

8

Supporting development and 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.





148

Trade and
development

153

Aid for Trade

156

Enhanced Integrated
Framework

159

Standards and Trade
Development Facility

162

Technical cooperation
and training

166

Trade and women's
empowerment

Trade and development

- **Developing countries' share of merchandise exports grew from 43.0 per cent in 2018 to 43.9 per cent in 2020, according to a note by the WTO Secretariat on the participation of developing economies in the global trading system.**
- **Addressing the Committee on Trade and Development in November, DG Okonjo-Iweala stressed the important role it plays in the multilateral trading system.**
- **A WTO publication highlighted the high trade costs faced by landlocked developing countries (LLDCs). Implementing the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement was critical for easing the flow of goods, it said.**

Background

The Committee on Trade and Development is 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, including all developmental issues, technical cooperation and training, and notifications under the Enabling Clause, which allows developed countries to give more favourable treatment to developing countries.

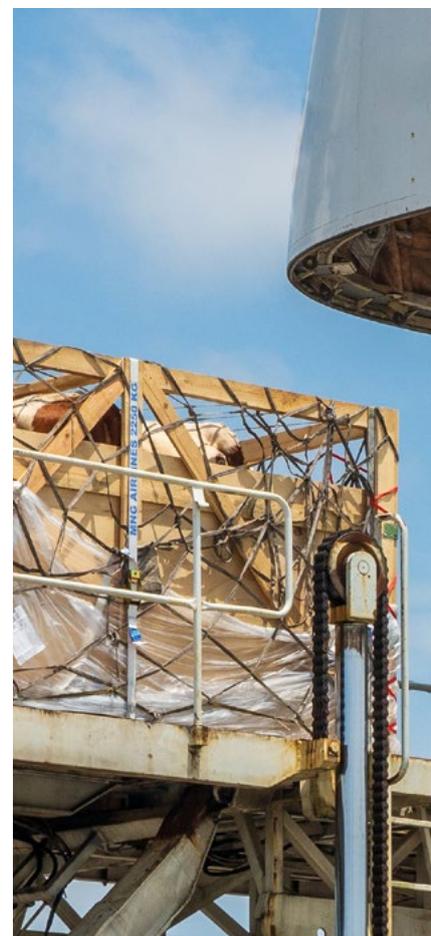
The Committee continued work on the link between trade and development, as instructed by trade ministers. In particular, it looked at how to operationalize fully the mandate of the Committee as the focal point for development work within the WTO. Chair Ambassador Muhammad Mujtaba Piracha (Pakistan) encouraged continued engagement among members in order to make progress.

The Committee also continued discussions on e-commerce and duty-free, quota-free (DFQF) market access for least-developed countries (LDCs). It considered a report by the WTO Secretariat on the implementation of special and differential treatment provisions (S&D) for developing countries in WTO agreements and decisions, which updated a 2018 report. Provisions range from increasing trade opportunities for developing countries and LDCs to providing technical assistance.

The Committee held two dedicated sessions on the monitoring mechanism on S&D, which acts as a focal point to review the implementation of S&D. The Chair observed that there were still no written submissions, which are required for the monitoring mechanism to become fully operational.

The WTO Secretariat presented an updated note on the participation of developing economies in the global trading system. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, developing economies' merchandise and commercial services trade fell in 2020. However, the share of developing economies in world merchandise exports grew from 43.0 per cent in 2018 to 43.9 per cent in 2020, and the share of imports from 40.5 per cent to 41.7 per cent.

The contribution of developing economies to world exports of commercial services declined from 30.9 per cent to 29.5 per cent.





Participation in global services imports also fell, from 37.8 per cent to 35.2 per cent.

Among regional trade agreements, the Committee considered the Revised Treaty of Trade between India and Nepal, the Partial Scope Agreement between Mexico and Paraguay, the Economic Complementarity Agreement between Mexico and Brazil, the Preferential Trade Agreement between Indonesia and Pakistan and partial scope agreements between El Salvador and Cuba and Mexico and Ecuador. Thailand's DFQF scheme for LDCs was considered in a session on preferential trade arrangements.

Addressing the Committee in November, DG Okonjo-Iweala stressed the key role played by the Committee in the multilateral trading system. She highlighted the importance of technical assistance and encouraged developing countries, in particular LDCs, to take maximum advantage

Offloading livestock from a cargo plane in Garoua, Cameroon.

“

At the end of the day, our work in the WTO must have real impact on people's lives and must produce real benefits, particularly for poorer countries.

DG Okonjo-Iweala

of the assistance offered by the WTO. “At the end of the day, our work in the WTO must have real impact on people's lives and must produce real benefits, particularly for poorer countries,” the DG declared.

Landlocked LDCs

A new WTO publication launched in December highlighted the high trade costs faced by landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) due to their isolation from the world's largest markets. The report stresses that implementing the Trade Facilitation Agreement (see page 113) is critical for easing the flow of goods across borders. It also underlines the importance of improving transport connectivity and putting digital technology at the forefront of policy objectives.

Technical cooperation and training

The annual performance report on technical assistance and training for 2020 was presented to the Committee. Despite a 22 per cent increase in e-learning opportunities and the rolling out of virtual activities, the number of WTO technical assistance events in 2020 decreased by 22 per cent compared to 2019.

Overall participation in technical assistance activities remained stable, as virtual activities tended to attract larger audiences. The biennial technical assistance and training plan for 2022 and 2023, which defines priorities, was adopted by the Committee.

