



Evaluation of  
The Certified Trade Advisers Programme (CTAP)

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## **Acronyms**

BMS	Business management system
CBI	Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CCPIT	China Council for the Promotion of International Trade
CTAP	Certified Trade Advisers Programme
DEI	Division for Enterprises and Institutions
ITC	International Trade Centre
NTF	Netherlands Trust Fund
NUCAFE	National Union of Coffee Agribusinesses and Farm Enterprises
QDB	Qatar Development Bank
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
SEC	Sector and Enterprise Competitiveness
TISI	Trade and investment support institution
UCDA	Uganda Coffee Development Authority
UEPB	Uganda Export Promotion Board

## Executive Summary

1. The Evaluation for the Certified Trade Advisers Programme (CTAP), requested by the Division of Enterprise and Institutions (DEI), was to assess the performance and results of CTAP operations in the period of 2011-2016, and to generate related findings and recommendations to inform strategic decisions for future operations.
2. CTAP is a capacity-building service offered by ITC, since 2002, to trade and investment support institutions (TISIs) and independent trade advisers in developing countries. The service provides training to technical staff of partner TISIs and independent trade advisors who are involved in services for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The CTAP provides participants a combination of training and practical fieldwork on SME diagnostics, strategy development and export.
3. Funding for the CTAP training varied from country to country. In some cases the partner TISI paid directly for the certification training (e.g. in China and Qatar); in other cases, CTAP was part of large projects (e.g. EDEC, ENACT, NTF II) funded by donors. One full CTAP session usually comprises three phases within a period of 7–9 months. Each phase includes an intensive six-day training workshop complemented by online activities, and each workshop is followed by fieldwork carried out over a period of 6–8 weeks.
4. The general intervention logic (results chain) was that, through a series of workshops and fieldwork assignments, TISI and independent trade advisor (often working as business consultants) would improve their ability to diagnose SME performance, support export, and design customized programmes to facilitate exporting.
5. The main assumption for the results chain was that CTAP training would provide TISIs with a local pool of certified advisers. The TISIs, in turn, would tap this resource to identify SME needs and to enhance the service. At the same time, independent trade consultants would supplement the country's SME support by providing individual services directly to SME clients. Eventually these efforts would contribute to increased competitiveness of the local SMEs.
6. The evaluation covers the recent operations from 2011 to 2016, and the data collection design followed a participatory approach focused on soliciting insights and first-hand experiences from stakeholders. Key informant interview, surveys and country visits were the main data/information collection tools used to support this approach.
7. The evaluation found that the CTAP knowledge is, by and large, appreciated in the field, and deemed innovative and relevant to local SMEs. The programme has achieved some results in terms of building the capacities of individual trade advisors, but limited results in enhancing the capabilities of TISIs. There is little evidence of direct impact on SMEs, although there are some anecdotal stories reported by certified trade advisors.
8. Women's participation is consistent in most countries. Most CTAP implementations did not have an explicit component on gender equality, but consistent efforts were made to maintain gender balance as much as possible in CTAP activities. The number of participating and certified women in China, Tunisia and South Africa exceeded 50 percent of all participants. In Morocco, the participation of women increased significantly since the first cohort graduated in 2011. It is noteworthy that the current President of the National Advisor Association in Morocco is a woman. Field visits in Uganda confirmed that women's participation in decision-making on coffee production had improved and that participation in farmer association activities had reduced gender-based violence in coffee farmer households. In Qatar and Palestine, the number of participating women remained low. Overall, the rate of participation of women exceeded 40 percent.
9. In the period of 2011-2016, the CTAP was run as a fringe activity within the Sector and Enterprise Competitiveness Section, without an explicit strategy, annual operating plan, annual budget or internal performance review. Lacking a strategic direction, the CTAP overall design remained mostly unchanged over years despite important changes in ITC's strategy and service portfolio. Individual managing officers often introduced modifications to adapt to the needs of the project and partner TISIs for each CTAP, but these changes were not shared among officers nor were they incorporated to the overall CTAP methodology.

**Key finding 1. CTAP was generally appreciated in the field as a capacity-building and training service. However, there was a lack of clarity regarding the main objective and strategy of the CTAP service. Over the years, lack of leadership allowed fragmentation into multiple sub-methodologies, which prevented further developing a holistic and adaptive approach to enterprise competitiveness. As a result, the positioning within ITC’s service portfolio is unclear as well.**

10. The CTAP Business Management System (BMS) is considered effective by trade advisors in the field. The CTAP participants found it useful in terms of assisting SME advisors to assess business challenges and helping SME managers to identify the cause of inefficiencies and improve business results. Some considered the approach a decision-making tool for SME entrepreneurs in the management of business resources.
11. However, the objectives and focus of the CTAP design are not always clear and consistent. CTAP training materials state that it aims at developing the diagnostic, strategic and export management capability of advisers and TISIs; while CTAP marketing materials refer to a capacity-building programme designed to enhance the international competitiveness of small and medium enterprises. This indicates an ambiguity in articulating CTAP focus and objectives, which has created confusion and unmet expectations among stakeholders. SMEs expect further concrete support for their enterprise, while ITC staff and management identify CTAP as a service for SME support, TISI support and/or independent trade adviser training.
12. In the period reviewed, there was no strategy or annual plan for the CTAP service. The positioning of CTAP within the corporate results framework of ITC, or its linkages with other ITC services and projects, were not explicit. Management of the CTAP service changed often. Reporting lines for the implementation of CTAP shifted as well, with CTAP officers reporting at times to the technical section and at others to the country officers. Although CTAP contributed about \$100,000 to the section’s revolving fund (about 45% of the fund’s total revenue), there was no evidence of significant investment in reviewing, upgrading or modernizing any of the programme’s materials and tools. As a result, some CTAP resources seemed rather disjointed and outdated.
13. In the absence of a strategy during the period under evaluation, two distinct CTAP approaches emerged. One approach, focused on training independent advisors, was implemented in French and financed as a component of ITC’s trade support projects in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. The other, implemented in English, focused on TISIs and was funded mainly by the client TISIs in China, Qatar, and South Africa<sup>1</sup>. These variations in approach resulted over the years in different selection criteria for participants, content, materials, delivery, as well as evaluation and reporting methods. Over time, the advent of multiple divergent ways of interpreting CTAP prevented evolving and adapting into a holistic approach to enterprise competitiveness.

**Key finding 2. CTAP training was effective in providing trade advisers with a generic framework to diagnose SMEs. It was not so effective in adapting the methodology to specific sectors or SMEs. In terms of building the capabilities of TISIs, the evidence base was weak.**

14. CTAP participants considered that the training provided a comprehensive and useful generic business diagnostic framework and facilitated the understanding of SME performance. The inclusion of fieldwork in training helped them apply the knowledge in an efficient manner to local SMEs. However, participants also pointed out they would have benefited from support in adapting the generic framework to specific sectors and SMEs. This was particularly the case for participants working as public TISI staff, as they often had limited experience in SME support.
15. CTAP cohorts in each country often included TISI staff and independent trade advisors, who had very different skills, experiences and expectations. The post-training application in advising local SMEs varied greatly. Since most CTAP cohorts included TISI staff not working directly with SMEs, the number of participants who never applied the methodology to SMEs was high — particularly when CTAP implementation was financed by partner TISIs who then exerted greater influence in the selection process.
16. At the TISI level, staff members of government TISI tended to resume their regular assignments after the training, and did not develop specific SME support initiatives. Although the available data is limited, it suggests that the CTAP may be more effective in supporting private TISIs —

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<sup>1</sup> In Uganda and Palestine the programme was funded by ITC managed projects.

as was the case with NUCAFE in Uganda, where there were more business demands and flexibility to provide a variety of support services to SMEs.

17. At the independent advisor level, CTAP methodology was more beneficial to independent advisors who were active in business support and had regular interaction with SMEs. All independent advisors interviewed reported using the methodology post-training, such as application and integration of BMS-based SME support services, creation of joint SME services with other CTAP advisors, and using the methodology in their daily work to improve organizational strategy and management.
18. Formal and informal networks of independent CTAP advisors exist in various countries. These networks take the form of national associations of trade advisers in Morocco and Algeria; in other countries, participants report keeping in regular contact with other local CTAP advisers. The initiatives of national CTAP networks include lobbying, co-delivering services, responding to request for proposals, and exchanging knowledge and experiences. There is also interest in connecting with other CTAP networks to capitalize on local experiences.

**Key finding 3. In its current form, the CTAP's impact on SME competitiveness is low, and there is no follow-up mechanism to assess the effects on SMEs.**

19. A close examination of the CTAP design and implementation approach/methodology demonstrated that SMEs seem to constitute a tool for CTAP to test the knowledge and skills of the advisors, rather than being the intended beneficiary of capacity-building support. In fact, the main support received by SMEs during CTAP implementation is a diagnostic report.
20. Furthermore, the definition of SME support varied from one CTAP training to another. While in most CTAP implementations, it referred to enterprises diagnosed, in a few countries (Uganda, Palestine and South Africa) it referred to SMEs receiving advisory services after CTAP training, and in one instance (Palestine) it required SMEs to co-finance the assistance received.
21. CTAP relied on client TISIs or the participants to identify companies to diagnose, for which there were no clear guidelines. When suitable companies were not identified by the partner, participants were invited to find a company themselves and team up to conduct the diagnostic required for certification; in a number of cases participants ended up diagnosing public companies, subsidiaries of multinationals, banks or large corporations to achieve certification, which further limited the number of SMEs touched by CTAP.
22. Despite shortcomings assisting SMEs, anecdotal self-reported evidence indicates that a number of advisers expanded consulting services to SMEs using CTAP/BMS (2 cases in Morocco, 1 in Tunisia and 1 in Palestine); and some SMEs seem to have benefited from increased services offered by the certified advisers. Many independent advisers interviewed by the evaluation could attribute at least one SME success story to CTAP/BMS, related to cost savings, production, marketing, increased exports and new markets.

**Key finding 4. The participation of national and regional trainers was common in implementation, often enhancing customization and reducing costs. The customization could be improved by better matching training contents with the needs of target participants.**

23. CTAP training is intensive, with participants receiving a high number of training hours, and individualized coaching and feedback. To improve customization and reduce costs, local trainers (e.g. in Morocco and Uganda) were called upon to support training delivery, adaptation of the methodology (e.g. coffee sector), and coaching participants during fieldwork. When local trainers were not available, regional consultants were called upon.
24. In terms of sustainability, the percentage of participants who continued to provide support to SMEs was less than 50%. However, over 70% of independent advisers interviewed reported designing and offering new services based on CTAP/BMS, indicating that the training contents matched better the needs of trade advisers than those of TISI staff. This mismatch could be addressed by identifying the business needs of participants and adapt the training accordingly.

## **Recommendations**

All recommendations are addressed to Chief Sector and Enterprise Competitiveness Section, within the overall guidance of the Director of the Division of Enterprises and Institutions and the active support of the Division of Markets.

- i. **To revise the strategic role of capacity-building services for SMEs within ITC's service portfolio, focusing on a coherent approach to SME competitive performance which considers the individual SME as the entity whose needs and context must be addressed.**

**This is to be undertaken in coherence and consultation with the systems developed by the Trade Development Strategies and Chief Economist Section.**

25. CTAP on its own and in the established format had limited capability to enhance the TISI offer of high quality sustainable services to SMEs or to contribute to improved SME competitiveness. The CTAP was a 7–9 month training programme providing individuals with the capacity to diagnose and support SMEs; it was not designed to address institutional challenges surrounding the support offer nor the resources to support the SMEs.
26. CTAP, did however, touch on core technical areas for ITC as its beneficiaries extend from individual advisers, to TISIs and to SMEs across sectors. To ensure the CTAP-successor methodology contributes to ITC's strategic objectives, a clear strategy is needed to determine:
- What are the objectives of a CTAP-successor methodology for SME competitiveness within ITC's current strategic framework?
  - Who are the different clients and beneficiaries of this methodology, and what are the diverse needs of each group of beneficiaries (e.g. SME needs vs. advisers needs)?
  - What are the adaptations/changes/upgrades necessary for the CTAP-successor to address the needs of the different target beneficiary groups and contribute to ITC's strategic objectives?
  - How can the CTAP components be best integrated through the CTAP-successor with other ITC initiatives to contribute to the strengthening of the SME support offer and the competitiveness of SMEs?

