

## WTO ACTION PLAN ON TRADE AND GENDER 2021-2026<sup>1</sup>

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### BUILDING A GENDER-RESPONSIVE WTO

Since 2016, the WTO has grown from a gender-blind Organization into a gender-aware one.

The new 5 year Action Plan on Trade and Gender sets the WTO on a path to become a gender-responsive Organization.

Under this overarching objective and building on results achieved in the implementation of the first WTO Action Plan on Trade and Gender 2017-2019 (extended to 2020), this 2<sup>nd</sup> WTO Action Plan is structured along the 7 key Objectives and 17 Action points.

#### 1. Context: Introduction of gender in the WTO since 2016

WTO Work on trade and gender started in 2016 and moved forward since 2017 with the implementation of its 1<sup>st</sup> Action Plan (2017-2019 – extended to 2020). Launched in October 2017, its purpose was to lay the foundations of a new work programme on trade and gender in the WTO, building work and projects from the ground up.

Timeline 2017-2020	
Date	Action
2016	Former WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo became an International Gender Champion (see current commitments in Annex 1).
	Trade and gender became one of the main themes of the Public Forum for the first time.
June 2017	Appointment of the first WTO Trade and Gender Focal Point by former Director-General Azevêdo.
October 2017	The WTO launched its first Action Plan on Trade and Gender (2017-2019 – extended to 2020).
	WTO Members adopt the Biennial Technical Assistance Plan giving the WTO Secretariat the mandate to create and conduct a training module on trade and gender (WT/COMTD/W/227/Rev.1 - section 3.3.1).
December 2017	118 WTO Members and Observers launched the Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade Women's Economic Empowerment (now 127).

<sup>1</sup> Readers should note that some timelines outlined in the document may be moved given the time when this action plan was drafted.

Timeline 2017-2020	
Date	Action
Since 2018	Some members have introduced gender sections in their trade policy review reports. Since 2018, as part of their TPRs, 48% WTO Members have voluntarily included information on their gender responsive trade policies (out of 37 reviews conducted between 2018 and 2020 <sup>2</sup> ).
March 2018 to October 2019	The Buenos Aires Declaration proponents (127 WTO Members and Observers since end 2019) organised 6 thematic workshops to share experience on integrating gender into their trade policies and to better understand how trade impacts women. They identified and showcased 32 best practices and recommendations on trade and gender ranging from data collection methods to impact assessments of trade agreements, government procurement and financial inclusion tools for women entrepreneurs. They have compiled them in a report <sup>3</sup> launched on 10 December 2020.
November 2019	The Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan 2020-2021 (WT/COMTD/W/248/Rev.1) confirmed the integration of gender in the WTO training programmes.
September 2020	WTO Members created the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender in the WTO (WT/L/1095/Rev.1).
December 2020	At the 1 <sup>st</sup> meeting of the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender on 10 December 2020, Members agreed to focus their work around four key pillars: experience sharing; considering the concept and scope for a "gender lens"; reviewing analytical work undertaken; and contributing to the Aid for Trade work programme.

## 2. Basis for the WTO trade and gender work

### a. The WTO's work on trade and gender follows the recommendations, actions and objectives set in WTO instruments

- Preamble of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT 1947)<sup>4</sup>
- Preamble of the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the WTO<sup>5</sup>
- Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment
- Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender (WT/L/1095/Rev.1)<sup>6</sup>
- Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan 2018-2019<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> From January 2018 to December 2020

<sup>3</sup> "Delivering on the Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment", 10 December 2020. [https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/news20\\_e/women\\_10dec20\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news20_e/women_10dec20_e.htm)

<sup>4</sup> "Recognizing that their relations in the field of trade and economic endeavour should be conducted with a view to raising standards of living, ensuring full employment and a large and steadily growing volume of real income and effective demand, ..."

<sup>5</sup> "Recognizing that their relations in the field of trade and economic endeavour should be conducted with a view to raising standards of living, ensuring full employment and a large and steadily growing volume of real income and effective demand, and expanding the production of and trade in goods and services, while allowing for the optimal use of the world's resources in accordance with the objective of sustainable development ..."

<sup>6</sup> 23 September 2020 [https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/news20\\_e/women\\_23sep20\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news20_e/women_23sep20_e.htm)

<sup>7</sup> WT/COMTD/W/227/Rev.1. The Plan provided that "Trade-related Technical Assistance (TRTA) is a core function of the WTO". It stipulates that the purpose of the WTO trade-related technical assistance is "to

- Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan 2020-2021<sup>8</sup>
- WTO Trade and Gender Action Plan for 2017-2019 (extended to 2020)

### **b. The WTO work is in line with the objectives of international instruments**

The **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** laid down the path for women's empowerment globally since 1995, year of the creation of the WTO. In 1995, governments committed to take action to empower women on issues such as poverty reduction, education and training, health, violence, economic growth and decision-making.