Least-developed countries



- › In 2020, the decline in exports due to the COVID-19 pandemic was steeper for least-developed countries (LDCs) than for the rest of the world.
- › LDCs' share in global exports of goods and commercial services decreased from 0.96 per cent in 2019 to 0.91 per cent in 2020.
- › The LDCs reiterated the importance of continued and improved preferential market access for LDC products and services.

COVID-19 discussions

In 2021, several international organisations shared analyses of the pandemic with the Sub-Committee on LDCs. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) presented its Least Developed Country Report 2020, emphasizing that the COVID-19 crisis was expected to increase extreme poverty by 35 per cent and to result in the worst economic performance of LDCs in three decades.

Background

The Sub-Committee on LDCs, established in July 1995 as a subsidiary body to the Committee on Trade and Development, focuses its work on an agreed WTO work programme for LDCs. This programme looks at several systemic issues of importance to LDCs in the multilateral trading system, such as market access, technical assistance, and accession to the WTO.

The LDCs highlighted the need for global cooperation to support their recovery from the crisis and promote their socio-economic development. Joint efforts were needed on many fronts to build resilience, including healthcare, structural transformation processes, technological upgrading and export diversification.

Market access for LDCs

The WTO Secretariat's 2021 annual report showed that LDC exports declined more than those of the rest of the world. In 2020, LDC commercial services exports contracted by 35 per cent, compared to 20 per cent worldwide. Travel exports were hardest hit, down 62 per cent. Overall, the share of the 46 LDCs in global exports fell to 0.91 per cent in 2020, from 0.96 per cent in 2019.

LDCs called on WTO members to continue making progress in the implementation of ministerial decisions on duty-free and quota-free market access (see page 148), preferential rules of origin (see page 103) and the LDC services waiver (see page 115) to enhance their exports and economic diversification. They called for further analytical work and efforts to close existing data gaps to better understand the impact of rules of origin requirements (see page 103) and factors determining under-utilization of trade preferences (see page 104).

"Boosting Trade Opportunities for Least-Developed Countries", a new WTO publication launched in January 2022, stressed that more support will be needed from the international community in the next decade to strengthen the participation of LDCs in world trade.

Fifth UN Conference on the LDCs (LDC5)

The Fifth UN Conference on the LDCs (LDC5), planned for 23 to 27 January 2022 in Doha, Qatar, was postponed due

A pottery workshop in Bangkok, Thailand.



0.91

LDCs' share in global exports of goods and services declined to 0.91%, from 0.96% in 2020.





Enabling LDCs to become more resilient and more integrated into the global economy is critical for meeting international development goals.

DG Okonjo-Iweala

to COVID-19. The UN General Assembly decided to reconvene LDC5 in two parts: on 17 March 2022 in New York and from 5 to 9 March 2023 in Doha. International trade remains a central theme of the Doha Programme of Action for LDCs for 2022-31, with a focus on building back better in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and guided by the Sustainable Development Goals.

LDC graduation

December 2021 marked the end of a joint WTO-Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) effort (see page 156), launched in 2019, to help LDCs assess the trade impact of graduation from LDC status. Seven reports were published. After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, trade and health impacts of COVID-19 on graduating LDCs were also examined.

Scarf weaving in the Azuay province of Ecuador.



In cooperation with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), ITC and UNCTAD, the WTO published “Textiles and Clothing in Asian Graduating LDCs: challenges and options”. In a briefing note, “Rethinking LDC Trade Priorities”, the WTO offered some perspectives on opportunities for LDCs arising from the digital economy and services trade.

LDC representatives exchanged views and experiences on graduation on 10-11 November at an event bringing together trade and development partners, international organizations and trade experts. DG Okonjo-Iweala said: “The interests of graduating LDCs, and those of all LDCs” will be best served by “a strong WTO that delivers negotiated outcomes.”

South-South dialogue

The fourth South-South Dialogue on LDCs and Development under China’s LDCs and Accessions Programme was held in Montreux, Switzerland, in September. Themed “Reinforcing the multilateral trading system for development”, it brought together over 80 Geneva-based delegates.

“Enabling LDCs to become more resilient and more integrated into the global economy is critical for meeting international development goals and for building a trading system fit for the 21st century,” DG Okonjo-Iweala said in an opening address.

The discussions revolved around priorities for the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), the WTO’s response to the pandemic and WTO reform. A multilateral response to the pandemic was the most recurrent theme.

LDC priorities

Trade ministers from close to 30 LDCs adopted a declaration outlining LDCs’ trade priorities at a virtual meeting on 19 October where they also discussed the state of play in the WTO negotiations. “MC12 should respond adequately to mitigate the social and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Ali Djadda Kampard, Chad’s Minister for Trade and Industry and Coordinator of the WTO’s LDCs Group.

Small economies

- The Committee discussed the economic and trade impact of natural disasters on small, vulnerable economies (SVE) and heard about the scope under WTO agreements to take measures to facilitate resilience to disasters.
- The SVE Group urged ministers to instruct WTO members to address integrating small economies into post COVID-19 economic recovery.

The Committee on Trade and Development held a dedicated session on small economies in July 2021 to discuss the economic and trade impact of natural disasters. Presentations were made by representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), ITC, UNCTAD and the WTO. Two members of the SVE Group – Ecuador and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines – shared their experiences with natural disasters. A number of SVE Group members called for further discussions.

Background

The Committee on Trade and Development – in dedicated sessions – oversees work on small economies and monitors the progress of proposals from small, vulnerable economies in the various WTO bodies and negotiating groups. Several small economies are small island states.



Rice harvesting in Kathmandu, Nepal.