- ii. **To revamp the methodology, contents and structure for building competitiveness of SMEs accordingly. The objective is to accommodate multiple project entry points for these services, into a single corporate point of view on how and why SMEs become more competitive.**

**This is to be undertaken in coherence and consultation with the systems developed by the Trade Development Strategies and Chief Economist Section.**

27. While the generic nature of the current CTAP/BMS methodology is one of the most appreciated features of the approach, it lacks protocols and mechanisms to facilitate a standard customization of the content to the changing reality of institutions and SMEs. A periodic review is needed to ensure changes in the business landscape, global economic trends and other relevant emerging topics of interest to TISIs, advisers and SMEs are addressed.
28. To date, CTAP has not been effective in adapting the methodology or providing tools to help TISI staff and advisers adapt the generic approach to specific SME contexts and needs, or to address the practical side of export. The people providing SME support services would benefit from such practical tools, and from platforms to share knowledge and collaborate.

- iii. **To improve TISIs portfolio of SME competitive performance capacity-building services, building on robust methods for assessing TISI performance and longer-term relationship with TISIs.**

**This is to be undertaken in coherence and consultation with the network and quality assurance systems developed by the Trade and Investment Support Institutions Section.**

29. To improve the impact of the programme, CTAP needs to refine its selection process of partners, trainees and SMEs based on their needs, skills, and interest and ability to implement improvements in the functioning of SMEs. This process needs to be complemented with clear communication and follow-up.
30. Big data from aggregated SME diagnostics could be very valuable for TISIs, ITC and SME advisers. It could be used to identify common needs of groups of SMEs with similar characteristics; design customized support service portfolios; and facilitate follow-up and improve impact measurement.

31. CTAP has produced country networks of qualified SME advisers with a variety of sector/technical knowledge and experience, and an interest in collaboration at the national and international levels. ITC could capitalize on this level of interest and motivation to expand and improve the SME work by promoting a global adviser platform.
- iv. **To modernize the distribution and information channels used by SME competitive performance capacity-building services, with the objective of increasing the number of SMEs benefiting from these services.**
- This is to be undertaken in coherence and consultation with the systems developed by the SME Trade Academy.**
- v. **To refine the measurement criteria for assessing SME competitiveness in SME competitive performance capacity-building services. The objective is to pave the way for a coherent and harmonized corporate approach in terms of baseline measurements, monitoring processes and knowledge management systems related to SME competitive performance.**
- This is to be undertaken in coherence and consultation with the systems developed by the Trade Development Strategies and Chief Economist Section.**

32. CTAP has generated a wealth of information and learning, but no mechanisms exist to institutionalize this information, or to actively share and integrate any knowledge produced. As a result, ITC has not been able to capitalize on the CTAP experience to enhance its tools and methodologies, develop its institutional knowledge, and improve the impact of its support to TISIs, advisers and SMEs.
33. The long-term impacts of capacity-building can only be assessed if the follow-up and communication systems are part of the design from the outset. Any new CTAP design should include (1) a clear protocol for the use of the methodology before, during and, most importantly, after training; (2) a thorough review and integration of the approach to unify, update and upgrade the methodology; and (3) significant investment in developing up-to-date supporting tools, platforms and networking activities in the short, medium and long terms.
34. To increase the reach of the programme, adding online resources for CTAP are recommended, which could be hosted on the ITC SME academy platform. An online training platform could provide a space for CTAP graduates to share new methods and approaches, and perform the role of a knowledge management system.



## Main report

### I. Background to the evaluation

35. The CTAP evaluation was commissioned by the ITC Management to assess the performance and results of CTAP operations and to generate related findings and recommendations, which would be fed into strategic decisions for the future operations.<sup>2</sup>
36. CTAP is a capacity-building service for trade and investment support institutions (TISIs) and trade advisers for SMEs. The service provides training in client countries to selected technical staff of TISIs and to business consultants involved in the design and delivery of support services for SMEs. The funding for the CTAP training varied from country to country; in some cases the partner TISI paid directly for the certification training, such as China and Qatar; while in others CTAP is part of large projects funded by project donors, e.g. projects implemented Morocco and Palestine.
37. The evaluation covers the CTAP operations for the period 2011 to 2016, and takes into account the following considerations:
  - A strategic need for an evaluation. The service has been ongoing for 15 years, and not been subject to a formal evaluation. As ITC's corporate results framework has been evolving to accommodate the emerging demands for trade development, it is necessary to review the strategic fit and value added of the programme in today's operational context.
  - For promoting corporate learning on the topic and in the context of an evolving capacity-building approach to SME competitiveness, the evaluation could provide insights beyond the CTAP service itself, through reviewing new training and coaching methods applied in ITC programmes and projects.
  - To ensure relevance to today's operational context, the evaluation prioritizes recent operations. The period 2011–2016 covers an adequate number and variety of CTAP services, implemented in eight countries in three regions: Asia, MENA3 and sub-Saharan Africa.
38. In this context, the **objectives** of this evaluation are:
  - To assess the performance and results of the CTAP service, through examining the strategic fit, methodology, implementation and results in project countries, and identifying the contribution to achieving ITC's corporate strategies and objectives.<sup>4</sup>
  - For learning purpose, to review the updated training and coaching methods applied in ITC projects, and provide lessons learned on capacity-building for TISIs and SMEs.
  - To generate findings and recommendations for informing strategic decision-making on future operations of the service.
39. The expected users of the evaluation include ITC and Division for Enterprises and Institutions (DEI) management, the CTAP team, the implementation partners in project countries, and the existing and potential funding partners of the service and of ITC.

### Methodology

40. Participation. In compliance with the ITC Evaluation Policy (2015) and Evaluation Guidelines (2017, draft), the main stakeholders were consulted and involved throughout the evaluation process; and regular interactions were established with the programme management team, ITC management and other major stakeholders.
41. The evaluation followed a qualitative approach. Project document review and key informant interviews were the main data/information collection tool used, and CTAP participants were

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<sup>2</sup> CTAP is referred as a programme; however, in current ITC terminology, the CTAP operation is not termed as a programme or a project.

<sup>3</sup> Middle East and North Africa

<sup>4</sup> It would also involve examining to what extent the CTAP addresses ongoing changes in the internationalization landscape (e.g. emerging collaborative production configurations; emerging focus on social, environmental and financial sustainability; innovation); shifting ITC's strategic priorities (e.g. priority countries and beneficiaries); and the needs and preferences of exporting enterprises (e.g. what do they need and how do they reach for help).

requested to fill out two short questionnaires (see Evaluation Matrix in Annex I). The list of interviewed key informants in each country, attached in Annexes II to III, mainly included:

- participants who attended CTAP training;
  - national consultants and managers who facilitated the CTAP training programme;
  - CTAP training beneficiaries from the earlier cohorts; and
  - SMEs who had benefited from the support extended by trained CTAP advisers
42. Given the objectives of the evaluation and the dual methodology of the CTAP (i.e. respective focus on advisers and TISIs) and reporting arrangements, the country studies included one from each of the two CTAP methodologies for a more in-depth examination.
  43. Morocco case study (2011–2015): CTAP in Morocco was offered three times at the request of the partner institution to create a large pool of certified advisers. The business advisers were called upon by the Ministry in three private sector development initiatives to advise SMEs. One of these initiatives is a large-scale internationalization programme for first-time exporters that aims to use CTAP advisers to assist over 1,000 SMEs.
  44. Uganda case study (2011): Further analysis of the CTAP in Uganda has allowed examination of an application of CTAP to a particular sector (coffee), its relevance to non-traditional productive units (e.g. sector associations rather than single producers), and its potential to address the needs of small-scale enterprises.
  45. For each country, a detailed description of the CTAP activities was developed to identify potential key informants of different roles: systemic, TISI, CTAP consultants, CTAP participants and SMEs. Using multiple data collection methods was to add rigour and depth, provide a more holistic view, allow for the verification of information, and confirm the validity of the evaluation process.
  46. To collect data in project sites, three main sources were used:
    - semi-structured interviews with stakeholders (government officials, TISIs staff, consultants, CTAP advisers, SME managers);
    - archival documents including all relevant project documents and stakeholder internal documentation; and
    - additional data (e.g. observation, surveys, field visits).
  47. With very little quantitative data regarding the CTAP results, the evaluation required triangulation to increase the precision of the analysis by taking into account different angles. Since CTAP beneficiaries were very heterogeneous, the comparison of responses and accounts was fundamental for validating data and ensuring conclusions were well grounded.

## II. Description of the CTAP operations

48. In 2002, ITC's Enterprise Management Development Section (EMDS), now Sector and Enterprise Competitiveness (SEC), developed a suite of tools and materials to equip trade and investment support institutions with the capability to diagnose and assess the business and management needs of small and medium-sized enterprises, and to develop and deliver customized SME support programmes in the areas of strategy design, business and export management
49. The initiative responded to an identified gap in human capital and aimed at providing TISIs access to a pool of individuals with appropriate knowledge and skills to provide high quality support services to SMEs. The assumption of the programme was that better diagnostics and more targeted support programmes would increase the quality and availability of support services for local SMEs. In 2002, these materials and tools were structured around a formal certification training programme offered through partner TISIs, both to staff members of TISIs as well as to qualified local business consultants.
50. CTAP targets TISIs, including chambers of commerce, sector-specific institutions and associations, universities and, more generally, any institution offering export support services to SMEs on international business competitiveness and management issues.
51. Beneficiaries of CTAP are business consultants and technical staff of partner institutions involved in designing and delivering these services, and individual local providers of SME support services. The final beneficiaries are the SME managers who receive more comprehensive and targeted support services in strategy, management and exports.
52. **Approach and services.** The programme employs a learning-by-doing approach. To complete the certification, the participants must demonstrate not only mastery of the content through a written exam, but also the skills in the field by diagnosing a local SME and designing an improvement programme based on the assessment.
53. One CTAP session usually comprises three phases within a period of 7–9 months. Each phase includes an intensive 6-day training workshop complemented by online activities, followed by fieldwork activities carried out over a period of 6–8 weeks. Participants receive the support of an experienced SME service provider during the fieldwork, to ensure participating SMEs receive accurate diagnostics and adequate assistance and to allow the programme manager to gather sufficient data points to evaluate the participants' skills and knowledge.
54. In addition to the modular train-the-trainer programme, CTAP provides access to ITC's business and export management content, tools and support materials. Certified advisers and partner TISIs can use these tools to diagnose individual or common weaknesses of local SMEs in different sectors and design customized support. The expectation is that once the CTAP is completed, the TISIs will capitalize on the certified trade advisers and available content, to offer, adapt, update and upgrade their SME support service portfolio.
55. CTAP participants receive training on enterprise diagnostics, strategic, business and export management, as well as on the soft skills necessary to design and deliver training and consulting services to SMEs.
56. **Theory of change.** Although the objectives varied from country to country, as they were set for each training in collaboration with the partner institution, the general objectives of CTAP are:
  - To provide partner institutions with a pool of highly skilled business advisers in general management, export marketing strategy design and export business diagnostics
  - To strengthen the capacity of the partner institution to develop and deliver programmes to diagnose SMEs' competitiveness and assist SMEs in developing competitive export strategies
57. The main indicators used to assess CTAP success include:
  - The number of trainees attending and completing the certification programme;
  - knowledge and skills gained by the participants (measured through attendance, quality of fieldwork assignments and a written exam);

- the number of SMEs receiving assistance during the training process; and
  - the level of satisfaction of the participants with the certification programme (post-workshop evaluations).
58. The CTAP programme aims to increase the capacity of trade and investment support institutions in providing services to SMEs. To strengthen the capacity of TISI staff and affiliated trainers and consultants in diagnosing enterprise weaknesses and designing support for SME managers, CTAP offers the following tools and services:
- three intensive workshops to ensure a consistent level of knowledge and skills in the fields of strategy, business and export management, SME diagnostics, training and counselling;
  - proprietary training materials;
  - SME diagnostics and strategy design tools;
  - two dry runs to test new knowledge, tools and skills in the field with local SMEs in a safe environment; and coaching, feedback and support from experienced certified SME consultants, working with and under the supervision of ITC staff.
59. These activities are expected to lead to the following project outputs:
- locally selected practitioners trained and certified to carry out enterprise diagnostics, assist with export strategy design, and develop and provide firm-level advisory services and technical assistance to SMEs;
  - SME diagnostics identifying specific support needs of local enterprises; and
  - SMEs receiving targeted assistance based on weaknesses identified.
60. The outputs described above aim at providing TISIs with the resources, knowledge and tools to design and update a SME support service portfolio, which is adapted to the changing needs of local enterprises. Ultimately, these outputs should enhance the performance of the TISIs vis-à-vis local SMEs through:
- availability of certified practitioners with a consistent level of knowledge and skills, and an enhanced ability to understand and assist local SMEs;
  - better access for TISIs to an increased pool of suitably skilled practitioners; and
  - more targeted support services providing more effective assistance to SMEs.
61. Improved capacity of TISIs and certified trade advisers in developing countries is the main outcome to be achieved. In the long run, better quality and more targeted SME support services should contribute to enhancing the level of competitiveness of local SMEs receiving assistance.
62. **Implementation.** Since 2011, the CTAP programme has been delivered under individual projects in eight countries: Algeria, China, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, Qatar, South Africa and Uganda. In two countries, the beneficiary paid directly for the programme (e.g. China, Qatar). CTAP programmes delivered in all other countries were part of larger projects (e.g. Palestine programme, NTFII) financed by donors. The table below provides basic information about these programmes.
63. During the period being evaluated, CTAP was managed by SEC/DEI. Each CTAP had a dedicated project manager responsible for its delivery and reporting, although during the 2011–2016 period, leadership, ownership and reporting lines of the CTAP programme were unclear and changed often. Although there were periods when a staff member was officially responsible for the CTAP, the programme seems to have survived mostly due to the personal commitment of individual members of staff delivering training and the ongoing demand from partner institutions, rather than to active leadership from the SEC section.
64. In reality, there were actually two parallel and independent CTAPs: one reporting to SEC (those implemented in China, Uganda Palestine, South Africa and Qatar); and the other — CTAPs held in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia —reporting to the Office of Arab States, Division of Country Programmes, as a component of larger projects. In this period, there was no coordination or information exchange between the two CTAP programmes.
65. Given the high reliance on individual officers for the implementation of CTAP and the absence of coordination, there is no common repository for content, knowledge and learning from the implementation of CTAP during these years.

