

Building trade capacity

The Second Global Review of Aid for Trade, which took place in July 2009, signalled continued determination to help developing countries use trade as a vehicle for economic growth and poverty reduction. Capacity-building initiatives and the Aid for Trade initiative were some of the major issues discussed by the Committee on Trade and Development. The WTO provided some 460 trade-related technical assistance activities during the year.

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Background

The Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) 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 development-related issues such as technical cooperation and training and notifications under the Enabling Clause, which allows developed members to give more favourable treatment to developing countries.

Trade and development

Capacity-building initiatives, market access for least-developed countries (LDCs) and the Aid for Trade initiative were some of the important issues discussed by the Committee on Trade and Development and its sub-committee on LDCs in 2009.

The Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) held five formal regular sessions in 2009. It also held two dedicated sessions to consider notifications of regional trade agreements (RTAs) under the Enabling Clause. The regular sessions considered notifications regarding market access for developing and least-developed countries, transparency for preferential trade arrangements, duty-free and quota-free market access for LDCs, and the participation of developing countries in the multilateral trading system. The committee also discussed the WTO's technical assistance activities.

The report of the 42nd session of the Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre (ITC) was presented to the committee. The Joint Advisory Group is the policy-making 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.

Notifications under the Enabling Clause

In 2009, the committee considered notifications under the Enabling Clause by Norway, the European Union (EU), Switzerland and the United States relating to their Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) schemes. These are unilateral programmes by developed countries which grant preferential tariffs to imports from developing countries.

In its dedicated sessions, the committee considered the Free Trade Agreement between Pakistan and Sri Lanka covering trade in goods and the Closer Economic Partnership Agreement between Pakistan and Malaysia, also relating to goods trade. A notification was made concerning the Preferential Trade Agreement between Chile and India, which will be considered in a dedicated session in 2010.

The committee also discussed issues concerning the change in the notification status of the Gulf Cooperation Council Customs Union, from Article 24 of the GATT to the Enabling Clause. The committee further agreed that RTAs notified under the Enabling Clause involving non-WTO members would be looked at using the same procedures as those for RTAs involving WTO members only. Three such agreements have been notified to the CTD – the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA), the India-Bhutan Agreement and the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA).

Preferential trade arrangements

The proponents of a transparency mechanism for preferential trade arrangements – Brazil, China, India and the United States – circulated a revised draft proposal in November 2009, which was further discussed in the committee. When reporting to the General Council in December 2009, the Chair said more consultations were needed and requested a further extension until July 2010 for the CTD to consider the matter and report back for appropriate action.



Duty-free and quota-free market access for LDCs

Duty-free and quota-free market access for LDCs remains a standing item on the CTD's agenda. Under this item, India provided an update on the implementation of its Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme for LDCs. Switzerland introduced a new GSP notification and the EU informed the Committee that its Everything but Arms (EBA) arrangement now provided full duty-free quota-free market access for all products (except arms and ammunition) from all LDCs. The CTD also conducted its fourth annual review of the implementation of the Decision at the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference in 2005, committing developed WTO members and developing countries 'declaring themselves in a position to do so' to grant duty-free quota-free access for almost all imports from LDCs.

Technical cooperation and training

The WTO's technical assistance and training activities (see page 116) were discussed by the committee, which took note of the 2008 Annual Report on Technical Assistance and Training and the Technical Cooperation Audit Report for 2008. The former provides an overview of the WTO's technical assistance and training activities in 2008, while the latter evaluates these activities. The CTD adopted the Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan for 2010 and 2011.

Small economies

In 2009 the CTD held two formal dedicated sessions on small economies, under the work programme originally agreed at the Doha Ministerial Conference in 2001 'to frame responses to the trade-related issues identified for the fuller integration of small, vulnerable economies into the multilateral trading system'. SVEs, mostly but not exclusively small island states, do not constitute a defined group in the WTO, but associate on specific issues.