The **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** emphasises gender equality as essential to build a better future. It rightly recognises that so long as inequalities persist between men and women, boys and girls, we cannot hope to eradicate poverty or achieve equitable growth. Sustainable Development Goal 5 concerns achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls.

The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** The Convention provides that women should enjoy equal rights and non-discrimination with regards to their participation in the economy, their employment, vocational training and education.

## **3. Main achievements on trade and gender between 2017 and 2020**

The achievements a. to c. below were driven by Members and from d. to p. by the WTO Trade and Gender Focal Point.

- a. Implementation of the **Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment** (2017-2019)<sup>9</sup> identifying and exploring 32 best practices on WTO Members policies and initiatives.
  - WTO Secretariat (i.e. WTO Trade and Gender Focal Point) collaborated with members in the implementation of the Declaration and contributed to the final report.
- b. Integration of gender into Members' trade policy review reports: 48% WTO Members under review have voluntarily included information on their gender responsive trade policies between 2018 and 2020.
- c. Establishment of Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender (WT/L/1095/Rev.1) at the WTO: work based on 4 pillars: experience sharing; considering the concept and scope for a "gender lens"; reviewing analytical work undertaken; and contributing to the Aid for Trade work programme.
  - While a member driven process, the Secretariat (i.e. WTO Trade and Gender Focal Point) supported Group's creation by providing inputs on the topic and participating in the discussions leading to the launch of the Group.

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enhance human and institutional capacity to take full advantage of the rules-based Multilateral Trading System". It also gives the WTO Secretariat the mandate to set up and conduct a training module on trade and gender (section 3.3.1).

<sup>8</sup> WT/COMTD/W/248/Rev.1. The Plan confirmed the integration of gender in the WTO training programmes.

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/news17\\_e/mc11\\_12dec17\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news17_e/mc11_12dec17_e.htm)

