

Evaluation of the ITC Non-Tariff Measures Programme



OVERVIEW

THE PROGRAMME

Trade policy measures other than ordinary customs tariffs, i.e. Non-Tariff Measures (NTM), produce **costly trade barriers and related procedural obstacles** to trade in goods and services which negatively impact the competitiveness of SMEs. The NTM programme addresses these obstacles firstly through **increased transparency** and secondly by **initiatives aimed at mitigating identified barriers**.

The full programme covers **4 components**: building a database of import/export regulations; business surveys to analyse SME experiences; tailored solutions to mitigate trade obstacles; development of coordinated trade alert systems.

The beneficiaries of the NTM Programme include **exporters and importers, Trade and Investment Support Institutions (TISIs), policy-makers and researchers** from developing countries around the world.

THE EVALUATION

The evaluation assessed the first 3 components of the NTM within the 6-year period 2010-16. It was carried out to **assess performance and results of the NTM programme in line with the objectives**, to generate learning and insights and provide recommendations for the successive phases of the programme.

The evaluation used a mixed method approach. Furthermore and since a Theory of Change (ToC) was missing, the ToC was reconstructed to enhance learning purposes and utility for analysing activities' contributions to intended results.

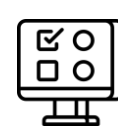
METHODS USED



Document
review



Interviews
(184)



Online survey
(34 respondents)



Country case studies
(Sri Lanka / Ivory Coast)

RESULTS IN A NUTSHELL

- The programme evolved from an **innovative pilot technical project** into a **full-fledged programme** aimed at mitigating the negative effects of NTMs.
- Very **innovative high quality tools and products** that **shaped the analytical methods used by the multilateral trade community** to understand NTMs from the business sector perspective.
- To evolve into a **more strategic and integrated corporate solution** requires **multi-player engagement and multi-layered strategies**, which design and management go beyond the capacity of a single ITC technical unit.
- This evaluation raises the issue of ITC's savoir faire in **managing the life cycle** of a successful innovative donor-supported pilot technical project into a more strategic and integrated corporate solution.

WHAT GOT EVALUATED:	Non-Tariff Measures Programme (NTM)
WHO IS DOING THAT:	The NTM Programme team, which is part of the Section <i>Trade and Market Intelligence</i> (DMD/TMI)
WHAT'S THE CONTEXT:	NTM aims at increasing transparency and helping countries better understand obstacles to trade faced by the business community due to trade policy measures other than ordinary customs tariffs.
PROGRAMME DURATION:	Established in 2010 and ongoing
EVALUATED TIMEFRAME:	The 6-year period 2010 to 2016
EVALUATED PORTFOLIO:	Total budget of approx. \$12.5 million
MAIN ACTIVITIES:	NTM involves 4 components: building a database of import/export regulations, business surveys to analyse SME experiences, tailored solutions to mitigate trade obstacles and development of coordinated trade alert systems.

MAIN FINDINGS

RELEVANCE & ALIGNMENT: The concept of mitigating NTMs' negative effects is overall aligned with beneficiary needs. Flexibility and adaptability is required to address different types of needs of different types of stakeholders and contexts. When the Programme evolved from delivering the technical outputs into supporting initiatives aimed at mitigating identified barriers, the design and implementation of these initiatives did not align enough to different contexts and needs. Therefore, NTM relevance would have benefited from Programme-embedded country guidance and intelligence from ITC Division for Country Programmes. To address better the need of different stakeholders, NTM would have benefited from a more systematic and an organic cooperation from the ITC technical sections.

EFFECTIVENESS: The Programme has been effective in contributing to shape NTM analytical methods, which are today commonly accepted and used in particular in the multilateral trade community and met donors' requirements. Regrettably, although interesting outputs have been achieved, including specific tools for the use of all stakeholders, at the outcome level, too little was accomplished and/ or followed-up on to generate a satisfactory level of results to pave the way for action and resolve NTM issues. To accomplish this results, thinking during the design phase revolved too much around how to get things done and too little on strategic planning.

EFFICIENCY: Donor requirements were met, though cost-efficiency could not be analysed in-depth due to an insufficient monitoring system. The funds allocated to enhance capacity of decision-makers to take actions to overcome NTM barriers, were not managed efficiently. As the Programme evolves from a pilot technical project into a strategic Programme, resource management requires the ability to adapt and change resource commitments and a management function with the capability, understanding and authority to maximize effectiveness and ensure sustainability towards outcomes.