**Table 1: CTAP training delivered in 2011–2016<sup>5</sup>**

Country (year)	Partner Institution	Source of funding	Budget (USD)	# of participants (# women) <sup>6</sup>	# of certified advisers (# women)	Companies assisted <sup>7</sup>	Reporting documents
China (2010) <sup>8</sup>	China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT)	CCPIT	189,394	42 (27)	21	23	Note for files (NFFs) and project completion report
China Extension (2013)	China Council for the Promotion of International Trade	CCPIT	209,805	19 (13)	16	9	NFFs and project completion report
Uganda (2011)	Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) Uganda Export Promotion Board (UEPB) National Union of Coffee Agribusinesses and Farm Enterprises (NUCAFE)	NTFII	312,552	30	18	30	NFFs and project completion report
Palestine (2013)	Paltrade	CIDA <sup>9</sup>	195,940	31 (9)	19	35+70 <sup>10</sup>	NFFs
South Africa (2014)	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	Government of South Africa	220,924 (182,115) <sup>11</sup>	16 (11)	8	13	NFFs and project completion report

<sup>5</sup> Information to be revised and completed as documentation becomes available from programme managers.

<sup>6</sup> Over the period of nine months participants received intensive group training for between 15 to 18 days, and coaching for a period of between 12 to 24 days.

<sup>7</sup> Some CTAP programmes end after completing a number of SME diagnostics; others go further.

<sup>8</sup> Although carried out in 2010, we have included the data for the initial China programme to provide context for the 2013 extension that was designed to replicate the CTAP programme in the regional councils

<sup>9</sup> Canadian International Development Agency

<sup>10</sup> In 2013, as part of the CTAP programme, 35 manufacturing SMEs received assistance. In 2014, 13 of the certified trainers received additional training to adapt the CTAP methodology to the information and communication technologies sector in order to produce 70 diagnostics of companies in this sector and develop the value chain of this sector in Palestine. The data about the number of companies is inconsistent in different documents.

<sup>11</sup> The allocated budget for the CTAP was \$220,924, while the actual expenditure was \$182,115.

Country (year)	Partner Institution	Source of funding	Budget (USD)	# of participants (# women) <sup>6</sup>	# of certified advisers (# women)	Companies assisted <sup>7</sup>	Reporting documents
Qatar (2016) <sup>12</sup>	Qatar Development Bank (QDB)	QDB	293,150	19 (2)	7	9	NFFs
Morocco (2010–11) <sup>13</sup>	Maroc Export/Ministry of Trade	CIDA (ENACT)	205,823	30 (6)	24 (3)	20	NFFs
Algeria (2010–2011)	Algex	CIDA (ENACT)	227,663	28 (8)	23 (6)	15	NFFs
Tunisia (2010–2011)	CEPEX/Ministry of Trade	CIDA (ENACT)	186,995	34 (16)	28 (13)	21	NFFs
Morocco (2014)	Maroc Export/Ministry of Trade	CIDA (EDEC)	191,867	32 (13)	28 (13) <sup>14</sup>	16	Budget and statistics document
Morocco (2015)	Maroc Export/Ministry of Trade	CIDA (EDEC)	191,867	34 (14)	28 (12)	13	Budget and statistics document

<sup>12</sup> All the programme activities were completed; however, at the request of the partner institution, the guidelines for participant selection, timeframes, participant examinations and fieldwork did not follow CTAP processes, requirements and procedures.

<sup>13</sup> Although started in 2010, we have included the data for the initial Morocco programme to provide context for the 2012 and 2015 extensions designed to replicate the CTAP programme in order to achieve a sufficient number of certified advisers to launch the primo exportateur programme of the Moroccan Ministry of Trade.

<sup>14</sup> Unclear in the documentation whether this number corresponds to certified or general participants.

66. The CTAP technical content and delivery methodology, over the years, have contributed to a number of ITC projects and programmes, such as:
- ACCESS! adapted the CTAP methodology to the needs of African business women.
  - LOAN.COM (Access to Finance), a tool to assess the managerial competence of SME managers to help financial institutions make decisions on SME lending, was originally inspired by CTAP's SME diagnostic methodology.
  - The first version of the TISI benchmarking tool applied the CTAP diagnostic methodology to trade support institutions (although it was subsequently modified quite extensively).
  - Trainers Cum Counsellors on Quality Management adapted CTAP's delivery and certification model to their programme.
67. **Monitoring and evaluation.** There was no predetermined arrangement for periodic review or evaluation of the CTAP implementation, neither available a common database on project implementation progress and results. The availability of implementation reports depends on the individual officer in charge of each particular CTAP.
68. In recent years, three ITC evaluations made references to certain CTAP activities: the mid-term ENACT evaluation (2012), which included some references to CTAP in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria in 2010–2011; the Outcome and Impact Evaluation of NTFII (2016), which presented some observation on the CTAP delivered in Uganda in 2011; and the mid-term self-evaluation of the EDEC (2017) which covered CTAP activities in Morocco delivered in 2014 and 2015. A funder-led end project evaluation, commissioned and financed by the donor agency CIDA, examined certain CTAP operations in Palestine. However, none of the aforementioned evaluations had dedicated assessment on the results and impact of CTAP activities.

### III. Evaluation analysis and findings

#### Relevance

70. **CTAP Design.** CTAP was a thorough business training and coaching method for trade advisors in diagnosing SMEs. However, without a clear strategy and objectives, the CTAP design tried to be all and to all beneficiaries. Participants ranged from civil servants, members of producer associations, seasoned business consultants, newcomers to SME support, university professors, certified accountants, SME managers, bank officers. These participants had different levels of business exposure and SME experience, as well as very different needs, gaps and strengths; yet, similar training was delivered to all.
71. The CTAP methodology and implementation was fragmented and inconsistent. There was no unified ITC CTAP methodology and no sharing of lessons learned. At the end of the period under evaluation, there were two clear variants to the methodology: one focused on independent advisers and has been integrated in larger ITC projects (e.g. ENACT, EDEC); the other focused on TISIs and has in most cases been financed by the TISIs themselves. Although seemingly small, these variations resulted over the years in different selection criteria for participants, content, tools, materials, delivery and evaluation methods.
72. A number of communalities could still be found in CTAP implementations, such as a methodological base called the business management system (BMS), a hands-on learning approach with three content pillars (SME diagnostic capabilities, SME strategy development, and SME exports and support delivery skills), and a combination of three one-week-long workshops with fieldwork assignments within local SMEs (accompanied by a coach).
73. While the CTAP's methodology may have provided a thorough training framework, this generic framework has been insufficient to support the actual work of the range of advisers, and to guarantee the institutionalization of CTAP knowledge within the TISIs themselves, especially in today's context where there are every emerging business and technology changes in developing countries.
74. The CTAP is largely appreciated in the field for its flexibility, comprehensiveness and broad applicability. It has provided a majority of independent advisers and some TISIs with a useful framework to diagnose SMEs in a variety of sectors. It has been used by a number of independent advisers to expand and adapt support services.
75. **Relevance to ITC's strategic objectives.** During the period under review, CTAP was run as a non-regular activity of the SEC section, and its continuation and survival relied on sporadic internal or external requests for CTAP implementation. No explicit strategy or annual plan for CTAP operations was found. The positioning of CTAP within the overall service offer of ITC or its linkages with other programmes was not stated or easily communicated.
76. In programme theory, CTAP design was related to two of ITC's strategic objectives: improved performance of TISIs to offer high quality and sustainable services to SMEs and improved international competitiveness of SMEs. In practice, however, the CTAP service had ambiguous objectives and customization of beneficiaries, no long-term strategy and management structure, and limited linkages with ITC's overall strategy and major ongoing services. The above internal factors limited the relevance of CTAP to ITC's strategic objectives.
77. Management personnel in the CTAP service changed often. The reporting lines for implementation shifted as well, with CTAP officers reporting at times to the technical section and other times to the country officers (when the CTAP was a part of a country project). Knowledge of CTAP within ITC was low, which resulted a very limited number of internal requests from ITC officers. External requests for CTAP emerged from repeat customers and word of mouth referrals. No evidence was found of an active communication strategy or marketing activity for CTAP, either in house or external.
78. In the absence of a clear strategy and proactive management, the ownership remained with the officer in charge of each CTAP implementation and the manager of the funds. This resulted in a diversity of CTAP methodologies. In reality, there was no unified ITC CTAP service to evaluate but a collection of implementations with some commonalities.



79. The CTAP was originally designed in 2002. Although important changes had occurred in the intervening decade, in the period under review there were no concerted attempts to review, update and upgrade the relevance of the CTAP methodology — either in the context of ITC's shifting strategic objectives or of a changing global environment towards exports, SMEs, SME support services and emerging technological advances.
80. CTAP contributed 45% of the section's revolving fund in the period under evaluation, and there was not a dedicated CTAP review on development or integration with other ITC tools, although some attempts to customize, upgrade and update the CTAP approach were conducted by individual programme officers in the context and with the funding of larger projects. These upgrades were not shared or institutionalized to benefit the CTAP methodology as a whole, further contributing to the emergence of a variety of CTAP methodologies in practice.
81. **Relevance to CTAP clients.** In theory, the CTAP service had three major groups of beneficiaries; two direct (TISIs and independent SME advisers); and one indirect (SME managers receiving improved support services). In reality, CTAP implementation responded mostly to the needs of independent SME advisers; for example, training participant SMEs mainly constituted a tool for testing the skills of advisers. Indeed, CTAP evaluated the SME diagnostics against the methodology (how capable the adviser was of applying the framework, logic of the arguments and linkages), rather than for accuracy and relevance to the needs of the company (how well it reflected the reality, challenges and possibilities of the SME). As a result, relevance to the SME during training was rather limited.
82. The relevance to beneficiaries was also affected by the ambiguous aim of the service and the lack of a clear definition of CTAP's main beneficiaries and strategy. Available training materials state that CTAP aims at developing the diagnostic, strategic and export management capabilities of advisers and TISIs. However, other marketing materials refer to the CTAP as a capacity-building programme designed to enhance the international competitiveness of SMEs.
83. This ambiguity created confusion and unmet expectations among beneficiaries, particularly: managers who expected continued SME support following CTAP training; and a number of TISIs did not have the internal capability or political will to capitalize on CTAP tools to design SME support services, or tap into the pool of independent advisers trained through CTAP. Among independent advisers, the expectation created of increasing demand for services from TISIs and an interface with local SMEs failed to materialize.
84. The CTAP design did not have a mechanism to examine the specific needs of different TISIs, nor the perceptions of SME managers about the value of the diagnostics and recommendations produced by advisers. As a result, the relevance of the CTAP service to beneficiaries was assessed based on the levels of participant satisfaction with the training, and their ability to acquire knowledge and use CTAP tools.
85. **Relevance to local SME needs.** According to respondents, the CTAP methodology provided good business diagnostic tools to bring out the key aspects of SME operational strategy, and provided analytical approaches relevant to local SME needs. Some respondents also pointed out a number of unmet SME needs, for example:
- The BMS was designed for manufacturing enterprises of a certain size and formal structure, leaving the certified advisers to adapt the methodology to developing country SMEs with informal structures.
  - In some countries (Uganda/coffee; Palestine/information technology), the training was customized to particular sectors, making it easier to apply the methodology. However, there was a strong unmet need to customize to other sectors like agriculture, services or merchandise trade.
  - CTAP methodology assumes certified trainers are well versed on sector and business knowledge. When a trainer was not well acquainted with a particular sector, advisers could not provide adequate support to SMEs.
  - CTAP methodology does not cover adequately aspects of financial management/mobilization and leadership/governance of SMEs. These are core areas that often undermine effective strategies for SMEs.
86. **Relevance to TISI needs.** Most TISI staff members surveyed pointed out that CTAP provided unique consolidated business diagnostic tools and a comprehensive approach to support SMEs to develop competitive strategies. In 2011, when CTAP training was conducted in Uganda,