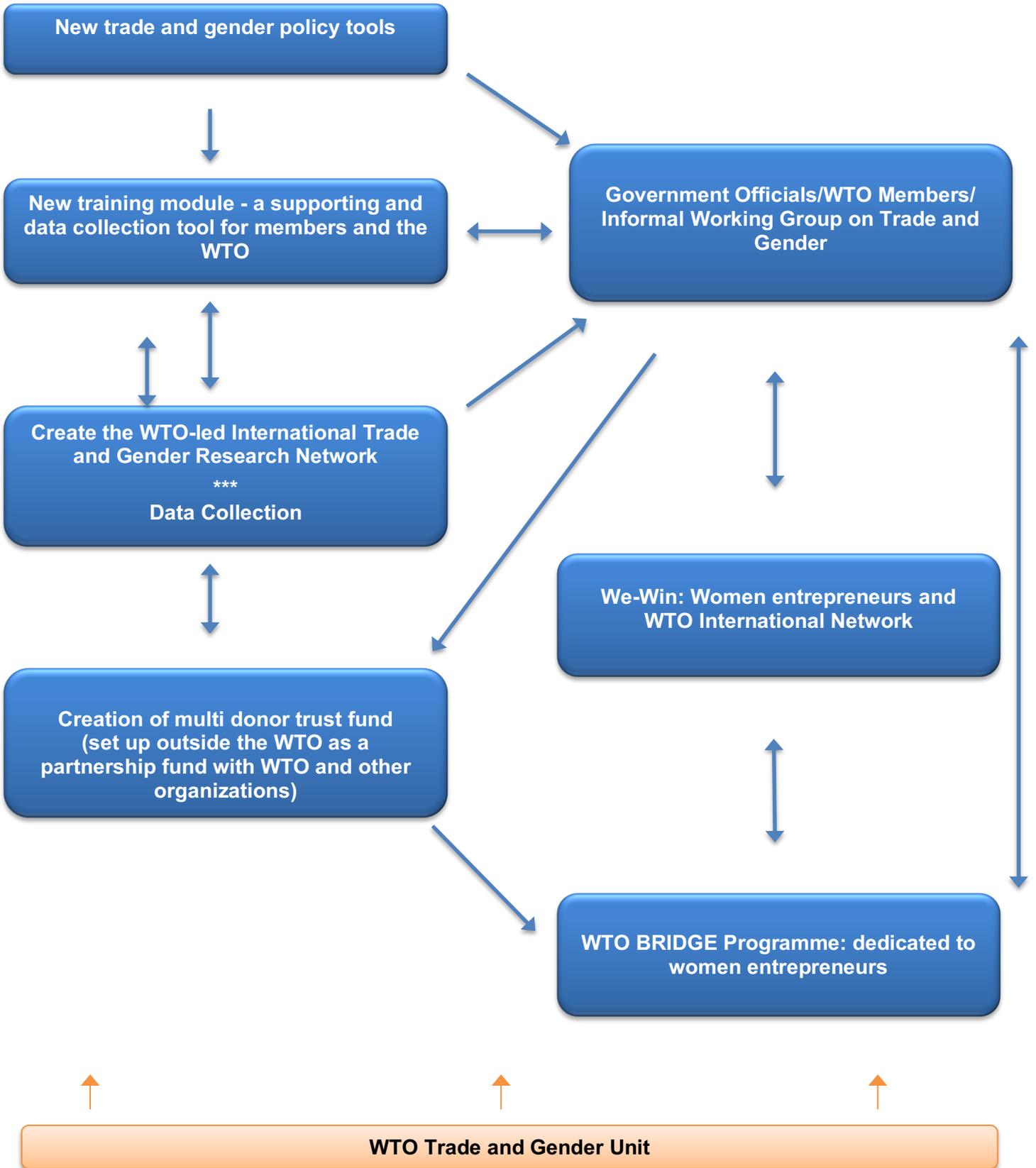
- d. Launch of 1<sup>st</sup> WTO Trade and Gender Action Plan 2017-2019 (extended to 2020): based on 4 objectives; building awareness, facilitating members activities, training government officials and women entrepreneurs; conducting research.
- e. Conception and launch of a training module for government's officials: launched in March 2019 and 17 trainings conducted since 2019.
- f. Organisation of a Webinar for WTO Members and Observers on "Applying gender lens to WTO" in May 2020.
- g. Creation of a training module for women entrepreneurs (to be launched in 2021). A test training was organised in September 2019 in South Asia.
- h. Establishment of a research partnership with the World Bank since 2017.
- i. Publication of 5 research papers and 1 book (WTO/WB joint report on "Women and Trade: The role of trade in promoting gender equality") between 2018 and 2020.
- j. Conduct of 3 regional surveys to collect trade and economic data on women entrepreneurs in South Asia, East Africa and Latin America.
- k. Conduct a mapping exercise of all capacity-building programmes for women entrepreneurs: the study revealed a gap in terms of providing training to women entrepreneurs on trade rules.
- l. Integrating a gender chapter in the G20/WTO trade monitoring reports and WTO Annual Report, since 2018.
- m. Collecting gender statistics on WTO Members and Secretariat: in 2019, women hold less than 25% of high-level positions in the WTO (Members and Secretariat combined).
- n. Outreach: between 2019 and 2020, the WTO has contributed to 21 regional and international conferences.
- o. Joining the International Gender Champions Network since 2016.

#### 4. Guiding principles of the new WTO Action Plan on Trade and Gender

The Action Plan sets a clear direction: transforming the WTO from a gender-aware organization to a gender-responsive one. Under this overarching objective, it is guided by the five following principles:

**BRIDGE:** Bridging actions for a maximised impact. To maximize the impact of the WTO work, actions will be bridged and connected. The content developed, collected or researched under one actionable item will serve to support another one - Therefore, also linking Objectives with each other. The graph below illustrates this bridging approach.

### BRIDGED ACTIONS



**CONNECT:** Connecting the WTO with the ground realities women face as well as trade and gender stakeholders.

**REINFORCE:** Building on and strengthening the work already achieved. Accelerating the gender mainstreaming<sup>10</sup> process where possible. Deepening existing collaborations within the secretariat.

**MATERIALIZER:** Concrete actions and solutions for concrete outcomes and results.

**COMMUNICATE:** building and enhancing awareness on the links between trade and gender. Communication will be used as a tool for enhancing awareness

## 5. Objectives and actions

### a. OBJECTIVE 1: Supporting WTO Members in integrating gender into their trade policies to make them gender responsive

This objective is in line with WTO members approach on how to apply gender lens to their work within the Informal working Group on Trade and Gender.

#### • Action 1: Developing new policy tools

Three tools are currently being developed to support members in integrating gender into their trade policies: 1) a multi-section and multi purpose trade and gender questionnaire to help governments report on gender during their TPR and assess how gender is include in their trade policies; 2) Monitoring and evaluation exercises; and 3) concrete indicators for applying trade rules with gender lens.

##### ○ **Tool 1:** Multi-section and multi-purpose trade and gender questionnaire

The questionnaire is divided in 10 sections ranging from objectives to data collection methods and measures in support of women entrepreneurs. This is a very versatile tool and it can be transformed to produce two types of policy tools.

