



# Supporting Trade Negotiations and Policy Reform

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## IN BRIEF

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The ITC Supporting Trade Negotiations and Policy Reform Programme assists chambers of commerce and other business organizations to articulate business views effectively and influence policies to ensure that trade negotiations, national policies and regulatory reforms all reflect a well-informed business perspective. ITC also works with policymakers to help them better understand the business perspective of these processes.

## THE PROBLEM AND ITC SOLUTION

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Policymakers and the business community in developing countries often fail to foster a business-friendly environment because they do not understand sufficiently well the business implications of relevant trade policy instruments, consultation mechanisms and negotiation strategies. The ITC programme aims at enhancing the trade potential of enterprises through policy and regulatory reform along the value chain to reduce the costs of production and logistics and gain effective market entry opportunities. Services provided by ITC consist of:

### [Promoting business advocacy](#)

ITC works with business organizations, particularly chambers of commerce, to ensure that the needs and views of businesses are clearly voiced and influence trade policy decisions.

### [Institutionalizing public-private dialogue \(PPD\)](#)

ITC PPD assessment methodology diagnoses the state of public-private dialogue in a country, identifies areas for improvement in dialogue and informs the development of new dialogue initiatives.

### [Sensitizing policymakers about business implications of trade policy](#)

ITC assists policymakers to analyse policies and regulations along the business value chain with a view to adopting a coherent approach to enhancing business competitiveness.

ITC's work in this area includes the following examples.

### ITC assisted Liberia in its World Trade Organization (WTO) accession:

- In building private-sector capacity to understand the business opportunities of WTO membership;
- In building a WTO accession strategy and comprehensive approach to the negotiation process with active participation of the private sector;
- In developing Liberia's national trade policy which fosters coherence between Liberia's WTO accession commitments and those made with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); and
- In providing demand-driven support to government officials in preparing offers of liberalization in the services and goods sectors under the accession process, with active engagement of stakeholders.

Over the last five years, ITC has provided customized assistance to Afghanistan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Samoa, Tajikistan and Yemen all of which have successfully acceded to the WTO or are on the point of doing so.

### ITC promoted business-friendly 'services sector' policy and regulatory reforms in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

ITC has developed a three-step public-private dialogue methodology for establishing business-friendly policies and regulatory environments in services. They are: identify services trade restrictions and study the governance framework; identify policy options; and choose the most appropriate policy option. The methodology was applied to four services sectors in six OECS countries. The recommendations assisted these countries to:

- Identify gaps and inconsistencies in regulations that hinder the achievement of legitimate national public policy objectives and minimize the cost of compliance for businesses;
- Prepare for bilateral trade negotiations with Canada, which adopts a 'negative list approach' to trade in services commitments, meaning all services are included unless specifically excluded; and
- Harmonize regulatory standards and coordinate liberalization strategies within OECS for advancing the regional integration agenda.