



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Committee on Managing Globalization

Third session, Part I
12-14 September 2006
Bangkok

**PROGRAMME PLANNING AND EVALUATION: MONITORING AND EVALUATION:
REVIEW OF SELECTED PROJECTS IN THE THEMATIC AREA OF
MANAGING GLOBALIZATION**

(Item 7 (b) (ii) of the provisional agenda)

THE ASIA-PACIFIC RESEARCH AND TRAINING NETWORK ON TRADE

Note by the secretariat

SUMMARY

The present note contains an internal evaluation of the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT), an initiative launched by ESCAP and the International Development Research Centre, Canada, in October 2004, in cooperation with 10 national-level research institutions in the region. ARTNeT is at an initial stage of development. Nonetheless, the review of ARTNeT activities and the feedback received from participants suggest that significant progress has been made in achieving the network's immediate objectives of: 1. building trade research capacity of institutions in least developed countries and other developing countries; 2. delivering demand-driven studies on trade issues to strengthen policy formulation; and 3. improving dissemination of research results to policymakers.

The secretariat has sought to create synergies, joining with United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Development Programme and World Trade Organization as ARTNeT core partners. The growing interest and commitments to the network of these key international organizations have increased the sustainability of the project. Overall, feedback from ARTNeT members and partners indicate that implementation of the project has been timely and efficient.

Nevertheless, a long-term challenge for ESCAP, as the secretariat to ARTNeT, is how to support ARTNeT so that it can evolve into the region's eminent generator of innovative "homegrown" trade research. Some of the immediate challenges, given the current financial resources of the network, include: (a) identifying and engaging promising research institutions and researchers in least developed countries; (b) balancing capacity-building objectives with the delivery of high quality studies; and (c) strengthening the contribution of governments in ARTNeT activities and sharpening the policy relevance of research.

The Committee is invited to review this programme and to provide further guidance to the secretariat on a strengthened relationship between research and policy formulation.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	1
I. CURRENT MANDATES	2
II. STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF ARTNET RESEARCH	3
III. IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES OF ARTNET AND PROGRESS ACHIEVED.....	4
IV. EFFICIENCY OF PROJECT DELIVERY	8
V. CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION	9
VI. CONCLUSION	11
Annex. List of ARTNeT members and partners (June 2006).....	12

Introduction

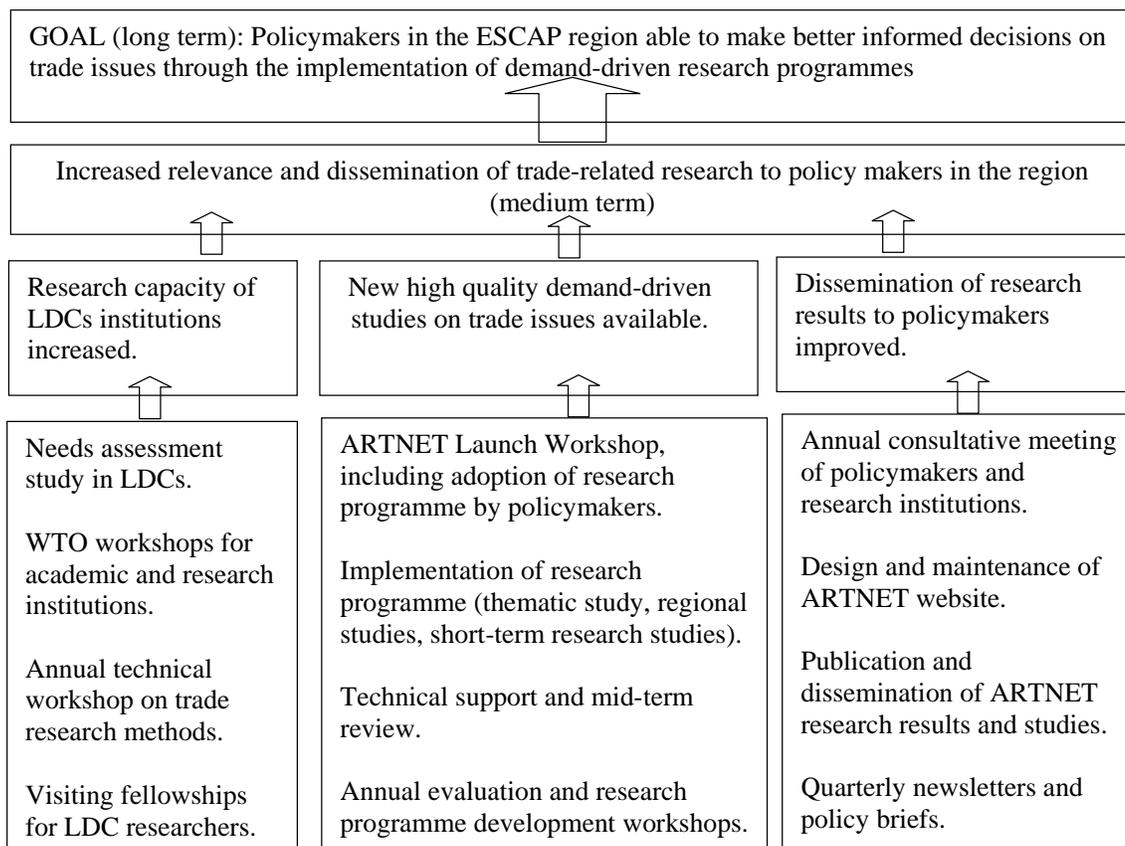
1. In April 2004, members and associate members of ESCAP requested the secretariat to strengthen research and policy-oriented analysis. Support was expressed for the establishment of a research network on trade to equip the region with a mechanism for enhancing the capacity of research institutions to deliver high quality and demand driven studies on trade issues of importance to policymakers. Given the increasing complexity of the international trade environment, trade policymakers in the ESCAP region faced a growing need for rigorous trade policy analysis. They required more effective domestic institutions able to deliver “homegrown” research and empirical analytical studies that would take into account the national and regional contexts and provide an enhanced economic basis for trade policy decision-making.

