



IsDB Technical Assistance Program for Regional and Global Integration in Trade

The IsDB Group delegation, usually headed by the President of the IsDB, participates in the annual session of the COMCEC, which is held in Istanbul, Türkiye. The IsDB and the other members affiliated to the IsDB Group participate in different committees and meetings of the working groups of COMCEC, such as the Financial Cooperation Working Group, the Poverty Alleviation Working Group, the Transport and Communication Working Group, the Agriculture Working Group, and the Trade Working Group. The IsDB publishes an annual report on the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) for Regional and Global Integration in Trade.

39th Session of the COMCEC (Istanbul, Türkiye, 2-5 December 2023) Status Report

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

IsDB Technical Assistance Program for Regional and Global Integration in Trade

I. Introduction

The IsDB submits regular progress reports on the implementation of the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) to the COMCEC meetings. These reports highlight the major WTO-related technical assistance activities undertaken under the TAP since the 38th Session of the COMCEC held in Istanbul, Türkiye, in November 2022.

The Technical Assistance Program for Regional and Global Integration in Trade assists IsDB 57 member countries in their efforts aimed to achieve integration among themselves and with the rest of the world, through training, policy advice and technical assistance. The interventions led under the program aim at rapid integration and increasing connectivity in order to unlock global opportunities for member countries as they become more integrated with the global market.

II. Background

The IsDB WTO-related Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Program (WTO-Program) was launched in 1997 with the prime objective of helping IsDB member countries upgrade their human and institutional capacities to adjust to the new multilateral trading system. The aim of the program is to provide greater awareness to the OIC member states on WTO agreements and their implementation, and to facilitate the process of their accession to the WTO. It also serves as a forum where relevant officials from member countries can exchange views and discuss various multilateral trade matters. In recent years, the program has put more focus on helping the member countries access the WTO and strengthening their negotiation skills on issues related to the framework of the Doha Work Program. The program which was later renamed (IsDB Technical Assistance Program (TAP) for Regional and Global Integration in Trade), aims to build the institutional and human capacities of IsDB member countries in the area of multilateral trade negotiations, such as those conducted under the auspices of the WTO, including acting as an interface for regional trading arrangements with the view to facilitating their effective participation into the global economy and fostering regional integration.

III. Major components of the program

The main components of the TAP consist in organizing seminars and workshops on the WTO and other regional agreements; conducting technical courses on trade policy; organizing consultative meetings on important issues and in preparation for the WTO ministerial conferences; undertaking WTO-related studies; and providing advisory services through financing of experts/consultants to member countries on WTO-related matters. The following is a brief summary of the activities undertaken under the TAP since inception:

1- Seminars and workshops

The IsDB organizes seminars and workshops covering a wide range of regional integration and trade issues with the aim of familiarizing member countries with the contents and provisions of the regional trade and WTO agreements as well as the activities of WTO to help to be in a better position to defend their interests. As of October 2023, 181 seminars and workshops were organized.

2- Trade policy courses

Organized in collaboration with the WTO, these courses are short versions of the WTO trade policy course which is a three-month curriculum offered by the WTO in Geneva. The trade policy course covers a wide spectrum of topics such as market access, customs and trade administration, agriculture, textile and clothing, sanitary and phytosanitary 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. Since inception, the programs has been offering these courses.

3- Special studies

Based on member countries' requests, the IsDB undertakes in-depth studies on WTO-related issues. The studies conducted so far covered the sectors of agriculture, investment and services, trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights, and e-commerce. Each study featured a set of case studies on OIC member states and contained valuable practical tips and negotiation strategies on various issues concerning the OIC member states.

4- Consultative Meetings

The IsDB organizes consultative meetings for its member countries, mostly in conjunction with the WTO ministerial conferences. These meetings provide a forum for member countries' delegations to exchange views and, where possible, coordinate their positions on matters related to the WTO. So far, the IsDB has organized nine consultative meetings.

5- WTO specific technical assistance to OIC/IsDB member countries

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

IV. **Activities planned/organized after the 38th Session of the COMCEC**

Based on member countries' feedback and requests, the TAP shifted its focus to two themes, namely (i) accession and other WTO-related matters and (ii) regional integration. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, there were a few delays in implementing some TAP activities in 2020. The following are the main activities organized/planned by the IsDB since the 38th Session of the COMCEC:

