



Paris, 13 June 2002

To: Participants to the OECD Regional Workshop
Trade Capacity Building: Experiences in an African Context

Dear Participant,

Regional Workshop on Trade Capacity Building in Mombasa, Kenya, on 26-27 August 2002

You have been invited to the OECD Regional Workshop: *Trade Capacity Building: Experiences in an African Context*, to take place in Mombasa, Kenya, 26-27 August 2002. One of the key challenges in strengthening trade capacity is to put in place a trade policy process or framework which is locally-owned and inclusive of all key stakeholders from the public and private sector and from civil society and academia. This will be a principal focus of the workshop.

In order to prepare for workshop discussions we would like to get a better idea of how your country perceives the trade policy process and how it is being approached. An explanation and a simplified diagram of the trade policy process are provided in the attached *annex*.

We would appreciate if you would respond to the attached questionnaire. The objectives of this questionnaire are to:

- assess the degree of consultative processes in national trade policy formulation;
- provide a basis for sharing good practices in developing national trade policy processes;
- pinpoint areas where donors can make a positive contribution;
- identify process indicators for monitoring and assessing the trade policy process; and
- provide a basis for follow-up to the workshop.

A second questionnaire will be sent out after the workshop in approximately six months time to assess the usefulness of the workshop and whether any changes have occurred in the trade policy process during that time.

Please respond briefly to the questions based on your personal experience. Send the reply by 5 July 2002, by e-mail or fax to:

By e-mail: Jens.andersson@oecd.org with ebba.dohlman@oecd.org on copy

By fax: +33 1 44 30 63 33

Attachments: - Questionnaire
 - Annex: Trade policy process



QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME:

1. Do you have a national trade strategy, and if so what are the principal priorities?

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2. Who has the main responsibility for national trade policy formulation in your country?

- For the WTO agenda?
- For the supply side agenda?
- Are there linkages between the two processes?

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3. What is the extent of stakeholder consultation within the national trade policy process?

- Inter-ministerial co-ordination?
- Public-private sector dialogue?
- Private sector consultations (incl. the informal sector)?
- Input from civil society and academia?

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4. Could you list the main organisations (public and private) involved in the trade policy process?

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- 5.** To what degree is the trade policy process linked with national development and poverty reduction agendas? To what extent are development planners, PRSP/UNDAF committees and civil society consulted?

- 6.** What are the main obstacles to an effective trade policy process in your country (in terms of access to information, human resources etc)?

- 7.** What are the major areas where existing national trade policy capacities need to be strengthened (institutional capacity, private sector organisations, research institutes, university programmes etc)?

- 8.** Where do you go for trade policy or market analysis?
- Are your needs met locally, regionally or internationally?

- 9.** In what way are you personally involved in the trade policy process?



10. What are your personal experiences from working with

- donors and multilateral agencies? Do they meet your needs?
- programmes such as the Integrated Framework, and JITAP,
- the WTO's Trade Policy Review Mechanism, and UNCTAD's Investment Policy Review?

11. How do donors see their role in trade capacity building?

12. Additional comments.

PLEASE RESPOND BRIEFLY TO THE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. SEND THE REPLY BY 5 JULY 2002, BY E-MAIL OR FAX TO:

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ANNEX: THE TRADE POLICY PROCESS

Countries wishing to improve their trade performance face many challenges. Capacity gaps need to be addressed in a wide range of areas, often simultaneously, and an unusually diverse array of stakeholders needs to be engaged. The breadth, complexity and continuing evolution of trade development challenges have led towards a consensus that one of the principal objectives of trade capacity building should be to help countries put in place effective and sustainable *trade policy frameworks and processes*. (See figure below)

An effective and sustainable trade policy process is based on the following elements:

- A coherent trade strategy that is closely integrated with a country's overall development strategy
- Effective mechanisms for intra-governmental policy co-ordination
- Effective mechanisms for consultation among three key sets of stakeholders: the government, the private sector, and civil society
- A strategy for the enhanced collection, dissemination and analysis of trade-related information

This approach has several things to commend it. A sound trade policy framework and effective policy process will:

- *Enable countries to address a wide range of trade-related challenges and opportunities over an extended period, both with respect to effective negotiations and implementation in the multilateral trading system, as well as enhancing their national and regional competitiveness.*
- *Enable countries to sustain and upgrade trade-related capacities after donors have departed, permitting dependence on external assistance gradually to decline. The participatory character of effective trade policy-making will help strengthen local capacities, as stakeholders “learn by doing” and learn from each other.*
- *Facilitate local “ownership” of trade development efforts. The involvement of a wide range of actors in the trade policy process will facilitate genuine local “ownership” of trade development and ensure that trade strategies and policies are demand-driven.*
- *Reduce the risk that partner country trade policies will be influenced by the trade policy priorities of donors. A decrease in external assistance and an increasing reliance on local capacities will minimise the chance that a partner country's trade policies will be skewed by the commercial or trade policies of donors.*

