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NEW TECHNOLOGIES, TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING BRANCH

The Use of Training, Research and Tools for Development in UNCTAD

- Virtual Institute
- Training Course on Key Issues on the International Economic Agenda
- TrainForTrade
- E-Tourism Initiative

**TRAINING
AND
CAPACITY-
BUILDING**

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1. INTRODUCTION

To respond successfully to the increasing frequency and depth of changes in the international economic environment, in part caused by rapid globalisation, developing countries must build skills and knowledge in the fields of trade and economics in general. The abilities of governments to conceive appropriate development-oriented economic policies or for the private sector to take advantage of trade agreements and opportunities will depend largely on the capacities of countries' human and institutional knowledge resources.

In the year running up to the 12th quadrennial conference of UNCTAD in April 2008, the issue of building knowledge and skills for trade and development has been a central theme in current debates about the economic future of developing countries. UNCTAD XII will specifically address the role of knowledge institutions and networks as catalysts of economic growth, support to business, and sources of analysis and policy inputs to government and civil society, including academia and the private sector.

UNCTAD recognises that weaknesses in developing country training and research institutions, as well as underdeveloped networks and cooperation schemes between public and private stakeholders, will inhibit their ability to benefit from globalisation, and it therefore aims to build and strengthen their capacities through the programs of the New Technologies, Training and Capacity Building Branch (NTTCBB). The branch seeks to develop capacity in three ways: by belivering training and inputs to training providers; by supporting research and the use of empirical research in policy formulation for trade and development; and by building tools for development.

The four programmes of the branch reflect this three-pronged approach in the implementation of their different but complementary activities, tailored to the needs of specific target audiences. The UNCTAD Virtual Institute on Trade and Development works mainly with academia and researchers in developing countries; the Training Course on Key Issues on the International Economic Agenda is UNCTAD's flagship training course for policymakers on trade and development; TrainForTrade works with trade practitioners, trade officials and private enterprise; and the e-Tourism Initiative provides e-tools and training for a sustainable tourism sector in developing countries.

UNCTAD believes that access to external technical expertise alone is not enough to develop the skill and knowledge capacities of developing countries. The branch therefore emphasizes the need to develop and support local institutions to ensure the long-term sustainability of its capacity building efforts. To this end, the four programmes of the branch have integrated various tools and methods into their work, such as Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and networking arrangements, as well as drawing on their pedagogical advantages in the creation of high-quality materials and the delivery of training.

In preparation for UNCTAD XII and its next four-year mandate, the NTTCBB has demonstrated the contribution of its work to developing countries, least developed countries and countries with economies in transition. This document offers a summary of that contribution.

2. THE ADVISORY GROUP MEETING, December 2007

The Advisory Group meetings provide an opportunity to examine together with a small group of experts, the evolution of cross-divisional training and capacity building activities carried out at UNCTAD headquarters and in the field. They also enable the NTTCB Branch to discuss with participants from beneficiary countries and some partner institutions, future perspectives to be developed and to put forth proposals to enhance the work being carried out by UNCTAD.

In 2007, the purpose of the meeting was to share experiences in the field of building and sharing knowledge among UNCTAD and other international organisations and higher education centres, and to reflect on current challenges and innovative responses being adopted in this area. The meeting was particularly timely in view of the current discussions and preparations for the UNCTAD XII conference and subsequent strategic plans to be developed by the Virtual Institute, TrainForTrade and the training course on key international economic issues.

The discussion centred on three main subjects. Firstly the participants underlined the importance of a long-term perspective for building local sustainable knowledge capacity in developing countries and LDCs. Subsequently, participants also stressed the value of promoting and facilitating strong links between research and policy makers. Finally, participants also examined the increasing role of ICTs as an innovative approach to make available learning and research material, facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences among networks, and to provide access to training.

The Advisory Group also requested UNCTAD to provide a comprehensive mandate at UNCTAD XII in the area of building knowledge, skills and local capacities and urged the donor community to back UNCTAD's efforts in this area with predictable funding.



The Virtual Institute (Vi) is a capacity building and knowledge sharing programme, comprising a small secretariat, based in Geneva, and a network of 23 member universities across five continents that own and determine the work plan of the Virtual Institute.

Over the past year, the Virtual Institute has created and streamlined a customizable set of services for its institutional and individual members that cater to their diverse needs and capacities. In 2007,

- the Vi offered developing country universities, teachers and researchers access to high-quality knowledge and expertise on trade issues, in Geneva and abroad;
- it encouraged links between policymakers and researchers and undertook research and advocacy on this process;
- it provided valuable professional development opportunities to developing country teachers and researchers;
- it expanded its online library of up-to-date trade and development resources, adding new categories and materials;
- it developed and published, in digital and hard copy form, several new customizable training packages;
- it welcomed 8 new university members, 12 affiliate university members and 50 new individual members;



Map showing the global distribution of Vi member universities (23)

Professional development: workshops and fellowships

Many developing countries face shortages of skilled, well-informed professionals to work on trade and economic development at the national and international levels, in public service, the private sector and academia. Vi professional development activities are therefore conceived in response to the growing need for high quality, locally based academic programmes and locally produced analysis of economic problems resulting in the provision of information for sound policymaking.

The Vi supports the professional development of university staff, especially those from the least developed countries, is through workshops and Vi fellowships. The workshop on the teaching and research of trade and poverty (Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania, November 2007) was attended by 20 African academics from 9 countries.

During the course of the week, participants got acquainted with UNCTAD's empirical findings on the trade and poverty relationship, and received training on research methods and databases. They also presented their own research on specific topics of relevance to the trade and poverty nexus and engaged in a dialogue with locally based Tanzanian policymakers on research-based policymaking.

3. ACTIVITIES OF THE VIRTUAL INSTITUTE

The workshop therefore offered a blend of training, peer education, networking and collegiate debate, intended to further the professional and technical development of participants as teachers and researchers, and to support their role as suppliers of information to governments and civil society.

"[The workshop] was really helpful, and there was so much to gain from it. Apart from the workshop content itself, an opportunity to network with fellow professionals in the region was another important element of the workshop. At least now we know 19 more professionals in the region working on various but related issues, and therefore the scope for future cooperation and networking has been widened. I will be registering on the VI website as I realized that there is so much one can gain and be informed".
Mmatlou Kalaba, South Africa

"I have learnt how to communicate research findings to policymakers: [we] must be direct and relevant, not as technical as for academicians."

Winnie Ikiring-Onyas, Uganda

Following the success of last year's fellowship program, the Virtual Institute offered fellowships to seven academics from four member countries during the autumn of 2007. Three fellows from the University of Dar-Es-Salaam in the United Republic of Tanzania, two fellows from Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal, as well as one fellow each from the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, Mozambique, and the Stellenbosh University in South Africa, stayed for between one month to six weeks in UNCTAD.