A. Organized activities

- Third regional dialogue on WTO accessions for the Arab region: Best practices in WTO accessions for the Arab region, with WTO and Arab Monetary Fund (31 October – 2 November 2023)
- Study on the assessment of WTO Article XII, with ICDT, WTO and AMF (on-going)
- Technical study on e-commerce within the framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area, with ICDT and ITC (on-going study)
- Study on trade policies and frameworks to foster regional integration and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in selected conflict and post-conflict Arab countries, with UNCATD (on-going).
- Study on promoting Chad-Sudan transit trade, transport, and regional integration through enhanced port connectivity, dry port/logistics hubs, and PPPs development, with ICDT and UNCTAD (on-going)
- Study on improving risk management of import control and inspection system of Fish Quarantine and Inspection Agency (FQIA) in Indonesia, with ICDT and Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (on-going)
- IsDB-ICIEC-ICDT panel discussion on Non-Binding Investment Guiding Principles on 18 October 2023 at the World Investment Forum in Abu Dhabi
- IsDB-ICIEC meeting on the organization of a capacity building program on OIC Business Intelligence Centre (OBIC) on 26-28 September 2023 in Istanbul.
- Completed the analysis of digital FDI and enabling factors of digital economy investments in the CAREC region (Second phase of the Digital CAREC Initiative)
- Study on Business Support Network for Improving Competitiveness of SMEs In COMCEC Countries, with KOSGEB and ICDT
- Training and awareness-raising initiative on Improved Import Control System for Fishery Sector in Indonesia, with ICDT and Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation
- Phase II study of the Trans-Maghreb Corridor, with ICDT and the Centre for Transportation Studies for the Western Mediterranean (CETMO) (on-going)
- Executive meeting on “Making the Middle Corridor an e-TIR Corridor” in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on 21-22 June 2023, with ICDT and ECE
- Turkmenistan WTO accession Support program, with ECE and ICDT (on-going)
- IsDB collaboration with ICDT on a study on the Implementation of the International Plant Protection Convention e-Phyto Solution for Togo and Nigeria (on-going)
- Second Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Group Meeting for the establishment of a permanent mechanism for the settlement of disputes arising out of the OIC Investments Treaty on 14-16 September 2023 in Casablanca
- IsDB-EIF-WAIPA workshop as part of the Capacity Development Program for francophone LDCs during the Annual Investment Meeting-Dubai on 10 May 2023
- IsDB-FZO capacity building activity (Free Zone Management Capacity Development Program), on the sideline of AICE 2023 – World FZO’s 9th Annual International Conference in Dubai, 1-5 May 2023
- IsDB-UNCTAD Program of Cooperation on Investment Promotion and International Investment Policies for the Year 2022 (ongoing)
- IsDB-UNESCWA on Safe and Inclusive Road Design in North and West Africa Project (on-going)

- IsDB-ICDT Capacity Development Program for African Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs)- Phase 1 (on-going)

B. Planned activities

- FDI Report, with ICDT and UNCTAD
- Study on promoting food security and climate resilience through trade in the IGAD Region, with IGAD, ICDT and UNCTAD
- Study on strengthening Central Asia landlocked and transit countries' capacity to use digital technologies for efficient transit transport facilitation, with ICDT and ESCAP
- Study on an Economic Corridor Linking Tripoli, Niamey and Ndjamena (Libya – Niger – Chad)
- COMESA Cooperation – studies on support to COMESA Trade in Services negotiations, with ICDT and COMESA
- Study on Uzbekistan-Tajikistan Cross Border Economic Zone
- Study on the Role of IPAs in the digital economy and digitalization of investment services, with ICDT
- Knowledge Transfer Program for Senegal – Developing the capacity of APIX Senegal - (Promoting investment environment in Senegal's pharmaceutical sector), with ICIEC, ITFC and AATB
- IsDB-NIPC Cooperation Program on Investment Promotion Capacity Development for member countries
- ICDT-IsDB-ICIEC establishment of OIC IPAs Association (academy)
- Study on attracting FDI in renewable energy for Central Asia member countries
- Cross-Border Paperless Trade Report for Asian member countries, with ESCAP and ICDT

V. Conclusions

The Islamic Development Bank continues to support OIC member states' efforts aimed to build their human and institutional capacities in order to meet the challenges of the multilateral trading system. The IsDB highly appreciates its collaboration of the WTO, international organizations, and national bodies and OIC institutions. The IsDB welcomes new ideas and suggestions to further enhance the impact of the Technical Assistance Program and looks forward to working more closely with all partners for the effective delivery of the program.

Annex: STATUS OF THE OIC/IsDB MEMBER COUNTRIES IN THE WTO

Country	Date of Accession	Observer status	no status
1. Albania	8 September 2000	1.Somalia	1. Palestine
2. Bahrain	1 January 1995	2. Algeria	
3. Bangladesh	1 January 1995	3. Azerbaijan	
4. Benin	22 February 1996	4. Comoros	
5. Brunei	1 January 1995	5. Iran	
6. Burkina Faso	3 June 1995	6. Iraq	
7. Cameroon	13 December 1995		
8. Chad	19 October 1996	7. Lebanon	
9. Cote d'Ivoire	1 January 1995	8. Libya	
10. Djibouti	31 May 1995	9. Sudan	
11. Egypt	30 June 1995	10.Uzbekistan	
12. Gabon	1 January 1995		
13. Gambia	23 October 1996	11. Turkmenistan	
14. Guinea	25 October 1995		
15. Guinea-Bissau	31 May 1995		
16. Guyana*	1 January 1995		
17. Indonesia	1 January 1995		
18. Jordan	1 January 1995		
19. Kuwait	1 January 1995		
20. Kyrgyz Republic	20 December 1998		
21. Malaysia	1 January 1995		
22. Maldives	31 May 1995		
23. Mali	31 May 1995		
24. Mauritania	31 May 1995		
25. Morocco	1 January 1995		
26. Mozambique	26 August 1995		
27. Niger	13 December 1996		
28. Nigeria	1 January 1995		
29. Oman	9 November 2000		
30. Pakistan	1 January 1995		
31. Qatar	13 January 1996		
32. Saudi Arabia	11 December 2005		
33. Senegal	1 January 1995		
34. Sierra Leone	23 July 1995		
35. Suriname	1 January 1995		
36. Tajikistan	2 March 2013		
37. Togo	31 May 1995		
38. Tunisia	29 March 1995		
39. Turkey	26 March 1995		
40. Uganda	1 January 1995		
41. UAE	10 April 1996		
42. Yemen	26 June 2014		
43. Afghanistan	29 July 2016		
44. Kazakhstan	45. 30 November 2015		