The WTO Secretariat highlighted its “WTO Natural Disasters and Trade” study, which focuses on six disaster-affected members: Fiji, Dominica, Nepal, St Lucia, Tonga and Vanuatu. It shows that these countries are likely to be either hit by, or recovering from, a significant natural disaster in any given year. There is scope under WTO agreements, including those on agriculture and subsidies, to take measures to facilitate resilience and the entry of relief in the form of goods and services, the Secretariat said.

At a meeting in October, the Committee took note of an updated compilation paper on the WTO’s Work Programme on Small Economies. It agreed to a proposal by the SVE Group for a ministerial decision at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) on the work programme.

The decision calls, among other things, for WTO members to address integrating small economies into post COVID-19 economic recovery by looking at the impact of the pandemic and the underlying challenges and opportunities faced by small economies. It also calls for the dedicated session to continue monitoring the progress of the small economies’ proposals in WTO bodies and negotiating groups.

Aid for Trade

- Aid for Trade disbursements rose to US\$ 45.7 billion in 2019, from US\$ 45.3 billion in 2018. US\$ 493.4 billion has been disbursed since 2006.
- The WTO held an Aid for Trade stocktaking event in March 2021, including a high-level plenary session attended by six heads of intergovernmental organizations. Over 1,000 people participated in the event, which reviewed members' Aid for Trade needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Committee on Trade and Development continued implementation of the Aid for Trade work programme for 2020-22 on "Empowering Connected, Sustainable Trade".

Background

Aid for Trade helps developing countries, and particularly least-developed countries, trade. The WTO-led Aid for Trade initiative encourages developing country governments and donors to recognize the role that trade can play in development. In particular, the initiative seeks to mobilize resources to address the trade-related constraints identified by developing and least-developed countries.

Aid for Trade financing

The most recent Aid for Trade data published by the OECD shows that total disbursements rose to US\$ 45.8 billion in 2019 from US\$ 45.3 billion in 2018 (see figures 1 and 2). Commitments reached US\$ 53.0 billion in 2019, down from US\$ 56.6 billion in 2018. Aid for Trade figures are all in 2019 US dollar constant prices. This may account for slight variations as compared to previous reports.

Aid for Trade disbursements rose to US\$ 45.8 billion in 2019 from US\$ 45.3 billion in 2018.

Between 2006 and 2019, the total amount of Aid for Trade, part of official development aid, disbursed to developing countries reached US\$ 493.4 billion. Over US\$ 300 billion in development finance was also provided at non-concessional rates.

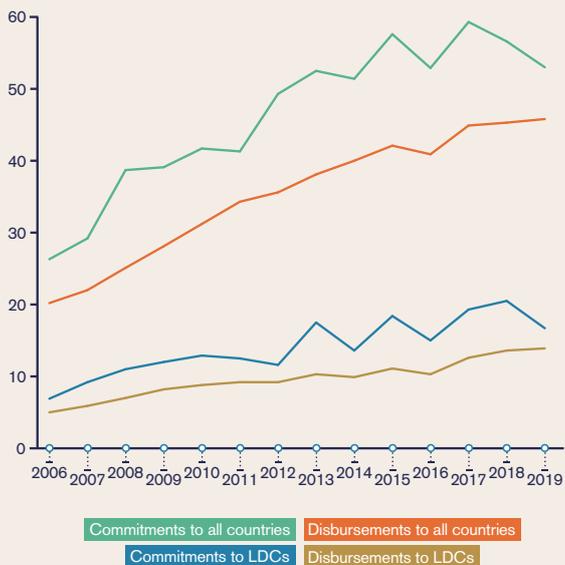
Disbursements have increased in every region since the launch of the Aid for Trade initiative (see Figure 3). In 2019, they continued to increase in Africa, Asia and Oceania. Support targeting least-developed countries (LDCs) also grew to reach US\$ 13.9 billion in 2019, up from US\$ 13.6 billion in 2018. In 2019, 40 per cent of the support was provided in grants rather than loans, up from 30 per cent on average in previous years since 2014.

Figure 1: Aid for Trade disbursements by category
(in US\$ billion, 2019 prices)



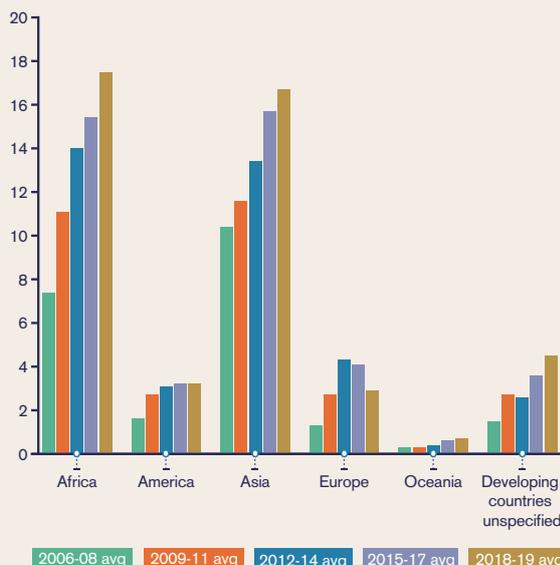
Source: OECD-CRS (Creditor Reporting System).

Figure 2: Aid for Trade commitments and disbursements by income group (in US\$ billion, 2019 prices)



Source: OECD-CRS (Creditor Reporting System).

Figure 3: Aid for Trade disbursements by continent (in US\$ billion, 2019 prices)



Source: OECD-CRS (Creditor Reporting System).