The purpose of Vi fellowships for the least developed countries, which are financially supported by the government of Finland, is to strengthen the research skills and knowledge of developing country academics by providing them with access to UNCTAD expertise as well as a 'mentor' who guides and comments on their research for the duration of their time in Geneva. The knowledge and skills fellows gain in Geneva can also be shared with colleagues and students in their university when they return. For the fellows from countries other than LDCs, who come on a self-funded basis, the main benefit of participating in the Vi fellowship programme is the access to, consultations and interaction with Geneva-based experts and the opportunities for professional networking, which help them advance their teaching and research projects.

"(T)he possibility of regular consultations with all the researchers, interns, and staff of the UN is one proof of the important role of the Virtual Institute in building and strengthening connections between educational institutions, governments and researchers for capacity building and better integrated understanding of international trade on commodities and (other) matters. Through the Virtual Institute fellowships it is possible to encourage university partnerships and south-north-south cooperation,"

Aderito Noticho, Mozambique



Left to right: George Gandye, Mesia Ilomo and Msafiri Njoroge, from Tanzania, on this year's fellowship program

The work of the membership: joint members' projects and the local adaptation of training materials

The diversity of the Vi membership offers numerous possibilities for member universities to support and work with each other, to develop and sustain their capacities to teach and research trade and development issues. In this regard, last year's Vi members meeting launched two new areas of work for the network: joint members' projects and the possibility to locally adapt generic Vi training materials.

In the area of joint projects, several member universities collaborated on two joint research projects: the first, a comparative study of the impact of regional trade agreements (Jordan, Mauritius and India), and the second, an analysis of the impact of Chinese exports of textiles on Senegal (Senegal and China). The final papers will be published in hard copy and on the Vi website in early 2008.

Other joint projects include the production of a training material on trade and the environment (Colombia and India), as well as the training of academics from member universities in Mauritius and Colombia in Trade Law at Carlton University, Ottawa, Canada, one of the founding members of the Vi network. Carlton University will also be supporting the University of Mauritius and the EAFIT University in Medellin, Colombia, in their academic programmes related to Trade Law in 2008.



Takawira Mumvuma, lecturer and researcher, University of Zimbabwe



Working group on research methods at the trade and poverty workshop, Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania, November 2007

In addition to providing modular, generic training materials (see below) for use on undergraduate and graduate taught courses, the Vi has this year offered the opportunity to its member universities to adapt such material to their local needs. Eight member universities (Jordan, Argentina, Belarus, Colombia, Mauritius, India, Senegal) have so far been adapting existing Vi material on Investment, Commodities, Competitiveness and Trade Negotiations to their local needs, by for example, adding relevant case studies, data, exercises, or translating the material into their languages.

All members' projects are conceived in consultation with the Vi and reviewed by the Vi or other UNCTAD experts to ensure the quality and usability of the material for other members of the network.

Access to expertise: study tours and curricular support

Training successful and experienced trade policymakers, practitioners and negotiators cannot be done in the classroom alone. To accelerate students' experience of the trade policy environment and familiarize them with some of the people, questions, data and tools they may potentially be dealing with in the future, the Virtual Institute continued its study tours: vocational "tours" of Geneva-based institutions.

Centered on UNCTAD, but also involving our partners at the WTO, ITC, WIPO, AITIC, the European Commission and OXFAM, students from masters programs at the University of the West Indies and the University of St. Petersburg spent up to three weeks covering a rigorous program of topics on the international trade and development agenda that exposed them to experts and the surroundings of trade policymaking and negotiation.

The development of successful university programs, such as taught masters courses, is essential for providing locally relevant and sustainable training and education. In 2007, the Vi continued to provide support to member universities, in particular the professional Masters in International Trade at the University of Dar-Es-Salaam, where staff members from UNCTAD taught on the commodities course as well as provided training in the use of UNCTAD's trade databases and analytical tools. The Vi also offered inputs to the Masters program on International Trade Policies and Negotiations at the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, the Masters program on International Investment at the Belarus State Economic University, and gave curricular advice on the existing and envisaged trade-related courses at the Foreign Trade University in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Access to knowledge: the website, training materials and newsletters

A significant development problem for many countries is their lack of access to knowledge and information, whether for the private sector, for national policy formulation or for use in negotiations. Yet access alone is not sufficient to ensure that information and data are used effectively: there is an intermediate stage, which involves finding information and selecting that which is relevant and of satisfactory quality. The Virtual Institute's online library of over 400 resources is a customized relational database of articles, papers, reports and briefs related to trade and development. It is browsable and searchable according to thematic category and keyword, and every resource is given a short description making browsing easier and more user-friendly. Additionally, the library also includes an email alert system, which users can subscribe to by category.

In addition to individual resources for students, teachers and researchers, the Vi website also contains bespoke training material on several topics. This year, the Vi produced four major generic teaching materials, on the Transfer of Technology, Regional Trade Agreements, Trade and Poverty and Trade Data Analysis. All of the materials were conceived in consultation with network members and finalized with comments and additions from them; in this sense, the work of the Vi is very much 'owned' by the users of Vi materials and as far as possible responds to their specific needs. In recognition of the differences among the Vi membership in their connectivity and access to the internet, all of the Vi's training materials are also available on CD-ROM and in hard copy.



Participants at the Vi workshop on trade and poverty, Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania, 2007

Another service pioneered by the Vi this year, has been the use of video conferencing with its members to present the findings of UNCTAD's Trade and Development Report and World Investment Report. This service allowed member universities to discuss with UNCTAD experts in real time and stage an interactive debate streamed simultaneously on the internet. So far, the Vi has been able to offer this service to Medellin University in Colombia, the Higher School of Economics, Moscow and St. Petersburg State University in Russia.

The Vi also produced four quarterly newsletters containing resources and information for teachers and researchers on trade and development issues. Together with the new website - to be launched in early 2008 - email groups and a discussion forum, the newsletter is an important pillar of support for the network's activities and contributes to the sharing of knowledge among members. The Vi also produced a paper on trade-related capacity building and the role of knowledge institutions in international trade.

Expansion of the network: new members in 2007

The Vi university membership reflects the diversity of development experiences, from small island developing states, such as Mauritius, to industrialised, middle-income economies such as Brazil. This year, the membership expanded by 46% from fifteen to twenty three universities and incorporated for the first time, transition economies into the network.

In the past year, the Vi has also been developing a new membership scheme to multiply the impact of its activities at the national level by incorporating partner universities of the core member university in the country; the number of these 'affiliate members' has now grown to twelve. The number of individual 'associate' users has also risen from 200 to 250 in more than 80 countries - an increase of 25%.

"This was another opportunity of knowing different people and creating new networks. [This] is a commendable task that UNCTAD through the Virtual Institute is doing to increase capacity and networking in the region."

