

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

A GUIDE TO **UNCTAD** TECHNICAL COOPERATION



Building capacity on trade and development since 1964

This handbook describes the technical cooperation activities carried out by UNCTAD and provides information on how to obtain technical cooperation.



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Under its technical cooperation activities, UNCTAD provides assistance tailored to the needs of the developing countries, with special attention being paid to the needs of the least developed countries and developing countries with the greatest needs. UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities are a significant element in achieving the objectives and policies outlined in the São Paulo Consensus adopted by the Conference at its eleventh session, held in São Paulo (Brazil) in June 2004. The Consensus represents the practical manifestation of the organization's commitment to national, regional and global development, exploiting the interrelationships between policy analysis, intergovernmental deliberations and operational activities.

As the focal point within the United Nations for the integrated treatment of trade and development and the interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development, UNCTAD addresses these issues in a mutually complementary fashion, including through its technical cooperation activities.

UNCTAD's technical cooperation is carried out in partnership with other agencies that provide trade-related technical assistance, in consonance with their respective mandates, expertise and areas of comparative advantage. This partnership and cooperation help to reduce duplication, result in the creation of synergies and ensure sequencing of activities.

The thrust of UNCTAD's technical cooperation is capacity development in the four main areas of its work, namely:

- Globalization and development;
- International trade in goods and services and commodities;
- Investment, technology and enterprise development; and
- Services infrastructure for development and trade efficiency.

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PRINCIPLES, OBJECTIVES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN UNCTAD

A. WHAT ARE THE MAIN OBJECTIVES?

The objective of UNCTAD's technical cooperation is to help developing countries to integrate into the global economy through enhanced participation in the world economy, particularly in international trade, finance and investment.

Pursuing that goal, UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities seek to:

- Enhance the human and institutional capacities of developing countries to strengthen their development policies and to create an institutional environment conducive to sustainable development;
- Help developing countries to better understand their economic problems and to find tailor-made solutions; and
- Enable developing countries to become effective negotiators in the fields of international trade, finance and investment, as well as help them implement the results of those negotiations.

UNCTAD's capacity development relates to enhancing developing countries' endogenous capacity to formulate, implement and evaluate home-grown policies for (a) the development and diversification of their domestic productive sector; (b) the design and implementation of trade and investment policies and negotiating strategies; and (c) the development of trade support services, within the framework of their development goals and taking into account the evolving international economic environment.

B. WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF PROJECTS?

UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities cover a diverse range of issues. Some 300 projects are currently being implemented in more than 100 countries, with annual expenditures of about \$28 million, financed mostly through extrabudgetary resources. These activities complement and are supportive of the policy-oriented analytical work of the secretariat and the deliberative work of the intergovernmental machinery.

Technical cooperation activities are carried out on the basis of specific country, subregional, regional or interregional projects:

- Country projects address requests from individual countries. They are financed at the country level either from the national budget or from aid funds available through ongoing development assistance programmes funded by multilateral or bilateral donors, or by drawing on loans provided by international or regional financial institutions.
- Subregional and regional projects provide services to groups of countries. They are usually initiated at the specific request of a group of countries, such as an economic cooperation grouping. Alternatively, the UNCTAD secretariat will take the initiative itself, following a request from the Conference or the Trade and Development Board.
- Interregional projects provide a standard service to all participating countries. They also include those projects that are more analytical in nature, designed to buttress UNCTAD's policy research and analysis. They also derive from collective requests from different countries, as well as from initiatives of the UNCTAD secretariat.

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