

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: ERD/EROD

TA No., Country and Name 6220-REG: Capacity Building of Developing Member Countries on Selected World Trade Organization and Doha Development Agenda Issues			Amount Approved: US\$400,000	
			Revised Amount: Not applicable	
Executing Agency: ADB		Source of Funding: JSF	Amount Undisbursed: US\$96,497.19	Amount Utilized: US\$303,502.81
TA Approval Date: 21 Dec 2004	TA Signing Date: Not applicable	Fielding of First Consultant: Not applicable	TA Completion Date Original: 31 May 2006 Account Closing Date Original: 31 May 2006	Actual: 29 Sept 2006 Actual: 29 Sept 2006
Description <p>Capacity building is essential to integrate developing countries into the multilateral trading system. International trade plays a key role in reducing poverty by increasing economic growth. In 2001, the World Trade Organization (WTO) launched the Doha Round to revitalize the world economy by expanding trade. In addition, in May 2002, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and WTO concluded a memorandum of understanding to cooperate in technical assistance (TA) activities involving WTO-related issues in the region. ADB launched two WTO-related capacity-building programs in 2002¹ and 2003.²</p> <p>As the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) was in a crucial stage of negotiations in 2005, the high-level meeting reviewed and evaluated the key DDA negotiating areas, provided technical and theoretical inputs, and examined policy options for the developing member countries (DMCs) on such areas as market access, agriculture, trade in services, and trade facilitation. The Osaka Local Government co-hosted this event.</p> <p>Of the 30 WTO applicants,³ 10 (one third) are ADB DMCs. Given the number of benefits of WTO membership, the intensive course on accession provided the eight (out of nine) applicants under this regional technical assistance (RETA) with technical knowledge to support admission as soon as possible.</p> <p>WTO's dispute settlement mechanisms (DSMs), are rights to due process enjoyed by all WTO members on equal footing. Since DMCs' knowledge about the DSMs—such as panel proceedings and strict time limit at each stage of the panel—were insufficient, the four-day intensive course on DSM assisted in making DMCs fully understand the DSM mechanisms and practices so they can fully exercise their rights under the WTO multilateral trading system.</p> <p>Expected Impact, Outcome and Outputs. The goal of this TA is to promote the full integration of the DMCs into the WTO multilateral trading system. To achieve this goal, the TA increased awareness and expertise of senior officials responsible for WTO and Doha Round issues through delivering three specific outputs: (i) successful conclusion of high-level meeting for negotiators with director-general level and above; (ii) successful completion of training course on accession for senior trade officials; and (iii) successful completion of intensive training course on dispute settlement.</p> <p>Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities. The courses were conducted using a combination of lectures by experts and round-table discussions, participated in by resource persons and participants from various DMCs. Participants were also given opportunities to consult with experts. High participation in the courses of the 32 DMCs was attained with the assistance of the regional departments and resident missions. Participants were asked to evaluate the courses and the courses were rated as highly satisfactory. However, several participants expressed the desire to lengthen the sessions that allow them to present their countries' experiences and concerns in the topics being discussed and solicit suggestions on improving the situation from other participants. Significant resource savings were generated relative to the budget due to cost-saving measures taken by ADB staff, the generosity of the local government of Osaka and technical assistance of collaborating agencies. Despite repeated reminders, some</p>				

¹ ADB. 2002. *Technical Assistance for Capacity Building for Developing Member Countries on the World Trade Organization Trading System*. Manila. The regional technical assistance (TA 6035) was approved on 4 June 2002.

² ADB. 2003. *Technical Assistance for Capacity Building on Selected World Trade Organization Issues*. Manila. The regional technical assistance (TA 6142) was approved on 28 November 2003.

³ As of October 2006.

presentation materials were received after the deadline.

Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome

A web page was created for each of the three activities to inform stakeholders, including participating DMCs, of the logistics, program, resource speakers, papers and presentation materials of the courses.

High-Level Meeting on WTO Key Doha Round Issues. A press conference was arranged in collaboration with Department of External Relations and Japan Representative Office, where leading Japanese press were present and reported the meeting in their newspapers. The opening ceremony was televised as Osaka Governor Fusae Ohta delivered her opening statement. The keynote speech of former United States Trade Representative Carla Hills was published in Asian Development Review (2005) Vol. 22, No. 1.

Intensive Course on Accession. Of the 30 WTO applicants, 10 (one third) are DMCs, which include economies in transition in the central Asian republics and island countries in the Pacific. As applicants use the application for WTO membership as leverage for reforms of their trade regime, accession to WTO is important. Appropriate advice was given by WTO experts and other speakers. Progress of each accession working party at WTO vary from one applicant to another: Kazakhstan and Samoa seem to be at an advanced stage of accession negotiations. Tonga was admitted to WTO at the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Conference in December 2005 while Viet Nam will be admitted in November 2006.

Intensive Course on Dispute Settlement Mechanisms. Except for several DMCs (such as India, Republic of Korea, and Thailand), majority of DMCs have never experienced a WTO dispute panel case settlement, a time consuming process that requires technical expertise. WTO dispute cases involving DMCs keep increasing: from 2000 to 2005, there were 149 cases, of which 33 cases (some 22%) or more than one out of every five cases involved DMCs. This trend is likely to grow as exports from ADB DMCs expand. The course provided the necessary technical expertise for possible future dispute cases.

Overall Assessment and Rating

Responses to an evaluation questionnaire indicate that these activities are timely and relevant to the DMCs, and that participants appreciate ADB's capacity-building efforts on WTO-related areas.

This capacity-building program is directly linked to ADB's overarching objective of poverty reduction. It aimed to strengthen the framework for liberalizing and facilitating international trade under the WTO trading regime to hasten economic growth as income level increases. It enhanced the DMCs' capacity to formulate national trade policies. In view of the above, the program has produced the envisaged outputs as originally planned in the project document. Thus, the TA is rated highly successful.

Major Lessons

Relevant and timely course curricula were developed with close coordination with international organizations (e.g. UNCTAD, WCO, and WTO) and with the Government of Japan. A strong media mileage was achieved through close collaboration with the Department of External Relations and Japan Representative Office and the participation of Ambassador Clara Hills, who served as US Trade Representative from 1989 to 1993 and was a key player in the Uruguay Round of Trade Negotiations. The full cooperation of regional departments and resident missions, particularly in soliciting nominations and ensuring high participation rate of DMCs contributed to the successful implementation of the high-level meeting and intensive courses and in availing of cost-effective airfares.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

The courses were well accepted by participants. A follow-up RETA, Capacity Development of Selected DMCs on the Implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement is now being processed. It will be formulated, reflecting feedbacks from participants of RETA 6220 and views of collaborating organizations and governments.