- NUCAFE needed to develop strategies to increase farmers' participation in upper levels of the value chain to increase their income. NUCAFE staff credited CTAP with providing the skills to assist farmer associations to produce and market high quality coffee, including securing direct export markets.
87. CTAP training may be more relevant to private TISIs and those with a clear mandate to service SMEs. However, CTAP partner TISIs ranged from government ministries, to national trade promotion organizations, to small producer associations. These different types of TISIs had different needs and challenges. TISIs did not always have SME support services as part of their mandate, and often had conflicting political demands, and limited financing and other resources.
  88. In most cases, government TISI participants resumed their regular assignments after CTAP training and did not develop specific services to SMEs. Although some individuals reported continued use of the acquired skills when advising SMEs on a case-by-case basis, most did not; some of the TISI staff members certified were never directly involved in providing diagnostic services to SMEs.
  89. **Relevance to SME advisers.** CTAP training was more relevant to independent professionals, especially to those experienced in business consulting, previously serving SMEs or involved in business diagnostics, and with strong backgrounds in economics and business. A majority of CTAP advisers reported that the BMS offered a structure to organize the technical knowledge acquired over the years, facilitating their ability to assess and support SMEs in a comprehensive manner. The BMS seemed to provide advisers a simple and thorough system to examine the different aspects of SMEs, allowing the development of comprehensive diagnostics and facilitating the identification of the causes of SME problems.
  90. The BMS complemented theoretical knowledge with practical fieldwork in a way that enabled participants' immediate application and consolidation of knowledge and acquired skills. Participants appreciated the CTAP in terms of content, length, skills covered, learning materials, teaching methodologies and evaluation system.
  91. Some SME advisers pointed out that CTAP has a strong brand value, and they have displayed their CTAP certificate, for example, in their LinkedIn pages or on business cards. Most of them referred to themselves and colleagues as "CTAPers" (in Anglophone countries) and "CTAPiens" (in Francophone countries).
  92. Despite appreciation for the methodology, respondents from different countries pointed out the following ways to improve its relevance to the work of advisers:
    - Strong adaptation to different sectors and company sizes
    - Updated contents to address emerging changes and developments in a timely manner (e.g. digitalization), and
    - Networking activities to promote knowledge exchange and collaboration among CTAPers nationally and internationally
  93. **Other training methods.** It is difficult to compare CTAP to other training and coaching methodologies, as no others attempt to target TISIs, independent advisers and SME managers simultaneously with the same methodological approach. A variety of training and facilitation programmes exist to support TISIs. Within ITC, the TSI section offers support through benchmarking and PIRM, as well as training interventions in specific topics such as strategy development or results-based management. Other training on ITC's interactive tools is offered to selected TISI staff.
  94. Regarding SME assistance, a number of specific training topics were offered ranging from marketing and branding to quality and packaging. There is a growing emphasis on coaching and mentoring to support SME work. While the short-term results of the coaching are promising, experienced consultants reported this approach to have mixed results in the medium and long term (for example, there in particular when selection of the SMEs is not sufficiently rigorous and managers chose to abandon the programme).
  95. NTF III's approach to SME capacity building differs from the CTAP methodology in several respects. NTF III conducts the diagnostics and training directly to the SMEs to address their unique challenges, which causes some limitations to the multiplier effects of the provided capacity-building, and NTF III provides a mentor to each of the trained SMEs for a period of

about one year, thereby providing hands-on guidance to learning-by-doing throughout the capacity-building period.

96. NTF III integrates direct support to SMEs and support to TISIs within the same project, which increases the likelihood of the business associations actively supporting the SMEs to increase their export competitiveness. Also, NTF III provides more flexibility in that the diagnostics and training are aligned to the needs of the participating SMEs, which can vary from sector to sector.
97. Interviews with users of other SME support methodologies, including in-company coaching, mentoring and training, revealed that most SME support approaches combine three common elements: assessment or diagnostic of some kind, training component for the coaches and SME managers, and direct assistance component to the enterprise (in the form of coaching, participation in commercial activities or provision of resources).
98. The feedback indicated that the results could be dependent on those factors such as: a thorough and comprehensive participant selection; a well-rounded support offer, which combines training, coaching, financial aid and a wide range of technical support for the companies; and the ability to produce sustainable shifts in the SME manager to alter the long-term business behaviours regarding long-term planning and management of resources.
99. Compared to other SME support approaches, CTAP had several differentiating factors:
  - focus of the support (training and coaching) on the advisers, rather than the SME manager;
  - building upon local existing capabilities of TISIs and advisers, in order to adapt the methodology to local SMEs; and
  - emphasis on changing the perspective of SME managers from ad hoc managerial practices to using the strategic process as for resource allocation and management.
100. A majority of independent advisers reported using the CTAP along other methods. The CBI<sup>15</sup> training and export coaching method was mentioned by a number of respondents and reported to be useful in providing coaching to SME managers; although deemed less comprehensive than CTAP in identifying the challenges of SMEs.
101. UNCTAD's Empretec<sup>16</sup> methodology was also mentioned, but deemed more useful for start-ups than established SMEs. This methodology identifies 10 key areas of competencies related to entrepreneurial development: opportunity-seeking and initiative; persistence; fulfilment of commitments; demand for quality and efficiency; calculated risks; goal setting; information seeking; systematic planning and monitoring; persuasion and networking; independence and self-confidence.

### Effectiveness

102. In project documentation, the objective of CTAP implementation is stated in terms of the number of participants trained and certified, and in some instances, the number of enterprises diagnosed during training. While these numbers have been achieved for the most part, CTAP in its current format ends with the certification of participants after completing training. Whether and how these participants use CTAP to offer SME support services remains largely unknown to ITC.
103. The current programme design has no mechanisms to follow up with the participants or the companies taking part in CTAP. As a consequence, there is no data collection system to assess whether and how the capability of the human resources available to the TISIs was improved, or whether certified participants transferred the acquired knowhow to local enterprises and how successful they were in doing so.
104. While some individual project officers have leveraged their relationships with participants and partner institutions to gather some follow-up information, these processes are not embedded in programme design or consistent throughout CTAP implementation. Therefore there is no sufficient or comparable data to examine the longer term effectiveness of CTAP.
105. **Building capability.** CTAP training resulted in acquisition of skills to conduct business diagnostics and develop competitive strategies. Some respondents reported to having secured

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<sup>15</sup> Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries

<sup>16</sup> Empretec is a United Nations Conference in Trade and Development capacity-building programme for SMEs

consultancy assignments with SMEs partly because of the CTAP certification process, and that the acquisition of the skills was consolidated with the help of the phased workshops, practical fieldwork projects and evaluation methodologies that promote hands-on skills in diagnosing SMEs.

106. Most interviewed trade advisors testified to having used the CTAP methodology to guide SMEs in a variety of sectors of the economy, including fruits and vegetables, education institutions and other services. Some outcomes reported by CTAP graduates include returning loss-making SMEs to profitability, growth and expansion of operations, and beginning engagement in export operations.
107. It should be noted, however, that such successes happened for the most part in SMEs with the capacity to implement the changes recommended by the CTAP adviser, which often required significant resources (e.g. financing) beyond the support provided by the CTAP service.
108. In general, TISI staff who participated in the CTAP credits the training for improving their ability to diagnose SMEs and develop export strategies. Most had received other training in trade and SME-related topics; however, in a majority of countries the effect was limited to the application of the methodology by trainees in their daily work.
109. Enhancing TISI capabilities depends greatly on each institution. Government TISIs often have restricted mandates, limited financing mechanisms and scant resources to support a wide outreach of beneficiaries. TISIs do not always prioritize the offer of SME support services (due to mandate constraints or government priorities).
110. Among the TISIs participating, private sector TISIs (e.g. NUCAFE) seemed to be more driven to generate revenues and returns for the members, embraced the methodology and diagnostics, and used it to generate revenues and increase the value accruing to the members. The data suggests that at the institutional level the CTAP may be more effective for private than government TISIs; and at the individual level more relevant to professionals in the daily business of SME support, whose assignments involve regular interaction and support of SMEs, and who have a background in business or management.
111. CTAP was also more effective in building the capabilities of independent advisers than TISIs. The application of the knowledge within TISIs varied greatly, and the record of effectiveness in terms of enhancing organizational capabilities remained low in most beneficiary TISIs. The experience in Uganda is a good case in point, as the programme targeted three different TISIs, which illustrate clearly the challenges and potential facing CTAP TISI capacity-building:

**The Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA)** is the Government agency with the mandate to promote and oversee the development of the coffee industry. Four UCDA staff attended the CTAP training, none left the organization. One of the UCDA CTAP graduates never used the methodology after the CTAP training as supporting SMEs was not part of his job. UCDA participants were mainly agronomists involved in providing coffee agricultural extension services and good agricultural practices. There is no indication that they provided trade advisory to SMEs beyond the fieldwork projects. There was no indication of any institutional use of CTAP methodology in UCDA after the training.

**The Uganda Export Promotion Board (UEPB)** is a Government agency for export promotion and development. Eight UEPB staff attended the CTAP training; only 3 remain due to high staff turnover (between 2012 and 2017 UEPB staff went from 30 to 17). In UEPB, despite high staff turnover, the CTAP methodology and skills remained within the institution. In early 2017, UEPB launched the Export Readiness project to support SMEs identify and address capacity challenges to exporting. A review of the export readiness checklists revealed that it was prepared based on the CTAP methodology. UEPB CTAP staff also confirmed using the CTAP methodology in their day to day services to SMEs although there is no dedicated CTAP based service to SMEs that officially institutionalizes the methodology.

**The National Union of Coffee Agribusinesses and Farm Enterprises (NUCAFE)** is a private umbrella organization of coffee farmer associations, cooperatives and enterprises. Five members of staff attended CTAP; four are still with the organization, and another joined a coffee certifying organization. Top management embraced the CTAP/BMS methodology fully and it is incorporated in the day to day duties of individual officers and in the training offer to farmers associations. NUCAFE staff credits the CTAP with providing the skills to help NUCAFE farmer associations produce and market high quality coffee, including securing direct coffee export markets. About 100 NUCAFE member coffee farmer associations are export ready and make direct coffee exports to importers in Europe. The CTAP is also credited with strengthening NUCAFE's institutional capability by contributing to the development of a firm social-enterprise business orientation. According to respondents, this strengthened capacity propelled NUCAFE to set up a coffee processing factory to facilitate value addition of the farmers' coffee and to acquire a lorry to offer market friendly transportation services, increasing the benefits to both the farmer associations and NUCAFE.

112. **Factors affecting effectiveness.** The most significant factor for CTAP effectiveness is the selection of TISI partners, advisers and SMEs. Other common factors that hindered/contributed to the implementation and integration of CTAP methodology included: the level of support of top management in institutionalizing CTAP-based programmes in partner TISIs; the levels of staff turnover in partner TISIs; and the selection of TISI staff participants.
113. With no formal activities, mechanisms or platforms to keep tabs on participants, partners or SMEs, CTAP lacked a basic system to examine the long-term effects of training on beneficiaries. In an attempt to develop such system, CTAP managers have developed a recertification scheme. However, the requirements, merits and process for annual renewal of the certificates is considered unnecessary and cumbersome by participants, and the recertification rate is low.
114. None of the interviewed respondents have reported renewing the certificates in Uganda, and only a small number in other Anglophone countries. Although in Francophone countries the certification requirements are more flexible, the rate is very low in Tunisia and Algeria, and only slightly higher in Morocco.
115. Interestingly, despite the low rates of certification, many advisers acknowledge having continued using the skills to guide and support SMEs. One option suggested by graduates is to have online refresher courses and an online global platform through which CTAP graduates share experiences and information on emerging tools and applications of the methodology.
116. A more accurate assessment of the effectiveness of the CTAP requires unified and thorough selection procedures, not only for advisers but also for TISIs and SMEs. Formal follow-up

mechanisms for beneficiaries are also a must to enhance long-term effectiveness and sustainability.

