

Mission, Objectives and Rationale

Mission

- To help maximize the contribution that trade and environment make to sustainable development through building capacities in developing countries to integrate trade, environment and development objectives into their national policy making.

Objectives

The CBTF assists countries, at their request to:

- Assess the environmental and developmental impacts of trade policies, as well as the trade and developmental implications of environmental policies with a view to maximizing the potential benefits to sustainable development and poverty reduction
- Undertake comprehensive analyses of specific issues at the interface between trade, environment and development
- Develop and implement policy proposals to promote integrated and mutually supportive trade, environment and development policies
- Participate effectively in international trade-environment-development deliberations, including in the context of the WTO and multilateral environmental agreements.

Rationale

- Draw on the technical expertise and comparative advantages of UNCTAD and UNEP
- Access to both organizations' global networks
- Synergies in efficient use of resources to launch and sustain a global programme of activities
- Cooperation with the WTO and through established networks, interested governments, IGOs and NGOs.

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on Trade Environment and Development*

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CBTF in brief

The UNEP-UNCTAD Capacity Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development (CBTF) was launched at UNCTAD X (Bangkok, 2000) in response to the expressed needs and demands of governments. The aim of the CBTF is to strengthen the capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to effectively address issues at the interface of trade, environment and development.

CBTF Phase I

During its first phase (2000-2003), with financial support from the European Commission, the Governments of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States, UNEP and UNCTAD undertook a thematic research project entitled "Sustainable Use of Natural Resources in the Context of Trade Liberalization and Export Growth in Indonesia: The Use of Economic Instruments in the Pulp and Paper Industry" and two studies "Environmentally Sound Management of Used Lead Acid Batteries in Central America and the Caribbean" and "Effects of Trade Liberalization on Agriculture in Lebanon, with Special Focus on Products Where Methyl Bromide is Used". In addition, one high-level policy dialogue and 11 capacity building workshops and seminars were organized at national and regional levels between 2000-2003.

CBTF Phase II

Following the success of Phase I and with the growing interest in the CBTF by beneficiary and donor countries, a new phase of activities was launched in 2004 with the financial support of the European Commission and the United States. Activities in Phase II of CBTF focus on the following issues:

Organic Agriculture

Organic Agriculture (OA) offers a range of environmental, social and economic benefits for developing countries. On the economic side, growing world markets for OA products offer interesting export opportunities for developing countries who may have some comparative advantage in OA due to relatively abundant labour and lower use of agrochemicals. In addition, OA production has been shown to have a positive effect on the local environment, biodiversity and soil fertility, and has the potential to increase the yields and incomes of subsistence farmers in developing countries who are not currently using agrochemicals, thus contributing to poverty reduction and sustainable rural development.

The CBTF supports interested countries through country projects and thematic research studies aimed at developing win-win policy options through promoting OA and easing access of organic products in overseas markets.

Environmental Goods and Services

Developing countries may derive benefits from the liberalization of trade in environmental goods and services (EGS), such as access to environmentally sound technologies and know-how, upgraded environmental infrastructure, more efficient resource management and improved environmental and public-health conditions.

The CBTF will seek to enhance understanding of the implications of liberalization of EGS for sustainable development, including the impacts on balance of trade, and help developing countries to identify EGS, including environmentally preferable products, of special importance to their trade, environment and development objectives through capacity building events and thematic studies.

Trade and MEAs

Strengthening the mutual supportiveness of trade and environment policies is required to maximize their joint contribution to sustainable development. Understanding the

relationship between multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and international trade is a key aspect in building this mutual supportiveness. There is, however, sometimes a lack of understanding between the policy makers active in these two fields.

The CBTF helps to bring policy makers from trade and environment fields together to discuss ways of ensuring that MEAs and trade agreements maximize their synergies and minimize areas of potential tension. The CBTF will continue to convene workshops back-to-back with WTO seminars to discuss these issues, and will support country-level projects focused on promoting the mutual supportiveness of MEAs and international trade.

Nature of Activities

Conceived to provide a dynamic mechanism to respond to the diverse needs of countries for technical assistance, the CBTF employs a collaborative partnership-based approach to capacity building comprising the following five integrated and complementary activities:

Country Projects based on practical *learning-by-doing* exercises involving teams of national stakeholders to enhance countries' capacities to develop mutually supportive trade, environment and development policies;

Thematic Research on major issues in the trade-environment-development domain and on practical approaches to sustainably address them, bearing in mind the development priorities of countries;

Policy Dialogue to facilitate awareness raising, consultations and the exchange of perspectives among experts, practitioners and negotiators at the national, regional and international levels;

Training to enhance countries' understanding of the relationship and complementarities between trade, environment and development; and

Networking and Information Exchange to provide technical and operational support at the national and regional levels and to widely disseminate the results of CBTF activities.