- Tool 1.1: A questionnaire to help governments report on gender during their trade policy review
- Tool 1.2: A checklist for governments to examine/investigate where they stand in terms of gender integration into their policies, strategies, programmes and action plans and to assess if/how gender is included in their trade policies.

*Note: All these tools will be available upon request from Members.*

##### ○ **Tool 2:** Monitoring and evaluation processes/exercises

- Tool 2.1: Reforming the aid-for-trade gender questionnaire as part of its monitoring and evaluation exercise (M&E): The aid-for-trade M&E is conducted on the basis of a questionnaire and the aid-for-trade work programme. This questionnaire includes gender related questions.

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<sup>10</sup> **Gender mainstreaming:** is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action including, legislation, policies, or programmes in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and strategies of women and men an integral part of their design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, so that women and men can benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.

- On the basis of responses provided, the WTO evaluates how aid for trade has been disbursed and integrated into aid-for-trade programmes targeting gender. However, the current questionnaire is far too vague to be able to gather the data needed to conduct a concrete and deep impact assessment of Aid for Trade on women. Therefore, the aid-for-trade response form needs to be further developed with more targeted and precise questions. It is recommended that the upcoming and next aid-for-trade M&E integrate such a questionnaire. Tool 1 can therefore serve as a basis for this work, which will follow the thematic of the aid-for-trade work programme adopted by members on a biennial basis. In order to achieve this analytical goal, the aid-for-trade Work Plan would need to include more specific language on gender and the evaluation of Aid for Trade impact on women, providing a framework for action.
  
- Tool 2.2: Creating a new monitoring and evaluation process on trade and gender. This process would complement the Trade Policy Review mechanism as only 12 to 15 countries are reviewed per year. On average, reviews are conducted every 3 to 4 years for each member. The Secretariat would gather the information on the measures, activities and policies on trade and gender implemented by the members of the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender. The final analysis would be included in a report for members to approve and possibly present at the General Council. Tool 1 will be used as a basis to develop this Monitoring and Evaluation process dedicated to trade and gender. In order to achieve this analytical goal, an M&E plan would need to be designed, providing a framework for action.

~ *Note: This process would require Members' approval.*

o **Tool 3: concrete indicators for implementing trade rules with a gender lens**

- The purpose of these concrete indicators would help members make trade provisions and rules work for women.
  
- These indicators will be developed on a 5 steps approach, which include among others: Acquiring a good and detailed understanding of the hurdles faced by women traders and concrete situations on the ground; categorisation of trade policy measures responding to these hurdles and types of female traders; identifying trade rules and provisions in WTO agreements corresponding to the indicators and making links with other non-trade policies such as ICT.
  
- This methodology is currently being developed and applied to the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. It will be extended to other WTO agreements such as agriculture, TBT and SPS, and then to all agreements.

*Note: All these tools will be available upon request from Members.*

<b>Timeline of implementation</b>	
<b>Tool</b>	<b>Implementation time</b>
<b>Tool 1:</b> Multi-section and multi-purpose trade and gender questionnaire	Tool 1.1: A questionnaire to help governments report on gender during their trade policy review.  <b>April-May 2021</b>

<b>Timeline of implementation</b>	
<b>Tool</b>	<b>Implementation time</b>
<b>Tool 1:</b> Multi-section and multi-purpose trade and gender questionnaire	Tool 1.2: A checklist for governments to examine/investigate where they stand in terms of gender integration into their policies, strategies, programmes and action plans and to assess if/how gender is include in their trade policies.  <b>April-May 2021</b>
<b>Tool 2:</b> Monitoring and evaluation processes and exercises	Tool 2.1: Reforming the aid-for-trade gender questionnaire as part of its monitoring and evaluation exercise (M&E)  <b>As soon as the M&amp;E is launched 2021-2022 in advance of the aid-for-trade Global Review 2022.</b>
	Tool 2.2: Creating a new monitoring and evaluation process on trade and gender.  <b>Upon members' approval</b>
<b>Tool 3:</b> Concrete indicators for implementing trade rules with a gender lens	The work has already been started on trade facilitation and will be followed by trade and agriculture, TBT and SPS.  <b>June-July 2021 for trade facilitation indicators</b>  <b>December 2021-February 2022 for trade and agriculture, TBT and SPS indicators.</b>  <b>2022-2023 for all other agreements.</b>

- **Action 2: New training strategy - a supporting tool and data collection mechanism for members and the WTO**

Following members' decision, a training module on trade and gender has been developed since 2018 and officially implemented since March 2019. After 2 years of implementation, a new strategy will be put into practice in the fall of 2021.

- *The new training programme in a nutshell*

The new training programme<sup>11</sup> will be delivered in 4 units, following a gradual level of knowledge acquisition, based on ITTC's Progressive Learning Strategy (PLS): introductory, advanced and specialist (Thematic/Advanced Courses).