### Efficiency

117. **Mobilizing local trainers.** CTAP training was implemented in each country, with a mix of local, regional and international trainers. Whenever local trainers were available (e.g. Morocco, Uganda), they would be called upon to support the delivery of the training, adaptation of the methodology (e.g. to the coffee sector), and coaching of participants during fieldwork activities. When local trainers were not available, regional consultants were called upon (e.g. Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Turkey, Palestine, Philippines, China). Maximization of local resourcing was a common practice in all CTAP implementations when possible.
118. This practice had several efficiency impacts, such as reducing the costs of delivery, providing further learning opportunities and international exposure for the local advisers, and allowing for the exchange of knowledge between countries.
119. **Costs for a CTAP training.** The available data makes it difficult to evaluate the cost-efficiency of the CTAP or a cost-benefit analysis. The only data referring to the benefits of CTAP consistently recorded refers to immediate outputs — number of participants, certified advisers and SMEs assisted — which provides a limited picture of CTAP service implementation.
120. CTAP implementation also showed significant variance in objectives and priorities of the supported projects and client partner institutions in terms of training focus, participant selection for certification purposes, co-financing arrangements, and the definition and scope of SME assistance. CTAP implementation variances limited the relevance of basic cost-efficiency calculations such as cost per participant, certified adviser or company assisted. The evaluation team cautions against using these measures to determine overall CTAP efficiency. Nevertheless, they are included below for general information purposes. For example, the average cost per participant ranges from USD 4500 in China 2011 to USD 11000 in China 2013 and South Africa 2014.

**Table 2: CTAP costs, by participants certified advisers and SME**

	# total participants	# certified advisers	Certification rate	# enterprises	Total CTAP reported	Budget per participant	Budget per certified adviser	Budget per enterprise
<b>Morocco 2010-2011</b>	30	24	80%	20	\$205,823	\$ 6,861	\$ 8,576	\$ 10,291
<b>Algeria 2011</b>	28	23	82%	15	\$227,663	\$ 8,131	\$ 9,898	\$ 15,178
<b>Tunisia 2011</b>	34	28	82%	21	\$186,995	\$ 5,500	\$ 6,678	\$ 8,905
<b>Morocco 2014</b>	32	28	88%	16	\$191,867	\$ 5,996	\$ 6,852	\$ 11,992
<b>Morocco 2015</b>	34	28	82%	14	\$191,867	\$ 5,643	\$ 6,852	\$ 13,705
<b>China (2010-2011)</b>	42	27	50%	23	\$189,394	\$ 4,509	\$ 7,015	\$ 8,235
<b>China Extension (2013)</b>	19	16	68%	9	\$209,805	\$ 11,042	\$ 13,113	\$ 23,312
<b>Uganda (2011)</b>	30	18	60%	30	\$312,552	\$ 10,418	\$ 17,364	\$ 10,418
<b>Palestine (2013)</b>	31	19	61%	100	\$195,940	\$ 6,321	\$ 10,313	\$ 1,959
<b>South Africa (2014)</b>	16	8	50%	13	\$182,115	\$ 11,382	\$ 22,764	\$ 14,009

121. Interviews with TISI staff, advisers and SME managers in the participating countries suggested increased efficiencies, in terms of training methodology, expansion services to SMEs in trade support, strategic alliances of CTAP advisers and increased export markets. While there are sufficient separate accounts to conclude that the programme has continued to have important effects long after the training concluded in most countries, these are not quantifiable within the current CTAP methodology.
122. There is insufficient data to quantify accurately the overall cost-efficiency of CTAP-based assistance; nor can the evaluation team extrapolate the accounts of a few individuals as

representative of the entire population that experienced the CTAP directly or indirectly. However, there may be some value in these accounts for the design of future ITC capacity-building programmes.

123. There are some examples of CTAP contributions to larger projects. For example, CTAP advisers in Palestine made possible the delivery of the ACCESS programme with a budget of only \$3,000. The results and impact of the ACCESS programme, in collaboration with the Business Woman Forum, were well documented in an ITC brochure and showed ample return on investment. The association of CTAP advisers in Morocco undertook the task of conducting interviews for the SMECO in their country, facilitating the data collection for ITC's flagship publication. Within the ENACT, EDEC and VMP projects, CTAP advisers conducted numerous tasks ranging from diagnostics, sector and marketing studies, to coaching enterprises.
124. Despite the above examples, the utilization rate of these ITC-trained resources remained low in the period under evaluation, when compared with the number of individuals trained. While ITC made a significant investment in training a global pool of SME experts, so far it has failed to find ways to capitalize on these human resources. Similarly, ITC has been unable to find mechanisms to promote the use of certified advisers among other ITC partners and TISIs.

### Impact

125. **Impact on TISI business services.** The impact of CTAP on TISI capacity to offer high quality and sustainable services to SMEs was generally low. Despite the fact that in Morocco and China the TISIs requested additional cohorts of CTAP advisers to be trained, the institutional changes were limited, and did not translate into a sustainable improvement in the service offer to SMEs. For example, in China after two CTAP programmes, the methodology was abandoned following changes in the management of CCPIT. However, after a CTAP graduate was recently appointed Director of the Division of International Affairs, ITC received renewed interest from China on the methodology and a request for a third CTAP implementation.
126. Similarly, in Morocco and Algeria the partner institutions had ambitious plans to use CTAP advisers for large numbers of diagnostics to inform and launch comprehensive export support programmes in their countries, but have yet to produce significant effects on the TISI business support offer to SMEs.
127. In most countries, partner institutions have not integrated the CTAP methodology internally. TISI staff has only been able to engage external independent advisers occasionally in Morocco and not at all in Algeria. Some individual TISI staff members have been able to apply the methodology occasionally in their daily work with particular SMEs but only on a case by case basis; the practice is not institutionalized.
128. TISI management and staff reported having benefited from using the BMS: to improve internal strategy; to identify common challenges of SMEs; and to adapt the support service portfolio to local needs. However, the data suggests that at the institutional level the CTAP may be more effective for private TISIs than government TISIs, because political, legal and administrative constraints may limit the resources available for, and the ability to offer, support services to SMEs.
129. Staff of government TISIs tended to resume their routine assignments after CTAP training, did not develop specific CTAP-based SME support initiatives. Since the TISIs often influenced the selection of participants, the number of staff who never applied CTAP methodology was high, particularly in the case of CTAP implementations financed directly by the TISIs.
130. **Impact on the service of independent advisers.** Most independent advisers interviewed reported using the CTAP methodology to support SMEs. Respondents applied the CTAP/BMS to their own consulting businesses to improve and expand their services, enhance their client base; develop and integrate various SME consulting tools, methodologies and materials to use with a larger variety of SME, and create new companies or joint ventures with other CTAP advisers.
131. In fact in most countries, small but cohesive and integrated teams of advisers still exist today; they keep regular contact, support each other, co-design and co-deliver services, respond to requests for proposals from TISIs and other private and public institutions, and exchange

knowledge and experiences. Although these teams remain informal in some countries, in others they are backed by a national association of trade advisers.

132. Overall the data showed the impact on independent advisers was stronger than on TISI staff, both in building their knowledge and capabilities, as well as in applying the acquired knowledge to offer assistance to SMEs.
133. **Impact on competitiveness of SMEs.** The direct impact on SME competitiveness was low. The CTAP approach counted on the TISI partners or participants to find companies to diagnose, without any guidelines, requirements or protocols. This resulted in participants teaming up to conduct the diagnostic required for certification, and diagnosing public companies, subsidiaries of multinationals, banks or large companies instead of SMEs. As a result, the number of real SMEs diagnosed during training was limited.
134. The CTAP design did not include a SME support component and there were no mechanisms to follow up on the recommendations contained in the SME diagnostics. Therefore, the CTAP had no mechanisms to support, assess or measure any initiatives at the SME level.
135. However, two categories of SMEs that may have indirectly benefited from CTAP. First, a number of exporting service ventures were created by the advisers based on the CTAP/BMS, some of which are still exporting services; second, the SMEs who benefited from the wider range of CTAP-based support services offered by the advisers. The evaluation was not able to verify these indirect results.

### **Gender equality and women's empowerment**

136. Most CTAP implementations did not have a specific component on gender. However, consistent efforts to ensure the participation of women in CTAP activities were made. The number of participating and certified women in China, Tunisia and South Africa exceeded 50% of all participants, and in other countries efforts were made to maintain gender balance as much as possible. Unfortunately in some countries like Qatar and Palestine the number of participating women remained low. However, overall the rate of participation of women exceeded 40%. In Morocco, the participation of women has increased significantly since the first cohort graduated in 2011, and the current President of the National Adviser Association is a woman. Field visits in Uganda confirmed that women's participation in decision-making on coffee production had improved, and participation in farmer association activities has reduced gender-based violence in coffee farmer households.

### **Innovation**

137. The CTAP/BMS was considered innovative by all respondents. The incorporation of strategy in business decision-making on the prioritization, allocation and management of resources was considered a novelty for SME managers, and a tool to induce important mind-set shifts in entrepreneurs often more preoccupied with day-to-day business problems. The system to classify, assess and build linkages between resources, operations and strategy to determine the root cause of problems and the potential courses of action was found to be a new way to look at a company regardless of the type of company and intervention.

### **Sustainability**

138. At the **TISI level**, the level of sustainability is low. Sustainability in TISIs was highly dependent on the interest and support of TISI top management, staff turnover, as well as political changes and shifting priorities in the case of public TISIs. In fact, at the institutional level, only NUCAFE and UEPB in Uganda showed some signs of sustainability: strong in the case of NUCAFE, which still credits the 2011 CTAP for its success; moderate in the case of UEPB, which has recently used the CTAP methodology to revamp its SME support offer.
139. In Morocco, the Ministry of Foreign Trade has incorporated the CTAP advisers in some global support programmes; however, these programmes incorporate other methodologies as well and the more recent attempts exclude a majority of CTAP-certified advisers. Of the remaining countries, only China's CCPIT seems (recently) to be making significant efforts to fully



incorporate the CTAP in its training offer. For a number of years, political changes halted CTAP-based initiatives and its continued support remains highly dependent on political will.

140. At the **independent adviser level**, sustainability is variable. In each country, there is a small core of individuals (between 5 and 10) who have fully embraced the methodology, incorporated it into their service offer, offered CTAP-based support services to SMEs, and shown clear intentions to continue delivering services to SMEs using the CTAP methodology. However, this sustainability depends significantly on the willingness of advisers to continue applying the methodology and offering it to SMEs; as opposed to larger interested corporations capable of offering more attractive consulting rates to the advisers.

