

Strategic Review of WTO-provided TRTA Activities

Final Report*

* A consortium of individuals from Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS), India; Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO – Latin American School of Social Sciences), Argentina; and North-South Institute (NSI), Canada prepared this report. It was commissioned by a Steering Committee consisting of WTO Members and appointed by the WTO Committee on Trade and Development. Views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the positions of their respective organisations. Members of the Steering Committee have commented on this report in their individual capacity, not necessarily reflecting the positions of their respective countries. This report has been submitted to the Steering Committee on 21st July 2006.

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Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific countries
ACWL	Advisory Centre on WTO Law
AD	Anti-Dumping
AfT	Aid for Trade
AITIC	Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BTOR	Back-to-Office-Report
CAFTA	Central American Free Trade Agreement
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CB	Capacity Building
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNNCI	Comité National pour les Négociations en Commerce International (Senegal)
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CTD	Committee on Trade and Development
CTPL	Centre of Trade Policy and Law (Carleton University)
CUTS	Consumer Unity & Trust Society
CVD	Countervailing Duties
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCE	Direction pour le Commerce Extérieur (Senegal)
DDA	Doha Development Agenda
DDAGTF	Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DTIS	Diagnostic Trade Integration Study
EAC	East African Community
EC	European Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ENEA	National School for Applied Economics (Senegal)
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
EURASEC	Eurasian Economic Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales
FTA	Free Trade Agreement/Area/Arrangement
GAFTA	Greater Arab Free Trade Area
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRD	Human Resource Development

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ICTSD	International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDEP	African Institute for Economic Development and Planning
IF	Integrated Framework
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IIC	Inter-Institutional Committee
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
INTAL	Institute for the Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean
IPDET	International Program for Development Evaluation Training
IPRs	Intellectual Property Rights
ISO	International Standards Organisation
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITHID	Integration, Trade and Hemispheric Issues Division (IDB)
ITTC	Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation
JITAP	Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme
LDC	Least Developed Country
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MFAFT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (Barbados)
MFN	Most-Favoured-Nation
MITT	Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Kyrgyz Republic)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTS	Multilateral Trading System
NAMA	Non-Agricultural Market Access
NCWTO	National Committee of the WTO (Kenya)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSI	The North-South Institute
NTB	Non-Tariff Barrier
OD	Operational Division (WTO)
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
PEF	Participant Evaluation Form
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTA	Preferential Trading Arrangement
RBM	Results-Based Management
RTA	Regional Trade Agreement
RTPC	Regional Trade Policy Course
SAFTA	South Asian Free Trade Area
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (Switzerland)
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards
TA	Technical Assistance
TAMC	Technical Assistance Management Committee
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade

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TCA	Technical Cooperation Audit
TCB	Trade Capacity Building
TCBDB	Trade Capacity Building Database
TORs	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
TPC	Trade Policy Course
TPR	Trade Policy Review
TRA	Trade-Related Assistance
TRCB	Trade-Related Capacity Building
TRIPs	Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights
TRTA	Trade-Related Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United National Industrial Development Organisation
UWI	University of the West Indies
WB	World Bank
WBI	World Bank Institute
WCO	World Customs Organisation
WHO	World Health Organisation
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WTO-CCO	WTO Coordination and Communication Office (Yemen)

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Glossary

Activity – Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources are mobilised to produce specific outputs.

Anti-dumping duties – GATT's Article 6 allows anti-dumping duties to be imposed on goods that are deemed to be dumped and causing injury to producers of competing products in the importing country. These duties are equal to the difference between the goods' export price and their normal value, if dumping causes injury.

Association of South East Asian Nations – Eight ASEAN members are members of the WTO – Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. The other ASEAN members – Laos and Vietnam – are negotiating WTO membership.

Beneficiaries – The individuals, groups, or organisations, whether targeted or not, that benefit, directly or indirectly, from the development intervention.

Countervailing duties – Action taken by the importing country, usually in the form of increased duties to offset subsidies given to producers or exporters in the exporting country.

Dumping – Occurs when goods are exported at a price less than their normal value, generally meaning they are exported for less than they are sold in the domestic market or third-country markets, or at less than production cost.

Effectiveness – Extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. Note: Also used as an aggregate measure of (or judgment about) the merit or worth of an activity, i.e. the extent to which an intervention has attained, or is expected to attain, its major relevant objectives efficiently in a sustainable fashion and with a positive institutional development impact.

Efficiency – A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.

Ex-post evaluation – Evaluation of a development intervention after it has been completed. Note: It may be undertaken directly after or long after completion. The intention is to identify the factors of success or failure, to assess the sustainability of results and impacts, and to draw conclusions that may inform other interventions.

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Feedback – The transmission of findings generated through the evaluation process to parties for whom it is relevant and useful so as to facilitate learning. This may involve the collection and dissemination of findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons from experience.

Finding – A finding uses evidence from one or more evaluations to allow for a factual statement.

Free trade area – Trade within the group is duty free but members set their own tariffs on imports from non-members.

High Income Countries – Per capita Gross National Income (GNI) > US\$10,065

Impacts – Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

Indicator – Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.

Inputs – The financial, human, and material resources used for the development intervention.

Institutional development impact – The extent to which an intervention improves or weakens the ability of a country or region to make more efficient, equitable, and sustainable use of its human, financial, and natural resources, for example through: (a) better definition, stability, transparency, enforceability and predictability of institutional arrangements and/or (b) better alignment of the mission and capacity of an organisation with its mandate, which derives from these institutional arrangements. Such impacts can include intended and unintended effects of an action.

Intellectual property rights – Ownership of ideas, including literary and artistic works (protected by copyright), inventions (protected by patents), signs for distinguishing goods of an enterprise (protected by trademarks) and other elements of industrial property.

Internal evaluation – Evaluation of a development intervention conducted by a unit and/or individuals reporting to the management of the donor, partner, or implementing organisation.

Lessons learned – Generalisations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programmes, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and coordination, etc.

Low Middle Income Countries – Per capita GNI US\$826-3,255 in 2004

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Monitoring – A continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds.

More Advanced Developing Countries and Territories – Aruba, Bahamas, Bermuda, Brunei, Cayman Islands, Chinese Taipei, Cyprus, French Polynesia, Hong Kong, Israel, Korea, Kuwait, Libya, Macao, Malta, Netherlands Antilles, New Caledonia, Qatar, Singapore, Slovenia and United Arab Emirates.

Most-Favoured-Nation – the principle of not discriminating between one's trading partners.

Non-tariff barriers – such as quotas, import licensing systems, sanitary regulations, prohibitions, etc.

Other Low Income Countries – Per capita GNI < US\$825 in 2004.

Outcome – The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs

Outputs – The products, capital goods and services which results from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.

Partners – The individuals and/or organisations that collaborate to achieve mutually agreed upon objectives. Note: The concept of partnership connotes shared goals, common responsibility for outcomes, distinct accountability and reciprocal obligations. Partners may include governments, civil society, non-governmental organisations, universities, professional and business associations, multilateral organisations, private companies, etc.

Performance – The degree to which a development intervention or a development partner operates according to specific criteria/standards/guidelines or achieves results in accordance with stated goals or plans.

Performance indicator – A variable that allows the verification of changes in the development intervention or shows results relative to what was planned.

Recommendations – Proposals aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, quality, or efficiency of a development intervention; at redesigning the objectives; and/or at the reallocation of resources.

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Relevance – The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies. Note: Retrospectively, the question of relevance often becomes a question as to whether the objectives of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed circumstances.

Results – The output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) of a development intervention.

Results-Based Management – A management strategy focusing on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts

Safeguard measures – Action taken to protect a specific industry from an unexpected build-up of imports – generally governed by Article 19 of GATT.

Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures or regulations – implemented by governments to protect human, animal and plant life and health, and to help ensure that food is safe for consumption.

Schedule – In general, a WTO member's list of commitments on market access (bound tariff rates, access to services markets)

Self-evaluation – An evaluation by those who are entrusted with the design and delivery of a development intervention.

Singapore issues – Four issues introduced to the WTO agenda at the December 1996 Ministerial Conference in Singapore: trade and investment, trade and competition policy, transparency in government procurement, and trade facilitation.

Stakeholders – Agencies, organisations, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in the development intervention or its evaluation.

Tariffs – Customs duties on merchandise imports. Levied either on an ad valorem basis (percentage of value) or on a specific basis (e.g. US\$7 per 100 kgs.). Tariffs give price advantage to similar locally produced goods and raise revenues for the government.

Thematic evaluation – Evaluation of a selection of development interventions, all of which address a specific development priority that cuts across countries, regions, and sectors.

Trade facilitation – Removing obstacles to the movement of goods across borders (e.g. simplification of customs procedures).

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Trade policy review – Surveillance of national trade policies undertaken by the WTO. All WTO members are reviewed, the frequency of each country's review varying according to its share of world trade.

Transparency – Degree to which trade policies and practices, and the process by which they are established, are open and predictable.

Upper Middle Income Countries – Per capita GNI US\$3,256-10,065 in 2004.

Uruguay Round – Multilateral trade negotiations launched at Punta del Este, Uruguay in September 1986 and concluded in Geneva in December 1993. Signed by Ministers in Marrakesh, Morocco, in April 1994.

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Executive Summary

I. Introduction: The Context

The launch of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) in 2001 marked a new chapter in trade-related technical assistance (TRTA) provided by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Developing countries' lack of negotiating and implementing capacity, their disappointment with the materialised benefits (or lack of them) from the Uruguay Round and their refusal to be pushed into a deal with limited benefits were some of the main factors that triggered a recognition that TRTA was an important element in furthering economic development and reducing poverty in developing countries. Indeed, the offer to significantly expand TRTA was critical to launching the DDA, as trade ministers agreed to a sizeable increase in the volume of bilateral and multilateral initiatives and programmes, including the creation of the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund (DDAGTF).

II. Methodology for the Strategic Review of WTO-provided TRTA

This is the first external review of the WTO-provided TRTA (inter-changeably used in this report as WTO's TRTA as well as WTO TRTA), which during 2002 to 2004 involved an annual average of 480 activities in the areas of trade policy and regulation and a cost of US\$15 million. It was based on detailed, questionnaire-based interviews in nine countries with officials and others who had participated in one or more of the WTO's seminars, courses, workshops or other activities, as well as others interested in trade policy issues.

The nine countries were Kenya and Senegal in Africa, Yemen in the Middle East, Bangladesh, Cambodia and the Kyrgyz Republic in Asia, Barbados and Ecuador in the Americas, and Moldova in Europe. This selection was designed to capture a broad representation of TRTA recipients; they accounted for some 6% of WTO TRTA during 2002-2004.

The WTO's TRTA in the nine countries was concentrated in five of the 20 categories of activities as defined by the WTO/Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) database (i.e. trade education/training, tariff negotiations/non-agricultural market access (NAMA), technical barriers to trade (TBT), trade negotiations techniques and services) with 56% of the total WTO TRTA spending in these categories. Relative to all TRTA provided in these nine countries, the WTO only accounted for 2.6% of spending.

In addition, in Geneva we interviewed several people closely associated with TRTA in other international organisations and think tanks, in donor governments and in the WTO Secretariat. Altogether some 152 questionnaires were completed (118 recipients and 34 supervisors/officials) and a total of 269 people met between February and May 2006. We

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also drew on the growing literature on trade and capacity building, on official and unpublished WTO documents, and our own knowledge as trade policy analysts.

Our review focused on the following three aspects:

- WTO's comparative advantage as a provider of TRTA,
- Relevance of its TRTA activities
- Its management and efficiency

Taking into account the increasingly complex aspects of TRTA in terms of both demand (need for training that goes beyond knowledge of WTO rules to analytical capacity and critical negotiating skills) and supply (increasing number of actors), we considered the WTO's *comparative strengths and weaknesses*. We evaluated the *relevance* of its terms of response to stated national, institutional and individual officials' needs. For *management and efficiency*, we looked at issues relating to the organisation of the TRTA courses themselves and the overall programming of TRTA.

III. Evaluations of other agencies involved in TRTA

Before we began our examination of the WTO's TRTA, we reviewed evaluations undertaken recently of TRTA programming by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the European Commission (EC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Bank and the International Trade Centre (ITC) as well as the Integrated Framework (IF) of TRTA for Least-Developed Countries and the Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme (JITAP).

The review highlighted a series of issues TRTA providers need to take into account, notably approach to training, content, and management. Examples include moving beyond technical assistance to building longer-term capacity, mainstreaming training outside core ministries and government, linking trade policies to poverty reduction and distributional issues, enhancing national and regional content to training including research on bilateral and regional trade policies, training in analytical skills and the creation of databases, supporting experiential learning, flexibility in programming to respond to evolving national needs and priorities, coordinating TRTA at the national and regional levels, and short-term and irregular financing.

IV. Overview of WTO's TRTA

In this section we provide some basic information about the WTO's TRTA, beginning with the seven strategic objectives endorsed at Doha in the *New Strategy for WTO Technical Cooperation for Capacity Building, Growth and Integration* (New Strategy, 2001). We also describe the five broad categories of TRTA products or activities, which are as follows:

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- General WTO-related training and technical assistance (including Trade Policy Courses (TPCs) in Geneva and in the regions, which account for a third of the TRTA budget)
- Specialised and advanced training and technical assistance (including national and regional workshops/seminars with another 33%)
- Academic support for training and capacity building (including workshops for university professors and research collaboration, with 3%)
- Support training and technical assistance facilities in Geneva (from symposia to internships, with 12%)
- Other programmes and support activities with funding requirements (such as involvement in other organisations' workshops, with 2%)

Of all WTO TRTA in 2002-04, 27% was allocated to Trade education and training, with another four kinds of activities each accounting for some 7% (Tariff Negotiations-NAMA, Trade mainstreaming in poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), TBT, and Services), all of which are of key relevance to developing countries in the Doha Round. Relative to all TRTA funding the WTO has played a larger role in providing training on tariff negotiations/NAMA, rules, dispute settlement, trade negotiations techniques, and services. Almost half (48%) of its TRTA has been in Africa, with Asia receiving 19%, and Latin America and the Caribbean 16%.

Comparing WTO's contribution to TRTA in trade policy and regulations with that of all other TRTA in that category shows that it is very small in terms of value – less than 2%. However, WTO has played a relatively important role in providing training in sub-categories such as tariff negotiations/NAMA, rules, dispute settlement, trade negotiations techniques, and services.

V. Comparative Advantage

The issue of comparative advantage is particularly important given the growth in TRTA demand and supply, and in considering how far the WTO should move beyond its original focus, collaborate with others, and leave certain areas and approaches to others. We found widespread agreement that the WTO has strong comparative advantage in knowledge and information about WTO rules and procedures, particularly from a legal perspective, in many operational aspects of agreements and in the latest state of play in ongoing negotiations. But many other organisations are also proficient in training on WTO trade law basics. The WTO's neutrality mandate is both an asset and a constraint.

In other areas considered important to many developing country recipients, notably development dimensions, negotiating techniques and analytical skills, and knowledge of national and regional specificities, the WTO's competence was questioned. The WTO has partnered with other organisations and experts to complement its own capacities, including a number of developing country universities and regional organisations as in the regional TPCs (RTPCs).

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In sum, earlier assumptions such as the uniqueness and adequacy of WTO experts' knowledge are being challenged, suggesting it is time to rethink and refocus the WTO 'brand'.

VI. Relevance

Our interviewees across the nine countries we visited as well as many others working on TRTA found that the WTO's TRTA has been generally relevant – responding to national, institutional and individual needs. 95% of interviewees found that the WTO courses had matched their requirements considerably or to some extent. But there were several ways suggested to make it more relevant.

One is improved *needs assessments*: few of the nine countries visited had a national TRTA plan, yet in nearly all there is a national mechanism for the development of trade policies that could help to identify TRTA needs and priorities, using various types of support that the WTO has offered. In terms of *course content*, for most interviewees the level of training was just right, though there were complaints about repetition and a call for more graduated programming.

The *materials* were useful, but improvement were suggested to make them more accessible and with more interpretative and analytical content. Similarly, while there was no bias noted in the content and materials – to maintain *neutrality* – this had limited the WTO trainers' willingness to discuss policy flexibility within the WTO rules and the implications of alternative negotiating proposals and to many WTO training was oriented more to building national officials' capacity as effective rule takers than as effective negotiators and rule-makers. Courses offered with regional experts and longer courses allowed the use of more relevant case-study material and simulations, than did many of the 2-4 day national or regional seminars and workshops. On the *quality of trainers*, WTO experts were considered to be of high quality with strong trade law expertise, but sometimes doctrinaire, in contrast to others who were less familiar with legal or negotiating details but offered a broader approach and regional experience.

Impacts at the individual level were easier to identify than at the institutional one – TRTA helped many trainees to perform particular tasks more effectively. Still, in many countries the training has had an institutional impact, primarily in building up the capacities of a cadre of trade-skilled professionals particularly in trade ministries, to understand and implement WTO rules. But in most countries the capacity to design national trade policies and to negotiate at the WTO remains relatively weak, even if there was evidence of more engagement in various aspects of the ongoing DDA negotiations.

VII. Management and Efficiency

Leadership of WTO-provided needs to be dynamic and full of missionary zeal, but this Review has found that the approach of the ITTC management is characterised by routine churning out of TRTA activities within a pre-determined static framework. This state of

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affairs has, in turn, lessened the motivation of the workforce and, by extension, negatively influenced the desirable and long-lasting impact of TRTA on beneficiary countries.

While the selection of participants is largely a government responsibility, and often works adequately, there were concerns that the variation in knowledge levels, language skills, and other differences made classes difficult to manage and less effective. Similarly, there were questions about variations in the quality of trainers, with one suggestion being that training performance be part of all WTO technical staff's annual performance.

Evaluation has expanded beyond the feedback forms from WTO trainers and trainees to some testing on course completion, course audits by the internal audit unit, and now some ex-post evaluations for the major courses. Longer reports prepared by trainees for their national ministries, were rarely made available to the WTO.

Many of the WTO's partnerships with other organisations have been managed in a largely ad hoc, informal fashion. In some cases, however, there are active Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), such as the collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and its arm the Institute for the Integration of Latin America (INTAL), which has been quite positive, and the relationship with various universities in the running of the RTPCs.

There is too little data publicly available for cost effectiveness to be systematically assessed; this is an area for further action by those working on the WTO/OECD TRTA/Capacity Building (CB) database. It seems, however, that many WTO national activities are more cost-effective than others, though these may not bring the full benefits associated with regional activities (such as networking with regional peers). Finally, the section raises other administrative issues such as the challenge of raising funds for a longer period so that the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation (ITTC) can develop a longer-term programme, involving more pre- and post-training activities, and a number of logistical challenges such as making information available on-line about course content and materials and planning.

VIII. Findings, Lessons Learned and Recommendations

In this section we highlight key messages and review the findings, lessons learned and recommendations of the three preceding sections on comparative advantage, relevance, and management and efficiency.

The key messages that come out of the Review are as follows:

Comparative advantage

- Credible core competencies in trade law
- Building deeper partnerships

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- Transforming ITTC into a fully-fledged training institution

Relevance

- Absence of effective needs assessments
- Course content and approach still to respond to specific national needs
- Product-related objectives partially met
- Overall high quality of trainers, but room for improvement
- Mixed impact of WTO TRTA

Management and Efficiency

- Lack of dynamic leadership in management of the ITTC
- Trainee selection processes lacking in focus and transparency
- Inadequate quality control of trainers
- Moving beyond trainee self-evaluation
- Programmatic approach needed
- Boosting value for money

The following are some of the recommendations made in this report:

Comparative Advantage

- Consider outsourcing the training on WTO basics
- Move up the trade system knowledge value chain
- Deepen collaboration with other international organisations and agencies
- Move from ‘hub and spoke’ to joint partnerships
- Move from Geneva-based to more regional and in-country approach
- Build the capacity of subject matter experts to deliver training and not just content lectures
- Strengthen the autonomy and freedom of ITTC

Relevance

- Support in-country needs assessments
- Work with the OECD to make the Trade Capacity Building Database more useful for planning purposes
- Move from WTO-centric content to a more comprehensive approach
- Re-orient training to help countries develop negotiating and analytical skills to better identify their trade interests and assert their trade rights
- Draw more on case-study material and research from within WTO and from outside
- Include more economists amongst trainers on WTO courses
- Make courses more interactive, with trainers as facilitators instead of lecturers
- Add 1-2 days to shorter courses to allow more practical and regionally relevant content
- Expand pre-training and access to materials ahead of courses

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- Include more national or regional trainers to address language problems and expand the range of materials and instruction in all three official languages
- Expand collaboration with Southern think tanks and academics

Management and Efficiency

- Employ people who have a missionary zeal and a long experience of working on trade problems of developing countries either at governmental or inter-governmental levels or in research institutions.
- Encourage greater transparency in trainee selection process and the use of benchmarks for participant selection
- Include a training performance indicator in the annual evaluation of WTO staff
- Increase funding for more regular ex-post and thematic evaluations
- Introduce more systematic evaluation of trainees with emphasis on their on-the-job performance rather than their ‘customer satisfaction’
- Seek more predictable and longer-term funding for the WTO’s TRTA to assist ITTC in longer-term planning
- ITTC should develop an overall plan to allow trainees to go through a structured programme of learning
- Solicit funds for trainees to participate in negotiating meetings and acquire other resources (e.g. databases) to apply their newly acquired WTO knowledge
- Consider expanding DDAGTF resource allocation to national and regional activities
- With OECD and other agencies compile data to allow comparison of relative costs of different TRTA programming

IX. Conclusions and Future Scenarios

In the final section, we make a few concluding comments and present two alternative scenarios for the future of the WTO’s TRTA. The continued inability of developing and least developed countries to understand and respond to the implication of WTO agreements and negotiate national interests and priorities have led to calls from beneficiary countries for a reorientation and rationalisation of the WTO’s TRTA activities. WTO’s neutrality mandate, lack of involvement of non-WTO resource persons and lack of dynamic leadership, in particular, have been important factors in reducing the impact of the WTO-provided TRTA.

We present here two possible scenarios for change; the first is a scenario of incremental change and related adjustments, while the second involves a more fundamental rethink, if not a new paradigm.

Scenario 1: Incremental Change

This scenario would be easier to implement, but would leave some recipient needs and current expectations of recipients unmet. For instance, it would involve needs assessments at the national level and ensure that regional workshops include country

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examples and case studies from the region. Other incremental changes would include developing a structured programme of courses, more interactive content and activity between regional experts and the WTO, providing reading materials ahead of events, improving participant selection, providing pre-course training and incorporate a training performance indicator in WTO staff annual evaluations along with a more dynamic leadership to run the training programmes.

Scenario 2: Fundamental Rethink

This scenario would be more ambitious and would seek a more holistic approach to cover all the WTO's TRTA objectives as set out in its *New Strategy for WTO Technical Cooperation for Capacity Building, Growth and Integration* (2001) and especially those that under the incremental scenario would remain unmet. Such a fundamental rethink is needed to broaden and deepen capacity building support, especially to least developed countries. The new approach could be developed by:

- Increasing decentralisation of courses to regional centres and national institutions.
- TRTA activities should draw on independent research as well as feed on the inputs from the Research Division of the WTO.
- The ITTC should be responsible for collaborating with other organisations, including country-based think tanks and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), with a view to ensuring that the assistance which the WTO cannot provide due to its neutrality and other constraints is met by non-WTO resource persons and/or programmes.

To ensure ITTC's independence, we suggest that procedures for reporting to the WTO Director-General be drawn up so that, except on major policy-related issues, it has full autonomy in drawing out its programmes and in determining priorities. These programmes should be prepared every two or three years and training should provide analysis of what is actually being done and *not* done around the world under each agreement and why, so as to provide more dynamic and objective TRTA.

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I. Introduction: The Context

The Doha Round purports to be a ‘development’ Round with the aim to integrate developing and least developed countries (LDCs) more fully into the multilateral trading system (MTS). This, in turn, is expected to contribute to poverty reduction and economic development in these countries. In this context, the Doha Ministerial Declaration recognised that “enhanced market access, balanced rules, and well targeted, sustainably financed technical assistance and capacity building programmes have important roles to play”.¹ The significance of trade-related technical assistance (TRTA) is therefore considerable. However, the essence of this has not received the importance it deserves, and how the WTO views TRTA since the organisation was established in 1995. Indeed, the very ethos has shifted, as becomes clear when reviewing the development of WTO with regard to TRTA in the past decade, from a developing country perspective. But how far this new ethos was captured in the programme design and delivery is suspect.

That a lack of negotiating and implementing capacity is a recognised recurrent problem for developing countries became evident soon after the closing of the Uruguay Round, as criticisms were raised concerning the asymmetry of the outcomes of that Round and the disproportionately high costs of their implementation. This did not, however, hinder the 1996 Singapore Ministerial from expanding the scope of WTO’s agenda, notably with the four so-called ‘Singapore Issues’: investment policy, competition policy, transparency in government procurement and trade facilitation.

Although there were several reasons for the failure of the Seattle Ministerial in 1999, the greater understanding of developing countries of the WTO system – and their resultant refusal to be pushed into a deal with limited benefits – was certainly a contributing factor. It was also during this time – towards the end of the five-year transition period granted to most developing countries under several agreements of the Uruguay Round² – that there was sharper awareness that they were not in a position to implement their obligations, as they were expected to. In response, a view emerged that implementation required significant investment in ‘bricks and mortar’ issues as well as the provision of TRTA, and “one way to make this linkage formal would be to seek agreement that no legal basis for a WTO dispute exists if adequate assistance has not been provided for implementation”.³

Then, in 2001, came Doha. Here, TRTA served as an inducement to launch the new Round – the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) – in what can be seen as a ‘concession’

¹ Para. 2.

² For instance in the case of trade-related intellectual property rights and investment measures, developing countries had until 2000 to conform to WTO rules, whereas LDCs had until 2006 and 2002 respectively. For phasing in agreed cuts in agricultural tariffs, however, developing countries had 10 years while LDCs were not obliged to make any cuts.

³ Kostecki, 2001, p. 13.

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to development.⁴ More specifically, the Doha Ministerial Declaration included commitments to TRTA in twelve different paragraphs, resulting in a sizeable increase in the volume of activities – both bilateral⁵ as well as multilateral initiatives and programmes, such as the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund (DDAGTF), the Integrated Framework (IF), and the Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme (JITAP).

Box I.1 Going Beyond Expectations

The DDAGTF was created in order to ensure the long term funding of the WTO's technical assistance activities. The Fund was only meant for TRTA activities to be conducted by the WTO and not other agencies. More importantly, the creation of the DDAGTF represented a positive response to earlier criticism that the WTO's TRTA had been open-ended, short-term and contingent. It relies on voluntary contributions from Members.

In 2002 it received pledges of around US\$15.7 million, which enabled the WTO to undertake an unprecedented level of activities. Surprisingly, the pledged amount was more than double that anticipated, which could be attributed to the willingness by developed countries to show developing countries that Doha was indeed going to be a 'development' Round. The promise of additional funding for trade was also reaffirmed at the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development in March 2002.⁶

It is important to emphasise that TRTA and capacity building (CB) were recognised to serve particular purposes and not only as ends in themselves. This becomes clear when comparing the first draft of the Ministerial Declaration (Harbinson's Draft Ministerial Declaration) with the final text. As an illustration, the first draft included the following with regard to the interaction between trade and competition policy:

"We commit ourselves to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for the provision of technical assistance and support for capacity building both during the negotiations and as an element of the agreement to be negotiated." (Para. 20.)

In contrast, para. 24 of the final version of the Doha Ministerial Declaration is considerably more elaborate:

"We recognise the needs of developing and least-developed countries for enhanced support for technical assistance and capacity building in this area [trade and competition policy], including policy analysis and development so that they may better evaluate the

⁴ See John Whalley (1999) *Special and Differential Treatment in the Millennium Round*, CSGR (Centre for the Study of Globalization and Regionalization) Working Paper No. 30/99

⁵ Bilateral efforts are reflected in a series of documents from the EU and national governments, including: European Commission (2003) "Trade and Development: A priority for the Round", July 2003; CIDA (2003) *Gender Equality and Trade-Related Capacity Building: A Resource Tool for Practitioners*, August; DFID (2001) "Building Capacity for Trade", *Trade Matters Background Briefing*, September; DFID (2003) "Standards as Barriers to Trade", *Trade Matters Background Briefing*, March; GTZ (2003) *Making Globalization Equitable: Trade-Related Cooperation*, September; and USTR/USAID (2002) "U.S. Trade Capacity Building Initiatives in the Americas", September 2002.

⁶ See paras. 26-38 on international trade as an engine for development and notably para. 36

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implications of closer multilateral cooperation for their development policies and objectives, and human and institutional development. (...)"

What happened at Doha can therefore be seen as a response to the calls from developing countries for capacity building in order to address a range of challenges that directly involve the WTO. As listed in Deere⁷ these include their limited capacity to:

- Participate meaningfully in the WTO negotiations and decision-making,
- Comply with WTO obligations and implement related regulatory reform given the associated financial, institutional and human resource costs,⁸
- Exercise their rights and bring cases under the dispute settlement procedures,
- Take advantage of market opportunities which negotiations yield due to significant resource, supply-side and competitiveness constraints,
- Address non-tariff barrier (NTB) constraints to market access (i.e., developed country sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS), packaging, and environmental standards),
- Withstand external shocks to domestic production and export opportunities, and
- Diversify economies and expand exports (50 WTO Members rely on just 1-3 export commodities).

As the Doha Round advanced, attention to TRTA developed further. In the run up to the Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong in December 2005, the discussion of how to increase the 'development' effects of the Doha Round, and in particular how to find ways of helping countries which would lose (or hardly gain) from the negotiations, became an issue of central relevance. The Hong Kong Declaration had elements of the traditional approach to special and differential treatment such as requiring no liberalisation from LDCs and allowing reduced commitments from other developing countries, as well as stressing the need to offer greater liberalisation in areas of interest to them. But the major change was the recognition of 'preference erosion' and of poor capacity to trade as valid concerns for the WTO. The Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration reaffirmed the importance of TRTA/CB, looked forward to the report of the IF Taskforce on ways to improve its implementation and address supply-side constraints in LDCs, and authorised the creation of another taskforce to review proposals for expanding and operationalising Aid for Trade.⁹

⁷ Carolyn Deere, *Capacity Building and Policy Coherence. A Role for a Leaders' Level G20?* Background Briefing Paper, Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), 2004

⁸ Beyond obligations in the Uruguay Round Agreements to reduce trade barriers, developing countries also undertook commitments to introduce significant reforms of regulations (including the formation and administration of intellectual property systems, and upgrading of sanitary, technical and phytosanitary standards) and trade procedures (including import licensing procedures and customs valuations). The Round did not, however, take into account the cost of implementing these reforms—a full year's development budget for many of the least developed countries—nor did it ask whether that money might be more productive in other development uses. See Finger & Schuler (1999). Lengyel (2005) has calculated these costs for Costa Rica, Peru and Argentina.

⁹ See paras. 48-54 and 57

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Definitions

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) *Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Guidelines on Strengthening Trade for Capacity Development*,¹⁰ trade related capacity building (TRCB) should strengthen capacity to:

- Formulate and implement a trade development strategy;
- Increase and diversify exports and markets; and
- Participate in institutions and processes that shape national and international trade rules and practices.

Box I.2: Defining TRTA and CB

The World Bank defines TRTA and CB as follows:

TRTA: Services financed and/or provided by donors and development agencies to strengthen trade-related institutions and build trade capacity in developing countries.

CB: In trade context, activities supported by the donor community aimed at strengthening the ability of stakeholders in developing countries to develop national trade policy, undertake analysis and identify their interests in international trade negotiations.

Understood as such, TRTA is more focused on the activities *per se*, whereas CB is a more results-based approach that is primarily concerned with outcomes and impacts. CB is therefore a broader concept in that it emphasises TA activities as a means to an end.

The WTO uses TRTA in a broader sense that is more akin to CB and the two terms – as well as TRTA/CB – are therefore used interchangeably in this report. Specifically, based on WTO's *New Strategy for WTO Technical Cooperation for Capacity Building, Growth and Integration* (2001) TRTA and CB are here defined as *training and technical cooperation activities for assistance in implementing commitments, developing trade policy capacity for participation and negotiation, and support for national policy objectives for beneficial integration into the trading system and the global economy*.

Source: www.worldbank.org/research/trade/glossary.htm

The WTO/OECD trade capacity building database (TCBDB) which tracks donors' efforts in the two main areas of trade policy and regulations and trade development, uses the term TRTA/CB, while TRTA and TRCB are used interchangeably in many other documents. As noted in Blouin (2004)¹¹ some agencies and analysts do make a distinction; for instance the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) defines CB as an activity which leads to lasting transformation, "a people-centered, learn-by-

¹⁰ OECD 2001

¹¹ Blouin, Chantal, Working Paper No. 2 *Comparative analysis of DFID and other donors' trade-related capacity building activities*, The North-South Institute, 2004

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doing approach, one that implies a consciously participatory methodology”.¹² In contrast, technical assistance, while involving a sharing of technical knowledge through a limited number of activities, does not necessarily build capacity.

While TRTA is the term preferred by the WTO, its objectives suggest it is interested in building capacity as per the broader WTO/OECD definition, in the area of trade policy and regulations. In this report, therefore, we mainly use TRTA in this broader sense, and where comparisons are made with other countries, drawing on WTO/OECD data, we also use the term TRTA/CB.

Actors involved in TRTA

The WTO's TRTA increasingly involves partnerships among a great number of agencies both in donor governments and on the developing country side, each of which has different priorities, operating arrangements, timeframes and resources. Besides the WTO, multilateral implementing agencies include the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank (WB), the Advisory Centre on WTO Law (ACWL), the Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation (AITIC), and a range of regional organisations and development banks. A number of other United Nations (UN) specialised and voluntary agencies are also involved in the field in their respective areas of competence, including the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Customs Organisation (WCO), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).¹³ At the receiving end there is a wide range of actors involved from ministries of trade and foreign affairs to agriculture, industry and health as well as specialised agencies (such as customs and standards offices).

Such expansion underscores the importance of ensuring that the WTO's programming draws closely on the needs of national authorities to ensure that TRTA meets changing country needs and at the same time that such programming is well-coordinated with that of others in terms of enhancing both relevance and efficiency.

¹² CIDA, *Strategic Approach to Trade Related Capacity Building (TRCB)*, draft document, August 2003, page 4

¹³ UNIDO, for example, is working to help assist with the development of the productive capacities of industry and to build capacities to produce exportable products. See WTO (2003) “Technical Assistance: WTO, UNIDO to work together on trade-related technical assistance”, WTO Press Release, 10 September 2003. The FAO is similarly working in the agricultural sector, particularly to help countries meet product standards and also to analyse the various issues under negotiation. See FAO (2003) “Trade-Related Capacity Building Programme for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry”, FAO Support to the WTO Negotiations, FAO: Rome. The WHO provides considerable support to developing countries with respect to the implementation of public-health friendly intellectual property policies.

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II. Methodology for the Strategic Review of WTO-provided TRTA

As per the Terms of Reference (TORs), the Strategic Review is based on a combination of desk-studies, questionnaires and interviews with TRTA participants, donor representatives, key staff of cooperating organisations and delegates attending WTO meetings in Geneva (see Annexure 1). Field visits were undertaken in nine selected countries that have received WTO-TRTA. The nine countries are Bangladesh, Barbados, Cambodia, Ecuador, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Senegal and Yemen.

This selection was designed to capture a broad representation of TRTA recipients – including both LDCs and others; longstanding, more recent and acceding members; and countries from all geographical regions. WTO TRTA during 2002-04 in the selected countries amounted to US\$2.62 million or some 5.8% of the total value of its TRTA for all countries and 6.2% of all its activities (Table 1a). In terms of all TRTA/CB to the nine countries, the WTO accounted for 2.6% of funding from all sources (Table 1b).¹⁴

Representatives of the Consumer Unity & Trust Society, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales and the North-South Institute (CUTS-FLACSO-NSI) evaluation team interviewed about 15 recipients and 5 officials in each country as well as two or three persons from other TRTA-delivering agencies, donors, private sector representatives, civil society organisations (CSOs) and academics. In some countries, meetings were also held with the national trade policy consultative body. In addition, in Geneva the review team met with representatives of a number of other agencies involved in the delivery and funding of TRTA, as well as with staff at the WTO Secretariat.

The interviews with the recipients and officials followed a standard questionnaire for each group (see Annexures 2 and 3) structured to cover the three main areas in the TORs, namely the WTO's comparative advantage in TRTA, the relevance of its technical assistance, and its management and efficiency. These three areas were also the focus of the semi-structured interviews with other informants. Altogether some 152 questionnaires were completed (118 recipients and 34 supervisors/officials) and a total of 269 people met between February and May 2006. Further details about the respondents are given in Annexure 4. The responses were subsequently analysed, qualitatively and quantitatively, in the light of the TORs and in conjunction with the relevant back-to-office-reports (BTORs) and Participant's Evaluation Forms (PEFs). The findings of the nine country field visits are summarised in Annexure 5.

¹⁴ There are difficulties with the data on activities, which are compounded when they are aggregated. We do not show data here for numbers of TRTA/CB activities for all donors, as there are inconsistencies in the way that these are recorded in aggregate and by country in the WTO/OECD database. Even in the case of the WTO alone, the data must be used cautiously. First, there is no distinction made between different types of activities, for instance between three-day workshops and three-month long policy courses. Second, a WTO activity with participants from, say, ten countries will yield ten records according to the WTO.

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We considered that the WTO's *comparative advantage* in TRTA in a twofold context of demand and supply flows is evolving with increasing complexity over time. On one hand, over the period 2002-2004, TRTA demands have moved beyond knowledge of the juridical content and negotiating history of WTO rules to building analytical capacity (both human and data) and critical negotiating skills. On the other hand, the suppliers of TRTA have increasingly comprised a number of bilateral, regional and multilateral agencies (many of them using universities, think-tanks or private sector organisations to deliver programming), as well as a growing number of domestic providers (universities, trade associations, etc) in some developing countries. This changing context necessarily modifies the role of the WTO and impels it to give growing attention to inter-institutional coordination with all these other suppliers of TRTA.

Therefore, in our field interviews as well as with document-based research, we considered the *comparative strengths and weaknesses* along the following lines:

- WTO trade law and negotiating history
- Neutrality
- Development dimensions
- Negotiations skills
- Technical knowledge and implementation experience
- Development of research and analytical skills
- Case studies/national and regional specificities
- Training and training of trainers
- Working with trade, foreign affairs and other ministries and public agencies
- Working with groups outside government

Based on WTO documents and in the course of the fieldwork, we evaluated the *relevance* of the WTO's TRTA as responding to stated national, institutional and individual officials' needs. This was closely related to the observation that the WTO's strategy must respond to growing and diversified demands. We considered trainees' opinions on the courses they took, their self-assessment of their learning there, their observations on increased capability and implementation capacity afterwards, as well as our own analysis of the longer term impacts of the TRTA on the trade policymaking institutions where they came from.