- *Unit 1: WTO Trade and gender course.* The course will be dispensed 4 times a year with seasonal sessions (Winter session in February; Spring session in May; Summer session in July and Fall session in October). November and December will be used for evaluation.

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<sup>11</sup> A full and detailed strategy has been developed separately and is available for consultation.

- *Unit 2: Training for Geneva delegates.* It is A dedicated training will be organised only for Geneva delegates. It will respond to Geneva delegates specific needs and work at WTO. The objective is to ensure the integration of gender lens in the WTO regular work.
- *Unit 3: E-learning training.* It will include online chats (which will continue under the same format) and a full-fledged e-learning programme. Building on the new training module, it will be developed in 2022 (a separate concept note will be developed in 2022) and implemented in 2023. In the meantime, online chats will continue to be conducted. The e-learning training will be two-fold: an introductory pre-Unit 1 course (it will be a prerequisite to enter Unit 1 sessions) and a specialised course looking more in depth at thematic trade topics i.e. climate change, standards, IP, etc.
- *Unit 4: National activities.* Upon national activity requests, specific programmes will be designed on the basis of Unit 1 and 3 (thematic sessions).

- o *Concrete solutions for members*

The new training is built as a supporting tool for WTO government officials in their work on trade and gender. It will continue to raise awareness on the links between trade and gender and give a new perspective on how trade can impact women's economic empowerment. It will keep on helping officials understand why trade rules are not gender neutral when implemented and how WTO trade agreements can be applied with gender lens. It will also provide concrete solutions on how to integrate gender into trade policies and concrete policy tools to help members develop trade policies that benefit women (see Objective 1, Action 1 above).

- o *A multi-purpose training module: fostering data collection and research*

- The training will also serve as a data collection tool on governments' trade and gender initiatives, programmes and policies. Prior to the course, a small questionnaire will be shared for the data and information collection exercise (based on tool 1.1 – see Objective 1, Action 1 above). Participants will be invited to collect and present one or two policies, initiatives, programmes set by their government or national agencies on trade and gender and/or women's economic empowerment. Each participant will receive a detailed briefing note giving them guidance on the type of information needed and the objective pursued.
- The information collected will be shared with the two WTO networks (We-Win and Research networks – see Objective 3, Action 1 and Objective 4, Action 1 below), the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender (see Objective 4, Action 1 below) as well as with WTO Members and Observers at large. It will be added into the WTO database of best practices on gender related trade policies. The data collection process will also use policy tools developed in support of members' work. It will be based on tool 1.1 (see Objective 1, Action 1 above).
- The data collected and the exchange with Members/trainees will help drive research by providing information on members' priorities and knowledge needs.

## **b. OBJECTIVE 2: WTO BRIDGE Programme - Strengthening women entrepreneurs (trade) capacity**

Women entrepreneurs face a general knowledge gap on trade rules and agreements (among other major obstacles), hindering their export capacity and preventing them from engaging in the global market. Training programmes do not address this knowledge gap and no other international or regional organisation has developed and implemented such training on long-term basis. There is room for action.

Moreover, demand for such trainings come from women entrepreneurs associations, whether regional or national. The WTO BRIDGE Programme is the Organization's dedicated training programme to fill both gaps and address businesswomen associations demand.

⇒ *BRIDGE means: "Bringing the Rules of International trade to businesswomen and Delivering Gender Equality".*

It is based on the following principals: tailor made; regionally anchored; train the trainer; support in knowledge implementation; mentoring and networking; and evaluation and monitoring of progress.

Three **positive spill over effects**: Enhancing women entrepreneurs' capacity in advocacy on trade issues; Reinforcing coordination and collaboration between businesswomen associations at national, regional and international levels; Strengthening the effectiveness of the current WTO agreements (in particular on trade facilitation, agriculture and government procurement) and future ones (e-commerce).

*Note: A summary is provided in ANNEX 2 and a separate and detailed business plan explaining the WTO BRIDGE Programme is available for consultation.*

### **• Action 1: Launch and implement the WTO BRIDGE Programme according to the timeline below**

- **2021**: Official launch of BRIDGE + Pilot trainings in South Asia, Latin America and East Africa + Survey in West Africa.
- **2022**: Pilot training in West Africa.
- **2022-2025**: 8 trainings per year in all four regions.
- **December 2023**: Mid term review. Based on evaluations conducted each year.
- **2026**: Overall evaluation of first 5 years of programme with WTO team, partners, trained entrepreneurs and mentors. Based on evaluations conducted each year.
- **2027-2031**: Phase II

### **• Action 2: Build partnerships externally and internally**

As described in the programme's business plan, partnering with regional organisations and governments is one of the key features of this training. These partnerships, especially at the regional level, have already been explored and following the programme's launch, these partnerships will be established more solidly.