The WTO Secretariat prepared an updated paper to assist the CTD in monitoring the progress of proposals by small vulnerable economies in the relevant WTO bodies and Doha Round negotiating groups. These proposals range across the Doha negotiations, covering agriculture, non-agricultural market access, services, rules (including fisheries subsidies) and trade facilitation, as well as the Aid for Trade initiative.

The CTD also discussed a report on its activities since 2005, which was then forwarded to the General Council and in turn transmitted to the WTO's Seventh Ministerial Conference. The CTD will continue to hold dedicated sessions on SVEs to monitor the situation in the Doha negotiations and, where possible, to make recommendations to the General Council.

Least-developed countries

The Sub-Committee on Least-Developed Countries held three formal meetings in 2009. The main subjects considered were market access for LDCs, trade-related technical assistance and capacity building, and accession of LDCs to the WTO.

Market access for LDCs

Market access for LDCs was discussed at all three meetings of the sub-committee. As background for the sub-committee's annual review of market access for products originating from LDCs, the WTO Secretariat provided updated information on the latest trends in LDC trade and market access conditions, including a section detailing the impact on LDC trade of the global economic crisis.

The sub-committee also continued to look at LDC market access issues in the area of trade in services, including a detailed presentation by the International Trade Centre (ITC) on its work in relation to LDC trade in services. The sub-committee will continue to make efforts to enhance LDCs' understanding of the various aspects of services trade with a view to assisting their effective participation in the negotiations on trade in services.



Background

The Committee on Trade and Development – in dedicated session – oversees the work programme on small economies and monitors the progress of proposals from small vulnerable economies (SVEs) in the various WTO bodies and Doha Round negotiating groups.

Building trade capacity



Background

The Sub-Committee on Least-Developed Countries (LDCs) addresses issues of specific concern and interest to LDCs in the WTO. Of the 49 LDCs designated by the United Nations, 32 are WTO members and 12 are in various stages of their accession process. The work programme on LDCs, adopted following the Doha Ministerial Conference in 2001, covers market access, trade-related technical assistance and capacity building, accession of LDCs to the WTO, and LDC participation in the multilateral trading system. The sub-committee also monitors the work of the Enhanced Integrated Framework for LDCs.

Technical assistance and capacity building

The sub-committee regularly monitors the progress of the WTO's trade-related technical assistance (TRTA) and other capacity-building initiatives for LDCs, such as the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) (see page 109) and the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) (see page 110). An overview of the WTO's technical assistance and training activities for LDCs, provided by the Secretariat, shows that these activities represented 42 per cent of all technical assistance to developing countries in 2008, reflecting the continuing priority given to LDCs. The sub-committee will continue its efforts to assess the specific needs of TRTA beneficiaries for trade capacity building.

The sub-committee also heard presentations from the Executive Director of the EIF Secretariat, which became fully operational in July 2009 (see page 109), and from the Secretariat of the STDF. As of May 2009, 21 STDF project preparation grants had been approved for LDCs, two-thirds of the total, and LDCs were beneficiaries of 14 projects or nearly 40 per cent of all the projects being funded by the STDF.

Accession of LDCs to the WTO

As of December 2009, 12 LDCs (Afghanistan, Bhutan, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Lao PDR, Liberia, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sudan, Vanuatu and Yemen), representing more than a third of those negotiating to join the WTO, were at various stages of their accession process.

The accession of LDCs continues to receive priority on the sub-committee's agenda. In 2009 the Secretariat prepared a detailed note on LDC accession, discussion of which prompted organization in May 2009 of the first-ever 'dialogue' between acceding LDCs as a group and key WTO members. The sub-committee considered a report on that dialogue and also took note of the outcome of a round table on LDC accessions hosted by Cambodia in September 2009. The dialogue will be continued within the framework of the sub-committee in 2010.