Peter Nkala, Mozambique

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE TRAINING COURSE ON KEY ISSUES ON THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AGENDA

The Training Course on Key Issues on the International Economic Agenda, or Paragraph 166 course as it is also known, primarily targets policymakers in developing countries as well as staff of permanent missions to the United Nations Office in Geneva. The programme addresses a key audience of the branch's capacity-building efforts and complements the branch's other programmes, particularly the UNCTAD Virtual Institute.

During the past year, the Paragraph 166 course further developed its format and content in response to the changing needs of policymakers and started to expand its scope in a number of directions. For instance, in 2007,

- Three regional three-week courses were organized between February and November for 73 participants, 32 of which were from LDCs.
- Due to the increased demand from African states, two courses were offered for this region - in Cairo and Dakar - in 2007. The third course was delivered to participants from Latin America and the Caribbean in Lima, Peru.
- The course continued to build links between the target groups of the branch by inviting academics as participants to the training courses in Cairo, Lima and Dakar, thus facilitating the exchange of policy concerns, analytical research and empirical evidence.
- The course also welcomed substantive contributions of resource persons from Virtual Institute universities (see below) who presented research and gave local or regional insights into some of the issues and topics on the course.
- The new website with online registration that was launched in 2006 continues to provide downloadable pre-course reading materials and exercises, and an online discussion function, which was used in the three courses.
- In response to the needs of negotiators and policymakers based in Geneva Missions, a series of nine short courses reflecting the breadth of issues covered by the regional Paragraph 166 course was designed and delivered in 2007.
- A brainstorming session for UNCTAD resource persons was organized in July to discuss the future structure and content of the Paragraph 166 course including opportunities to improve course delivery.

Course design and delivery

The course was also further enhanced by implementing the recommendations of an earlier external evaluation, which included:

- Collaboration in the design of the programme with UN Regional Commissions, Virtual Institute member universities and national experts to ensure a rich, coherent programme on trade, investment, finance and development;
- Introduction of more detailed case studies and lessons learnt from previous policy decisions, such as the examination of national investment strategies, learning from past lessons in defining a national IT strategy; studying and critically examining proposals on specific WTO issues.
- Greater emphasis on policy design and implementation.
- Detailed analysis and debate on the importance and value of trade agreements.



Viola Sawere, Trade Officer, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Marketing, Tanzania

The programme of the three-week course gives policymakers a comprehensive overview of key issues on the international economic agenda from the unique perspective of UNCTAD's analytical work and experience from technical cooperation activities. At the same time, the course also embeds knowledge and understanding through such activities as simulation exercises, extensive discussion and group work, case studies and problem solving, and the presentation of research. The activities on the course therefore have the added value of giving participants the opportunity to practice proficiencies essential for policymakers, such as negotiation skills and techniques; indeed, several of the course's graduates are nominated as negotiators in Geneva-based missions.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE TRAINING COURSE ON KEY ISSUES ON THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AGENDA

With the aim to strengthen the links between academia and policymakers – and emphasize the importance of using empirical research in policy formulation – academics also participate in these courses and Virtual Institute members are being used as resource persons. These members are experts in their field and region and therefore provide deeper insights into the regional issues pertaining to the integration of their countries into the world economy. The academics themselves have also found the course content to be rich and rewarding and have decided to incorporate aspects of the course into their own regular teaching programmes. In such a way, their participation in the course has the desired multiplication effect through the teaching of trade and development issues in their countries.

Impact of the Paragraph 166 courses

The end-of-course evaluations completed by participants continue to reveal that many appreciate the design and coherence of the programme which treats development from the multiple perspectives of trade, finance and investment.

I was very impressed by the interactive teaching methods and the high quality of the course materials that were made available. I shall introduce these methods into my teaching at the University particularly in adapting the materials to our research on development in African states.

Dr. Ernest Bamou, University of Yaoundé II and Ministry of Economy and Finance

The above participant added that this approach could be further elaborated in the classroom at his University, adding to the long-term impact of the programme. Many participants felt that the discussions during the course helped them find solutions to problems that they were facing in their work, and equipped them with the tools to address future questions and issues. The simulation exercise was specifically appreciated as it gave the participants deeper insights into the challenges facing countries in the negotiations process at all levels. In this context, the importance of inclusive dialogue at all levels - public, private and civil society - in the process of securing coherence to development strategies was pointed out as a particularly valuable learning experience.

An opportunity to take a course like that, with experts from Latin America and the Caribbean region, exchange ideas, information, and different experiences on our problems on trade and development was unique. The simulation exercise was a great experience where we could see how the negotiations take place, act as negotiators, go through the official background documentation to the initial domestic consultations, to bilateral consultations, filling the GATS schedule, until the final meeting at WTO.

Remember that in our group there were people from different areas of knowledge (economics, international relations, business, law, etc), working in different places (governmental agencies, universities, etc), which enriched the discussions during the negotiations. I am already disseminating some of the knowledge gained by incorporating topics on ICT and Investment at Economic Department. I have presented a seminar to my colleagues and to the graduate students on new issues in international trade, and I have two graduate students working on topics discussed during the training course (non tariff barriers and trade in minerals).

Dr. Orlando da Silva, Department of Economics, Federal University of Viçosa, Brazil.

Future courses

For the next biennium 2008-2009, a new course is being designed by UNCTAD experts for the five regions, with the first two planned for the transition economies and Western Asia in 2008.

In a separate but related development, the Advisory Body that governs this program with the Secretary General recommended that the courses, currently delivered at a rate of 5 every two years, be delivered on an annual basis so as to better meet the demand for these courses. This is in recognition of the importance and relevance of the course for participants and member States of UNCTAD.

Another positive move is the endorsement by the Advisory Body of the Secretary General's proposal that parliamentarians and decision makers could also benefit from courses taking the same approach and covering the same issues. This should help raise awareness of legislators of trade and development issues and facilitate cooperation in decision making processes on these issues between the government and the legislative. Additional resources within and outside UNCTAD would need to be mobilized to implement both recommendations of the Advisory Body.

There were gaps in my knowledge in the area of International Trade, Finance and Investment and my country and particularly the Central Bank of Tanzania (BoT) needs more experts competent in monitoring the implementation of the International Trade, Finance and Investment Policies. This course has met my expectations and has enhanced my ability to research, analyze and advise appropriately on key international issues with a wider focus and objectives. Also my students at University College will also benefit from this knowledge where I teach on a part time basis.
Geoffrey Mwambe, Economist, Central Bank of Tanzania

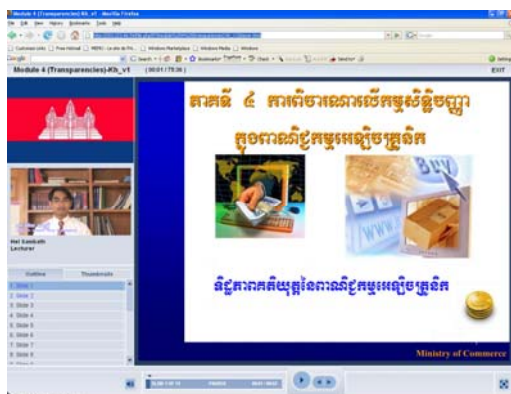


TNC-SME linkages, P166 course in Lima, Peru

The *TRAINFORTRADE* Programme continued its training and capacity building activities with the financial support of the Governments of Belgium, France, Ireland, Portugal and Spain, as well as of the European Commission and of the ports member of its Port Training Programme.