In terms of *management and efficiency*, with our interviews and through desk research we looked at the steps taken for the organisation of the TRTA courses themselves, such as the selection of the participants and the quality control of the trainers. We also considered the general programming of TRTA, elements such as the management of partnerships, follow-up activities, cost-effectiveness, funding and other logistical matters. Several of these issues are understood as being under a shared responsibility of the WTO Secretariat and the national recipient governments, and the evaluation was done keeping this in mind.

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Table 1a. Share of 9 field visit countries in total WTO TRTA commitments

2002-04 by value and number of activities

Category	Value (US\$ 000)	Value (%)	Number (%)
Total	2,620	5.8	6.2
33111 - Trade mainstreaming in PRSPs/development plans	130	4.1	4.4
33112 - Technical barriers to trade (TBT)	194	6.2	6.0
33113 - Sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS)	154	7.1	8.6
33121 - Trade facilitation procedures	145	6.4	6.2
33122 - Customs valuation	81	8.4	6.4
33123 - Tariff reforms	-	0	0
33130 - Regional trade agreements (RTAs)	21	5.6	5.3
33141 – Accession	11	3.3	3.5
33142 - Dispute settlement	68	5.3	5.5
33143 - Trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS)	71	6.4	6.9
33144 – Agriculture	45	6.0	7.3
33145 – Services	173	5.5	6.0
33146 - Tariff negotiations - NAMA	206	5.8	5.8
33147 – Rules	80	6.3	8.1
33148 - Training in trade negotiation techniques	185	7.4	7.3
33151 - Trade and environment	117	4.9	5.2
33152 - Trade and competition	103	4.6	5.0
33153 - Trade and investment	39	5.1	5.5
33154 - Transparency and government procurement	69	4.7	5.3
33181 - Trade education/training	728	6.0	7.1

Source: WTO/OECD Trade Capacity Building Database

Table 1a shows that the WTO TRTA in the nine countries was concentrated in trade education/training, followed by tariff negotiations/non-agricultural market access (NAMA), technical barriers to trade (TBT), trade negotiations techniques, and services. The nine countries accounted for a relatively higher share of WTO spending in customs valuation, trade negotiations techniques, SPS, trade facilitation techniques and trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPs), and for a relatively higher share of activities in SPS, rules, agriculture, trade negotiations techniques and trade education/training.

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Table 1b. Share of WTO in total trade policy and regulations TRTA in 9 field visit countries

2002-04 by value

Category	Amount (%)
Total	2.6
33111 - Trade mainstreaming in PRSPs/development plans	1.0
33112 - Technical barriers to trade (TBT)	1.1
33113 - Sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS)	13.9
33121 - Trade facilitation procedures	0.4
33122 - Customs valuation	6.8
33123 - Tariff reforms	0.0
33130 - Regional trade agreements (RTAs)	0.4
33141 – Accession	0.1
33142 - Dispute settlement	55.8
33143 - Trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS)	4.9
33144 – Agriculture	89.6
33145 – Services	63.5
33146 - Tariff negotiations - NAMA	42.4
33147 – Rules	100.0
33148 - Training in trade negotiation techniques	5.1
33151 - Trade and environment	5.8
33152 - Trade and competition	7.1
33153 - Trade and investment	40.5
33154 - Transparency and government procurement	100.0
33181 - Trade education/training	28.0

Source: WTO/OECD Trade Capacity Building Database

Table 1b shows that in terms of funding, the WTO has been a relatively important source of TRTA in the nine countries for training in certain areas, notably rules and transparency in government procurement, agriculture, services, and dispute settlement. In contrast it has played a relatively minor role in training on issues such as tariff reforms, accession, regional trade agreements (RTAs), customs valuation, trade mainstreaming in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)/development plans. We do not show here any data by number of activities because of inconsistencies in reporting by TRTA providers to the WTO/OECD database.

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III. Evaluations of other agencies involved in TRTA

Under the umbrella of TRTA, a broad range of activities is covered including: seminars, workshops, training programmes in trade rules and procedures, courses on negotiating skills, legal advice and assistance with preparing draft laws, assistance for making use of the WTO's dispute settlement machinery, technical missions, the provision of manuals, guides, documents, data research and consulting practices, as well as funding for specific programmes and initiatives (such as improved customs facilities and infrastructure development, export insurance programmes, support to exporters and cooperative initiatives among businesses, etc).

While some donors focus on supporting greater participation by developing countries in trade negotiations and improved implementation of trade agreements, others focus on support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries. TRTA/CB efforts have also included activities to promote developing country imports, enhance productive capacity, support national policy making processes, and build capacity for civil society to monitor the implementation and results of trade.¹⁵

The OECD estimated that commitments to TRTA/CB in 2001 and 2002 were equal to some 4.8% of aid commitments (on a par with the share going to basic education or basic health). Total TRTA/CB activities totalled some US\$2,127 million in the same period.¹⁶ In addition, in 2000 and 2001 an average of US\$8.1 billion committed to economic infrastructure (some 20% of all aid) was devoted to building infrastructure (e.g., transport, energy and communications) for international trade.¹⁷

Several evaluations have argued that beneficiary-orientation and relationship building are usually weak points and that familiarity with the recipients is often missing. They have suggested that TRTA/CB should be better adapted to the context of the recipient countries. Since each country is different and has different priorities, responses to needs have to be sequenced differently. The question as stated by Prowse (2002) is not so much whether there is a need for a significant increase in aid for trade as how to deliver it¹⁸.

¹⁵ These variations are noted and described in WTO/OECD (2002) *First Joint WTO/OECD Report on Trade-Related Technical Assistance and Capacity Building (TRTA/CB)*.

¹⁶ WTO/OECD (2003) *Second Joint WTO/OECD Report on Trade-Related Technical Assistance and Capacity Building (TRTA/CB)*

¹⁷ The OECD classifies trade-related aid under three headings: 1) trade policy and regulations—to help countries reform and prepare for closer integration in the multilateral trading system; 2) trade development—to help develop the business climate and promote trade to business sectors; and 3) infrastructure—to help countries build the physical infrastructure required to move goods and exports successfully.

¹⁸ Prowse, S. The Role of International and National Agencies in Trade Related Capacity Building, *The World Economy*, vol. 25, pp 1235-1261, 2002

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This section discusses the findings of the most recent evaluations of some selected agencies in order to highlight where the WTO's own TRTA programmes might find a comparative advantage and how it can play a constructive role in advancing the Aid for Trade agenda, as it complements the agreements made in the Doha Development Ministerial conference. The coverage here is meant to be indicative, not exhaustive. Many other bilateral, regional and multilateral initiatives exist which may also have been the subject of evaluation and from which lessons might also be drawn. (These include, for example, European Union (EU) efforts in respect of its relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, the creation of an EU-LDC network which includes a trade component, and the establishment of the ACWL, which is based in Geneva and assists developing countries to bring cases under the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism.)¹⁹

United Kingdom's Department for International Development

The evaluation of trade-related work of the Department for International Development (DFID)²⁰ focused on bilateral TRCB projects and programmes, but also involved some interviews with lead multilateral agencies (UNCTAD, WTO) and other bilateral donors, to provide a context for the UK evaluation. There were five country case studies in which DFID-funded projects in trade policy and regulations and trade development were reviewed. Following the OECD *Guidelines*, the dimensions addressed were: relevance, performance and success, as well as sustainability and the linkages made to poverty reduction, gender equality and regional integration.

During 2000-03, DFID gave priority to business support services, trade finance, mainstreaming trade and trade facilitation. The evaluation found it had been a leader in efforts to link trade to poverty reduction in research, policy analysis, dialogue, and policy-making. But it was less able to integrate gender equality. Its trade policy and regulations projects contributed to developing countries' capacity in four areas: build knowledge about WTO and trade issues; support governments to integrate an approach to trade policy making; build a government-society trade policy dialogue; and strengthen connections between trade and poverty reduction in the discussion and practice of trade policy. DFID also tried to bring a poverty focus to the multilateral programmes that it supports directly (UNCTAD, WB, UNIDO, ITC and others).

¹⁹ For further information, see European Commission (2003) *Making Globalisation Work for Everyone: The European Union and World Trade*, December, and for the EU-LDC Network: <http://www.acp-eu-trade.org/euldcnetwork.html>. The Netherlands government also undertook an evaluation of its TRTA financing in 2003; see Evaluation of TRTA. Three Geneva-based Organisations: ACWL, AITIC and QUNO, by Nora Plaisier and Paul Wijmenga, Ecorys/NEI, Rotterdam, June 2004, available at <http://www.quno.org/geneva/pdf/2004intellectualPropertyEval-iob.pdf>.

²⁰ The evaluation was undertaken by a team led by the North-South Institute. See Ann Weston, Chantal Blouin and Leelananda De Silva *Evaluation of DFID Support to Trade Related Capacity Building. Synthesis Report*, February 2005. This and other reports from the DFID evaluation are available at NSI's website www.nsi-ins.ca.

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The key challenge for DFID was found to have been to move from technical assistance to capacity building in all these endeavours. The strategies suggested were: to move beyond responding to short-term needs through the provision of technical assistance to building capacity through the creation of trade knowledge networks; to elaborate a strategy to involve universities, think-tanks, chambers of commerce and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the development of such networks;²¹ to go beyond workshops and courses to support experiential learning (i.e. participation in the trade negotiating process itself, study tours and internships); to involve stakeholders beyond ministries to assess TRCB needs; to maintain flexibility in project design to account for changing local conditions; to build TRCB components into broader projects to mainstream trade issues; to increase transparency in decision-making about TRCB projects (use of funds, timelines, choice of subcontractors, etc); to maintain trade-related capacities beyond the initial phase with continuous investment to offset staff turnover and the evolving nature of trade negotiations; and to improve linkages between trade policy projects and trade development projects.

European Commission

The evaluation²² focused on trade policy and regulations and trade development projects in the period 1996-2000. It involved field visits to Kenya, Moldova, Tunisia, Vietnam and Zambia. The evaluation was hampered by a lack of accurate data on trade-related assistance (TRA), particularly as the database did not capture the TRA elements of other projects nor the differences between types of output (technical assistance, training, etc), and difficulties in distinguishing between commitments, engagements and disbursements.

The evaluation was quite critical of the European Commission's (EC's) TRA programming documents, finding them to be weak in terms of assessing national trade policies and priorities, though their regional programming was usually based on a deeper analysis. Instead needs were usually derived from consultations with various officials in recipient countries (with no particular criteria for whom to include). There was no use of systematic diagnostic or analytical surveys to verify priorities, let alone detailed coordination with other donors. The EC TRA had followed a reactive, piecemeal approach rather than an overall strategy or framework for its TRTA projects. One of the recommendations to address these problems was to train EC staff on trade and development issues and the elaboration of the EC's guidelines for TRA.

EC programming varied between regions. Regional integration was the main channel in the ACP, while the focus in other regions was on private and/or productive sector development and WTO accession, with increasing demand for more technical assistance. Many different types of activities were supported which made it difficult to draw conclusions about their individual contribution.

²¹ They could be used as implementing agencies for TRCB projects or project sub-components. This may require longer term or multi-phase programming.

²² ADE in association with IBM and EPU-NTUA. *Evaluation of Trade-Related Assistance by the European Commission in Third Countries, Final report*, Volume 1, May 2004.

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In general, however, it seemed that the EC's TRA projects had contributed to increased knowledge and understanding of the multilateral trading system (MTS) at the national and regional levels, yet there was still limited capacity on basic trade issues. On the other side, the projects were often delayed and lacked the flexibility needed to adapt to changes in the trading environment and beneficiaries' needs. It was suggested that project implementation could be improved by broadening the steering committees to include a broader range of stakeholders besides immediate beneficiaries.

There was little coordination between regional and national programming to ensure that they complement and reinforce each other. The report recommended that regional institutions be involved in the development of country strategies and national indicative programmes. In terms of trade development, the evaluation found that it was very hard to link project activities to changes in aggregate data. But it concluded that the main constraints on project impact and sustainability were the poor business environment and regulatory framework in recipient countries, and these needed to be taken into account when designing TRA programmes.

The projects had not addressed crosscutting issues such as gender or the environment partly because they were already quite complex. More rapid disbursements might be achieved by the use of trade trust funds, sector-wide approaches, budget aid and allowance for short-term specialised expertise. And the evaluation recommended that technical trade assistance activities be built into projects relating to agriculture, private sector development and SMEs.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

While UNCTAD remains a relatively small agency in the area of TRTA, it has developed a niche role with an emphasis on the 'development dimension' of international trade, with a particular focus on LDCs. At UNCTAD IX (Midrand, 1996) and X (Bangkok, 2000), the organisation's mandate was strengthened with the launching of two UNCTAD technical assistance instruments: the 'Positive Agenda' and the Commercial Diplomacy Programmes. The mandate to provide support to RTAs among developing countries was also strengthened.

An external evaluation was carried out covering activities from UNCTAD X in 2000 up to March 2005.²³ The key findings were that the selection process and its marketing needed to broaden the diversity of participants and to attract candidates who can derive the maximum possible advantage from the courses. Its collaboration with regional UN commissions and local academic institutions should be substantially improved to complement the 'generic knowledge' provided by UNCTAD with the 'local knowledge' required by the participants.

²³ Presser, Lazzarotto and Sheikh, 2005

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Partnerships with the research and academic communities were needed to raise the long-term quality and relevance of the participation of the developing countries in international negotiations – the establishment of the WTO Training Institute (now the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation) being mentioned in particular.

The evaluation suggested that closer coordination should be established between UNCTAD trainers and the selected regional and local speakers during the preparation of courses by exchanging the training materials and other inputs well in advance, in order to ensure that UNCTAD's presentations were related to the regional and local speakers' presentations, and vice versa. Such a move would in turn help to increase the regional and local capacity in these issues.

Another recommendation was to define feasible impact indicators prior to the implementation of future courses. It was suggested that course delivery should gradually rely more on problem-based learning rather than lectures. Case studies, simulations and hands-on training should be used more extensively to keep a high degree of personal involvement and to further stimulate group discussion. As a follow-up on training, information exchange mechanisms should stimulate the networking of the trainees. Most trainees required continued contact with the secretariat, and in particular with the trainers, to obtain advice, analysis and general information after the end of the training course, and particularly as they began to share the acquired knowledge and information in their respective ministries.

To allow impact at the societal level, UNCTAD could become involved in encouraging home-grown teaching and research responding to the needs of policy makers and other stakeholders, and helping to enhance understanding of country-level implications of WTO agreements and changes in the global environment. UNCTAD should develop strategies for building the statistical capacity needed for evidence-based research and policy making.

World Bank²⁴

The World Bank provides technical assistance in all areas of trade. It is an organisation-wide activity, mostly undertaken as part of country lending but also by its training arm, the World Bank Institute (WBI) and various networks.²⁵ Most work is focused on support for customs reform, institutional strengthening and analysis of trade policy reform. The renewed interest in trade capacity building (TCB) at the global level has increased pressures for the Bank to coordinate its work in this area even while TCB continues to occur in a dispersed fashion.

²⁴ This section draws largely from World Bank, Office of External Evaluation, *Evaluation of World Bank Support for Trade*, 2005 (unprocessed).

²⁵ The Finance and Private Sector Development Network of the World Bank, for example, assists countries in improving the business environment, thereby encouraging investment, and facilitating trade through improved logistics in ports and related transport infrastructure.

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A new Trade Department was established in 2002 to expand training. Lending for TCB more than doubled from US\$132 million in 1998-2000 to US\$267 million in 2001-03.

The WBI in particular undertakes capacity building extending to WTO-relevant issues. The central component is a modular course also provided through distance learning with the aid of video conferencing, electronic debates, and a website linked to the joint World Bank/WTO Trade and Development website.²⁶ The strengths of this programme are that it addresses several levels and demands of policy, helping in the development of a national strategy to manage the benefits of accession. The WBI attaches particular importance to the selection of participants and takes a pro-active stance in that matter. Research assists training through the Bank's Integrated Programme of Research and Capacity-building to enhance participation in the WTO negotiations on agriculture.

The weaknesses are in the glaring gap between capacity building to liberalise trade and the lack of assistance to help countries manage external shocks and adjustment costs related to that same trade liberalisation. There is a neglect of pressing demands at the regional level, such as the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) in Africa and bilateral free trade arrangements/agreements (FTAs), which is compounded by lack of a clear focus on these negotiations in the Bank's trade research and capacity building. In addition, there is scant attention to the distributional outcomes of trade liberalisation. Given the purported importance of TCB in the trade agenda, too few resources have been devoted to training activities. Furthermore, development of databases and tools for trade policy analysis has been very slow.

International Trade Centre

A private consortium undertook the evaluation²⁷ of the International Trade Centre between 2003 and 2005, focusing on its comparative advantage, performance and effectiveness. Later, governance, donor and human resources coordination were added. The evaluators found that ITC had a strong comparative advantage in trade development, in contrast to the strength of its parent organisations, UNCTAD and WTO, which concentrated on trade policy and regulation. ITC was further supported by its self-developed competencies in business advocacy, knowledge of specialised aspects of trade policy as they affect private enterprises, as well as its long experience in networking private actors for trade promotion aims.

While the evaluation mostly endorsed ITC's style of intervention, it noted a need for more systematic needs assessments and a measurement of products' costs in terms of real utilisation by recipients, as well as a stronger drive to update them according to changing needs. It also criticised the limited understanding of ITC of the business sector in LDCs, leaving out the informal economy, with a consequent gender bias.

²⁶ www.itd.org

²⁷ DMI Associates in association with Ticon DCA, Copenhagen DC & ACE-Global, *Evaluation of the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO*, Volume 1: Synthesis Report, 2005

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ITC was found to be visibly handicapped by its lack of multiyear funding and the frequent lags in the reception of funds promised by external donors. Also, the size of the organisation was too large to continue providing just generic or global products but too small to develop more region- and country-specific products. It was recommended either to downsize and continue its current task more efficiently, or to enlarge and generate more recipient-specific business assistance. It was considered that the change of management in 2006 due to retirements was a good time for ITC to reform itself by choosing one of these two paths in order to reach a better equilibrium between expenditures and global impact.

Integrated Framework for TRTA to LDCs

The evaluation of the Integrated Framework was carried out in 2004 by a private consulting firm and addressed two key issues – the expected contribution of trade to LDC poverty reduction, and the effectiveness of the IF as a means to mainstream trade into LDC development plans and PRSPs.²⁸ It considered stakeholders' awareness, understanding and expectations of the IF, the extent of stakeholders' cooperation, factors affecting the IF's success, implementation of previous recommendations, and governance.

The evaluation was completed very quickly, allowing for only 2-day visits to 17 LDCs, and an invitational electronic survey. Qualitative measures were primarily used as it was too early for measurable results in terms of poverty reduction, and as there were few measurable goals and objectives against which to measure operational results. Some data was collected from the survey, but it had a very limited response.

The report identified some progress at the agency level and within several LDCs, where diagnostic trade integration studies (DTIS) had been completed and discussed, and efforts were being made to integrate trade into the PRSP process. To achieve concrete results in more countries, it proposed changes in LDC agencies and donors in planning, programming and implementation. It called for the use of results-based management (RBM) and a Logical Framework specifying impacts, outcomes and outputs in order to clarify the IF's 'final destination' (what it seeks to achieve and by when), and the 'roadmap' for getting there.

LDCs saw the IF as a mechanism for providing additional funding for the projects identified in the diagnostic studies. LDCs, donors and agencies thought the IF should address supply-side constraints, including infrastructure. Donors and agencies were however reluctant at the country-level to link their TRCB assistance to the IF or to use the IF as a basis for enhanced coordination of their work. They expressed concerns about its effectiveness, and wanted to link the DTIS Action Plan Matrix to the PRSP process, as with other aid and financial support. The report recommended a donor facilitator work to improve coordination.

²⁸ Capra International and TFOC, *IF Evaluation*, WTO, WT/IFSC/6/Rev.2 and Add.1, 2003

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It also suggested that LDCs ask donors to bid on projects, which were identified in the DTIS. Diagnostic studies were found to be complicated, over-ambitious, and without clear priorities. Most LDCs lacked the capacities to manage, implement or promote the IF agenda and a training specific for the IF Focal Point was recommended in order to address that issue in each country. To improve the IF oversight committees, a smaller Working Group was proposed to accelerate decision-making and reduce inter-agency-driven political posturing. This was to be complemented by consultations done through a strengthened IF Secretariat that would oversee an expanded capacity building programme, accommodate new LDC recipients, undertake a communications programme and manage a new network of IF Focal Points.

Recent enhancements to the IF address some of those issues.²⁹ They include a significant, multiyear expansion of resources for technical assistance and capacity building and for strengthened governance and increased ownership at the country level, through more flexible national management structures. The main objective is still to mainstream trade into national development strategies to ensure policy coherence, increase donor coordination, and maximise financing of trade-related projects through bilateral and multilateral channels.

Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme

The Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme, operated by the ITC, UNCTAD and the WTO, was the subject of a mid-term evaluation in 2000 and a summary evaluation in 2002. The summary evaluation involved field visits to ten countries – eight countries benefiting from JITAP and two non-JITAP ‘benchmark’ countries.³⁰ Besides a review of relevant documents, meetings were held with key stakeholders, including inter-institutional committees (IICs), private sector organisations and members of the NGO and academic communities interested in trade issues in each country. The evaluators followed a qualitative approach, partly reflecting the lack of indicators and data collected during the programmes that might have helped in the measurement of impact. The only data available related to outputs (numbers of people trained etc).

The key findings and recommendations were that JITAP was an important instrument in familiarising and developing capacities on the MTS in the eight beneficiary countries. It enabled MTS issues to be discussed not only within government, but also with the private sector and civil society. Many outreach programmes stimulated by JITAP and also IICs, enabled broader participation.

²⁹ Nielson, 2005

³⁰ Leelananda De Silva and Ann Weston, *Summary Evaluation of the Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme (JITAP)*, ITC, June 2002

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JITAP also achieved an effective blending of national and inter-country (sub-regional) arrangements to implement programme activities. While it had not yet linked trade and poverty explicitly, some IICs and export-sector strategies were conducive to exploring such linkages, and it was recommended that they be explored in the next phase. JITAP had successfully contributed to the development of relevant human resource capacities, developing a training culture on MTS issues. While some local institutions were stimulated to expand their training activities in this as a result, many more local universities, business schools and similar training institutions could be included.

Overall, the joint and integrated approach to trade issues had raised the credibility and the profile of the three organisations involved – ITC, UNCTAD and WTO – and also contributed to better understanding of trade issues in participating countries. Addressing three broad issue areas – negotiating capacities, enabling application of agreed rules and creating opportunities for export expansion – was essential for this, but the JITAP's design of 'clusters' to segment training had somewhat diluted this effect.

Other problems with JITAP's implementation were: irregular financing, management problems in Geneva and at the country level, lack of flexibility in adjusting work plans, and centralisation of authority. No judgement on JITAP's cost-effectiveness was possible given the lack of meaningful financial statistics.

Summary

To sum up, this section has reviewed recent evaluations of TRTA/CB undertaken by a range of donors and agencies, including the IF and JITAP in which the WTO is also involved. As summarised in Table 2, several strengths and weaknesses have been identified. In particular the review has highlighted a series of challenges in terms of approach to training, content, and management:

- moving beyond technical assistance to capacity building,
- mainstreaming training outside core ministries and government,
- linking trade policies to poverty reduction and distributional issues,
- enhancing national and regional content to training including research on bilateral and regional trade policies,
- training in analytical skills and the creation of databases,
- supporting experiential learning,
- flexibility in programming to respond to evolving national needs and priorities,
- coordinating TRTA at the national and regional levels, and
- short-term and irregular financing.

It is important to bear these in mind when addressing various aspects of the WTO's TRTA in the following sections and considering where the WTO can play a most constructive role, as will be developed in the scenarios for what we see as future options.

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Table 2. Summary of strengths & weaknesses of selected TRTA providers and programmes

Institution	Strengths	Weaknesses
DFID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkages between TRTA and poverty reduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge to respond to long term needs • Room for more deliberate strategy to expand knowledge networks • Scope for more participation in needs assessments and decision-making as well as greater transparency
EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to increased knowledge and understanding of the MTS at the national and regional levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No use of systematic diagnostic or analytical surveys to verify priorities • No detailed co-ordination with other donors • Frequent delays and lack of flexibility • Little co-ordination between regional and national programming • Lack of addressing cross-cutting issues
UNCTAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to building capacity for apprehending intricacies of the MTS • Central role in facilitating and encouraging the expansion of South-South trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal monitoring mechanism to remain in contact with former UNCTAD trainees • Co-ordination challenges to ensure link between UNCTAD providers and local recipients • Top-down approach to TA • Not enough definition of feasible impact indicators prior to the implementation of future courses
World Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic use of needs assessment procedures • Regular statement of goals, indication of how the project's results will be evaluated and where to find additional information on the problem to be solved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow introduction of tools for trade policy analysis • Bias toward particular kinds of economic policy advice – programmes tailored to facilitate liberalisation rather than addressing development issues • WB activities crowding out attention to alternative economic proposals and role of other agencies
ITC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good track record in co-operation and co-ordination with development partners • Capacity, neutrality and impartiality to support developing countries • Relevant and efficient interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level of utilisation of some products • General tendency of product proliferation • Lack of ITC field presence • No formal systematic processes of needs assessment or for monitoring results • Weaknesses in governance and accountability structures • Complex financing structure

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Institution	Strengths	Weaknesses
IF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts to integrate trade into the PRSP process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences in planning schedules and programme objectives among partners • Complicated and ambitious diagnostic studies • Concern over ability to guarantee sustainable financing, effective co-ordinated delivery of TA, and demands of IF conditionality
JITAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad participation of stakeholders • Effective blending of national and inter-country arrangements to implement programme activities • Successful contribution to the development of human resource capacities • Raised credibility and profile of ITC, UNCTAD and WTO • Contribution to a more holistic and comprehensive view of trade issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No explicit link between trade and poverty • Scope for greater engagement with local training institutions • Extensive fragmentation at the field level • Financial constraints and irregular flow of donor funding • Management problems in Geneva and at the country level • Lack of flexibility in adjusting work plans • Little decentralisation of authority

IV. Overview of WTO's TRTA

There are three types of objectives with regard to the WTO's TRTA activities. First, there are specific objectives set out for every TRTA activity undertaken. Second, there are product objectives set out in annual Technical Assistance and Training Plans. Finally, there are the seven strategic objectives endorsed at Doha in the *New Strategy for WTO Technical Cooperation for Capacity Building, Growth and Integration* (New Strategy, 2001). These are:

- Coordinate effectively with key development partners to enable beneficiaries of TRTA to participate meaningfully in the system;
- Assist beneficiary countries to understand their rights, implement their obligations and improve their capacity to draw on the benefits of the system. To this end, technical assistance will focus on establishing partnerships with beneficiary countries to better understand and use the rules;
- Increase the volume and quality of TRTA in response to demand;
- Provide a focused response to the priorities expressed by beneficiaries, within a coherent trade policy framework and companion policies;
- Support national efforts in building institutional capacity;
- Ensure that TRTA is delivered within a coherent policy framework (not on a stand-alone basis) through careful coordination with bilateral and multilateral development partners;
- Provide legal advice and assistance in respect of dispute settlement, pursuant to Article 27.2 of the Dispute Settlement Understanding.

As for product objectives, the organisation breaks down its TRTA activities into five categories (which, in turn, contain sub-categories):

- General WTO-related training and technical assistance;
- Specialised and advanced training and technical assistance;
- Academic support for training and capacity building;
- Support training and technical assistance facilities; and
- Other programmes and support activities with funding requirements.³¹

These are described in greater detail in Box IV.1.

³¹ See, for instance, the Technical Assistance and Training Plan for 2006 (WT/COMTD/W/142) for the full breakdown of WTO's TRTA activities.

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Box IV.1: The WTO's TRTA Products

The WTO now offers over 50 different TRTA 'products', which it groups into five categories.³²

General WTO-related training and technical assistance

This category consists of three sub-categories: (i) trade policy courses (TPCs) – Geneva-based and regional, which last 12 weeks, (ii) Geneva-based introduction courses (3 weeks), and (iii) regional and sub-regional short TPCs and Doha Development Agenda (DDA) advance training programme (1-2 weeks). These activities primarily aim to give government officials a basic grounding on WTO and international trade rules. While the TPCs date back to the days of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the regional TPCs (RTPCs) were introduced in 2001 and are delivered in partnership with selected universities in all regions, using regional academics and trade policy specialists alongside WTO and other international experts. The shorter regional TPCs are usually carried out in partnership with other organisations such as regional secretariats.

Specialised and advanced training and technical assistance

This category comprises (i) Geneva-based specialised courses (ii) national TA activities, (iii) regional seminars and workshops, (iv) trade negotiations techniques, and (v) national and regional outreach activities for parliamentarians and civil society. These activities usually involve trainers from the WTO's Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation (ITTC) and a relevant operational division, though outside experts may also be used, and the typical training lasts 2-3 days, with the exception of the specialised courses, which are usually 1-2 weeks. In the case of national activities to which each country has the right to two or three each year, the level of knowledge ranges from broad and general to more specialised activities, depending on what is requested. Regional seminars (which alone account for some 20 distinct WTO TRTA products) are increasingly intended to provide more advanced training.

Academic support for training and capacity building: an integrated approach

This category is geared towards building sustainable institutional capacities at national levels on WTO-related matters, working in close cooperation with regional inter-governmental organisations and academic institutions. Besides involvement in running the RTPCs, there are workshops for university professors on WTO matters (to prepare for the RTPCs and discuss curriculum development inter alia), support programmes for doctoral students, programmes for visiting academics, research collaboration³³ and dissemination of WTO documents to universities.

Support training and technical assistance facilities

This category includes a wide variety of Geneva-based activities such as topic-specific symposia, WTO introduction days, the "Geneva Week" and the Newsletter for non-residents, ad hoc assistance to delegations, servicing regional groups, advice on legal issues, and four different types of trainee programmes or internships. Additional activities delivered in the field include

³² Technical Assistance and Training Plan 2005, WT/COMTD/W/133/Rev.2, 16 December 2004

³³ Some of this research may enrich the content of ITTC training. For instance, in 2006 the WTO's Research and Economic Division produced a book with material prepared by researchers from many different countries, *Meeting the Challenges of WTO Participation: 45 Case-Studies*, available at www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/casestudies_e/casestudies_s.htm.

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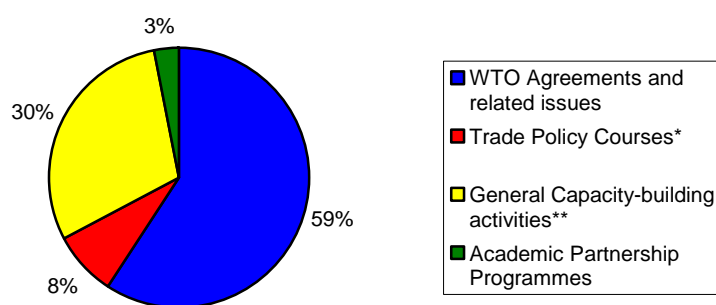
trade policy clinics, WTO reference centres, and TA within the Trade Policy Review (TPR) mechanism framework. Finally the WTO assists beneficiaries in conducting needs assessments; and developing TA using distance learning and information technology.

Other programmes and support activities with funding requirements

WTO experts are increasingly involved in seminars and workshops organised by other organisations. The WTO is also a key player in JITAP (focussing on technical support to WTO reference centres and national enquiry points on SPS, TBT, Services and TRIPs) the IF (through its participation in national workshops/seminars in IF recipient countries and in IF management).

As Chart 1 underlines, the bulk of activities in 2005 focussed on the WTO agreements and related issues, followed by general capacity-building activities, the trade policy courses and the academic programmes. In terms of funding, Chart 2 shows that roughly a third of funding for 2006 was intended to go to general courses and another third to more specialised courses, and only 3% to academic programming. The remainder of expenses were to be for support training and technical assistance facilities (12%), additional short-term contract staff (7%) and overheads (10%).

**Chart 1. WTO TRTA by subject matter – Share of number of activities, 2005
(N=462)**



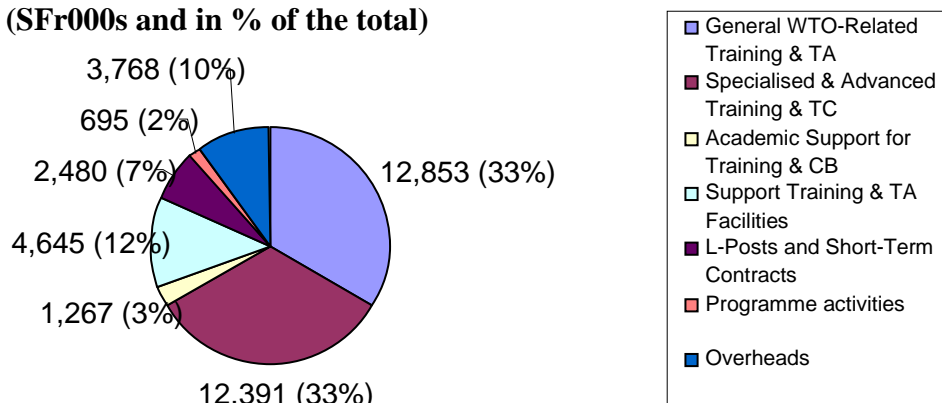
* Includes e-Training/Distance learning, specialised courses, introductory courses and introduction days

** Includes Geneva Week, IF, JITAP and reference centres

Source: WTO, *Annual Report on Technical Assistance and Training (1 January to 31 December 2005)*, WT/COMTD/W/146, 6 February 2006

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Chart 2. WTO TA and Training Plan Expenses, 2006
(SFr000s and in % of the total)



Source: WTO, Committee on Trade and Development, Note on the Meeting of 5 October 2005, WT/COMTD/M/54, 20 December 2005

To ensure long term funding, the DDAGTF was established in 2001, which relies on voluntary contributions, averaging circa US\$20 million per year. This compares with some US\$800 million per year in total bilateral and multilateral TRTA in trade policy and regulations, and underscores the importance of ensuring that the WTO's TRTA programming is well coordinated with that of others in terms of ensuring it is both relevant and efficient. Demand for TRTA has grown, but so has the supply from agencies keen to be involved in its delivery.

In addition to channelling donor funding through its DDAGTF, the WTO has also taken up a central role in improving coordination among donors through the Trade Capacity Building Database (established jointly with the OECD in 2002) which maintains details and funding levels of bilateral, regional and multilateral donors.

In order to deal with the increasing needs, expectations and the responsibility granted by its own much-enlarged budget since 2002, the WTO has engaged with other multilateral and regional organisations in providing TRTA. Specifically, the WTO works closely on a formal basis with the World Bank, UNCTAD, ITC, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the context of IF and JITAP. Besides that, it has signed 25 or so Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) since 2002, though not all are active.

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Under those arrangements, the WTO provides, besides its own TPCs in Geneva and other regions, general and specialised/advanced technical assistance through:

- Workshops, seminars, technical missions, on specific agreements and/or national issues, held in a country or region;
- Courses on trade negotiations skills; and
- Outreach activities for parliamentarians and civil society, albeit at a much lesser frequency.

On a still smaller scale, it also supplies support for conducting TRTA needs assessment (only since 2005) and a range of academic and technical assistance support activities.

Planning for these activities, originally expected to respond to recipient countries' stated needs, is for the most part agency-designed in annual plans. While a longer work plan would obviously strengthen cooperation with other agencies and deepen dialogue with stakeholders, a more ad-hoc manner was selected to gain flexibility, accounting for probable needs of fine-tuning in later years, to accompany the ongoing negotiations in the Doha Round, and to take stock of expected requests from member countries for nation-specific TRTA.

Needs assessments are intended to help governments establish priorities amongst the WTO's 28 agreements on which they could apply for assistance. The WTO is providing support in various ways. It has prepared guidelines for use by government officials and discussion by WTO staff during their TPRs, though these are done with intervals of several years in most developing countries.

Some national officials during their secondment to the WTO Secretariat, under the Dutch-funded internship programme, have been tasked with contributing to national TRTA needs assessments following these guidelines. Finally, the IF provides some TRCB needs assessment as part of the diagnostic studies for some 30 least developed countries involved in the IF.

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Table 3. Total WTO TRTA by category (2002-2004)

Category	Amount (US\$ 000)	% of WTO Total	% of all TRTA
33181 - Trade education / training	12,212	27.03	7.32
33146 - Tariff negotiations - non-agricultural market access	3,570	7.90	37.97
33111 - Trade mainstreaming in PRSPs/development plans	3,200	7.08	0.94
33112 - Technical barriers to trade (TBT)	3,134	6.94	2.49
33145 - Services	3,132	6.93	11.29
33148 - Training in trade negotiation techniques	2,517	5.57	11.43
33151 - Trade and environment	2,403	5.32	2.71
33121 - Trade facilitation procedures	2,254	4.99	0.31
33152 - Trade and competition	2,247	4.97	2.34
33113 - Sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS)	2,169	4.80	1.77
33154 - Transparency and government procurement	1,476	3.27	8.80
33147 – Rules	1,287	2.85	29.47
33142 - Dispute settlement	1,282	2.84	16.06
33143 - Trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS)	1,112	2.46	3.19
33122 - Customs valuation	965	2.14	1.23
33153 - Trade and investment	780	1.73	3.67
33144 – Agriculture	740	1.64	2.88
33130 - Regional trade agreements (RTAs)	370	0.82	0.09
33141 – Accession	337	0.75	0.57
33123 - Tariff reforms	0	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	45,185	100.00	1.88

Source: WTO/OECD Database

Table 3 shows the different types of TRTA activities conducted by the WTO by itself or in association with other suppliers, and compares these with other donors' TRTA. More than a quarter (27%) of funding has been allocated to Trade education and training, with another four kinds of activities at around 7%, jointly accounting for another 28% (Tariff Negotiations-NAMA, Trade mainstreaming in PRSPs/development plans, TBT, and Services).

All these are of key relevance to developing countries in the Doha Round. They are, however, not the only subjects of concern to the recipients of this TRTA; a similar case can be made for several others that have received much less funding from the WTO. In terms of how the WTO compares with total TRTA by all donors in these categories, the table shows that the WTO has played a relatively important role in providing training on tariff negotiations/NAMA, rules, dispute settlement, trade negotiations techniques, and services.

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Another way to look at the WTO TRTA activities is through its financial allocation to recipient countries, classified according to their income level and geographical location. Table 4 indicates that the WTO spent around 40% of its budget in the least developed countries, and another 35% in low and low middle-income countries. Upper-middle and high-income countries have absorbed the remaining 15%. Overall, these proportions in TRTA expenditures have remained more or less the same for the three years under review here.

