

AID-FOR-TRADE CASE STORY

SINGAPORE

The Singapore Cooperation Programme

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I Issues Addressed

1 Singapore contributes towards the WTO's Aid-for-Trade (Aft) initiative through the human resource capacity building programmes of the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP), which is administered by the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2 Singapore strongly believes in the importance of human resource capacity development in strengthening an economy's trade and economic capacity, so as to facilitate its economic development and effective participation in the international trading system. This arises from Singapore's own experience, in which human resource development was a key factor contributing to our economic growth and development. This is especially because our people are our only resource, as we have no natural resources.

3 Singapore has been providing technical assistance to developing economies since the mid-1960s. These technical assistance programmes were brought under a single framework when the SCP was established in 1992. To date, the SCP has trained more than 70,000 government officials from 169 developing economies from across the Asia-Pacific, Africa, Middle East, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean regions.

4 As much as 80% or more of our SCP programmes totalling US\$15 to US\$20 million per year contribute either directly or indirectly to Aft. These include programmes designed around Singapore's experiences in trade and investment promotion, as well as other fields which contribute to the building of an economy's economic infrastructure and strengthening of its economic policy-making capabilities to be integrated into the global trading system. These diverse fields include economic development, education, environment, urban development, civil aviation, port management, public governance, information and communication technology, healthcare and disaster management.

II. Objectives Pursued

5 Under the SCP, we have been designing programmes based on our technical expertise and experience in specific areas, while taking into consideration the various economies' development needs as well as policy planning and budgeting framework. Given Singapore's firm belief in harnessing trade to attain growth and development, trade-related capacity building programmes have been mainstreamed into our development assistance strategy and programming. The SCP has actively supported international events that

promote and facilitate dialogue on trade and development issues, as well as regional programmes that build developing economies' capacity to handle trade policy issues such as trade negotiations and dispute settlement. An example is the WTO Regional Trade Policy Course for the Asia-Pacific, which Singapore hosted annually from 2007-2010.

6 Under the SCP, Singapore has a long-standing partnership with the WTO to conduct joint technical assistance programmes for developing economies under the Singapore-WTO Third Country Training Programme (TCTP), which was established in 1996. Through this TCTP, Singapore collaborates with the WTO to host trade capacity building programmes which assist eligible Members in the Asia-Pacific to enhance their human resource and institutional capacities to deal with the challenges emerging from the multilateral trading system. Currently, Singapore and the WTO conduct an average of three capacity building programmes annually, including an Asian Parliamentarians' Workshop, which covers areas such as TRIPS, Trade and Environment, and Services.

7 Since the December 2005 WTO Ministerial Conference, we have committed additional resources to programmes targeting specific areas, such as capacity development to engage in regional and bilateral free trade agreements. In line with the growing emphasis on aid alignment and coordination, we have also been working closely with our international partners such as the World Bank, World Intellectual Property Organisation, International Monetary Fund, Commonwealth Secretariat, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) in organising more joint technical assistance programmes in various fields.

8 In our immediate region, the SCP contributes actively to the capacity building efforts of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), aimed at narrowing the developmental gap and facilitating an integrated ASEAN community by 2015. Singapore has made three pledges totalling about US\$92 million from 2001-2011 towards the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), mostly in the form of capacity building programmes. Singapore's Aft programmes for the less developed ASEAN members under IAI are aimed at capacity building in trade negotiations, international trade facilitation, and understanding of regional/international trade agreements. To date, over 33,000 government officials from these economies have benefited from programmes in Aft and other relevant areas under the SCP.

9 For the Middle East, the SCP contributes actively to the capacity building programmes that build industrial capacity and trade negotiation skills in 49 member economies of the Asia-Middle East Dialogue (AMED). Courses have been conducted for AMED economies on "Doha Round Negotiations: Challenges and Opportunities" and "Capacity Building for Negotiating Free Trade Agreements". AMED was initiated by Singapore in 2005 to strengthen dialogue, economic cooperation and trade ties between the two regions. These programmes are conducted in two training centres in Jordan and Qatar, in partnership with their respective governments.

10 For Latin America, the SCP has offered capacity building programmes in areas that build economic infrastructure and productive capacity of 32 member economies of the Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC) since 2007. These programmes include trade facilitation courses such as "Port Management and Operations" and "Airport Terminal Operations and Management". FEALAC was initiated by Singapore in 1999 for the similar purpose of strengthening economic cooperation and dialogue between the two regions.