Aid for Trade work programme

The Committee on Trade and Development continued to review the implementation of Aid for Trade. Members, development institutions, UN agencies and multilateral development banks reported on their activities. The Committee organized two thematic workshops on the implications of LDC graduation (see page 151) for Aid for Trade and on the circular economy, economic diversification and Aid for Trade.

In October, WTO members launched the 2022 Aid for Trade monitoring and evaluation exercise to gather information on members' Aid for Trade priorities, their transition towards sustainable development and the role that Aid for Trade can play to support environmental sustainability and women's economic empowerment. The WTO Secretariat will present the results at the Aid for Trade Global Review in 2022.

Aid for Trade stocktaking event

The WTO held an Aid for Trade stocktaking event in March 2021 on the challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. In 35 sessions, spread over three days, more than 1,000 participants discussed trade and development, with the role that trade can play in economic recovery from COVID-19 as the main thread.

The sessions examined seven main themes: adapting trade formalities, such as customs and conformity assessment, to COVID-19 and future pandemic risk; COVID-19, debt and financing; digital connectivity and e-commerce; global value chains, supply-side capacity and the pandemic; promoting an inclusive, green recovery; promoting recovery among micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), including in tourism; and regional approaches to COVID-19 recovery.

Speakers at a high-level plenary session on the opening day, attended by the heads of the IMF, OECD, UNCTAD, the WHO, the World Bank and the WTO, said that the global trade community must act swiftly to mitigate the severe impact of the COVID-19 crisis on developing countries, and in particular on LDCs. “The post-COVID recovery must not leave anyone, or any country, behind. The first step towards this goal must be a rapid, global vaccine rollout that ends the pandemic,” said DG Okonjo-Iweala.

Sessions examined the impact of COVID-19 on women’s participation in trade. One focused on Southern Asian countries while another looked at difficulties women entrepreneurs face in accessing digital tools to move their businesses online. Many other sessions also considered the impact of COVID-19 on women’s economic empowerment.



493.4

A total of
US\$ 493.4 billion
has been disbursed
since 2006.



The post-COVID recovery must not leave anyone, or any country, behind. The first step towards this goal must be a rapid, global vaccine rollout that ends the pandemic.

DG Okonjo-Iweala

A vaccination centre in Manila, the Philippines.



Enhanced Integrated Framework

- › Thirty-six new projects were approved in 2021, with a combined value of over US\$ 10 million, aimed at harnessing trade to promote the development of least-developed countries (LDCs).
- › The EIF partnership undertook an independent evaluation of its work, which concluded in early 2022.
- › Capacity-building remained a central feature of EIF support, with a focus on building skills around monitoring, evaluation and learning as well as communication of results.

Background

The EIF is the only multilateral partnership dedicated exclusively to assisting LDCs in their use of trade as an engine for growth, sustainable development and poverty reduction. The EIF partnership of 51 countries, 24 donors and eight partner agencies works closely with governments, development organizations, civil society and academia. Together, they leverage know-how to tackle the world's most pressing trade-for-development issues. The WTO houses the Executive Secretariat of the EIF.



Results

The EIF continued to support mainstreaming trade and building productive capacity in LDCs. Since the start of EIF operations in 2010, more than 37,000 government officials and private sector representatives have participated in EIF training activities. It has also assisted the adoption of over 40 trade and investment regulations, such as a new foreign trade law and investment code in the Comoros.

Over 13,000 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) have received support, contributing towards the creation of more than 31,000 jobs. EIF projects have a good balance in terms of gender, with women constituting over 55 per cent of beneficiaries. Every EIF dollar invested in LDCs has resulted in US\$ 0.6 of additional resources from LDC governments, development partners and the private sector.

Workers in Burkina Faso processing shea butter for the production of organic cosmetic products at Karibel, a local company supported by EIF.

Increasing support to LDCs

Thirty-six new projects were approved in 2021, with a combined value of over US\$ 10 million. A total of US\$ 6 million was financed through the EIF Trust Fund while US\$ 4.2 million was leveraged through other partners. EIF donors have disbursed US\$ 134 million to the EIF's phase two programme (2019-22), of which 98 per cent has been allocated.

Targeting a wide range of LDC priorities, projects include institutional and policy support, such as assisting Somalia in its accession to the WTO. Other projects have supported LDC participation in the African Continental Free Trade Area, digitalization of cross-border trade, investment promotion, alignment of climate and trade policy, and women's economic empowerment.

Independent evaluation

The EIF partnership undertook an independent evaluation of the EIF, which concluded in January 2022. It included a programme wide assessment and 25 country case studies.

The evaluation provided an assessment of results achieved, lessons learned and ideas for future support for LDCs. The relevance of the EIF was particularly highlighted along with the need for further support to LDCs to help them recover from the impact of COVID-19.



A worker at the Rwanda E-Waste Recycling and Dismantling Facility in Bugesera District.

CASE STUDY

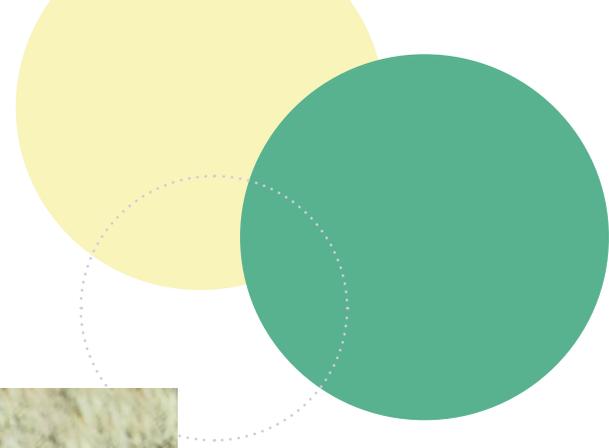
Rwanda sets an example in e-waste management

Following the development with EIF support of an e-waste policy in 2016, Rwanda has established an e-waste recycling facility, managed and operated by EnviroServe Rwanda through a public-private partnership with the Government of Rwanda.

