

Building trade capacity

- New guidelines were introduced in 2012 to streamline the accession process of least-developed countries.

- The Fourth Global Review of Aid for Trade will take place on 8-10 July 2013, focusing on the role that Aid for Trade can play in helping connect developing countries to national, regional and global value chains.

- The WTO launched a new publicly available database on preferential trade arrangements – schemes under which developed countries grant preferential tariffs to imports from developing countries.

- The WTO undertook 343 technical assistance activities in 2012 to help government officials from developing countries gain a better understanding of the multilateral trading system.

- Over 5,400 people participated in the WTO's e-learning courses in 2012.



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Background on building trade capacity

The WTO aims to help developing countries build their trade capacity and allows them a longer time to implement trade agreements. Hundreds of training courses are organized each year for officials from developing countries.

Trade and development

In 2012, the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) pressed ahead with implementing the work programme on electronic commerce. Other issues discussed by the CTD and its Sub-Committee on Least-Developed Countries (LDCs) included accelerating and easing LDC accessions, capacity-building initiatives, market access for LDCs and technical assistance.

The Committee responded to the call by the WTO's Eighth Ministerial Conference to continue reinvigorating the WTO work programme on electronic commerce (e-commerce). Based on a proposal from Cuba and Ecuador, it agreed that a workshop on "e-commerce, development and small and medium-sized enterprises" will be held in 2013. A number of other proposals from members were considered in the context of the mandate from ministers to undertake focused work on the link between trade and development. Duty-free and quota-free market access for LDCs remained a standing item on the agenda of the CTD at its three formal regular sessions in 2012.

The Committee received reports on the 45th and 46th sessions of the Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre (ITC), which is the policymaking body of the ITC, the trade promotion agency for developing countries jointly sponsored by the WTO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The ITC's work focuses on small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries and on the private sector.

Notifications under the Enabling Clause

In 2012, the Committee received a notification, under the Enabling Clause, concerning the entry into force for Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) and the Philippines of the Agreement establishing the free trade area between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India.

Also with regard to regional trade agreements, a notification was received concerning the accession of Rwanda and Burundi to the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Community Customs Union. Notifications under the Enabling Clause concerning Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) schemes – which allow developed countries to grant preferential tariffs to imports from developing countries – were made by the United States and Switzerland.

Preferential trade arrangements

After four years of negotiations and a year of work by WTO members on implementation measures and data collection, the WTO launched in March 2012 a new publicly available database on preferential trade arrangements (<http://ptadb.wto.org>).

Preferential trade arrangements (PTAs) are schemes in which the beneficiaries of trade concessions do not have to provide concessions in return. They include GSP schemes under which developed countries grant preferential tariffs to imports from developing countries as well as other non-reciprocal preferential schemes granted a waiver by the General Council.

The database contains information on PTAs being implemented by WTO members. This information includes the legal nature, history and background of each PTA, the range of products covered and the types of treatment offered. The database reflects the continuing efforts of the WTO to enhance transparency in trade policy.

The database was set up following negotiations in the CTD that led to the establishment of the transparency mechanism for PTAs. A notification under the mechanism was made in 2012 by the Republic of Korea outlining preferential treatment offered to LDCs.

Technical cooperation and training

The WTO's technical assistance and training activities (see page 105) were discussed. The Committee took note of the 2011 annual report on technical assistance and training, providing an overview of activities in the previous year, and the technical cooperation audit report, which evaluated those activities.



Background on trade and development

The Committee on Trade and Development serves as the focal point for the coordination of all work on trade and development issues in the WTO. The Committee deals with a variety of issues, such as technical cooperation and training and notifications under the Enabling Clause, which allows developed countries to give more favourable treatment to developing countries.



Small economies

In 2012, the Committee on Trade and Development held two formal dedicated sessions to look at the wide range of proposals by small, vulnerable economies (SVEs) in the WTO, with the aim of achieving their fuller integration into the multilateral trading system.

The Committee's work focused on carrying out instructions by ministers at the Eighth Ministerial Conference that the Committee, with the assistance of the WTO Secretariat, continue examining the impact of WTO rules on small economies and the trade-related constraints they face and analyse the effects of trade opening and non-tariff measures (such as sanitary regulations and product standards) on small economies.

The Committee discussed a Secretariat background paper on the impact of non-tariff measures and heard presentations on recent research conducted on the subject by representatives from the ITC and UNCTAD. The Committee will continue to hold dedicated sessions on SVEs to monitor the situation in the Doha Round negotiations, to further examine the impact of non-tariff measures on small economies and, where possible, to make recommendations to the General Council.



Background on small economies

The Committee on Trade and Development – in dedicated session – oversees work on small economies and monitors the progress of proposals from small, vulnerable economies (SVEs) in the various WTO bodies and Doha Round negotiating groups. SVEs – mostly but not exclusively small island states – do not constitute a defined group in the WTO but associate on specific issues.

Least-developed countries

In 2012, the Sub Committee on Least Developed Countries (LDCs) mainly focused on the accession of LDCs, following the decision to streamline LDC accessions taken by ministers at the WTO's Eighth Ministerial Conference. The Sub-Committee also took up subjects under the WTO work programme for LDCs, such as reviewing market access conditions for LDC products and the delivery of trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives for LDCs. In addition, it discussed a possible update of the WTO work programme for LDCs.

Market access for LDCs

Discussion on the issues relating to market access for LDC products continued to receive priority attention by the Sub-Committee. As mandated, the WTO Secretariat prepared a comprehensive note covering trends in merchandise and services trade during 2000-11. The note examined the market access conditions faced by LDCs in both developed and developing countries, including the status of duty-free and quota-free access for LDC products.

