

FAQ: Hub & Spokes e-Learning Initiative

In its role as an executing agency of the Hub & Spokes project, the Commonwealth Secretariat is exploring opportunities to offer an e-Learning training module to stakeholders on trade policy matters. In the first instance, funding is available to offer a pilot course in ONE specific trade policy area relevant to the parameters of the Hub & Spokes project—namely trade policy formulation, negotiations and implementation.

1. Which organisation will be providing the training?

The pilot course will be offered by a reputable and experienced international organisation that is well versed in trade policy matters and able to tailor a topic to suit the training needs of the ACP regions.

2. How many stakeholders will be able to participate in the e-Learning training course?

We expect around 200 individuals from the ACP regions will be able to participate in the pilot course. However, this will ultimately depend on resources available and limits imposed by the course provider.

3. When will the pilot programme take place?

The exact timing for the pilot course will depend on the provider selected as well as the topic chosen. However, we anticipate the pilot course will be offered in the 1st quarter of 2010.

Typically, e-Learning training modules require around 30 hours input from course participants over a 4 to 6 week period—again these specifications will vary depending on the provider and course topic.

4. How much will it cost?

The Hub & Spokes project will cover all costs associated with delivering the e-Learning pilot course. Course participants are only required to set aside the time and effort each week to take part in the initiative and get the most out of the course.

5. What does an e-Learning course usually involve for participants?

The e-Learning training course we are envisaging will likely require around 30-40 hours input from course participants over a period of anywhere between 3-6 weeks—again these specifications will vary depending on the provider and course topic selection. For participants, e-Learning courses usually involve a mix of reading material and self-study, online interaction, quizzes and simulation exercises.

6. What IT requirements will be needed to participate in an e-Learning course?

e-Learning courses by definition require some degree of regular access to IT technology—including a PC and internet access. Often e-Learning courses involve a combination of audio, video and slide-show presentations and while providers can usually tailor material to those with slow internet access, at the very least participants will be expected to have access to a reliable internet service (even if it is on a slow bandwidth).

7. Will course participants be entitled to a certificate?

Yes—we anticipate that all participants who satisfactorily complete the course and achieve a passing grade in the tests set by the provider will receive a certificate.

Building the Capacity of ACP Countries in Trade Policy Formulation, Negotiations and Implementation ('Hub and Spokes') Project



The 'Hub and Spokes' Project is jointly funded by the European Commission, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie and is supported by the ACP Secretariat

8. Who can participate in the e-Learning pilot course?

At this stage we envisage priority being accorded to trade officials whose day-to-day work activities will benefit from their participation. This could include both junior and senior trade officers. For those ministries benefiting from the services of a Trade Policy Analyst (TPA) under the auspices of the Hub & Spokes project, we encourage ministries to bear in mind the capacity needs of officers designated as 'counterparts' to the TPA when identifying course preferences.

9. What language(s) will the e-Learning pilot course be available in?

We will endeavour to secure a course provider that can offer the material in multiple languages—including English, French and (where possible) Portuguese. However, this may be limited by any additional cost of providing the course in more than one language and the capacities of the provider. Where a pilot course provided in multiple languages is not feasible it will be provided in English only.

10. When can I nominate individuals to participate in the pilot course?

Once the topic has been finalised and course provider selected, the Commonwealth Secretariat will seek nominations from your organisation to participate in the pilot course.

11. Will there be any further e-Learning training exercises offered after the pilot course?

Subject to feedback from course participants and views on the effectiveness of e-Learning in delivering training and enhanced capacities, future courses may be considered on a broader range of trade policy topics as part of the planned Hub & Spokes Phase II programme.

12. What topic will be the focus of the pilot course?

To ensure the pilot course targets a recognised training need of ACP member countries, the Commonwealth Secretariat is seeking input from trade ministries to identify a suitable topic. To assist this process, through research and discussions with possible course providers we have identified a number of topics that you may wish to consider. However, please do not hesitate to identify other topics that are of higher priority for your organisation/ministry.

A number of broad topics are listed and summarised in the Annex to this FAQ. Once you have reviewed the likely course outline for these topics, please prioritise these topics in order of preference by completing the survey. The preferences your organisation selects should take into account the broad trade policy capabilities that will be important to your organisation over the next 12-18 month period and the trade officials you are likely to nominate as course participants.

13. How can the survey be accessed and completed?

To minimise paper work for you and for us and help progress this initiative quickly, our preference is for the survey to be completed online at the Hub & Spokes website at the following web address: www.thecommonwealth.org/hubandspokes.

Should this not be possible, please complete the hardcopy of the survey and return to the Hub & Spokes project team by mail or by facsimile:

The Hub & Spokes Project Team Commonwealth Secretariat Marlborough House, Pall Mall London SW1Y 5HX UNITED KINGDOM
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Or fax to: +44 (0) 207 747 6504
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14. When should the survey be completed by?