In 2019, the new facility collected 3,000 tonnes of e-waste and sold or donated nearly 2,000 refurbished computers to schools while creating over 400 jobs. EIF Coordinator Peter Donelan said: "The EIF worked with the Government to get trade into its national development agenda, and that included helping with the creation of this e-waste policy. With the environmental gains, the job creation and the income generation, I am pleased that Rwanda is now leading the region on e-waste."

E-waste is generated from discarded mobile phones, computers, stereos and large household appliances. In Africa, it is predominately discarded through open dumping, burning and landfilling, with potentially serious implications for human health and the environment.

The recycling facility offers collection services for neighbouring Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. Circuit boards are exported to Dubai for their precious metals. "Rwanda is among the few countries with an electronic waste policy and regulations. It is only the second in Africa to have a state-of-the-art e-waste dismantling and recycling facility," said Olivier Mbera of EnviroServe Rwanda.



With support from the EIF, Zambia's honey industry is providing new export opportunities for women and small businesses.

Delivering strong support systems

Capacity-building remained a central feature of EIF support, with a focus on building skills around monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), project implementation, communication and the response to COVID-19.

Capacity-building included training through webinars and the development of new e-learning courses. It also included a secondment programme for MEL officials from LDCs. Idrissa Yahaya, a participant from Niger, said: "The work environment was very positive and enabled me to strengthen my skills."

In partnership with the Thompson Reuters Foundation, the EIF delivered training on media engagement along with other activities aimed at helping ministries of trade in LDCs raise the profile of trade in their countries.

Trade and the environment

The EIF stepped up work in LDCs around trade and climate change. A cornerstone of this work has been the "Aligning Climate and Trade Policy for LDCs and Graduates" initiative, funded by the EIF and implemented by the Overseas Development Institute. It brings together LDC trade and climate negotiators to explore climate-trade linkages, with much work completed in the lead up to the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) at the end of October in Glasgow, Scotland (see page 177).

Other activities included creating better linkages for Aid for Trade (see page 153) and climate finance, looking at ways to unlock technology transfer and supporting LDC engagement in carbon markets and standards.

Standards and Trade Development Facility

- The STDF's guide on good regulatory practices was launched in November. It sets out practical tools and tips to improve the quality and effectiveness of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures.
- The STDF Working Group approved two new projects and four new project preparation grants, totalling US\$ 1.6 million, to help developing countries meet international standards on food safety, plant and animal health and access international markets.
- Over 4,100 stakeholders joined STDF online events on e-certification, SPS investment priorities, public-private partnerships, food safety and more.

Background

The STDF is a global partnership helping developing countries improve food safety, animal and plant health and meet sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements for trade, based on international standards. Established by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the WTO, the STDF contributes to sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction and food security. It is financed by voluntary contributions from Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, Germany, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. Further information: www.standardsfacility.org.

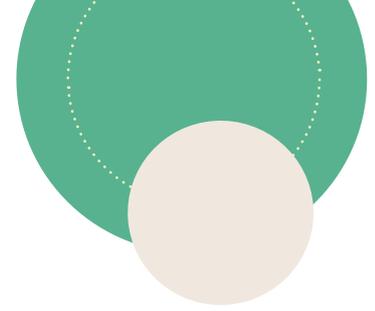
Keeping trade flowing

In 2021, the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) continued to help developing countries facilitate safe trade, acting as a global platform for dialogue and learning on SPS capacity developments.

Under the STDF's strategy for 2020-24, "Safe and Inclusive Trade Horizons for Developing Countries", members of the global partnership delivered results that benefited producers, processors, exporters and governments in developing countries. Investing in safer food and agricultural systems is key to economic recovery and resilience against COVID-19 and future shocks.

An asparagus-packing factory in Ica, Peru.





Delivering results

Digital tools play a major role in making trade more secure, faster and less costly. For example, replacing paper certificates with electronic phytosanitary certificates (ePhytos) standardizes and simplifies the data-exchange process.

More than 100,000 ePhytos, developed with STDF funding, are already exchanged worldwide every month, double the figure in 2020. With the World Bank, the public-private partnership Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation and others scaling up the ePhyto approach, more traders and governments will benefit.

Over 87 experts from 44 organizations are connected through the STDF Practitioner Groups, which aim to support and improve the planning, delivery and dissemination of the STDF's work on public-private partnerships, SPS e-certification and the use of evidence to prioritize SPS investments. These online communities have identified opportunities for synergies, innovation and collaboration to benefit their own organizations and SPS stakeholders on the ground.

In 2021, partners worked together on projects driving SPS improvements. For instance, in Cameroon, public and private sector stakeholders rolled out good practices for Penja pepper, a sought-after ingredient in high-end restaurants worldwide, offering new market opportunities for small-scale farmers.