Other matters

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) reported on the outcome of the LDC Ministerial Conference held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in November 2008. The subsequent LDC Ministerial Conference, focusing on the impact of the global financial crisis, took place in Vienna in December 2009.

The LDC Coordinator reported on the meeting of LDC trade ministers in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in October 2009. The Dar es Salaam Declaration adopted at that meeting sets out the position of LDCs in different areas of the Doha Development Agenda, and forms the basis for LDC participation in the ongoing negotiations.

The Chair informed the sub-committee that the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least-Developed Countries would be held in Turkey in 2011, for which the preparatory process had been launched. The WTO will be making a substantive contribution to this conference in line with its areas of expertise.



Enhanced Integrated Framework for LDCs

The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) for trade-related assistance to LDCs became effectively operational in 2009. By the end of the year, 47 LDCs were involved in the EIF process, and the EIF Trust Fund had risen to US\$ 90 million. The breadth of support enjoyed by the EIF was manifest at the EIF Ministerial event hosted by the Director-General on the margins of the Seventh WTO Ministerial Conference in December 2009.

The EIF is not a new mechanism but an enhanced version of the Integrated Framework (IF) established in 1997. The EIF became effectively operational in 2009, taking over implementation for the 45 LDCs already involved with the IF at the end of 2008. As of December 2009, 47 LDCs (including Cape Verde, which joined the IF when still an LDC) were at different stages in the EIF process. Thirty-five had completed Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies (DTIS) aimed at identifying bottlenecks and other problems handicapping trade expansion, and some were updating their studies. Another 12 LDCs were in the midst of preparing their first DTIS.

During 2009, work continued on transforming the EIF Interim Board, the principal decision-making body, into a full Board focusing more on strategic issues and less on day-to-day management of the EIF, which will be the responsibility of the EIF Secretariat. By the end of the year, the EIF Trust Fund had grown to around US\$ 90 million. In this context, ministers at the Seventh WTO Ministerial Conference underlined the importance of ensuring continued predictable funding from donors, needed more than ever at a time of economic crisis, so as to maintain the EIF's capacity to meet the high expectations of LDCs and their development partners.

EIF financing has two separate 'windows', Tier 1 and Tier 2. Tier 1 projects (institutional capacity building) are intended to improve the capacity of the national EIF managers to manage the EIF process in their countries and thereby help make trade a core element of national development strategies. Tier 2 projects (designed to promote broader trade capacity building and poverty reduction) aim to provide bridging money to jump-start activities identified by the DTIS as priorities in the EIF 'diagnostic' phase. The DTIS studies evaluate internal and external constraints on a country's integration into the world economy, and recommend areas where trade-related assistance (including productive capacity building and trade-related infrastructure) and policy actions can help the country overcome potential barriers.

At the end of 2009, Tier 1 projects had been approved for 10 LDCs (Cambodia, The Gambia, Lao PDR, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Yemen) for funding out of the EIF Trust Fund, while more were in the pipeline (additional Tier 1 projects for Burundi and Zambia were approved in early 2010). Additionally, DTIS-related projects for Afghanistan, Bhutan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Timor Leste and Togo had been approved, bringing the total number of projects to 15 by the end of 2009. Also in 2009, the EIF Interim Board drew up detailed technical and fiduciary guidelines for the formulation of Tier 2 projects, which are expected to become operational in 2010. Tier 2 projects may be funded by bilateral, regional or multilateral donors active in the country, or by the EIF Trust Fund.

Building trade capacity



Background

The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) is the flagship of trade-related assistance programmes specifically dedicated to least-developed countries (LDCs). It is an international partnership combining the efforts of the LDCs with those of the six core EIF agencies (the International Monetary Fund, the International Trade Centre, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the WTO), donors and other development partners (such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization). The EIF sets out to respond to the trade capacity building needs of LDCs and enable them to become full and active players and beneficiaries of the multilateral trading system. Supported by the overarching principle of country ownership, the EIF is the principal mechanism LDCs can call upon to assist them in mapping out their trade priorities, mainstreaming trade into their national development strategies and presenting these to donor partners for funding and implementation.