Table 4. WTO TRTA by income group of recipient countries (2002-2004)

TRTA by income group, value (US\$ 000)	2002	%	2003	%	2004	%
Least Developed Countries	4,267	39.45	5,856	40.20	7,200	39.90
Other Low Income Countries	1,502	13.89	1,921	13.19	2,694	14.93
Low Middle Income Countries	2,404	22.23	3,205	22.00	3,865	21.42
Upper Middle Income Countries	1,381	12.77	2,233	15.33	2,359	13.07
High Income Countries	51	0.47	81	0.56	74	0.41
CEECs/NIS*	650	6.01	511	3.51	621	3.44
MADCTs**	560	5.18	760	5.22	1,233	6.83
Total	10,815	100.00	14,567	100.00	18,046	100.00

Note: Excludes TRTA not allocated by country

* CEECs/NIS are Central and Eastern European countries and Newly Independent States

** MADCTs are More Advanced Developing Countries and Territories

Source: WTO/OECD Database

Table 5 notes the regional distribution of WTO TRTA, with Africa receiving close to 48% of the funding, Asia 19%, while Latin America and the Caribbean (North, Central and South America) had around 16%, and the remainder went to developing Europe, the Middle East, and Oceania. The biggest change during this period was the increased allocation to Far East Asia, which was offset by a decline in Europe.

One can therefore conclude that the WTO's TRTA has been concentrated on least developed countries, located mostly in Africa, and less in the remaining continents. Fewer funds have gone to low and middle low-income countries in Latin America, the Middle East and Far East Asia.

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Table 5. WTO TRTA by region of recipient countries

TRTA by region, value (US\$ 000)	2002	%	2003	%	2004	%	Total 2002-04 %
Africa	5,076	46.93	7,270	49.91	8,415	46.63	47.81
North & Central America	964	8.91	1,688	11.59	1,803	9.99	10.26
South America	594	5.49	1,069	7.34	972	5.39	6.07
Far East Asia	720	6.66	1,135	7.79	2,106	11.67	9.12
South & Central Asia	1,112	10.28	1,260	8.65	1,919	10.63	9.88
Middle East	619	5.72	709	4.87	735	4.07	4.75
Europe	1,154	10.67	861	5.91	1,124	6.23	7.23
Oceania	576	5.33	574	3.94	971	5.38	4.88
TOTAL	10,815	100.00	14,566	100.00	18,045	100.00	100.00

Note: Excludes TRTA not allocated by country

Source: WTO/OECD Database

A previous review of the WTO's TRTA was undertaken by Kostecki in 2001³⁴ for the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), prior to the launch of the Doha Development Agenda. In brief, this review underlined two concerns with the work being done by the WTO up to that time. One was that the TRTA was too focused on how to enhance rule compliance, and too little on providing member countries with useful analytical tools to participate successfully in trade negotiations. Second, it pinpointed the incompleteness of needs assessment and bottlenecks in the cooperation with other donors in terms of jointly generating developmentally purposeful TRTA. On the positive side, it underlined the WTO's institutional advantage in providing 'organisation-specific' knowledge on rules and the technical aspects of trade negotiation. The following sections contain a new review of a very different period of WTO TRTA history, and they will assess to what extent these opinions are still relevant.

³⁴ Technical Assistance Services in Trade-Policy: A contribution to the discussion on capacity-building in the WTO, ICTSD, November 2001

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Box IV.2: Doha Mandates in Respect of Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

Paragraphs 38-41 deal with overall TRTA while, paragraphs 42-43 focus more specifically on LDCs.

Paragraph 38 instructs the Secretariat “to support domestic efforts for mainstreaming trade into national development plans for economic development and strategies for poverty reduction. The delivery of WTO technical assistance shall be designed to assist developing and least-developed countries and low-income countries in transition to adjust to WTO rules and disciplines, implement obligations and exercise the rights of membership, including drawing on the benefits of an open, rules-based multilateral trading system. Priority shall also be accorded to small, vulnerable and transition economies, as well as to Members and Observers without representation in Geneva”.

Paragraph 39 underscores the importance of coordinating delivery of TRTA with relevant bilateral, regional and multilateral institutions and calls for consultations with relevant agencies, bilateral donors, and beneficiaries to identify ways of enhancing and rationalising the IF and JITAP.

Paragraph 40 instructs the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration to develop a plan to ensure long-term funding for the WTO’s TRTA. Paragraph 41 instructs the Director-General to report on the implementation and adequacy of the technical assistance and capacity-building commitments. Paragraph 42 lists meaningful market access, support for the diversification of their production and export base, and trade-related technical assistance and capacity building as essential for integrating LDCs into the multilateral trading system. It also addresses the need for accession-related technical assistance.

Paragraph 43 endorses the Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least-developed Countries (IF) as a viable model for LDCs’ trade development. It also requests the Director-General to provide an interim report to the General Council in December 2002 and a full report to the fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference on all issues affecting LDCs.

In addition, the Declaration is peppered with specific technical assistance and capacity building provisions related to the various negotiating mandates, notably in market access for non-agricultural products (paragraph 16), trade and investment (paragraph 21), trade and competition policy (paragraph 24), transparency in government procurement (paragraph 26), trade facilitation (paragraph 27) and the environment (paragraph 33). More specific technical assistance provisions are to be found in the Decision on Implementation-related Issues and Concerns (WT/MIN (01)/W/10) also adopted in Doha, notably in paragraphs 2.2, 3.5, and 3.6., 5.1, 5.3., 5.4, and 14.

Source: ICTSD, Doha Round Briefing Series, “Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building”, No. 12

V. Comparative Advantage

The issue of the WTO's comparative advantage in TRTA has been prompted by several developments. On the one hand, as outlined in earlier sections, there have been many suggestions made about expanding TRTA needs – for instance going beyond knowledge of the juridical content and negotiating history of WTO rules to building analytical capacity (both human and data) and critical negotiating skills, to applying these in bilateral and regional contexts, deepening technical knowledge and application in highly specialised areas such as SPS, and broadening awareness of trade-related issues outside government to the private sector, CSOs, parliamentarians and others. At the same time there have been an expanding number of agencies at all levels – multilateral, regional, bilateral, national, official, private sector, universities and CSOs – that have become engaged in TRTA/CB. Many of these have established themselves as credible and effective in TRTA/CB – as the earlier review of recent evaluations illustrated. Moreover, the WTO's involvement is relatively small in terms of funding, even when in terms of training activities it is generally one of the leaders.

In this increasingly complex TRTA/CB geography in terms of both demand and supply it is important for the WTO to consider where its strengths and weaknesses lie – how far it should move beyond its original areas of focus in TRTA, collaborate with others, and leave certain areas and approaches to others.

In this section, we draw on the interviews in the nine case-study countries, the fieldwork in Geneva, and our review of the literature and draw some general findings. We organise our observations around a number of issues, arising from the interviews and literature. These relate to:

- WTO trade law and negotiating history
- Neutrality
- Development dimensions
- Negotiations skills
- Technical knowledge and implementation experience
- Development of research and analytical skills
- Case studies/national and regional specificities
- Training and training of trainers
- Working with groups outside government

In our interviews, we asked trainees about their awareness of similar training activities conducted by other agencies or donors (Box V.1). More than 80% had some awareness, and 72% had actually taken part in such activities. Overall, the WTO courses were ranked somewhat higher – 80% of respondents with some opinion considered the WTO training to have been good or very good, whereas the figure for other training was 67%. The discussion of comparative advantage here, however, draws on their answers to other questions and other observations made in the course of our meetings.

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WTO trade law and negotiating history *“What the WTO is doing cannot be done by others” ... “it has the best knowledge” ... “it can do what no other can do”*

There is widespread agreement that the WTO has a strong comparative advantage in knowledge and information about the WTO system of rules and procedures, and related history of their negotiation and use, particularly from a legal perspective. As the above quotes from various interviewees imply, it has a unique position in terms of its knowledge of the juridical content and negotiating history of the WTO rules. This is reflected in the high quality ascribed to both its training and the documents provided. WTO officials also have core competencies on many operational aspects of agreements and the latest state of play in ongoing negotiations, which form the focus for their daily work.

Nonetheless, for the more basic legal information about WTO rules and history, the WTO might want to consider some form of outsourcing to the many other organisations with detailed knowledge of WTO trade law – both intergovernmental, private and non-profit organisations in both developed and developing countries which are already providing similar courses. It could also train other institutions, particularly in developing countries, to do this, and make available relevant materials on its website, building on the e-courses that are already available for pre-training of course participants. Moving in this direction would be consistent with the preference of some donors; more importantly, it would allow the WTO to focus the scarce time of its experts on more technically complex issues.

Neutrality *“Other donors would try to influence our positions” ... “Neutrality at all costs limits TRCB” ... “the Secretariat’s lack of neutrality is disproportionately a problem for developing countries”*

The WTO is generally considered to be more neutral than bilateral agencies, whose involvement in TRTA/CB has raised questions about conflict of interest.³⁵ As already mentioned in the section on relevance, many trainees considered that the WTO presented information in a fair and balanced way, without biases. Neither they nor the bilateral agencies funding the training had to worry that the approach or content in the WTO courses was intended to influence their negotiating positions – whereas this might have been a concern with courses offered directly by donors with well-entrenched positions on, for instance, agriculture.

³⁵ See, for example, Sauvé (2004) and Overseas Development Institute (ODI) (2006). Sauvé talks of ‘the inherent difficulty of divorcing a donor economy’s TRTA/CB from its own market access interests’ p. 21. *Trading for Development*. Report from an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Workshop on WTO Capacity Building Best Practices, prepared for the APEC WTO Capacity Building Group, Santiago, Chile February 2004. ODI argues that an honest broker is needed to avoid the situation in which donors such as the EC are providing TRCB to countries with which it is negotiating from divergent interests.

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There were several questions, however, about whether the WTO interprets the responsibility to be neutral too narrowly – in fact many interviewees considered that this acted as a constraint, and meant that the WTO was unable to provide them with the full range of technical insights or capacity building skills that they had sought.

Others suggested that the WTO had failed to stay within the narrow boundaries of neutrality, for instance in adopting a pro-liberalisation position and promoting engagement on services, enforcement of TRIPs and discussion of the new issues. In other words, it is important to recognise that WTO experts' interpretation of WTO rules and negotiations may sometimes reflect certain bureaucratic and ideological interests or preferences.³⁶ Even with these limitations, however, the WTO Secretariat and its experts are considered less biased than many other official agencies involved in TRCB.

Various changes in the WTO's approach to training appear to have helped to diminish the neutrality bias. For instance, one has been to involve resource persons from outside the WTO, as in the case of the RTPCs (though some have felt constrained to keep to the WTO approach on a particular subject). The WTO has collaborated with other intergovernmental organisations like UNCTAD, which has had a broader mandate, as in the context of JITAP. (While the WTO has also made efforts to engage with other perspectives, for instance in the annual meetings with analysts from the private sector and NGOs in Geneva, this does not address the need at the national level for a broader perspective in TRCB.) Finally, other organisations (such as international think-tanks like ICTSD or the South Centre and AITIC) have provided a space in which WTO experts, for example, may more openly present their views on trade issues, at least in their personal capacity.

Development dimensions *“the WTO courses are too status-quo oriented and lack a development dimension”... “... a diversity of views is important”* (Sauvé)

The debate about whether the WTO's mandate extends to development is reflected in the confusion about how far its TRTA should and can address the development aspects of trade rules. A particular complaint of many trainees was that the WTO experts were unable to provide a sufficient development dimension to their presentations, perhaps in their efforts to remain neutral. In their view, the policy space or development flexibilities that were open to them were not fully or adequately explored and this reflected a certain bias. Certainly they would have liked more effort to flesh out the windows for special and differential treatment in the existing rules and the development implications of particular negotiating proposals.

³⁶ Sauvé 2004, p. 12

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A related question is whether the WTO is equipped to examine the links between trade and development – and to help countries build the capacity to integrate trade into development strategies. This has not been emphasised in the WTO courses; it is an area where the WTO lacks core competencies compared to other organisations like UNCTAD, the World Bank and UNDP.

Negotiations skills *“now that we have a good understanding of the agreements, we need more training on negotiating skills, especially for the weaker countries” ... “strengthen the practice of tactics of negotiations; the culture of each country, their interests, the politics”*

Much of the WTO training is technocratic – focusing on legal obligations and processes for negotiation – but several interviewees noted the importance of learning negotiations skills. These have been included in some of the longer courses, often using a simulation exercise developed and taught by an outside consultant. Some trainees regretted that once trained, the WTO lacked the funding to provide them with hands-on experience in a negotiating setting.

While the WTO can explain the procedures of negotiations, some question whether it has the competence to train developing country officials in the more political aspects of negotiating (both in terms of domestic politics and in relationship to major partners). The World Bank refers to “the limits of advice: and the importance of domestic constituencies for reform” and calls for “appropriately structured public-private partnerships ... in a wide-range of areas, including trade negotiations, trade-related investigations and legal actions, trade-related research and extension.”³⁷

It is not appropriate for the WTO to become involved in such political processes, given its lack of experience and limited knowledge of domestic political actors, as well as its neutrality obligations. Other international agencies such as UNCTAD and bilateral donors such as DFID have helped governments develop consultative mechanisms to work with national stakeholders in the development of trade policies and negotiating positions. And some international, regional and national NGOs have also been involved.³⁸ But it is still a relatively underdeveloped area for outside involvement, reflecting various difficulties including sensitivities.

³⁷ World Bank, 2006:152-153

³⁸ For instance, Oxfam is working with the South Centre in some countries to combine technical support with political mobilisation. In Senegal ENDA-Tiers Monde has been active in bringing together farmers' organisations and the government to advance their involvement in the cotton case.

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Technical knowledge and implementation experience *“on some issues other agencies have more specialised expertise and implementation experience” ... “The WTO staff need to be complemented by trainers with more practical experience”*

Many trainees – especially those with some basic knowledge of the WTO, often as a result of WTO courses – underlined the value of the WTO’s more detailed technical knowledge of the rules and their application, for instance in the handling of dispute settlement cases, safeguard action and preparation of services schedules.

In the view of several, however, there are other organisations that are better suited for particular aspects of TRTA/CB than the WTO. Several interviewees suggested that more of the WTO activities be undertaken in collaboration with specialised agencies and organisations such as the WCO, WHO, WIPO and FAO. Indeed, while the WTO staff is seen as most qualified to explain the content of the legal documents, this needs to be complemented by trainers with greater technical expertise relating to the application of those rules and more practical experience.

These other agencies are recognised to have more specialised, or deeper, technical expertise than the WTO on some aspects – for instance the WCO on issues such as customs valuation, the FAO on agricultural trade impact assessment, the International Standards Organisation (ISO) and other standards agencies for training on certification or auditing. Drawing on their experience they are better able to provide concrete examples, with many of these examples relating to implementation, which is still a preoccupation for many countries. The examples were also used to illustrate the training, in a way, which was often found to be lacking in the WTO courses. (For instance, recipients in Yemen reported that a workshop on SPS/TBT organised by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) had been more useful than a similar course offered by the WTO.)

Another approach taken by some donors is to fund the opportunity for some hands-on experiential learning to complement WTO training; for instance USAID has funded Latin American expert participation in WTO meetings in 2002-03 to be able to apply and reinforce their knowledge of SPS negotiating rules and procedures.

Development of analytical skills *“analysis of cases was very enlightening” ... “we often do not have the capacity at the national level to do analytical work, for example to analyse the proposals being put forward in the negotiations”*

In many countries, governments lack the analytical capability to analyse the economic and social implications of alternative proposals during the negotiations, let alone to determine an optimal trade strategy to meet their national development objectives. Several interviewees requested that WTO courses be enhanced to allow them to develop more such analytical skills, and that these be complemented by providing trainees with access to studies, analytical tools and databases.

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Others suggested that the WTO work with national economic research centres to run national courses emphasising training in analysis and undertake impact assessments, for example of the changes proposed in the three agricultural pillars.

The WTO has expanded its research outputs in recent years and has begun to work with researchers from developing countries – with a small number of visiting academics and doctoral students as well as partnerships with Southern academics in the RTPCs – to enhance Southern research capacity on WTO issues. But overall its capacity to provide analytical content to its courses is limited by human resource constraints. And it remains small relative to the capacities of other intergovernmental agencies like UNCTAD, the World Bank and the FAO. For this reason it has regularly involved the Bank in its RTPCs – the Bank typically assists trainees with their research exercise in the last week of the course – and may do so in the Geneva TPC. Such cooperation could be extended more systematically to other agencies, such as UNCTAD, the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) and others with complementary analytical expertise.

Access to databases is important for analytical purposes as well as meeting national obligations (e.g. on SPS/TBT). WTO databases have been useful and officials in some countries expected the WTO would be able to assist in the construction of national databases (e.g. on services). In one country officials suggested that UNCTAD's trade and tariff data was more useful for tariff conversion exercises; but more information is needed to establish the relative strength and weaknesses of WTO databases compared to those available to Southern analysts from other organisations such as UNCTAD, UNIDO, WIPO and the World Bank as well as from national sources.

Case studies and national/regional specificities *“knowledge of national and regional issues is not its comparative advantage”*

A common request from trainees was for more case studies, simulations and illustrations during the courses that reflect regional if not national specificities. This would make it easier for trainees to relate to the material and to learn from it. It would also help to reinforce ongoing regional integration and efforts to develop regional sectoral policies and positions at the WTO (as much as in negotiations with the EU or other trading partners). Many reported that out-of-region facilitators illustrated their courses with inapplicable and irrelevant examples from much larger countries or others with a very different level of development or confronting different development challenges. The lack of a country-specific or region-specific vision of the WTO training was a frequently mentioned problem.

Various steps have been taken to increase the amount of more relevant material. First, training carried out with regional institutions such as Institute for the Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean (INTAL) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has involved trainers with knowledge of more concrete and region-specific examples.

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Second, courses bringing together participants from within a region are able to share specific experiences – provided there is enough time and structure to allow for trainees to develop case studies.

Third, the partnership with researchers in the RTPCs and the visiting researchers at the WTO is also likely to have generated more such material. The WTO might consider systematising the information that is already available to it, while investing more funding in the development of further case-studies (in partnership with UNCTAD and/or the Bank, for example) and drawing on the material produced elsewhere.

Training and ‘training of trainers’ *“trainees with experience should be used as trainers to share experience, to have multiplying effects”*

It is clear that most trainees and many others involved in TRTA/CB consider that the WTO has developed good training courses that are taught by people with strong training skills – and that these have become more institutionalised with the formation of the ITTC. As mentioned in the section on management, there were various suggestions for how these might be improved – ranging from training the WTO and other trainers now involved in WTO courses, to the way in which the courses are managed, and testing of trainees. There is still a sense that the ITTC is not as fully developed a training institution as others that have been involved in training for longer and on a larger-scale and/or more integrated fashion (i.e. running programmes rather than a series of one-off short courses), as well as a concern that its mandate may limit the scope and approach of training offered, relative to an institution with training as its primary mandate.

Some have suggested that the WTO should therefore expand its collaboration with other organisations. This might involve building on its experience with its RTPC partners – whose comparative advantage lies in being regionally based training institutions. For instance, these institutions could assume greater responsibilities as co-managers of the RTPCs, and even as regional centres for managing all WTO courses in a region. In Kyrgyzstan, for instance, another suggestion was that the WTO consider opening a regional Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) WTO training centre based in Bishkek, which could be linked to other donors’ ongoing regional initiatives.

Yet another option would be for the WTO to delegate more responsibility for courses to other organisations – with the WTO no longer taking the lead on course delivery preferring instead to concentrate on the design of a programme of courses, the production of relevant materials, and/or the provision of courses as part of programmes managed by others. This would respond to the challenge from a few interviewees that the WTO should reduce its direct engagement in training, and instead concentrate on preparing training materials to be used by other organisations. In this view, WTO experts could also be invited as resource persons in some of the training activities of others, but the WTO would not be organising the activities themselves.

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A focus on training of trainers (ToT) in government and in training centres would allow the WTO to respond to the continuing demand in government as well as the growing demand from outside government in many countries for more information and understanding about the WTO. But it would do so in a way which does not require it to go outside its area of competence, i.e. its close connections to officials working on trade issues in many countries. Through strengthening these officials' knowledge and providing them with certain outreach tools, the WTO can more effectively support dialogue with private sector organisations and farmers' groups for instance.

To sum up, it is time for a rethinking of the WTO 'brand' which has now become associated with all sorts of training that it may have lost its identity – at the same time that the core assumptions of the original training courses (such as the uniqueness and adequacy of WTO experts' knowledge, and trainees' interest in juridical aspects of the multilateral trading system – to name only two) have been increasingly challenged. Some future options are set out in the final section in the form of alternative scenarios for the WTO.

Box V.1: Views on Training Activities of Other Agencies/Donors

21a.³⁹ Are you aware of similar training activity conducted by other agencies/donors? (N=118)

Yes 95 (80.5%) No 23 (19.5%)

21b. Have you participated in the above-mentioned training activity? (N=118)

Yes 85 (72%) No 10 (8.5%) NA 23 (19.5%)

22. If yes, how do you compare the technical assistance provided by the WTO Secretariat with the capacity building of other organisations with which you have been involved? (N=66/74)

	WTO %		Other %	
Very Poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	1	1.5	1	1
Fair	8	12	14	19
Good	23	35	22	30
Very Good	14	21	9	12
NA	20	30	28	38

³⁹ These numbers in the boxes that refer to the interviews (Boxes V.1, VI.1, VI.2, VI.3.1, VI.3.2, VI.4, VII.3, VII.4 and VII.5) correspond to the question numbers in the questionnaires (see Annexures 2 and 3).

VI. Relevance

Overall relevance

From our interviews and observations drawing on various sources (PEFs, BTORs, etc) it is clear that many view the WTO's TRTA as having been relevant in a general way – responding to national, institutional and individual needs. Almost half of the beneficiaries (48%) responded that the training had matched their requirements considerably, while another 47% thought it did so to some extent (Question 8b, Box VI.1 Views on course content and approach, at the end of this section). There is also a general sense that the WTO has evolved its TRTA in recent years (as detailed in Section IV above), in tune with some of the emerging demands from its recipients relating to content, delivery and volume of training. However, it is clear that there are many ways in which the relevance of the WTO's TRTA can be enhanced – beginning with the articulation of national needs, as well as the content and approach of courses, and going beyond courses to include other elements. Here we consider a range of relevance issues encompassing inputs, outcomes and impacts of the various WTO training activities. Broadly speaking, we sought to trace training outcomes at four levels:

- trainees' reactions – what they thought and felt about the training;
- learning – the resulting increase in their knowledge and/or capabilities;
- behaviour – the extent of improvement in their behaviour, capability and implementation/application; and
- results – the longer term impact on the trade policymaking institutions.⁴⁰

Needs assessments

Needs assessments are a critical first step to planning effective TRTA. Both the WTO Secretariat (through ITTC), its members and other partners (such as the OECD and partner organisations involved in the IF) have invested in designing and using various processes and tools to assess national TRTA needs, and thus to increase the effectiveness of TRTA. It is generally recognised that recipient governments in collaboration with national stakeholders are best positioned to identify their own needs – and thus to ensure greater national ownership of TRTA – but that assistance may be needed in this process. Some have argued that multilateral or regional agencies are better placed to provide such assistance⁴¹ given that donor agencies (e.g. the European Commission) may have conflicts of interest. Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind that multilateral and regional agencies may have their own biases according to several interviewees, as discussed elsewhere.

⁴⁰ From Donald Kirkpatrick, *Evaluating Training Programs*, www.businessballs.com/kirkpatricklearningevaluationmodel.htm

⁴¹ See, for example, ODI 2006 p. 19

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The WTO Secretariat is also involved with the OECD DAC in collating information on what TRTA/CB has been offered to individual countries in the areas of trade policy and regulations and trade development since 2001. This is largely retrospective, however, rather than prospective and so is not very useful as a planning tool, e.g. for coordinating efforts by various agencies. Other constraints are that it captures funding committed rather than funding disbursed, and that some data aggregation makes it difficult to capture all national-level activities.

The WTO produced guidelines for needs assessments in August 2004⁴² and later a proposal was discussed to integrate the use of these into national TPRs.⁴³ These WTO documents recognise the importance of a nationally-driven approach that involves a wide range of stakeholders, with priority given to the inter-ministerial community with interests in various aspects of trade policy and practice. The WTO therefore proposes that it work with governments to build on whatever may already exist, whether in national trade policy statements, PRSPs, under the DTIS of the IF, or some other mechanism. This assistance may be provided at the time of national TPRs and at other times in the intervening years.

In 2005 the WTO Secretariat was able to secure support from the Dutch government for a trainee programme, which has been used in part to provide assistance to member governments in TRTA needs assessments. The trainee programme involves officials on secondment from their governments working in the WTO Secretariat, or Geneva-based missions or international NGOs (INGOs)/NGOs. As a result of these and other efforts, a few countries have now produced national TRTA needs assessments, or are about to do so.

A brief review of three such assessments for Malawi, Mongolia and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)⁴⁴ shows that these provide an overview of the existing trade policy framework in each country, and a list of broad and specific areas for further TRTA/CB from the WTO and others. Only in one case (OECS), however, are there particular priorities identified for the WTO. The reports are useful in highlighting additional TA needs that could be met by the WTO such as training “regional statisticians on collection and dissemination of trade data in a useful way for policy makers”⁴⁵ and going beyond training to issues such as funding for officials to participate in negotiations.⁴⁶

In few of the nine countries visited in the course of this evaluation was there a clear process in place to determine national TRTA needs, whether through the PRSPs or

⁴² JOB(04)/113

⁴³ 6691d

⁴⁴ 15 November 2005, and JOB (05)/275, November 2, 2005 respectively

⁴⁵ OECS para. 24

⁴⁶ OECS para. 28

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annual trade policy statements, let alone an action plan for meeting those needs.⁴⁷ There had been little systematic engagement with donors on TRTA/CB needs, and the WTO TPRs had not yet been considered an opportunity to do a needs assessment whether targeting the WTO or more broadly. Instead what is most common is for the WTO focal point in the trade ministry to act as a liaison between the WTO and the government – responding to WTO requests for suggestions of national courses and for participants in regional workshops or other courses. Examples are the WTO Division in the Ministry of the Economy in Moldova or the WTO Department in the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism in Kyrgyzstan.

Few of those interviewed were aware of the WTO needs assessment guidelines, nor of any other national approach to do this, though they recognised that this was important and primarily a national responsibility. In the absence of such a plan, it appeared to a majority of interviewees that much of the TRTA/CB, whether from the WTO or other agencies, was supply-driven. Even in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Yemen, despite having access to the IF and its DTIS, which is meant to address TRTA needs even if not in a very detailed fashion, none of those interviewed knew of any TRTA/CB needs assessment. Cambodian officials appeared to know what their TRTA needs were but were not sure how to go about securing the required TRTA. In Yemen, the WTO Coordination and Communication Office (WTO-CCO) in the Ministry of Trade and Industry noted its intention to develop an Annual Training Plan for its staff.

In Senegal, however, the DTIS Action Matrix, which was written in 2003 and updated in 2005, does make several references to TRTA/CB. One encompasses trade policies and includes such measures as operationalising the Comité National pour les Négociations en Commerce International (CNNCI), and strengthening trade negotiating capacities to put international trade rules into effect. Senegal's Matrix also includes TRTA/CB needs beyond knowledge of WTO rules and the capacity to negotiate and enforce them, such as assistance to strengthen standards and quality, competitiveness and the application of competition rules.

Nonetheless, in nearly all the nine countries there is a national mechanism for the development and implementation of trade policies that would be appropriate for overseeing a process to identify TRTA needs and priorities, develop a plan of action, identify TRTA funders/suppliers, and coordinate activities to maximise complementarity and minimise duplication. Examples include the Foreign Trade and Investment Council in Ecuador, the CNNCI in Senegal and the National Economic Policy Council in Cambodia.

There are also committees in these and other countries, which focus more specifically on the WTO, that might be tasked with needs assessment targeting WTO training such as the National Committee on the WTO in Kenya, the Inter-Agency Committee on WTO Matters in Cambodia and the National Committee on Accession of Yemen to the WTO.

⁴⁷ Similarly ODI (2006, p. 18) found that needs assessments lack “a clear mapping of who will be addressing the most urgent bottlenecks”.

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For instance in Cambodia, the Inter-Agency Committee is well positioned to ascertain its WTO-related capacity constraints, as it is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the country's WTO commitments. In some countries (Moldova, Kyrgyzstan) there is neither an inter-ministerial working group nor an advisory group on the WTO, so it would fall to the WTO focal points to lead this needs assessment.

Course content, approach and frequency

While WTO members can request two or three WTO-provided training activities in their countries each year, and decide whether or not to nominate national participants for other activities, most recipients disagree with the claim that the WTO's TRTA is demand-driven. (See, for example, WT/COMTD/M/54 para. 96: "The Plan was demand-driven. A list of what could reasonably be foreseen was provided, but there was flexibility to deal with demands from beneficiary countries, in particular with regard to national activities.") In fact, the WTO's TRTA is predominantly modular – or, to put it another way, a fixed menu – with limited flexibility or 'à la carte' options. Members are able to choose between a number of given courses, drawing from the WTO's core competencies and mandate. There is somewhat greater flexibility for the national courses, but these are limited in number, reflecting the WTO's training capacity constraints rather than members' needs. Also, in some cases it seemed to interviewees that their national demands had been largely ignored.

For most interviewees, the key factors in determining the relevance of the courses offered by the WTO are their content, approach and frequency.

Content

It is generally clear that the subject areas offered by the WTO in the Geneva-based courses, RTPCs and workshops as well as those it can offer nationally in response to country-specific requests, are considered relevant to recipients. In all of the field countries, there is a continuing need for increasing understanding about the WTO rules and ongoing negotiations.

The level of training was considered just right by 84% of respondents, but too basic by 9% and too advanced by 7% (Question 7, Box VI.1). Basic information is still needed by both newer officials in trade ministries and those in other ministries involved in trade-related matters, as well as non-government officials that are now part of national trade machineries. And these needs extend beyond such circles to include parliamentarians, journalists, private sector, CSOs and others.

For those with previous experience of WTO courses and other trade-related training, the availability of more advanced/specialised courses is appreciated as a way of deepening their knowledge and increasing their ability both to implement national obligations and

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represent national interests in multilateral trade negotiations. One suggestion therefore was that the WTO offer more two-week specialised courses.

Some interviewees considered that the courses available provided a graduated approach to learning about the WTO – starting with basic information and moving into more advanced knowledge, through a series of courses available. But others complained that there was a lot of repetition, with too much time at the beginning of courses covering introductory material, when what they needed was more updating and/or deepening of more specialised knowledge. This led to the suggestion that the WTO develop an overall human resource development (HRD) plan that would allow trainees to go through a structured programme of learning, rather than ad hoc courses and activities as at present. (This would parallel the development of national trade-related HRD plans for trade officials and other stakeholders.)

Officials were less impressed than recipients by the level of training, as 73% found it just right, while 17% considered it too basic and 10% deemed it too advanced (Question 9c (O), Box VI.1). Several pointed out that a training that was too basic for some could be just right or too advanced for others. Achieving the right level, therefore, depended on the proper selection of participants.

The material is generally considered to be very useful (62% of respondents, Question 9, Box VI.1) and in many cases trainees have continued to use it after the courses, sharing it with their colleagues, and even using it as the basis for presentations to their colleagues, in other seminars or workshops, or, in the case of academics, for lectures to their students. Nonetheless, there were various suggestions for their improvement in terms of accessibility (paper/CD/online, language, timing) and content (more explanations, interpretation, examples).

In terms of the course subjects offered by the WTO, these do not always match the needs expressed by national requests or in the course of interviews. For instance in one country a request for training on SPS was denied on the grounds that other agencies were already providing this, even though national authorities considered that the WTO training would be complementary rather than duplicative. A number of countries considered they had not had enough detailed training on trade remedies and safeguards, going beyond the introductory level information available in general courses on WTO rules.

In the shorter courses, content is often limited to a description of the agreements rather than addressing the more practical issues of implementation and negotiation. While this may be of interest to lawyers, typically participants are keen to learn about the application of rules, through case studies, which illustrate the practical examples of how WTO rules affect policymaking or how to make proposals. As one interviewee explained, “case-studies help to understand the WTO rules and discover their ‘power’.”

One criticism is that many of the WTO courses are standardised – following a ‘one-size fits all’ approach rather than being tailored to fit regional let alone national specificities. There is a mismatch between national experiences and examples being used to illustrate

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particular issues. For instance, one course in Moldova on trade and the environment included references to Japanese whale hunting and fishing which were not relevant to their circumstances. Others noted that examples could be less relevant because they were drawn from larger countries or countries at very different levels of development. Some Yemeni respondents (one official and several recipients) commented that content should also be better adapted for training officials of countries in accession.

Others underlined the importance now of complementing WTO teaching on multilateral rules with an understanding of the regional context, so that national trade communities can deepen regional integration in a way which is compatible with WTO obligations.

Several interviewees in both field visit countries and in Geneva suggested that the use of regional and national experts alongside WTO trainers would help to provide more relevant perspectives and material. Another idea was for more WTO activities to require participants to prepare brief reports on country-specific problems or issues, for presentation and discussion during the course.

Approach

The WTO's approach, and particularly its attempt to maintain a neutral position in its training, is generally considered appropriate. But several interviewees also made a number of comments about ways in which the WTO's training could be strengthened to make it more relevant, through tailoring its content, and complementing theoretical, juridical and general content with more applied/practical, economic, analytical and regionally-specific content. Others underlined the importance of officials understanding the political nature of trade policy making and negotiations, a subject not often addressed by the WTO courses.

Some three-quarters of respondents considered that the training was fair and balanced, while the remainder expressed doubts about this (Question 8a, Box V.1). In the discussions, several interviewees raised concerns about a bias in the WTO's approach. Some considered that if the WTO trainers are really to be neutral, they should place less emphasis on trade liberalisation and not suggest that countries would benefit from making services commitments. Similarly, they should give more attention to the development flexibilities or policy space that exist within the WTO rules and to the possible implications of different negotiating options. Some trainers and courses do follow this approach – for example in Barbados, one respondent noted that a course on intellectual property rights (IPRs) had provided information about policy space as well as how to comply with WTO norms. But this needs to be more consistently applied.

To many, WTO training seemed more oriented to building national officials' capacity as effective rule takers – i.e. complying with the multilateral system – rather than to going beyond this to build their capacities to negotiate and become effective rule makers. Several respondents therefore called for more training on negotiating skills. Many others emphasised the need for assistance in developing their analytical skills to better assert

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their trade rights. “We often do not have the capacity at the national level to do analytical work, for example to analyse the proposals being put forward in the negotiations” as one official explained.

Finally, many interviewees noted that training would be more relevant if the courses involved more case-studies, simulations and other practical exercises, such as problem-solving in which participants would be able to consult with resource persons as well as fellow participants from other countries. In effect, the role of the trainers would become more one of facilitator rather than ‘lecturer’. In the RTPCs and some other regional workshops, where WTO trainers had been complemented with others from the region, it was found that this had allowed for a broader approach.

Frequency

While the WTO annual plan suggests an intense pace of activities, opportunities to attend WTO courses at a national level are more intermittent, except in regional centres like Kenya and Senegal where there are more opportunities for participation in regional workshops in their capitals. In countries with smaller bureaucracies and trade policy communities, such as Barbados, Moldova and Kyrgyzstan, there are still questions of absorptive capacity. But in many other countries there is a demand for somewhat longer and more frequent courses. Adding a day or two would allow workshops to include more practical and regionally-relevant content, without compromising the time needed to absorb details of WTO rules and procedures. Several participants reported that courses are too short for the amount of information being covered, with little time for digestion. Nor had the courses been frequent enough to satisfy the demand expressed in several countries for broadening the scope of participants in WTO courses to those outside trade ministries in other parts of the government, as well as the private sector, universities and NGOs active in the trade policy community.

Relevance of particular courses

In our interviews, several comments were made about the strengths and weaknesses of the different types of WTO training activities. Most of the 68 responses were in connection with the regional workshops or courses other than the RTPC (see Box VI.2 Views on Regional Courses).

Geneva – TPCs and introductory courses

The longer three-month courses are generally considered of high quality and very useful in preparing officials for their trade-related responsibilities. Besides covering the breadth of WTO rules, they now incorporate simulations, case studies and negotiating skills. Even so some argued that the course is still intensive and could be improved by more practical exercises. The opportunity to network with WTO officials as well as with counterparts from other countries is of considerable value to many participants.

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Regional – RTPCs and other courses

Courses or workshops bringing together officials and others from countries within a particular region are appreciated for various reasons, though in general it was felt that the shorter workshops (of 2-3 days) are too short and ad hoc.

In the experience of a number of interviewees involved in the regional courses, one advantage of regional training is that it allows the development and strengthening of regional networks, which can be particularly relevant for countries in the process of deepening regional integration. In some instances, however, it was suggested that the WTO Secretariat needed to rethink the definition of its regional groupings to maximise the number of countries in a workshop with common interests. For instance, Moldova has been included in the Eastern European group rather than with the former CIS with which it has more in common. In Africa, some ‘regional’ workshops have involved both East and West African countries, despite their divergent interests as revealed during lengthy discussions on cotton in an agricultural workshop. Others, however, suggested that the diversity of experience provides the opportunity to learn from each other.

The lack of country-specific or region-specific examples was a problem mentioned especially frequently with respect to the shorter regional workshops. In some cases where events were co-organised with regional institutions there was greater scope for broader perspectives and ‘creative thinking’, regional knowledge/content and regional languages. Offering training in a language besides English is particularly crucial for ensuring effective participation by officials from outside the trade ministries, who are typically less proficient in English.

The more technical courses, for instance on notification procedures and SPS/TBT rules, were by their technical nature quite specific, and often practical.

Participants in the longer trade policy courses were much less affected by the problem of the lack of concrete examples and application, as these courses included simulation exercises, which the recipients thought were very important and useful. Working with partners and trainers from within the region also ensured regional content. Finally, the RTPCs have also benefited from more careful joint planning between WTO and non-WTO trainers from the region.

National courses

National courses are generally considered effective in that they allow a more tailor-made course, addressing national priorities in more depth (particularly as in the case of services where these are at an early stage of identification) and involve many more national participants and national trainers. On the other hand, this can preclude the benefits of other regional approaches including networking, sharing of different experiences, and deepening efforts to integrate regionally.

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Online courses

The online courses are considered interesting and a cost effective way of getting a general understanding of the WTO rules and procedures. But they had been frustrating for trainees in countries with slow Internet access (as in Moldova), power outages and other connectivity constraints.

Quality of trainers

In general the quality of trainers involved in WTO courses is considered high, particularly on legal aspects of WTO rules, their negotiating history (past and current) and their implementation. Nonetheless various observations have been made about these trainers that suggest the scope for improvement, if WTO courses are to contribute training that meets national needs in the short- and longer-term.

WTO trainers

Altogether there are some 200 WTO staff, who have been involved in training, who fall into three categories – WTO long-term staff working in ITTC, those based in WTO substantive divisions, and others on fixed-term ('L') contracts (most of whom are also employed in the divisions).

ITTC staff are considered more adept trainers, while those from other divisions are considered more knowledgeable at a substantive level. The newer trainers are generally considered good, but perhaps more concerned than others about maintaining 'neutrality' and there were some indications that they might also need to improve their training and interpersonal skills. Some interviewees thought that WTO trainers are more doctrinaire than non-WTO trainers, with "an excessively orthodox perspective, shying away from debate or discussion".

Finally, most trainers are legal experts and this is considered appropriate for training on the juridical aspects of the WTO. However, there is increasing interest from recipients in training that embraces economic analysis, to allow better understanding of how to promote and protect national interests through WTO rules and negotiations.