Figure 4: STDF projects and PPGs, 2004 to 2021

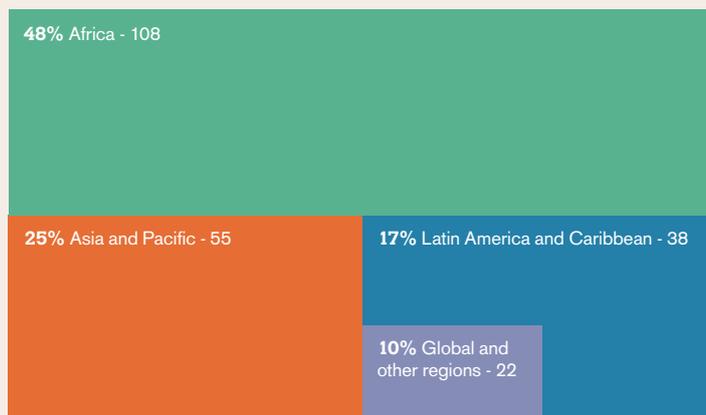
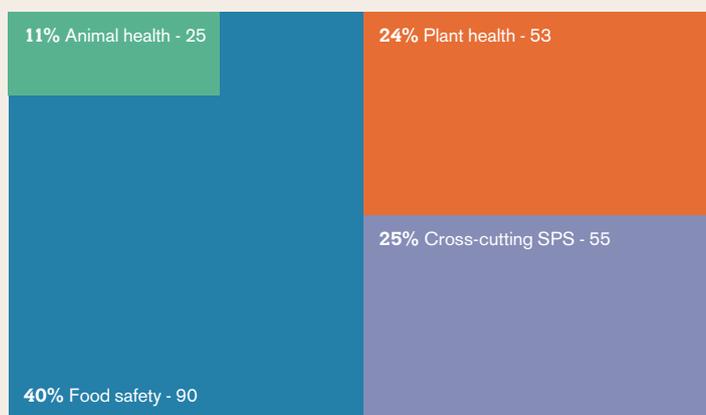


Figure 5: STDF projects and PPGs by topic (number), 2004 to 2021



The STDF's guide on good regulatory practices was launched at the SPS Committee in November. It sets out practical tools and tips to improve the quality and effectiveness of SPS measures to help reduce costs and eliminate unnecessary barriers to trade.

In 2021, members also strengthened the STDF's operational capacity through the implementation of a new monitoring, evaluation and learning framework and a communications plan to build greater awareness of the importance of investing in safe trade.

Public and private stakeholders in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and Uganda, members of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), used the STDF's evidence-based approach to prioritize agri-food investments and boost exports. Partners identified more than 50 investment options across diverse value chains, including livestock, honey and horticulture.

"The STDF works to enable small-scale farmers to meet international health and safety standards for their products. This opens the door to new markets and means higher incomes and more jobs and economic opportunities, particularly for women," said DG Okonjo-Iweala at the launch of the STDF annual report in August.

Launching new projects

The STDF Working Group approved two new projects and four new project preparation grants, totalling US\$ 1.6 million, down from US\$ 3.7 million in 2020.

Project grants:

- Dominican Republic and Haiti: Strengthening food safety and plant health for selected value chains.
- Cambodia, Lao PDR, Philippines, Viet Nam: Improving biosecurity and control of African swine fever.

Project preparation grants (PPGs):

- Burundi: Evaluating food safety and plant health needs to expand horticultural exports.
- Zambia: Capacity-building on SPS measures to improve compliance of small-scale cross-border traders.
- Eastern and Southern Africa: Taking a regional approach to address invasive potato pests.
- Nigeria: Applying the phytosanitary capacity evaluation tool to improve plant health systems for trade.

The total amount of STDF project funds allocated since its founding in 2004 stands at over US\$ 60 million. Sixty per cent of STDF project funds have benefited least-developed countries (LDCs).



CASE STUDY

Controlling fruit flies to boost trade from Southern Africa

An STDF project is connecting both horticulture producers and policymakers in Mozambique and South Africa to build capacity and advance work on pest-free areas. The project is enabling farmers and officials in Mozambique, an LDC, to benefit from South Africa's expertise in controlling fruit flies.

Rising fruit fly populations disrupt production of fruits, vegetables and plants, threatening livelihoods and exports. Rolling out this collaborative approach will benefit fruit exporters across the region. The project leveraged over US\$ 2 million in funding and strong commitment from the public and private sectors.

Another successful public-private partnership from the same region – promoted by the STDF as an example of best practice – involves South African industry groups and the government working together to strengthen producers' capacity to control fruit flies and facilitate safe trade. Collaboration on the use of sterile insect techniques, where large numbers of sterile insects are released into the wild, is reducing the incidence of medfly, one of the most destructive fruit pests in the world. It is also leveraging financing and commitment for more sustainable solutions to the problem.

Since 2019, importing partners have found no medfly in exports from areas where these techniques are being used. By 2021, average wild medfly populations fell by over 70 per cent in these areas. This has improved productivity, cut fruit losses and reduced the number of rejected export shipments.

Technical cooperation and training

- › The WTO Secretariat consolidated its virtual delivery of national, regional and global technical assistance activities in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- › The number of e-learning courses increased by approximately 25 per cent over the previous year to 132.
- › Some 11,700 participants benefited from national, regional and global activities, including new e-learning courses.
- › Africa remained the region with the highest participation in e-learning courses, with 38 per cent of total participants.

Background

The Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation coordinates the WTO's technical assistance programmes. Its activities include e-learning, global and regional training courses, academic programmes, and workshops at national and regional level. The technical assistance programmes help WTO members better understand their rights and obligations in the multilateral trading system. This strengthens countries' capacity to benefit from participation in the system.



Dr Okonjo-Iweala and French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire at a signing ceremony to mark France's donation of EUR 6 million to finance WTO technical assistance programmes.

The WTO Secretariat continued to implement virtual national, regional and global seminars and workshops, including long-duration regional trade policy courses adjusted for a virtual format. Eighty technical assistance activities were conducted, little changed from 2020.