The WTO Secretariat reported that the value of LDCs' total exports (goods and commercial services) grew by 23.9 per cent in 2011 to reach USD 229.8 billion. Major product categories contributing to the rise included fuels and mining products as well as agricultural products, which experienced price hikes. Although many WTO members welcomed the figures, they agreed with Haiti, the LDC coordinator in the WTO, that "a lot remains to be done".

The Sub-Committee also considered four notifications concerning preferential treatment for LDC products, made by China, India, the Republic of Korea and Chinese Taipei.

Technical assistance and capacity building

The Sub-Committee regularly monitors the progress of trade-related technical assistance for LDCs and other capacity-building initiatives in which the WTO is involved, such as the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF – see page 101) and the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF – see page 103). The secretariats of both these assistance mechanisms provided detailed briefings to the Sub-Committee on their respective activities.



Background on least-developed countries (LDCs)

The Sub-Committee on Least Developed Countries (LDCs) looks at systemic issues of importance to LDCs. These include market access, trade-related technical assistance and capacity building, accession of LDCs to the WTO and trade-related commitments undertaken by the international community to help LDCs, such as the Programme of Action for LDCs adopted in 2011 by the United Nations.





Following General Council approval of its membership on 26 October 2012, Laos became the latest least-developed country to join the WTO in early 2013.

As of October 2012, 47 LDCs were at various stages of the EIF process. Total pledges to the EIF Trust Fund stood at USD 240 million, of which USD 165 million had been secured. With regard to the STDF, as of October 2012, 32 project preparation grants (PPGs) had exclusively benefited LDCs, representing more than 60 per cent of all PPGs. In addition, LDCs have benefited from one-third of all STDF project grants approved. The importance and the synergies between the EIF and the STDF were again emphasized by the Sub-Committee.

Accession of LDCs to the WTO

Of the 49 countries designated by the United Nations as LDCs, 34 are WTO members. The Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) became the newest LDC member on 2 February 2013 following the Government's ratification of its accession package which had been adopted by the General Council in October 2012.

One of the important achievements of the Sub-Committee in 2012 was work on the strengthening of the LDC accession guidelines initially adopted in 2002. Following up on the ministerial mandate of 2011, the Sub-Committee focused in the first half of the year on strengthening and streamlining guidelines to further accelerate and ease the accession process of LDCs.

The new guidelines introduced some new flexibility and parameters to help acceding LDCs integrate into the multilateral trading system consistent with their development, trade and financial needs. Most importantly, it established benchmarks for acceding LDCs' market access negotiations (see page 36). "These improved guidelines provide a simpler framework for

the entry of LDCs into the WTO family. It is another example of positive action in favour of the world's poorest countries," said WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy.

At present, nine LDCs (Afghanistan, Bhutan, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Republic of Liberia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sudan and Yemen), representing more than a third of those negotiating to join the WTO, are at various stages of the accession process.

Work programme for LDCs

In the latter half of the year, the Sub-Committee sought progress in updating the work programme for LDCs, which was adopted in 2002. It was put on the agenda in October 2011 when the LDC Group made a submission indicating changes that were needed. A number of WTO members have reiterated their willingness to work on the update and have underlined that it should be technical and non-substantive. In 2013, the Chair may convene informal consultations to advance this work.

An LDC retreat took place from 18 to 20 October 2012. The retreat was intended to review areas of priority and interest to LDCs and to formulate their positions in preparation for the WTO's Ninth Ministerial Conference to be held in Indonesia in December 2013.



Aid for Trade

In 2012, Aid for Trade continued to mobilize resources. Commitments rose in 2010 to USD 45 billion, according to the latest figures, up from some USD 40 billion in 2009. This is 82 per cent more than the 2002-05 baseline period. The Committee on Trade and Development worked on implementing the 2012-13 work programme, with its main theme of “deepening coherence”, and prepared for the Fourth Global Review of Aid for Trade due in 2013, which will centre on global value chains. Four thematic workshops were held.

The Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) held four formal sessions on Aid for Trade in 2012 at which WTO members discussed progress in the implementation of the 2012-13 work programme, and partners and organizations reported on their Aid for Trade work.

Four thematic workshops were also held. On Aid for Trade and sustainable development and the green economy, the workshop, attended by WTO members and representatives of other international organizations, concluded that Aid for Trade contributes to sustainable development but much more needs to be done to make green growth a reality. At a workshop on Aid for Trade and services, participants shared the view that services are an important catalyst for economic growth, employment and poverty alleviation. Aid for Trade helps to address the various factors that hold back the participation of developing countries in trade in services, including lack of access to export financing. The workshop also noted that tourism is a key services sector and an important source of revenue for developing and least-developed countries (LDCs), and yet it is still a largely untapped resource.

Access to financing was the central theme of a workshop on Aid for Trade and trade finance. Between 80 to 90 per cent of world trade relies on commercial financing, mostly of a short-term nature. But only a third of the poorest countries benefit regularly from the services offered by trade finance programmes. And even where trade finance is available, it does not mean that access is universal. Finally, a workshop on Aid for Trade and



The WTO hosted a workshop on Aid for Trade and services on 11 July 2012.

intellectual property (IP) examined how developing countries, and in particular LDCs, can use IP in support of economic growth and development – and how development partners can support this process through Aid for Trade.

Fourth Global Review

At the CTD meeting on Aid for Trade in November, the Director-General announced that the Fourth Global Review will take place on 8-10 July 2013 and that its theme will be “connecting to value chains”. With a focus on private sector development, the review will cover – among other things – the role that Aid for Trade can play in helping connect developing countries – and LDCs – to national, regional and global value chains. Underpinning the review is a monitoring and evaluation exercise conducted by the WTO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The monitoring exercise is based on self-assessment questionnaires addressed to developing and least-developed countries, donors (bilateral and multilateral agencies) and South-South partnerships (between developing countries).