It is not clear that this demand can be met by the relatively few economists at the WTO, most of whom are in the Economic Research and Statistics Division and the TPR Division. Instead it may be necessary for the WTO to include more economists amongst the increasing number of non-WTO trainers now involved in its courses.

There has been a problem with the language of instruction (and the language of materials) for non-anglophone speakers. English is the predominant language of instruction. Non-English speakers have found that interpretation is not always available, and when it is, it is usually not adequate. To these participants, it seems that they are getting second-rate training. One solution may be to include more national or regional trainers; for instance

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in Moldova and Kyrgyz, it was suggested that Russian-speaking resource persons from Eastern Europe could be used.

Non-WTO trainers

While the majority of WTO training activities are still provided by WTO officials, an increasing number of other trainers have been involved in training WTO courses over the last four years. This partly reflects an effort by the WTO to respond to some of the suggestions for improving the relevance of its training, as well as a solution to the limited number of its staff. Non-WTO trainers include trainers from other international organisations, as well as consultants from a number of developing and developed countries. Most, though not all, of these non-WTO trainers are drawn from a roster managed by ITTC. But several interviewees considered that this could be taken further, with more training of national and regional experts to become trainers, involved in WTO and other courses on international trade.

The most organised group of non-WTO trainers includes those involved in the RTPCs. In particular the development of the RTPCs in collaboration with academics and other trainers from the regions has been an important initiative. While regional trainers are chosen because of their knowledge and interest in WTO rules and negotiations, as well as related national and regional trade policies, their own capacity is generally considered to have been enhanced through annual meetings in Geneva to plan the RTPCs with their WTO expert partners, as well as in the actual delivery of the courses.

Several interviewees considered that non-WTO trainers often had relevant experience and good knowledge of the regional context, which effectively complemented WTO juridical expertise. Some favoured keeping a mixture of developed and developing country trainers. Others suggested that there needed to be a careful selection process as some trainers had been too rhetorical, theoretical or biased.

One issue for non-WTO trainers has been the extent to which they are involved in planning the WTO courses, and the degree of their autonomy in teaching (when accompanied by WTO trainers). While increasing non-WTO trainers' involvement might be considered likely to dilute the WTO 'brand', it is in keeping with the general request for greater national and regional content, more variety in perspectives taught, and the importance of ToT to reduce the dependence on WTO training.

Uniformity of participants

While the size of classes was generally considered to be appropriate (Question 10, Box VI.1), several interviewees commented on the need for greater efforts to improve their selection. Amongst the problems raised were: differences in knowledge of the subject matter and language, regional experience, responsibility and interest. Of course some differences are recognised as providing the basis for useful exchanges of experience, with

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participants from one country keen to learn from the different approaches of another. But when they are too pronounced they distract the trainer and undermine discussions and other group exercises. Selection procedures and ways to improve them are addressed in the section on management and efficiency below.

Impacts/outcomes

There are several ways in which the impacts of WTO's TRTA were assessed during the course of our fieldwork and literature review. These included: contribution to improved individual work capacity as well as changes in institutional and national capacities.

Short-term/individual impact

Nearly all trainees (90% of those interviewed) found that they had acquired knowledge that would be useful to them in their current jobs (Question 4a Box V.3 on Application of Training) and 93% reported that they were able to apply the knowledge acquired (Question 15). Somewhat fewer (77%) considered that the training had been very relevant to their work, however (Question 4b). Officials similarly found the training useful; 97% believed that the participants were applying the acquired knowledge either considerably (62%) or to some extent (35%) in their present positions (Question 5 (O) Box VI.3).

A wide range of examples was given. For instance countries in the process of acceding or recently acceded found that the training had helped them to prepare for *accession* (others noted that it had helped them to develop requests of acceding countries) and to understand their new WTO obligations. Some suggested, however, that the training had not been particularly useful in preparing them for the practicalities of implementing these obligations – they would have appreciated a more applied approach in the courses.

Several trainees found that the more technical workshops, for instance on TBT and SPS, had allowed them to realise that their *national regulations* and/or procedures were not in conformity with the WTO and what steps were needed to correct this, or to develop mutual recognition procedures with other countries. Similarly, others considered themselves better equipped to examine and even contribute to draft national legislation, e.g. on IPRs, to ensure that it was in conformity with WTO provisions, or to *notify the WTO* about national NTBs. In some cases, the training had prepared officials for their TPR (though more often this was one aspect of WTO training that interviewees thought needed strengthening). Some were able to use their training to apply safeguards against imports from a major trading partner and make the appropriate notifications.

Another common area of impact was in the *ongoing Doha negotiations*. Many interviewees found that the workshops had provided them with enough information to be better able to understand the issues on the table, such as the NAMA formulas, and to formulate national, regional and other group positions for different negotiating groups

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and for the Hong Kong Ministerial. This suggests that the orientation of WTO training, if not the volume of activities, will need to change once the DDA is completed. There will likely be less need for information and training related to the analysis and preparation of proposals for WTO negotiations. Instead the training may shift to ways to assert existing WTO rights (e.g. through the application of safeguards or the pursuit of dispute settlement) and to adhere to commitments (e.g. tracking donor commitments to Aid for Trade, notifications under any new agricultural safeguard mechanism) as well as those obligations that arise from the DDA (e.g. through improved notification procedures). As already suggested elsewhere in this report, the WTO may become more involved in partnership with others in training to support the development of more analytical skills for national trade policy-making and implementation, and in training related to enhancing regional trade.

WTO training had also helped to strengthen officials' contribution to *bilateral and regional FTA negotiations*, and more generally to their capacity to *brief ministers* on a wide range of national trade issues. (For instance, one interviewee noted the importance of presenting bilateral trade relations not just in terms of statistics but in the context of the various WTO and other sets of rules governing that relationship.)

Follow-up by trainees⁴⁸

There have been various efforts to ensure that the information and knowledge acquired during WTO training is shared institutionally, i.e. with others whether in their ministries, other government departments or elsewhere. Almost three-quarters of trainees prepared a report on the programme they attended and an even higher ratio shared the information and materials with their colleagues and others in the private sector and civil society (Questions 5 and 17 in Box VI.4 on Dissemination).

For instance, in Kenya after attending a WTO seminar on intellectual property, an official from the Health Ministry organised a national seminar on these issues for 25 colleagues, with the financial support of the WHO. In Kenya as well as Senegal, WTO trainees frequently provide informal feedback to colleagues in the five or six national trade negotiations sub-committees. Others have organised outreach events with private sector and other groups. In Ecuador, officials who have participated in WTO courses become focal points on these issues for their colleagues and as such are regularly consulted about them.

In most countries, however, this reporting and dissemination process has not been formalised, resulting in missed opportunities and lower impacts, according to several interviewees. Resources are not necessarily put in a known or easily accessible place for others to consult. Trainees are rarely required to prepare formal reports on their training let alone to organise sessions at which they share their training with their peers, other stakeholders in the trade policy community, or more broadly. So it is somewhat

⁴⁸ The issues of follow-up in terms of evaluation and in terms of further training by the WTO are addressed in the following section on Management and Efficiency.

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surprising that as many as 56% of respondents reported making a presentation of some sort. While recognising that many officials have competing priorities, and not wanting to create new layers of bureaucracy, there are various ways in which such initiatives can be regularised and the impact of TRTA enhanced. For instance, at the end of a regional workshop, according to one interviewee, “the participants should indicate what they will do with the information they gained and later the WTO would check what they did.” Similarly, there should be an information management system in place to ensure that WTO materials collected are appropriately archived and thus accessible to others.

Most trainees have had insufficient training, whether in the WTO or other courses, to become trainers themselves. There is a limit to their knowledge, and capacities as trainers. While this might change with a more organised and sustained series of courses, a more efficient approach would appear to be to work with developing country academics, as in the RTPCs. There are already examples of the RTPCs contributing to the development and/or strengthening of Masters courses on trade policy – as at the University of Nairobi and the University of the West Indies (UWI). Many additional suggestions were made in the course of our interviews. One was that staff at WTO reference centres be given further training to act as WTO resource persons. The Kyrgyz government requested the WTO to open a regional WTO training centre for members of CIS to expand training of Kyrgyzstan and other officials in the region. Others suggested that staff at national administrative training institutions such as the Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute, once it becomes functional, or the National School for Applied Economics (ENEA) in Senegal, might be trained to broaden training about the WTO. There are several think tanks outside government that could also be reinforced in this way – whether by the WTO or other agencies – such as the Centre for Policy Dialogue in Bangladesh or the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis. In Yemen, one idea was that the WTO help to develop a network of local resource persons and institutions for follow-up training. Such networks could also be called upon to promote information about the WTO in regional centres outside capitals.

Longer-term/institutional impact

In most countries the training has had an institutional impact – in terms of building up the capacities of a cadre of trade professionals. In general it seems that the selection criteria have operated in favour of candidates with past and future involvement in trade issues. Typically this has meant that the knowledge and skills of individuals working within trade ministries have been enhanced – particularly those that were able to attend the longer TPCs or RTPCs as well as some of the shorter courses. In many cases, trainees from national trade ministries had used their training to strengthen their working relationship with officials in other ministries or agencies working on trade issues, and occasionally with private sector groups. For instance on SPS, officials felt better equipped to provide advice to exporters and to assist in the process of risk assessment. On IPRs, officials were able to make useful contributions to discussions with national patent offices. There has been a leakage of trainees out of trade ministries, however, reflecting

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both turnover within the public sector and poor conditions of service compared to the private sector in many countries.

Over time a growing number of others involved in trade policy discussion, design and implementation have been covered – though these have typically participated in shorter courses or workshops which have improved their understanding and access to information rather than making them particularly knowledgeable or expert. This is particularly the case in countries with a more formalised inter-institutional process – as in Kenya and Senegal. Yet it is still the case that in most countries the capacity to design national trade policies and to negotiate at the WTO remains relatively weak (as in the case of Bangladesh where three officers in the commerce ministry handle all issues relating to the WTO), and there is a need for continuing updating and deepening of knowledge, whether through reading, courses and/or application.

What has been the overall impact of WTO training? The evidence is fairly mixed and weak. In the case of Ecuador, which only joined the WTO in 1996, the government has been quite active in promoting its national interests. It has participated in 11 dispute cases, two of which as a complaining party and six as a third party. It has also made a number of proposals during the Doha negotiations while actively pursuing regional agreements. Moldova, which joined even more recently in 2001, has been involved in building a coalition with other recently acceded countries and made a number of other proposals. Bangladesh has been active in the LDC coalition including a number of years as spokesperson. Cambodia's accession in 2004 took ten years – and this delay was explained by its lack of trained personnel, even after a number of training activities. Representatives of Kenya often speak on behalf of the Africa Group in the WTO. In Kyrgyzstan, officials considered that they had useful experiences in their accession and post-accession activities to share with other CIS countries, even if their own trade-policy making capacity remained weak. Senegal worked with Kenya and a number of other African countries on a proposal regarding the Singapore issues for Cancun, as well as with seven other countries on services proposals. Its ambassador is presently involved Chair of the WTO Committee on Regional Trade Agreements.

While not one of the four West African countries leading the demands for changes on cotton support programmes, Senegal has joined these countries in discussions with the US about the West African Cotton Improvement Programme. Finally, the Barbados ambassador is Chair of the Council for TRIPs.

It is, however, important to recall that WTO TRTA typically accounts for a small share of total TRTA in each country – for our sample of nine countries, it amounted to less than 3% of total TRTA/CB received in the 2002-04 period under review (according to WTO/OECD database figures). This ranged from 1.2% in Bangladesh to over 95% in Barbados.

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Box VI. 1: Views on Course Content and Approach

6a. What is your assessment of the quality of the training you received? (N=118)

Very poor	0 (0%)
Poor	0 (0%)
Fair	13 (11%)
Good	52 (44%)
Very good	53 (45%)

7. Was the training provided to you at the right level or too basic/too advanced? (N=118)

Too basic	11 (9%)
Just right	99 (84%)
Too advanced	8 (7%)

9c (O). Was the training at the right level? (N=30)

Too basic	5 (17%)
Just right	22 (73%)
Too advanced	3 (10%)

8a. Was the design and delivery of the training activity fair and balanced? (N=117)

Yes 86 (73.5%) Maybe 24 (20.5%) No 7 (6.0%)

8b. Did it match your requirement? (N=91)

Considerably 44 (48.4%) To some extent 43 (47.3%) Not really 4 (4.4%)

10. Were there too many or too few participants in that training programme? (N=110)

Too many	13 (12%)
Just right	96 (87%)
Too few	1 (1%)

9. Were the training materials useful? (N=117)

Not useful	1 (1%)
Somewhat useful	4 (3%)
Quite useful	40 (34%)
Very useful	72 (62%)

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Box VI. 2: Views on Regional Courses

4a. Are you applying the knowledge that you acquired from the training activity in your position? (N= 53)

Yes 46 (87%) No 7 (13%)

4b. How relevant was the training activities for your work? (N=55)

Considerably 39 (71%) To some extent 14 (25%) Not really 2 (4%)

14. To what extent were you able to apply the knowledge in your work at the time of the training? (N=35)

Considerably 16 (46%) To some extent 13 (37%) Not at all 6 (17%)

15. Are you able to apply it now in your current responsibilities? (N=37)

Yes 33 (89%) No 4(11%)

Box VI. 3.1: Views on Application of Training

4a. Are you applying the knowledge that you acquired from the training activity in your position? (N=118)

Yes 105 (89%) No 13 (11%)

5 (O). In your opinion, are the participants applying their acquired knowledge in the present positions? (N=34)

Considerably 21 (62%) To some extent 12 (35%) Not really 1 (3%)

4b. How relevant was the training activities for your work? (N=118)

Considerably 91 (77%) To some extent 25 (21%) Not really 2 (2%)

14. To what extent were you able to apply the knowledge in your work at the time of the training? (N=87)

Considerably 43 (49%) To some extent 35 (40%) Not at all 9 (10%)

15. Are you able to apply it now in your current responsibilities? (N=84)

Yes 78 (93%) No 6 (7%)

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Box VI. 3.2: Examples of Application of Training

4c. Could you give us examples of how you used it?

- During discussion with line ministries for amending/formulating laws and regulations regarding General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) provision
- To 'hold on' and argue in negotiations with the WTO and other agencies/countries
- I used GATS principles to back up my negotiations with the ASEAN
- I used knowledge gained on anti-dumping (AD) duties, countervailing duties (CVD) and Safeguards to discuss the draft national law on those subjects
- For FTAs negotiations and dispute settlement mechanism meetings
- The TPC was very useful to get ready for our accession negotiations
- To do tariff notifications
- I used it to develop case studies for my courses and I am preparing a book on WTO accession in the region with other participants to the workshop
- To develop a new legal framework for government procurement
- To change our practices on food safety standards
- We used the information to investigate a case related to the safeguard agreement
- In preparing requests for bilateral negotiations with acceding countries
- Examination of draft legislation to determine its conformity with WTO provisions
- I have used the knowledge about WTO provisions and tariff regimes in other countries in the process of building and developing the national tariff system
- To work on IPR-related issues during the TPR process in cooperation with the national Patent Office
- I can apply the knowledge acquired from WTO training on SPS (when I was still a government official) to my present work in a company that exports foodstuffs
- To prepare WTO negotiation and understand the issues on the table
- To formulate positions for the Hong Kong Ministerial
- Prepared a draft proposal for notification
- Learned that we were not in conformity as we had not notified the WTO on TBT
- We changed our position on Trade Facilitation and undertook a new business initiative on Trade Facilitation
- Networking with other participants was very useful to see different perspectives on WTO
- Individual advice to exporters and other stakeholders
- Prepared briefs and became involved in an AD case
- Helpful in designing and negotiating FTA
- Useful background for briefing domestic exporters and discussion with relevant ministries and official agencies
- Regional integration on TBT issues
- To apply safeguards against imports from another country
- Interpretation of the Agreement on Agriculture and notifications required, which was also useful for FTA negotiations, considering options for compensation and room for manoeuvre including safeguards
- Networking with regional allies on multilateral negotiations and RTAs
- To prepare background notes and other short analyses for briefing the Minister before visiting another country
- Preparation for the TPR
- Networking with WTO for further CB

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Box VI. 4: Views on Dissemination

5. Did you write and submit a report of the programme you attended? (N=110)

Yes 78 (71%) No 32 (29%)

17. Did you have the opportunity to share the information on the training programme received with your colleagues in your department and other government departments? (N=105)

Yes 95 (83%) No 20 (17%)

18a. Were you able to organise a meeting/briefing/workshop to disseminate the information in your department? (N=114)

Yes 64 (56%) No 50 (44%)

18b. Were participants from other government departments/agencies/organisations also invited to the meeting/workshop? (N=59)

Yes 31 (52.5%) No 28 (47.5%)

18c. What was the level of response to this meeting/briefing/workshop? (N=49)

Very poor: 0 (0%)

Poor: 0 (0%)

Fair: 5 (10%)

Good: 33 (67%)

Very good: 11 (22%)

19. Have you shared the acquired knowledge with other stakeholders, such as producer groups, business associations, civil society groups, as a resource person? (N=108)

Yes 65 (60%) No 43 (40%)

VII. Management and Efficiency

In the course of our interviews and literature review there were several issues that arose with respect to the management of the WTO's TRTA that impact on its efficiency and effectiveness. These covered a wide range from management of the programme, selection of participants, quality control of trainers, and evaluation more generally, to management of partnerships, follow-up activities, cost-effectiveness, funding and various logistical issues. While some of these are the responsibility of the WTO Secretariat, others relate to national recipient governments, donors, and multilateral agencies.

Management of the ITTC

It is a truism to state that strong leadership plays an important part in the performance of any joint activity. The provision of TRTA is, of course, no exception. In fact, it can even be argued that dynamic leadership in WTO-provided TRTA is as important as most other WTO divisions in view of the specific development mandate under the DDA. This can also be attributed to the perception that TRTA is of a secondary nature in WTO's primary mandate and work, which is servicing the Members on negotiations.

Based on off-the-record discussions with WTO staff and personal interactions, this Review has found that there is a lack of missionary zeal in the management of the ITTC. The approach is characterised by routine churning out of TRTA activities within a pre-determined static framework. This includes responding to requests and meeting deadlines, rather than by personally motivated people who are driven by an ambition and the vision to ensure that TRTA has a desirable and long-lasting impact and who, equally important, can spread this missionary zeal to the rest of the staff.

Selection of participants

The process of selecting participants is largely within national governments' authority, typically in the WTO focal point in the trade ministry, though with some input from WTO missions in Geneva. As many as 22% of our interviewees did not know what process was used to make these selections (Box VII.3; in Bangladesh 11 of 15 did not know). In many countries the process appears to be ad hoc and several participants suggested that the processes could be improved to ensure both greater uniformity in the knowledge level and expectations of participants, as well as broader representation of stakeholders from other parts of government and non-government agencies. This is important to ensure that courses are effective and that some participants do not act as a drag on others.

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Box VII. 1: The WTO's TRTA Institutional Structure

At the heart of the Secretariat's TRTA are the ITTC, the Technical Assistance Management Committee (TAMC) and the Technical Cooperation Audit (TCA) unit. In addition, the various Operational Divisions (ODs) play a significant role in the delivery of activities. While TRTA falls under the responsibility of Deputy-Director General Ms. Rugwabiza, the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) oversees this work.

Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation

The ITTC is the focal point of the WTO's TRTA, being the key manager and coordinator of these activities. The division was created in March 2003 through a merger of the WTO Training Institute and the Technical Cooperation Division. The merger was partly an effort to integrate training and technical cooperation and thereby maximise potential synergies. At the end of February 2006, the ITTC was divided into seven units (excluding the Director's office) with a total 39 staff (see organigramme on p. 77).

Technical Assistance Management Committee

The TAMC was set up in 2001 to ensure the coordination and coherence of WTO TRTA internally and externally, acting as a forum for discussions and sharing of knowledge between TRTA providers, the ITTC and ODs. It has met up to ten times annually since then (five times in 2005). It consists of a Deputy Director-General (chair) and Directors of relevant divisions (ITTC, Economic Research and Statistics, Development, Budget and Controls Section). It is assisted by contact persons in each OD (about 26 people in total).

Technical Cooperation Audit

The TCA unit was established in early 2001 in order to monitor and evaluate WTO's TRTA and since then it has produced an annual evaluation report on the previous year's TRTA activities. It currently includes one permanent and one contracted staff persons.

Operational Divisions

The WTO Operational Divisions are the main providers of TRTA, relating to the Agreements under their responsibility as well as in various TPCs and introductory courses. Some 200 staff from ODs contribute to Geneva- and/or field-based activities in a variety of workshops and training events.

Committee on Trade and Development

The CTD is the forum where WTO members discuss and establish guidelines for WTO TRTA. It convenes on a formal basis roughly once a quarter to consider TRTA and other regular business.

Most governments centralise selection of participants in the WTO department or focal point in the trade/trade and industry, commerce, economy, foreign affairs or foreign affairs and trade ministries, and these in turn tend to give priority to officials in their ministries. Even when specialised issues such as SPS/TBT are involved, officials from the specialised agencies are not necessarily the first to be selected. Involvement in the national trade policymaking machinery such as the National Committee on the WTO (NCWTO) in Kenya and the CNNCI in Senegal has been one criterion used to identify candidates for the WTO courses, an approach that was considered appropriate by many

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interviewees as the trainees are likely to use the knowledge gained to be more active participants in these national machineries.

But otherwise the tendency in most countries has been to build up a cadre of officials with WTO training in the central trade ministries before extending these opportunities to those in other line agencies involved in trade (agriculture, customs, industry etc.), let alone academics, private sector and CSO representatives. In some smaller countries with smaller bureaucracies, there were fewer officials to choose from and so fewer concerns about selection procedures.

In terms of *gender* representation, in one country it was noted that having the foreign affairs ministry determine and dominate participants in general WTO courses, means there is a gender bias amongst trainees, given the disproportionate number of men in that ministry. In another country the higher proportion of women in the public sector where salaries are much lower than in the private sector, had had the opposite effect. Otherwise there was no general pattern of gender discrimination in the selection of participants.

Some countries have an *age* limit, which was found to be dysfunctional, as it prevented more senior, permanent officers from updating and strengthening their technical knowledge via WTO courses.

Some concerns about inappropriate allocation procedures could be addressed by introducing greater transparency. Whilst recognising that in some countries internet communication is not widely accessible, one suggestion is that the WTO announce on its website each time that it is contacting governments to nominate participants for particular courses. This publicity would encourage other stakeholders to put forward possible candidates through the appropriate national channels. “Expanded diffusion would allow technical officers – and not only diplomats – to participate. An improved selection of the participants would lead to more relevant TA and lasting results” according to one interviewee. One suggestion was to have a sub-committee of national trade machineries manage or review the selection process.

Others suggested that the WTO and specifically ITTC establish benchmarks for identifying participants for all courses. Governments could then designate a pool of officials requiring WTO training for their work and only these participants would be able to participate in the courses and training. The list could be shared with the WTO and made public, as a way to monitor the selection of participants. The WTO could also become more directly involved in working with governments to screen participants, building on the approach followed for the Geneva-based TPCs and the internship programmes, or even have countries forward a short-list of potential candidates to the WTO for it to make the final selection. But generally there were not so many problems with participant selection as to warrant such an intrusive approach.

In some countries there is a human resource management problem that has diluted the impact of the WTO and other TRTA; this is associated with high turnover rates,

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departmental restructuring and the departure of some officials to the private sector, where salaries are often much higher. Such movement is not completely negative – it can help to mainstream awareness of WTO issues. But it can undermine efforts to build up a core of trained people within government and thus capacity to design, negotiate and implement trade rules. In order to stem the associated loss of human capital, the WTO has suggested that participants in the TPCs be required to commit to staying in their jobs for a minimum period. In several countries this approach is followed although making such requirements binding goes against labour laws in many, and therefore it cannot always be enforced. Another strategy might be for external funding to be used to retain recently trained staff, for instance through additional salary or the promise of further training (as in the case of the pilot project for economists in Zambia which is being proposed for bilateral support under the IF).

Quality control of trainers

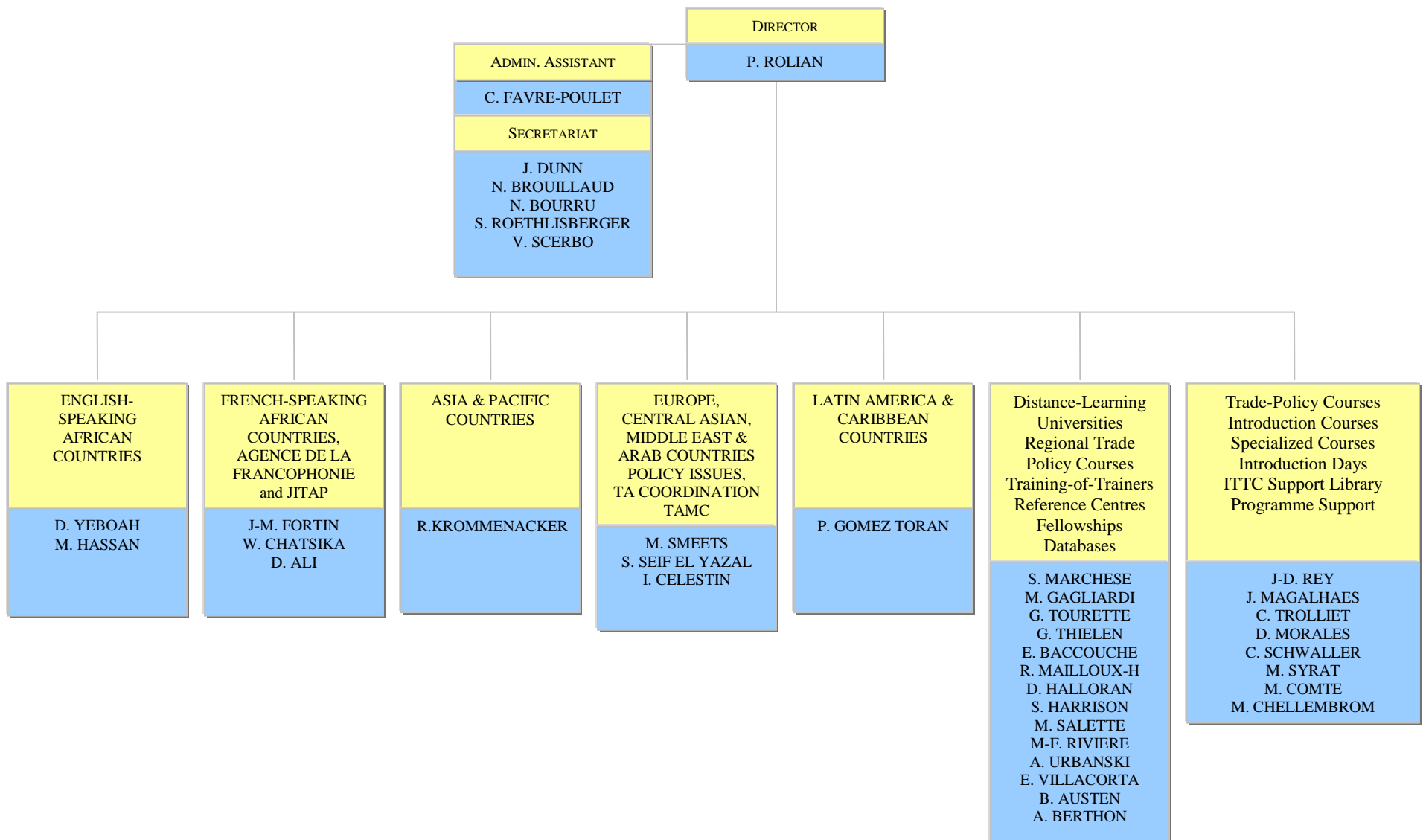
While in general WTO courses are recognised as high quality, questions have been raised about the WTO's approach to quality control – whether there is a clear policy or practice, for instance, to ensure that trainers meet certain standards. In 2002, a ToT initiative to improve their performance was considered useful but it was not followed up subsequently, despite some internal suggestions that this and more personalised tuition were desirable. This lack of follow-up has meant that the newer recruits have not been given the opportunity to attend a ToT. Some BTORs also underlined this need.⁴⁹ According to ITTC staff, one way to ensure that training skills are taken more seriously by managers and experts would be to include a training performance indicator in WTO staff annual evaluations; certainly this would be consistent with the emphasis now given to training in the WTO's TRTA mandate.

Another issue is to ensure that if an expert cannot turn up as planned, say in a RTPC, that the person replacing them has appropriate expertise.

Some experts might also benefit from training to work with non-WTO partners (both Northern and Southern), some of whom have complained about being corrected or contradicted in the course of their presentations.

⁴⁹ According to the BTORs for the 8th Introduction Course for LDCs, 71% of participants ranked sessions given by ITTC trainers as very successful compared to 42% for sessions given by experts from other divisions.

Chart 3. Organisation chart of the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation (ITTC)
(as on 21 February 2006)



Evaluation

In recent years the WTO Secretariat has taken several steps to expand the evaluation of its training programme, in order to ensure that its results are in line with its objectives. Until this strategic review, the focus had been on self-evaluations by trainees and WTO trainers, combined with on-site evaluations by the TCA. The Rules Division has proposed an ex-post evaluation of its courses some 8 to 12 months after completion of its courses and similar ex-post evaluations were to be followed in the TPCs, to determine both individual and institutional impacts.

There are several ways in which even this internal self-evaluation can be strengthened. For instance in the case of the RTPCs, according to one interviewee, Southern trainers should be asked to complete BTORs as per the WTO trainers.

Evaluation needs to be done both systematically and seriously. Some interviewees suggested that evaluation was difficult when it was not confidential, while a few others noted that there was an incentive at least in the case of courses involving travel and per diems to report favourably on courses. Even so, the degree of thoughtful and constructively critical comments we received in the course of our interviews suggested that participants find it in their interests to provide accurate feedback.

Evaluation of trainees is rarely undertaken. Some interviewees thought that this would be useful – whether it was undertaken by the WTO trainer, Secretariat, or the national ministry or agency. In the case of longer courses this could take the form of written tests while shorter courses could involve oral tests. (N.B. oral tests may be less feasible given trainer time constraints). Such an evaluation could be shared with senior officials and used as input into future performance evaluation. Others suggested that trainees be required to complete BTORs as do the trainers in order to provide more feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the TRTA – and to provide input to national human resource managers.

Besides the evaluation forms completed at the end of courses, many trainees are expected to prepare reports on their training for their employers; 45% of our respondents had done so (Box VII. 4). Typically these are presented to their directors and occasionally even shared with their ministers. While there is rarely a fixed outline for such reports, they usually combine commentaries on the substance of the courses, how the training might be used, as well as observations about the competence of the trainers, quality of materials, and other observations. They were rarely accessible to others considering doing WTO courses – in the same or other departments (an exception being Cambodia) – and only rarely sent to the WTO.

Management of partnerships

In order to respond to growing demands for TRTA in a wide range of areas, involving increasing technical knowledge and with greater regional if not national content, the WTO has greatly expanded the number of partnerships in which it is involved. Informal estimates suggest that as many as three-quarters of WTO courses involve other agencies. The main exception is the national activities, which typically only involve WTO trainers (though in the case of JITAP, the WTO works with UNCTAD

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and the ITC). And at the same time other agencies are asking the WTO to participate in courses, which they are running (75 or 16% of all activities involving the WTO in 2005⁵⁰).

One reason for the uncertainty about the extent of partnerships is that this is managed informally, ‘in a pragmatic way’.⁵¹ The Secretariat has signed between two and three dozen MoUs with other agencies to govern collaboration in TRTA but in many cases these have expired without being used. Generally Secretariat staff consider informal relations are more effective. Several other agencies disagree, arguing that a MoU can clarify several aspects needed to ensure that partnerships work well. (For an example of good practice, see Box VII.2 on WTO-INTAL collaboration.)

Box VII.2: WTO-INTAL Collaboration

In Latin America and the Caribbean, many WTO TRTA activities are now undertaken in close partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and its arm INTAL, under a MoU signed by the IDB and the WTO in February 2002. The following are some key characteristics:

- The WTO with the Integration, Trade and Hemispheric Issues Division (ITHID) of the IDB and INTAL has jointly developed a trade negotiations training course.
- The annual programme for the region – the selection of topics, calendar, places and trainers – is designed jointly by the WTO’s ITTC in consultation with delegations in Geneva and the IDB/INTAL.
- The programme involves 12-15 regional courses a year, and is flexible enough to incorporate topics relating to the state of the Doha negotiations.
- The IDB provides US\$600,000 annually for these activities and INTAL provides two full-time officers.
- The training is provided by WTO experts of the WTO, alongside IDB experts from the ITHID.
- The WTO usually provides documentation and teaching materials
- Courses are provided in only one language at a time – English in the Caribbean and Spanish in Latin America
- Trainees are national government officials, appointed by their respective ministries, and whose working responsibilities are closely related to the process of trade negotiation, at a regional or multilateral level.
- After each course trainees are encouraged to fill in an evaluation form to help improve the next year’s activities.
- The Joint Programme has produced a number of concrete, region-specific examples
- Despite the overall positive experience, there is still scope to: improve the “match” between trainers and trainees; fine tune the level of instruction; identify appropriate trainees; mesh the WTO’s one year planning horizon with the longer term perspectives of the IDB; and strengthen the Latin American partners’ role in the planning, design and content of the activities.

⁵⁰ WT/COMTD/W/146 p. 39

⁵¹ para. 157, WT/COMTD/W/146

Cost effectiveness

One issue that arose in some interviews was the relative cost of WTO TRTA compared to that offered by national training institutions such as universities or administrative staff colleges ('les écoles d'administration et de douanes'). For instance, we were told that the average cost of a participant in the three-month RTPC in the Caribbean is some US\$30,000 whereas a similar course offered by UWI-Cave Hill campus in Barbados, taught by Caribbean and international specialists costs some US\$6,000 (excluding accommodation and travel costs).⁵²

In terms of courses offered by the WTO, interviewees generally suggested that national courses were the most cost-effective, as many more national officials and others could attend, compared to the one or two participants normally allowed for other courses. (An exception is the regional courses in which host countries are able to have more national participants.) For the WTO the cost-savings are primarily in terms of participants' travel and per diem costs.⁵³ Besides the financial benefits, there are several benefits to recipient countries (as already discussed in the section on relevance). National courses typically involved representatives from other ministries and agencies besides those dealing with trade or foreign affairs; also there was often the possibility of one or two participants from a national university and CSOs. In this way, TRTA was more likely to be mainstreamed and national trainers to be developed, than with other courses. National courses also allow for more tailoring of presentations, discussion and materials to the national context. On the other hand, there would be a loss of the networking with officials from regional or more distant trading partners, and the exchange of national experiences, which have been associated with the courses outside trainees' home countries, as underlined earlier.

Most interviewees were satisfied with the size of classes, which averaged 25-30. The few courses with as many as 150 participants from around the world (as reported in a course on domestic regulation) were considered too large to allow for much discussion.

Funding

As with many TRTA programmes, there are a number of issues relating to funding that have complicated management of the WTO's TRTA, in particular making it more difficult to develop longer-term plans. (NB. even with fully committed funding, there will always be some uncertainty in the WTO plan given that both the supply and the

⁵² Airfares and accommodation are included in the WTO costs. The 18-month long Masters Program in International Trade offered at the same campus cost \$14,000 per participant in 2006 (\$15,000 from 2007). This course involves nine months of teaching, one-month study tour and five months of internship/placement. It is noteworthy that Caribbean governments and businesses are willing to pay the shorter course fees even while the WTO equivalent course would be free to most of them. This information is from interviews in Barbados and correspondence with the UWI course assistant.

⁵³ The WTO does not track costs on a per participant/day basis except where it has to cover the costs of a participant. This makes it difficult to compare costs. Assuming an average of 30 people in a national seminar, however, costs per day in 2004 would have been SFr 57, compared to SFr1,100 for regional activities (assuming no local participants), 500 for RTPCs and 2,300 for regional activities at WTO headquarters, according to information from the Secretariat.

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demand for certain types of training are contingent on developments in the WTO, and notably in the negotiations.)

Funding for TRTA is drawn from various pools – the regular budget (which covers the Geneva-based activities, some specialised national activities, research collaboration and dissemination of documents to academics for a total of SFr5.3 million in 2006), the DDAGTF, other trust funds and cost sharing (see Chart 4).

According to WTO financial rules⁵⁴ the Secretariat needs to have in place 25% of its annual plan funds by December 31, 75% by March 31, and the remaining 25% by June 30. Failing this, the activities have to be scaled back. By May 2, 2006, only SFr13 million had been pledged i.e. barely half of what was needed for the whole year (see Chart 4). (Some of the delays may have been the result of donors waiting the findings of this Strategic Review.)

While there has been no case as yet of funding not materialising, this uncertainty has made it more difficult for ITTC to make longer-term commitments, and at one point it seemed that the RTPC might be in jeopardy. One suggestion might be that a reserve fund be created to provide a buffer. Ideally the ITTC should be able to programme regional activities in a two-year cycle, even if national activities are planned on a shorter one-year cycle in order to allow for greater flexibility in responding to short-term national requests.

Pre- and post-training activities ('follow-up')

Many people interviewed suggested that the WTO needed to develop an overarching plan for its training courses. This would require not only some reflection on how different courses relate to each other, and whether different courses add up to a coherent programme, but also what pre- and post-training activities might be needed to maximise the benefits of the courses.

Pre-training is an idea that has been introduced, for instance with electronic courses, to bring people up to the same level in advance of a course. While it is still fairly limited, those interviewees who had experienced it suggested that it was very useful, though some had experienced problems with slow internet connections. Certainly pre-training complements careful participant selection as a way to ensure trainees are at a similar knowledge level when they start courses, thereby helping to improve their overall effectiveness.

In terms of follow-up activities, there was a general sense that more could be done. Over 90% of respondents noted that there had been no follow-up by the WTO (Box VII. 5). Many trainees reported keeping in touch with counterparts from other countries who had participated in the same courses, through informal networks such as electronic chat rooms. But others suggested that there was a role for the WTO to provide various types of follow-up – over three-quarters thought that such activities were required. An obvious need was for further training – to deepen knowledge acquired in the introductory and shorter courses in order to develop expertise in certain areas, and in particular to develop analytical skills.

⁵⁴ Annex B WT/BFA/56

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Another suggestion was for the WTO to facilitate contact between course participants and trainers, to allow trainees to share ideas with each other and contact experts/trainers with follow-up questions. Some follow-up contact with experts already takes place – and interviewees noted that this had been timely and helpful – but it could be strengthened.⁵⁵ But there were many ideas about other initiatives that the WTO could undertake.

For instance, these included sending trainees updated information on the issue in which they were trained; assistance with organising WTO materials (in some countries the reference centres are not fully functional); assistance with compiling national statistics, and providing access to analytical tools, international databases and studies needed for analytical work; and providing funds to participate in negotiating meetings.

Logistics

In our interviews and meetings, several points were raised about the logistics and how minor changes could help to improve the quality of the courses in various ways.

