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Committee on Trade and Development

WTO TECHNICAL COOPERATION

Implementation Modalities

Revision

The Guidelines for WTO Technical Cooperation, adopted by the Committee on Trade and Development on 15 October 1996, envisage the Committee establishing implementation modalities to be observed by the Secretariat in its administration of technical cooperation activities, and by the Committee in its review of these activities.

This note by the Secretariat has been prepared in response to the Committee's request. It attempts to capture elements in its non-paper of 3 February 1997, the informal note by the Swiss delegation circulated on 12 May 1997, and various comments made by delegations at, or subsequent to, the Committee's meeting on 20 May and 26 September 1997.

IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

WTO technical assistance should be provided so as to ensure the attainment of the objectives and principles stated in the Guidelines for WTO Technical Cooperation, and in compliance with the operational directives therein, within the scope of the human and financial resources made available by Members.

The following implementation modalities have been drawn up also with a view to enable the secretariat to deliver technical cooperation in a flexible, timely and pertinent manner, and to adjust it when necessary to suit the specific needs of recipient countries. They may be reviewed at an appropriate time, in the light of new experiences and developments in trade-related technical cooperation.

1. Modes of Delivery

In responding to requests for assistance, the Secretariat would draw up a programme of activities tailored to the specific needs of the requesting beneficiary. Programmes would make use of one or several of the following instruments:

- (i) General Seminars for explanation and dissemination of information on the WTO;
- (ii) Seminars and workshops to deal in-depth with specific issues;
- (iii) Technical Missions;
- (iv) Training courses;
- (v) Practical training programmes for selected officials with specific responsibilities;

- (vi) Information technology-based training material;
- (vii) Supply of data on trade and tariffs and other documentation on the WTO;
- (viii) WTO participation in technical assistance and training activities organized by regional and other international institutions.

2. Long-Term Engagement

- (a) It is recognised that the delivery of technical cooperation would be greatly enhanced if recipient countries were to designate an official/office in a government ministry to be the central focal point for technical cooperation activities with the WTO, and preferably for all trade-related technical assistance provided by other institutions.
- (b) The WTO will apply objective qualification criteria when selecting candidates to participate in WTO technical cooperation and training programmes.
- (c) Governments will assist in the selection of officials to be trained as local trainers, and will provide information on technical cooperation activities and expertise available in the country or at the sub-regional/regional level, as the case may be. The WTO may assist in developing a network of local trainers.
- (d) National experts and officials who have received WTO training shall, to the extent possible, be used for technical cooperation activities at the regional and sub-regional levels.

3. Coordination with Other International Institutions

- (a) Close coordination shall be established, whenever feasible and appropriate, with other international organizations, such as the International Trade Centre (ITC), UNCTAD and the World Bank.
- (b) Where other international institutions, such as the World Intellectual Property Organization, the World Customs Organization, and the Food and Agriculture Organization, have already established contacts with operational divisions of the WTO Secretariat in relation to their trade-related technical cooperation activities, these activities would be placed within the overall framework of established programmes of the WTO, where such exist.
- (c) For purposes of coordination and administration, the Technical Cooperation and Training Division is the central focal point in the WTO Secretariat for interaction with international, regional and sub-regional institutions, as well as with donor and recipient governments in the context of bilateral programmes, and shall, within the areas of competence and expertise of the WTO, participate in inter-agency programmes.

4. Management and Funding

4.1 Management

- (a) The Technical Cooperation and Training Division shall, in close collaboration with other operational Divisions of the Secretariat, coordinate the organization and execution of the Secretariat's response to requests for technical cooperation.
- (b) Requests for technical cooperation activities shall be communicated to the Technical Cooperation and Training Division, explaining the problem to be addressed and the need for technical assistance in this regard, the preferred modes of delivery. If possible the request should include an indication as to whether, and to what extent, the country concerned can participate in cost-sharing of the activities requested. If a request does not fall within the WTO's domain of competence and expertise, applicants would be directed to the institution best equipped to meet those needs.
- (c) Based on the specific requests for technical cooperation activities as well as on indications of voluntary contributions, which shall also be communicated to the Technical Cooperation and Training Division, the Division shall prepare a Three-Year Plan, comprising activities consistent with the priorities and objectives referred to in the Guidelines. The Three-Year Plan shall be circulated to the Committee on Trade and Development for its approval, at least two weeks in advance of its last meeting of the year.
- (d) For the first year, the Three-Year Plan shall indicate for every proposed activity (i) a description of the activity with the modes of delivery to be used; (ii) the organizing entity; (iii) the proposed source of funding and (iv) the executing unit and human resource utilisation. For the second and third years, the Plan shall be of a general and indicative nature, outlining priorities for the future.
- (e) Unforeseen requests and requests of an urgent nature shall be accommodated to the extent possible, bearing in mind the regular programme.
- (f) It is also understood that since a number of actors are involved in most technical cooperation activities, their interaction is an important factor in the fixing of exact dates, coverage, participation and documentation for the particular events. Some amount of flexibility is also needed in order to allow for factors such as the convenience of the host government.
- (g) The Secretariat shall liaise with, and report on technical cooperation activities to, the Committee in accordance with the Guidelines.

4.2 Funding

- (a) WTO technical cooperation activities shall be financed by the regular budget of the WTO within the limits specifically designated by Members, by voluntary contributions to the WTO Trust Fund for Technical Cooperation, by contributions from international financial institutions, or through international or national cost-sharing.
- (b) The Trust Fund shall be managed by the Technical Cooperation and Training Division in accordance with the provisions of the Guidelines.

- (c) Contributions to the Trust Fund may be non-earmarked or earmarked for particular activities by the donors. Donors shall address their offers to the Technical Cooperation and Training Division, indicating the amount of their contribution and whether their contribution is earmarked or non-earmarked.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Follow-up

- (a) To ensure the effectiveness of technical cooperation activities administered by the Secretariat and the optimum use of resources, the Committee on Trade and Development shall undertake annual and if necessary more frequent reviews, on the basis of reports provided by the WTO Secretariat. In this context, the Committee on Trade and Development shall consider, at the appropriate time (say every three years), the possibility of commissioning an external evaluation of the WTO Secretariat's technical cooperation activities, based on the Guidelines for Technical Cooperation. Such an evaluation should follow internationally recognized methodologies.
- (b) Appropriate follow-up activities may be established with a view to ensuring the effectiveness of technical cooperation and training activities. These can include training of trainers programmes, the use of internet and interactive technology (CD- Rom) for self-training, follow up courses, seminars, workshops (national/regional), making available local technical expertise and advice.