A complementary monitoring exercise – undertaken together with the New Partnership for Africa’s Development’s “Grow Africa” initiative, the International Chamber of Commerce, the International Trade Centre, the International Telecommunication



Background on Aid for Trade

The Aid for Trade initiative was launched at the WTO’s Sixth Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong in 2005. It aims to help developing countries, and particularly least-developed countries (LDCs), enjoy the opportunities offered by the multilateral trading system. Aid for Trade assists them in developing the trade-related skills and infrastructure needed to implement and benefit from WTO agreements and to expand their trade.

Union and the United Nations World Tourism Organization – was addressed to the private sector to survey five sectors of particular importance to developing countries. These sectors are agri-food, information and communication technologies, textiles and apparel, tourism, and transport and logistics. Responses to the questionnaires will be analysed and conclusions drawn in a joint publication by the OECD and the WTO, and policy implications will be discussed at the review in July 2013. In parallel, the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Commission for Africa carried out a separate monitoring exercise on the AU action plan on boosting intra-African trade.

The Aid for Trade initiative continues to mobilize resources. The most recent figures available show that Aid for Trade commitments reached approximately USD 45 billion in 2010, representing an 82 per cent increase from the 2002-05 baseline period, with an average yearly growth rate of 13 per cent. This increase was “additional” and not at the expense of other sectors. Figures 1 and 2 provide a breakdown of regional and category-specific Aid for Trade commitments.

WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy, speaking at the OECD Policy Dialogue on Aid for Trade in Paris on 16 January 2013, warned that Aid for Trade financing could be harder to come by in the future. “We have made significant progress in securing additional financial resource” for Aid for Trade for developing countries. But “sustaining financing flows in the continued tight fiscal environment is going to be tough”.

Figure 1: Aid for Trade commitments by category

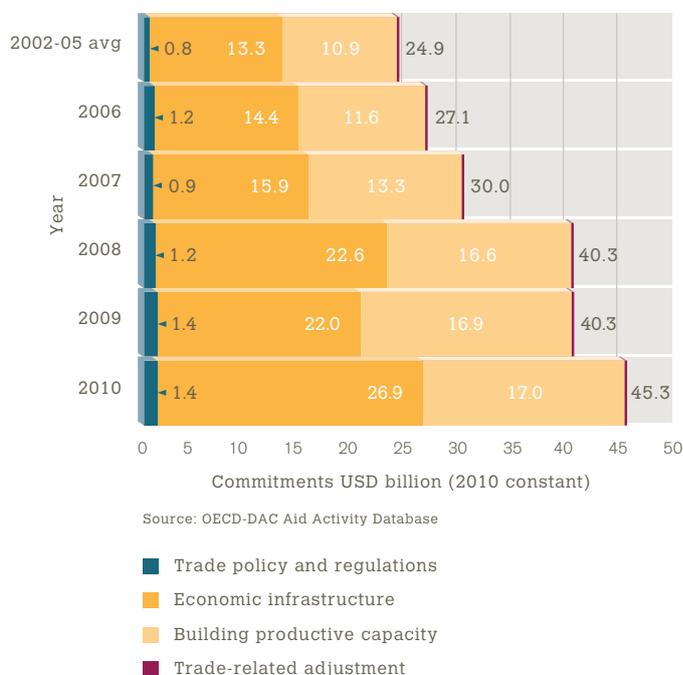
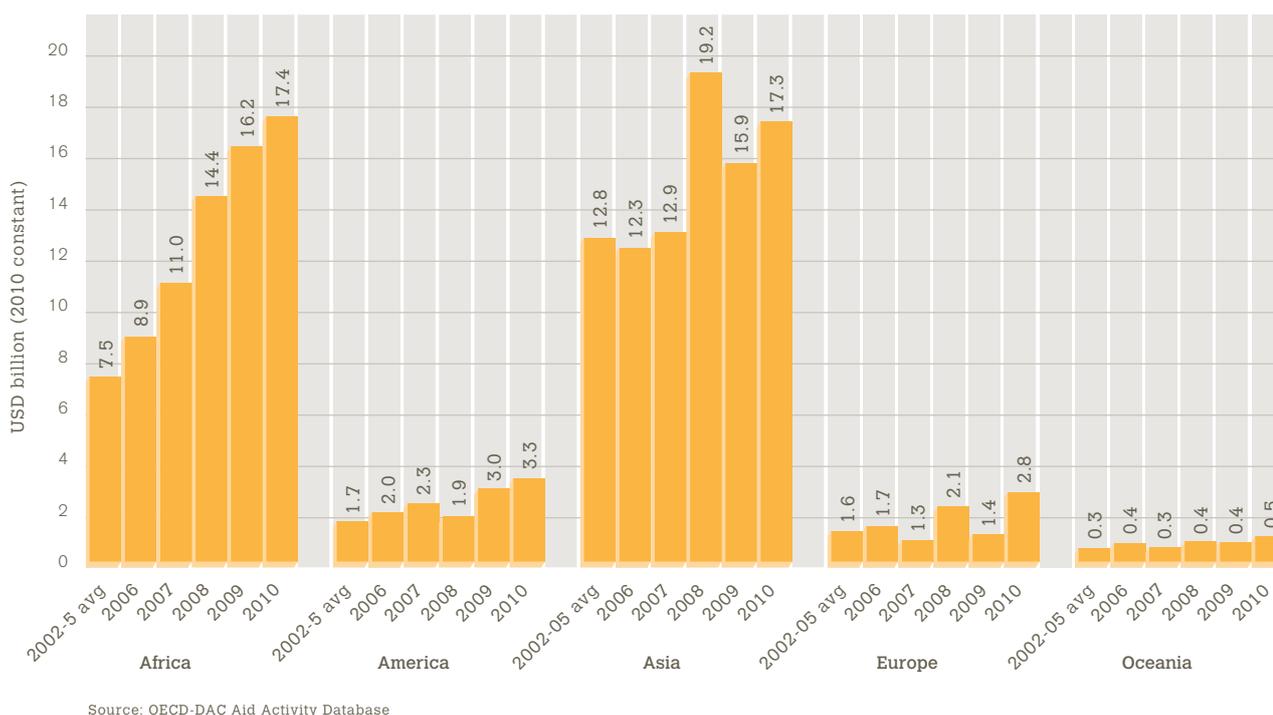