Advance delivery of information about course content and materials

Given that much of the WTO's courses are modular, it is surprising that many participants complained about not receiving materials let alone information about course content in advance of the courses. This is not always the case – for some of the longer courses, this is done more systematically as participants are encouraged to prepare for the course. But it is also important for shorter courses or workshops in which a lot of material is covered in two or three days. Sending a list of readings, identifying which are recommended and which optional, and where they might be sourced on the Internet, with a minimum three week notice, should be a basic principle for all courses. The WTO reference centres in each country might be used as a distribution centre for these training resources.

The WTO appears to be behind the industry standard in this respect. In contrast to the very limited course descriptions on the WTO website⁵⁶, there is a detailed syllabus including list of readings on the websites for the Masters in International Trade Policy at UWI⁵⁷, the Certificate Program in Trade Policy and Commercial Diplomacy at the Centre of Trade Policy and Law (CTPL), Carleton University,⁵⁸ and UNCTAD's

⁵⁵ In the case of the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) presently run out of Carleton University, the organisers emphasise group building and networking among individuals during the programme, providing contact lists for all trainees, maintaining a list serve for problem solving and tracking down resources, and follow-up mini-courses organised by the trainees themselves. Correspondence with IPDET manager, June 2006.

⁵⁶ www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/train_e/tradepolicycourse_e.htm

⁵⁷ www.cavehill.uwi.edu/tradepolicy/courses.html

⁵⁸ www.carleton.ca/ctpl/pdf/training/ctpl_certificate_program_syllabus.pdf

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Virtual Institute.⁵⁹ On the other hand this information is not available for the courses organised by the Joint Vienna Institute.

Language of instruction and discussion

As mentioned already in the section on relevance, language difficulties have been an obstacle for many trainees. Interviewees recommended that the WTO make more effort to expand the range of materials and instruction in all three official languages, i.e. Spanish and French as well as English, and consider working with trainers and materials in other regional languages such as Russian and Arabic. Even so, participants' proficiency in these languages needs to be subjected to more rigorous testing. The present tests do not appear to have weaned out those unable to comprehend the training or to participate in the discussions. Lack of proficiency has diluted the impact of courses.

Box VII. 3: Views on Selection procedures

2a Are you aware of the selection procedure of this training activity? (N=117)

Yes 91 (78%) No 26 (22%)

2b. Was your country mission in Geneva involved with the process of selection? (N=111)

Yes 21 (19%) No 61 (55%) Don't know 29 (26%)

Box VII. 4: National Assessments

13a. Other than the assessment done by the WTO were you asked to make an assessment of the training programme by your department? (N=101)

Yes 45 (45%) No 56 (55%)

13b. If yes, was that assessment shared with your department? (N=40)

Yes 37 (93%) 3 No (7%)

13c. Do you know whether that assessment was sent to the WTO or not? (N=41)

Yes 2 (5%) No 28 (68%) Don't know 11 (27%)

Box VII. 5: Views on Follow-up training and other activities

20a. Was there any follow-up by the WTO to the training programme that you attended? (N=105)

Yes 10 (9.5%) No 95 (90.5%)

20b. If yes, did you participate in that follow-up training programme? (N=8)

Yes 7 (87.5%) No 1 (12.5%)

20c. If no, do you think follow-up activities were required? (N=74)

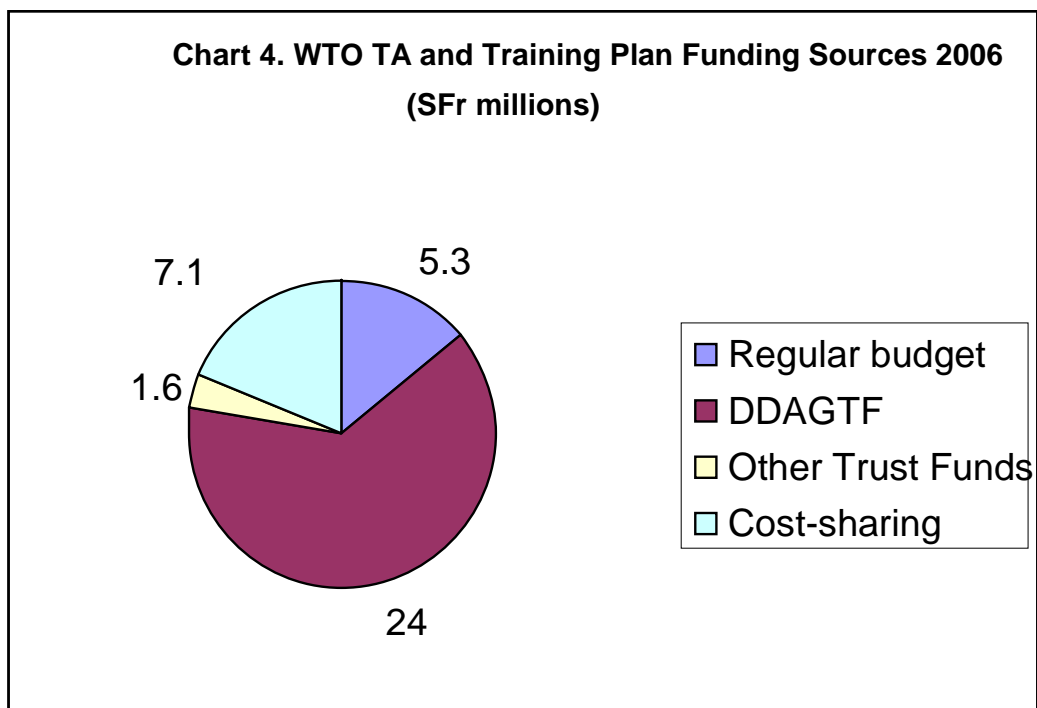
Yes 58 (78%) No 16 (22%)

20d. Did you request your government to request a follow-up training activity? (N=81)

⁵⁹ In the case of the Virtual Institute, correspondence with the course supervisor is needed before gaining access to the documentation.

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Yes 21 (26%) No 60 (74%)



Source: Derived from WT/COMTD/M/54, p. 31

VIII. Findings, Lessons Learned and Recommendations

In this section we present the findings, lessons learned and recommendations of the three preceding sections on comparative advantage, relevance, and management and efficiency. Key messages have been identified under each of the three aspects of WTO TRTA and the findings, lessons learned and recommendations are accordingly organised under the relevant key messages.

Comparative Advantage

Credible core competencies in trade law

Findings

- There is widespread agreement that the WTO Secretariat has strong comparative advantage in knowledge and information about the WTO system of rules and procedures, and the related history of their negotiation and use, particularly from a legal perspective.
- The WTO's more detailed knowledge of the rules and their application is highly valued.
- The WTO is considered less biased than many other official agencies involved in TRTA. But the requirement for neutrality can limit the scope of its advice and sometimes it appears to be pro-liberalisation.
- The WTO has less capacity to provide technical assistance and training on the development dimensions of trade rules, the political aspects of negotiations (both in terms of domestic politics and in relationship to major trading partners), and on analytical techniques.

Lessons Learned

- The WTO's neutrality can act as a constraint, and despite this neutrality, interpretation of WTO rules and negotiations by the WTO experts sometimes reflects certain bureaucratic and ideological interests or preferences.
- The question is whether the WTO is equipped to deliver training on trade and development, political skills of negotiation, and analytical skills. There is scope for greater collaboration with specialised and regional agencies for training and capacity building on such issues, which would complement WTO's expertise and training.
- Outsourcing of basic training on WTO issues would be consistent with the preference of some donors. More importantly, it would allow the WTO to focus on more technically complex issues, given its limited resources (human as well as financial).

Recommendations

- Consider outsourcing the training on basic information about the WTO's history and rules to other organisations now having knowledge on such issues.
- Move up the trade system knowledge value chain with, for instance, courses on latest jurisprudence and conduct a version of 'trade clinics' that respond to the specific queries and assessed needs of recipient countries.

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- Deepen coordination and collaboration with other international organisations and agencies, especially to ensure that TRTA needs in terms of 1) pre-negotiations analysis and policy consultations, 2) post-agreement adjustments, and 3) supply-side capacity are met by non-WTO programmes.
- Extend decentralisation and devolution to regional institutions; for instance, work with national economic research centres to run national courses on analytical skills and to undertake impact assessments.

Building deeper partnerships

Findings

- The WTO has greatly expanded the number of its partnerships, but the nature of these partnerships remains underdeveloped. Partnerships are often managed informally, ‘in a pragmatic way’.
- Some partners are better able to address policy issues confronting national ministries such as Preferential Trading Arrangements (PTAs) that go beyond a WTO-specific focus.

Lessons Learned

- The ‘hub and spoke’ approach to partnership – with the WTO as the hub – needs revision to make TRTA more inclusive and appropriate to recipients’ needs.
- Several partner agencies find informal relations to be less effective than the WTO, arguing that a memorandum of understanding can clarify several aspects needed to ensure that partnerships work well.

Recommendations

- Move from ‘hub and spoke’ to joint partnerships with other agencies/donors and with recipients.
- Move from Geneva-based towards a more regional and in-country approach.
- When working with partners, delegate more responsibility for courses to them, leaving the WTO to play a supportive role.

Transforming ITTC into a fully-fledged training institution

Findings

- WTO is seen as having developed good training courses taught by people with strong subject knowledge.
- These courses have become better planned since the formation of the ITTC, which is a part of the WTO Secretariat.
- However, the ITTC is not as fully developed a training institution as others that have been involved in training for longer and on a larger-scale and/or in a more integrated fashion.

Lessons Learned

- The ITTC’s mandate may limit the scope and approach of training offered, relative to an institution with training as its primary mandate.

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Recommendations

- Build the capacity of subject matter experts to deliver training and not just content lectures. This could involve obligatory annual/biennial training courses and the creation of a training ‘help desk’ in ITTC for trainers to consult as needed, and particularly when developing a new course.
- Create and support networks of trainers so that they can regularly exchange notes and ideas.
- The ITTC should systematise training of trainers and develop teaching materials for courses and workshops to be used by the trainers, both in government and in other training centres.
- Work with recipient governments to help trainees become capable trainers.
- Work with recipient governments and other members to strengthen the autonomy and freedom of ITTC. Expect it to prepare a work programme drawing on ideas from recipient countries and partners every two to three years.

Relevance

Absence of effective needs assessments

Findings

- Despite the importance of national needs assessment to ensure effective TRTA, in few countries is there a clear process for doing this, let alone an action plan that details how those needs should be met.
- Yet TRTA needs assessment can be effective when undertaken by recipient governments in collaboration with national stakeholders. Donors and/or regional/multilateral agencies can provide help in this process.
- The WTO has a variety of tools to assist needs assessment and planning; e.g. internships, Trade Policy Reviews (though these are not sufficiently frequent) and the WTO/OECD database (though this has a number of shortcomings).

Lessons Learned

- The WTO should help recipient countries to introduce/improve domestic national needs assessment procedures.
- National inter-ministerial committees can be effective in developing plans for training needs.
- There are a number of useful mechanisms (for example, internships, TPRs, TCDB) at the WTO Secretariat's disposal but these could be used more systematically.

Recommendations

- The WTO should be aware of the institutional weaknesses limiting countries' capacity to assess their national needs, and work with governments to address this problem, for instance through inter-ministerial or multi-stakeholder committees focusing on trade.
- The WTO should work with the OECD to make the Trade Capacity Building Database more useful for planning purposes by including prospective as well as retrospective information, and ensuring greater compatibility among the different providers' data.
- A questionnaire could be sent to prospective TRTA participants to collect information about their strengths and weaknesses as well as establish their own priorities.

Course content and approach still to respond to specific national needs

Findings

- WTO TRTA is predominantly modular with limited flexibility to adjust its content to recipients' specific needs. National courses offer more flexibility, but are limited in number. The Secretariat considers this to be a demand-driven approach, but most recipients find it supply-driven.
- Training is often theoretical, juridical and general, thus limited to describing agreements and focusing on legal aspects. There is less focus on economic and social analysis.

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- Where practical examples are used to illustrate particular issues, they are often not relevant to national experiences. But there is some useful case-study material emerging from the Economic Research and Statistics Division.
- Outsourcing (out of Geneva as well as to other agencies) has begun to allow for a broader approach and to address specific national and regional needs, but it is still too ad hoc/limited, except in the case of Regional Trade Policy Courses.

Lessons Learned

- The modular approach makes the WTO's TRTA activities too status quo oriented and without the flexibility needed for training to respond to needs.
- Being too focused on legal aspects – and less on economic and social analysis – gives a sense that training builds officials' capacity as effective rule-implementers rather than rule-makers.
- Use of regional and national experts alongside WTO trainers helps to provide more relevant perspectives and material.

Recommendations

- The ITTC should promote awareness in recipient governments about what TRTA activities can be provided by the WTO.
- Provide more assistance, with other partners, to help countries develop negotiating and analytical skills to better identify their trade interests and assert their trade rights.
- Draw more on case-study material and research from within WTO and from outside.
- Ask participants to prepare brief reports on country-specific problems and/or issues, for presentation and discussion during a course.
- Provide more training of national and regional experts to provide advice and act as trainers used by the WTO for regional and in-country courses.
- Move from WTO-centric content to a more comprehensive approach, which addresses the broad range of trade policy issues now facing many developing country trade ministries.

Product-related objectives partially met

Findings

- Short TRTA activities (i.e. less than one week) provide substantial information but do not allow sufficient time for digestion and simulations or practical exercises.
- Material is mostly useful, but not always adequate to needs. It is not systematically sent out to participants in advance of training.
- The WTO's attempt to maintain a neutral position is generally considered appropriate, but there is a concern that it interprets its neutrality mandate too narrowly and has a trade liberalisation bias.
- WTO's TRTA is currently lecture-based rather than based on problem solving (with relevant case studies) though the longer TPCs and especially the RTPCs are moving in this direction.

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- There has been a problem with the language of instruction and materials for non-Anglophone participants.
- The size of classes is generally considered appropriate, but lack of uniformity of participants in terms of knowledge, language proficiency, experience, responsibility and interest are cited as practical problems.

Lessons Learned

- Shorter courses, especially national workshops, do not allow sufficient time for the amount of information covered to be discussed and digested.
- Taking neutrality too far can reduce the relevance of technical assistance and fail to provide recipients with the full range of technical insights or capacity building skills and knowledge that they had sought. Involvement of non-WTO resource persons and collaboration with other organisations, agencies, institutes etc. have helped to reduce the neutrality bias.
- The present language tests do not appear to have weaned out those unable to comprehend training or participate in discussions.
- Proper selection of participants is key to fulfil specific and product-related objectives. Some differences among participants can provide the basis for useful exchanges of experience, but when they are too pronounced they distract trainers and undermine discussions and other group exercises.

Recommendations

- Courses and workshops should be more interactive, with trainers as facilitators instead of lecturers. Introduce more case studies, simulations and other practical exercises.
- Adding 1-2 days would allow workshops to include more practical and regionally relevant content, without compromising the time needed to absorb details of WTO rules and procedures.
- Greater use of regional resource persons could offset costs of longer workshops.
- Sending a list of readings, identifying which are recommended and which are optional, and where they might be sourced on the Internet, with a minimum three weeks notice, should be a basic principle for all courses.
- Expand pre-training, for instance with electronic courses, to bring people up to the same level in advance of a course.
- Include more national or regional trainers to address language problems and expand the range of materials and instruction in all three official languages and consider the same in other regional languages such as Russian and Arabic. Subject participants to more rigorous testing of language proficiency.
- Work with governments to improve the selection process (see Management and Efficiency section below).

Overall high quality of trainers, but room for improvement

Findings

- Most trainers are legal experts. In general the quality of WTO trainers is considered high, particularly on legal aspects of WTO rules, their negotiating history (past and current) and their implementation.

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- ITTC staff are considered more adept trainers, while those from other WTO divisions are considered more knowledgeable at a substantive level. Newer trainers are generally considered good, but perhaps more concerned than others about maintaining ‘neutrality’.
- Some consider that WTO trainers are more doctrinaires than non-WTO trainers, though the latter also have strengths (such as their knowledge of the regional and national context) and weaknesses.

Lessons Learned

- There appears to be differences in performance between resource persons (trainers) from ITTC and from operational divisions of the WTO as well as between ‘newer’ and ‘older’ trainers. This results in reduced consistency and, ultimately, overall performance of WTO-provided TRTA.
- It is not clear that the demand for more training on economic analysis can be met by the relatively few economists at the WTO.
- While increasing non-WTO trainers’ involvement and autonomy might dilute the WTO ‘brand’, it would help address the general request for greater national and regional content and more variety in perspectives taught.

Recommendations

- Introduce regular training of trainers programmes (as already mentioned in the Comparative Advantage section above).
- Include more economists amongst WTO trainers as well as the increasing number of non-WTO trainers now involved in its courses in order to provide more comprehensive training.
- Involve non-WTO trainers more in the planning of WTO courses and increase the degree of their autonomy in teaching.

Mixed impact of WTO TRTA

Findings

- Many view the WTO’s TRTA as having been relevant in a general way – responding to national, institutional and individual needs. But the capacity to design national trade policies and to negotiate at the WTO remains relatively weak in most countries.
- There is no formalised reporting and dissemination process of the training received in many countries.
- Typically the WTO-related knowledge of individuals working within trade ministries has been enhanced, as has their capacity to understand and implement WTO obligations, though their analytical capacity is still limited. Others involved in trade policy discussions have improved their general understanding and access to information on specific WTO issues, rather than becoming particularly knowledgeable about how to use the WTO to promote national interests.
- Most trainees have had insufficient training, whether in the WTO or other courses, to become trainers themselves.
- In some countries there is a human resource management problem that has diluted the impact of WTO-provided and other TRTA. This is associated with

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high turnover rates, departmental restructuring and departure of some officials to the private sector. There is also a lack of continuity at Geneva missions as well as in other diplomatic posts.

- Financial constraints on participation in WTO meetings and access to data also limit the capacity to put training into practice.

Lessons Learned

- Need to adopt an institutional rather than an individual focus, and to enhance the skills and knowledge of trade ministries as well as other agencies and stakeholder groups working with them.
- Without formalised reporting and dissemination processes in place, recipients risk missing opportunities and lowering the institutional impact of training.
- There is a need for continued updating and deepening of knowledge. This requires a programmatic versus a product-specific approach to training (see Management and Efficiency Section below).
- Having WTO trainees leave government can help to spread awareness of WTO issues. But it undermines efforts to build up a core of trained people within government and thus the institutional capacity to design, negotiate and implement trade rules.

Recommendations

- Assist recipient governments to put in place an information management system to ensure that WTO materials collected are appropriately archived and thus accessible to others.
- Expand collaboration with Southern think tanks and academics in order to build institutional capacity in developing countries.
- Provide further training to staff at WTO reference centres in order for them to act as WTO resource persons.
- Provide assistance to develop trade-related databases on subjects such as tariff rates, non-tariff barriers etc.
- Work with donors and recipients to consider various incentives for retaining recently trained staff in order to curb the loss of human capital.

Management and Efficiency

Lack of dynamic leadership in management of the ITTC

Findings

- There is a lack of missionary zeal in the management of the ITTC. The approach is characterised by routine churning out of TRTA activities within a pre-determined static framework.

Lessons learned

- A lack of dynamism in the leadership results in tasks being dealt with in a routine fashion within a pre-determined static framework.

Recommendations

- Employ people who have a missionary zeal and a long experience of working on trade problems of developing countries either at governmental or inter-governmental levels or in research institutions.

Trainee selection processes lacking in focus and transparency

Findings

- The selection process appears to be ad hoc in many countries.
- Many governments centralise selection of participants in the international trade department or foreign affairs ministry, though other agencies involved in trade are encouraged to nominate trainees.
- No general pattern of gender discrimination in the selection of participants was found.

Lessons Learned

- There is a problem in ensuring both greater uniformity in the knowledge level and expectations of participants, as well as broader representation of stakeholders from other parts of government and non-government agencies.
- There is a tendency in most countries to build up a cadre of officials with WTO training in the central trade ministries before extending these opportunities to other ministries and stakeholders.
- There are inter-ministerial or multi-stakeholder trade committees that could contribute to the identification of potential trainees.

Recommendations

- Encourage recipient governments to establish a sub-committee within the national trade ministry, the national inter-ministerial committee or the national consultative trade committee to manage and review the selection process, and make it accountable to the trade minister and trade mission in Geneva.
- Introduce greater transparency, for example through announcements on WTO's website when governments are being asked to nominate participants for particular courses.
- ITTC should establish benchmarks for identifying participants for all courses and work closely with governments to screen participants.

Inadequate quality control of trainers

Findings

- While in general, WTO courses are recognised as high quality, questions have been raised about the WTO's approach to quality control and whether there is a clear policy or practice.
- A successful training of trainers in 2002 was not followed up, despite requests that it be continued.
- For the RTPCs, however, regular meetings with non-WTO trainers have helped to improve preparation and delivery.

Lessons Learned

- The absence of follow-up on training of trainers means that newer recruits at the WTO have missed the opportunity to bridge the gap with 'older' trainers (as noted above in the Relevance section).

Recommendations

- Include a training performance indicator in the annual evaluation of WTO staff.
- Some experts might also benefit from training to work with non-WTO partners (both Northern and Southern).

Moving beyond trainee self-evaluation

Findings

- There have been various changes to increase the amount of auditing and evaluation, although efforts have been limited by resource constraints.
- Trainee self-evaluations are a key tool; along with back-to-office reports from WTO trainers. Participants have provided a range of critical and constructive suggestions in their feedback.
- Despite some earlier difficulties with tracking trainees, a longer term, ex-post evaluation will be undertaken in late 2006/early 2007.
- Besides the evaluation form completed at the end of a course, many trainees are expected to prepare reports on their training for their employers. These reports are rarely accessible to others considering doing WTO courses and only rarely sent to the WTO.

Lessons Learned

- At present, evaluation is geared towards measuring 'customer satisfaction' rather than the absorption and subsequent performance of a trainee.
- More importantly, at present such evaluation does not assess a country's interests – there is no feedback from supervisors/responsible trade officials as to changes in national capacities to engage in the multilateral trading system.

Recommendations

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- Strengthen internal self-evaluation through, for instance, asking Southern trainers in Regional Trade Policy Courses to complete back-to-office-reports as done by the WTO trainers.
- Introduce more systematic evaluation of trainees performance via written or oral tests, alternatively trainees could be required to complete and present back-to-office-reports and subsequently action-taken-reports.
- Undertake ex-post and thematic evaluations every three years, including an institutional focus.
- The Secretariat needs funds to undertake regular ex-post and thematic evaluations.

Programmatic approach needed

Findings

- Budgets are provided to ITTC on an annual basis and do not cover a longer-term period.
- At present, WTO-provided TRTA is mainly based on providing individual products with many ad hoc courses and activities.
- Follow-up activities are exceptions rather than the norm and there is a general sense that more could be done in this regard.
- Complementary measures are needed to ensure that training is practiced.

Lessons Learned

- WTO needs to adopt a programmatic approach and develop an overarching, long-term plan for its training courses. This would require not only some reflection on how different courses relate to each other, and whether different courses add up to a coherent programme for a country or set of countries, but also what pre- and post-training activities might be needed to maximise benefits of such courses, and what complementary funding might be involved.

Recommendations

- Members should consider ways to ensure more predictable and longer-term funding for the WTO's TRTA to assist ITTC planning of its activities. This might involve more funding from the regular budget e.g. for the RTPCs.
- ITTC should develop an overall plan to allow trainees to go through a structured programme of learning. This would include introductory courses and more advanced course for officials to ensure their trade expertise progresses over time. Such an overall plan would respond to national trade-related human resource development plans, which ITTC should assist recipient country trade ministries to develop.
- Develop a follow-up strategy including facilitation of networking between participants and trainers, and distribution of updated information on course subjects.
- Solicit funds for recipient countries to effectively participate in negotiating meetings and acquire other resources (e.g. databases) to apply their newly acquired WTO knowledge.

Boosting value for money

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Findings

- It is difficult to access the detailed budgetary information needed to compare the costs of different WTO training activities and those of other international, regional and national agencies.
- It seems that the WTO's national courses are the most cost-effective of all its courses, as many more national officials and others can attend them compared to the one or two individuals who normally participate in other courses, including Regional Trade Policy Courses.
- WTO courses effectively share information and transfer some knowledge to trainees, but there are still questions about empowerment.
- WTO courses have generated some political returns in terms of goodwill towards the WTO, as well as the perceived legitimacy of its rules and participation in the negotiations.
- WTO-provided TRTA is considered particularly valuable by countries with less access to bilateral/multilateral funds.

Lessons Learned

- Although difficult to measure quantitatively, WTO-provided TRTA has clearly brought benefits.
- Nevertheless, there is room for improvement to increase efficiency and effectiveness as well as to boost relevance. Notably, needs assessment processes can be improved, planning and delivery more demand-driven, selection of participants more transparent, coordination and cooperation with other TRTA providers more formalised, a more programmatic approach – with systematic follow-up – adopted, and a move from individual to institutional impact.
- More information is needed for comparisons with the costs of other TRTA.

Recommendations

- Consider expanding DDAGTF resource allocation to national and regional activities.
- Compile data with OECD and other agencies to allow comparison of relative costs of different TRTA programming.

IX. Conclusions and Future Scenarios

The findings, lessons learned and recommendations of this Strategic Review show that the WTO's TRTA has focused on its core competencies, namely promoting better understanding and interpretation of WTO agreements, rules and disciplines as well as monitoring and enforcement. In recent years the range of TRTA activities have expanded to include capacity building initiatives to help developing countries participate in shaping international trade rules as well as in formulating trade policies at national levels.

Despite this evolution and expansion of WTO-provided TRTA activities, in-house capacities to understand and respond to the implication of WTO agreements and negotiate national interests and priorities are mostly inadequate in many developing and least developed countries. This should not come as a surprise, since the WTO's TRTA is focused on training and not on empowerment, which has even led to a few questioning whether the WTO should be in the business of providing TRTA at all. Seen in the light of the seven objectives in WTO's *New Strategy for WTO Technical Cooperation for Capacity Building, Growth and Integration* (2001), this means that the WTO has not exactly succeeded to fulfil two of them:

- Assist beneficiary countries to understand their rights, implement their obligations and improve their capacity to draw on the benefits of an open, rules-based, multilateral trading system. To this end, technical assistance will focus on establishing partnerships with beneficiary countries to better understand and use the rules.
- Support national efforts and ownership in building durable institutional capacity for trade policy formulation, advocacy and negotiation.

Several reasons for this failure have been discussed in this Report, but three factors in particular should be highlighted. First, WTO's *neutrality* mandate – albeit appreciated by some – limits the knowledge and understanding that developing countries can gain from TRTA. As a result, the participants are trained to become effective rule-implementers rather than rule-makers. Second, there is a *lack of utilisation of non-WTO resource persons* in the WTO's TRTA activities. This point relates to the previous one on neutrality, since one of the benefits from the inclusion of non-WTO trainers has been a greater variety of perspectives taught and a reduction in the neutrality bias. Third, *lack of dynamic leadership* of the WTO's TRTA makes the technical assistance a routine affair. It is paramount that the activities are guided by people with a missionary zeal and a long experience of working on trade problems of developing countries either at governmental or inter-governmental levels or in research institutions.

As a result of the foregoing, beneficiary countries have called for a reorientation and rationalisation of the WTO-provided TRTA activities to make them more broad-based and comprehensive in order to cover broader aspects of promoting trade policies that support national development strategies in general and poverty reduction in particular.

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This necessitates broadening and deepening the scope of and approach to WTO-provided TRTA activities, among others, in relation to training of trainers, going deeper into technical issues (particularly on trade rules, especially those that are creating non-tariff barriers to market access), moving beyond Geneva-based to more regional and national training (including content), and promoting the participation of academia, private sector and civil society organisations as resource persons as well as recipients of WTO-provided TRTA.

Against this backdrop, we present here two possible scenarios for change and concomitant adjustments. The first one is a scenario of incremental change and related adjustments. The second scenario involves a more fundamental rethinking, if not a new paradigm. Both entail different overarching visions for what the work of WTO-provided TRTA should be, and remain contingent on current and future developments in the closing of the Doha Round and its aftermath. The alternative if neither scenario is pursued is “more of the same”; a wasted opportunity to improve WTO-provided TRTA and thus to manifest the development dimension more firmly into the WTO’s ethos.

Scenario 1: Incremental Change

In this Scenario we assume that there would be some adjustments within the basic matrix of the WTO-provided TRTA, and a greater and more functional synergy between the WTO-provided TRTA activities and those of other agencies. Despite heightened visibility of TRTA in the Doha Development Agenda, this Scenario assumes that for various reasons there will be no radical change to the basic approach and structure of providing TRTA. Under this Scenario, training would remain focused on the “do’s and don’ts”, but with a strong commitment to lessen information asymmetries on the MTS for all the WTO member countries.

The major benefit of this incremental approach lies in that it is an easy, natural progression from the present state of affairs. The disadvantage would lie in that some of the needs and current expectations of recipients might be left unmet. Moreover, not all of the WTO’s strategic objectives would be fulfilled with this proposed approach, and hence a note of realism must be injected into this strategy.

The imperative for adjustment lies in the fact that in this Scenario we foresee that only the following five out of the original seven objectives, as spelt out in the *New Strategy* and as agreed upon in Doha, would be covered:

- Coordinate effectively with key development partners to enable beneficiaries of TRTA to participate meaningfully in the system;
- Increase the volume and quality of TRTA in response to demand;
- Provide a focused response to the priorities expressed by beneficiaries, within a coherent trade policy framework and companion policies;
- Ensure that TRTA is delivered within a coherent policy framework (not on a stand-alone basis) through careful coordination with bilateral and multilateral development partners; and
- Provide legal advice and assistance in respect of dispute settlement, pursuant to Article 27.2 of the Dispute Settlement Understanding.

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This Strategic Review has identified a need to introduce a number of adjustments and reforms to improve delivery and meet higher expectations arising from the increased visibility of WTO-provided TRTA activities.

Building Blocks for a Scenario of Incremental Change

At a general level one could consider ways of getting around the constraint of neutrality by moving to a problem-solving approach that addresses trade-offs within and amongst agreements. The key issue would no longer be how countries should adapt to WTO legal commitments, but how these can be jurisprudentially applied so as to reduce developing countries' structural disadvantages.

In this manner, TRTA activities could be made more demand-driven. This would require that TRTA-providers work with systematic needs assessments that would enable a more 'listening' and a more 'customised' content. An in-country system for feeding into the process of needs assessment would allow restructuring of delivery and enhanced coordination between and among agencies working on the ground.

At the management level, a system of follow-up of trainees is highly desirable, such as setting up an interactive network for trainees that would not only allow for their consultation with trainers but also amongst themselves, thereby increasing cross-fertilisation of ideas, knowledge and experiences. While this would entail additional work for the ITTC, the aggregation and organisation of efforts post-TRTA delivery would acquire a true life and become a visible and positive outcome of the WTO-provided TRTA.

In terms of courses, training should focus on explanation of problems that developing and least developed countries are encountering while applying WTO rules and on practical steps that could be taken to resolve them within the framework of the existing WTO rules. This problem-solving approach should be based on relevant case studies and should take into account the flexibilities available to developing and least developed countries. That implies replacing other approaches such as 'best practice' examples, which tend to be more ideologically laden.

Increased emphasis on case studies, both in Geneva and at regional/national levels, should centre on the experiences of developing and least developed countries in applying the WTO agreements – their problems in applying WTO rules and the impacts that the application of the rules-based system is having on economic and social development.

There might be a smaller variety of courses that are of longer duration (1 week, 2 weeks and 3 months), which could include both introductory as well as more advanced courses for officials whose trade expertise has progressed over time. An improved dialogue with recipient governments (in national capitals and in Geneva missions) and with prospective trainees is necessary to ensure the appropriate selection of participants.

Courses and workshops should become more interactive, with trainers playing the role of facilitator instead of lecturer. For that, pre-course preparation is essential, whether

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through the provision of reading materials to participants before training courses, or electronic courses, and the careful selection of trainees. A post-course dissemination strategy should also be implemented.

Finally, ITTC could strengthen the skills of its trainers, through obligatory annual or biennial courses in training, the creation of a training ‘help-desk’ in ITTC for consultation as needed and especially when developing a new course, and introducing training performance criteria to annual evaluations.

In Scenario 1, new resources (human as well as monetary) would not be required but existing resources at the disposal of the ITTC would be reallocated to allow for a number of incremental changes, while the ITTC should establish greater and more functional synergies with other TRTA providers.

Scenario 2: Fundamental Rethink

Comprehensive capacity building on WTO issues should constitute a core policy objective of developing and least developed countries in their efforts to effectively integrate into the multilateral trading system. This integration should be based on balanced terms consistent with their level of development and their ability to assume and implement obligations.

This is the philosophy of the WTO, as stated in the Preamble to the Agreement Establishing the WTO, 1994 (the Marrakesh Agreement) and has been reiterated many times in many places, most notably in Paragraphs 1 to 11 of the 2001 Doha Ministerial Declaration of the WTO Members. Such comprehensive trade capacity building should be a part of a country’s long-term trade policy.

Building Blocks for a Scenario of Fundamental Rethink

The argument for this Scenario lies in Paragraphs 38 to 41 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, which elaborated the objectives and scope of “Technical Cooperation and Capacity Building” of the WTO Members, in particular the least developed countries. Therefore, in line with these objectives and commitments, the WTO-provided TRTA activities should aim at building deep capacities and institutions in trade policy formulation and implementation as well as at shaping WTO rules that can sustain effective participation, anchored in their development strategies, of WTO Members in the international trading system.

Under this Scenario a clear strategy and sense of direction would be necessary to broaden and deepen capacity building support, especially to least developed countries. One would need a big push for such a new approach to TRTA, which could be developed in a three-fold manner, as follows:

- There should be increasing decentralisation of course provision and workshops with regional centres and national institutions playing a more active role.
- TRTA activities should benefit from independent research as well as feed on the inputs from the Research Division of the WTO.

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- The ITTC should be responsible for collaborating with other organisations, including country-based think tanks and non-governmental organisations, with a view to ensuring that the assistance that the WTO cannot provide due to its neutrality and other constraints is met by non-WTO trainers and/or programmes.

The result of this more holistic approach would be to cast a net to cover all objectives of WTO's TRTA, as spelt out in the *New Strategy* and especially the two that have been unfulfilled in WTO-provided TRTA to date and that would remain unmet under the incremental Scenario 1 – (i) assisting beneficiary countries to understand their rights, implement their obligations and improve their capacity to draw on the benefits of the system and (ii) supporting national efforts in building institutional capacity.

This Scenario would require a mandate to revamp both internal and external *modus operandi* of WTO-provided TRTA activities. The benefits are that it would allow the WTO to fill the gaps left by other agencies in the field where it has shown a comparative advantage and also to ensure better synergy with the TRTA provided by other agencies.

WTO-provided TRTA would assist countries in the construction of local capacity to monitor (via knowledge, analytical skills and databases) the trade policy of their trading partners in subjects such as tariff rates, NTBs, compliance with WTO agreements and use of subsidies or antidumping. These practical needs are essential for generating effective ownership in the WTO trading system, as they provide the background to be able to negotiate effectively.

It would transform technical assistance and capacity building into genuine development of analytical capacity to negotiate and also to exercise full membership rights. TRTA under this approach would empower countries by building long-term analytical capacity of trade ministries and similar capacities in other line ministries in a systematic manner. The successful accomplishment of this scenario would surely increase the legitimacy of the WTO in the eyes of developing countries governments and their populations, an asset that would in turn facilitate the completion of the original TRTA *New Strategy*.

A key measure to make this Scenario operational would be to transform the role of the ITTC. At present, it does not have the required autonomy and freedom for collaborating effectively with other inter-governmental, international and national organisations in providing assistance in which it does not have programmes.

In order to strengthen ITTC's independence, it would be necessary to carefully examine its existing organisational structure, ensuring that the procedures for reporting to the WTO Director-General be drawn up in such a manner that, except on major policy-related issues, it has full autonomy in drawing out its programmes and in determining priorities. These programmes should be prepared every two or three years drawing on ideas from recipient countries and especially the least-developed countries.

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In other words, rather than show WTO agreements as “policy goals” that need to be incorporated into national trade policy and demonstrate “best practices” in that regard, training should provide analysis of what is actually being done and *not* done around the world in respect to each agreement and why, so as to provide more dynamic and objective TA. Thus, in this Scenario the ITTC would be given the task of designing a forward looking strategy intimately connected with needs at country level. This independent research is required for developing institutional capacity for policy formulation and implementation, for exercising rights, and for building negotiation and advocacy skills on the part of the recipient countries.

The result would be *ex-ante* visibility of WTO-provided TRTA activities in compliance with all objectives of the Doha Development Agenda, in general and the *New Strategy*, in particular. What developing and accession countries lack in terms of power they need to make up, in areas of particular interest to them, through innovative policy ideas, knowledge and the capacity to translate those ideas into practice.

In Scenario 2, a major reshuffle of resources would be required, and likely an expansion, as this would involve substantially enhancing the scope and quality of TRTA activities without reducing the number of training activities provided in a year.

The ITTC should play a more pivotal role in this context, particularly in raising additional resources. Additional human resources could be made available from different sources such as increasing the use of trainers from different operational divisions of the WTO Secretariat, but especially more use of trainers from outside the WTO. This would involve increasing cooperation and coordination by the ITTC with the operational divisions as well as with other TRTA providers.

For additional monetary resources, other than reallocating existing funds at the disposal of ITTC, new resources would need to be tapped. The Aid for Trade (AfT) initiative could be one such additional source provided its operationalisation is linked to the WTO-provided TRTA activities. Several proposals suggest that trade policy capacity is an area with unmet needs that might be addressed by AfT: on the one hand, through any national trade-related needs assessment and priority setting that AfT may support, and, on the other, through programming that targets supply capacity, trade infrastructure and compliance/adjustment costs.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ See, for instance, Communication from UNCTAD, 19 May 2006, WT/AFT/W/11, and Communication from Mauritius on behalf of the ACP Group, 4 May 2006, WT/AFT/W/8.

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Annexure 1

ToR for the Strategic Review of WTO-provided TRTA Activities

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In November 2001 at the Doha Ministerial Conference, technical cooperation and capacity building were recognised as important components of the development dimension of the Multilateral Trading System. Subsequently, the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund (DDAGTF) was established to finance TRTA activities in line with: (i) the technical cooperation and capacity building mandates in the Doha Declaration⁶¹; (ii) the New Strategy for Technical Co-operation for Capacity-Building, Growth and Integration⁶²; and (iii) the Coordinated WTO Secretariat Annual Technical Assistance Plan⁶³. The annual resources for TRTA and training have doubled, both in the regular budget and in extra-budgetary funds. Between 2002 and 2004, the donors allocated SFr 50 million of extra-budgetary resources and 16.5 million of the regular budget (RBTA) to meet technical assistance and training needs of the Members concerned in all areas of multilateral trade⁶⁴. A TRTA programme of work of such magnitude is without example in the history of WTO. The seminars, workshops, courses, etc., during the past three years were attended by more than forty thousand employees of ministries of trade, commerce, industry, finance, planning, customs agencies, universities and civil society organizations from 120 countries.

