

**THE TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
(TAP) FOR REGIONAL AND
GLOBAL INTEGRATION
IN TRADE**

GENERAL
OVERVIEW

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TAP

● IsDB Member Countries

20.3% INTRA-OIC IN 2015

18.7%
INTRA-OIC

60%
EU

51%
ASIA

37%
NORTH
AMERICA

76%
CUSTOMS SERVICES

33%
LOGISTICS
& LEGAL

Intra-OIC trade compared to Intra-regional trade in 2016

Difficulties faced by exporting companies in intra-OIC

INTRODUCTION

As a part of its 10-year strategy, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) identifies cooperation as one of its core pillars. The IsDB is committed to contributing to greater connectivity among its member countries. This can be attained by increasing intra-regional trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) for its 57 member countries spread across Asia, Africa, Middle East and North Africa, and Latin America.

In this regard, in 1997, the IsDB launched the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) for Regional (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation [OIC] level) and Global Integration (World Trade Organization [WTO] level) in Trade, which has the prime objective of helping its member countries upgrade their human and institutional capacities so that they can adjust to the new multilateral trading system. This is a purely demand-driven program in which member countries determine their needs for capacity development in this area. The program also serves as a forum in which senior officials from member countries exchange views and discuss various urgent multilateral and regional trade matters.

The TAP for Regional and Global Integration in Trade assists the IsDB's 57 member countries in their efforts to integrate among themselves and with the world through training, policy advice, and technical assistance. The interventions under this program aim at rapid regional and economic integration and at increased connectivity. These initiatives are expected to generate both global opportunities and increased exposure to global risks for the member countries, as they become more integrated with the global market.

BACKGROUND

The share of intra-OIC trade decreased from 20.3% in 2015 to 18.7% in 2016, compared with that of intra-regional trade in the EU (60%), Asia (51%), and North America (37%). Despite considerable efforts to promote intra-OIC trade and reduce bottlenecks, many obstacles remain. According to the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), the difficulties faced by exporting companies in OIC are primarily related to customs services (76%) and to logistics and legal aspects (33%).

The difficulties in logistics are particularly related to interstate transport costs (freight).

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

The main objectives of the TAP for Regional and Global Integration in Trade is to enhance member countries' capacities to negotiate and implement regional and multilateral trade agreements, as well as to increase their understanding of policy implications and the role of trade at the global and regional levels. As such, the IsDB is called upon by member countries to help them in acceding to the WTO and make the most out of their participation in it.

SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THE PROGRAM,
THE ISDB HAS ORGANISED MORE THAN

86 SEMINARS
AND
52 WORKSHOPS

QUICK TIMELINE OF THE HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS UNDER THE PROGRAM

The main elements of the IsDB TAP that have been ongoing since 1997 include:

- 1** Organizing seminars and workshops on WTO matters and other regional agreements
- 2** Conducting technical courses on trade policy
- 3** Organizing consultative meetings on important issues and in preparation for WTO Ministerial Conferences
- 4** Undertaking WTO-related studies
- 5** Providing advisory services through the financing of experts/consultants for member countries on regional and global trade matters



Guyana trade facilitation workshop, April 2018



Dubai MC11 workshop, October 2018

CORE FUNCTIONS AND AREAS SUPPORTED BY THE PROGRAM

SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

Since the inception of the program, more than 86 seminars and 52 workshops have been organized by the IsDB. These cover a wide range of WTO issues with a view to familiarizing the member countries with the content and provisions of WTO agreements, as well as the with the activities of the WTO.

TRADE POLICY COURSES

Trade policy courses, commonly organised with the WTO, cover a wide range of topics, such as market access, customs and trade administration, agriculture, textile and clothing, sanitary and photo-sanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, government procurement, general agreements on trade in services, intellectual property rights, anti-dumping, subsidies and countervailing measures, dispute settlement, agreement on trade-related investment measures, trade and competition policy, trade and environment, and regionalism.

SPECIAL STUDIES

The IsDB occasionally undertakes in-depth studies on WTO-related and other trade-related issues based on the requests of member countries or by OIC and its institutions. So far, the IsDB has undertaken studies on the agriculture sector, investment, the services sector, aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPs), a study about practical options to increase coordination among OIC Ministers of Trade vis-a-vis recent developments in WTO negotiations, electronic commerce, and the ongoing Senegal National Green Export Review (NGER) project. Each study included a set of case studies on OIC member countries and contained valuable practical tips and negotiation strategies on the various issues concerning OIC member countries.

CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS

The IsDB through the TAP for Regional and Global Integration for Trade organizes consultative meetings for member countries mostly in conjunction with the WTO Ministerial Conferences. These meetings provide a forum for the delegations of member countries to exchange views and, whenever possible, coordinate their positions on matters related to the WTO, adopt a common stance, and act as a group to acquire stronger bargaining power. So far, the IsDB has organized 11 consultative meetings for both capital- and Geneva-based officials.

WTO-SPECIFIC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES

The IsDB-TAP also provides specific technical assistance to member countries by hiring consultancy services or fielding in-house WTO experts on vital WTO issues, such as WTO accession, drafting of national laws, establishing WTO units, and providing capacity building for all general purposes.

KEY PARTNERS



1 ISLAMIC CENTER FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE (ICDT)



2 UNCTAD



WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION

3 WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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