Figure 2: Aid for Trade commitments by region



Enhanced Integrated Framework

In 2012, the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) – the Aid for Trade programme for least-developed countries (LDCs) – was independently rated as “highly relevant” to the trade and development priorities of LDCs. As a result, the EIF Steering Committee extended the EIF mandate until end-2015, with an additional operational period for project implementation up to 2017. Forty-three countries have so far received assistance, up from 40 at the end of 2011, to build stronger trade institutions and to address trading challenges. The EIF is supported by donor pledges of USD 240 million and contributions of approximately USD 178 million (up from USD 155 million in 2011) as of 31 December 2012.

The EIF, an Aid for Trade “partnership in action” programme for LDCs, is making headway in helping the poorest countries integrate into the global trading system. Its role is to strengthen trade institutions and foundations and roll out priority projects in areas such as adding value to agriculture, trade facilitation, export promotion and productive capacity building. The EIF operates within the framework of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action (which monitor how donors and recipients are doing against their commitments).

An independent mid-term review (MTR), conducted between July and November 2012, concluded that the EIF programme, which became operational in 2009, is highly relevant to the trade and economic priorities of LDCs. It said that the EIF had contributed to building capacity for trade-related strategies, to mainstreaming trade into national development strategies and to ensuring a coordinated delivery of trade-related assistance in line with country priorities. The MTR also indicated that the EIF had supported countries in market development, enhancing productivity, improving programme quality, addressing supply-side capacity constraints and trade integration. Following the MTR, the EIF Steering Committee accepted at its December 2012 meeting the proposal by the EIF Board to extend the programme mandate to the end of 2015, with an additional operational period for project implementation up to 2017.



Background on the Enhanced Integrated Framework

The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) for trade-related assistance to least-developed countries (LDCs) is a multi-donor programme that helps LDCs become more active players in the multilateral trading system. The EIF combines the efforts of LDCs with those of 23 donors and six core international partner agencies, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and the WTO. Other development partners, such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), act as observers.

Rise in funded projects

The programme provides funding to countries through two separate “windows”, Tier 1 and Tier 2. Prior to receiving Tier 1 funds, recently admitted countries can also access funds for projects to lay the groundwork for EIF implementation. Tier 1 projects, comprising institutional capacity-building support and diagnostic trade integration studies (DTIS), are intended to help countries identify, address and prioritize bottlenecks and other constraints to trade, economic growth and sustainable development. DTISs provide a common basis for action by governments, civil society, the private sector and development partner stakeholders. Tier 2 projects are designed to build supply-side capacity to trade and provide start-up finance for activities identified as priorities in the first phase.

During 2012, the number of approved Tier 1 projects rose to 43, from 29 at the end of 2010. This includes 31 projects providing multi-year support for plans to mainstream trade and ensure coordinated implementation of priority activities, identified through the DTIS process, and 12 pre-DTIS projects. A total of 14 DTIS updates were approved in 2012. The number of Tier 2 projects approved for implementation rose to 12 from one at the end of 2011. There is currently a pipeline of over 28 Tier 2 projects across a variety of sectors targeting compliance with standards, enhancing the services sector, value addition, export growth and income generation for the poor.

Approved Tier 2 projects in 2012 include enhancing the sesame sector with a strong focus on private sector collaboration in Burkina Faso, institutional capacity building in sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards in Burundi, feasibility studies on developing an existing export processing zone and the identification of tourism sites in Burundi, and increasing exports of milled rice and high-value silk in Cambodia. Other projects include improving the varieties of sesame, corn and palm seeds and plants in the Central African Republic, adding value in agriculture with a focus on cashew nuts, groundnuts and sesame in The Gambia, promoting fresh fruit and vegetables production for domestic and export markets in Lesotho, promoting the gum arabic sector in Mali, improving quality and adding value to ginger exports in Nepal, supporting eco-tourism in Sierra Leone, and improving the productivity and quality of honey in Yemen.



EIF funding has supported the development of the silk sector in Cambodia.

Monitoring and capacity building

The EIF has been helping countries set up monitoring and evaluation (M&E) programmes to evaluate their national projects. Following an anglophone M&E workshop in 2011, a francophone one was hosted by Burkina Faso in 2012. To enhance the EIF's reporting capacity and information sharing, the EIF Database, also known as the EIF Knowledge Hub, was launched in 2012.

Tailored capacity building programmes rolled out in 2012 include a project development module jointly developed with the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) and piloted in a training workshop in Senegal. The EIF also jointly organized, with the United Nations Development Programme, a trade-mainstreaming module with pilots in Burkina Faso, Cambodia and Zambia. This has resulted in the adoption of a trade road map with recommendations in Burkina Faso, the development of trade strategies in Cambodia and the start of a dialogue to reform policy implementation in trade ministries and agencies in Zambia.

