



## 10 | Trade in services

**T**echnical assistance and capacity building in services trade have been consistently high over the last decade. Since 2015, more than 30 national and regional activities have been carried out at the request of African members and governments in the process of acceding to the WTO.

In order to support the various integration initiatives on the African continent, much of the assistance requested focuses on services negotiations, assessment of services regulations and scheduling of commitments. In addition, specific activities focusing on energy services, business services and mutual recognition have been delivered in recent years.

Many African officials participate in the annual specialized advanced course on trade in services, which focuses on policy trends and negotiations, and which is organized every year by the WTO's Trade in Services and Investment Division.

In recent years, the WTO Secretariat has cooperated on an ongoing basis with the secretariats of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)

and of SADC in the context of their regional integration initiatives. In addition to sub-regional training activities on sectors and issues of interest, the WTO Secretariat has assisted in the legal verification of draft services schedules submitted in the context of regional negotiations. The purpose of this assistance has been to advise member states of these regional organizations on the clarity and compatibility with the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the commitments proposed to be undertaken. Since mid-2020, virtual training activities on trade in services have also taken place for officials of ECOWAS institutions, both in English and in French.

In the context of the I-TIP Services database,<sup>1</sup> the WTO Secretariat cooperates with many African members to collect information on their services policy regimes.

<sup>1</sup> The I-TIP Services database is a joint initiative of the WTO and the World Bank which provides information on members' commitments under the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), services commitments in regional trade agreements, applied measures in services, and services statistics.