#### IV. Conclusions and lessons learned

141. The CTAP knowledge is, by and large, appreciated in the field, and deemed innovative and relevant to local SMEs. The programme has achieved some results in terms of building the capacities of individual trade advisors, but limited results in enhancing the capabilities of TISIs. There is little evidence of direct impact of CTAP on SMEs, although there are some anecdotal stories reported by independent trade advisors.
142. In the period of 2011-2016, the CTAP was run as a fringe activity within the Section, without an explicit strategy, annual operating plan, annual budget or internal performance review. Lacking a strategic direction, the CTAP design remained mostly unchanged over years despite important changes in ITC's strategy and service portfolio.
143. **Relevance.** Despite the mixed results in terms of TISI adoption of the CTAP knowledge, the methodology is appreciated by trade advisors in the field for its comprehensiveness, flexibility and ease of use. It could be used to support other ITC services as well, although in the period under review, there were limited linkages with ITC's overall strategy and service offer.
144. In the period of 2011-2016, there were no concerted actions to review, update and upgrade the CTAP methodology, either in the context of ITC's shifting strategic objectives or a changing global environment towards exports, SME support and emerging technological advances.
145. While the CTAP's basic methodology may have provided solid training, this generic framework seems to have been insufficient to support the post-training SME support work of the range of advisers, and to guarantee the institutionalization of CTAP knowledge within the TISIs.
146. The range of TISIs (ministries, trade promotion organizations and small producer associations) had different needs and challenges; SME support services were not always part of their mandate, and they often had conflicting political demands, and limited financing and other resources. This indicates that CTAP-like training may be more relevant to private TISIs and those with a strong and clear mandate to offer support services to SMEs (like the positive example provided by NUCAFE in Uganda).
147. The CTAP design did not differentiate between different groups of beneficiaries. Participants had different levels of business exposure and SME experience, as well as very different needs, gaps and strengths; yet, similar training was delivered to all.
148. There were gaps identified in meeting local SME needs. For example, the BMS was designed for manufacturing enterprises of a certain size and formal structure; the CTAP methodology was not customized to enough different sectors, and did not adequately cover financial management/mobilization and leadership/governance of SMEs; and the methodology assumed trainers already had the necessary sector and business knowledge to provide a support to SMEs.
149. **Effectiveness.** CTAP was effective in training individual trade advisors to apply CTAP knowledge in SME business analysis; it has failed, however, to support institutionalisation within the TISIs, or to promote a follow up mechanism between trade advisors and SMEs.
150. Flexibility is built into the CTAP methodology to allow adaptation to sectors and inclusion of emerging needs. However, to capitalize on this flexibility the CTAP has relied entirely on the individual capabilities and willingness of certified advisers. Without support in the adaptation and SME application process, CTAP could follow up on the quality of the SME services offered by TISIs or independent advisers.
151. **Efficiency.** The practice of implementing training in each country with a mix of local, regional and international trainers had enhanced the efficiency. It reduced the costs of delivery, provided further learning opportunities and international exposure for the local advisers, and allowed for the exchange of knowledge between countries.
152. To assess the efficiency, it would require comparable data on the cost and benefits. However, since CTAP implementation was not homogenous in that the objectives and priorities of the supported projects and client organizations varied, a basic cost-efficiency calculations, such as cost per participant, certified adviser or company assisted, presents only an indicative sense of the costs but with limited value in indicating the overall efficiency.

153. CTAP made a significant investment in training a global pool of CTAP experts in developing countries, but it has not yet capitalized on these human resources; for example, it has not promoted the use of certified advisers among other ITC partners and TISIs.
154. **Impact.** In the period 2011-2016 over a dozen TISIs partnered with the CTAP, over 250 participants were trained and an even greater number of companies were diagnosed, but there is no substantial data available regarding these past activities. There is no global database of CTAP certified advisers or available copies of the SME diagnostics conducted during or after training. Aggregate information on these activities would allow ITC to provide more targeted and customized tools and support to exporting SMEs. Without well-designed knowledge and data management, CTAP cannot measure the impact on individuals certified advisor, TISIs or SMEs.
155. The impact of CTAP on the ability of TISIs to offer high quality services to SMEs was generally low, with the notable exception of NUCAFE in Uganda. The data suggests that at the institutional level, CTAP may be more effective for private TISIs than government TISIs, because political, legal and administrative constraints may limit the resources available for, and the ability to offer, support services to SMEs.
156. The impact on independent advisers was stronger than on TISI staff, in terms of building knowledge and capabilities and applying the acquired knowledge. The more experience in advising SMEs, the greater the ability of the adviser to apply the methodology in supporting SMEs.
157. The direct impact of the CTAP on SME competitiveness was low. The CTAP design did not include a SME support component or follow-up on the SME diagnostics. Therefore, CTAP had no mechanisms to assess or measure results at the SME level.
158. **Gender equality and women's empowerment.** Most CTAP implementations did not have an explicit component on gender equality, but consistent efforts were made to maintain gender balance as much as possible in CTAP activities. The number of participating and certified women in China, Tunisia and South Africa exceeded 50 percent of all participants. In Morocco, the participation of women increased significantly since the first cohort graduated in 2011; it is noteworthy that the current President of the National Advisor Association is a woman. Field visits in Uganda confirmed that women's participation in decision-making on coffee production had improved and that participation in farmer association activities had reduced gender-based violence in coffee farmer households. In Qatar and Palestine the number of participating women remained low. Overall, the rate of participation of women exceeded 40 percent.
159. Innovation. The CTAP/BMS was considered innovative by all respondents, providing a system that allowed a new way to look at an SME's resources, operations and plans regardless of the type of company or intervention.
160. **Sustainability.** The evaluation found the level of sustainability for the continued application of CTAP to be low. Sustainability in TISIs is low, affected by a range of factors, including management commitment, staff turnover and shifting priorities. At the institutional level, only NUCAFE in Uganda showed some signs of sustainability.
161. At the independent adviser level, sustainability is uncertain, relying on individual advisor in each country who have incorporated the methodology in service to SMEs. Without their continued commitment and ability to generate business, the CTAP approach will not be sustained,

## Lessons learnt

- i. **CTAP is appreciated often in the field as a capacity-building and training service. However, there was a lack of clarity regarding the main objective, strategy and leadership of the CTAP service. The positioning within ITC's service portfolio is unclear as well.**
162. The CTAP Business Management System (BMS) methodology is considered effective by participants in the field. The participants found it useful in terms of assisting SME advisors to assess business challenges and helping SME managers to identify the cause of inefficiencies and improve business results. Some considered the approach a decision-making tool for SME entrepreneurs in the management of resources.
163. However, the objectives and focus of the CTAP design are not always clear and consistent. CTAP training materials state that it aims at developing the diagnostic, strategic and export

management capability of advisers and TISIs; while CTAP marketing materials refer to a capacity-building programme designed to enhance the international competitiveness of small and medium enterprises.<sup>17</sup> This indicates an ambiguity in articulating CTAP focus and objectives, which has created confusion and unmet expectations among stakeholders. SMEs expect further concrete support for their enterprise, while ITC staff and management identify CTAP as a service for SME support, TISI support or independent trade adviser training.

164. In the period reviewed, there was no strategy or annual plan for the CTAP service. The positioning of CTAP within the corporate results framework of ITC, or its linkages with other ITC services and projects, were not explicit. Management of the CTAP service changed often. Reporting lines for the implementation of CTAP shifted as well, with CTAP officers reporting at times to the technical section and at others to the country officers. Although CTAP contributed about \$100,000 to the section's revolving fund (about 45% of the fund's total revenue), there was no evidence of significant investment in reviewing, upgrading or modernizing the programme's materials and tools.<sup>18</sup> As a result, these CTAP resources seemed rather disjointed and outdated.
165. In the absence of a strategy during the period under evaluation, two distinct CTAP approaches emerged. One approach, focused on training independent advisors, was implemented in French and financed as a component of ITC's trade support projects in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. The other, implemented in English, focused on TISIs and was funded mainly by the client TISIs in China, Palestine, Qatar, South Africa and Uganda. These variations in approach resulted over the years in different selection criteria for participants, content, materials, delivery, and evaluation and reporting methods.

**ii. CTAP training was effective in providing trade advisers with a generic framework to diagnose SMEs. It was not so effective in adapting the methodology to specific sectors or SMEs. In terms of building the capabilities of TISIs, the evidence base was weak.**

166. CTAP participants considered that the training provided a comprehensive and useful generic business diagnostic framework and facilitated the understanding of SME performance. The inclusion of fieldwork in training helped them apply the knowledge in an efficient manner to local SMEs. However, participants also pointed out they would have benefited from support in adapting the generic framework to specific sectors and SMEs. This was particularly the case for participants working as public TISI staff, as they often had limited experience in SME support.
167. CTAP cohorts in each country often included TISI staff and independent trade advisors, who had very different skills, experiences and expectations. The post-training application in advising local SMEs varied greatly. Since most CTAP cohorts included TISI staff not working directly with SMEs, the number of participants who never applied the methodology to SMEs was high — particularly when CTAP implementation was financed by partner TISIs who then exerted greater influence in the selection process.
168. At the TISI level, staff members of government TISI bureaus tended to resume their regular assignments after the training, and did not develop specific SME support initiatives. Although the available data is limited,<sup>19</sup> it suggests that the CTAP may be more effective in supporting private TISIs — as was the case with NUCAFE in Uganda, where there were more business demands and flexibility to provide a variety of support services to SMEs.
169. At the independent advisor level, CTAP methodology was more beneficial to independent advisors who were active in business support and had regular interaction with SMEs. All independent advisors interviewed reported using the methodology post-training, such as application and integration of BMS-based SME support services, creation of joint SME services with other CTAP advisors, and using the methodology in their daily work to improve organizational strategy and management.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See, for example, the CTAP brochure 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Each CTAP managing officer introduced incremental changes and improvements with each implementation but these were not shared and did not respond to a strategic upgrade, update and modernization of the approach, tools or materials.

<sup>19</sup> The majority of TISIs following the CTAP program were public organizations. The good results with NUCAFE (a private TISI) suggest that the private sector could take advantage of the CTAP methodology.

<sup>20</sup> Two respondents reported having the intention to change careers (to SME support) after CTAP training, but had to go back to their previous occupation.

170. Formal and informal networks of independent CTAP advisors exist in various countries. These networks take the form of national associations of trade advisers in Morocco and Algeria; in other countries, participants report keeping in regular contact with other local CTAP advisers. The initiatives of national CTAP networks include lobbying, co-delivering services, responding to request for proposals, and exchanging knowledge and experiences. There is also interest in connecting with other CTAP networks to capitalize on local experiences.
- iii. In its current form, the CTAP's impact on SME competitiveness is low, and there is no follow-up mechanism to assess the effects on SMEs.**
171. A close examination of the CTAP design and implementation approach/methodology demonstrated that SMEs seem to constitute a tool for CTAP to test the knowledge and skills of the advisors, rather than being the intended beneficiary of capacity-building support. In fact, the main support received by SMEs during CTAP implementation is a diagnostic report.
172. Furthermore, the definition of SME support varied from one CTAP training to another. While in most CTAP implementations, it referred to enterprises diagnosed, in a few countries (Uganda, Palestine and South Africa) it referred to SMEs receiving advisory services after CTAP training, and in one instance (Palestine) it required SMEs to co-finance the assistance received.
173. CTAP relied on client TISIs or the participants to identify companies to diagnose, for which there were no clear guidelines. Some participants teamed up to conduct a diagnostic required for certification; in some cases participants ended up diagnosing public companies, subsidiaries of multinationals, banks or large companies to achieve certification, which further limited the number of SMEs touched by CTAP.
174. Despite shortcomings assisting SMEs, anecdotal evidence indicates that a number of advisers reported expanding consulting services to SMEs using CTAP/BMS (2 cases in Morocco, 1 in Tunisia and 1 in Palestine); and some SMEs seem to have benefited from increased services offered by the certified advisers. Many independent advisers interviewed by the evaluation could attribute at least one SME success story to CTAP/BMS, related to cost savings, production, marketing, increased exports and new markets.
- iv. The participation of national and regional trainers was common in implementation, often enhancing customization and reducing costs. The customization could be improved by better matching training contents with the needs of target participants.**
175. CTAP training is intensive, with participants receiving a high number of training hours, and individualized coaching and feedback. To improve customization and reduce costs, local trainers (e.g. in Morocco and Uganda) were called upon to support training delivery, adaptation of the methodology (e.g. coffee sector), and coaching participants during fieldwork. When local trainers were not available, regional consultants were called upon.
176. In terms of sustainability, the percentage of participants who continued to provide support to SMEs was less than 50%. However, over 70% of independent advisers interviewed reported designing and offering new services based on CTAP/BMS, indicating that the training contents matched better the needs of trade advisers than those of TISI staff. This mismatch could be addressed by identifying the business needs of participants and adapt the training accordingly.

## V. Recommendations

177. The CTAP methodology can be the basis for an ITC-wide shared methodology for improving SME competitiveness which we will call here the CTAP-successor. It can be especially important in supporting two of ITCs strategic objectives with respect to improved performance of TISIs to support SMEs and improved international competitiveness of SMEs. In order to address the issues identified, the evaluation provides the following recommendations

**Recommendation 1: To revise the strategic role of capacity-building services for SMEs within ITC's service portfolio, focusing on a coherent approach to SME competitive performance which considers the individual SME as the entity whose needs and context must be addressed.**

178. CTAP on its own and in the established format had limited capability to enhance the TISI offer of high quality sustainable services to SMEs or to contribute to improved SME competitiveness. The CTAP was a 7–9 month training programme providing individuals with the capacity to diagnose and support SMEs; it was not designed to address institutional challenges surrounding the support offer nor the resources to support the SMEs.
179. CTAP, did however, touch on core technical areas for ITC as its beneficiaries extend from individual advisers, to TISIs and to SMEs across sectors. To ensure the CTAP-successor methodology contributes to ITC's strategic objectives, a clear strategy is needed to determine:
- What are the objectives of a CTAP-successor methodology for SME competitiveness within ITC's current strategic framework?
  - Who are the different clients and beneficiaries of this methodology, and what are the diverse needs of each group of beneficiaries (e.g. SME needs vs. advisers needs)?
  - What are the adaptations/changes/upgrades necessary for the CTAP-successor to address the needs of the different target beneficiary groups and contribute to ITC's strategic objectives?
  - How can the CTAP components be best integrated through the CTAP-successor with other ITC initiatives to contribute to the strengthening of the SME support offer and the competitiveness of SMEs?
180. If and when these strategic questions are addressed, in-house technical sections could collaborate to assess whether and in what ways the methodology could be integrated into other ITC services and initiatives. For instance, using the NUCAFE experience, the technical section could use the CTAP-successor approach to develop tools to support TISIs in assessing SME needs and develop their service offer (which the benchmarking reports identify as a common weakness of TISIs). Similarly, SEC could capitalize on the extensive experience and recommendations of successful independent CTAP advisers in different countries and combine this with its sector expertise to offer a comprehensive tool kit to strengthen SME support services in a variety of sectors.