Course development and delivery

In cooperation with other UNCTAD divisions and programmes, TrainForTrade continued revising, updating and adapting its courses so as to better meet beneficiaries' needs. Updated versions of the workshops for the training of instructors and of technical tutors are now available in French, English, Portuguese and Spanish.



Two new courses on Trade and Transport Facilitation and on Basic Foreign Investment Issues were developed and validated in the framework of the project for Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Moreover, the two distance learning versions of the courses on Legal Aspects of e-Commerce and on Competition Law and Policy have been adapted into Khmer, and the distance learning pedagogical material on Basic Foreign Investment Issues has been adapted into Lao.

In addition, new distance learning materials were developed and uploaded to the TrainForTrade platform (<http://learn.unctad.org>) on the topics of electronic marketing in the field of tourism, the organization of a port system and technical port management (part of the course on modern port management). The distance learning course on the Legal Aspects of e-Commerce was developed and validated in Spanish for the ALADI Secretariat and Member States, and the distance learning version of the course on Sustainable Tourism for Development was produced in French, validated in Madagascar and then delivered in West Africa.

In 2007, six train-the-trainers courses, out of which three for distance learning tutors, were organized for 79 African, Asian and Latin American participants who can now take an active part in local seminars, and initiate autonomous training schemes in their countries. Out of the 79 trainers who participated in the 2007 courses, 71 have delivered training in the framework of a TrainForTrade workshop this year. The number of trainers has more that doubled since 2006.

Also in the past year, a total of 32 face-to-face and distance learning workshops benefited 1082 trade operators (242 women and 840 men) from 34 developing countries, including 11 least developed ones. About 285 of these trainees followed distance learning courses all over the world. These workshops were organized in cooperation with other UNCTAD services, such as the e-Tourism Initiative, the ICT and e-Business Branch and the Trade Logistics Branch, SITE Division, the Work Programme on International Investment Agreements and the Policy and Capacity Building Branch, DITE Division, the Trade Negotiations and Commercial Diplomacy Branch and the Competition and Consumer Policies Branch, DITC Division.

Activities by region

Africa: 14 African distance learning tutors from 8 countries participated in a four-day workshop in Dakar, Senegal, in May 2007. This course, funded by the Government of Belgium, taught the participants how to facilitate the management of distance learning sessions and access the TrainForTrade learning platform in their respective countries.

Twenty four tourist operators, both from private and public sectors as well as civil society, participated in a 7-day seminar organized in Anstirabé, Madagascar in July 2007, for the implementation of sustainable tourism activities in this province. This seminar was preceded by 4 distance learning sessions, organized over 2 weeks, which provided participants with basic knowledge on opportunities and challenges related to sustainable tourism for development. This activity has been carried out in close cooperation with the e-Tourism Initiative, SITE Division, as well as with the French Auvergne Region.

Another distance learning seminar on sustainable tourism was organized in November 2007 for 8 West African countries with the support of local tutors trained in May 2007. Following this seminar, which was funded by Belgium, decision-makers from the eight countries gathered in Geneva to discuss possible technical cooperation activities in the field of sustainable tourism for development. This meeting was organized back to back with the "Trade and Development Implications of International Tourism for Developing Countries: pre-UNCTAD XII event" organized in Geneva on 19-20 November 2007 by the DITC Division. TrainForTrade provided inputs to this pre-event and was involved in the preparation of one of its sessions.

In 2007, 350 trade operators have benefited from TrainForTrade distance learning seminars and 45 information and communications specialists have been successfully trained to act as technical tutors in 30 developing and least developed countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. In Madagascar for example, 50 participants have followed the distance learning course on tourism for development organized in remote provinces. It was the first time that local officials, the private sector and relevant NGOs had access to UNCTAD international experts through the Internet. Following a hybrid approach, this distance learning course was followed by a face-to-face seminar in the provinces to gather the needs from relevant stakeholders for the local industry to re-appropriate the tourism sector.

Last but not least, the TrainForTrade project for Angola, which has been prepared since 2003 by UNCTAD in collaboration with the European Commission in Brussels, the European Union Delegation in Angola, the Angolan authorities and the Permanent Mission in Geneva, has been launched in October 2007 in Luanda. In July 2007, the contribution agreement between UNCTAD and the European Commission was signed for an amount of 2,940,000 Euros. This 4-year project aims to assist the Angolan Government in the implementation of a locally-owned national training and capacity building framework.

Asia: in the framework of a French-funded project for Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, TrainForTrade organized 17 workshops, of which two regional train-the-trainers courses. The



project can currently count on 31 trainers and distance learning tutors to take over the training activities once the project - which has been extended to October 2009 - will be terminated. Three tutors from Cambodia and two from Lao PDR were trained to produce distance learning material in local languages.

An independent evaluation of the four-year TrainForTrade project for Cambodia and Laos funded by France praised the results both in terms of its relevance and impact for the development of these countries. The evaluation report suggested that UNCTAD

considers the extension of the TrainForTrade approach to other developing countries, in the framework of national or regional programmes of technical assistance.

E-commerce / Asia

Since 2003, UNCTAD has provided assistance to Lao PDR and Cambodia through TrainForTrade training workshops and advisory services. As a result, the two countries are close to finalizing their legislation on e-commerce in line with the ASEAN regional harmonized e-commerce legal framework. To present the draft legislation to a wide audience, a national stakeholder consultation roundtable for both the private and public sectors was organized in August 2007 in Vientiane by the Science and Technology and Environment Agency (STEA), and in December 2007 in Phnom Penh by the Ministry of Commerce. By 2008, Cambodia and Lao PDR will have enacted their e-commerce legislation in compliance with the ASEAN initiative.

Latin America: A regional training course for 17 distance learning tutors from the Secretariat and 11 member countries of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) was organized in Montevideo, Uruguay, in May 2007 with the financial support of the Government of Spain. These tutors supported the distance learning delivery of the course on Legal Aspects of e-Commerce organized by TrainForTrade and the ICT and e-Business Branch, SITE Division with the financial support of Spain in August 2007. About 104 participants (40% of whom were women) of 11 ALADI member countries and Secretariat benefited from this course. Twenty of these participants were selected to participate in the face-to-face course on the same theme which was organized in Montevideo in October 2007.



The tutors trained in May also supported the distance learning delivery of the course on International Investment Agreements for 52 investment operators from 20 Latin American countries in September and October 2007. This delivery was organized in cooperation with the Work Programme on International Investment Agreements and the Policy and Capacity Building Branch, DITE Division, and with the support of the Government of Spain.