As described in the programme's business plan, a working group of WTO experts to support this programme and women entrepreneurs will be set up internally.

This small team will be developing the content of the trainings with the WTO Trade and Gender Focal Point. It will also serve as a permanent link between the WTO and trainees.

### **c. OBJECTIVE 3: Bridging WTO with the ground reality**

#### **• Action 1: Create We-Win - Women entrepreneurs and WTO International Network**

We-Win is a network between the WTO and women entrepreneurs from 4 regions (Latin America, South Asia, East Africa and West Africa).

Its purpose is to share trade and business experiences as well as solutions across regions and learn from the different perspectives of the Network's participants.

I will promote activities, programmes and policies benefiting women entrepreneurs as well as publish a calendar of relevant events. Through the network, women's success and inspirational stories in trade will be shared. The platform will also help promoting female entrepreneurship.

#### **• Action 2: Connect the network with WTO members**

The material, discussions and experiences shared as part of the network will be communicated with the Members of the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender. Testimonies of women entrepreneurs about their business and trade experience will also be shared, to better inform members' understanding of what is really happening on the ground.

Upon COVID-19 recovery, representatives of the network will be invited to the WTO to meet with WTO Members and the WTO Director-General. These encounters will be held regularly.

The network will also be closely linked to WTO BRIDGE Programme and its delivery.

*Note: A separate and detailed concept note explaining We-Win is available for consultation.*

### **d. OBJECTIVE 4: Strengthening the institutionalisation of gender within the WTO**

#### **• Action 1: Work with the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender**

The WTO Trade and Gender Focal Point is the servicing official for the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender. She is supporting and facilitating WTO Members' actions and activities on trade and gender (as described in the 1<sup>st</sup> WTO Action Plan on Trade and Gender).

In addition to its regular duties as the secretary to the group, she is conducting additional initiatives:

- Create a database collecting information on all the experience as well as gender-related trade policies and programmes shared by members in the Informal Working Group. It will be organised by theme and possibly by regions and include a summary of each experience presented. This database will be published on the WTO website and will help Members access information in an efficient manner.
- The Focal Point will also collect all the reports and publications mentioned and presented by members as part of their work in the informal working group. References to these reports se will also be included in the best practices database mentioned above.

- Supporting Members in their objective of producing a tangible outcome at MC12 and a roadmap on concrete actions towards MC13.
- Others activities will be conducted as the Group's work expands, especially following the outcome of MC12, held in December 2021. The Action Plan will be updated in January 2022 to integrate MC12 outcomes (see Objective 7 below).

- **Action 2: Strengthen financial resources**

- The creation of a multi-donor trust fund would strengthen the work of the WTO. The fund would be created outside the WTO as a partnership fund that includes the WTO.

*Note: The implementation of Action 3 will be pending on the WTO Members and DG decision.*

- **Action 3: Accentuate collaboration with external stakeholders**

- It will strengthen the WTO position as a key player on the issue. It will also reinforce the WTO as a front-line player and a leader on the issue of trade and gender as well as strengthen the WTO's position as a role model and a game changer on gender parity.
- Collaborations have already been established with key external stakeholders i.e. other international organisations, private sector (World Economic Forum, International Chamber of Commerce, women entrepreneurs regional and national associations), academia (WTO Chairs and universities in Canada, Turkey, and UK) and think-tanks (CUTS International, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), Policy Kitchen, etc).
- These collaborations will be turned into partnerships and new ones will be explored and established.

*Note: A separate concept note will be prepared to move this action forward.*

## **e. OBJECTIVE 5: Furthering research and data collection**

- **Action 1: Create the WTO-led International Trade and Gender Research Network**

- The network will include trade and gender researchers and experts from the WTO, other International organisations and academia. It will also be open to gender experts and will invite to special guests, such as think tanks and private sector, to present their work. The network's purpose is to share information on current and future topics of research; disseminate early and final findings of current research; foster research collaboration and partnerships; combining joint efforts in gathering funding for research.
- Every 2 years, led by the WTO, an international research conference will be organised to release findings of published or to be published research work

*Note: a detailed and separate concept note on the network is available for consultation.*

- **Action 2: Collect data**

- Since 2017, the WTO has been collecting gender statistics on the positions women held in the WTO (members and secretariat). Such reports will continue to be conducted on an annual basis looking at female leadership in the WTO. In 2023, an evaluation of the evolution of leadership in the WTO will be conducted on the basis of the annual reports. This is collaborative effort within the WTO Secretariat.
- Women entrepreneurs survey: between 2019 and 2020, the WTO conducted 3 regional surveys in East Africa, South Asia, and Latin America looking at the representation of women entrepreneurs in international trade and their knowledge gap on trade rules. The survey also included granular data on their households, education levels, finance ownership and reasons for creating their own companies. These surveys were used to develop the WTO BRIDGE Programme but also to inform presentations in international conferences, working papers and trainings, by the WTO Trade and Gender Focal Point. The WTO will continue gather such data in West Africa and Switzerland between 2021 and 2022 for the same purpose. It will also seek to gather other types of data especially focusing on trade policies and programmes for women.