2. The planning system, providing the framework for the delivery of the great volume of TRTA and to meet the Members' expectations for high quality assistance, has evolved over time. Since 2004, the Technical Assistance and Training Plan (TA Plan) has been structured around five main categories of products⁶⁵ and two major programmes, the JITAP and the IF. It includes product-specific objectives and offers assistance in twenty-four technical areas in five regions for more than one hundred and twenty Member states. In implementing the TA Plans, modalities for effective and efficient delivery and systematic gathering of feedback from the recipients (Members) and beneficiaries (Participants) gained importance. From the very beginning, donors of the DDAGTF emphasized the importance of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in managing technical co-operation. Therefore, in May 2002, a M&E system was put into effect aiming at making TRTA activities more transparent and accountable; sensitizing WTO staff to the importance of the effects and impact of the TA delivered; integrating evaluation among other management functions.

⁶¹ WT/MIN(01)/DEC/1

⁶² WT/COMTD/W/90

⁶³ WT/COMTD/W/95/Rev.3; WT/COMTD/W/104/Rev.2 and WT/COMTD/W/119/Rev.2

⁶⁴ Subject areas currently covered by WTO TRTA are as follows: Accession; Agriculture; Competition Policy; Dispute Settlement; Government Procurement; Implementation Issues; IT/WTO Reference Centres; Integrated Framework/LDCs; Investment; Mainstreaming; NAMA; Rules; Services; STPC; SPS/TBT; Textiles & Clothing; Tools for TA; Trade and Development; Trade and Environment; Trade Facilitation; Trade Negotiation Skills; TRIPs

⁶⁵ WT/COMTD/W/133/Rev.2 – Paragraph 16: General WTO-related Technical Assistance and Training; Specialized and Advanced Technical Assistance and Training; Academic Support for Training and Capacity Building; an Integrated Approach; Support Technical Assistance and Training Facilities; and Inputs into Activities organized by other Bodies

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3. The M&E system's main means of action is self-evaluation. Although the system also provides for thematic and ex-post evaluations of broader issues than the performance of individual TRTA activities, for reasons of resource constraints, such evaluations have yet to be carried out.

II. OBJECTIVES, ASPECTS TO BE ASSESSED AND STAKEHOLDERS

4. The main objective is to get independent views and recommendations that can be implemented on such aspects of TRTA, which are usually not subject to on-going internal evaluations. More specifically, external views are invited on the following three aspects to be examined within the framework of a Strategic Review (Review):

(A) WTO's comparative advantage in offering TRTA vis-à-vis other agencies

(B) The relevance of WTO TRTA to the Members and the Participants

(C) Efficiency and management of WTO TRTA

5. The Review is expected to be forward-looking and result in what outside experts can offer by the identification and analysis of new priorities and/or modalities for TRTA; formulation of recommendations and lessons learned for future improvements; and suggestions of creative ways to maximize TRTA benefits. The output should be user-friendly in order to facilitate consideration by all the stakeholders of WTO TRTA.

6. The main stakeholders are the Members, including the Participants who receive TRTA, the Donors, and the Secretariat. The results of the Review should help Members (donors and recipients) in considering and making informed decisions regarding the WTO TRTA strategy and practice. The conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned from the Review may also relate to and be useful to other agencies cooperating with WTO, e.g. IMF, ITC, UNCTAD, WB, WIPO, regional development banks, etc.

III. SCOPE OF THE STRATEGIC REVIEW

7. The scope of the Review will cover TRTA provided by WTO alone or in cooperation with other agencies, e.g. ITC, UNCTAD, WB, IMF, OECD, etc since 2002. It should include TA products delivered within the framework of regional, national and Geneva-based technical assistance and training activities as provided for in the annual TA Plans, or in addition to the Plans. The JITAP and IF multi-year programmes, of which WTO is a cooperating partner, have recently been evaluated; this Review is not expected to repeat those evaluations. Instead, it should include the assessment of WTO's role, inputs and performance in contributing to those programmes, as appropriate. Neither should the reviewers redo the work of the Technical Cooperation Audit (TCA) unit. TCA's annual reports to the COMTD should be used as source materials.

IV. ASPECTS TO BE ADDRESSED

8. As mentioned above, the Review will address three aspects of WTO TRTA through seeking answers to specific questions below. The answers should be based on analysis, include findings, and result in conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned, as appropriate. The comparative advantages and the relevance of WTO TRTA will be examined in the light of the strategic objectives⁶⁶ of WTO technical assistance.

(A) WTO's comparative advantage in offering TRTA vis-à-vis other agencies

- Who are the key development partners (bilateral and multilateral) of WTO and what are the ordering principles, mechanisms and avenues in deciding the TRTA issues on which coordination with other agencies is required?
- What specific role WTO plays in offering TRTA relative to other institutions, e.g. UNCTAD, ITC, World Bank, etc? Does WTO have a comparative advantage in offering TRTA? How successful are WTO TRTA activities carried out in coordination and/or jointly with the development partners? Is there a need for change in this coordination?
- On the basis of feedback from beneficiaries and TRTA reports, what kind of TRTA does WTO do better than other agencies? What mix of TRTA activities can be suggested as an optimum, relative to the limited resources available for such purposes in WTO?

⁶⁶ There are the seven broad objectives attached to the New WTO Strategy for Technical Cooperation (document WT/COMTD/W/90 – 21 September 2001):

- (i) **coordinate** effectively with key development partners to enable countries and customs territories, beneficiaries of WTO technical assistance, to participate and integrate more meaningfully in the multilateral trading system, in order to increase incomes for growth, poverty reduction and development;
- (ii) **assist** beneficiary countries to understand their rights, implement their obligations and improve their capacity to draw on the benefits of an open, rules-based, multilateral trading system. To this end, technical assistance will focus on establishing partnerships with beneficiary countries to better understand and use the rules;
- (iii) **increase** the volume and quality of the technical assistance that the WTO delivers in response to significantly increasing demand (from an increasing Membership);
- (iv) **provide** a focused response to the priorities expressed by beneficiaries, within a coherent trade policy framework and companion policies;
- (v) **support** national efforts and ownership in building durable institutional capacity for trade policy formulation, advocacy and negotiation;
- (vi) **ensure** that WTO technical assistance is delivered within a coherent policy framework (not on a stand-alone basis) through careful coordination with bilateral and multilateral development partners. Delivery of WTO technical assistance within a coherent policy framework will seek to *mainstream* trade priority areas of action into national development plans and strategies for poverty reduction, so that trade will more effectively play its role as an engine for poverty reduction and development; and
- (vii) **provide** legal advice and assistance in respect of dispute settlement to developing country Members, pursuant to Article 27.2 of the Dispute Settlement Understanding.

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- How can the WTO further improve the delivery of TRTA? Is it feasible to gradually shift to providing expert inputs to other training institutions offering TRTA and/or to supervising whether the training efforts of other institutions are effective and of high technical quality? Could one assume that by putting emphasis on the training of trainers and a steadily increasing role of partner institutions would result in a decreasing demand for WTO's direct delivery of training over time?

(B) The relevance of WTO TRTA to the Members and the Participants

- How effective are the needs assessment methods used by the WTO to determine the priority areas of TRTA provided to developing countries? Do the TA plans reflect areas of greatest interest to developing countries? To what extent Trade Policy Reviews have been used to help identifying TRTA needs? How could their utilisation be improved?
- To what extent WTO TRTA met the needs and demands of the Members arising from the implementation of the Doha Development Agenda? Has TRTA helped to establish partnership with beneficiary countries and improved the understanding of their rights; helped them to implement their obligations and improve their capacity to draw on the benefits of an open, rules-based, multilateral trading system? In this respect, what role do outsourcing and regionalisation (transfer of TRTA activities to other institutions) of the TRTA play?
- How effectively do the different TRTA products in the Annual Technical Assistance and Training Plans (Plan) contribute and link up to national efforts to bring about sustainable national institutional capacities for trade policy formulation, advocacy and negotiation? How successful has WTO been in mobilising participants from both genders to equally benefit from TRTA activities? How can the participation of women be increased?
- To what extent has WTO TRTA been successful in achieving the product-related objectives set out in the TA Plan and those of the specific objectives established for the individual TA activities? Do those objectives reflect the needs of the Members and the Participants?
- How could the dilemma between training the maximum number of persons from a maximum number of countries over an average of three days, or training fewer persons from fewer number of countries but more in-depth, over a longer duration, be resolved while ensuring Member countries' rights to benefit from the TRTA? Should the main categories of products included in the TA Plan be developed into technical assistance programmes of a larger scale and longer duration? Is there a need to further adjust the planning process of the TRTA?

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- Has the volume and quality of the TRTA delivered been commensurate with the increasing demands, originated particularly by the increasing Membership? Are needs for WTO TRTA infinite, still growing, steady, or decreasing over time?
- Is there any cross-fertilization between WTO TRTA and its other functions, e.g. providing effective services to negotiations and in meeting existing work obligations related to rules setting and dispute settlements? How could the Donors, recipient Members and the Secretariat work closer together, including the improved coordination and knowledge-sharing with technical committees, in order to enhance the results of WTO TRTA?

(C) Efficiency and management of WTO TRTA

- Has the management of WTO TRTA, that is the ITTC, the Operational Divisions, the Technical Assistance Management Committee (TAMC) and the Technical Cooperation Audit Unit (TCA), been effective and efficient in exercising their TRTA-related management functions, e.g. planning, design, monitoring of implementation and evaluation of results? Is there any duplication or overlap in exercising these functions?
- How does the established monitoring and evaluation system help in making TRTA more results-oriented? How effective is self-evaluation compared to other methods of assessment? How can ex-post and thematic evaluations be carried out on a regular basis? Are the reporting and budgetary processes of the DDAGTF adequate, transparent and effectively applied? Are the resources adequate to cover non-training delivery elements of the DDAGTF such as needs assessment, course planning, design, monitoring and evaluation? Are there any viable alternatives for improvement?
- The Review should be based on an appropriate set of performance indicators and targets, which can be used in assessing the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the TA Plan, as a whole as well as those of the individual products included in the TA Plan. Recommendations are invited on how the cost-benefit ratio of the TA products can be improved.
- Finally, conclusions are invited on the extent to which WTO TRTA has generated value for money. What are the main results and outcome and do they justify the resources allocated?

V. REVIEW METHODOLOGY

9. The Review should be independent and external to WTO. It will be based on a combination of desk-studies, questionnaires and interviews with key staff of cooperating organizations in offering TRTA in Geneva and delegates stationed in, or attending WTO meetings in Geneva during the period of the Review as well as on a limited number of field visits to selected countries which have received TRTA from WTO. In the countries to be visited it is extremely important that the Team interview, and/or collect information from, former participants of WTO TRTA. The reports resulting from the Review are required to relate the conclusions and recommendations to evidence. The Review will be carried out by a team of experts (Team), independent from WTO.

10. The methods below are to be applied to all the issues addressed in the Review. The Team should use instruments and techniques adapted to WTO mandate and suited to the great volume of TA events (courses, seminars, workshops, etc) of short duration and small budget. More specifically, they should include:

- The preparation of a work plan describing in detail how the Team is going to conduct the Review, including the order in which they will address the issues included in the TOR;
- The preparation of a Review matrix that includes yardsticks such as performance indicators/targets, sources of data and sources of verification. The yardsticks should be used by the Team in an attempt to quantify the analysis of WTO's comparative advantages in offering TRTA, its relevance and its efficiency and management. The Review matrix should structure the yardsticks into Input, Output and Outcome levels;
- Desk review of relevant documents related to the Doha and Cancún Ministerial meetings; COMTD reports on technical assistance and training plans; implementation reports; annual TCA reports; minutes of relevant COMTD sessions that discussed these reports; selected BTORs and Participant Evaluation Forms and a brief overview of the recent external evaluation reports of JITAP, the IF, the ITC and UNCTAD;
- Analysis and search of the database of WTO/OECD on TRTA/CB to get an impression of the results of training offered by WTO compared to other agencies and institutions.
- Observation of one or two TRTA events on-going in Geneva during the Review;
- Consultations with donors' representatives in Geneva currently involved in financing WTO TRTA;
- Consultations with Members' delegations in Geneva receiving WTO TRTA, or attending Geneva-based meetings;

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- Discussions with ITC, UNCTAD and WTO officials (ITTC, Operational Divisions and TCA) involved in TRTA planning, design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation;
- Interviews and consultations with Members' representatives in selected developing countries that have received WTO TRTA.

VI. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

11. The outputs of the Review process should result from the application of the methodology outlined above. These should be produced along the following schedule:

- Output 1: Inception Report, including the Work Plan and the Review matrix, to be submitted within six weeks of the award of the contract;
- Output 2: Draft Synthesis Report including conclusion, recommendations and lessons learned based on the desk reviews and the experience gained through field visits. The draft synthesis report should be submitted within five months of the award of the contract;
- Output 3: Final Report on the Strategic Review of WTO TRTA, to be submitted within six months of the award of the contract.

Each report should be as concise as possible and submitted in English to the Steering Committee of the Review.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Steering Committee

12. The effective management of the Strategic Review will be monitored by a Steering Committee, which will consist of six Members, representing both Donor and Beneficiary Members of WTO TRTA. The Steering Committee will be set up within one month after the adoption of the TOR of the Review by the COMTD. It will select the members of the review Team, guide the Team's selection of the countries to be visited according to the criteria below:

- the countries to be visited, taken as a whole, should have received a broad range of WTO TRTA, including regional and national activities of both short and longer duration, implemented by WTO alone and/or in cooperation with other agencies;
- no more than two countries should be selected in the larger regions (Asia and the Pacific (including small island countries), Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and one country in other regions, i.e. Arab and Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia)

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Coordination

13. The Team members will work independently of the WTO Secretariat, while the WTO Secretariat will assist and facilitate the Team members when so requested:

- The Institute for Training and Technical Co-operation (ITTC) will be the focal point for the Review and will arrange for the smooth cooperation with the Team;
- The Operational Divisions providing TRTA, as well as the Administration and General Services (AGS) Division, and TCA will collaborate with the Team as required;
- The counterparts, in their domain, will arrange for the Team's access to the required documentation and information, staff members, etc.

14. The management of WTO TRTA (ITTC, Operational Divisions, AGS and TCA) will also stand by to provide comments on the Draft Synthesis Report that relate exclusively to factual matters.

15. It should be stressed that the process of dialogue and consultation between the review Team and the stakeholders (Donors, Beneficiary Members and the Secretariat) should not in any way compromise the independence of the review team and its final report.

16. The management of WTO TRTA will prepare a management response to the Steering Committee on the Final Report, highlighting its reaction to the Strategic Review and its views on the feasibility of the implementation of the recommendations and the application of lessons learned included in the Final Report.

17. The smooth implementation of the review will require:

- notification by the senior Management of WTO of cooperating agencies (ITC, UNCTAD, etc) as well as the Members concerned on the conduct of the Review (including those who will receive the Team for field visits)
- the organization of formal briefings and debriefings of the Team members at WTO headquarters in ITTC and TCA;

18. Time frame for the Review process: the Review will be conducted in 2005 and should be completed within 6 months.

VIII. COMPOSITION AND SELECTION OF THE REVIEW TEAM

19. The Review Team will be composed of three experts with experience in and knowledge of developing countries' trade policies, strategies and capacities. None of the team members should have been employed by WTO for working as resource person for WTO TRTA activities. They should have experience in hands-on management and evaluation of trade-related technical assistance and training systems and, as a Team, able to communicate and work in the three working languages of WTO (English, French and Spanish). The Team will function independently and free of undue influence. The Team members will have the final responsibility for the preparation of the Strategic Review report as scheduled and its submission to the Steering Committee.

20. The selection of the Team members will be managed by the Steering Committee and follow the process below:

- The Secretariat will collect a list of candidates from the Donors and beneficiary Members of WTO TRTA and submits the CVs of the candidates to the Steering Committee for selection;
- The Steering Committee selects the members of the Review Team.

For the preparation of the contracts for the Team members the WTO Secretariat will provide assistance, if required.

IX. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

21. The Team members will have access to all official documents and reports that are needed for the strategic review of WTO TRTA.

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Annexure 2

Questionnaire for recipients

Code:

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Questionnaire for Recipients of TRTA

NAME OF THE INTERVIEWEE (OPTIONAL):

NAME OF THE INTERVIEWER:

DATE & LOCATION OF INTERVIEW:

1. What WTO-provided/conducted TRTA (trade-related technical assistance) activities did you attend?

2a). Are you aware of the selection procedure of this training activity?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please elaborate:

2b). Was your country mission in Geneva involved with the process of selection?

Yes	No	Don't Know
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2c). What do you think were the criteria for selecting you for this particular training activity?

2d). Did you have to comply with any obligations to be eligible for participation? (such as minimum time to be spent in the department/organisation to ensure that the institution benefits from the training)

3a). What position did you hold at that time, and in which department?

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3b). What position do you hold now?

4a). Are you applying your acquired knowledge from that training activity in the present position?

Yes	No
-----	----

4b). How relevant was the training activity for your work?

Considerably	To Some Extent	Not Really
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4c). Could you give us examples of how you used it?

4d). Which aspects of your work was it most useful for?

Negotiations on WTO Agreements	Implementation of WTO Agreements
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5. Did you write and submit a report of the programme you attended?

Yes	No
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6a). What is your assessment of the quality of the training that you received? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5

1 = Very Poor
2 = Poor
3 = Fair
4 = Good
5 = Very Good

6b). What were its major strengths and weaknesses?

7. Was the training provided to you at the right level (or too basic/too advanced)?

Too Basic	Just Right	Too Advanced
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Please elaborate:

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8a). Was the design and delivery of that training activity fair and balanced?

Yes	Maybe	No
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Any biases? Please explain:

8b). Did it match your requirement?

Considerably	To Some Extent	Not Really
--------------	----------------	------------

9. Were the training materials useful? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 4

- 1 = Not useful
- 2 = Somewhat useful
- 3 = Quite useful
- 4 = Very useful

10. Were there too many participants or too few participants in that training programme?

Too Many	Just Right	Too Few
----------	------------	---------

11a). Did the training programme make use of resource persons available in your country or region?

Considerably	To Some Extent	Not Really
--------------	----------------	------------

11b). Were the resource persons able to explain complex issues with examples relevant for your country/region?

Considerably	To Some Extent	Not Really
--------------	----------------	------------

12. Was there any feedback/assessment of the training programme and/or resource persons done?

Yes	No
-----	----

Please specify:

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13a). Other than the assessment done by the WTO were you asked to make an assessment of the training programme by your department?

Yes	No
-----	----

13b). If yes, was that assessment shared in your department?

Yes	No
-----	----

13c). Do you know whether that assessment was sent to the WTO or not?

Yes	No	Don't Know
-----	----	------------

14. To what extent were you able to apply the knowledge in your work at the time of the training?

Considerably	To Some Extent	Not Really
--------------	----------------	------------

15. Are you able to apply it now in your current responsibilities?

Yes	No
-----	----

Any comments:

16a). Did the training programme reflect your priorities (individual and departmental priorities) in terms of the need for enhancing capacity?

Considerably	To Some Extent	Not Really
--------------	----------------	------------

16b). Was it consistent with the requests that your country had made to the WTO?

Considerably	To Some Extent	Not Really
--------------	----------------	------------

17. Did you have the opportunity to share the information on the training programme received with your colleagues in your department and other government departments?

Yes	No
-----	----

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18a). Were you able to organise a meeting/briefing/workshop to disseminate the information in your department?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please explain:

18b) Were participants from other government departments/agencies/organisations also invited to the meeting/briefing/workshop?

Yes	No
-----	----

18c). What was the level of response to this meeting/briefing/workshop? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5.

--

- 1 = Very Poor
- 2 = Poor
- 3 = Fair
- 4 = Good
- 5 = Very Good

19. Have you shared the acquired knowledge with other stakeholders, such as producer groups, business associations, civil society groups, as a resource person?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, how:

20a). Was there any follow-up by the WTO to the training programme that you attended?

Yes	No
-----	----

20b). If yes, did you participate in that follow-up training programme?

Yes	No
-----	----

20c). If no, do you think follow-up training activities were required?

Yes	No
-----	----

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20d). Did you request your government to request for a follow-up training activity?

Yes	No
-----	----

21a). Are you aware of similar training activity conducted by other agencies/donors?

Yes	No
-----	----

Please specify:

21b). Have you participated in the above-mentioned training activity?

Yes	No
-----	----

Please specify:

22. If yes to 21b), how do you compare the technical assistance provided by the WTO Secretariat with the capacity building activities of other organisations with which you have been involved? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5

WTO	Others

Any comments:

1 = Very Poor
2 = Poor
3 = Fair
4 = Good
5 = Very Good

23. What other comments or recommendations would you like to share about the WTO's trade-related technical assistance programme?

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Annexure 3

Questionnaire for officials

Code:

--	--

Questionnaire for Officials Involved with TRTA

NAME OF THE INTERVIEWEE (OPTIONAL):

NAME OF THE INTERVIEWER:

DATE & LOCATION OF INTERVIEW:

1a). Please elaborate the process of selection of participants for the WTO TRTA programmes as well as the rationale behind the selection.

1b). Was your country mission in Geneva involved with the process of selection?

Yes	No
-----	----

Please specify:

2. Were there any conditions/prerequisites put forth by the WTO regarding the recipients?

Yes	No
-----	----

Hint: (Such as education, position held, years of service, level of topic specific knowledge etc.)

Please specify:

3. Do you impose any obligations on the participants of WTO TRTA activities?

Yes	No
-----	----

Hint: (Such as guaranteed continued engagement in the department/organisation)

Please specify:

4. When personnel are being promoted/moved from the positions held at the time of a training activity, was the participation in that activity considered as a factor?

Yes	No
-----	----

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5. In your opinion, are the participants applying their acquired knowledge in the present positions?

Considerably	To Some Extent	Not Really
--------------	----------------	------------

6. For which aspects of the Ministry's activities have these trainings been found to be most useful?

Negotiations on WTO Agreements	Implementation of WTO Agreements
--------------------------------	----------------------------------

Any comments:

7. Can you give us examples of how the recipients have used/may use the knowledge received in their work?

8. Do the participants write and submit a report on the training programme they attend?

Yes	No
-----	----

9a). What is your assessment of the quality of the training programme? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5.

--

- 1 = Very Poor
- 2 = Poor
- 3 = Fair
- 4 = Good
- 5 = Very Good

9b). What are the major strengths and weaknesses of this training programme?

9c). Was it at the right level?

Too Basic	Just Right	Too Advanced
-----------	------------	--------------

Please explain:

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10. In your opinion, is the design and delivery of this training activity fair and balanced?

Yes	Maybe	No
-----	-------	----

Any biases? Please explain:

11. Do they match your country's requirements?

Considerably	To Some Extent	Not Really
--------------	----------------	------------

12. Does this activity make use of resource persons available in your country or region?

Yes	Sometimes	No
-----	-----------	----

13. In your opinion have the resource persons been able to explain complex issues with examples relevant for your country/region?

Considerably	To Some Extent	Not Really
--------------	----------------	------------

14. Do the providers take feedback/assessment on the training programme and resource persons?

Yes	No
-----	----

If no, do you think it is required?

Yes	No
-----	----

15a). Do you ask the participants to make their individual assessment of the training programme(s) they attend?

Yes	No
-----	----

15b). If yes, is that assessment shared within the department?

Yes	No
-----	----

15c). Is this assessment sent to the WTO as well?

Yes	No
-----	----

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16. Do the training programmes reflect your priorities (country and departmental priorities) in terms of the need for enhancing capacity?

Considerably	To Some Extent	Not Really
--------------	----------------	------------

17. Do they reflect the requests that your country made to the WTO?

Considerably	To Some Extent	Not Really
--------------	----------------	------------

Could you cite an example of a training programme that was requested and subsequently received:

18. How is the demand for such training activities assessed in your country?

19a). Are lessons from a training programme, attended by a particular participant shared within the departments and/or with other government departments through meeting/briefing/workshop?

Yes	Sometimes	No
-----	-----------	----

19b). If yes, what was the level of response of the participants on this meeting/briefing/workshop? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5.

--

1 = Very Poor

2 = Poor

3 = Fair

4 = Good

5 = Very Good

19c). Are these meeting/briefing/workshop department-specific or are participants invited from other government departments/agencies/organisations as well?

Within Department	Among Departments
-------------------	-------------------

20. Is the acquired knowledge shared with other stakeholders? (*Such as producer groups, business associations, civil society groups?*)

Yes	Sometimes	No
-----	-----------	----

If yes, how:

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21. Has there been any follow-up activity of this programme conducted by the WTO?

Yes	Sometimes	No
-----	-----------	----

22. If yes, do the trainees participate in that follow-up training activity?

23. If follow-up activities were not undertaken, do you think such training activities are required?

Yes	Sometimes	No
-----	-----------	----

24. Has your government requested for follow-up training activities?

Yes	Sometimes	No
-----	-----------	----

If yes, have they been provided?

All	Some	None
-----	------	------

Please specify:

25. Are you aware of similar training activities conducted by other agencies/donors?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify:

26. How do you compare the technical assistance provided by the WTO Secretariat with the capacity building activities of others with which you may have been involved? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5.

WTO	Others

Any comments:

1 = Very Poor
2 = Poor
3 = Fair
4 = Good
5 = Very Good

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27. Does the WTO TRTA activities address the technical assistance requirements of your country?

Considerably	To Some Extent	Not Really
--------------	----------------	------------

28. How does the TRTA activities of other agencies/donors address your country's requirement?

Considerably	To Some Extent	Not Really
--------------	----------------	------------

29. In your opinion is there an element of repetitiveness in the TRTA provided by different agencies/organisations?

Considerably	To Some Extent	Not Really
--------------	----------------	------------

Please elaborate:

30. What other comments or recommendations would you like to share about the WTO's trade-related technical assistance programme?

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Annexure 4

Information about respondents

		Trainees N=118	Supervisors/ Officials N=34
Gender	Female	23	9
	Male	35	9
	Not specified	60	16
Position	Head/Manager/Chief	41	8
	Deputy Head	11	1
	Assistant Director	3	
	Specialist/Expert	18	
	Lecturer	2	
	Research/Policy Officer	13	
	Senior Assistant Secretary	1	
	Fellow	2	
	Desk officer	3	
	Economist	10	
	Not specified	14	25
	Trade ministry	36	7
Orgtn/Dept	Standards agency	7	
	Agriculture ministry	5	2
	Procurement agency	4	
	Other ministries/agencies	23	3
	Academic	6	1
	IGO	2	2
	Industry assoc.	4	1
	NGO	3	
	Private sector	1	
	Consultant/advisor	2	
	1, 2- or 3-day course	51	7
	1- or 2-week course (incl. 4 days)	27	2
Training (1)	TPC	15	2
	3-week courses or longer	6	
	RTPC	8	
	Internship	2	
	Online	2	
	One course	54	5
Training (2)	Two courses	24	1
	Three or more courses	32	2

Notes:

Position refers to where trainees are today, not where they underwent training.

Other ministries include finance, health, environment, social affairs, tourism and tax/revenue authority.

Training (1) includes all types of courses taken by a respondent. If a person has taken a 2-day course and a TPC entries have been made under both categories. However, if a person has taken two 2-day courses, there is only one entry under that category.

Training (2) refers to the number of courses a respondent has taken.

Source: interviews in field countries

Annexure 5

Summary of Country Reports

Bangladesh

1. Key features of national trade context

With a population exceeding 140 million, Bangladesh is the world's largest LDC. It has enjoyed fairly robust growth in the past decade, with average annual gross domestic product (GDP) rising by 5.3 percent in 1995-2005. During the same period, it has continued a liberalisation process that began in the 1980s with the reduction of quantitative restrictions, the lowering of tariffs and greater government support for exports.

Bangladesh's export performance during the past two decades of greater openness has been strong, with annual growth of exports of goods and services averaging 9.2 percent in 1995-2005. Exports more than doubled during the decade, reaching US\$8.6bn in 2005. The bulk of the growth in exports was due to the country's vibrant ready-made garment sector, which represented some three-quarters of total exports in 1997-2003. One factor in that particular sector's success was Bangladesh's advantageous position in the textile quota regime that came to an end on 1 January 2005 and which has resulted in greater competition from other garment producing countries, notably China.

Imports stood at US\$11.5bn in 2005, nearly doubling against a decade earlier. Bangladesh's main imports are cotton, machinery and mineral fuels, and its main import partners are India, China, Singapore and the EU. As for exports, the main destination by a considerable margin is the EU (58.6 percent in 2004), followed by the US (25.6 percent).

Bangladesh was one of the founding members of the WTO. It is also a member of South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA).

2. Activities under assessment

TRTA in the category trade policy and regulations totalled US\$29.6mn in Bangladesh in 2002-2004, according to the WTO/OECD database. Of this, TRTA from WTO accounted for only 1.2 percent, although that still made it the fourth largest donor during that period, with 79 activities.

Trade education/training was the sub-category that received the most funding and activities from the WTO in Bangladesh. Other sub-categories with relatively more funding were trade mainstreaming in PRSPs/development plans, TBT and training in trade negotiations techniques.

The EC was by far the greatest donor of TRTA in trade policy and regulations in Bangladesh in 2002-2004, providing more than three-quarters of all funds during that period. Other donors included Canada, Japan, Korea, Norway and the US.

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The evaluation team interviewed a total 25 people in Bangladesh, which included four officials and 15 recipients. The remaining six were four representatives of agencies (viz. Canadian International Development Agency, Department for International Development-UK, European Commission, World Bank) that provide technical assistance and capacity-building support to the Government of Bangladesh and two officials from the Ministry of Commerce (Joint Secretary and Deputy Secretary) that deal with these agencies. The interviews took place between 17 and 24 March.

3. Findings

Relevance

According to most officials and recipients, training courses are relevant to their work, on the grounds that “some knowledge is better than no knowledge”. Overall, they applied the knowledge acquired in their areas of work. Some training courses were not directly relevant to their work, but the participants were still able to apply the knowledge gained to some other areas. For instance, one participant who had undergone training on dispute settlement said that it was not particularly relevant in the context of Bangladesh’s association with WTO and related issues, since as a poor country it is not in a position to enter into the dispute settlement process. For example, it does not have the capacity to address anti-dumping duties imposed by Brazil on jute products or raise dumping disputes with China and India. Nevertheless, the participant found that the training had helped in understanding the language used in discussions about disputes.

One problem highlighted relates to the selection of participants. In Bangladesh, there is a committee headed by the Additional Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, which is responsible for selecting participants in the WTO-provided training courses. Most of the time appropriate candidates are selected for training, but there was some suggestion that the process was not always straight-forward. There have been cases where government officials who required training were not considered for nomination despite being recommended by the Geneva mission, with some senior officials instead attending those trainings (mostly those of short duration and held outside Dhaka).

The difficulties in getting the right candidates seem to have been confined to the Ministry of Commerce. In the case of other ministries and agencies (such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Board of Revenue) the selection process was reportedly more objective, leading to the right persons being selected. In such cases, the Ministry of Commerce follows an established procedure – writing to the head of the ministry or agency to nominate a relevant person.

According to interviewees, one of the factors that contribute to making an activity relevant is a trainer’s understanding of the situation in Bangladesh. However, resource persons were mostly drawn from the WTO Secretariat, which often resulted in issues being explained with examples that were not relevant to Bangladeshi trainees. Many officials and recipients were of the opinion that it is not possible for the WTO resource persons to have adequate knowledge of on-the-ground realities in different countries. For this reason, they suggested there should be more trainers who understand the need of the country or region in which the training is taking place.

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There is therefore a need to develop the capacity of local and regional resource persons.

There is hardly any need assessment as far as training on WTO issues is concerned on the part of either the WTO Secretariat or the Ministry of Commerce in Dhaka. Not only that, the WTO has failed to respond adequately to the few requests that were made by Bangladesh. There have been instances when issues relevant for the country were not considered for capacity building through training, despite the country periodically sending its needs for national training seminars to the WTO Secretariat. Indeed, in only one case (a national seminar on SPS) did the request lead to a training activity, while other requests were mostly ignored. That there is a need for further training can be seen in the services negotiations: Bangladesh has received nine requests, but the Ministry of Commerce has very limited capacity to respond to these.

Performance

One of the major weaknesses identified by the participants of the WTO-provided training is that the activities are mostly quite short and with so many issues covered, there is too little time to read the course content while undergoing the training. Design and delivery are mostly theoretical when practical case studies (relevant to the country) and simulation exercises would be more appropriate. Most of the training was on WTO agreements, whereas knowledge on negotiating skills is very much required.

Another problem is that participants mostly come to know about the content of training after arriving at the venue. Except the subject and a broad agenda, participants were mostly in the dark about course content. For instance, the Ministry of Commerce had received a covering letter for a four-day regional seminar in China on the Doha Work Programme. However, not even a reading list – let alone course materials – had been sent to facilitate preparation for this activity. There should therefore be a properly constructed reading list (with “must-read” and “optional” sections) and course materials (including information about materials available on the Internet) should be sent at least two weeks prior to a training programme.

The selection process affects the performance of TRTA, as having participants of diverse capabilities in a programme has resulted in the training being too basic for some, while for others it has been too advanced and in the process both sets may lose interest. According to interviewees, with such disparities, resource persons have often found it difficult to balance the needs of different participants.

As for strengths, many participants appreciated the opportunities to interact with officials from different countries and to exchange experiences and knowledge on different issues in the course of the training activity.

Impact

An overwhelming majority of the recipients said that they are applying the acquired knowledge in their current position. Based on this, the impact – at least at an individual level – can be seen to be satisfactory.

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However, one problem in assessing the impact is the lack of evaluation of participants' achievements. The WTO Secretariat does not conduct any assessment of a participant's performance in a training programme. Similarly, the relevant ministry or agency does not conduct any post-training assessment. Performance should be appraised through marking and shared with the participants as well as senior officials in the relevant ministry or agency, and this should be included in the criteria for future posting and promotion. In making this assessment there should be different types of performance evaluation for short-duration and long-duration training. For short-duration training, oral assessment may be more appropriate. For long-duration programmes (three-week and three-month courses), there should be closed-book assignments (i.e. to be completed while sitting in an examination room) as well as open-book assignments (i.e. to be completed outside an examination room).

Most participants reported completing a feedback form towards the end of a training seminar/workshop but there were questions about the reliability of the information provided. In some cases, it was found that participants were encouraged by their ministry, before going for a training programme, not to be very critical in assessing the resource persons and course materials while filling up the feedback form. Sometimes participants were hindered by not being able to complete the form anonymously.

Most of the recipients considered that training would have been better conducted in Dhaka, as this would have been more cost-effective and increased the likelihood that only those interested in the subject would undergo the training. Such training in capitals could be facilitated by national trainers. It was suggested that the WTO Secretariat conduct "training of trainers" courses in capitals, and simultaneously to strengthen the development of national-level institutions to provide trade-related training and follow-up activities. One such organisation is the Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute, which was established two years ago, though it is still non-functional for want of resources as well as leadership.

In Bangladesh, as in many other countries, there is a clear lack of involvement of other agencies (including non-governmental organisations) in WTO negotiations and the need for them to become more proactive is an issue that could be addressed through TRTA. Their greater involvement is not only important because of the need for wider stakeholder consultation, but also greater understanding of the WTO and the MTS. For instance, some NGOs in Bangladesh are concerned that liberalisation of services may lead to malpractices on the part of banking and insurance companies. Yet many do not realise that there is scope for services regulation through WTO commitments and that there is no requirement to make commitments on public services like water.

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Comparative advantage

It is not always easy – or even possible – to compare TRTA activities among different providers. Nonetheless, interviewees who were able to make such comparisons found on aggregate that WTO TRTA was somewhat better than the technical assistance provided by other agencies. It was, moreover, clearly mentioned that the WTO Secretariat has a comparative advantage over other agencies in conducting training courses on WTO agreements, as the Secretariat is dealing with the agreements in their daily work. On the other hand, the WTO Secretariat does not provide much training on trade negotiations.

4. Conclusions

At present, in Bangladesh the WTO-provided TRTA activities are considered to be relevant, albeit mostly supply-driven. Participants enjoy the opportunities to share experiences and knowledge with representatives from other countries. As for trainers, however, they find that training could be made more relevant if it were provided by more resource persons with greater knowledge about the country and region. Furthermore, courses are often regarded as too short for the amount of information to be conveyed and absorbed. They are also found to be too theoretical and not having enough case studies and simulation exercises.

The government has requested training on specific issues, but these requests are often not met. This is not just true for training but for support under the IF. For instance, since 2000 when the first Trade Policy Review of Bangladesh was undertaken, the country has placed 40 requests to get support as under the Integrated Framework; only one request (a project on leather sector) has been considered so far.

One issue that came out strongly in the fieldwork was how to improve the selection of participants to take into account both relevance to their position, their level of experience and knowledge, and their needs. Many officials in the Ministry of Commerce suggested that the selection process should be made more transparent and that there should be an accountability mechanism for senior officers. In their view, the WTO Secretariat should play a proactive role in the selection process. This has occurred on occasion; for instance, for a training course on anti-dumping, where the WTO Secretariat followed a merit-based policy of selection. To improve the situation, therefore, measures should be introduced both by the government and the WTO.

Barbados

1. Key features of national trade context

Barbados is a small Caribbean island of 166 square miles, and one of the world's most densely populated countries. Barbados compares favourably with other Caribbean countries on economic and social indicators: its poverty rates are the lowest in the Caribbean.⁶⁷ In 2003, Barbados ranked 30th in terms of the United Nations' Human Development Index.⁶⁸

In the past thirty years, Barbados has transformed from an agriculture-based economy, to a more diversified, service oriented one. During this transformation process, significant economic growth and development has taken place.⁶⁹ The particularly solid economic performance of the 1990s, however, has given way to macroeconomic imbalances since 2001.

After implementing an expansionary public investment programme to help revive economic activity⁷⁰ – especially the tourism sector – there was a strong economic recovery in 2004 and 2005. The economy expanded by 4.4% in the first quarter of 2006, marking its seventh consecutive quarter of real GDP growth above 3%.⁷¹ But Barbados continues to be an economy highly exposed to a narrow range of external factors over which it has little or no control.⁷²

The domestic economy is also highly vulnerable to the economic performance of its major trading partners, the US and Europe (predominantly the UK). Whilst Europe is the main market for Barbados' exports, primarily under preferential trading arrangements, the majority of its imports are from the US and Canada, with an increasing amount from within the region under the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) trading arrangements.⁷³

2. Activities under assessment

According to the WTO/OECD database, total spending in Barbados on Trade Related Technical Assistance/Capacity Building (TRTA/CB) from 2002 to 2004 amounted to US\$196,000 for trade policy and regulations, with 61 TRTA/CB activities organised. The WTO was by far the largest donor of TRTA for Barbados with 49 activities, which amounted to US\$186,000 million. Most of the funds were spent on trade

⁶⁷ Barbados Staff Report for the 2005 Article IV Consultation. IMF. Prepared by the Staff Representatives for the 2005 Consultation with Barbados. July, 2005

⁶⁸ *Human Development Indicators 2005*, UNDP, 2005

⁶⁹ *Turning losses into gains: SIDS and multilateral trade liberalisation in agriculture*, UNCTAD, United Nations, July 2003, p. 46

⁷⁰ Barbados Staff Report for the 2005 Article IV Consultation. IMF, op. cit., p. 7-9

⁷¹ Review of the economy for the first three months of 2006. Economic Press Release. The Central Bank of Barbados. May, 2006

⁷² Trade Policy Review Barbados, Report by the Secretariat, WT/TPR/S/101, WTO, June 2002

⁷³ *Turning losses into gain*, op. cit., p. 46

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education/training, followed by services, rules and trade negotiations techniques, TBT and trade facilitation procedures.