New appointments

H.E. Minelik Alemu Getahun, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, was elected the new Chair of the EIF Board, succeeding H.E. Mothae Anthony Maruping of Lesotho, who had chaired the Board since its inception in 2007. H.E. Päivi Kairamo, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Finland in Geneva, was elected as the new Chairperson of the EIF Steering Committee, taking over from H.E. Hannu Himanen of Finland, who had chaired the EIFSC since its first meeting in 2010.

In March 2013, the WTO launched the process for recruiting a new Executive Director to succeed Ms Dorothy Tembo, whose term of office ends on 30 September 2013.

The EIF partnership also welcomed South Sudan as one of the new entrants to the programme following the EIF Board decision, increasing the number of EIF countries to 48.

At the international level

At the 13th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIII) in April, the EIF hosted an LDC ministerial working breakfast on the theme "Integrating Trade into National Development Strategies: Accelerating Delivery of Results in the New Global Economic Landscape". The EIF also joined the WTO in hosting an International Women's Day event, which focused on how the EIF was supporting the drive for women's economic empowerment in the poorest countries worldwide.

At the third annual meeting of the Steering Committee, one of the eight film chapters from the EIF "Trading Stories" project was premiered. The project focuses on disseminating information on good practices and lessons learnt and showcasing country results. The Cambodia Trading Stories film chapter featured national trade voices from the community perspective, the private sector and civil society as well as the government, showing the real impact of the programme in Cambodia.

For more information, go to www.enhancedif.org.

Standards and Trade Development Facility

The Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) – the Aid for Trade vehicle to help developing countries implement sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards – continued to increase awareness, mobilize resources, strengthen collaboration and identify and disseminate good practice to enhance the effectiveness of SPS-related technical cooperation. It also focused on providing support and funding for the development and implementation of projects that promote compliance with international SPS requirements. Contributions to the STDF totalled USD 4.7 million in 2012.

The STDF began implementing a new five-year medium-term strategy (2012-16) in 2012 setting out the principles and strategic priorities that will guide its work and the use of its resources. The strategy is built on the need to promote increased collaboration and interaction among providers of SPS-related technical cooperation and continue strengthening the STDF as a “knowledge platform” for the exchange of information, sharing experiences and the identification and dissemination of good practices.

In collaboration with the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the STDF organized a seminar on international trade and invasive alien species in Geneva on 12-13 July 2012. Invasive alien species are those that have crossed borders into new habitats, where they can survive, reproduce and outgrow local species and potentially cause environmental damage. The seminar, attended by 110 participants, was successful in:

- raising awareness about the mutually supportive objectives of the SPS Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the contribution of effective SPS control systems to help protect against the entry of harmful species, including pests, diseases and other invasive alien species
- fostering increased collaboration between the SPS and the



The STDF organized a seminar on 12-13 July 2012 at the WTO on international trade and invasive alien species.

- CBD “communities” at both regional and national levels
- reviewing initiatives that aim to build national and/or regional capacities to manage the entry and spread of invasive alien species, including pests and diseases, and highlighting common challenges, good practices and additional capacity building efforts required.

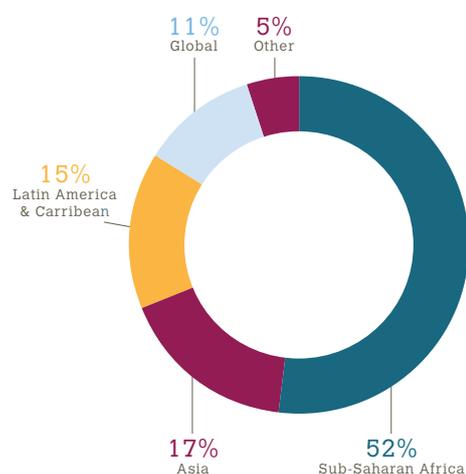
The STDF continued its work on the application of multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) to inform SPS decision-making and improve resource allocation. The STDF facilitated the application of the MCDA tool in Viet Nam in September 2012 and organized a regional workshop for selected experts in food safety, animal and/or plant health and trade from Asian and Pacific countries in Bangkok, Thailand, on 12-13 November 2012. The workshop provided practical skills to enable them to apply the tool in their own countries. Following the workshop, several SPS experts expressed interest in using the MCDA framework.

The STDF and the Inter-American Development Bank jointly published “Public-Private Partnerships to enhance SPS capacity: What can we learn from this collaborative approach?”. Building on an STDF seminar on this topic held in October 2010, the paper analyses the emergence, operation and performance of selected SPS-related partnerships between SPS government

Background on the Standards and Trade Development Facility

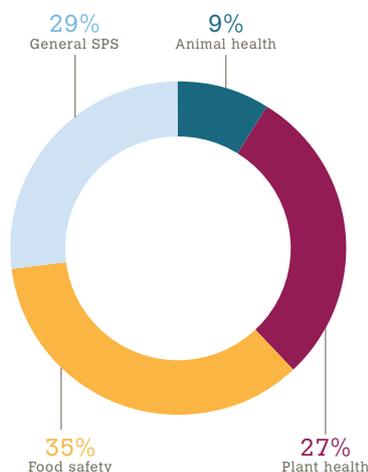
The Standards and Trade Development Facility is a global partnership that helps developing countries build their capacity to implement international sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards, guidelines and recommendations and improve their human, animal and plant health status in order to gain and maintain access to markets. This work contributes to sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction, food security and environmental protection in developing countries. Established by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the World Bank, the World Health Organization and the WTO, the STDF is financed by voluntary contributions. The WTO provides the secretariat.

Figure 3: Location of STDF projects and project preparation grants*



*The total may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 4: Coverage of STDF projects and project preparation grants*



agencies and the private sector, raises awareness about the potential value and role of such partnerships in enhancing SPS capacity and provides practical guidance to facilitate and promote their use for SPS capacity development.