Dorothy Tembo, Executive Director of the EIF Secretariat, speaking at the Ministerial Working Breakfast on the Enhanced Integrated Framework on 1 December 2009.



Background

The Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) is a joint initiative in capacity building and technical cooperation aimed at assisting developing countries to implement international sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards and thereby gain and/or maintain market access. Established by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the WTO in August 2002, the STDF is a partnership financed by voluntary contributions to a trust fund. The WTO provides the secretariat.

Standards and Trade Development Facility

Since 2002 the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) has expanded both in terms of participation and funding. A number of organizations, including the International Trade Centre (ITC), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as well as donors and developing countries, participate in the STDF. Funding has expanded from US\$ 300,000 of seed finance from the World Bank and the WTO in 2003 to US\$ 5 million in 2009, with 16 additional donors contributing to the trust fund since the STDF's creation.

In 2009 the STDF adopted a new operating plan for 2010–11 that focuses on coordination and information dissemination, project development and project implementation. The plan places particular emphasis on assisting developing countries to transform their sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS)-related needs into concrete and fully budgeted proposals. It also focuses on the STDF's role as a forum for coordination and as a reference point for good practice in the supply and receipt of SPS-related technical cooperation.

In the context of its work on coordination and dissemination of information, the STDF conducted two global events in 2009:

- A joint STDF/World Bank expert seminar on 'Climate Change and Agriculture Trade: Risks and Responses', held in Washington, D.C., on 22–23 September, raised awareness among donors and developing countries of the importance of integrating the climate change dimension into their SPS-related technical assistance programmes.
- An STDF workshop on the use of economic analysis to inform SPS-related decision-making, organized on the margins of the SPS Committee meeting in Geneva on 30 October, discussed the costs and benefits of investing in SPS capacity building and the role and use of different economic analysis methodologies.

The STDF initiated work on SPS performance indicators, in collaboration with the OECD, in the context of more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of Official Development Assistance (ODA).

Contacts were established with the newly-created Trade Facilitation Facility (TFF) at the World Bank to further explore the linkages between SPS and trade facilitation, as well as with various other organizations and initiatives working on capacity building in the areas of food safety, and animal and plant health.

A film produced by the STDF, 'Trading Safely: Protecting Health, Promoting Development', illustrates the difficulties faced by developing countries in ensuring the safety of their products, the benefits to be gained from doing so, and available assistance in this regard.



At the regional level, the STDF organized two 'training-of-trainers' workshops for SPS officials of seven African regional economic communities in Nairobi (13–16 July) and Bamako (20–23 July). The STDF also commissioned a scoping study and analysis of existing SPS coordination mechanisms in Africa at regional and national levels, including recommendations on how to improve SPS coordination on the ground among the wide range of actors involved.

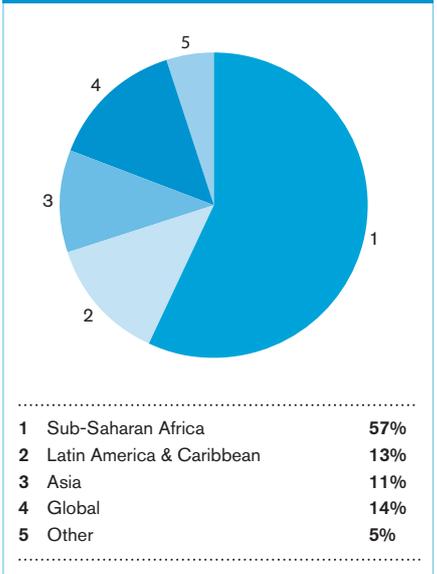
In addition, the STDF and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) organized a meeting in Bamako on 29–30 September where participants agreed on a coordinated multi-stakeholder approach to fruit fly control in West Africa and endorsed a Regional Action Plan. Efforts to mobilize funds for fruit fly control in West Africa will continue in 2010.