III. (For projects and programmes: Design and Implementation)

11 The SCP conducts a wide range of programmes, focusing on building up the trade policy, economic infrastructure and productive capacities of the developing economies to participate more effectively in the international trading system. These programmes include courses, workshops and study visits for officials who are in a position to shape domestic opinions and/or provide policy advice to their governments. The policy makers and senior officials may observe first-hand the critical role that trade has played in the development of Singapore. At the trade policy and regulation level, the SCP programmes cover trade policy and planning, trade liberalisation, regional trade agreements, trade negotiation and facilitation, dispute settlement, custom clearance, border management and international trade and investment promotion. At

the economic infrastructure level, the SCP programmes focus on the trade facilitation aspects of sea and airport management, logistics and distribution, and ICT. At the production capacity level, the programmes cover banking, trade financing, enterprise development and competitiveness, and seafood safety code. At the general support level, the SCP organises programmes and study visits that focus on Singapore's experience in macroeconomic reforms and trade liberalisation.

12 With the experience gained in our bilateral technical assistance, we have also worked with developed economies and key international organisations to offer joint technical assistance programmes to developing economies. The partnership concept was conceived as a means to harness the joint expertise and resources of Singapore and our partners, so as to widen the scope and depth of the experience shared with these economies. Our relations are formalised through TCTP Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) which outline how we work together to provide technical assistance programmes including cost-sharing formula, type and number of programmes, partner economies, etc. Regular meetings and consultations are held to review and fine-tune the working arrangements and the programmes offered. The SCP has forged close to 40 international partnerships with developed economies, international organisations and non-governmental organisations to run such partnership programmes. Through these partnerships, we are able to leverage on our partners' resources and expertise as well as combine our efforts to achieve maximum benefits and outcomes for the participants of our joint programmes.

IV. Problems Encountered

13 A key challenge is to tailor our programmes in response to changing regional and global landscapes, in order to help developing economies take maximum advantage of the WTO rules and agreements to protect their interests in regional and international trade. Urbanisation, climate change and food security are emerging challenges affecting the world, especially of developing economies, and Singapore has to attune to these changing needs. In this regard, close collaboration with our partners, as well as consultations with beneficiary economies to assess training needs, formulate Aid-for-Trade programmes and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our programmes are important.

V. Factors for Success/Failure

14 Singapore engages partner economies, donor partners as well as stakeholders closely to coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation and outcomes of our programmes. Emphasis is placed on aligning our programmes to maximise the outcome of our efforts. The programmes are designed to meet the training needs of recipient economies within Singapore's capacity. Post-course surveys and evaluation sessions are conducted at the end of the programmes to assess if the programme objectives have been met. Regular consultations are also held with the partner economies to evaluate the programmes.

15 Also contributing to the success of the SCP is the availability of competent and experienced trainers in disparate fields where Singapore has done well, to share their knowledge with programme participants. With our development partners, we are able to do more and offer greater breadth in coverage and depth in expertise in our joint programmes. There is great care taken in the selection of training providers, both from public and private agencies, to ensure their relevance.

16 Singapore works closely with our overseas Missions and the recipient economies' National Focal Points to extend the reach of our programmes through effective publicity to ensure that qualified participants can apply.

VI. Results Achieved

17 To date, the SCP has trained more than 70,000 government officials from 169 economies from across the Asia-Pacific, Africa, Middle East, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean regions

18 As a strong supporter of free trade, Singapore's SCP has helped to raise the overall awareness among developing economies of the opportunities of a rules-based open world market, and to strengthen

their national capacities to access and benefit from it through their participation in international trade and the WTO.

VII. Lessons Learned

19 Singapore's own development experience serves as a useful example of the importance and benefits of a rules-based international trading system underpinned by the WTO. During our consultation with these economies, we make a conscious effort to identify and emphasise training programmes that would build practical trade skills, economic infrastructure and productive capacity.

20 Regular consultations with our agencies and partners to coordinate our technical assistance programmes help us to keep abreast of the changing needs of developing economies, so that our limited resources can be optimally deployed to meet their needs. This approach has enabled us to offer both regularly scheduled courses on a wide range of areas, as well as customised training to cater to the needs of specific economies.

21 Whilst most of our programmes are conducted in Singapore, the in-country IAI training centres in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam and the AMED joint training centres in Qatar and Jordan enable us to reach out to more participants from these regions.

VIII. Conclusion (applicability to other programs)

22 Singapore's contribution in development assistance under the SCP has increased over the years. As much as 80% or more of our current programmes under the SCP contribute either directly or indirectly to Aft. Singapore remains committed to raising the capacity of developing economies to connect to the international trading system. Singapore will also continue our collaboration with the WTO and other partners, and forge new international partnerships, within our overall capacity to contribute.