The STDF launched a virtual library containing SPS-related capacity-building documentation, including SPS needs assessments, action plans, training materials, evaluations of projects funded by the STDF and other donors, research papers and articles from various publishers and sources. The library will assist beneficiaries, international organizations, stakeholders, researchers and consultants in the development and implementation of SPS-related capacity-building initiatives and further facilitate the dissemination of relevant experiences and good practices.

The STDF initiated research on the implementation of SPS measures in the context of trade facilitation. This work will be pursued in 2013 and seeks to raise awareness about the synergies between the implementation of SPS measures and trade facilitation. It will also identify key needs, opportunities and good practices to improve the implementation of SPS measures in a way that ensures the appropriate level of health protection while minimizing trade transaction costs. Finally, it will develop recommendations to strengthen future work and technical cooperation focused on SPS and trade facilitation.

The STDF actively participated in a series of conferences, training workshops and other information sessions and meetings at international, regional and national levels, including the WTO SPS Committee. This work included the STDF's involvement in and collaboration with other Aid for Trade programmes,

mechanisms and initiatives (such as the Enhanced Integrated Framework or EIF) aimed at ensuring that SPS issues and priorities are properly addressed. A joint EIF/STDF training workshop in Senegal resulted in a practical guide on project development and results-based management tools (in collaboration with the Centre for International Development and Training at the University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom).

Three project preparation grants (PPGs) and eight project grants were approved in 2012, bringing the total number of PPGs and projects funded by the STDF to 53 and 63, respectively. Of the total number of grants, 52 per cent have been awarded to sub-Saharan Africa, 17 per cent to Asia and 15 per cent to Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, 11 per cent of projects and PPGs can be classified as global (see Figure 3).

On a thematic basis, 35 per cent of projects and PPGs were dedicated to food safety issues, 27 per cent to plant health and 9 per cent to animal health, while 29 per cent could be classified as SPS general (see Figure 4).

Overall, the STDF has devoted 44 per cent of project resources to least-developed countries and other low-income countries.

Technical cooperation and training

The Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation (ITTC) strengthened both content and delivery of WTO technical assistance and training programmes in 2012, reinforced its capacity to interact with beneficiaries in all regions and bolstered its coordinating role for trade capacity building. The WTO undertook 343 technical assistance activities in 2012, the vast majority aimed at government officials. Results-based management was further consolidated in the design, management, delivery and evaluation of capacity-building programmes.

The work programme on technical assistance in 2012 was guided by the WTO's biennial Technical Assistance Plan 2012-13, which built on lessons learned from the implementation of previous biennial plans (2008-09 and 2010-11). The ITTC continued to institute measures to improve its own institutional capacity and to enhance the efficiency and impact of its trade-related technical assistance.

The ITTC strengthened the progressive learning strategy (PLS) for trade-related technical assistance. PLS makes maximum use of e-learning (Internet-based training) to deliver technical assistance across all products, from basic to intermediate levels. This approach ensures that when participants attend the more advanced training, they have acquired a minimum level of knowledge.

A critical element of the PLS is the selection of candidates using pre-determined criteria. This has ensured a consistent learning path for all trainees across all WTO members. It has strengthened linkages between programmes and has promoted more coherence and cost-effectiveness in the delivery of technical assistance. Geneva-based courses are now attended by participants with the same level of WTO knowledge and this approach is gradually being extended to national and regional activities.



The newly upgraded WTO Reference Centre in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, was inaugurated on 10 April 2012.

The WTO Secretariat re-affirmed its commitment to delivering technical assistance with regional partner institutions. The regional approach to addressing capacity constraints complements the work and initiatives undertaken by bilateral donors as well as other agencies offering trade-related technical assistance. Coordination of technical assistance has been enhanced within the Secretariat and with partner agencies.

The Secretariat continued to pursue its outreach programmes in 2012, including its work with parliamentarians (see page 116), the private sector (see page 121), academics and universities. One other branch of outreach is the WTO Chairs Programme (see page 126), which has greatly improved coordination and cooperation by concentrating WTO support on academic courses, research activities, academic networking and public outreach.

The results-based management initiative, which requires the use of appropriate indicators to measure the impact and results of WTO's technical assistance programmes, was further refined after being formally introduced in 2011. It covers the design, management and delivery of WTO's trade capacity-building programmes and will become fully operational in 2013.



Background on technical cooperation and training

The trade-related technical assistance programme is the WTO's contribution to the Aid for Trade initiative (see page 99). In the WTO Secretariat, this assistance is coordinated by the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation. Its activities include e-learning, global and regional training courses, academic programmes and workshops at national and regional level. The technical assistance programme helps WTO members better understand their rights and obligations in the multilateral trading system, which strengthens countries' capacity to deal with the challenges and attain the benefits of participation in this system.



The WTO undertook 343 technical assistance activities in 2012 to help government officials gain a better understanding of the WTO.

Overview of activities

In 2012, the WTO undertook 343 technical assistance activities, both in Geneva and in various WTO members. The majority of these activities were organized in partnership with other international organizations and regional and sub-regional organizations. At the national level, the activities most in demand were multi-topic briefing sessions on issues relating to WTO agreements or the Doha negotiations. These included non-agricultural market access, rules, trade in services, trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS), and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures.

The immediate goal of these activities was to give participants a better understanding of fundamental WTO principles on the topics covered. However, on some specific Doha negotiating issues, an objective was to give participants the factual and analytical information necessary for meaningful participation in the negotiations.

Subject-specific regional seminars were conducted in all regions. These continued, as in recent years, within the framework of a strengthened role for ITTC regional desks. This approach reinforces the Secretariat's interaction with beneficiaries and regional partners, and enhances the WTO's coordinating role in the field of trade capacity building.