**Recommendation 2: To revamp the methodology, contents and structure for building competitiveness of SMEs accordingly. The objective is to accommodate multiple project entry points for these services, into a single corporate point of view on how and why SMEs become more competitive.**

181. The CTAP/BMS would benefit from customization at three levels — country, sector and organizational structure. While the generic nature of the CTAP/BMS methodology is one of the most appreciated features of the approach, it lacks protocols and mechanisms to facilitate a standard customization of the content to the changing reality of institutions and SMEs.
182. After completing the training, some TISI staff and advisers have been successful in adapting the CTAP methodology; however, their success has depended entirely on the personal ability and experience of each individual. ITC could facilitate this task as part of the CTAP-successor by developing tools, protocols or platforms to support the adaptation and application process.
183. A periodic review process of the topics and content for the new CTAP-successor is needed to ensure changes in the business landscape, global economic trends and other relevant emerging topics of interest to TISIs, advisers and SMEs are addressed. For example, CTAP makes no mention of digitalization strategies despite being a prime topic for SMEs for over a decade now, and its content maintains a focus on traditional distribution channels and modes of export.

184. Most SMEs have challenges because the proprietors do not follow sound managerial practices. As a result, they do not take well-calculated risks; do not separate the business economy (SME) from their family or personal economy; are not willing to set up necessary governance and management systems; do not seek information and advice from professionals; and employ relatives who often lack the required skills, etc. This limits their sustainable growth as the SMEs remain un-bankable. Even with good diagnostics and advisory services, implementation often fails on account of unwillingness to change these practices. The CTAP successor should take into account how to support managers to overcome these entrenched behaviours so that they can more effectively guide SMEs.
185. Civil servants in government TISIs deliver services to SMEs guided by the funded priorities. However, SME advisory services are often among the least prioritized and or allocated the smallest budgets. The evaluation findings indicated that targeting private practitioners in SME advisory and consulting services, or agencies focused on providing advisory services to SMEs, is most likely to result in more SMEs being served than through government TISIs. They are also more motivated to learn and apply the skills, as they deliver direct benefits in terms of more SME clients, higher consultancy/advisory fees, etc., compared to CTAP advisers in government TISIs who do not charge fees for the services provided to SMEs.
186. The effectiveness of the CTAP-successor can be enhanced with complementary support to TISIs in building capacity to promote business linkages, organizing and coordinating B2B<sup>21</sup> events, and e-commerce platforms. These have the potential to create additional business opportunities for SME and, in turn, demand for advisory services from the CTAP graduates.
187. Independent trade advisers often vary in their knowledge and expertise in terms of sector experience; expertise with specific types of organizations; knowledge or experience in specific topics such as finance, marketing and logistics; business acumen (the ability to carve themselves a niche or develop a variety of services using whatever methodology); soft skills (the ability to communicate effectively, and use language, tools and approaches adapted to the client SME); and export operations. A capacity-building programme aimed at producing a well-rounded pool of advisers would benefit from a more customised approach, which accounts for those differences and provides a flexible tool kit that the advisers could draw upon as needed.
188. Currently, CTAP is more of a one size fits all approach and provides only one tool, the business management system, which advisers have to adapt as needed. As a result, CTAP has not been so effective in adapting the methodology or providing tools to help advisers adapt the generic approach to specific SME contexts and needs, or to address the practical side of export. Advisers would benefit from such practical tools, and from platforms to share knowledge and collaborate.

**Recommendation 3: To improve TISIs portfolio of SME competitive performance capacity-building services, building on robust methods for assessing TISI performance and longer-term relationship with TISIs.**

189. The CTAP has a very rigorous selection process for advisers. However, the partner organizations have often influenced the process, including bypassing the selection requirements. In contrast, CTAP has a less explicit selection process for either partners or beneficiary SMEs. These issues need to be addressed:
  - To improve the impact on advisers and TISI staff, the selection of participants needs to be applied rigorously and the training programme customized to: (1) the different needs of TISI staff vs. independent advisers; and (2) the diverse skills/knowledge and experience levels of participants.
  - To improve the impact on TISI capacity building, the selection of partners needs to focus on those institutions that (1) working closely with SMEs; (2) have a clear mandate to offer support services to SMEs; and (3) have the flexibility to develop new support services.
  - To improve the impact on SMEs, beneficiaries should be selected at the beginning of the project to: (1) ensure a priori the potential for improvement of the SME, and the level of interest and commitment of SME managers; (2) capitalize on the training duration and start providing support to the companies from the outset; and (3) ensure sufficient and clear communication and follow-up with the companies to avoid frustration and unmet expectations of managers, and guarantee access to improvement measurement data.

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<sup>21</sup> Business-to-business

190. CTAP has produced country networks of qualified SME advisers with a variety of sector/technical knowledge and experience. Some independent CTAP advisers already display high levels of formal and informal collaboration at the national level, and express deep interest in contacting their colleagues in other countries to expand and improve their SME work. ITC could capitalize on this level of interest and motivation by promoting a global adviser platform:
- To provide access to relevant content to support work with SMEs, upgrades, online refresher courses and other ITC tools to maintain up-to-date adviser capabilities, and ensure consistency and quality of SME support services.
  - To allow for some of the SME analysis to be performed online so advisers can aggregate and examine trends in the companies they diagnose or support (in some case advisers have diagnosed over a 100 companies since obtaining CTAP certification);
  - To offer proof of CTAP completion, certification or train-the-trainer status in a searchable database of advisers, which could motivate them to stay updated, connected and provide ITC with useful data about the SME services provided and their results.
191. Big data from aggregated SME diagnostics could be very valuable for TISIs, ITC and SME advisers. Aggregated diagnostics could be used to identify common needs of groups of SMEs with similar characteristics; design customized support service portfolios; and facilitate follow-up and improve impact measurement.
192. The evaluation found evidence that CTAP officers made an attempt to adapt the CTAP diagnostic tool to fit the technical support benchmarking structure. The development budget of such an online platform at the time was under \$20,000. A platform to aggregate, analyse and mine SME diagnostics, and share support materials, tools and best practices, could also be used to promote the institutionalization of customer-centric cultures within TISIs.

**Recommendation 4: To modernize the distribution and information channels used by SME competitive performance capacity-building services, with the objective of increasing the number of SMEs benefiting from these services.**

**Recommendation 5: To refine the measurement criteria for assessing SME competitiveness in SME competitive performance capacity-building services. The objective is to pave the way for a coherent and harmonized corporate approach in terms of baseline measurements, monitoring processes and knowledge management systems related to SME competitive performance.**

193. Even when embedded in larger projects, the CTAP service often operated as a stand-alone, nine-month component with unclear linkages to other ITC initiatives. To increase the impact and multiplier effect of CTAP on the economy, the CTAP-successor could be implemented over a 3–5 year period. This would enable trainings of several CTAP graduates in cohorts, each of which could be customized to different sub-sectors of the economy, like agriculture or manufacturing, and create a critical mass of advisers with specific expertise to support selected sectors. At the same time, it would allow time for ITC to provide ongoing support to TISIs to institutionalize knowledge and assist advisers in applying tools to the different types of SMEs.
194. Available research on SME support shows that to produce sustainable impact on exports, SMEs require a variety of support that ranges from training, coaching, financial, to accompaniment during sponsored international trade events. For the CTAP-successor to be effective, the diagnostic phase should be supplemented with actual direct support to the SMEs. In the current CTAP design, the engagement of CTAP graduates with SMEs is limited to the fieldwork project experience where advisers diagnose and interface with SMEs. However, this relationship stops at the end of training. This limits the adoption, implementation and sustainability of the provided advice, especially if the SME does not have strong systems and structures. To be effective, most SMEs would benefit from additional support (e.g. coaching and mentoring). This could be through bimonthly or monthly follow-up meetings to ensure that the SME is implementing the recommendations from the diagnostics and competitive strategy developed, or is able to address any emerging challenges from implementing the advice provided.
195. Over time, CTAP has generated a wealth of information, knowledge, success stories, lessons learned and challenges. Unfortunately, no mechanisms existed to incorporate and institutionalize this information, and no attempts were made to actively gather, develop, share and integrate any knowledge produced. As a result, ITC has not been able to capitalize on the CTAP experience to enhance ITC's tools and methodologies, develop ITC's institutional knowledge, and improve the impact of ITC's support to TISIs, advisers and SMEs.



196. To capitalize on this potential, any new design should include (1) a clear protocol for the use of the methodology before, during and, most importantly, after training; (2) a thorough review and integration of the approach to unify, update and upgrade the methodology; and (3) significant investment in developing up-to-date supporting tools, platforms and networking activities in the short, medium and long terms.
197. To supplement the face to face trainings, which are expensive to conduct and require a lot of logistical support, online resources for a CTAP-successor are recommended. This can be hosted on the ITC SME academy platform, and a local partner institution or team of consultants can be appointed to supervise the project work. This would increase the reach of the CTAP-successor, and provide opportunities for refreshers and/or upgrading the knowledge and skills of existing advisers. The online training platform can also include an online platform for CTAP alumni, where graduates can continuously share new methods and approaches, as well as opportunities globally, and eventually constitute a knowledge management system.
198. Capacity-building programmes for advisers take time to produce results. To be successful, the capacity acquired during training has to be integrated by the adviser; adapted to their support service offer; demanded by SME managers (willing to pay for the service); delivered to the companies; implemented by the managers; and given time to produce results.
199. However, the medium and long-term impact of a capacity-building effort can only be assessed if the follow-up and communication systems and mechanisms are part of the design from the outset — something the current CTAP design lacks.
200. ITC also played a very limited role in the selection of companies. The CTAP approach counted on the partner or participants to find companies to diagnose, without guidelines or protocols. When there were insufficient numbers of companies to diagnose, this resulted in some participants having to team up to conduct the diagnostic required for certification; in other cases, participants diagnosed public companies, and subsidiaries of multinationals, banks or large companies, instead of SMEs.
201. SME support requires more than a diagnostic and strategy report. Once an SME manager opens the company's doors for diagnose, there is often a strong expectation for follow-up. Even if the CTAP is not designed to provide direct assistance to SMEs, ITC has many tools and services that are complementary. A better integration of the different services would be of benefit to SMEs and to ITC as well. For example, SMEs participating in fairs, country visits, buyers-seller meetings and the like, voiced a need to learn how to select and prepare for the most suitable events in the context of their own business strategies, and that they may need follow-up support to ensure delivery on any agreements/contracts after the event. ITC offers all such support through different programmes, but seldom in an integrated and sustained manner.