Just a few other agencies and individual countries have offered occasional trade-related training courses focusing on trade finance and investment, namely Japan, Korea and the ITC. The WTO has accounted for some 95% of the courses, seminars or workshops available to Barbados from 2002 to 2005. The bulk of these were offered regionally or in Geneva; only 3 were organised nationally.

Barbadian trainees attended a variety of courses, most of them in other Caribbean countries where the WTO – often in association with regional bodies – has offered different courses on subjects such as trade facilitation, technical barriers to trade, tariffs negotiations, trade and environment, services and dispute settlement. We conducted 20 interviews in March 2006, 15 with recipients of this training, plus 3 government and regional organisations officials and 2 with representatives of the private sector. The recipients were from the Ministries of Foreign Relations and Foreign Trade (6), Agriculture (2) and Business (2), the Government Audit Office (1) and the National Standards Institution (2).

3. Findings

Relevance

Most interviewees acknowledged having applied their acquired knowledge in their positions. More important, most of them confirmed that the training activities were considerably relevant for their work. Particularly, they found WTO courses very useful for different actions, such as understanding WTO terminology, clarifying some WTO specialised topics (TRIPs, anti-dumping), producing tariff notifications, and advising authorities in policy-making. The considerable opportunities for informal networking within the region or with countries facing similar dilemmas were seen as one of the central values of the courses and workshops.

Although there were good comments concerning the overall quality of the courses, some respondents underlined that the design and delivery of the training activities were not particularly balanced. They argued that courses were too status quo oriented and too supply-driven. Especially when courses were led exclusively by WTO trainers, there was a lack of consideration of small economies' perspectives and a deficiency in understanding the developmental impact of compliance with WTO rules.

WTO TRTA is perceived as being designed in a top-down way, covering a very wide context and paying little attention to regional particularities and regional pre-existing know-how. Also, even when WTO hires resource persons from the Caribbean for regionally focused courses, they keep a too-tight leash on the content, eliminating the possibility for real input from these regional experts. There was a general request among interviewees for courses to be taught with more specificity responding to local needs.

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Regarding the relevance of WTO courses at the institutional level, Caribbean trade diplomacy has tended to be reactive for historical reasons and matters of scale. WTO courses could help reverse or at least moderate this trend, by assisting Barbados and others to write up more proposals, and assist them to keep abreast of multiple negotiating arenas despite their few human resources.

Follow-up activities were considered scarce or even non-existent. No follow-up news service or newsletter from the WTO was distributed to trainees. But some sort of 'continuing education' could be useful, keeping officials updated on the rapidly changing areas of WTO rules, such as intellectual property and others. The exception is a newsletter service, which is provided to countries without representation in Geneva. One interesting suggestion was that courses be continued through on-the-spot consultants, who would provide the type of TA most needed as Caribbean governments can afford only a very limited staff and those employed in trade-related ministries must wear several hats at any given time.

Performance

The quality of the training received in the WTO courses or workshops was seen as very good or good. But several interviewees acknowledged that information provided by WTO instruction is limited to a description of the agreements, avoiding a focus on their practical consequences. That lack of realism impedes their full internalisation, ownership and adequate implementation. A frequent request was for more case-study teaching instead of instruction going point by point through the agreements. Case studies can be much more useful for the Caribbean stakeholders because trainees already know the basics of WTO agreements and what they need is practical examples of how WTO rules affect policymaking.

According to the interviewees, WTO trainers are not allowed to discuss the implications of WTO jurisprudence and regulations during the courses. Lack of emphasis on policy-relevant connotations of WTO rules and dispute settlement puts in question the usefulness of the WTO's TA, when the aim is to reinforce trainees' ability to contribute to an active participation of their countries in ongoing WTO work and negotiations. Several respondents complained that courses "just teach how to comply with agreements" when they wanted more interpretation and discussion of work once agreements are signed.

As for the organisation and logistics, some interviewees remarked on the excess of technical juridical language, which, in addition to language problems of some instructors, made courses quite difficult to understand and follow. Moreover, courses were perceived as very front-loaded when they should have advanced faster on what had already been taught. The organisation in modules was also seen as too rigid. A better alternative, according to one interviewee, could be to divide up the longer courses into shorter versions and adapt them to each of the areas of the Caribbean, investing WTO funds in local research and developing what capacity building is actually needed in each Caribbean country.

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The WTO spends US\$1 million in the RTPC given in Jamaica to repeat the same instruction year after year, with limited input to course planning allowed from regional experts, even though they do a good part of the teaching. In contrast, the Masters Program in International Trade at the University of West Indies offers an equivalent short course to officials, private business personnel and civil society representatives at a much smaller cost of US\$6,000 per year, using local knowledge from the Caribbean and bringing in specialists from around the world without WTO support. Some Barbadian officials are trained there, as are many local businesses and other Caribbean government officials.

Impact

Concerning most trade policy courses, the process of selection of trainees is under the wing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT), which tends to fill the quota first with its own personnel before offering spaces to other ministries such as the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture, Industry and others.

Barbados can usually nominate two people to each course. Present procedures which rely for diffusion solely on the MFAFT do not allow extensive participation of special agencies. Some agencies remain unaware of the implications of the WTO agreements for their sector. Hence, there is a need for the information on TA opportunities to be diffused more widely. An improved selection of the participants would lead to more relevant TA and lasting results.

The limited pool of officials that could be trained in Barbados has already been tapped, with many cases now of officials being retrained repetitively every year on the same or similar courses.⁷⁴ Repeating courses weakens participants' motivation, when they only need some information up-dating. As the group of officials needing basic rule-oriented training is drying up, representatives of the private sector and civil society should be brought in as TRTA recipients.

The information received by participants is usually not shared with colleagues after the event. The lack of meetings or any other efforts to disseminate information limits the institutional accumulation of knowledge. In the absence of such management rules to take full advantage of the TRTA given by WTO, institutional memory and human capital building appeared weak. Regarding the lack of human capital building, the problem is two-fold. First, newcomers are rarely trained by retirees or others leaving their post. While staff turnover is low in Barbados, the costs of training new officers are still significant. Second, at the MFAFT only one person (at the administrative level) takes care of up-coming topics in their initial phase – and attends every course relevant to these issues – before these topics are permanently assigned to other members of the MFAFT staff, who then become eligible to take courses on those issues as well (i.e. SPS, IPR, environment, etc).

⁷⁴ Public officials are a very stable group in Barbados. Training is valued but not in pay, certainly.

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Comparative advantage

During the interviews, none of the recipients questioned the ability of the WTO to explain the letter of the agreements, but many observed that out-of-region facilitators illustrate their courses with inapplicable and irrelevant examples from much larger countries (such as Brazil) or others with a very different level of development (such as India). The lack of country-specific or region-specific vision of the training was the problem mentioned most frequently. Training carried out with regional associations was seen as more useful in that regard because it brought to bear concrete and region-specific examples.

As a potential partner in future WTO courses, but with a stake in the determination of content and style of instruction, the UWI Masters Program in International Trade was singled out as one with regional relevance; students get in-depth regional insights with an appropriate degree of detail. It involves a Caribbean ‘tailor-made’ programme for officials, private business and civil society representatives at a relatively small cost, using local resource persons and experience.

4. Conclusions

In general the interviewees considered that the WTO courses were very relevant to their individual work and to the needs of their institutions. However, there were a number of ways in which it was suggested that the design and delivery of courses could be improved. To include a more regional focus in the content of the training programs was the most repeated request.

Reviewing the neutrality of WTO courses was another frequent demand. While many interviewees observed that the WTO experts were very careful not to be biased – e.g. not to promote one negotiating position over another – some observed that their efforts to be neutral went too far, pre-empting any ‘development-conscious’ approach to the topics. For some interviewees, a related weakness was the narrow juridical view. Recipients would have preferred to examine case studies to understand WTO rules and discover their ‘power’, and to learn “how to live with the agreements already signed or likely to be forced to sign in the near future”, as an interviewee said.

WTO TRTA is essential for a small country such as Barbados, which suffers from a shortage of human resources. Its small – although highly skilled – workforce limits its trade policy capacity. Even worse, its small group of officials is repeatedly trained year after year on the same courses. An improved selection of the participants and more tailored training would lead to more relevant TA and lasting results, and thus help Barbados to overcome the intrinsic difficulties of a small bureaucracy dealing with multi-layered trade schemes.

Amongst suggestions made during our field visit were:

- Design courses with specificity for national needs and increase follow-up
- Allow more interpretation in training, for example on ways to make existing preferences work for a developing country
- Diffuse information on capacity building opportunities more broadly
- Improve the selection of participants

Cambodia

1. Key features of national trade context

Following the civil war in the 1970s, Cambodia began a process of restoring peace and stability, introducing a democratic political system and undertaking various reform programmes such as administrative, judicial and economic reforms. The latter primarily entailed a process of market-oriented liberalisation that included the abolition of the state monopoly for foreign trade, the promulgation of a foreign investment law and the removal of a large number of restrictions to engage in international trade.

The importance of external trade to Cambodia's economy has grown significantly since the economy began to open up. The ratio of exports of goods and services to GDP more than doubled to 65 percent in the decade to 2004, when total exports reached some US\$2.5bn, having achieved an average annual growth rate of 18.4 percent since 1994. The US, which absorbed 1.4 percent of Cambodia's exports in 1996, is now a major destination with some 60 percent in 2003 due to the boom of garment exports. In 2003 garment exports reached US\$1.6bn, some 80 percent of the export total.

Imports were US\$3.2bn in 2004, up from US\$0.7bn in 1994. Cambodia's imports are dominated by Hong Kong, China, Chinese Taipei and ASEAN partners, with almost half of the country's imports coming from the first three. Its main imports are textiles and mineral products.

Cambodia became a WTO Member on 13 October 2004 – the second LDC (after Nepal) to accede to the organisation through the full working party negotiation process. It has been a member of ASEAN since 1999.

2. Activities under assessment

The WTO/OECD database on TRTA shows that Cambodia received a total of US\$12.3mn in technical assistance for trade policy and regulations between 2002 and 2004, of which only 2.8 percent was implemented by the WTO. The TRTA activities in Cambodia funded by the WTO are quite varied, ranging from national seminars, workshops and missions to regional and regular courses, Geneva-based courses, training of trainers, and video-conferences. However, the most predominant forms of TRTA provided are trade policy-courses (Geneva-based or regional) and regional training courses/workshops (around 40 of these). Japan, Thailand, France and the EC are among the major donors in Cambodia for trade-related technical assistance and capacity building in trade policy and regulation.

The evaluation team conducted 27 interviews between 13 and 17 March with Cambodian officials, WTO TRTA recipients, one representative of the private sector, and one representative of the donor community. A meeting was also arranged with members of the Inter-Agency Committee on WTO matters in Cambodia at the beginning of the fieldwork process.

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At that meeting, various relevant ministries, which had not received WTO TRTA, requested to be given an opportunity to talk to the evaluation team and convey their observation on the TRTA programme and their capacity building needs.

3. Findings

Relevance

Most recipients thought that the quality of the training they received in the WTO course or workshops was very good or good, and relevant to their work. All quoted the strength of the activities as helping to increase knowledge and capacity, and enhancing their understanding about the MTS. However, many respondents commented that the training provided only introduced them to the WTO and the obligations. They suggested that the training would have been more useful if it had also covered aspects relating to how they could fulfil their accession commitments, exercise their membership rights and derive benefits from the WTO system.

There was a sense that training should be more demand-driven and better tailored to national needs. More national-level events would not only help to customise the content of the training to the local situation and local needs, but would also serve to broaden the participant base. However, none of the interviewees (including the officials) were aware that Cambodia, being an LDC, could request the WTO to organise up to three national TRTA events. This seems to reflect a lack of national strategy and vision regarding TRTA, as well as a lack of communications between the WTO Secretariat and the national authorities. The lack of a mechanism for needs assessment at the national level is but one manifestation of the former.

With regard to making the training more relevant to the national context, many recipients pointed out that the quality of the TRTA activities could be enhanced by adding more local/regional content, by way of making use of resource persons available in the region or in the country.

On the more institutional level, the role of the Ministry of Commerce as a national focal point has meant that a lot of WTO training activities have been concentrated there. Some other line ministries, on the other hand, have participated in TRTA activities but on a lesser scale. An encouraging point, however, is that all interviewees were able to tell what are the areas of their work that are relevant to Cambodia's WTO membership (rights and obligations), as well as their demands in terms of technical assistance.

Performance

Most interviewees were positive about the quality of the WTO's activities. Some participants, however, commented that the trainers should be selected from a pool of practitioners, so as to avoid the problem of trainers who were rhetorical or too theoretical.

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Similarly, most respondents were positive with regard to the training materials received from the WTO, which they had found very useful in both internal settings (presentations within government, sharing with colleagues) and externally (as lecturers in academic institutions or as resource persons in workshops/seminars). One interviewee noted, however, that the materials distributed were in some cases just photocopies of the WTO legal texts, which could have been improved by adding explanations, interpretations and examples.

All participants acknowledged that having a regional group in various training events undertaken by the WTO helps in promoting networking and exchange of national experiences. On the other hand, quite a few participants pointed out that there is usually a big gap of knowledge and capacity between participants from various countries of different stages of development and with different levels of familiarity with WTO issues, which hinders proactive participation and lively interaction in the regional activities. This, coupled with the fact that the participants' were not very fluent in the language of instruction and that the timing of some courses was too short (which made the speakers rush through various important issues), adversely affected the comprehension of the recipients. Some therefore suggested that the WTO could be more meticulous in its selection of participants, especially regarding their qualifications (including English), years in service, etc. In addition, perhaps some kind of pre-training updating of knowledge and intimation could be undertaken – for example, via video-conferencing or circulation of some pre-training 'homework' – to ensure a more homogeneous level of knowledge amongst participants.

A final point to highlight is the lack of consistent effort by the WTO to solicit feedback/assessment on the training programme and resource persons from the participants. To the extent that this was done, it was in an *ad hoc* manner. Assessments were made within the departments and ministries, but they were never shared with the WTO.

Impact

All recipients and officials agreed that the WTO courses or training workshops were very useful for Cambodia's WTO negotiation process, since they explained in detail how the multilateral trading system works, the organisation of the WTO, and the relevant legal texts and inherent rights and obligations. However, the WTO courses and training had not been useful for post-accession implementation of all the commitments made, since they neither went into specificities nor assisted in understanding how to undertake several commitments and what these commitments meant for Cambodia.

All interviewees recognised the importance of institutional capacity building, rather than just building the capacity of individuals, and recommended that major reforms of the public administration system should be undertaken, including increasing civil servants' salaries. The low salary levels in the government sector affect the sustainability of the knowledge/capacity acquired during WTO training.

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The large gap between government salaries and what people with the same qualifications receive in the private sector [1:10] has induced many officials, after having received training, to leave for the private sector and use their expertise to earn a larger income there. Requiring WTO trainees to stay in their jobs for a certain time after training is not possible under Cambodian law; there is no enforcement mechanism for 'soft' promises or commitments made by the participants prior to their training, and so many later move to the private sector.

Regarding the short-term impact of the training, the information (including materials) received by the participants is usually shared with colleagues after events, though there is no formal dissemination requirement, except in the case of MAFF. The sharing of information takes various forms, such as a report (submitted to senior officials, usually department heads, and then circulated to various colleagues) or informal and formal meetings. Some ministries also organise talks with the private sector, although the level of response from the private sector is low. Usually only representatives of business associations and chambers of commerce attend such briefing sessions.

On the issue of building longer term capacity, several interviewees highlighted the importance of training of trainers as well as the need for long-term planning of assistance as with the present short-term approach creates there is often a mismatch between supply and demand which reduces the effectiveness and efficiency of the TRTA. There had been few follow-up activities by the WTO, despite all the participants and officials being of the opinion that such follow-up is required. This results from the lack of systematic feedback/assessment to the WTO and especially from the fact that the Cambodian government rarely requests follow-up activities.

Comparative advantage

Discussions with the interviewees revealed that there is a serious lack of coordination between donors (including the WTO), with the result that there is a certain level of duplication and wastage of resources.

Most interviewees have an equally favourable view of the quality of the training provided by the WTO and that provided by other donors/TA providers. The WTO TRTA activities tend to be perceived as 'general' and 'introductory' in nature – sometimes 'too unbiased' – and not too useful with respect to implementation. Other donors, such as the EC, Japan, UNCTAD, WIPO and the WCO are considered more helpful in this way. All the respondents proposed more coordination between the WTO and other specialised bodies in providing TRTA.

A representative of the donor community in Cambodia also revealed that there were gaps in terms of coordination among the donors and between the donors and the relevant Cambodian authorities. This can only be resolved if both make concerted and pro-active efforts to liaise with each other. There is an inter-ministerial steering committee dealing with the IF. However, this committee is not very active and holds irregular meetings.

4. Conclusions

Cambodia faces several challenges such as a lack of financial and human capital, economic vulnerability to changes in the international trading environment and implementing its post-WTO accession compliance programme of policy making and institutional reform. There is limited understanding of WTO required laws among implementing governmental institutions and other key stakeholders like the private sector and research institutions/academia. There is an urgent need for appropriate TRTA and capacity building initiatives in such areas as the legislative framework, valuation procedures, trade policy evaluation, and reporting and assessing the impact of trade protection and liberalisation.

Existing entities within the government sector as well as those outside including trade-related research institutions and industry associations have very limited capacity to provide policy inputs relevant to policy makers.

Cambodian public policy-makers, particularly in the Ministry of Commerce need a long term well resourced programme of capacity development that is institutionally and programme-based rather than short project-based. There should be stronger cooperation and support to strengthen partnership programmes among research institutions and with international organisations and academia. There is also no evidence of a proper mechanism within the public sector to effectively ascertain, coordinate and implement TRTA needs and priorities in a holistic and coherent manner.

Most of the TRTA activities implemented by international agencies and donor countries are supply-driven, with minimal inputs from the government sector. In most cases, they are not tailor-made to the requirements of the country and have resulted in duplication of activities. The existing Inter-Agency Committee on WTO matters, chaired by the Senior Minister of Commerce, would be an appropriate forum to ensure that TRTA programmes implemented are consistent with national needs and priorities and meet the requirements of sustainability.

Ecuador

1. Key features of national trade context

Ecuador has a population of about 13 million. It ranks 82 out of 177 countries according to the UNDP Human Development Report.⁷⁵ It has substantial oil resources and rich agricultural areas. The country exports primary products such as oil, bananas, and shrimp, and fluctuations in world market prices can have a substantial domestic impact. Trade in goods and services – as a proportion of GDP – has gradually decreased in the past few years.

The recent economic scene in Ecuador has been dominated by the economic and financial crisis of 1998-1999 and subsequent adjustments. The crisis caused real GDP to drop by some 6%, with poverty worsening significantly.⁷⁶ The banking system collapsed in 1999, and Ecuador defaulted on its external debt. The currency depreciated by some 70%, and, on the brink of hyperinflation, in March 2000, Congress approved the adoption of the US dollar as legal tender. Dollarisation allowed stabilisation of the economy and growth returned to its pre-crisis levels.

Despite the relatively positive performance of Ecuador's economy recently, in April 2005 a popular rebellion pushed Congress to oust the head of state Gutierrez and replace him with Vice-president Palacio. The political situation has stabilised under the current Palacio administration, but elections are due in October 2006 in what seems a fragmented and unstable scenario, especially concerning indigenous opposition to the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the US.

2. Activities under assessment

Many of the activities under assessment were delivered in association with other agencies in the region. In fact, except for the general TPC in Geneva, and the recently inaugurated RTPC with the University of Chile (September- November 2005), capacity building was developed with a variety of regional and global bodies. Particularly notable is the association with INTAL – an arm of the IDB, which constitutes a milestone for WTO technical assistance activities in Latin America.

According to the WTO/OECD database on TRTA, Ecuador received US\$7.7 million in technical assistance for trade policy and regulations between 2001 and 2005. The WTO provided a large share of the activities benefiting Ecuador, with more than 88% of the total. During that period, officials from Ecuador participated in 98 activities, 71 of which were organised by the WTO mostly in trade education/training, services, dispute settlement and technical barriers to trade.

⁷⁵ The HDI in the 2005 Report of the UNDP refers to 2003.

⁷⁶ Ecuador – Country Assistance Strategy. Public Information Notice, World Bank, 2003

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There were 15 Ecuadorian trainees interviewed and 5 officers in March 2006. Trainees attended a variety of WTO courses, most of them in countries other than Ecuador. The most predominant form of TRTA provided by WTO was trade policy-courses (Geneva-based or elsewhere) and regional training courses/workshops. There were very few national events organised in Ecuador with WTO funds.

3. Findings

Relevance

All interviewees confirmed that the training activities were very relevant for their work. Particularly, they found WTO courses very useful for different actions, such as making tariff notifications, improvement of negotiations skills, networking and delivery of updated information. Almost every interviewee considered that the quality of the training they received in WTO courses or workshops were very good. The training provided a useful start-up to their jobs, mostly to understand otherwise arcane agreements and their legal intricacies. The considerable opportunities for informal networking within the region or with countries facing similar dilemmas were seen as another central value of the courses.

The instruction carried out with regional associations was seen as useful because it brought to bear concrete and region-specific examples. The more technical courses pertaining to notification procedures and internalisation of SPS and TBT rules were not affected at all by lack of concreteness, given their very specific nature by definition. Some respondents suggested that case study methods might help to bring to life many issues. There were some specific requests to include further trade relief, safeguards and countervailing duties, and dispute settlement courses. Demands for more frequent and longer courses, involving a larger number of participants, were also mentioned repeatedly.

Although there were very good comments concerning the overall quality of the courses, some respondents underlined that the design and delivery of the training activities were not particularly balanced. They argued that courses were too status quo oriented and too supply-driven. Especially when courses were led exclusively by WTO trainers, they seemed to be teaching a 'doctrine' with an excessively orthodox perspective, shying away from debate or discussion.

Some interviewees stated that follow-up activities were scarce and were mostly done at the initiative of the trainees. There were suggestions that the WTO offer more follow-up activities rather than repeat courses. The participants gave, however, very positive comments about the materials and documents used in the courses and the seminars. They also used the materials in presentations made to their colleagues.

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Regarding regional partnerships, the association of the WTO with INTAL was prominent in the list of courses offered for Ecuador and other countries in the region. The annual programme of courses – designed jointly by the WTO, in consultation with delegations in Geneva, and the IDB/INTAL – seems to fulfil the strong need for a regional focus.⁷⁷ The training is provided by WTO experts, sometimes jointly with experts from the IDB. Although the quality of training by WTO instructors was not contested, trainees considered that they needed to relax their self-control, and expand the boundaries of their conventional instruction.

Performance

As for efficacy, both positive and negative aspects were noted. For several respondents WTO training was too general and applied rules by the book. In contrast, when delivered by external consultants or other agencies, training was less inhibited and more appealing. Thus, there was a general request to include more non-WTO instructors in order to become skilled at brinkmanship and to show the ‘two sides of the coin’.

Also, many respondents proposed that the WTO offer more demand-driven and less ‘packaged’ training. There were also quite a few requests for more specific and precise courses: some more sub-regional and others more country-specialised (on countries’ idiosyncrasies, culture, politics, and interests) in order to strengthen negotiating skills.

Concerning the selection of Ecuadorian participants to attend WTO courses, it remains clear from the interviews that it could be improved. In relation to the general trade policy courses, for which demand is high, the process is under the wing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), which tends to fill the quota first with its own personnel before distributing it to other agencies.

Since MFA dominates the participation in general WTO courses, there is a rather noticeable gender bias amongst trainees, given the male dominated composition of the MFA personnel. Moreover, the selection of officials carries an age limit, which is seen as dysfunctional. The elimination of age limits would allow training for permanent officers who need to update and strengthen their technical knowledge and skills.

Regarding IDB/INTAL-WTO training, although the general assessment was positive, it was stressed that efforts should be made to improve the ‘match’ between trainers and trainees, achieve an adequate level of difficulty (not too basic nor too advanced), and better adjust candidates’ profiles in order to target eligible applicants.

It is not feasible to make specific comments on efficiency of WTO courses in Ecuador. This is because of the absence of data from the WTO – let alone other agencies – relating to the costs of inputs and the challenges of attributing values to outputs, in this case, the information and knowledge acquired in the courses.

⁷⁷ This Training Program does not include national seminars, only regional ones.

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Impact

One important issue regarding the long-term impact of the WTO TRTA activities is the concern for the regular rotation of personnel. As in most countries, in Ecuador the MFA has a quota for political appointments at a high level. But trainees have been drawn from permanent staff and not from political appointees, so very few trainees have left their jobs in the public service as a result of government changes. As a general trend, national political instability does not affect personnel stability within Ministries. This is a clear indication that selection criteria have operated in favour of candidates with past and future involvement in trade issues.

As we have mentioned, MFA centralises WTO training – even though it is not the single leader in trade negotiations. Moreover, the MFA has had a rotation policy for its personnel. Hence rotation tends to be higher in principle in this Ministry than in other agencies. This raises again the question of the selection process. Some interviewees highlighted that, as trade negotiations now loom large, the MFA is searching to increase specialisation, reducing rotation of personnel from trade into other issues.

For the general Trade Policy Course, the WTO requires grantees to make a formal commitment to remain in their jobs –and therefore, involved in trade policy issues– for a specified period. In the case of CORPEI (being a private non profit institution), candidates were required to remain in their actual jobs for a year after the course. This commitment reduces political interference and opens opportunities for agencies to ensure a multiplying effect.

Concerning the institutional impact, the information received by participants is usually shared with colleagues after the event. This dissemination takes different forms. Mostly it takes place on a day-to-day basis on request. Participants in WTO courses become focal points for their colleagues in these particular trade matters and are consulted regularly. Several interviewees also stated that they had informal meetings with their colleagues where they highlighted the key points from the WTO training activity. Some participants were also able to organise workshops and seminars with business, academics and civil society.

As for the impact of WTO TRTA activities in building capacity for the country, while outsiders – including WTO experts – are still considered as needed to help in various ways, there is a sense of growing national capacity. In concrete terms, TRTA activities seem to have contributed to an increasing effectiveness of Ecuador's trade strategies, although its innovative negotiation tactics were first developed when accessing the WTO and simultaneously joining other WTO members in the banana regime dispute against the European Union.

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Comparative advantage

Few interviewees thought that the WTO training programme should be fundamentally reviewed – recognising that it had inherent strengths in the area of trade law and its application -- although many argued that they found the courses too status-quo oriented and lacking a development dimension. One interviewee found that neutrality at all costs was not useful capacity building, and that more was needed to flesh out implications and windows for special and differential treatment. Another interviewee qualified the vision as too rosy; another as ‘neoliberal’.

In contrast, when resource persons from outside the WTO were incorporated as facilitators in the courses, the bias tended to be reduced. Collaboration with regional institutions also involved the use of concrete examples and case studies by the non-WTO resource persons, thus compensating for a weakness observed in courses offered by the WTO on its own. Indeed, the WTO staff is seen as most qualified to explain the content of the legal documents, but several argued that this needed to be complemented by trainers with more practical experience and a broader perspective.

Nevertheless, the courses were highly graded, on a par with those run by other agencies, and seen as very useful for the day-to-day business of both negotiating and implementing agreements. Many had comments on what could be improved and they offered proposals in terms of ensuring that the organisation best suited for the work is involved.

4. Conclusions

Knowledge and comprehension of WTO rules and procedures are important for a country like Ecuador where growth is linked to primary goods exports. It is important for the government to know how to negotiate; use WTO rules to reinforce its vulnerable economy; and profit from the opportunities created in other markets.

In general, TRTA activities organised by the WTO were considered constructive and helpful by Ecuadorian officials and recipients. However, the compact of ‘excessive neutrality’, training by the book, lack of development dimension and few dispute settlement courses, were seen as detrimental to the training’s usefulness.

In terms of impact, capacity building resulting from TRTA activities in Ecuador revolves largely around the MFA. This has allowed diplomatic officials to build a critical mass of knowledge about WTO rules and current negotiations. In other key ministries, however, TRTA training has reached fewer recipients, leaving some sensitive trade areas deprived from expert knowledge.

There are still doubts about how best to take advantage of WTO training. Some suggestions have been made about increasing the number of activities, which appear to have been less than Ecuador has requested (especially concerning national courses); strengthening the content of courses (level, links to national and regional dimensions as well as the development context, balance between theory and practice, avoidance of excessive neutral stance); and ensuring follow-up.

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Some would like to be able to focus on particular policy/sectoral issues; others would like further training to broaden/deepen their knowledge.

To conclude, some suggestions for consideration are to:

- embrace trainees as trainers. However, whether such ‘training of trainers’ should be undertaken by the WTO, another international organisation or a national partner is a point to discuss;
- include universities to bridge the divorce between the new trade regime and civil society;
- incorporate an increasing number of external consultants in order to avoid excessive neutrality, risk aversion, or ‘standoffishness’;
- improve and balance the selection process;
- share the ‘tricks’ of the trade and not just the rules of the book as transferred by WTO officers; and
- design more demand-driven courses within a regional or country planning exercise.

Kenya

1. Key features of national trade context

Trade reforms in Kenya evolved slowly from an import substitution strategy toward a more open trade regime, beginning in the mid-1980s. However, given the lack of public support and limited political commitment, most trade reforms took place in the late part of the 1990s. The recent trade reforms included the dismantling of import restrictions such as quotas with the shift toward tariffication, the reduction of tariff levels and the elimination of export duties and taxes. Tariffs are now the key instrument of Kenyan trade policy, but protection remains relatively high. The simple average of most-favoured-nation (MFN) import tariffs is 18%, only 3.7% of tariff lines are duty-free and tariff revenues still represent more than half of tax revenue (54%).

Kenya is a founding member of the WTO having been a GATT contracting party since 1964. In recent years, Kenya has become more active in WTO negotiations, and often speaks on behalf of the “Africa group”, a coalition of African members. Kenya is a member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and has established, with Uganda and Tanzania, the East African Community (EAC) which also aims for economic integration and greater harmonisation between the three countries, as well as undertaking joint projects in infrastructure. The Kenyan mission in Geneva is composed of three individuals, plus some occasional interns. In Nairobi, the WTO division of the Ministry of Trade and Industry includes thirteen officials.

2. Activities under assessment

Between 2001 and 2004, the WTO allocated almost half million dollars on technical assistance for Kenya, which represented about 2% of all the financial resources donors spent on building capacity for trade policy and regulation in this country. This support has taken the form of several trade policy courses each year. As well as three national seminars, Nairobi was the location for the regional trade policy course between 2001 and 2004, as well as some regional workshops. Kenyans also participated in several regional workshops in different African locations, as well as the courses offered by the WTO in Geneva and the Geneva-based 10-month internship programme managed by the WTO. The WTO has also been involved with the ITC and UNCTAD in the implementation of the JITAP, which was operational in Kenya during that period.

We conducted fifteen interviews in Nairobi between April 3 and 11, 2006. Five officials from the WTO division of the Ministry of Trade and Industry were interviewed, seven from other ministries, and three from non-governmental organisations (private sector, academia and donor community). The respondents had participated in the regional trade policy courses and in the regional workshops. One interviewee had participated in the internship programme in Geneva, and another had attended only a national WTO workshop in Nairobi. The author of this report also attended a meeting of the Kenya’s National Committee on the WTO as an observer during her stay in Nairobi.

3. Findings

Relevance

The interviewees all stated that the training received by the WTO was very relevant to their work and that they were able to apply the information and knowledge received in the conduct of their duties such as the preparation of negotiation positions in the current WTO negotiations. The simulation exercises are very much appreciated, as they are deemed very useful. The materials provided to participants are considered very useful and the majority say that they continue to use these documents and materials after the training activity. A number of participants commented about the regional groupings used for regional workshops. They suggested that the grouping should only include East African countries, given their similarities. One respondent gave the example of a regional workshop on agriculture, which included West African countries and where the long discussions on cotton were not considered relevant for several of the officials.

Some interviewees suggested that the WTO's training programme needs to move beyond knowledge of the WTO agreements and to focus on developing the analytical capacity of officials. This analytical capacity is needed to better understand the implications of negotiations proposals for Kenya, but also for other tasks such as the submission of comments in trade disputes, as in the recent sugar case involving the EU. "We need to move from being generalists to being experts," as one official put it. The difficulties of doing analytical work were also raised several times during the meeting of the National Committee on the WTO. Whether it is on agriculture, NAMA or intellectual property, the members of the committee highlighted the need to conduct studies and analysis and the lack of internal capacity to do so. Analytical capacity exists outside the governmental agencies, such as the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) and the university-based Institute of Development Studies (IDS), but funding to support such studies is not sufficient.

It was suggested that one way the WTO can contribute to building analytical capacity was to offer more intensive training (2 weeks) on one specific issue. The 10-month internship programme currently being offered in Geneva is also seen as a good way to improve the analytical capacity of the officials, in addition to improving their negotiation skills by learning by doing. Indeed, several noted the improvement of negotiating skills as a key area where there were still significant capacity gaps. A number of interviewees mentioned the JITAP during our discussions. "The JITAP was a very good model to build analytical capacity, especially the train the trainers element of this model." They suggested that the WTO used more of the approaches adopted in this programme in its training activities.

Performance

The quality of presentations in WTO training activities is undisputed; interviewees see resource- persons from the WTO secretariat as very knowledgeable. One obstacle to efficacy in terms of reaching the target audience was noted by a number of interviewees: the selection process of participants.

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The participants in courses and workshops are nominated by the WTO division of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. A number of problems have been raised regarding this process. First, some interviewees noted that this leads to an overrepresentation of the officers from the WTO division as participants, preventing some officials from line ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture to gain better knowledge of WTO issues. This is not an issue unique to Kenya.

A number of interviewees also thought that the selection of participants in terms of their qualifications and responsibilities should be tighter and involve the WTO secretariat, and not only the national government's trade ministry. "The Secretariat should establish benchmarks for officials to participate in their activities, the candidates should submit a CV and there should be clear criteria for selection. This is already done in the internship programme." We should note that in Kenya the selection of participation for WTO training activities also takes into consideration membership in the National Committee of the WTO. This is seen by many interviewees as a very good criterion for selection, as the trainees can use the knowledge gained to be more active and useful participants in these national discussions. Another suggestion made to ensure that the right people are participating in the training activities was to ask the candidates to send a paper to the resource person before the workshop and/or to prepare a presentation on a relevant topic for the event.

Between 2001 and 2004, the University of Nairobi was the regional centre offering the three-month trade policy courses to African officials. In 2004, it was moved to Namibia, according to a WTO decision to rotate the location of regional training centres every three years. Some officials challenged this decision, arguing that it is not an efficient way of doing things, as the new regional training centre has to start all over again in terms of developing its capacity to manage such courses. Others believed that the decision to rotate the location reflected the politicisation of the training programme, i.e. moving the centre to different capitals in order to "pepper" the benefits for the country acting as host. A more long-term commitment to creating regional training centres was preferred.

Another element discussed regarding the decentralisation of the WTO training was the need to verify the level of expertise of the resource persons before they offer training on the WTO agreements. Some of the selected local experts did not have sufficient knowledge to be able to offer the trade policy courses. Despite these difficulties, interviewees all agreed that the regional decentralisation of the training activities is a good approach.

Impact

Compared to many other countries, Kenya has developed a relatively inclusive trade policy process with the NCWTO at its core. The committee is composed of government officials for many ministries and government agencies (agriculture, environment, regulatory agencies, health) and is chaired by the director of the WTO division of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. It is not only an inter-ministerial committee, as representatives from the private sector, academia and other non-governmental organisations are also members.

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Five sub-committees report to the NCWTO. The NCWTO received financial support from JITAP during a number of years and many interviewees commended the work accomplished by JITAP in terms of building capacity on trade in Kenya. The committee and its sub-committees offer interesting channels of dissemination of information on trade, including information received at WTO training such as regional workshops, and several interviewees acknowledge using this channel for this purpose. However, they also suggested that the committee could be used even more for such dissemination.

A number of other means have been used by participants, especially in regional workshops, to disseminate the information received to colleagues or stakeholders. For instance, after attending a seminar on intellectual property, an official from the Health Ministry organised, with the financial support of the WHO, a national seminar with 25 ministry officials, in order to increase their awareness and knowledge of these issues. Officials from Kenya's Bureau of Standards disseminate the information received to the private sector through a number of means including a regular newsletter. Some interviewees suggested that the WTO should do follow-up to ensure the impact of its training. For instance, at the end of a regional workshop, "the participants should indicate what they will do with the information they gained and later, the WTO would check what they did."

The need to improve the long-term impact of trade training was on the mind of several interviewees. They raised the need to develop a regular and systematic programme of training in specific areas (for example, agriculture, standards, health), instead of the regional workshops that are usually carried out in an "ad hoc" fashion. One of them suggested that these programs "should be more country specific, or at least better reflect the level of capacity of the recipient countries, as there are important differences across developing countries."

Comparative advantage

One interviewee challenged the idea that WTO should engage in training. "The WTO is a forum for discussions and for rules setting. Training should be left to other organisations for whom training is an integral part of their mandate, such as international development agencies and the World Bank." It was suggested that the WTO Secretariat could still be involved in preparing training materials but that it would be used by other organisations. Its experts could also be invited as resource persons in some of the training activities of others, but the WTO would not be organising the activities themselves. Others did not challenge the involvement of the WTO in training on trade issues, but believed it should be doing it in an even more collaborative manner with other organisations. For instance, an official from the health ministry suggested that the WTO develop a regular programme of training on trade and health issues in coordination with the FAO and WHO.

There are diverse views regarding the question of whether there is an overlap or duplication of content between the different organisations involved in trade-related technical assistance. Whereas many think that there is no overlap, others found that there was a lack of collaboration among the international organisations and donors involved in TRTA/TRCB and had observed duplication of efforts.

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For example, some noted that there are many workshops on trade facilitation and standards but no coordination to ensure a coherent programme of training and capacity building. They suggested that the NCWTO could be use at the national level to coordinate all the training and capacity building made available.

4. Conclusions

The interviewees in Kenya are generally satisfied with the quality of the training received as well as with the materials used in that training. The trainers were seen as neutral, very knowledgeable and competent. The recipients all agreed that the WTO TRTA was directly relevant for their work. One of the main issues highlighted during this country field visit was the need to go beyond basic knowledge of the WTO agreements and to build analytical capacity among Kenyan officials, so that the government is in a better position to establish its policy positions and evaluate the impacts of WTO trade agreements. There was no consensus as to whether the WTO is the best organisation to address that need, but interviewees generally supported that the suggestion that the WTO work more in collaboration with other TRTA providers and that it increasingly decentralised its training activities. Another issue raised frequently was the need to improve the selection of participants, with many interviewees suggesting that the WTO secretariat become more involved in the screening of candidates.