Collaboration with the Enhanced Integrated Framework

STDF's involvement in project development and implementation has improved coordination within countries. Collaboration with the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) was strengthened (see page 109). Out of six STDF project preparation grants (PPGs) implemented in 2009, five followed up on SPS issues identified in EIF Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies.

The STDF met its target level of funding of US\$ 5 million in 2009. It funded seven project preparation grants and eight project grants, bringing the total number of PPGs and projects funded through the STDF to 38 and 41, respectively, by the end of 2009. Overall, the STDF has devoted 54 per cent of project resources to least-developed countries and other low-income countries. Fifty-seven per cent of STDF projects and PPGs have been awarded to sub-Saharan Africa, 13 per cent to Latin America and the Caribbean and 11 per cent to Asia. In addition, 14 per cent of projects and PPGs can be classified as global (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: STDF projects and project preparation grants (number)



Aid for Trade

The Second Global Review of Aid for Trade, which was held on 6 and 7 July 2009, highlighted substantial and measurable progress in implementing the Aid for Trade initiative. Since its inception, the initiative has succeeded in raising awareness of the needs of developing countries, in particular least-developed countries (LDCs), and the support they require to benefit from trade expansion and reduce poverty. Using the increasing resources provided by donors, the Aid for Trade programme has focused more recently on effective implementation of projects, especially at the regional level. The worsening global economic outlook during 2009 further increased the relevance of the Aid for Trade initiative for developing countries.



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Pascal Lamy in conversation at the Second Global Review of Aid for Trade in July 2009.

Activities in 2009

In 2009 the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) held four formal sessions on Aid for Trade. The CTD meetings focused on: the monitoring and evaluation framework for the initiative; preparations for the Second Global Review of Aid for Trade; the outcome and priorities emanating from the Second Global Review; the subsequent General Council debate on Aid for Trade where the Director-General outlined the 2009 Aid for Trade roadmap (see below); and the development of the Aid for Trade Work Programme for 2010–11.

The CTD meetings benefited from active participation of the regional development banks, which provided information on Aid-for-Trade events held outside Geneva. These included two national reviews, held in Lima, Peru, on 3 March 2009 and San Pedro Sula, Honduras, on 4 May 2009; the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Review held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, on 7 and 8 May 2009; and the Regional Meeting for members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, on 28 and 29 May 2009.

The North-South Corridor Review held in Lusaka, Zambia, on 6 and 7 April 2009, which brought together COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa), EAC (East African Community) and SADC (Southern African Development Community), generated over US\$ 1 billion of funding committed by development partners for upgrading road, rail and ports infrastructure and supporting other measures to facilitate cross-border trade. Other international organizations, notably the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the UN Economic Commission for Europe, the UN Industrial Development Organisation and the UN Development Programme, also presented their respective activities relating to Aid for Trade.

The Second Global Review of Aid for Trade on 6 and 7 July 2009 evaluated progress made since the First Global Review held in November 2007, putting the emphasis on how Aid for Trade was being implemented on the ground (see page 114). The success of the initiative was outlined in a new publication jointly prepared with the OECD. *Aid for Trade at a Glance: Maintaining Momentum* examines recent trends and presents a comprehensive analysis of the providers and recipients of donor funding. It also addresses the regional dimension of Aid for Trade, showcasing three cross-border examples of Aid for Trade in practice.



At the subsequent General Council debate on Aid for Trade on 28 July 2009, the Director-General identified the following issues as priorities for future work: reinforcing the regional dimension of Aid for Trade; maintaining momentum on commitments post-2010; enhancing the role of the private sector; and evaluating the impact of Aid for Trade interventions in developing countries. The Director-General also highlighted the need to mainstream trade into national development strategies.