## Annexes

### Annex I: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	Main Evaluation Questions	Main Data Sources
<b>Relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To what extent are the objectives and design of the CTAP in line with ITC's corporate objectives, strategies, strengths and comparative advantages?</li> <li>-In what ways has the CTAP approach and methodology contributed to the achievement of ITC's goals?</li> <li>-What is the value added of the CTAP service in terms of methodology, technical content, process, and implementation?</li> <li>-To what extent was the CTAP service adjusted during implementation to changes in context to ensure relevance?</li> <li>-To what extent did the CTAP fit in with the needs of the partners in beneficiary countries?</li> <li>-What could be done to ensure CTAP is more aligned with the current priorities of clients, donors, partners and beneficiaries?</li> <li>-What other emerging alternative training, coaching and mentoring methods are applied in ITC and other organizations?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Desk review of available documentation</li> <li>-Interviews with internal stakeholders</li> <li>-Beneficiary surveys</li> <li>-Interviews in the field</li> <li>-Research</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To what extent were the objective and outcomes of the CTAP attained, both in quantitative and in qualitative terms?</li> <li>-To what extent was the CTAP effective in building capabilities of TISIs?</li> <li>-To what extent was the CTAP effective in building capabilities of Certified Trade Advisors?</li> <li>-To what extent was the CTAP effective in reinforcing the support services available to SMEs?</li> <li>- In what ways has the CTAP influenced the effectiveness of the work of the projects where CTAP was integrated?</li> <li>- What unintended effects for ITC, partners and beneficiaries can be attributed to the CTAP?</li> <li>- What changes in the CTAP design or implementation may have produced better outcomes and impact for beneficiaries?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Desk review of available documentation</li> <li>-Past evaluations</li> <li>-Interviews with internal stakeholders</li> <li>-Beneficiary surveys</li> <li>-In depth phone interviews with beneficiaries</li> <li>-In depth interviews in the field</li> </ul>

Evaluation Criteria	Main Evaluation Questions	Main Data Sources
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What were the resources and costs to develop CTAP service outputs?</li> <li>--How were CTAP delivery teams selected for implementation (e.g. partners, consultants, subcontractors)?</li> <li>- How was the project M&amp;E system?</li> <li>-To what extent were CTAP costs comparable to similar services?</li> <li>-What are the major factors that account for CTAP efficiency performance?</li> <li>-What are the possibilities of benchmarking with similar initiatives?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Desk review of available documentation</li> <li>-Past evaluations</li> <li>-Interviews with internal stakeholders</li> <li>-Beneficiary surveys</li> <li>-In depth phone interviews with beneficiaries</li> <li>-In depth interviews in the field</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To what extent have TISIs changed their situation and/or improved as a result of the CTAP?</li> <li>-To what extent have the CTAP advisors changed their situation and/or improved as a result of the CTAP?</li> <li>-To what extent have TISIs or CTAP advisors influenced the overall situation as a result of the CTAP?</li> <li>-What other positive or negative effects be observed as a consequence of the CTAP activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Desk review of available documentation</li> <li>-Past evaluations</li> <li>-Interviews with internal stakeholders</li> <li>-Beneficiary surveys</li> <li>-In depth phone interviews with beneficiaries</li> <li>-In depth interviews in the field</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To what extent are the TISIs, certified trade advisors and their organizations prepared to continue the activities and benefits of the programme?</li> <li>-What is the likelihood that the results/benefits from CTAP will continue in beneficiary countries?</li> <li>-What factors have contributed/hindered the continuation of the CTAP effects?</li> <li>-What is the existing and potential demand for the CTAP?</li> <li>-What evidence exists to indicate that key partners have committed resources to maintain benefits and results?</li> <li>-What other factors may account for the positive or negative assessment of sustainability of the CTAP?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Desk review of available documentation</li> <li>-Past evaluations</li> <li>-Interviews with internal stakeholders</li> <li>-Beneficiary surveys</li> <li>-In depth phone interviews with beneficiaries</li> <li>-In depth interviews in the field</li> </ul>

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Main Evaluation Questions</b>	<b>Main Data Sources</b>
<b>Innovation, replication and scaling up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To what extent has the programme been considered innovative?</li> <li>-To what extent has the methodology and/or approach been replicated or scaled-up outside the scope of the CTAP?</li> <li>-What distinctive components of the CTAP may inform or benefit other ITC's activities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Desk review of available documentation</li> <li>-Past evaluations</li> <li>-Interviews with internal stakeholders</li> <li>-Beneficiary surveys</li> <li>-In depth phone interviews with beneficiaries</li> <li>-In depth interviews in the field</li> </ul>
<b>Gender equality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To what extent was gender-equality incorporated in the design and implementation of the CTAP?</li> <li>-What was the specific gender contribution of the CTAP?</li> <li>-What components of the CTAP might have contributed/hindered to gender equality?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Desk review of available documentation</li> <li>-Beneficiary surveys</li> </ul>

**Annex II: List of stakeholders consulted in Uganda**

Name			Institution	Role
Mr.	Henry Mbidde		EMD Adviser, Kampala, Uganda	
Mr.	John Bosco Lwere	UEPB	Assistant Trade Promotion Officer	
Ms.	Elizabeth	Abwol	Embassy of the United Kingdom, Kampala	EMD Adviser
Mr.	Jimmy	Baluku	Uganda Coffee Development Authority	EMD Adviser
Mr.	Mike	Butseya Maliro	Uganda Coffee Development Authority	Certificate of Completion
Dr.	Stephen Paul	Gitta	Uganda Export Promotion Board	EMD Adviser
Mr.	Sam	Karuhanga	Uganda Export Promotion Board	Certificate of Completion
Mr.	Samson Agay	Kermundu	Uganda Coffee Development Authority	Certificate of Completion
Mr.	Charles	Kironde	NUCAFE	EMD Adviser
Mr.	John Bosco	Lwere	Uganda Export Promotion Board	EMD Adviser
Mr.	Philip	Muwanika	Uganda Free Zones Authority	EMD Adviser
Mr.	David	Muwonge	NUCAFE	EMD Adviser
Ms.	Rashida	Nakabuga	NUCAFE	EMD Adviser
Mr.	Deusedit	Nuwagaba	NUCAFE	EMD Adviser
Mr.	Simon Peter	Okiring	Chemonics International- EEA	EMD Adviser
Mrs.	Brenda	Opus	Uganda Export Promotion Board	EMD Adviser
Mr.	Robert	Sentamu	Uganda Coffee Development Authority	EMD Adviser
Mr.	Amos	Tindyebwa	Trade And Business Development Centre	Certificate of Completion
Mr.	Dick Robert	Wadada	Africa Coffee Academy	Certificate of Completion
Mr.	Francis	Wasswa	Uganda Export Promotion Board	EMD Adviser
Others				
Mr.	Nixson	Nuwagaba	UCDA	NTF III Training beneficiary
Mr.	Kizito	Mayanja	UCDA	NTF III Training beneficiary
Mr.	Joseph	Nkandu	NUCAFE	NUCAFE
Ms.	Monica Malega			CTAP earlier Cohort
Mr.	Daniel	Joloba	Empretec certified trainer	
Mr.	Richard	Okuti	NTF III National Coordinator Uganda	

**Annex III: List of stakeholders consulted in Morocco**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Institution, Role</b>
M. Said Maghraoui , Directeur	Director, Ministry of Trade
Mme Yazidi Khadija, Ctapienne (travaille au ministère)	Ministère
M. Mohamed Essabar, Chef De Division (a suivi les 3 éditions du CTAP)	Chief of Division
Mme Lamia Znagui,	Directrice de la Fédération des Industries de la Peche (representing several participating SMEs)
Mme Ilham Ait Bouazza, Ctapienne	Ministère
Mme kawtar Mgouni, Ctapienne (travaille au ministère)	Ministère
Mme Basma Boukhar, Ctapienne (travaille au ministère)	Ministère
Mme Hasna Ounajama, Ctapienne (travaille au ministère)	Ministère
Mme Farah Rhoulben, Ctapienne (travaille au ministère)	Ministère
Manager entreprise du secteur du cuir	PME
M. El Atmani Youssef	Secrétaire Général de l'Association AMCE
M. Bentahir Youssef, Ctapien	Adviser
M. Mohamed Zahzouhi, Ctapien	Adviser
Mme Dilami Khadija, Ctapienne, Présidente de l'AMCE	Adviser
M. Abdelazziz El Aloui	Adviser
Mme Fettouma Maa	Adviser
M. Abdessamad Sentissi	Adviser
Mme. Amina Errami	Adviser
M. Ali Mehrez	Maroc Export
Mme Asma Missa	Manager PME WASSA
M. Karim Labbene	Adviser
Mme Bouchra Muftisade	Adviser
M. Jalil Beradda	Coach
M. Omar Taj	Coach

**Annex IV: Other CTAP stakeholders consulted**

<b>Name, Country</b>	<b>Role</b>
Mr. Fred Janssen, Netherlands	NTF III IV consultant, SME coach
Ms. Pinar Dincer, Turkey	Regional consultant, SME coach
Ms. Yasmeen, Palestine	Adviser
Mr. Mamoun Nazzal, Palestine	Adviser
Mr. Ibrahim, Palestine	Adviser
Mr. Kemal Kheffache, Algeria	Adviser
Ms. Mariem Triki, Tunisia	Adviser
Ms Selma Kourdali, Algeria	Adviser
Mr. Malek Harami, Algeria	Adviser
Mr. Malik Dib, Algeria	Adviser
Ms. Asanda Languza, South Africa	Adviser

**Appendix V: Internal stakeholders consulted**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Mr. Anders Aeroe	Director
Ms. Eman Beseieso	Trade Promotion Adviser
Ms. Stefania Casappa	Senior Trade Training Officer
Ms. Anne Chapaz	Chief TS
Ms. Iris Houswirth	Chief Strategic Planning
Mr. Leonardo Iebra	Senior Trade Training Officer
Mr. Sebastien Ioanittis	Enterprise Competitiveness Adviser
Mr. Gultekin Ozaltinordu	Former Enterprise Competitiveness Adviser
Mr. Sadiq Syed	Trade Promotion Adviser
Ms. Dorothy Tembo	Deputy Executive Director
Mr. Marcos Vaena	Chief SEC

**Annex VI: Likert survey findings table<sup>22</sup>**

		<b>Strongly disagree (%)</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>	<b>Neutral (%)</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Strongly agree (%)</b>
<b>NO</b>	<b>Question</b>					
<b>1</b>	The CTAP programme methodology was appropriate to address the needs of SMEs in my country				60	40
<b>2</b>	The technical content of the CTAP addressed the topics relevant to SMEs in my country				60	40
<b>3</b>	The CTAP certification process was appropriate to improve my ability to support SMEs			40	40	20
<b>4</b>	I often use the skills obtained through CTAP in my work			20	60	20
<b>5</b>	I apply the CTAP content to any size of company without any problems		20	20	40	20
<b>6</b>	I apply the CTAP content to any sector without any problems			20	60	20
<b>7</b>	The feedback I get from SMEs shows that they find the usefulness			20	60	20
<b>8</b>	Despite the changing economic environment, the CTAP addresses the topics of interest to my SME clients			20	40	40
<b>9</b>	Despite changes in the way business operates, the CTAP is considered useful by the SMEs I assist				80	20
<b>10</b>	The CTAP significantly improved my ability to assess SME problems/challenges				20	80
<b>11</b>	The CTAP significantly improved my ability to design customized support programmes for SMEs			20	80	

<sup>22</sup> Based on 17 fully completed questionnaires from CTAP participants



12	The CTAP significantly improved my ability to deliver programmes to SMEs more effectively			20	80	
13	The CTAP significantly improved my ability to help SMEs design a competitive strategy			20	80	
14	The CTAP significantly improved my ability to assist SME export operations			20	60	20
15	The CTAP significantly improved the overall quality of my business advisory services				80	20
16	I collect customer satisfaction information to assess the quality of the support I provide to SMEs		40	60		
17	The feedback I receive from the SMEs I assist using the CTAP approach/content is mostly positive		20	20	60	
18	I use hard evidence (economic or financial indicators) to verify the effectiveness of the support I provide to SMEs			60	40	
19	The hard data I collect shows that the assistance I provide using the CTAP approach produces			80	20	
20	I believe the CTAP was delivered in a very efficient manner			20	60	20
21	I believe the CTAP has a high level of quality				40	60
22	I still use the diagnostic skills acquired in CTAP to assist SMEs				60	40
23	I often apply CTAP content in my work		20	40	40	
24	I have benefited significantly from my CTAP certification in my professional career		20	60	20	
25	I believe including information regarding my CTAP participation/certification in my professional marketing materials increases my professional status (LinkedIn page, CV, business cards, etc.)		20	20	20	40
26	As a result of the CTAP I have been able to support more SMEs in my country			40	60	
27	As a result of the CTAP I have increased the number of new clients			80	20	

<b>28</b>	As a result of the CTAP I have been able to access new types of clients (e.g. different economic sectors, different size of companies, public sector organizations, international organizations)			60	40	
<b>29</b>	As a result of the CTAP I have been able to provide a wider variety of services to clients			60	40	
<b>30</b>	As a result of the CTAP I get more referrals from clients			80	20	
<b>31</b>	As a result of the CTAP I receive better feedback from SMEs			60	40	
<b>32</b>	As a result of the CTAP I have been able to differentiate my services from those of competitors			40	60	
<b>33</b>	As a result of the CTAP I have been able to increase my daily consulting/ advisory/ training rates significantly			100		
<b>34</b>	I consider the CTAP to be a highly innovative approach to strengthening SME business advisory services				80	20
<b>35</b>	I consider the CTAP has increased my ability to provide innovative services to SMEs				100	