WTO Technical Assistance and Training

ESTIMATED TIME: 1 hour

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 9:

To introduce:

- WTO technical assistance and training; and,

- to provide an overview of the different WTO technical assistance activities and programmes.
I. WTO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

Technical assistance and training are core elements of the development dimension of the Multilateral Trading System (MTS), as confirmed by Ministers at Doha (December 2001). The bulk of WTO technical assistance and training is directed towards helping government officials from beneficiary countries to better understand WTO rules so that they can better exercise their rights of membership, negotiate more effectively with their trading partners and reap the benefits of an open, rules-based MTS. The WTO’s technical assistance and capacity building efforts are one of main delivery components in the Aid for Trade work programme. It contributes to multilateral efforts to enhance the delivery of Aid for Trade to developing countries and to improve the impact of this initiative.

Technical assistance programmes are designed with a view to gradually and progressively moving to higher levels of learning. The objective is to achieving cumulative and sustainable capacity building by enhancing the efficiency and impact of technical assistance and training in beneficiary countries. Annually, the WTO Secretariat organizes around 400 technical assistance activities, in Geneva and in WTO Member countries and regions, training several thousands of officials. In line with the Doha Declaration, priority attention is given to LDCs. Outreach technical assistance and training activities include work with parliamentarians and universities.

Trade capacity-building is a core function of the WTO Secretariat as a whole. Within the Secretariat, the Institute for Training and Technical Co-operation (ITTC) is responsible for the coordination of WTO technical assistance and training activities. The regular WTO body overseeing technical assistance activities is the CTD.

The WTO is implementing Results Based Management (RBM) in the design, management and delivery of WTO’s trade capacity building programmes. The objective is to strengthen the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of such programmes.

Doha Ministerial Declaration (para. 38): Technical cooperation and capacity building

"We confirm that technical cooperation and capacity building are core elements of the development dimension of the multilateral trading system, and we welcome and endorse the New Strategy for WTO Technical Cooperation for Capacity Building, Growth and Integration. We instruct the Secretariat, in coordination with other relevant agencies, to support domestic efforts for mainstreaming trade into national 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. We reaffirm our support for the valuable work of the International Trade Centre, which should be enhanced."

I.A. WHO BENEFITS FROM WTO TECHNICAL ASISSTANCE AND TRAINING?

The main beneficiaries of the WTO Secretariat's trade capacity building are government officials from developing, least developed and economies in transition Members and Observers. WTO’s technical assistance activities are primarily geared towards government officials responsible for WTO-related issues, including the implementation of WTO Agreements and the Doha Round of Negotiations.

Efforts are being channelled to gradually reach a broader audience, including academia, civil society, parliamentarians and private sector representatives. Some technical assistance activities and programmes are directed specifically towards these groups.

I.B. THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING PLAN

The WTO seeks to enhance coherence in the design and the implementation of the WTO technical assistance and training activities by exploiting synergies among its various training products and programmes. In order to achieve those objectives, ITTC prepares a biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan (“The TA Plan”), which provides the WTO Secretariat's backbone for the delivery of technical assistance and training activities. The TA Plan features the types of activities delivered by the WTO Secretariat and sets out the objectives for the planning and delivery of such activities for the period concerned (see Documents: WT/COMTD/W/*). The TA Plan is adopted by the CTD.

I.C. THE PROGRESSIVE LEARNING STRATEGY (PLS)

Since 2010, the Secretariat has put in place a Progressive Learning Strategy (PLS) aimed at promoting higher levels of learning, with a view to building and sustaining the long-lasting human and institutional capacity of beneficiary countries to participate more effectively in the MTS.

The WTO “Progressive Learning Strategy” (PLS) is the progressive, multi-modular sequencing of products in order to improve the delivery of WTO technical assistance and training, with a view to gradually and progressively moving to higher levels of learning. It seeks to enhance coherence in the design and the implementation of the WTO Secretariat's technical assistance and training activities, exploiting synergies among its various training products and programmes.

The WTO Secretariat has identified two broad categories of capacity-building participants, namely, "generalists" and "specialists:

- "Generalists" are those government officials who need a broad knowledge of the WTO to conduct their work, such as capital-based officials dealing with WTO issues or delegates posted to Geneva missions with general responsibility for WTO affairs.
- "Specialists" are those government officials that require in-depth knowledge in a specific area, such as those officials working on a specific issue in a particular Ministry in their capital (for example, those who are dealing with technical barriers to trade, agriculture or sanitary and phytosanitary measures issues).
On the basis of this distinction, two broad training paths have been identified, one for “generalists” and another for “specialists”. Each training path consists of a sequence of three training levels.