Port Training Programme

French-speaking Network: In 2007, the following African port members of the TrainForTrade Port Training Network implemented the port training cycle, which comprises eight modules on Modern Port Management, for a total of 240 hours of training, and a final written assignment: Cotonou (Benin), Conakry (Guinea), Dakar (Senegal), Douala (Cameroon), and Lome (Togo).

Structure	Country	Training cycles
Port Autonome de Cotonou	Benin	5 th cycle
Sihanoukville Autonomous Port Phnom Penh Autonome Port	Cambodia	3 th cycle
Port Autonome de Douala	Cameroon	5 th cycle
Port Autonome de Conakry	Guinée	3 th cycle
Port Autonome de Dakar	Senegal	6 th cycle
Port Autonome de Lomé	Togo	4 th cycle

Port Training Programme - Benin

The Port Autonome de Cotonou (Benin) has been a member of the French-speaking network of the UNCTAD/TrainForTrade Port Training Programme since 1996. Over the last decade, 70 middle managers of the port community of Cotonou have benefited from this training and capacity-building programme and have been granted the UNCTAD Port Certificate which has boosted their professional career. A human resources development strategy has been established and in 2006, after the lift of the ban on recruitment from the World Bank, the Port Autonome de Cotonou has recruited 60 new middle managers for the different divisions of the entity. Twenty of these new recruits are participating in the 2007 training cycle of the UNCTAD/TrainForTrade Port Training Programme which will allow them to be quickly operational in their new functions and responsibilities inside the Cotonou port community. The Port Training Programme also exists for Portuguese-speaking countries; in 2007 it has been launched for English-speaking developing countries.

In January and February 2007, a three-week training course for 11 port trainers of these five African countries was organized in Marseille, France, with the cooperation of the Port Autonome de Marseille and the Institut de Formation et d'Echanges Portuaires, with the financial support of the French region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. This workshop trained port operators to deliver the modules 1 to 4 of the TrainForTrade course on Modern Port Management. Contacts have been taken with the Ports Autonomes of Abidjan and of San Pedro, Côte d'Ivoire, for their possible inclusion into the Port Training Programme.

English-speaking Network:

An International Coordination Meeting of the UNCTAD Port Training Programme for English-speaking Port Communities was organized in Dublin, Ireland, in June 2007 in cooperation with the Dublin Port Company and the support of Irish Aid. About 60 representatives of 17 port communities, both in developed and developing English-speaking countries participated in the meeting and adopted the Dublin Declaration to launch the programme for the ports of English-speaking developing countries.

In the field of port training, after two years of implementation, the port authorities of Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville decided to take over the responsibility for the delivery of the third session of the programme in Cambodia in 2007. Over the past two and a half years, 35 port managers followed the 230-hour training programme in English and prepared an end-of-study memoir, later defended before an international jury. Among these, 12 officials became certified UNCTAD Port Training Programme trainers, who co-delivered seven modules in the second session in 2007. They also contributed to the upgrading and the translation of the materials into Khmer that will be used as from November 2007. The Port Training Programme implementation in Cambodia contributed to improved productivity in both ports, which was a key factor in the recent decision of the Dublin Port Company to enter into partnership with the Phnom Penh Autonomous Port, following their participation in the International Port Training Conference organized by the UNCTAD TrainForTrade programme and the Dublin Port Company in June 2007.



In November 2007, UNCTAD and Irish Aid signed an agreement, under which the Irish development agency grants 474,000 Euros to the TrainForTrade project for the Port Communities of English-speaking Developing Countries. The overall objective of the project, which follows and implements the recommendations adopted at the Coordination Meeting of last June, is to reinforce the training capacities of port communities of selected developing countries in Asia and in Africa. Preliminary missions to start implementing the project in Indonesia and Malaysia were organized at the end of 2007. Missions to Ghana, Sri Lanka and Tanzania will be organized at the beginning of 2008.

Spanish-speaking Network:

UNCTAD has signed Memoranda of Understanding with the Spanish Port Authorities of Valencia and Gijón under which the ports fund TrainForTrade training activities in selected Latin American ports, especially in countries that belong to ALADI. A preliminary mission to the ports of Callao, Guayaquil and Montevideo was conducted in October 2007 with the financial support of Spain. The upcoming extension of the Port Training Programme to Spanish-speaking countries should be launched in March 2008 at a conference in Valencia.



6. ACTIVITIES OF THE E-TOURISM INITIATIVE

Tourism is an information intensive sector. Evidence shows that the tourism value chain is heavily influenced by the digitalization of tourism processes, from intermediaries' infrastructure to supplier integration, service transformation and distribution, and revenue management. ICTs are instrumental in the empowerment of local actors and the distribution of leadership in the tourism value chain, leading to the enhancement of development opportunities in the local tourism sector.

By facilitating access to market information and best practices, ICTs offer tourism businesses, especially Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), unprecedented opportunities to increase their competitiveness. Strategies for the integration of ICTs into SME business operations rely on a strong partnership-building approach involving both local communities and business providers. A partnership mindset should therefore be encouraged and incentives introduced to pool resources, develop partnerships and strategic cooperation schemes within the tourism sector.

"We firmly believe in the potential of integrating tourism and ICT. This fruitful combination can help reduce poverty, promote growth and assist developing countries in moving up the value chain and assuming their rightful place in the global arena..."

(Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, UNCTAD SG, Malaysia, March 2007)

Launched at UNCTAD XI, in 2004 (Sao Paulo Consensus § 114 & 115 and Annex 1 on the Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships), as one of the Partnerships on ICT for Development, the e-Tourism Initiative promotes ICT-driven growth through a participative strategy (networking and competitive collaboration) for the tourism sector of developing countries. This Initiative is based on a strong public-private partnership, as well as building vertical and horizontal links between suppliers within a country. The Initiative seeks to put more power into the hands of small and medium sized enterprises and help destinations become self-sufficient in their search for business.

Its implementation relies on various components - research and analysis, consensus-building and technical assistance: a) country case studies to provide updated analysis and input to the training courses; b) training courses and validation seminars; c) recommendations and project formulation; and lastly d) development of customized open-source (FOSS) based electronic platforms, to enable local actors to tap directly the international market.

The Programme benefited from the support of the Governments of Canada, France, Germany and Italy. The e-Tourism website (<http://etourism.unctad.org>) is regularly updated in English, French and Spanish. It allows transparency on the objectives, means and outcome of the Programme. Additionally, promotion material has been produced into these 3 languages.

The UNCTAD e-Tourism Initiative has conducted research and analysis on the use of ICTs in the tourism sector. In 2007, ICT and tourism case studies that were carried out in Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam identified key needs in those countries and helped prepare specialized workshops that examine the studies' findings. Training materials are continuously updated in different languages: one set of materials on ICT and tourism provides trainees with instruments for assessing the opportunities and impacts of ICTs in the tourism sector, while another set underlines the importance of electronic marketing in tourism promotion by providing tools for evaluating opportunities and outputs of ICTs in tourism marketing and access to market. This are at present available in English and French in a "face-to-face" version and a distance learning version, which extends the target audience of the course.



