



IsDB Technical Assistance Program for Regional and Global Integration in Trade

Usually headed by the President of the IsDB, the IsDB Group delegation 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 various COMCEC committees and working groups' meetings, 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 for Regional and Global Integration in Trade (TAP).

41st Session of the COMCEC (Istanbul, Türkiye, 1-4 November 2025) **Status Report**

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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I. Introduction

The IsDB submits regular progress reports on the implementation of the Technical Assistance Program for Regional and Global Integration in Trade (TAP) to the COMCEC meetings. This report highlights the major technical assistance activities undertaken under the TAP since the 40th Session of the COMCEC held in Istanbul, Türkiye, in November 2024.

TAP assists IsDB 57 member countries in their efforts to achieve trade integration among themselves and with the rest of the world, through training, policy advice and technical assistance. The program's interventions aim to increase cross-border connectivity, unlocking 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 primary objective of helping IsDB member countries to upgrade their human and institutional capacities in order to adapt to the new multilateral trading system. The program aims to raise awareness among OIC member states on WTO agreements and their implementation and to facilitate the process of their accession to the WTO. The program also serves as a forum where relevant officials from member countries can exchange views and discuss various multilateral trade matters. Later renamed IsDB Technical Assistance Program for Regional and Global Integration in Trade (TAP), the program 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. It also acts as an interface for regional trading arrangements with the view to facilitating their effective participation in the global economy and fostering regional integration.

III. Program components

The main components of the TAP consist of organizing seminars and workshops on the WTO and other regional agreements; conducting technical courses on trade policy; holding consultative meetings on trade issues and in preparation for the WTO ministerial conferences; undertaking WTO-related studies; and providing advisory services through financing experts/consultants for the benefit of member countries on WTO-related matters. All IsDB member countries benefit from the program's components. To maximize the program's reach, its activities are often replicated in different regions where member countries are clustered in regional groups. The following is a brief summary of the activities undertaken under the TAP since its inception:

1- Seminars and workshops

The IsDB organizes seminars and workshops covering a wide range of regional integration and trade-related matters. These aim to familiarize the member countries with the contents and provisions of regional trade and WTO agreements, helping them better defend their national interests. As of October 2025, 196 seminars and workshops had been organized since the program's inception, benefiting thousands of officials from the member countries. Recently, the program has focused more on trade and food security, logistics development, investment and trade digitalization, follow-up on WTO ministerial conferences' decisions, and accession and post-accession of member countries to the WTO.

2- Trade policy courses

Organized in collaboration with the WTO, these courses are shortened versions of the WTO's three-month trade policy course, which is 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, textiles and clothing, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, government procurement, the General Agreement on Trade in Services, intellectual property rights, anti-dumping measures, subsidies and countervailing measures, dispute settlement, the Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures, trade and competition policy, and trade and the environment. Recently, however, the program has discontinued its trade policy courses and shifted its focus to longer-term capacity development activities.

3- Special studies

Based on requests from member countries, the IsDB conducts in-depth studies on WTO-related issues. Studies conducted so far have 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. Recently, the program has supported member countries, particularly those in the MENA region, in their quest to access the WTO.

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, coordinate their positions on WTO-related matters where possible, and share suggestions on potential focus areas for the program. So far, the IsDB has organized nine consultative meetings.

All the member countries are invited to the consultative meetings which are usually held on the eve of WTO ministerial conferences to ensure high-level participation. It is a standard practice for the member countries to be invited to co-chair the consultative meetings with the IsDB. The last consultative meeting was organized during the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference held in December 2017 in Argentina.

5- WTO-specific technical assistance to IsDB member countries

The IsDB also provides specific technical assistance to member countries by hiring consultancy services or fielding in-house WTO experts on key WTO issues such as

accession to the WTO, drafting national laws, establishing WTO units, and providing capacity development for all general purposes.

IV. Activities planned/undertaken after COMCEC 40th Session

Based on member countries' feedback and requests, TAP has expanded its focus to include regional integration and connectivity and investment promotion. The main activities organized/planned by the IsDB since the 40th Session are as follows:

A. Activities undertaken

- High-level workshop on logistics development and regional integration in Africa, in collaboration with ITFC (ongoing)
- Advancing trade digitalization through single window interoperability in Asia, in collaboration with ESCAP (ongoing)
- Improving the capacity and engagement of SME support institutions and the private sector in using online B2B matchmaking tools in OIC member states, in collaboration with KOSGEB and ICDT (ongoing)
- Rehabilitation of the WAEMU CU18 Ghana–Benin border road project in Togo (ongoing)
- Revitalization of infrastructure supporting the economy in Burkina Faso (ongoing)
- Capacity development program on the role of credit information and unique entity identifiers in supporting trade and investment decisions (ongoing)
- Boosting exports through investment promotion in Central Asia, in collaboration with ESCAP and ITFC (ongoing)
- Capacity assessment of cargo seaports in Asia, in collaboration with ICDT (ongoing)
- Regional workshop on road connectivity and its impact on regional trade in Atlantic Africa through the TIR Convention (ongoing)
- Support for Comoros' WTO Post-Accession Plan of Action (ongoing)
- 5th Consultative Forum with Regional Cooperation Organization (ongoing)
- IsDB-World Bank Group collaboration on updating HDM4 Software (ongoing)
- IsDB-UNESCWA collaboration on safe and inclusive road design in North and West Africa project (ongoing)
- IsDB-ICDT capacity development program for African investment promotion agencies (ongoing)
- Turkmenistan WTO accession support program with UNECE and ICDT (ongoing)
- Study on promoting food security and climate resilience through trade in the IGAD region, in collaboration with IGAD, ICDT and UNCTAD (ongoing)
- Operationalization of eTIR procedures in IsDB member countries (ongoing)
- Supporting the advancement of the Arab economic integration with ITFC (AFTIAS 2.0) and the League of Arab States (ongoing)
- Cross-border trade between Algeria and Tunisia with ITFC (AFTIAS 2.0) (ongoing)
- Digital-enabled entrepreneurship training program in Uzbekistan (completed)

- Opportunities for a regional domestic market for oil and gas in the East African region with the AU Energy Commission (completed)
- Workshop on the Sahel Initiative with BADEA and the UN Office of the Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel (completed)
- Study on promoting Chad-Sudan transit trade, transport, and regional integration through enhanced port connectivity, dry ports/logistics hubs, and PPPs development with ICDT and UNCTAD (completed)
- Study on the Trans-Maghreb Corridor with ICDT and the Centre for Transportation Studies for the Western Mediterranean (CETMO) (completed)
- IsDB-UNCTAD Program of Cooperation on Investment Promotion and International Investment Policies (completed)
- Study on attracting foreign direct investments in renewable energy for Central Asian member countries with ICDT (completed)
- Study on the role of IPAs in the digital economy and digitalization of investment services with ICDT (completed)

B. Activities planned

- Study on an economic corridor linking Tripoli, Niamey and Ndjamen (Libya, Niger and Chad)
- Study on COMESA trade in services negotiations with ICDT and COMESA
- Experts group meeting in preparation for the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14) with ICDT
- African CEO training for the Sahel region with ICDT
- Digitalization of the SMGS Railway Consignment Note and Multimodal Data and Document Exchange with UNECE and ESCAP
- Capacity development and advisory program for the Algerian investment promotion agency
- Investment promotion program for the renewable energy sector in Uzbekistan
- Tajikistan Railway Action Plan with ESCAP
- Mainstreaming trade facilitation support for cross-border road projects
- Capacity development program for seaports in IsDB member countries

V. Conclusions

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

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

Member Country	Accession date	Observer status	No status
Afghanistan	29 Jul. 2016	Algeria	Palestine
Albania	8 Sep. 2000	Azerbaijan	
Bahrain	1 Jan. 1995	Iraq	
Bangladesh	1 Jan. 1995	Iran	
Benin	22 Feb. 1996	Lebanon	
Brunei Darussalam	1 Jan. 1995	Libya	
Burkina Faso	3 Jun. 1995	Somalia	
Cameroon	13 Dec. 1995	Sudan	
Chad	19 Oct. 1996	Syria	
Comoros	26 Feb. 2024	Turkmenistan	
Côte d'Ivoire	1 Jan. 1995	Uzbekistan	
Djibouti	31 May 1995		
Egypt	30 Jun. 1995		
Gabon	1 Jan. 1995		
Gambia	23 Oct. 1996		
Guinea	25 Oct. 1995		
Guinea-Bissau	31 May 1995		
Guyana	1 Jan. 1995		
Indonesia	1 Jan. 1995		
Jordan	1 Jan. 1995		
Kazakhstan	30 Nov. 2015		
Kuwait	1 Jan. 1995		
Kyrgyzstan	20 Dec. 1998		
Malaysia	1 Jan. 1995		
Maldives	31 May 1995		
Mali	31 May 1995		
Mauritania	31 May 1995		
Morocco	1 Jan. 1995		
Mozambique	26 Aug. 1995		
Niger	13 Dec. 1996		
Nigeria	1 Jan. 1995		
Oman	9 Nov. 2000		
Pakistan	1 Jan. 1995		
Qatar	13 Jan. 1996		
Saudi Arabia	11 Dec. 2005		
Senegal	1 Jan. 1995		
Sierra Leone	23 Jul. 1995		
Suriname	1 Jan. 1995		
Tajikistan	2 Mar. 2013		
Togo	31 May 1995		
Tunisia	29 Mar. 1995		
Türkiye	26 Mar. 1995		
Uganda	1 Jan. 1995		
UAE	10 Apr. 1996		
Yemen	26 Jun. 2014		