- **PLS Level 1** - Basic level: relies principally on the online E-learning Introduction course. This is the starting point for all those going through the various training paths, whether generalists or specialists. It provides a basic introduction to the WTO including its objectives, functions, structure, basic principles and disciplines. In addition, there is a Geneva-based Introduction course for LDCs.

- **PLS Level 2** - Intermediate level: following completion of the first level of training, the paths for generalist and specialists diverge. Level 2 courses aim at deepening the understanding of the WTO Agreements in general (generalists), or of a specific Agreement or trade-related subject (specialists).

- **PLS Level 3** - Advanced level: following completion of the second level of training, the participants may apply to more advanced training. Level 3 also comprises two paths (generalists and specialists). These courses seek to consolidate and broaden the knowledge acquired in level 2.

The first stage in the learning process consists mainly of E-Learning, where levels of knowledge of participants can be enhanced, tested and synchronized. On the generalist path, the next level is achieved through E-Learning or through the intermediate level training such as RTPCs, which address WTO issues from a regional perspective. Emphasis is put on interactive learning, case studies and sharing of knowledge and experiences between participants at the regional level. On the specialist path, a range of E-Learning and face-to-face activities are available. Once these two initial steps have successfully been completed, the participants are eligible for the highest level of learning, i.e. advanced thematic courses on particular topics (e.g. dispute settlement, trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS), sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS), agriculture, rules) as well as the comprehensive Geneva-based advanced trade policy course (ATPC), which has been re-designed so as to fulfil this purpose.
I.D. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The WTO technical assistance activities and training programmes can broadly be grouped in the following categories:

I.D.1. GENERAL WTO-RELATED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

This category mainly includes training activities designed to offer a broad understanding of all WTO-related matters. Most of the products within this category are directed to government officials with a broad overall WTO responsibility and a general knowledge of the WTO. They include, for example, the Geneva-based Advanced Trade Policy Courses (ATPC), the Regional Trade Policy Courses (RTPCs), the Geneva Weeks and the Introduction course for LDCs.

To know more about General WTO-related training activities, please refer to:
http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/train_e/general_courses_e.htm

I.D.2. SPECIALIZED AND ADVANCED TA AND TRAINING

This category addresses specific topics geared mainly towards specialists. The main purpose is to address issues that cannot be covered in the general courses. They include seminars and workshops on specific topics (e.g. agriculture, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, services negotiations or dispute settlement), which can be held in Geneva or in the field. This category of products encompasses Geneva-based specialized courses, national activities and regional seminars, the Advanced Training Programme for Government Senior Officials, the Intensive Course on Trade Negotiations Skills, as well as outreach activities for parliamentarians and civil society.

To know more about specialized and advanced training activities, please refer to:
http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/train_e/specialized_courses_e.htm

I.D.3. E-LEARNING

The WTO E-Learning programme serves as a complement, as well as an alternative, to more traditional training programmes. E-Learning ensures that participation in more advanced WTO courses is premised on a full understanding of basic WTO concepts and principles, as well as of the main provisions of the Agreements. Successful participants in online E-Learning courses are eligible to attend more advanced WTO training and capacity-building. The registration process to E-Learning courses is explained in an Annex, at the end of this module. In addition, a number of self-training modules on specific WTO Agreements/issues are available online through the WTO webpage on distance learning, and on the E-Learning website. The modules are free and open to all website users.
I.D.4. ACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The development of partnerships between the WTO Secretariat and the trade policy-related academic community in Member countries is at the core of these programmes. "Joined up" capacity building simultaneously enhances the capacity of the WTO to train government officials and builds institutional and human capacity for such training in developing countries. Furthermore, it contributes to the development of WTO-related curricula in academic institutions of higher learning and promotes WTO-relevant research intended to strengthen national and regional negotiating capacity. It includes, inter alia, the WTO Chairs programme, Regional and global capacity-building academic events and a support programme for doctoral students. For instance, the WTO Chairs programme aims at supporting and promoting trade-related academic activities by universities and research institutions in developing and LDC countries.