UNCTAD also organized a number of training workshops on ICT and Tourism for public-private audiences. For every workshop, the e-Tourism Initiative customized the pedagogical material further to the specific country situation and took into account the profile of the target group. In 2007, seminars took place in Kota-Kinabalu, Malaysia (March), Antsirabe, Madagascar (July), and Vientiane, Laos (November).



6. ACTIVITIES OF THE E-TOURISM INITIATIVE

The e-Tourism Initiative has also promoted consensus-building through advisory services and the organization of important e-tourism events. In March 2007, the Programme held the "Asia-Pacific: e-Tourism for Growth / Matching Market Efficiency and Social Inclusion" conference. The conference took place in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia, on 13 and 14 March 2007.



Two workshops were organized on the first day for the benefit of tourism stakeholders at senior and operational levels from Ministries, National Tourism Authorities and tourism businesses. The first workshop was dedicated to e-marketing and e-payments issues. The second session focused on the importance of innovation and knowledge management in the tourism processes and their impact on related organizational configurations.

"All about a Destination Management System was interesting as it made us think of the missed opportunity in our website and how we could develop it further."
(A participant in a workshop, Malaysia, March 2007)

On the second and last day, the programme continued with a high-level welcoming ceremony chaired by Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, followed by specialized panels on various tourism themes: ICT - its impact and role on tourism; ICT for sustainable tourism; ICT for tourism SMEs; a partnership-building approach; e-Marketing and tourism.



The event was attended by delegates coming from 22 countries / territories of the sub-region, namely: Australia, Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji Islands, Guam, Hong-Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Macau, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, and Vietnam. International and regional organizations, as well as cooperation agencies committed to the development of ICT for tourism in Asia-Pacific were represented: UNCTAD, UNESCAP, ADB, UNDP, UNWTO, and GTZ, thereby increasing the total number of participating countries and territories to 28. For the organization of the event, UNCTAD worked in close cooperation with the civil society and tourism-related institutions, among which the Ministry for Tourism of Malaysia.

The Programme also provided input to the "Trade and Development Implications of International Tourism for Developing Countries: pre-UNCTAD XII event" organized in Geneva on 19-20 November 2007 by DITC.

The IT component of the technical assistance package, an Electronic Tourism Platform (ETP), is currently being developed. It will eventually allow the developing, least developed and small island countries to organize, market and sell their own tourism services online to national and international tourists. This ETP will be a 'portal generator' and a maintenance software tool. The goal of the portal will be to enable prospective travellers to a beneficiary country to search tourism-related information and plan a visit. The ultimate benefit of the software is to support the traveller's decision process in a simple, effective and personalized way. This should result in a measurable increase of the inbound tourism flow. The selected open source software approach will enable a free distribution of the software code and make it possible for beneficiaries to customize and improve the tool according to their own evolving needs and wishes.

UNCTAD started with the functional and technical analysis of the ETP as well as with the development of its release 0.5 that covers the establishment of broad implementation parameters for the platform and a first release of the data collector.

The e-Tourism Initiative's capacity-building (seminars) and research and analysis (national case studies) activities have increased knowledge and understanding of e-tourism issues among public and private sectors of several developing countries and has also provided expert advice on e-tourism strategies.

"It is really very interesting and useful material, we need to have next training course in major cities in Laos. However we need you to translate each module into Lao language and also each exercise and role play because translation into Lao is useful and helpful for all participants to understand well..."
(Lao PDR, November 2007)

Management summary sessions are usually held after the workshops to define a common strategy towards addressing some of the constraints identified by the participants and head toward the implementation of e-Tourism activities in the countries. The positive results of the initial work have resulted in increased requests for seminars and greater networking among the public and private tourism sector.

7. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES OF THE FOUR PROGRAMS

Activity	Date	Countries	Type of Event	Participants
Training				
Awareness Raising on WTO Accession	January	Kambodia	Provinces**	103
Investment Promotion	February	Lao PDR	Provinces**	23
	March	Lao PDR	Provinces**	23
	November	Lao PDR	Provinces**	40
	February	Lao PDR	National	31
Trade and Transport Facilitation	June	Lao PDR	National	37
	February	Lao PDR	National	18
Basic Course on Foreign Investment	February	Lao PDR	National	18
Sustainable Tourism for Development	June	Madagascar	Provinces	24
	November	Ouest Africa	Regional*	90
	November	Ouest Africa	Regional	6
Workshop on ICT & Tourism	March	Malaysia	National	25
Workshop on e-Marketing and e-Payments	March	Malaysia	Regional	36
Workshop on Innovation and Knowledge Management	March	Malaysia	Regional	30
Sub-regional conference entitled "Asia-Pacific: E-Tourism for Growth: Matching market efficiency and social inclusion"	March	Malaysia	Regional	70
Seminar on an Introduction to E-Marketing in Tourism-Malaysia	March	Malaysia	National	28
Workshop on ICT & Tourism	November	Lao PDR	National	36
Legal Aspect of Ecommerce	August	ALADI	Regional*	104
	October	ALADI	Regional	20
	December	Cambodia	National*	15
	April	Ouest Africa	Regional	15
Training of Technical Tutors	May	Latino America	Regional	17
	September	Cambodia & Lao PDR	Regional	14
	January	France	Regional	11
Port Training Programme	all year	Cameroun	National 5th	22
	all year	Cotonou	National 5th	20
	all year	Senegal	National 6th	15
	all year	Togo	National 4th	12
	all year	Guinea	National 3th	10
	all year	Cambodia	National 2nd	72
	all year	Cambodia	National 3th	16
	June	Cambodia & Lao PDR	Regional	17
Workshop on the Teaching and Research of Trade and Poverty: Conceptual and Methodological Approaches and Policy Implications	November	Various African least developed and developing countries	Regional workshop	20
Teaching of Commodities Course at Dar-Es-Salaam University	June	Tanzania	National	28
WITS Training for the Univeristy of Dar-Es-Salaam	July	Tanzania	National	8
Production of pedagogical videos	October	Cambodia & Lao PDR	Regional	5
Meetings				
Round Table on Competition	June	Cambodia	Provinces	55
	October	Cambodia	Provinces	55
Round Table on E-Commerce	December	Cambodia	National	50
Advisory Group on Strengthening of UNCTAD Training Capacities and HRD	November	Various developing and developed countries	Advisory Group Meeting	30