2. In response to these needs, the secretariat, in cooperation with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and 10 leading national research institutions in Asia and the Pacific, launched the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT) on 27 October 2004, during the first session of the Subcommittee on International Trade and Investment.

3. ARTNeT is an open network of national research institutions (ARTNeT members), supported by ESCAP and other core ARTNeT partners, including United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Trade Organization (WTO). The ESCAP Trade and Investment Division serves as the secretariat of the network and, as such, facilitates the conceptualization, operationalization and delivery of ARTNeT activities in collaboration with members, partners and government officials involved in trade analysis and policymaking through their respective focal points.

4. The specialized regional network aims to increase the amount of relevant and quality trade research in the region by harnessing available research capacity and developing additional capacity through: (a) regional team research projects; (b) enhanced research dissemination mechanisms and increased interactions between policymakers and researchers; and (c) specific capacity-building activities catering to researchers and research institutions from least developed countries. An overview of the ARTNeT project, including its goals, objectives and main activities, is presented in figure 1.

Figure 1. ARTNeT project overview



5. The research network now comprises 16 member institutions in 14 countries in the Asian and Pacific region (the annex contains a list of members and partners). In addition to continuous IDRC support of the network, support from other ARTNeT partners increased markedly between 2005 and 2006, with, for example, an 80 per cent increase in WTO financial support to the ARTNeT research programme. The UNDP Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Initiative also joined as a core ARTNeT partner in November 2005, following its participation in the second ARTNeT Consultative Meeting of Research Institutions and Policy Makers, held in Macao, China, in October 2005.

I. CURRENT MANDATES

6. The urgent need for policy-relevant research and analysis at the regional level is evident from the increasingly complex regional trade policy environment. Fourteen new preferential trade agreements came into force during the year 2005 alone. The stalling of the Doha round of negotiations, the increasing stringency in developed and developing countries alike of non-tariff barriers, and the growing importance of market-driven regional and global supply networks have also led to an increasingly unpredictable and segmented trading environment.

7. In recognition of this complexity, at its sixty-second session, the Commission underscored the importance of strengthening capacity in trade policy analysis and research and expressed appreciation for the ongoing work of ARTNeT and its contribution to policy-related decision-making and to regional cooperation in trade research analysis and information sharing.¹ Further, in its resolution 62/6 on managing globalization through strengthened regional cooperation in trade and investment, the Commission explicitly requested the Executive Secretary to continue efforts, in collaboration with regional and global partners, to undertake policy-oriented analytical work and provide technical assistance to ESCAP members and associate members in order to increase their human and institutional capacity in this area.

8. In its resolution 62/6, the Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to continue to organize trade policy dialogues, not only among policymakers but also between government, private sector and civil society representatives. ARTNeT, as a multi-stakeholder inter-agency platform facilitated by ESCAP, provides a useful platform for the efficient delivery of these types of activities.

