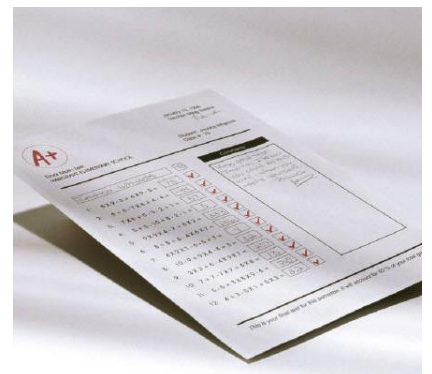


## ITC'S PROGRAMME ON NON-TARIFF MEASURES

Understanding the non-tariff obstacles to trade exporters and importers experience when trading their goods



# ITC'S PROGRAMME ON NON-TARIFF MEASURES

## UNDERSTANDING THE NON-TARIFF OBSTACLES TO TRADE EXPORTERS AND IMPORTERS EXPERIENCE WHEN TRADING THEIR GOODS

Non-tariff Measures (NTMs) have become a major impediment to international trade and market access, and are of particular concern to exporters and importers in developing countries. Exporting companies seeking access to foreign markets and companies importing products need to comply with a wide range of requirements, including technical regulations, product standards and customs procedures. NTMs vary across products and countries, and can change quickly. The business sector in developing countries often lacks the information, capabilities, and facilities to meet the complex requirements and demonstrate compliance with NTMs at reasonable costs. National policy makers often lack a clear picture of what their business sector currently perceives as predominant obstacles to trade, thereby making it difficult to develop the most appropriate trade-related policies.

ITC aims to increase transparency and understanding about NTMs – in order to facilitate trade in the long run. We help countries to understand the non-tariff obstacles to trade their business sector experiences and to define strategies and solutions that meet the specific needs of the business sector and help to facilitate the trading of their goods. We collaborate closely with national and regional stakeholders and are engaged in a multi-agency initiative to increase transparency and understanding about NTMs.

### Understanding the obstacles to trade companies face when complying with non-tariff measures

ITC is experienced in carrying out large-scale company surveys on NTMs and other obstacles to trade that a country's exporting and importing companies experience in their daily operations. Countries interested in collaborating with ITC in this area are invited to contact us at [ntm@intracen.org](mailto:ntm@intracen.org).

National enterprise surveys identify at product, sector and partner country-level the predominant obstacles the business sector currently faces when complying with NTMs, including those that are related to potential bottlenecks at the national level with regards to the capabilities and technical facilities to meet regulations and demonstrate compliance. The survey contributes to a better understanding of the specific needs of the business sector, enabling targeted capacity building and better formulation of national strategies and policies. In particular, it identifies:

- ✓ A pattern of the most challenging NTMs by sector, company size and partner country
- ✓ The existing national procedures and facilities which need to be strengthened in order to better support the business sector in exporting and importing their goods
- ✓ Gaps in understanding specific measures applied by specific countries or for specific products – resulting from a lack of access to relevant information.

The survey methodology controls for a representative sample at the national and sector level and covers both exporting and importing companies, which are surveyed through in-depth face-to-face interviews. Its rigor has been tested in a pilot jointly developed and executed by ITC and UNCTAD in seven countries throughout 2008-2009.

Upon completion of the national survey, ITC, in close collaboration with national partners, provides an in-depth analysis of the survey results, which helps identify the need for concrete national action in the key export sectors and key NTM issues. Survey results are also discussed in the framework of a national stakeholders' workshop, which initiates a continual dialogue among different stakeholders, including the private sector, trade support institutions, government agencies, and academics.

The business perspective on the issue of NTMs is indispensable in the identification and definition of national strategies and policies that help address and overcome obstacles to trade. Exporters and importers have to deal with NTMs on a day-to-day basis, and they know best about the specific challenges and problems they face. The understanding of their key concerns with regards to NTMs helps governments better define the needs for concrete action and capacity building – for example in the area of technical regulations and sanitary and phytosanitary regulations, conformity assessment and related technical assistance.

Upon request, ITC also offers to provide capacity building in the area of NTMs, in particular with regards to technical regulations.

[ITC welcomes enquiries from governments interested in this subject.](#)



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