* DL: Distance Learning

** : Local language (Khmer or Lao)

7. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES OF THE FOUR PROGRAMS

Activity	Date	Countries	Type of Event	Participants
Study Tours and Fellowships				
University of St. Petersburg	April	Russia	Study Tour	12
University of the West Indies	May	Various Caribbean States	Study Tour	25
Cheikh Anta Diop University	September	Senegal	Fellowship	2
Eduardo Mondlane University	October	Mozambique	Fellowship	1
Stellenbosch University	October	South Africa	Fellowship	1
Dar-Es-Salaam University	November	Tanzania	Fellowship	3
Publications				
A Case Study on "ICT & Tourism" in Lao	December	Lao PDR	National	-
A Case Study on "ICT & Tourism" in Sri-Lanka.	2006-2007	Sri Lanka	National	-
A Case Study on "ICT & Tourism" in Cambodia	2006-2007	Cambodia	National	-
Training Material on Trade and Poverty	November	Various Developing and Developed Countries	International*	-
Training Material on Regional Trade Agreements	December	Various Developing and Developed Countries	International*	-
Training Material on Trade Data Analysis	December	Various Developing and Developed Countries	International*	-
Non-Paper on Building Knowledge and Skills for Trade in Developing Countries	February	Various Developing and Developed Countries	UNCTAD Commission	-
Four Quarterly Vi Newsletters	Jan - Dec	Various Developing and Developed Countries	International*	420

8. PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

Belgium

- The **Port of Ghent** cooperates with the TrainForTrade programme on issues related to port management. It took part in training seminars organized by the Port Training Programme.

Canada

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with the **University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM)** during the 2007 E-Tourism conference (Sabah, Malaysia) is a key asset for the e-Tourism Initiative activities.
- The agreement between the e-Tourism Initiative and the **Tourism Ministry of Quebec** continued to show excellent and concrete results in 2007.

France

- Activities of the Port Training Programme are planned in Marseilles, in collaboration with the **Port Authority** and the **Regional Authority of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur**.
- The seminar on Sustainable Tourism for Development in Antsirabe (Madagascar) was organised by the TrainForTrade and the E-Tourism Initiative with the **Regional Authority of Valinankaratra** (Madagascar) and the **Regional Authority of Auvergne** (France).

Germany

- The Kota-Kinabalu (State of Sabah, Malaysia) seminar about ICT and tourism was held thanks to the logistical support of the **German Cooperation Agency (GTZ)**, which acted as a national counterpart for UNCTAD.

Ireland

- An International Coordination Meeting of the UNCTAD Port Training Programme for English-speaking Port Communities was organized in Dublin, Ireland, in June 2007 in cooperation with the **Dublin Port Company** and the support of **Irish Aid**.

Lao PDR

- The Vientiane seminar on ICT and tourism has been held thanks to the cooperation with the **Lao National Tourism Administration**, as the project local counterpart.

Portugal

- The **Administração dos Portos do Douro e Leixões** contributed to develop four distance learning modules of the Port training programme in Portuguese.

Spain

- The **Port Authority of Valencia** contributed to the delivery of the Port Training Programme for French and English developing countries, particularly Cambodia, by sending experts.
- The **Port Authority of Gijon** signed an agreement with UNCTAD to support the Port Training programme in Latino America and participate in the Port Training Programme activities for French- and English-speaking ports.
- The two ports participated in a preliminary mission to the ports of Callao, Guayaquil and Montevideo in Latino America in October 2007.

International Organisations

- The **International Trade Centre** (ITC) has been contributing to Geneva-based study tours for postgraduate students of Virtual Institute member universities. It has also developed a joint project with TrainForTrade for Guinea, which is due to start in the first term of 2008.
- The **World Trade Organization** (WTO) has been an active contributor to the Virtual Institute's study tours and is a partner in the joint UNCTAD-WTO publications of a book on applied trade data analysis. WTO publications of interest to academia are made available on the site of the Vi.
- The Virtual Institute has cooperated with the **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific** (UNESCAP)'s **ARTNeT** (Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade) whose resources for researchers are made available to Vi member universities.
- The **Trade and Regional Integration Division** (TRID) from **United Nations Economic Commission for Africa** (UNECA) makes available ECA papers and studies on trade issues on the Vi website.
- The **South Centre's** analytical work has been made available on the Vi website.
- The Virtual Institute has provided information and access for its members to professional development opportunities offered by the **World Bank Institute** and has an agreement with the World Bank to make its analytical work available on the Vi website.
- This year, the **Advisory Centre for WTO Law** (ACWL), the **Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation** (AITIC), the **European Commission** (EC, Geneva), and the **World Intellectual Property Organization** (WIPO) have also contributed to specific Vi activities, in particular the study tours for students of postgraduate programmes at Vi member universities.
- The organization of the 2007 e-Tourism conference (state of Sabah, Malaysia) benefited of the cooperation of the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia, the Sabah Ministry of Tourism and the Sabah Tourism Board. In addition, support was provided by GTZ, the Yayasan Sabah Group, APSDEC and other parties
- The course on Key Issues on the International Economic Agenda benefited from the cooperation of UN regional commissions: the United Nations Economic Commission For Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) have contributed to the programmes of courses organized for their respective regions.

Belgium

2007 saw the conclusion of the TrainForTrade project financed by the Belgium, which included distance learning courses for African and Asia LDCs, as well as Latin American countries. A new course on "Introduction to Sustainable Tourism for Development" was developed and delivered in West Africa and Madagascar.

Finland

This country supported the Virtual Institute to fund assistance to LDCs, as well as the production of training materials on trade and poverty.

France

- Continued to support the TrainForTrade regional project for Cambodia and the Lao PDR.
- Contributed to the funding of the TrainForTrade team in Geneva.
- Co-funded the Phnom Penh e-Tourism seminar through its Ministry of External Relations.
- The Regional Authority of Rhône-Alpes funded the joint TrainForTrade / e-Tourism Madagascar seminar.
- The French Agency for Development (AFD) showed an interest in funding the joint ITC/TrainForTrade project for Guinea.

Ireland

UNCTAD and Irish Aid signed an agreement under which the Irish development agency grants 474,000 Euros to the TrainForTrade project for the Port Communities of English-speaking Developing Countries.

Norway

Via the ALDC Division in UNCTAD, Norway funded the workshop on the teaching and research of trade and poverty in Dar-Es-Salaam, in November.

Portugal

Financial support to TrainForTrade was granted to strengthen human resources of the programme at headquarters.

Spain

The Spanish Government continued to fund the TrainForTrade activities for the Secretariat and member States of ALADI.

In the context of the preparations for UNCTAD XII, and in line with the support for the organization's cross-divisional training and capacity-building activities expressed by Dr. Supachai, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, the New Technologies, Training and Capacity Building Branch will continue to develop the unique comparative advantage of its training and capacity-building programmes, in particular their distinctive integrated approach to training and capacity building, advanced pedagogical skills, comprehensive range of topics covered, and capacity to respond to the needs of a wide variety of beneficiaries going from public officials to trade practitioners and academia.

