



Non-tariff Measures in Goods and Services

IN BRIEF

The ITC Non-tariff Measures (NTMs) Programme ensures that the concerns of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) about regulatory and procedural trade obstacles are brought to the attention of policymakers and other stakeholders, enabling them to take concrete actions to address these issues. It increases the transparency of NTMs through data collection and dissemination and provides thought leadership through applied research and analysis.

THE PROBLEM AND ITC SOLUTION

International trade is no longer just about tariffs; it is increasingly about quality, safety, prudential and many other regulatory requirements and standards. Businesses must meet the requirements of regional and global markets if they are to be competitive and internationalize. Exporters, particularly SMEs from developing countries, often struggle to comply (and demonstrate compliance) with NTMs and decision makers often lack information on the trade obstacles experienced by the private sector.

The NTM Programme contributes to ITC's efforts to address NTM-related trade obstacles, allowing developing country SMEs to benefit from reduced trade costs and improved market access.

The programme:

- Identifies the predominant NTM-related trade obstacles, both at the regulatory and procedural level, by sector, company type, size and ownership (including by women), partner country and other variables, allowing for tailored analyses (for example, of impediments to regional integration) (www.intracen.org/publications/ntm);
- Channels the voice of SMEs on regulatory and procedural trade obstacles to the relevant institutional stakeholders in the export and import process, for example, through ITC's company-specific NTM surveys (ntmsurvey.intracen.org) and the Trade Obstacles Alert Mechanism (www.tradeobstacles.org);
- Provides SMEs with improved access to information on NTMs, thereby reducing information asymmetries between SMEs and large companies as well as between developed and developing countries (www.macmap.org);
- Enables the better formulation of national and regional strategies, policies and negotiation positions;
- Allows trade and investment support institutions (TISIs) to better target their advocacy and provide more tailored advice to SMEs; and
- Enables tailored solutions reflecting SME priorities and high-impact areas regarding NTMs, for example, in quality management, trade facilitation and trade information.

IMPACT

The NTM Programme has contributed to making import and export regulations for over 70 countries publicly available to the 500,000 registered users of ITC's Market Analysis Tools. In addition, through its NTM Surveys in over 50 countries, ITC ensures that SMEs' key concerns are known to and addressed by decision makers, both at national and regional levels. So far, more than 22,000 companies have shared their experiences with NTMs, reporting more than 21,000 obstacles to trade with 185 countries. Country findings are systematically discussed with local, regional and international actors.

Survey results have fed into trade strategies, (e.g. in Malawi), and have informed the design of projects and programmes (e.g. in Madagascar and Morocco.) They have also led to a number of initiatives, for example,

on product quality and conformity assessment in Senegal and on improved SME access to information on regulations and trade procedures in the Arab States. They have also strengthened public-private dialogue mechanisms through the introduction of the trade obstacles alert and resolution mechanism in Côte d'Ivoire and Mauritius.

These initiatives are changing the business environment through regulatory changes and streamlined administrative procedures to reduce the time and cost of trade. Highlights include the simplification of weight certificate procedures for cacao in Côte d'Ivoire (reducing the issuance time from up to six months to only two weeks) and the elimination of import permits in Mauritius.