**OBJECTIVE 6: Continuing to build and enhance awareness through impactful communication and initiatives**

- **Action 1: Develop new communication material and tools**

- **One-page info-graphics brief:** Each publication (books, staff working paper, etc) will be accompanied with a one-page info-graphics brief highlighting key findings, which can be used by the WTO communication team to disseminate information
- **Promotion videos:** on the basis of ready-to-use applications, short “promotion” video will be done regularly to explain various aspect and new work done by the WTO. They will be disseminated on social media regularly.
- **Message of the year campaign.** Every year a key theme will be identified and will be guiding the communication campaign. On this basis, various messages will be developed based on current work and thematic focus and disseminated on regular basis (2 to 3 months – to be determined by the team).
- **Women and Trade webpage:** It will be revamped and used as one of the key communication channels.

- **Action 2: Exhibition - “A history of trade and gender”**

This virtual exhibition will be used to build awareness on the links between trade and gender through the ages. It will also feature portraits of historic female figures in trade and gender equality. It will be launched at the 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference and will tour across regions. Various partnerships will be set up externally and internally to create, promote and disseminate the exhibition.

*Note: A separate and detailed concept note on this initiative is available for consultation.*

- **Action 3: Foster coordinated internal/external communication**

- Communication activities will be coordinated and all the material developed will be used for external and internal communication purposes.

- To communicate on current work and progress achieved, the WTO Trade and Gender Focal Point will hold regular information sharing sessions for WTO Secretariat staff, through the WTO Gender Network.
- A small team in communication Division will work with the WTO Focal Point on Trade and Gender on a regular basis to implement the communication plan. A timeline for developing and disseminating communications material will be established on a yearly basis with the WTO communication team.

**f. OBJECTIVE 7: Taking into account the outcome at the 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference (MC12).**

This Action Plan will be updated in January 2022, to integrate MC12's outcome on gender and to maximise its future impact.

**5. Implementation timeline, impact assessment and evaluation**

**a. The Action Plan will be implemented in 5 phases from April 2021**

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Action</b>
Phase 1	April 2021 to October 2023	Implementation of the Action Plan's 7 Objectives and 17 Actions
	<i>Phase 1.1: January 2022</i>	<i>Update of the Action Plan to integrate MC12 outcomes on gender</i>
Phase 2	October to December 2023	Mid-term assessment and update of Action Plan
Phase 3	January 2024 to December 2026.	Implementation of revised Objectives and Actions
Phase 4	January to February 2027	Overall impact assessment and evaluation. It will used to develop the 3 <sup>rd</sup> WTO Action Plan.
Phase 5	March to April 2027	3 <sup>rd</sup> WTO Action Plan on Trade and Gender

**b. Annual reporting on progress achieved**

- At the end of each implementation year, the work done will be evaluated and each actionable item will be assessed in its impact.
- For this purpose, various and specific assessment tools will be developed under each Objective.
- On this basis, annual reports will be produced and presented to the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender.

**ANNEX 1**  
**WTO International Gender Champion Commitments 2019**

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Human Resources Commitments	Promote gender equality in all aspects of the WTO's work by helping to achieve a respectful and inclusive working environment within the Organisation and by working on the development and implementation of gender specific policies.
Trade and Gender Commitments	Support WTO Members' on-going efforts to give trade and gender a more prominent place in the WTO. Further develop and expand the WTO's training offer on trade and gender for government officials and other audiences. Continue to collaborate with other organizations on collecting and presenting gender-disaggregated data to understand better the links between trade and women's economic empowerment.