SUSTAINABILITY: NTM missed overall logic linking all components and stakeholders to allow for buy-in and ownership due to the lack of strategic planning at its design phase. NTM started with outputs as objectives and initially, neither the longer-term impact from the implementing partners' perspective, nor an exit strategy defining mutual expectations were discussed and agreed upon. That said, TOAM is a relatively sustainable tool that is designed to operate outside of ITC intervention. Nevertheless, sustainability prospects are somehow limited by the decreasing level of use.

IMPACT (LONG-TERM CHANGE): The chances of the Programme actually leading to concrete actions to overcome NTMs are low. In this context, there is limited evidence that NTM contributed to improving international competitiveness of SMEs in LDCs.

INNOVATION, HUMAN RIGHTS & GENDER EQUALITY: NTM is very innovative. The programme did not include a human rights or gender specific agenda. The NTM surveys did render gender-specific data allowing for analysis from a gender perspective. Furthermore, digital tools delivered offer potential to reduce the obstacles encountered by women entrepreneurs in face-to-face interactions.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure consistency with partners' and beneficiaries' development needs and priorities from the start of the survey cycle to increase sustainability and impact.

Expand the scope and depth of partnerships to ensure partners' engagement both externally with governments, and internally with other sections within ITC.

Consider using collected data for solution-oriented analysis to mitigate the negative effects of NTMs. These can include a regional analysis or meta-study.

Consider scaling-up TOAM and the use of data generated in other countries and regions and put in place a mechanism to support finding solutions for NTM related issues.

Consider TISI- and enterprise-specific actions in initiatives to mitigate NTM related obstacles.

Consider integrating the Programme into the overall ITC programming and management. In parallel, keep looking for funds to implement specific projects to render actionable contents of generated reports.

AGREED FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Organize stakeholders' consultations to take specific needs into consideration. Engage further with local authorities and trade support institutions for capacity building and select best survey implementing partner.

Continue to engage and support relevant partners on their roles and responsibilities in the implementation and follow-up. Continue to engage with relevant ITC Sections on survey implementation and follow-up, including the design and utility of survey findings for technical sections.

Promote the regional and sectoral dimension of survey analysis and NTM workshops to increase awareness of the possible extensions of NTM survey analysis. Consolidate survey database to allow for cross-country analysis.

Expand the TOAM country online platform to regional level upon demand and resources. Ensure a mechanism is put in place to strengthen the ownership of relevant institutions for the TOAM in ECOWAS.

Organize briefings to ITC technical sections on the NTM survey program's activities and outputs, engage relevant ITC sections on survey design, implementation and follow-up, develop further training of TOAM focal points to increase understanding of market access and NTM concepts.

Raise awareness to internal and external partners on the follow-up surveys as a NTM programme offering to assess the removal of trade barriers and identify potential new obstacles. Create a working group to develop a clear understanding of DMD internal value chain.

SUPPORT TO SDGs



INDICATOR

- 2.b Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round.
- 17.10 Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda.
- 17.12 Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all LDCs, consistent with WTO decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from LDCs are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access.

SUPPORT

ITC works directly with agri-businesses, farmers and cooperatives on improving their production and exports. ITC works along agricultural value chains and helps to create demand and strengthen agri-business. All this with a specific focus on women, youth and family businesses. ITC's global public goods provide information on trade data and market access to enable users to identify new market and business opportunities, as well as on voluntary environmental and social sustainability standards, which enables users to enhance compliance with standards to increase exports.

ITC supports and advocates the promotion of a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system by its mandate. It works with governments on trade-related policies and assists with WTO-related matters. ITC provides information on WTO tariffs, and Non-tariff measures to address and eliminate existing disparities. ITC is a custodian agency for this target and tracks progress of its attainment.

ITC provides global public goods, such as the Rules of Origin Facilitator, and makes information on Rules of Origin and Trade Agreements accessible, available and transparent. ITC identifies Non-tariff measures to bring them to the attention of the policymakers. ITC is a custodian agency for this target and tracks progress of its attainment. ITC supports LDCs in addressing NTMs and in conducting trade negotiations.