

Field research

Field research can go much deeper than desk research but it is of course much more expensive as it involves collecting information primarily through contact with people. It is particularly costly in a distant market. The best results are achieved if it is preceded by desk research.

In planning overseas field research, the key networks and gaps in existing desk research must be identified. Because of linguistics, social, cultural and environmental differences between nations the researcher must undergo a thorough briefing of the background to the market. These differences are profoundly evident between for example the USA and a Developing country or Eastern bloc nation.

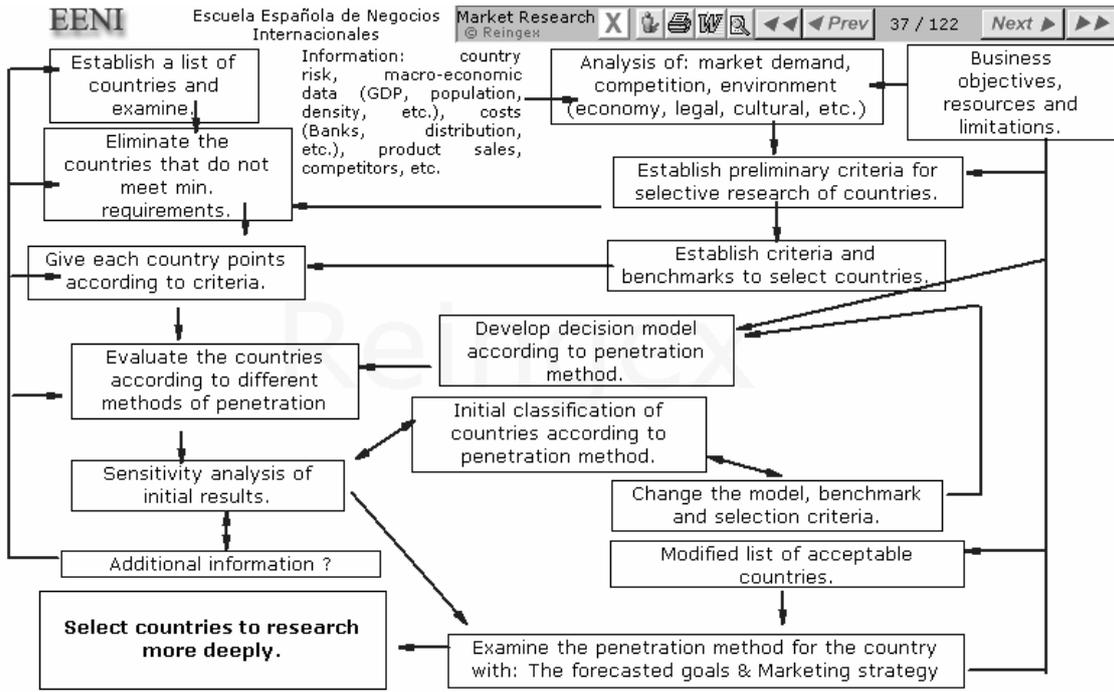
Sampling. By drawing on a probability sample it possible to obtain reliable market information. However this is simply not possible in many developing countries because often demographic statistics are inadequate or street maps are not available or out of date and houses are not numbered. The researcher in this circumstance will have to rely on convenience sampling.

Questionnaires. Each questionnaire requires careful phrasing so as to achieve cross-cultural comparability and avoid misleading answers. The best results are achieved if the questionnaire is drawn by a native of the country in which the research is to carried out and he or she is fluent in the language of the research sponsor.

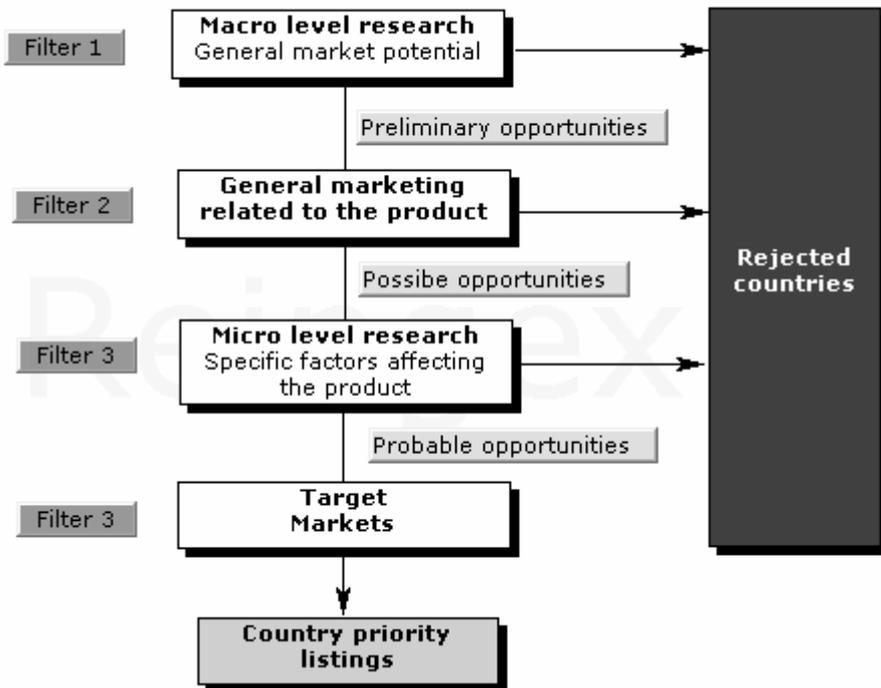
Telephone interviewing. This method of field research is very feasible in countries such as the USA where the number of telephones per house hold high. In contrast to the developing world, there are so few telephones with high installation and rental costs, making even industrial research difficult.

Personal interviewing. This is the preferred method in consumer research and is relied on very much in industrial research. However the personal interviewing technique presents problems in developing countries for the following reasons.

- a. it is difficult to recruit female interviewers in some cultures.
- b. the refusal rate is high because
- c. male interviewers seem to have more difficulty in obtaining co-operation with female informant
- d. in some cultures women may only be interviewed in the presence of their husbands
- e. there is general mistrust of strangers
- f. in industrial research, businessmen tend to refrain or disclose only a minimum of information to government, employees shareholders and researchers.



The Market Selection Process



Before you start studying the learning unit on market research, please answer these questions. You do not yet know the answers provided in the unit, therefore this will be based entirely on your previous knowledge. This exercise allows your tutor to evaluate the level of your knowledge. You will also be able to compare what you knew before and after you've studied the unit.

- Why does your company need to export?
- When to export?
- Where to export?
- How to export?
- At what prices?
- What advantages does exporting offer your company?
- Disadvantages?
- Will you plan your exports for the short or medium/long term?
- What attitudes will you have to overcome to start exporting?
- What production capacity do you need to export?
- What financial resources do you need to export?
- What organisational structure will you need to carry out export transactions?
- What is the position of the management?
- How would you start exporting?
- What information would you need?

Articles:

- Improving and Maintaining Market Access using the WTO Agreements
- Ex: Report on foreign trade of France
- Ex: Egypt

Exercises

CASES

MITSUI

- **Why China and its environs is a priority in Mitsui global strategy?**

CARGILL

- What you have learned in this case about successful market research in international trade?