The number of e-learning courses increased by approximately 25 per cent to 132. As in previous years, around 50 per cent of participants accessed their training through the WTO's online platform.

The WTO Secretariat undertook 211 technical assistance activities, including e-learning courses, to help government officials better understand WTO rules and the multilateral trading system, attracting approximately 11,700 participants, some 9 per cent lower than in 2020.

New initiatives included the first WTO Virtual Executive Trade Course from 25 January to 12 March, which was attended by 62 senior government officials from developing and least-developed countries (LDCs). The course explored linkages between WTO rules and governments' trade policies.

Africa had the highest percentage of overall technical assistance activities (18 per cent), followed by Asia-Pacific (15 per cent). Africa

 **The WTO Secretariat undertook 211 technical assistance activities to improve understanding of trade rules.**



also had the highest participation in e-learning courses (38 per cent), followed by Asia-Pacific (26 per cent). Thirty per cent of e-learning courses were undertaken by participants from least-developed countries (LDCs).

Activities were implemented under the 2020-21 technical assistance and training plan, with its results-based management approach. Guidelines and benchmarks helped to maintain a high standard of content, consistent teaching methods and regular evaluation.

Members, partners and others tracked programme implementation through electronic dashboards, which were launched in 2020 to display the level of training provided, the objectives, the nationality of participants and the gender breakdown.

The largest number of activities implemented (35 per cent) was aimed at participants from all WTO beneficiary members and observers. The remaining 65 per cent were covered by national and regional activities (see Figure 6).

Participation in technical assistance activities

Women represented 48 per cent of participants for all WTO technical assistance activities. Roughly 47 per cent of the activities (including e-learning courses) were delivered in English, 24 per cent in Spanish, 23 per cent in French and the remaining 6 per cent used interpretation. Technical assistance continued to be provided for countries seeking to join the WTO (see page 42).



Testimonial: French and Irish Mission Internship Programme (FIMIP)



Desmond Idu-Odaiche
FIMIP intern, Nigeria Trade Office,
Permanent Mission of Nigeria

“The FIMIP significantly exceeded my expectations as it has exposed me to practical skills, knowledge and first-hand experience in handling various aspects of trade and the day-to-day work of the WTO. The internship also allowed me to network, meet diverse people and gain valuable shared experience. The FIMIP also provided me with the opportunity to support and contribute to the daily activities of the Nigerian Mission on various issues in the WTO’s regular bodies and their work programme. My participation in the negotiating groups’ special sessions provided valuable insights and deepened my understanding of the multilateral trading system.”

Testimonial: Netherlands Trainee Programme (NTP)



Brenda Bvalani
NTP intern, Malawi

“The internship programme has been a great learning experience for me. I have gained hands-on experience in the ongoing work of the WTO Secretariat. I also had an opportunity to sit in multilateral trade negotiations and to learn how negotiations are done and members’ considerations in coming up with their positions. Through this internship, I have built a network of WTO experts and fellow interns who can offer me advice on various issues.

“As a participant from an LDC, I have learnt of the technical assistance available to LDCs and I have developed a deeper understanding of special and differential treatment available in WTO agreements.”

Testimonial: WTO Virtual Executive Trade Course



Imsouchivy Suos (Cambodia)

Deputy Director of the Department of Notifications and Legal Compliance (WTO Affairs), Ministry of Commerce

“There are a lot of key takeaways that I have gained from this executive course, especially in terms of ongoing international trade policy issues and the interests of the members, including LDCs during and post the COVID-19 pandemic. I have already started applying what I have learned in my daily work, especially during the preparation for MC12. On a personal level, I am also delighted that this executive course allows me to meet new colleagues from different countries.

“I strongly recommend this course to all colleagues who are directly involved in WTO-related work, especially busy senior professionals who need to further enhance their knowledge in this field.”

Testimonial: E-learning



Dominic Osei Bonsu (Ghana)

Records Officer, Office of the Head of Civil Service

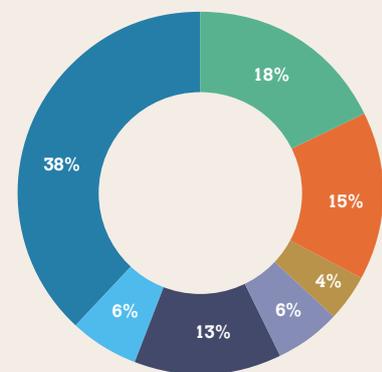
“I am really glad to have had the opportunity to participate in the WTO e-learning courses. The courses and the materials used during the sessions helped me to understand the processes of the WTO. Furthermore, the practical illustrations used in sessions made it easy and simple to understand the courses. This has all helped me in my workplace.”



Internship programmes

As in previous years, most government officials completing WTO internships were from LDCs and other low-income countries. Twenty participants completed the French and Irish Mission Internship Programme, which offers a 10-month placement to a capital-based official at the selected country's mission in Geneva. Fifteen participants completed the Netherlands Trainee Programme, which also lasts 10 months. Four interns participated in the Regional Coordinator Internship Programme and three in the Accession Internship Programme.

Figure 6: Technical assistance activities (national and regional) by region in 2021



Africa - 15 | Asia and the Pacific - 12 | Caribbean - 3
 Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia - 5
 Latin America - 11 | Middle East - 5 | Global - 31



DG Okonjo-Iweala welcomes Young Professionals Programme participants to the WTO on 2 February 2022.