Activities by region

The technical assistance programme continued to place particular emphasis on providing assistance to Africa and to least-developed countries (LDCs), whose integration into the multilateral trading system remains a priority for the WTO.

Activities held for the benefit of Africa during 2012 constituted 24 per cent of the total number, followed by Latin America with

14 per cent, Asia and the Pacific with 13 per cent, 9 per cent for Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 5 per cent for Arab and Middle Eastern countries and 3 per cent for the Caribbean. Global events represented 31 per cent of trade-related technical assistance in 2012. For a full breakdown of activities by region, see Table 1.

There has been a gradual, but marginal, decline of overall activities conducted by the Secretariat mainly because of increased use of e-training and better filtering of requests to ensure consistency with assessed needs.

LDCs benefited from approximately 41 per cent of all technical assistance activities, including national activities held in LDCs and regional and global activities in which LDCs were invited to participate. Several products have been specifically created for LDCs, or have LDCs as a priority. Examples are the three-week introduction courses for LDCs and a new course, the advanced LDCs course, which follows the PLS approach.

Other programmes give LDCs priority in determining beneficiaries. For example, the reference centres programme (see below) specifically focuses on the installation/upgrade of reference centres for LDC members.

Taking into account field-based activities only, the regional spread of events in which LDCs were involved shows that a majority of courses were targeted at Africa (58 per cent), followed by Asia-Pacific economies (22 per cent), Arab and Middle East countries (8 per cent) and the Central and Eastern European and Caucasus and the Caribbean regions (6 per cent each). Global events, including e-learning and Geneva-based courses, accounted for 42 per cent of activities involving LDCs in 2012.



Figure 5: Participants by region, 2012

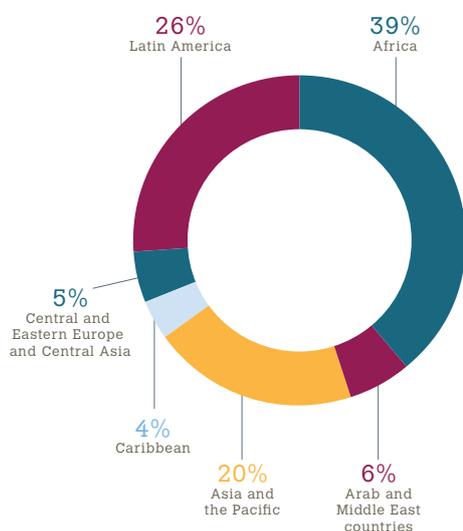
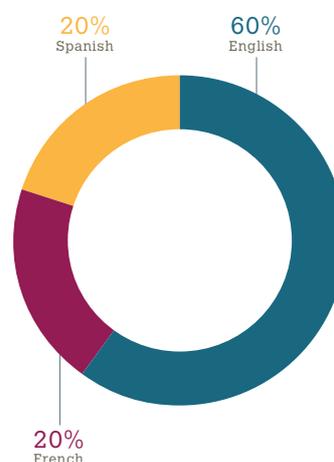


Figure 6: Participants by course language in 2012



The Netherlands Trainee Programme, which assists in the economic and social development of low-income countries and comparable poor small, vulnerable economies in trade policy, and the WTO mission internship programme both give priority to applicants from African and LDC countries.

In 2012, six out of 18 candidates admitted to the internship programme, which was developed for Geneva-based missions, were from LDCs and half of these were from Africa. In the Netherlands Trainee Programme, 12 out of the 16 candidates were from Africa, and seven of the candidates were from LDCs. In addition, the Enhanced Integrated Framework (see page 101) is entirely focused on LDCs.

The high proportion of activities at national level reflects continued demand and allows the Secretariat to tailor its technical assistance to the particularities of each country. Most activities held at national level are meant to address those aspects of the WTO agreements that pose specific challenges for the country in question.

At PLS level 2 (intermediate), five regional trade policy courses were held: in Swaziland for English-speaking Africa, in Colombia for Latin American countries, in India for the Asia-Pacific region, in Kuwait for Arab and Middle-East countries and in Turkey for Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

At PLS level 3, two three-month advanced trade policy courses for government officials were held in Geneva, one each in English and in French. In addition, a range of shorter, intensive advanced thematic courses were delivered, addressing such topics as dispute settlement, trade and environment, agriculture, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, LDC-specific issues, regionalism and intellectual property (the latter jointly with the World Intellectual Property Organization).

Twenty-eight technical assistance activities were held at the WTO, including the advanced trade policy course, an introduction course, two introduction days, nine thematic courses, nine Geneva symposia, three Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) and trade facilitation activities, and the twice-yearly "Geneva Weeks". The purpose of the Geneva Week is to inform non-resident WTO members about recent developments in the WTO's work programme and the Doha negotiations. The last Geneva Week was held from 10 to 14 December 2012.

E-learning

The WTO e-learning programme continued its growth in 2012, with a total of 33 online courses in English, French and Spanish, available on the e-learning website (<https://etraining.wto.org>) and through the WTO website.

Over 6,500 applicants from all regions applied for enrolment in e-learning courses, including more than 1,110 from LDCs. Out of the total applications, some 5,442 candidates met the criteria of being government officials and were selected to take the course (see Figure 7). Around 60 per cent of participants enrolled for the online courses in English, with the remainder split evenly between French and Spanish.

E-learning will continue to enhance its outreach, both regionally and academically, through partnerships. The objective is to strengthen partnerships and consolidate an already good geographical coverage, which would increase the value-added of technical assistance.

The regional distribution of participants taking the courses continued to be comprehensive, covering all regions, with Africa (39 per cent), Latin America (26 per cent) and Asia and Pacific (20 per cent) having the highest rates of participation.