Please complete the survey online, or return by post, no later than **Tuesday 22 December 2009**.

ANNEX: Possible e-Learning Course Topics and Indicative Course Outlines

<p>Introduction to the WTO</p>	<p>The course focuses on the multilateral trading system: the World Trade Organization (WTO)—its history and its functions, and with the legal framework that governs trade relations between national economies. The objective of the course is to describe and explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the role and functions of the WTO; - the key features of the various agreements (in trade in goods, trade in services and trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights); - the main rights and obligations of Member Governments as set out in the WTO Agreements; - the exceptions to the WTO basic market access disciplines and how a Member's obligation can be "waived"; - the WTO rules governing regional integration; - the concept of special and differential treatment; - the provisions on anti dumping, safeguards provisions, countervailing duties.
<p>International Negotiations (Practical Skills and Techniques)</p>	<p>The overall objective of this course is to provide professionals and interested individuals with powerful and structured techniques to enhance their negotiation skills and expertise. It revisits important and time tested concepts of negotiation, which form the building blocks for skilled negotiators. An important component of this course is a hands-on online simulation exercise which will give participants an international negotiation perspective through peer-to-peer exchanges under the guidance of an expert. Lastly, this course has been developed on the premise that there is no one right way to negotiate, only systematic thinking helps along with the use of an analytical framework to set strategy for negotiating case-by-case. This course will help participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - create greater value from both internal and external negotiations; - understand and apply the underlying concept of negotiation theory to your advantage; - build more productive relationships with your counterparts; - improve collaboration internally with colleagues; - increase awareness of the pervasiveness of negotiation;
<p>WTO Dispute Settlement</p>	<p>This course aims to provide a full understanding of the WTO dispute settlement process, its evolution, basic rules and accomplishments. Specifically, this foundation course aims at providing a thorough knowledge of a subject of critical importance to those directly or indirectly involved in international trade policies, academic research or international commercial matters. The objective of the course is to describe and explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the GATT 1947 and the institutionality of the WTO; - dispute settlement and jurisprudence under the GATT 1947; - dispute settlement under the WTO: General Rules and Principles; - legal issues before the DSU panels and the dispute settlement process; - Appellate Review, compensation and suspension of concessions and other obligations, - an illustrative case of a WTO dispute controversy.
<p>Trade in Services</p>	<p>This course will provide participants with an in-depth overview of the current negotiations on disciplines for domestic regulation in the WTO. The objective of the course is to describe and explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the role and functions of the WTO; - the legal framework of the Multilateral Trade System; - the basic principles of the Multilateral Trade System in trade in goods and show how these principles apply to trade and services; - the legal framework governing the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) Agreement; - Members' rights and obligations in the GATS Agreement.

Trade Facilitation	<p>The course focuses on the WTO and the multilateral trading system, with special emphasis on the TRIPS Agreement. The objective of the course is to describe and explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the role and functions of the WTO; - the legal framework of the Multilateral Trade System; - the relationship between the World International Property Organization (WIPO) and the WTO; - the basic principles of the Multilateral Trade System in trade in goods and show how these principles apply to TRIPS; - the legal framework governing the TRIPS Agreement. - Members' rights and obligations in the TRIPS Agreement.
Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures	<p>The course focuses on the WTO and the multilateral trading system, with special emphasis on the SPS Agreement. The objective of the course is to describe and explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the role and functions of the WTO; - the legal framework of the Multilateral Trade System; - the basic principles of the Multilateral Trade System in trade in goods; - the legal framework of the SPS Agreement; - Members' rights and obligations in the SPS Agreement
Trade Remedies	<p>The course focuses on the WTO and the multilateral trading system, with special emphasis on anti-dumping, safeguards and subsidies and countervailing measures. The objective of the course is to describe and explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the role and functions of the WTO; - the legal framework of the Multilateral Trade System; - the basic principles of the Multilateral Trade System in trade in goods; - the legal framework governing the "WTO trade remedies"; - Members' rights and obligations in the WTO agreements on anti-dumping, safeguards, subsidies and countervailing measures, countervailing duties.
Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)	<p>The course focuses on the WTO and the multilateral trading system, with special emphasis on the structural and institutional content of the WTO and the TBT Committee, the legal framework- the instruments – governing TBT and current discussions about the TBT Agreement. The objective of the course is to describe and explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the role and functions of the WTO; - the legal framework of the Multilateral Trade System; - the basic principles of the Multilateral Trade System in trade in goods; - the legal framework of the TBT Agreement; - Members' rights and obligations in the TBT Agreement.