Accordingly, in the second half of the year, the CTD developed an Aid for Trade Work Programme for 2010–11 designed to support these objectives and keep Aid for Trade in the international spotlight. Issued in November 2009 under the responsibility of the Chair of the CTD, the Work Programme stresses the importance of Aid for Trade in helping to promote recovery from the global economic downturn and ensure that developing countries reap full benefit from a successful conclusion to the Doha Round.

A series of activities, leading up to a Third Global Review of Aid for Trade in 2012, will focus on: continued mobilization of resources; mainstreaming trade priorities into national and regional economic and development plans; strengthening the regional dimension, specifically by reinforcing the role of development banks, regional economic communities and bilateral donors in developing focused regional projects; giving greater emphasis to the effective implementation of Aid for Trade projects, including through South-South and triangular forms of cooperation whereby two countries form a partnership to lend technical assistance to a third country; further refining evaluation and monitoring mechanisms to focus on the impact of Aid for Trade; and enhancing dialogue with the private sector.

Building trade capacity

The Second Global Review of Aid for Trade highlighted substantial progress in implementing the initiative.

Aid for Trade

Second Global Review

The Second Global Review of Aid for Trade held on 6 and 7 July 2009 provided an opportunity to give added impetus to the ambitious mandate on Aid for Trade agreed at the WTO's Hong Kong Ministerial Conference in 2005. Held in the midst of the financial crisis, the event signalled continued determination to honour commitments to help developing countries, especially least-developed countries (LDCs), in using trade as a vehicle for economic growth and poverty reduction. This determination was underlined by new Aid for Trade pledges from France, Japan, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Opening the two-day meeting, which was attended by heads of international financial institutions, international organizations, ministers and other dignitaries, the United Nations Secretary General emphasized the important role that Aid for Trade could play in helping to stimulate recovery from the financial and economic crisis. Pascal Lamy, WTO Director-General, said Aid for Trade 'was living up to its promise of moving from making trade possible, to making it happen'.

The centrepiece of the Review was a joint WTO/OECD publication, *Aid for Trade at a Glance 2009: Maintaining Momentum*, documenting the success of the initiative to date. The report noted that more and more developing countries were prioritizing trade in their development strategies. Donors were responding by increasing the resources they provided to build trade capacity in areas such as policy, institutions and infrastructure, and developing countries were also becoming more active in cooperating with each other in region-wide projects. The monitoring exercise carried out for the report received replies from 88 developing countries, indicating growing ownership of the Aid for Trade initiative by its intended beneficiaries.

Aid for Trade grew by 10 per cent a year between 2005 and 2007 and, if non-concessional aid from international financial institutions is added, the total nearly doubled. This, Mr Lamy pointed out, had been achieved without taking resources away from other development priorities such as health, education or the environment. During the meeting, and despite the challenging global economic environment, donors reaffirmed their Aid

for Trade commitments, or even increased them. New commitments were announced by France (€850 million from 2010), Japan (US\$ 12 billion in total for 2009-11), the Netherlands (€550 million) and the UK (£1 billion per year for 2010-12).

The vigorous debate among representatives from all corners of the trade and development communities promoted a deeper appreciation of the challenges faced by developing countries, especially LDCs, as well as the opportunities to use the Aid for Trade platform to promote growth. Separate sessions on the COMESA-EAC-SADC North-South Corridor (a joint project of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the East African Community and the Southern African Development Community), the Greater Mekong Delta Sub-Region and Infrastructure and Integration Corridors in Latin America showcased practical examples of what Aid for Trade could achieve.

Despite these success stories, the Second Global Review also highlighted the scope for improving implementation of the initiative. The meeting reaffirmed the need to increase resources for Aid for Trade and ensure trade was mainstreamed in development plans. Monitoring and evaluation needed refinement, and there should be more involvement of the private sector. Participants also stressed the importance of the regional dimension and the emergent role of South-South cooperation. In his closing remarks, Mr Lamy said Aid for Trade was "coherence in global economic policymaking in action". A global Aid for Trade partnership has been forged.