Table 1: Trade-related technical assistance by region in 2012¹

Trade-related technical assistance by region	National technical assistance		Regional		Global ²		Other (conferences, etc.)		Total	
Africa	47	35%	13	22%	0	0%	22	33%	82	24%
Arab and Middle East countries	7	5%	6	10%	0	0%	4	6%	17	5%
Asia and the Pacific	26	19%	16	28%	0	0%	4	6%	46	13%
Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia	19	14%	6	10%	0	0%	7	10%	32	9%
Caribbean	4	3%	6	10%	0	0%	0	0%	10	3%
Latin America	31	23%	11	19%	0	0%	6	9%	48	14%
Sub-total	134	100%	58	100%	0	0%	43	64%	235	69%
Global	0	0%	0	0%	84	100%	24	36%	108	31%
Total	134	100%	58	100%	84	100%	67	100%	343	100%

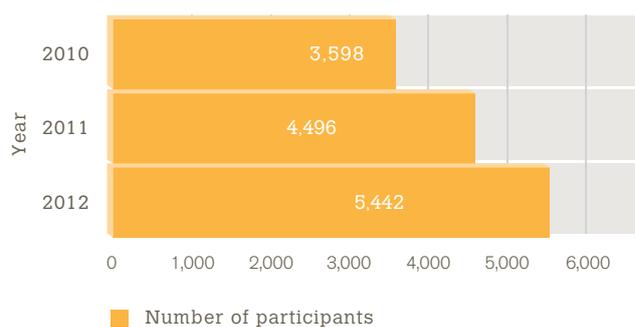
¹ Percentage columns do not always add up to 100 due to rounding.

² Activities under the "global" category are not targeted at a specific region, but include, for example, the Geneva-based courses and topic-specific workshops and symposia, distance learning, internship programmes and the advisory role on legal issues – Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU).

Changes introduced in the delivery of the courses in 2012 gave participants more flexibility to register at any time. As of 22 January 2013, around 740 participants were in the process of finishing a 2012 course. This new approach has been key to the successful implementation of the PLS, in which e-learning functions both as a training and selection tool, ensuring that only successful participants in the online prerequisite courses are eligible to apply for higher level activities.

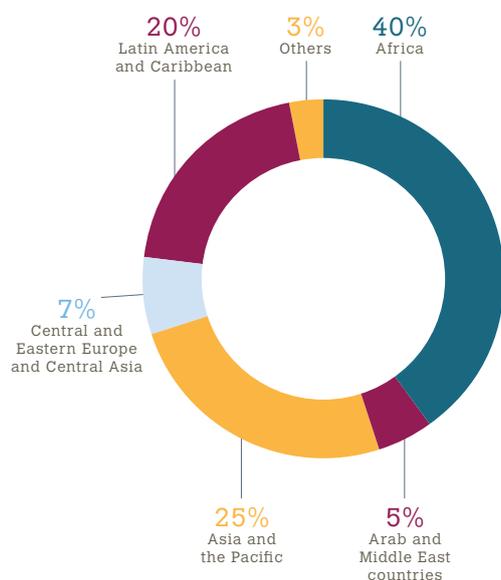
New courses on trade and development, WTO trade economics and the WTO market access database were finalized and opened for registration in 2012. In addition, a new type of course ("My Course") was made available to guide participants in identifying gaps in their WTO knowledge, and to select the appropriate training material accordingly. The catalogue of courses will continue to be expanded to include specialized courses. The aim is to cover all the main WTO subjects at level 2. New courses also continued to be made available in French and Spanish.

The number of online interactive activities in English, French and Spanish, as well as the number of multimedia and audio-visual components on specific WTO topics, was boosted to increase the quality of WTO e-learning courses and increase knowledge transfer.

Figure 7: Number of participants selected for WTO e-learning courses, 2010-2012


Source: WTO

Figure 8: Relative share of reference centres by region in 2012



WTO reference centres

WTO reference centres (RCs), located primarily in LDCs, are open to government officials, business representatives, academics, and the general public to allow them to access WTO-related information. RCs are equipped with IT equipment, books, CDs, DVDs, and any relevant WTO-related documentation. RCs have full access to WTO databases, publications and WTO training material. In 2012, new RCs were established/upgraded in nine countries, taking the total number in operation to 108.

The programme was first launched in 1997 and has evolved considerably since then, turning RCs into effective learning centres. The RC programme has been refined, ensuring that it responds adequately, primarily to the needs of LDCs and countries without a resident mission in Geneva. The RCs enable these countries to follow WTO developments. In addition, the RCs serve as an effective means of undertaking WTO e-learning activities.

RCs can also be established in regional/sub-regional organizations to improve their collaboration with their member states and other agencies. They can be established within a government, i.e. at a ministry, at an academic institution or within business organizations, for example, a chamber of commerce.

Each RC has an RC manager, who is responsible for its daily operation. In order to operate the RC programme in the most effective way, the WTO Secretariat provides RC managers with full training to acquire the technical knowledge and skills required. These training events are organized both in Geneva and in the field.

RCs narrow the geographical distance between capitals and the WTO Secretariat, thus easing lines of communication and enabling participation in WTO discussions and decision-making. There are currently 108 working RCs located in 92 countries (See Figure 8).

Financing the technical assistance programme

One of the continuing challenges for the trade-related technical assistance programme is the need to ensure timely and adequate levels of funding. The programme is financed mainly from the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund, which is a voluntary funding window provided by WTO members.

Donors provided CHF 24,669,734 in new funds in 2012, down from CHF 25,977,529 in 2011. Contributing countries have continued their support for the trust fund and funding levels for 2012 were sufficient to meet the minimum level of assistance required by eligible countries.