Young Professionals Programme

Fourteen young professionals (seven women and seven men) were recruited for the Young Professionals Programme (YPP) in 2021, using a merit-based selection process. They were recruited from WTO members with currently no more than one professional staff member at the WTO Secretariat. Funded by the Global Trust Fund, the programme aims to improve the opportunities for young professionals from nationalities under-represented at the WTO to be recruited by the WTO or other international organizations.

Financing technical assistance

The bulk of the technical assistance programme is financed by the Global Trust Fund through voluntary contributions from WTO members. There has been a gradual decrease in voluntary contributions for a decade. In 2021, total contributions were CHF 5.4 million, down from CHF 5.6 million in 2020.

Other funding sources include the WTO regular budget for Geneva-based courses and national technical assistance activities – CHF 4.8 million for 2020 – and contributions from other trust funds (such as the French and Irish Mission Internship Programme and the Netherlands Trainee Programme), which totalled CHF 2.1 million in 2020.



Testimonial: Young Professionals Programme (YPP)



Mkhosi Mdhluli

Young Professional
2021, Eswatini

“Through the YPP, I have obtained an invaluable understanding of the importance of accountability through a results-based management programme. I have also gained insight into different trade-related issues, including WTO agreements that my country is signatory to. Coming from a developing country, I am confident that the knowledge and skills I have accumulated will be beneficial to me individually and to my country in the immediate future.”



14

A total of 14 young professionals were recruited for the Young Professionals Programme in 2021.

Trade and women's empowerment

- › A five-year plan was approved to transform the WTO from being gender-aware to gender-responsive.
- › The WTO launched the Gender Research Hub, a global network of trade and gender experts, to share research and foster partnerships.
- › On International Women's Day 2021, DG Okonjo-Iweala said COVID-19 had deepened inequalities, but none deeper than those between men and women.



A new five-year Action Plan on Trade and Gender was launched in January 2021, with the aim of transforming the WTO from a gender-aware organization to a gender-responsive one. Building on the 2017-19 plan (extended to 2020), it has seven key objectives. These include supporting WTO members in integrating gender into their trade policies to make them gender-responsive, strengthening women entrepreneurs' capacity to trade, and furthering research and data collection.

Inclusive trade is at the heart of the WTO's work, and supporting the integration of women into international trade is one of its key components, as shown by the establishment of the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender in 2020 and a new Ministerial Declaration on Trade and Gender Equality (see page 74).

The WTO Secretariat actively supports WTO members on trade and gender through its Trade and Gender Unit. In May, the WTO launched the Gender Research Hub, a global network of trade and gender experts, to share research findings and foster partnerships.

Core participants in the Hub include the OECD, UNCTAD, the IMF, the World Bank, the ITC, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the

WTO Chairs Programme and prestigious universities (see page 192). The Hub can help WTO members respond to the ministerial call, contained in the new declaration, for research initiatives on trade policy instruments to increase women's participation and leadership in trade.

On International Women's Day on 8 March 2021, the WTO held a virtual event, "Women in Leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world". Participants said that WTO members must act swiftly to address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 crisis on women.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened inequalities of every kind. But perhaps no divide has deepened more than that between men and women," DG Okonjo-Iweala said in her address at the event. Trade can be a source of more and better jobs, and increased purchasing power for women. Overall, countries that are more open to trade, as measured by the ratio of trade to gross domestic product, have higher levels of gender equality, she said.

The WTO Trade and Gender Unit offers training on trade and gender for government officials, collecting data or providing WTO members with various policy tools to help them integrate gender considerations into



The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened inequalities of every kind. But perhaps no divide has deepened more than that between men and women.

DG Okonjo-Iweala

their programmes and policies. It has also developed a comprehensive WTO database detailing all gender-related provisions included in trade agreements.

Overall, out of 500 regional trade agreements (RTAs – see page 124), 104 include gender-related provisions, with some devoting full chapters to them. The plurilateral agreement on domestic regulation in services (see page 71) became in 2021 the first accord adopted in the WTO to include a gender equality provision – in this case, with regards to authorization procedures for service suppliers.

The Unit collaborated with WTO chairs from Mexico, Chile and Barbados in a series of webinars and training activities as part of their trade and gender programme. They are also jointly delivering a “Handbook on Trade Policy and Gender Equality”, aimed at improving understanding of why mainstreaming gender equality in trade policy is of crucial importance.

In an opening address to launch a research and outreach project on “Gender and Trade in the Americas” on 3 August, DDG Anabel González emphasized the central role of women in the region’s economic and social lives and the WTO’s work in supporting gender-responsive trade policies.



CASE STUDY

Making trade work for women

Members of the WTO Chairs Programme (WCP – see page 192) in Mexico, Barbados and Chile set up, in partnership with the WTO Secretariat, in 2021 a project bringing together research, curriculum development and outreach events on “Trade and Gender in the Americas”. The WTO’s Trade and Gender Unit closely collaborated with the WTO Chairs on this project.

The project consisted of a series of seminars on trade and gender with the participation of ministers, permanent representatives to the WTO and negotiators working in the governments of Mexico, Chile and the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). It also encompassed a course on “Women and Trade in the Americas” taught by negotiators with experience of trade and gender provisions in trade accords and by representatives of international organizations, such as UNCTAD and the World Bank. The nine-day online course was attended by 35 students from 11 countries.

“Gender perspectives have to be at the core of international negotiations. This project presents an incredible opportunity for the WCP to work with both member states and international organizations to achieve this,” said Ambassador Chad Blackman, Permanent Representative of Barbados to the WTO.

DDG Angela Ellard said: “I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the research on trade and gender conducted under the auspices of our Chairs Programme. The WTO is acting to make trade work for women, and when women do better, societies do better.”