A global Aid for Trade partnership has been forged.





Background

The main aim of the WTO's trade capacity building programme is to help beneficiary countries deal effectively with the many challenges of the multilateral trading system. The WTO's trade-related technical assistance (TRTA) programme contributes to multilateral efforts to enhance the delivery of Aid for Trade to developing countries and to improve the impact of this initiative (see page 112). Within the WTO Secretariat, TRTA is coordinated by the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation. Its activities ('products') include eTraining, global and regional training courses, academic programmes, and seminars and workshops at regional and national levels.

Technical cooperation and training

The design and delivery of technical assistance and training underwent a period of transition in 2009. A new strategy and vision were developed, reflected partly in the implementation of activities in 2009 but spelled out in more detail in the Technical Assistance Plan for 2010–11 prepared during the year. In line with the demand-driven nature of the WTO's trade-related technical assistance programmes, this plan builds on lessons learned from implementing the first biennial plan (2008–09), and introduces changes designed to improve content and delivery.

First, the WTO Secretariat's Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation (ITTC) has been restructured to strengthen its capacity to design and deliver an effective trade assistance programme. This restructuring has reinforced the ITTC's ability to interact with beneficiaries in all regions. It has also enhanced the WTO's coordinating role in relation to trade-related capacity-building activities within its field of competence and responsibility – helping WTO members to gain a better understanding of their rights and obligations within the multilateral trading system and strengthening their institutional capacities to deal with the challenges emerging from it. These capacity-building efforts are part of a larger objective and broader initiatives in the context of Aid for Trade (see page 112).

Second, a new vision for the delivery of trade-related technical assistance was developed, which aims to achieve sustainable capacity building and to enhance the programme's efficiency and impact. A new approach has been adopted to build on the notion of gradual and progressive learning. In addition, eTraining (online training) will be used as a means of delivering training across all products. These changes will contribute to sustainable capacity building at both the individual and institutional level, strengthening linkages between programmes and assuring coherence and cost effectiveness in the delivery of technical assistance.

Enhanced cooperation and relationships with regional partner institutions continue to be a priority for the WTO Secretariat. This regional approach is in line with the approach of the Aid for Trade initiative, which is supported by the technical assistance programme. Since the programme aims to complement the work of bilateral donors as well as other agencies active in trade-related technical assistance, the coordination of technical assistance programmes has become increasingly important.

The Secretariat continues to pursue its outreach programmes, including its work with parliamentarians, the private sector, academics and universities. Continued efforts to improve coordination and promote efficiencies resulted in the launching in 2009 of a new WTO Chairs Programme, which provides dedicated support to teaching, research and outreach activities by universities and research institutions in developing countries (see page 129).

Overview of activities

In 2009, a total of some 460 technical assistance activities were provided by the WTO (see Table 1). These included Geneva-based activities as well as those held in WTO member countries and regions. The majority were organized in partnership with other international organizations. Three-month regional trade policy courses were held in Benin for French-speaking Africa, in Swaziland for English-speaking Africa, in Singapore for the Asia-Pacific region, and in Jamaica for the Caribbean.

A range of 'global' technical assistance activities were undertaken in Geneva, including the regular 'Geneva weeks'. These are week-long events – organized twice annually – for representatives of 30 or so WTO members and observers without missions in Geneva. Officials are briefed about recent developments in the ongoing Doha negotiations and other WTO activities, and have the opportunity to attend meetings of WTO councils and committees and to liaise with the WTO Secretariat and regional groupings of WTO members. Other Geneva events included a workshop on agriculture notifications in September 2009 to help build capacity in preparing and reviewing notifications required by the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture.