To know more about WTO academic programmes, please refer to:
http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/train_e/academic_support_e.htm

I.D.5. TRAINEE PROGRAMMES AND INTERNSHIPS

They allow officials to get first-hand exposure to the functioning of the MTS and/or to provide support to the respective beneficiaries’ permanent missions or to the coordinators of selected WTO regional groups. They include the Netherlands Trainee Programme (NTP), the WTO regional coordinator internship, the WTO mission internship and the WTO Accessions Internship Programme. For example, the NTP assists in the economic and social development of LDCs, low income countries and comparable poor small and vulnerable economies in areas related to trade policy. It provides junior public officials with the opportunity to learn about matters dealt with within the WTO.

I.D.6. WTO REFERENCE CENTRES

Their main purpose of these Centres is to act as focal points for the WTO in the field for the transmission of WTO information. They provide with dedicated physical locations situated in beneficiary countries from where government officials and the public in general can have access to information -including WTO databases- via the WTO Internet website, on CD – ROMs, in print, as well as in electronic format. Reference Centres may also be used as enquiry points to fulfil notification requirements, as well as to participate in E-Learning courses.

To know more about WTO Reference Centres, please refer to:
http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/train_e/ref_centres_e.htm
The WTO Technical Assistance and Training Webpage

The technical assistance and training webpage, available on the WTO Website, provides background information on the scope of available programmes and activities:

http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/teccop_e/tct_e.htm

Information included in the webpage gives regular updates on technical assistance and training news, explains the WTO mandate to carry out technical cooperation activities, describes the WTO's collaboration with other agencies, and provides access to the matrix of WTO technical assistance activities, as well as to WTO technical assistance documents.

The webpage provides dynamic information on the planning and implementation of each individual regional or global technical assistance activity listed in the Annex to the Technical Assistance Plan. The information is articulated following the chapters of the Plan, so as to serve as a reference to the agreed programme. Once a date and venue for an activity are confirmed, information on the event, such as course description, its objectives and programme, target audience, application requirements, and any relevant reading and training material are summarized in an "activity sheet" and made available online.

To know more about the technical assistance activities and programmes, please refer to:

http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/train_e/products_e.htm

I.E. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES AND LCDS

Least developed countries benefit from over 40 per cent of all technical assistance activities, including not only national activities held in LDCs, but also regional and global activities in which LDCs are invited to participate. Thus, in line with the Doha Declaration, priority attention is given to LDCs.

Several products have been specifically created for LDCs or have LDCs as a priority, such as the three-week introduction courses for LDCs held in Geneva. Other programmes give LDCs priority in determining beneficiaries. They include the Reference Centres Programme, the Netherlands Trainee Programme (NTP) and the Mission Internship Programme. For example, the Reference Centres Programme specifically focuses on the installation/upgrade of reference centres for LDC Members. The Netherlands Trainee Programme and the Mission Internship Programme both focus on applicants from African and LDC countries.
Annex

E-Learning: Background Information and Registration

A. E-Learning Course Duration

1. The estimated average study time per course is from 50 to 60 hours. Participants can start their course at their convenience and will enjoy access to the course for a three-month period, within which they will be free to organize their study pace according to what fits them best. Participants will be assisted by a trainer throughout the duration of their course. Furthermore, the E-Learning platform offers interactive tools to enhance the learning experience.

B. E-Learning Registration and Nomination

2. While the WTO E-Learning material is freely available in the WTO E-Learning website, participants have to register and submit a nomination form in order to participate in a monitored course, access the module exams and obtain a WTO certificate.

3. ONLINE Registration THROUGHOUT the year at http://etraining.wto.org.

4. Registration for online courses is a two-track process. To register TWO FORMS are to be filled and submitted:

   (a) Online Registration Form

5. Interested officials shall register online first. After the duly completion of the online registration form at http://etraining.wto.org, the system will generate a registration number, which candidates will need to include in the Nomination Form.

   (b) Nomination Form

6. The nomination form can be downloaded at http://etraining.wto.org. The Nomination Form is also sent attached to the Invitation Letter, which is forwarded to Delegations from beneficiaries of WTO TRTA.

7. The registration number will be required. The participation of each candidate should be duly confirmed by the responsible government authorities. Nomination forms should be either sent by email (scanned) to elearning.registration@wto.org or by fax to +41 22 739 5191.

8. Once the registration process is complete, a username and password is sent to each participant by email. The access codes are available for a three month period, starting from the date of the first login into the website. During these three months a Trainer and a dedicated Help Desk will be available to provide online assistance and course monitoring throughout the course.