## ANNEX 2 WTO BRIDGE Programme

(BRIDGE: Bringing the Rules of International trade to businesswomen  
and Delivering Gender Equality)

WTO BRIDGE PROGRAMME <i>IN A WINK</i>	
<b>Problem</b>	<p>Women entrepreneurs face a general knowledge gap on trade rules and agreements (among other major obstacles) ...</p> <p>... Hindering their export capacity and preventing them from engaging in the global market.</p> <p>Training programmes (internationally and regionally) do not address this knowledge gap, at least not on the long term.</p>
<b>Key data</b>  <i>WTO survey "Assessing Women Entrepreneurs' Knowledge Gap on Trade in East Africa, South Asia, and Latin America. 2019-2020"</i>	<p><b>Women entrepreneurs are underrepresented in international trade</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In East Africa, South Asia, and Latin America combined, only 27% of businesswomen export</li> </ul> <p><b>Women entrepreneurs face a general knowledge gap on trade rules and agreements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45% women entrepreneurs have received no clear information on customs requirements and expressed difficulty in accessing information on international export/import including tariffs.</li> <li>• 19% of women entrepreneurs do not trade because they have no or very little knowledge of how to export.</li> <li>• Only 50% of women entrepreneurs received trainings on trade generally and only 35% on trade regulations and customs procedures.</li> <li>• However, despite their current level of knowledge, 55% of women entrepreneurs intend to export in the future (94% in East Africa).</li> <li>• 92% of women entrepreneurs are interested to take trade related training.</li> </ul>
<b>Solution</b>	<p>WTO <b>BRIDGE</b> PROGRAMME: "<i>Bringing the Rules of International trade to businesswomen and Delivering Gender Equality</i>"</p> <p>BRIDGE is the WTO dedicated training programme to fill both gaps and address businesswomen associations demand.</p>
<b>The competition</b>	<p>There is room for action. No long-term programmes exist. Only one other international organisation has conducted such training but in a very targeted manner.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Strengthening businesswomen's export capacity, removing obstacles preventing women to enter the global market and promote inclusive trade.</p>

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<b>Identity/concept</b>	<p>BRIDGE is based on the following principals: tailor made; regionally anchored; train the trainer; support in knowledge implementation; mentoring and networking; and evaluation and monitoring of progress.</p> <p>Three <b>positive spill over effects</b>: Enhancing women entrepreneurs' capacity in advocacy on trade issues; Reinforcing coordination and collaboration between businesswomen associations at national, regional and international levels; Strengthening the effectiveness of the current WTO agreements (in particular on trade facilitation, agriculture and government procurement) and future ones (e-commerce).</p> <p>BRIDGE is in line with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WTO core objectives</li> <li>• Two of WTO four core functions</li> <li>• WTO Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan 2018-2019 and 2020-2021</li> <li>• WTO Action Plan on Trade and Gender 2017-2019/2021-2026</li> <li>• Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment</li> <li>• Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender (WT/L/1095/Rev.1).</li> <li>• Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action</li> <li>• The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</li> <li>• The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)</li> </ul>
<b>Targets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T1: women entrepreneurs who don't export</li> <li>• T2: women entrepreneurs who informally export</li> <li>• T3: women entrepreneurs who formally export for 2 years (case by case)</li> </ul> <p>⇒ <i>370 women entrepreneurs trained in the first 5 years</i></p>
<b>Revenue streams/key resources</b>	<p><b>Revenues</b>: Budget of WTO Trade and Gender Unit + support from training delivery partners + potential donors</p> <p><b>Key resources</b>: WTO Trade and Gender Unit + WTO BRIDGE team + regional businesswomen associations + training delivery partners</p>
<b>Yearly budget estimation</b>	CHF 91,600
<b>Key milestones</b>	<p><b>2022</b>: Official launch of BRIDGE + Pilot training in South Asia</p> <p><b>2023-2025</b>: 8 trainings per year in all regions.</p> <p><b>2026</b>: Overall evaluation of first 3 years of programme with WTO team, partners, trained entrepreneurs and mentors. Based on annual evaluations conducted each year.</p> <p><b>2027-2031</b>: Phase II</p>

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<b>Teams and key roles</b>	<p><b>Teams for selection process:</b> WTO BRIDGE team and regional businesswomen associations. <b>Key roles:</b> joint criteria identification and selection process</p> <p><b>Teams for trainings delivery:</b> WTO BRIDGE team, regional partners, governments. <b>Key roles:</b> development of content and delivering of trainings. Each partner will have a determined focus.</p> <p><b>Overall lead:</b> WTO Trade and Gender Unit</p>
<b>Key partners</b>	BRIDGE is designed as a multi-partner global programme including stakeholders from various sectors: private sector (women business associations – regional and national) and international/regional organizations.
<b>Key activities</b>	Training; building women's export capacity; enhancing women entrepreneurs' capacity in advocacy on trade issues; reinforcing coordination and collaboration between businesswomen associations at national, regional and international levels; strengthening the effectiveness of the current WTO agreements (in particular on trade facilitation, agriculture and government procurement) and future ones (e-commerce).
<b>Marketing activities</b>	Incentives and promotional activities to be conducted with the purpose of expanding the programme and gathering financial support.