Activities by region

The technical assistance programme places particular emphasis on providing assistance to Africa and to least-developed countries (LDCs), whose integration into the multilateral trading system remains a WTO priority. Thus, the majority of activities during 2009 were held in Africa – 67 national activities representing 36 per cent of all national activities, and 36 regional activities, representing 32 per cent of all regional activities.

Fifty-eight national and 28 regional activities were held in Asia and the Pacific; 23 national and 13 regional activities in the Latin American region; 27 national and regional activities in Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus; 26 national and regional activities and conferences in Arab and Middle Eastern countries; and 21 national and regional activities in the Caribbean. For a full breakdown of activities by region, see Table 1.

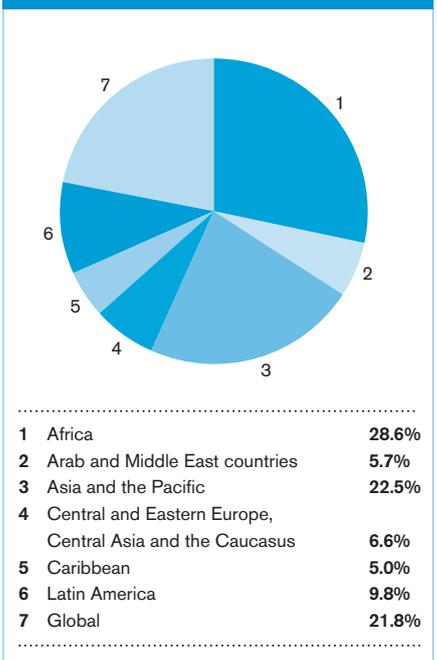
LDCs benefited from nearly 45 per cent of all technical assistance activities in 2009. These included national activities as well as regional activities in which LDCs participated. In addition, other products have been specifically created for LDCs, or have LDCs as a priority, such as the Enhanced Integrated Framework (see page 109), the three-week introduction courses for LDCs, the Reference Centres Programme (a network of centres where any relevant information on the WTO can be accessed), the Netherlands Trainee Programme (a programme aimed at junior public officials who spend a period of up to ten months within the WTO) and the Mission Internship Programme (a ten-month internship programme for Geneva-based missions).

In total, 111 activities were regional activities and 66 were 'global' events, while a total of 185 activities were held at the national level to respond to the continued demand for national training activities. The majority of national activities addressed aspects of specific WTO agreements.

Financing the trade-related technical assistance programme

While there have been improvements in the provision of donor funding to the Global Trust Fund of the Doha Development Agenda, ensuring timely, adequate and predictable receipt of funds remains a challenge. For example, the technical assistance programme was obliged to defer the costly regional seminars to spring 2009 from the beginning of the year, pending funding availability. The programme continues to be financed mainly from voluntary contributions by WTO members to the Global Trust Fund.

Figure 2: Trade-related technical assistance by region in 2009



Note: Global activities are not targeted at a specific region. They include Geneva-based courses and topic-specific workshops.

Table 1: Trade-related technical assistance by region in 2009

By region	National		Regional		Global ¹		Other (conferences, meetings, etc.)		Total	
	Number of activities	As a % of total activities	Number of activities	As a % of total activities	Number of activities	As a % of total activities	Number of activities	As a % of total activities	Number of activities	As a % of total activities
Africa	67	36	36	32	1	2	27	28	131	29
Arab and Middle East countries	10	5	13	12	0	0	3	3	26	6
Asia and the Pacific	58	31	28	25	0	0	17	18	103	22
Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus	18	10	9	8	0	0	3	3	30	6
Caribbean	9	5	12	11	0	0	2	2	23	5
Latin America	23	13	13	12	0	0	9	9	45	10
Sub-total	185	100	111	100	1	2	61	63	358	78
Global	0	0	0	0	64	98	36	37	100	22
Total	185	100	111	100	65	100	97	100	458	100

¹ Activities under the 'global' region include those that are not targeted at a specific region, such as 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).