Kyrgyz Republic

1. Key features of national trade context

The Kyrgyz Republic (or Kyrgyzstan) is a poor mountainous country in transition, with a predominant agricultural sector. It is regarded as having the most open trade and investment policies of the CIS – the alliance of old Soviet Union states, with the exception of the three Baltic states.⁷⁸ It was the first CIS member to adopt a convertible currency, abolish the state monopoly on international trade and eliminate restrictions on foreign direct investment (FDI). Similarly, it was the first CIS member to join the WTO, in 1998.

Total exports in the Kyrgyz Republic reached US\$672mn in 2005. Gold was by far the main export, accounting for just over one-third of the total. Other key exports included energy products and cotton. According to World Bank figures, the ratio of exports of goods and services to GDP was 43% in 2004, up from 34% a decade earlier. As for imports, the Kyrgyz Republic's main commodities are mineral fuels, machinery, pharmaceutical products and vehicles. Total imports in 2005 stood at US\$1.11bn, which means that the Kyrgyz Republic had – as in nearly every year during the past decade – a negative trade balance.

The country's key trading partners are Russia, Kazakhstan and China, which together account for some three-fifths of its imports and two-fifths of its exports. The United Arab Emirates is, however, its largest export destination, with about one-quarter of all exports.

Besides the WTO, the Kyrgyz Republic is also a member of the Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC) – a regional agreement among Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Russia and Tajikistan.

The trade policy capacity of the Kyrgyz Republic vis-à-vis the WTO is very weak. Out of five officials at the Geneva mission, only one is designated as representative to the WTO (i.e. working exclusively on WTO issues). The WTO Department in the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism (MITT) has 12 staff members, as compared to around 180 people in total in the Ministry. Media coverage is minimal and there are not many national studies on the WTO or other trade policy and trade development issues.

2. Activities under assessment

According to the WTO/OECD database, the Kyrgyz Republic received a total of US\$8.3mn in technical assistance for trade policy and regulations between 2002 and 2004. The technical assistance funded and undertaken by the WTO in the country amounted to just above US\$0.2mn. Trade education/training was by far the sub-category that received most WTO TRTA in the country during the three-year period (with 14 out of 44 activities).

⁷⁸ Turkmenistan downgraded its status from full member to associate member in 2005.

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In all, there were 75 TRTA activities connected with the Kyrgyz Republic, which means that the WTO – as is often the case – was the provider offering the most activities. The US and the EC were the two largest funders of TRTA.

A total of 25 interviews were conducted between 4 and 10 April, with 22 questionnaires being filled out. Twenty government officials were interviewed as well as one person from the private sector, one academic, one NGO representative (a public association called “Investment Roundtable”), one donor official (GTZ) and a USAID contractor.

3. Findings

Relevance

Answers from the respondents regarding the quality of the WTO TRTA training were very positive. The participants and even the officials found these courses and seminars either good or very good, quoting the strength of the activities as helping to increase knowledge and capacity, and enhancing their understanding about the multilateral trading system. They also noted that the training materials were either quite useful or very useful, the training level was just right, the training content was considerably relevant to their work and they were all able to apply the knowledge acquired in their work. These favourable responses reflect the fact that all WTO-related matters have been considered quite new and complex issues to Kyrgyz officials, due to the dearth of technical knowledge; any assistance coming their way would be considered new and adding value. Another possible reason is that the newly-introduced simulation-based teaching methods used and subjects addressed during the WTO courses are perceived as obviously superior to the old Soviet-style teaching methods and subjects that had previously prevailed in the country.

Many respondents acknowledged the fact that having a regional group in various training events undertaken by the WTO does help in promoting networking and exchange of national experiences. One participant quoted the usefulness of referring to other countries’ tariff systems in preparing that of the Kyrgyz Republic.

In order to increase the relevance of the WTO TRTA, some participants proposed that more national workshops be organised, which would widen the training base and partially help to resolve the language problem (see below). However, none of the interviewees bar one was aware that the country could request the WTO Secretariat for up to three national training events every year on different topics. This shows a severe lack of internal coordination within the national government as well as an absence of a proactive approach towards the WTO.

Also related to relevance is the issue of who is selected to attend the course and if that is the right person. There appears to have been few irregularities such as nepotism or favouritism. However, many participants said that they were neither aware of the process nor of the criteria by which they were selected, but simply filled the application form when being told by their directors that they had been chosen for participation.

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This suggests that the selection was *ad hoc*, though it may also be explained by the fact that with few people available to take the courses, the choices were not difficult.

Performance

All of the respondents appreciated the trainers as being very knowledgeable and attentive, especially those from the WTO Secretariat. Many mentioned that quite frequently resource persons were drawn from developing countries with relevant experiences and good knowledge of the regional situation. However, they also stressed that a good mixture of resource persons from both developed and developing countries is required to balance the design and delivery of the training. Some said that resource persons could have been drawn from the Kyrgyz Republic itself, since the country's experiences would be very relevant for other CIS nations in their accession process. Quite a few proposed that the courses provide more practical knowledge as well as simulation exercises.

One major problem that hindered effective participation and comprehension by the recipients was their language proficiency, in particular English. Some interviewees even admitted they could neither follow the teaching in English nor comprehend the English-language materials and that they had followed the teaching only with the help of some fellow participants. This shows that the selection process was not strict enough, and that the selection criteria could not be entirely met in many cases. The Head of the WTO Department in the MITT confirmed that this was a major problem which is yet to be resolved. Those people sent for training mostly met the criteria of job profile, responsibility, qualifications and years of services but could not speak English as their education was in Russian. The limited number of personnel, however, meant that the pool of experts to be chosen for participation was not big enough to allow any room for manoeuvre.

As a solution to this problem, all recommended that Russian-medium seminars/training courses, or even courses with simultaneous interpretation, would have been more effective and that if the materials had been translated into Russian beforehand and sent to the prospective participants for study and better preparation, the benefits could have been much greater. One interviewee thought that Russian-speaking resource persons from Eastern Europe would be very effective, since this would allow for direct interaction between resource persons and participants. Besides, the similarity in terms of level of development and local conditions between Eastern Europe and Central Asia would also make the experiences and knowledge shared by the Eastern European resource persons more applicable.

Other aspects thought to have adversely affected the comprehension of the recipients and reduced efficacy and efficiency of the activities were the uneven levels of knowledge among participants, the sometimes too high number of participants attending courses (150 participants in one case) and the short duration of some activities. One participant mentioned that questions raised during the training course were of too diverse a nature and levels, which affected the overall efficiency since the trainers felt they had to attend to all questions in a fair and just manner.

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Some found the courses too short and as there was a lot of information given, the speakers had to rush through various important issues with the result that the trainees were not able to absorb them sufficiently.

Impact

In most cases, people do not have to make any commitments regarding their continued engagement in their ministry's/department's work since this provision is not stipulated by law. A few exceptions to this were stated by some officials, who confirmed that the participants have to make commitments regarding continuation of their service or engagement with the government for between one and three years. However, all opined that only those showing competency and dedication to their work (sometimes shown by the years already spent in service) were ever chosen to go for TRTA training.

Reporting was *ad hoc*, though all recipients would go back and share their knowledge, information, as well as training materials with their colleagues, and in some cases with business associations and entrepreneurs informally or during their daily work. The WTO also did not undertake any type of serious assessment or follow-up other than a fleeting assessment handout at the end of each training event. In some cases, even this assessment did not give any room for appraising the trainers, as well as testing the trainees' acquired knowledge. There was also no back-to-office performance appraisal of the recipients due to time and human resource constraints.

Many respondents stressed the point that TRTA by the WTO should be provided on a continuous basis, not as a one-time event for the sake of updating knowledge, if the intent is to build institutional capacity. However, they did not realise that, to achieve this end, pro-active follow-up and sending requests are a must. Indeed, more than 90 percent of all the interviewees said that no requests seemed to have been made from the Kyrgyz government to the WTO. Most technical assistance for the Kyrgyz Republic to date appeared to have been received passively and had not created any long-lasting effects. The mismatch between the absence of host government requests and the great inflow of TRTA meant that the training has largely been supply-driven.

Finally, interviewees mentioned the adverse impact of the gap between public and private sector salaries and the unstable political environment. The salary differential has been the main reason leading to movement of people from the public to the private sector. The frequent restructuring of the government system has exacerbated the problem of personnel loss and reduced institutional capacity, which had followed the Kyrgyz revolution. Most of the staff members in the WTO department had started working there after 2002-03, and many were very young and inexperienced. Some more senior staff members have been there for longer, but in other departments of the Ministry.

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Comparative advantage

All respondents enthusiastically mentioned that the WTO Secretariat has a comparative advantage over other agencies in conducting training courses on WTO agreements as they are administering the agreements in their daily work. On the other hand, the other donor agencies had the advantage of longer-term programmes, local presence, closer contacts with local institutions and better grasp of the situation in Kyrgyzstan.

Talks with recipients and officials as well as donor agencies revealed that there was almost no repetition or duplication in terms of TRTA between several donor agencies since: (i) there was a National Economic Policy Council which coordinated donors' activities, and (ii) in cases where the Council was not very active, the donors took the initiative to coordinate themselves.

Examples of TRTA undertaken by other providers in the Kyrgyz Republic include the GTZ, which has a special programme to promote the CIS countries' integration into the multilateral trading regime and to build capacity for managing globalisation, in which the Kyrgyz Republic is a cornerstone. This same approach has been adopted by USAID/PRAGMA in a regional TA programme they have been implementing since 2001, which covers the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan.

4. Conclusions

It was clear from many discussions with respondents from outside the government that the Kyrgyz Republic entered the WTO quite quickly, without any planning on how to benefit from membership. Exports have fallen considerably after the Kyrgyz accession to the WTO. This may be attributed partly to Kyrgyz economic dependence on trade with neighbouring countries and the financial crisis in Russia which negatively affected the economies of Kyrgyzstan as well as other CIS countries. More TA on specific issues, therefore, should be provided both at the regional, international and national levels. Resource persons from other developing and transition countries would be suitable for this purpose, as they would be more au fait with local circumstances. An example quoted in this regard was a resource person from South Africa in a joint project conducted by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and ITC, who was greatly appreciated by all local participants. Furthermore, the training activities could be twinned with people from Eastern European countries, as they also speak Russian, which is the official language in the Kyrgyz Republic.

It was also thought that the former government of the Kyrgyz Republic took the decision to enter the WTO without any national dialogue, hence the people knew nothing about the WTO at the beginning. Some members of the government and parliament have cooled in their support of the WTO and it was therefore suggested that TA for representatives of the private sector, the academia and parliamentarians was needed to reverse this trend.

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The Kyrgyz government has requested help from the WTO to open a CIS-regional WTO training centre based in Bishkek, which could be linked to other donors' ongoing regional initiatives. The Deputy Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism mentioned that his ministry would be happy to provide the space and basic facilities for this centre, if the WTO would provide resource persons and logistical support for participants. He considered that the Kyrgyz Republic's experiences as the first country in the region to join the WTO in the region would be of great relevance and benefit to others.

Moldova

1. Key features of national trade context

Moldova became a member of the WTO in July 2001. Moldova made the request for acceding to the WTO in 1993. During the accession negotiations, Moldova did not receive developing country status, but that of a transition country, despite its low-income. The country has had a particularly difficult transition period following independence in 1991. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Moldova lost direct and indirect subsidies that amounted to 25 percent of its GDP. Increasing energy import prices also have severely affected Moldova's terms of trade. Moldova is a participant in many free trade areas such as the plurilateral CIS free trade area consisting of 12 former Soviet Republics. Moldova's domestic market is small and its economy is trade-oriented with exports representing 38% of its GDP in 2004. Moldova's exports remain concentrated in a few commodities, and largely destined to the CIS market, with its main trading partners being Russia, followed by Ukraine and Romania.⁷⁹ The main exports are foodstuffs, wine and tobacco, and its imports, mineral products, fuel and machinery.

The Moldovan mission in Geneva has two professional staff, including the Ambassador. In the capital, the WTO division includes eight professionals. In a trade diagnostic study published in 2004, the World Bank assessed Moldova's trade policy capacity as relatively weak. Nevertheless, there are some indications that its trade capacity has increased; it has been active in building a coalition with other newly acceded members to have their liberalisation commitments made during their accession process taken into account in the Doha round.

2. Activities under assessment

According to the WTO/OECD database on TRTA, Moldova received \$12 million worth of technical assistance for trade policy and regulations between 2001 and 2004. In value terms, the WTO's technical assistance is a small part of all TRTA activities in Moldova, amounting to \$209,000 for the participation of Moldovan officials and nationals in the Geneva-based trade policy courses, the regional trade policy courses in Vienna and the regional workshops.

We conducted eighteen interviews with Moldova-nationals that participated in trade policy courses in Geneva or in Vienna, in varied regional workshops and in the new online course. Seven respondents were from the Ministry of Economy, six from other ministries, and one official is a member of the Moldova mission in Geneva. We also interviewed four individuals from outside government, one of whom used to be part of the WTO division of the Ministry of Economy.

⁷⁹ *The Republic of Moldova: Trade Diagnostic Study*, World Bank Report No. 30998-MD, 2004, p. 20

3. Findings

Relevance

The participants usually thought that the training they received in the WTO courses or workshops were very relevant to their work. Nevertheless, they highlighted that the lack of concrete examples and practical application was reducing the relevance of the training. The lack of country-specific or region-specific examples was a problem mentioned especially frequently about the regional workshops. For example, a participant in a workshop on trade and the environment noted that many examples were about Japanese whale hunting, fishing and forestry, which were not relevant to their economy. Respondents generally agreed that including more experts from the region in the delivery of the regional workshop would be a good idea to deal with this problem. Some also suggested that the resource persons should have more practical experience, than legal or theoretical knowledge.

One of the respondents had a specific recommendation to increase the relevance of WTO training:

“Before the workshop, each participant should prepare and send a report on the problems or issues of their country relevant to the workshop. The participants would present the highlights to the group, get the views of the experts and the views of the other participants. This would make it more participative and interesting, more useful than sitting and listening to lectures.”

Another respondent suggested that in order to be more concrete, the trainers should use a case study in the workshop, for example a case of WTO accession from the beginning to implementation. Participants in the trade policy courses were much less affected by the problem of the lack of concrete examples and application, as these courses included simulation exercises, which the recipients thought were very important and useful.

Many interviewees noted that the exchanges of national experiences among participants was one of the key strengths of the workshops, some even suggested that 50% of the time should be spent on such exchanges rather than lectures from experts. Some noted that when the participants are more passive and less involved in a workshop, the relevance of the activity is diminished, and one suggested that there should not be more than one participant by country because the second participant tends not to be active in the discussions. Several respondents noted the quality of the participants as one of the strengths of the workshops they participated in. As mentioned in the quote above, if the regional workshop would be designed according to this more participatory approach, the role of the trainers would become more one of facilitator, than a “lecturer”.

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Performance

The participants usually thought the quality of the training they received in the WTO courses or workshops was very good or good. The comments about the presentations made were generally very positive. The vast majority of interviewees (14/17) thought that the training programs were designed at the right level of expertise for them. None had a problem with the size of the group of participants in the activities they were involved in. The participants also made generally very positive comments about the materials and documents used in the courses and the seminars. They also used the materials in presentations made to their colleagues and distributed them inside government.

The selection of participants in Moldova to be sent to the TRTA activities is not perceived by most interviewees as a problem. The selection of participants in Moldova is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Economy. When the Ministry of Economy decides that the participants should be from another ministry, a formal invitation is sent to the other department, which has to make its own internal selection. The selection of officials within the WTO division is based on the specialisation and level of experience of the individual. For example, the WTO trade policy course is used to train new staff that recently joined the division.

We only met one person, who was outside the WTO division, who believed that the selection of the participants was poorly done and that he/she should not have been sent to the WTO regional workshop. This person proposed that to prevent such mistakes, each country should designate a pool of officials that require WTO training for their work and only these participants should be able to participate in the courses and training. The list should be shared with the WTO and made public, as a way to monitor the selection of participants. A respondent from outside government also deplored that the line Ministries, especially the Ministry of Agriculture, were not often recipient of capacity building on WTO issues.

Two of the officials we met had participated in the recent WTO online courses. They were generally pleased with the training they received in this programme. This is an interesting avenue to further explore, given the potential cost-effectiveness of such activities. The key problem raised by the respondents was that the slow internet access they had in Chisinau made the use of the online course often very frustrating.

Impact

A key obstacle to the long-term impact of the WTO TRTA activities in Moldova is the regular movement of personnel. Many respondents noted that after a couple of years in the WTO division, the trade officials leave to go work in the private sector given the very large difference between the salaries of the public and private sector in Moldova (10:1). We were told that the WTO training, especially the trade policy course, is used as an instrument to motivate personnel to stay at least three years in the division. Some respondents see the movement of personnel as a key obstacle to build institutional capacity. However, other considers that if the officials stay in the country, in the private sector, their expertise can still be used by the government as a consultant and is not lost.

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In terms of the short-term impact of the training on the trade policy of the government, the information received by participants is usually shared with colleagues after the events. This dissemination takes different forms such as sharing of documents and material received, and informal meetings. Moreover, the WTO division of the Ministry of Economy organises four seminars a year for government officials and non-government actors to share information about the WTO and the information received in the courses and workshops is disseminated during these events. In order to improve the impact of WTO training, one official suggested that in the post-training reports, trainees should be “required to prepare a short note at the end for each issue area during the course to say 1) what they have learned that is useful to their work, 2) how would they apply this, and 3) what policy proposals/recommendations they would make as a result of what they have learned.”

Several interviewees commented that the level of WTO training programme needs to progress with time, in order to reflect the increase in capacity that have happened in the past years. It was suggested by some that the content of the regional workshops needs to become more sophisticated and not simply an introduction to the issue area. Moreover, regional workshops should be developed as part of a continuous programme of training, not just a “one-time thing”.

Comparative advantage

None of the interviewees thought that the WTO training programme should be fundamentally reviewed or that there were important problems of duplication. One respondent stated, “what the WTO is doing cannot be done by others.” He added that one reason the WTO is best position to present the agreements and their implications is that they are more neutral and that “other donors would try to influence our positions”. Indeed, all of our interviewees thought the programs they participated in had presented information in a fair and balanced way, without biases.

Nevertheless, many had comments on what could be improved and they offered proposals in terms of ensuring that that the organisation best suited for the work is involved. Thus, some interviewees suggested that more of the WTO activities be more often undertaken in collaboration with specialised agencies and organisations such as WCO, WHO or WIPO. This suggestion is linked to the often-mentioned lack of concrete examples offered by the resources persons. Indeed, the WTO staff is seen as most qualified to explain the content of the legal documents, but several argued that this needed to be complemented by trainers with more practical experience.

4. Conclusions

This country study highlights that participants have generally positive views regarding the quality and the relevance of the technical assistance offered by the WTO. The trade policy courses have drawn very few criticisms, but there is more room for improvement in the case of regional workshops.

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The key areas for improvement that have been identified here are 1) the need for more concrete illustrations and examples in regional workshops 2) to need to move away from the one-workshop model to a structured programme of training whose content evolves as capacity is improving, and 3) the need to ensure dissemination of the information received, especially to officials outside the trade ministry.

The interviewees did not have a lot of comments regarding the comparative advantage of the WTO in the field of trade training, except for some who thought the quality of the WTO training was higher than that given by other donors or providers. Duplication, overlap or lack of coordination was not presented as a problem here. Long-term impact of the WTO trade training and institutional capacity building remains an important problem in Moldova, however, given the very high movement of public officials, especially in the WTO division. This problem is out of the control of the WTO Secretariat, but the implication for its training activities may be that in countries with a high level of turnover, trade policy courses will have to continue to be offered at an introductory level, to ensure that new staff understand the WTO agreements and procedures.

Senegal

1. Key features of national trade context

Senegal's economy is fairly dependent on trade (as shown by a trade:GDP ratio of 70.6). Imports were liberalised in the course of a macroeconomic stabilisation and structural reform programme, which began in 1994 with IMF and World Bank support. Applied tariffs in 2004 were 14.3% for agricultural goods and 11.6% for other goods on average, though average bound levels are 30% Senegal's export performance has been well below that of other sub-Saharan African countries, let alone all developing countries. This can be partly attributed to a heavy concentration of exports on products for which demand was falling such as groundnut oil.

While Senegal currently has Least-Developed Countries (LDC) status, several people in the government and private sector envisage graduating to developing country status in the near future. This has increased their sense of responsibility to ensure the economy and the bureaucracy has the capacity to handle the associated more onerous WTO obligations.

There are two key bodies with responsibilities for trade policy making and enforcement in Senegal. In government, the Direction pour le Commerce Extérieur (DCE) in the Ministry of Trade, which reports to the Trade Minister, is the lead on trade negotiations. The DCE also chairs a committee created in December 2001, in the wake of the launch of the Doha Development Agenda, the CNNCI. In addition to WTO negotiations, the region's negotiation of the EPA with the EU is another preoccupation for Senegal given its strong trade and investment links with the EU, as are efforts to strengthen regional integration within West Africa. Finally, a major trade concern is how to address supply-side constraints.

2. Activities under assessment

According to the WTO/OECD database, total spending in Senegal on TRTA/CB in trade policy and regulations from 2001 to 2004 amounted to US\$3.5 million. The WTO was one of the larger funders after the EC (US\$1.2 million) and the US (US\$1.1 million) with US\$494,000 of activities. The activities most funded by WTO were trade education and training, NAMA tariff negotiations, trade mainstreaming, TBT and services.

The interviews in Senegal took place in March 2006, in meetings with several people present and in bilateral meetings, involving a total of almost 50 people representing some 20 agencies. This allowed a wide coverage of views and opinions about WTO's TRTA as well as more focused feedback on particular types of courses. The interviewees had participated in a wide range of courses – in terms of subject, length of course, location of delivery (national, regional/continental and in Geneva), and organising agency (those funded, organised and delivered by the WTO and others in which other organisations participated in the funding, organisation and/or delivery). They had also participated in courses in which the WTO had not had any involvement.

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In addition to those with interests in the courses as participants or managers or colleagues in the national trade negotiating committee, meetings were held with a number of donors.

3. Findings

Relevance

In general the interviewees considered that the courses offered by the WTO were very relevant to their individual work and to the needs of their institutions. However, there were a number of areas in which the Senegalese Trade Ministry had unmet needs. For instance it was felt that there had not been enough courses on intellectual property and that the issue of trade remedies and safeguards had not been adequately addressed beyond the introductory level information provided in some of the more general courses on WTO rules. For some interviewees, one of the courses' weaknesses was the narrow juridical view/presentation of the WTO rules. It would have been good to learn more about the development aspects and also to be taught more about how to analyse national interests in the WTO negotiations.

There seemed to have been too few national courses; more national courses would help to meet the need for extending information and knowledge about the WTO beyond the relatively small group of officials and private sector representatives that have been able to participate in the courses to date. Customs officials, who may have a higher turnover than other directorates, suggested that a national course be organised for their officials to cover a wide range of areas for which they are responsible.

Another issue raised by interviewees was the need for the greater use of national experts, i.e. people who had already extensive training or experience in WTO questions – whether officials, academics or consultants – would both enrich the courses and enhance the relevance of the knowledge. It was also suggested that the WTO develop a formal 'Training of Trainers' programme, with the collaboration of technical advisors from the WTO Training Institute, to produce a body of national trainers specialised in the WTO. The first group to be trained in this way would be drawn from those who already have some knowledge of the WTO. This would allow the extension of training on the WTO to producer groups and others outside Dakar.

While many interviewees observed that the WTO experts were very careful not to be biased – e.g. not to promote one negotiating position over another – some commented that their efforts to be neutral went too far. In their view, there was a bias against fully explaining the development content of the WTO. For instance there was less time spent on the SDT provisions and how developing countries and LDCs can take advantage of these. Similarly there was inadequate time given to how countries might take advantage of safeguard and trade remedy provisions.

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Interviewees noted that in some cases training needs to go further. Capacity building is required for the conduct of impact assessments and studies, the implementation of WTO agreements such as customs valuation, and to assess the implication of likely rules on trade facilitation. And training is not enough; once the human capacity constraints are removed, others become binding such as funding to participate in negotiating meetings.

Performance

In general, there was high satisfaction with many aspects of the WTO courses, but there were some areas where there had been disappointments and various improvements were recommended. For instance, some of the newer WTO experts were considered to be less proficient as trainers than their more experienced colleagues. But generally it was the non-WTO experts that were criticised as wanting in one respect or another.

Some interviewees considered the two and three-day courses to be too short given the amount of technical information that needed to be presented, discussed and absorbed. There were some complaints about logistics. Language was sometimes a problem. When courses involve both Anglophone and Francophone participants, the teaching is more likely to be in English; while interpretation is available, this is still second-best. Materials were not always available in French when they were needed and in some cases they were not even delivered to participants despite being promised.

It is not possible to make specific comments on efficiency in the absence of data from the WTO let alone other agencies, relating to costs of inputs and the challenges of imputing values to outputs – in this case the knowledge and information acquired in the courses. Nonetheless it seemed clear to many respondents that it is much more efficient for the WTO to offer national courses, than to send Senegalese officials and others to courses held in other countries. This is primarily because it would allow more Senegalese trainees to participate. There would also be efficiencies from the training of national trainers, who could then be used in partnership with WTO trainers.

Impact

Interviewees were unanimous in their opinion that the WTO courses had increased their knowledge of WTO rules and provided them with some tools (notably documents and websites to consult for more information) for furthering this knowledge after the courses were over. Nonetheless there was a limit as to how far they were able then to apply this knowledge in their day-to-day to work let alone in training others.

Several participants and one instructor noted that it was very difficult to incorporate lessons if there were limited or even no opportunities to practice them. The instructor had found that even when trainees had participated in 2 or 3 previous courses, their knowledge of particular WTO issues such as dispute settlement was quite basic and needed to be retaught before they could move on to a new issue or area or to deepen their knowledge.

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In this case the problem was considered to result from the teaching mode – quite theoretical and/or unrelated to the regional let alone national context – and the lack of practical application especially after the course. In this respect, involvement in the cotton case had been an effective learning tool for Senegalese officials and others, in contrast to some of the two or three day courses more generally available.

Participants were usually required to prepare a brief report for their department, but rarely to organise a seminar, though some interviewees considered this might be a useful practice to adopt in the future. Some had been able to share their knowledge with others on the CNNCI subcommittees. This appears to have contributed to an increasing effectiveness of the CNNCI, and particularly the agricultural subcommittee, which has become more active, includes a number of national CSOs and is seen by the government as an important vehicle for determining national policy positions, according to some interviewees. It is important to note, however, that besides the WTO courses on agriculture, there have been other sources of more sustained and diverse TRTA, notably France. Also, Senegal's involvement in the different group processes (including cotton, the G33, ECOWAS) has been empowering as well as educational for the government and others. Nevertheless, very few interviewees considered themselves well enough trained to be able themselves to become trainers of others.

Comparative advantage

Most interviewees identified the WTO as having a strong comparative advantage in providing training (both long-term and shorter-term) and documentation related to the history and functioning of WTO rules, and the current WTO negotiations, following an approach that is largely juridical and neutral. What is less clear is the extent to which the WTO can go beyond these areas and approaches, and if not whether it should leave it to other organisations to do so either operating independently or being incorporated into the design and delivery of WTO courses. Several interviewees recognised that other agencies might have more specialised expertise than the WTO – e.g. the WCO on issues such as customs valuation, the FAO on agricultural trade impact assessment, the ISO and other standards agencies for training certifiers/auditors.

For instance, economic analysis, impact assessment, development flexibilities were not seen as areas of WTO strength, in contrast to organisations such as UNCTAD, the World Bank, the FAO, the South Centre and IDEP, as well as certain donor government agencies. One option would be for the WTO to work with these other organisations more frequently to ensure that such content is included in its courses for Senegal.

The WTO has tried to increase national and regional content through greater inputs from and exchanges between participants. It has also begun to use more national and regional experts in its courses, particularly those organised with regional secretariats like ECOWAS as knowledge of national and regional issues is not its comparative advantage. But this could be taken further.

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For instance, more courses could be organised in West Africa in collaboration with ECOWAS, with ECOWAS taking greater responsibility for designing the course content. In Senegal, it was suggested that the WTO could link with CREA (the Senegalese Centre for Applied Economic Research) or ENEA (the National School for Applied Economics) to run national courses, or even to do national impact assessments of changes e.g. in the three agricultural pillars. There are other international agencies that might be in a better position to provide workshops on bilateral and regional trade (e.g. UNCTAD in the case of trade and investment agreements).

4. Conclusions

In terms of the WTO's training courses and other types of TRTA, it is clear that there has been an evolution in what is offered by the WTO whether on its own or in partnership with other funders, regional and sub-regional organisations and multilateral agencies. This can complicate a government's request for assistance as well as an evaluation. But such flexibility is positive as it creates various possibilities for engagement with the WTO and increases the probability that the WTO's TRTA responds to national needs, which themselves are changing over time.

Even so questions were raised in Senegal about: the scope for *programming* WTO TRTA interventions which at times seem rather ad hoc, one-off, rather than systematised or part of a longer-term plan; increasing the number of activities which appear to have been less than Senegal's entitlement (while Senegal has benefited from being a hub of regional activities this may explain why it has had fewer national courses); strengthening the content (level, links to national and regional dimensions as well as the development context, balance between theory and practice); and ensuring follow-up. These could be better integrated with the TRTA efforts of other agencies.

In terms of the impact, in Senegal the absorptive capacity for TRTA revolves largely around the DCE and the CNNCI and its subcommittees. This structure has allowed the training to be more systematically integrated into national trade policy making and to create a critical mass of knowledge about the WTO rules and the current negotiations. There is a core of expertise in the DCE where several officials have been trained by following more than one WTO course each. Similarly in other key ministries there are individuals who have had some, albeit usually more limited, WTO training. Outside government exposure to the WTO has been restricted to a few private sector and even fewer NGO representatives involved in the CNNCI.

Nonetheless there are still questions about how best to take advantage of this training and to respond to the expectations that it has created. The CNNCI is one means. But in our interviews there was a general sense that much more was needed. To capitalise on their newly acquired understanding of how the WTO operates, some would like to be able to focus on particular policy/sectoral issues, and/or to participate in the WTO meetings. Many would like further training to broaden/deepen their knowledge, especially to be able to do more analytical work; others want to be able to share their knowledge with others, especially groups outside the capital. More institutionalised access to WTO resources, such as documents and trade-related databases, along with more support to the reference centre, would also help to keep knowledge updated.

Yemen

1. Key features of national trade context

Yemen is an LDC in the process of accession to the WTO, having submitted its application to join the organisation in 2000. This process can be seen as a logical step in the country's efforts to liberalise trade, which date from 1995 when Yemen began to remove a number of trade barriers.

Exports of goods totalled US\$4.1bn in 2004, with an average annual growth rate of 1.3% in the decade 1994-2004. Its exports are highly concentrated with oil making up some 95% of the total. Besides oil, it also exports fish, coffee and fruits and vegetables. Thailand and China are the two largest markets, absorbing almost 30% each of Yemen's total exports. Imports amounted to US\$4.0bn in 2004, with major imports being petroleum products, foodstuffs – particularly cereals, sugar and dairy products, machinery and vehicles. The largest sources of Yemen's imports are the EU, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Yemen is not yet a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), whose members include some of its major trading partners, but in 2002 it joined the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA), an arrangement that aims to eliminate tariffs among its members by 2010.

2. Activities under assessment

In 2002-2004, Yemen received a total US\$10.6bn in TRTA in trade policy and regulations, of which the WTO accounted for 2.2%. In all, there were 47 activities provided by the WTO that involved participants from Yemen. Most WTO activities occurred in the sub-categories trade education/training (7 activities), tariff negotiations – NAMA (6), and services (5). Two activities took place in the sub-category accession. The EC, UK and US were the largest donors in terms of value during the three-year period, representing more than 90% of the total funds going to Yemen.

15 recipients and 5 officials (from various Ministries of the Republic of Yemen) were interviewed in Sana'a between 29 March and 4 April. In addition, meetings were held with representatives of GTZ (Germany), UNDP and International Finance Corporation (IFC, part of the World Bank Group), which provide a range of TRTA/CB in Yemen.

3. Findings

Relevance

Most recipients felt that the training programmes were relevant for them, as they were constantly using the knowledge gained and skills learnt in their current responsibilities, especially in the process of Yemen's accession to the WTO.

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Some of the recipients felt that attending training was only a part of their capacity building process; they also relied heavily on available literature (publications and the internet). A few of the officials were, however, of the opinion that there are instances when training activities are not really relevant for the participants. For example, the value of two participants attending training on dispute settlement was questioned on the grounds that Yemen was not yet a WTO member and, as an LDC, was highly unlikely to enter into a dispute.

One aspect that diminished the relevance of the training was that resource persons were not always able to explain complex issues with examples/cases relevant for the region. This was partly attributed to the fact that the resource persons were people from the WTO Secretariat and that only on very few occasions were nationals from one of the countries in the region (Arab and the Middle East) included as resource persons. It was therefore suggested that the WTO should try to make use of national resource persons (experts and practitioners) based in the region, who are well aware of the national realities. The WTO could provide a pre-training orientation for these national resource persons. In view of the fact that the WTO Secretariat has trainers who are always on the move (providing training, etc. to recipients throughout the world), it would also be much more efficient to develop the capacity of resource persons from the region. This is particularly important for a country like Yemen (and others in the Middle East) in view of the fact that many of the participants sent to regional trainings are Arabic speaking, and are not conversant in English.

Requests for national training activities are prepared on the basis of the current requirements by the government, and are therefore considered more useful for Yemen. Thus, it was suggested that Yemen ask the WTO to increase these activities from the present annual quota of three.

Performance

The participants in the WTO-provided training were very impressed with the knowledge of the resource persons, the comprehensive coverage of the topics, and the participation of a large number of women in the regional training workshops.

With regard to the selection process, Yemen has a well-organised system of selecting the participants for WTO-provided training courses. The WTO Coordination and Communication Office (WTO-CCO) is the focal point within the Ministry of Industry and Trade and is responsible for activities related to the WTO. The efficient system is in spite of the fact that Yemen is a country in accession and that participants from Yemen are only able to attend regional trainings organised by the WTO “if seats are not filled up by member country participants”, as explained by some participants.

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Nevertheless, it was revealed that the Ministry of Industry and Trade does not have a proper procedure to clearly identify the training needs of the officials associated directly with the process of accession of Yemen to WTO. Thus, it has sometimes been the case that participants with divergent backgrounds and with varying levels of understanding participate in the training courses, and sometimes on issues that are not really consistent with their individual or departmental capacity building requirements.

The WTO-CCO has realised this anomaly and will soon be embarking on the process of developing 'Annual Training Plans' that will indicate specific training requirements on trade-related issues for the staff. These plans will be sent to the WTO. In addition, there was a suggestion that the background and current responsibilities of the trainees should be shared with the trainers well before the training programme, in order for the trainers to prepare their delivery in accordance with the capacity and requirements of the trainees.

A distinct problem facing Yemen is that Switzerland does not have a mission in Yemen and a Swiss visa can only be obtained by sending one's passport to Saudi Arabia. This often leads to delays, which can complicate participation in training programmes for which there is usually limited lead-time. There have also been problems with visas to enter other regional countries in which the WTO was holding its training activities.

Other weaknesses of the training raised in the interviews included:

- Short duration of the training programmes
- Very limited availability of reading/training materials
- Reading materials are provided on the spot, whereas ideally these should be sent electronically to the participants earlier, so that they could go through them before the training programme
- Lack of proper translation/interpretation facilities
- Too little focus on practical exercises and simulations.

Impact

It is mandatory for all participants to fill out a 'feedback form' towards the end of all WTO-provided training programmes, usually on the last training day. On their return, all participants are required by their respective ministries to write a report about the training programme. However, there is no fixed outline for these reports and so the structure and content is at the discretion of the person writing the report. Some recipients reported that they had included a section in their report specifically on the quality of the training programme and the effectiveness of the resource persons. These reports are submitted to the respective departments, and are filed for future reference. But they are neither sent to the WTO nor to the other departments in the government.

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Only in a few cases did the WTO undertake follow-up activities to its training. Clearly, this is an aspect that could be improved upon since all interviewees (bar one who had attended a follow-up course) thought that follow-up training activities were required. On the other hand, few recipients had actually asked their government to request such follow-up. This suggests that measures can be taken by both the WTO and the government to ensure greater follow-up and, thereby, contribute to more long-term capacity building. In this context, it was also considered to be crucial that a network of national/regional resource persons and institutions was developed. It was suggested that the WTO should facilitate the process of developing a network of national resource persons and institutions that the trainees could approach for post-training consultations and further information sources, among other issues.

Most recipients said that they shared the information gained in the training with colleagues and other stakeholders. It appeared, however, that the organised briefings for government departments that used to take place are becoming increasingly informal. With other stakeholders – business associations, trade unions, university professors and the like – the information was often shared in workshops. Some officials felt that in addition to organising training in Sana’a, the capital of Yemen, there should be training organised in regional towns like Aden, Hodeidah and Harat. This should be done with the object of developing the understanding of relevant stakeholder groups on WTO issues.

Comparative advantage

Training programmes coordinated by the WTO were definitely better in terms of their content, quality and the knowledge of the resource persons than similar training activities undertaken by other agencies. However, a few recipients noted that on some specific issues training provided by other agencies were more useful than that offered by the WTO, e.g. a workshop on SPS/TBT organised by USAID.

The largest TRTA in Yemen, in value terms at least, that is currently being undertaken is a multi-year project titled ‘Support to Yemen’s Accession to WTO’, which is being implemented by GTZ with finance from the European Commission. The goal of this project is to assist the government to undertake significant changes in the economic and legal structures of the country in order for these to be in line with WTO requirements. Other examples of TRTA activities offered by other providers include a project for developing the country’s quarantine capacity with support from FAO; a joint programme with UNDP, the World Bank, IMF and UNCTAD to enhance capacity and ensure transparency on trade related policy-making; and efforts under the Integrated Framework to develop Yemen’s export potential in agriculture and fisheries by establishing testing facilities and developing quality standards. As for duplication, the officials interviewed thought that there was ‘to some extent’ an element of repetitiveness of the TRTA provided by the different agencies and organisations.

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4. Conclusions

Yemen is a country in accession to the WTO and an LDC. It is evident that there is an urgent need for the WTO to undertake training programmes that specifically match the country's requirements and that are especially relevant for the staff engaged in the preparation of its accession to the WTO. If it is difficult to organise such training programmes at the regional level (keeping in view the demands from other members), it should be provided at the national level. National activities should be practically oriented and intensive, with appropriate follow-up activities, thereby ensuring continuity in the capacity-building process.

The WTO should organise training programmes for LDCs including both members and non-members, so that the former can share their experiences with the WTO with the countries in accession. Development of a regional resource network of individuals and/or institutions on WTO issues should be facilitated by the WTO to compensate for the inadequacy of its own follow-up activities.

Finally, the WTO should adopt a process for proper 'needs assessment' before deciding on training activities for a country. This should involve improved coordination between the countries and the WTO Secretariat. The approach adopted by the Ministry of Industry and Trade to develop Annual Training Plans seems to be the right way forward.