

Annex I: Questionnaire for Arab acceding governments

Questionnaire for Arab acceding governments

Policy context for the accession of Arab economies

1. What were the main challenges facing the economic performance before starting the accession process? Please identify challenges in order of national priority.
2. What are the foremost important considerations behind the decision to seek membership of the WTO? For example:
 - a) Ensuring greater economic policy coherence including a trade policy direction that is supportive of the overall economic strategy;
 - b) Ensuring stability and predictability in conditions governing trade in goods and services to promote expansion of guaranteed export opportunities;
 - c) The need to diversify the economy away from dependency on a narrow export base;
 - d) Improving domestic business environment through promoting competitive market conditions;
 - e) Attracting foreign direct investment;
 - f) Upskilling domestic human resources;
 - g) Contributing to economic and social development goals;
 - h) The desire to share experiences and best practices and to act jointly with other WTO members, including in future negotiations;
 - i) Other considerations (please specify).

In the response, please address the considerations listed above according to the national order of priority, including other considerations not listed above.

3. Has the government conducted a pre-accession assessment? If so, please provide main conclusions from such an assessment.

Accession process

4. Has the government established a domestic coordination and consultative mechanism for all relevant stakeholders (governmental and non-governmental) to ensure active participation in the WTO's accession process? If so, please describe how such mechanisms are structured and how they interact to perform their functions.
5. What are the main challenges in establishing such mechanisms and in ensuring they fulfil their purpose, including how they provide their input to the accession negotiating process?
6. How has the government been communicating the accession-related information and associated reforms to all relevant stakeholders?
7. What are the current mechanisms for increasing and sustaining public awareness, including among the private sector, about the WTO?
8. What are the main challenges related to trade and the economy that you are facing during the accession process? This could relate to:

- a) Exchange rate and monetary policy challenges;
- b) Technical regulation challenges (e.g. TBT, SPS, others);
- c) Tariff reforms and other import regime reforms;
- d) Reforms related to trade in services (financial, telecommunications, information technology services, transportation, distribution, energy, tourism, professional services, and others);
- e) Other challenges (please specify).

What solutions have been suggested for the identified challenges? How do such solutions relate to WTO accession and associated reforms? Have any such solutions been implemented? If so, how effective have they been in addressing challenges and what were the experiences gained for the future?

9. What are the main challenges facing the country which are not related to trade? This could relate to non-trade regulatory reforms, as well as internal or external political challenges, among other challenges. What solutions have been suggested for these challenges? What have been the experiences gained so far to inform the way forward on such issues?
10. Have there been phases in the accession process where progress slowed? What were the main causes of this? What solutions were found to reactivate the process?
 - a) If the process hasn't been reactivated, what are the main challenges you are facing for the reactivation? What solutions have been suggested so far and how effective have they been?
11. Has there been continuous and strong political will behind the accession process? If so, how has it been sustained?
 - a) If not, what are the main causes of waning political will, and what has been suggested so far to reignite it?
12. What are the remaining steps to be taken in your accession process? Has the government established a road map to fulfil them? If so, please provide details of the road map.
13. What WTO-related reforms have been planned so far? How were they arrived at? Such reforms include but are not limited to the following:
 - Main steps taken to reform the direction of or adjust the implementation of trade policy;
 - Main regulatory reforms;
 - Main institutional reforms;
 - Development of infrastructure (physical and digital) and human capital;
 - Steps taken to enhance trade facilitation for goods and services;
 - Other measures to encourage/assist exports/exporters of goods and services;
 - Activities and participation in the WTO and other international organizations;
 - Interactions with existing/prospective trading partners, including in respect of preferential trade agreements.
14. Has the government conducted a technical assistance and capacity building (TA/CB) needs assessment study for the accession process? If yes, please provide a summary of the main conclusions of the study.
15. If such a study has not been conducted, how does the government view its current TA/CB needs?
16. Has the government made requests to the WTO or other organizations to fulfil your TA/CB needs? If so, please provide a brief description.
17. What has been provided in terms of TA/CB thus far? By whom? What was the most effective? (To be complemented by the Arab monetary fund TA/CB questionnaire).
18. Has the government been participating in the work of the WTO as an observer? If so, please specify the issues of interest and provide a summary description of its participation.
19. Does the government participate in any regional/preferential trade initiatives? How are these aligned with WTO rules?
20. Please provide suggestions you might have for how the WTO Secretariat can improve its support to Arab acceding governments in the accession process.