At the same time, and as the fruitful combination of ICT and Tourism can help reduce poverty, promote growth and assist developing countries in moving up the value chain and assuming their rightful place in the global arena, the e-Tourism initiative will continue to help the developing world capitalize on the considerable opportunities represented by this booming sector. In order to achieve this objective, the Initiative will continue to conduct activities relying on various components: research and analysis, consensus-building and technical assistance.

The branch also intends to continue its research and consensus building activities, which are complimentary to its technical cooperation work. The e-Tourism initiative will undertake a certain number of country case studies on the impact of e-Tourism for development and TrainForTrade will continue its studies on distance learning issues. All four programs will continue to advocate for capacity building efforts to be sustained and increased in the fields of knowledge, skills and tools for development, and hope to build consensus on these issues among all stakeholders.

Support to the building of local and regional training and teaching capacities

The Vi will continue to provide opportunities to member universities to conduct local adaptation of Vi teaching materials, and to work jointly with other members on policy-relevant research. This should not only result in teaching materials' being tailored to the context of the countries involved, but, through practical exposure to research and adaptation, enhance local capacities in these areas.

So as to increase the institution-building impact of the programme on the universities involved, as well as, more broadly, on the participating countries, the Vi will aim to further increase the number of individuals at member universities participating in Vi activities, and continue to expand its affiliate member university scheme allowing additional universities in these countries to benefit from the programme.

The Course on Key International Economic Issues will continue to pay a particular attention in the selection of course participants, as well as the follow-up to its courses, to the dissemination of knowledge and skills acquired during the training in participants' home institutions. It will also continue providing places on the course to academics so as to multiply its impact through the integration of course topics and materials into regular academic programmes at developing country universities.

The TrainForTrade programme will continue to promote long-term, sustainable capacity development for its beneficiary countries, by strengthening its training networks and activities and encouraging South-South cooperation and exchanges. This will involve, in particular,

- the development and adaptation of new and existing courses to the local needs and conditions, including translation into local languages;
- the delivery of these courses, including via distance learning, in order to reach a large target population at an efficient cost/benefit rate
- the continuation of the train-the-trainers cycles organized on a regular basis in order to ensure the transmission of knowledge and skills to and by the trade and transport policy-makers and operators
- the development of synergies with and among all national stakeholders through the establishment of national pedagogical committees and the strengthening of local institutions

At the regional level, it will continue its efforts to strengthen capacities of regional partner institutions such as ALADI.

Support to the building of local and regional research capacities and to research-based policy making

The Vi will continue to provide professional development opportunities to staff from universities and research institutes to build their knowledge of substantive trade and development issues as well as their research skills in these areas. Associate Vi membership will then continue to be offered to participants of Vi workshops to facilitate follow-up and future cooperation.

The Vi will continue to advocate for the practice of research-based policymaking to ensure that economic and social policies are locally determined and designed on the basis of empirical findings. It will also continue to support its members in their efforts to conduct policy-relevant research, and facilitate communication and networking between policymakers and researchers through its technical cooperation activities, work with the intergovernmental machinery, and the dissemination of own research and the work of other substantive UNCTAD divisions.

The Course on Key International Economic Issues will continue facilitating the dialogue and mutual understanding between policymakers and researchers by including both groups among the participants of the course and providing them with opportunities for interaction and cooperation in problem solving during the course.

Other capacity building activities envisaged by the branch in 2008

Thanks to funds granted to the e-Tourism Initiative from the United Nations Development Account, the Programme will develop a specialized and standardized training package and replicable learning model to help developing countries to engage effectively into the integration of local stakeholders through e-business strategies. The model will encourage a partnership mindset to pool resources, develop alliances and strategic cooperation schemes. This will be accompanied by measures to develop human resources and foster tourism-oriented entrepreneurship through sectoral research, needs and assessment workshops, as well as the dissemination of a consensus-based guiding manual. As from 2008, six African ECOWAS countries will benefit from these capacity building activities. The e-Tourism initiative will also continue to carry out several awareness workshops on "ICT and Tourism" as well as on e-marketing.

On the technical side, and in cooperation with the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM), UNCTAD was able to start with the development of the Electronic Tourism Platform. The release of the first version (0.5) is envisaged in mid-2008. This release covers the establishment of broad implementation parameters for the platform and a first version of the data collector. More precisely, it consists of five steps covering (1) the architectural design of the ETP; (2) the selection of the component technologies for the architecture; (3) the setting up of the development infrastructure; (4) the building of an architectural proof of concept and (5) the building of the data collector. Furthermore, and subject to funding, the project plan for release 1 of the ETP will include the building of an A to Z portal supporting the required functionalities and the planning of the work for the subsequent releases. The objective is to showcase ETP 1.0 for a target country.

The Vi will continue to enhance and fine-tune the customizable menu of its services to address the increasingly diverse needs of Vi members, as the network expands and becomes more heterogeneous. Depending on the resources of the secretariat, as well as extra-budgetary resources, it will continue to expand its membership beyond the current 23 members, without compromising the quality of the services it offers to members.

For the next biennium 2008-2009, a new course on Key International Economic Issues will be designed by UNCTAD experts for the five regions covered by the programme, with the first two deliveries planned for the transition economies and Western Asia in 2008. Following the recommendations of the Advisory Body that governs this program with the Secretary General, and depending on additional resources both within UNCTAD and extra budgetary resources, five courses might be delivered annually instead of over a two-year period. In the same vein, new type of courses taking the same approach and covering the same issues might be offered to parliamentarians so as to help raise their awareness of trade and development issues and facilitate cooperation in decision making processes on these issues between the government and the legislative power.

An annual programme of short courses on Key International Economic Issues will also be offered, for a second consecutive time, to Geneva-based missions, providing training and knowledge sharing opportunities to negotiators and diplomats in Geneva, and encouraging the use of research and data in policymaking and negotiation.

The TrainForTrade project for Cambodia and Lao PDR will continue to develop local capacities in order to ensure the local ownership and sustainability of training and capacity building activities. The first activities under the TrainForTrade project for Angola will be implemented, following the set up of the National Steering Committee at the beginning of 2008. The joint UNCTAD/TrainForTrade and ITC two-year project for Guinea, funded by the French Agence Française de Développement, is expected to start in the first term of 2008. The port training programme for French-speaking and Portuguese-speaking African countries will continue and expand its activities; the one for English-speaking developing countries will be pursued in selected African and Asian countries with the financial support of Irish Aid; the programme for Spanish-speaking developing countries is expected to be launched in Valencia in March 2008 with support of the Spanish ports of Gijón and Valencia, and of the Spanish government; its first target countries should be ALADI member States.

Partnerships

The four programmes of the New Technologies, Training and Capacity-Building Branch will consolidate and expand partnerships with UNCTAD divisions and programmes, international organizations, donors and other partners.



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NEW TECHNOLOGIES, TRAINING AND CAPACITY-BUILDING BRANCH

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