9. At the global level, ARTNeT activities are in support of Millennium Development Goal No. 8 to “develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory”. The project is also in support of the 2005 World Summit Outcome,² the Doha Development Agenda³ and the Monterrey Consensus.⁴

II. STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF ARTNET RESEARCH

10. The strategic direction of the research programme is led by the contextual realities of the trade policy environment in which government policymakers operate. At the core of this is how to design a trade policy that will promote economic growth and development. For a dynamic trading region such as Asia and the Pacific, the focus has been on securing additional market access through multilateral and regional trade liberalization and strengthening the economic basis on which policy- and decision makers formulate their policies and negotiate strategies. A sectoral focus has been adopted, in line with the sector-specific approach of trade negotiations, whether at the multilateral, regional or bilateral levels.

11. The ARTNeT research programme of 2004-2005 was designed, therefore, on the basis of the key concerns expressed by trade policymakers during the First ARTNeT Consultative Meeting. Two major components of research were agreed on. The first, trade facilitation, is a new area of the WTO

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2006, Supplement No. 19* (E/2006/39-E/ESCAP/1390), para. 180.

² See General Assembly resolution 60/1 of 16 September 2005, paras. 36-38.

³ See A/C.2/56/7, annex, paras. 38-39.

⁴ See Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development (*Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex), paras. 57-64.

negotiating agenda, with research efforts focused specifically on the need for and cost of implementing selected trade facilitation measures being discussed by the WTO Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation.

12. The second was a regional study on agricultural trade liberalization focusing on the potential for agricultural trade opportunities at the regional level through preferential trade agreements (PTAs), at a time when the number of PTAs has increased sharply. The study also included a chapter on non-tariff barriers faced by least developed countries in major export markets.

13. The ARTNeT research programme of 2005-2006, endorsed by policymakers in October 2005, was a sequential follow-up to the research results that emerged during the first year of the project. Since the preliminary research findings on trade facilitation suggested that customs valuation and trade facilitation through regional trade agreements were priority issues for both Governments and private sectors, the Second ARTNeT Consultative Meeting approved further research on trade facilitation, focusing particularly on difficulties associated with the implementation of the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation and the trade facilitation provisions in existing preferential trade agreements.

14. A regional study on trade liberalization in services was also approved, as this sector had emerged as one of increasing importance to this region, both as an earner of foreign exchange and as a sector whose development determines the efficiency and competitiveness of the whole economy. This study is ongoing and focuses on trade liberalization in financial services in three countries with very different characteristics and levels of development: Bangladesh, Malaysia and Nepal. It is expected that useful intercountry exchange of experiences will emerge from this exercise.

15. While the ARTNeT research programme of 2006-2007 will be discussed and approved in the next ARTNeT Consultative Meeting in November 2006, the following issues have emerged from ARTNeT and other ESCAP policy dialogues, and are likely to feature prominently in future ARTNeT research: (a) the impact of non-tariff barriers, including standards and trade procedures, as well as policy solutions to reduce their impact on trade and development; (b) regional trade integration issues, including evaluating the impact of preferential trade agreements that recently came into force and the potential for the consolidation of bilateral agreements into larger region-wide agreements; (c) the relationship between trade, investment and competition policies, and their implications for countries of the region, including the potential benefits from harmonizing and coordinating policies and agreements in these related areas.

III. IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES OF ARTNET AND PROGRESS ACHIEVED

16. The immediate objectives of ARTNeT are: (a) building the trade research capacity of institutions in least developed countries and other developing countries; (b) delivering demand-driven

studies on trade issues to strengthen policy formulation; and (c) improving the dissemination of research results to policymakers. The progress achieved towards meeting these objectives is discussed below.

A. Building trade research capacity of institutions in least developed countries and other developing countries

17. Forty-two researchers from 14 research institutions in the region have received training on trade research techniques during two regional ARTNeT capacity-building workshops on trade research, held in March 2005 and April 2006. The first workshop was co-organized by ESCAP, UNCTAD and WTO, while the second was co-organized and jointly funded by WTO. Both workshops were mainly targeted at junior researchers from research institutions in the region, particularly from least developed countries, but government officials involved in trade policy analysis from Bhutan, Mongolia and the Russian Federation also participated in the second workshop in April 2006.

18. Participants at both events expressed high levels of satisfaction through evaluation questionnaires, indicating that their trade research capacity had been enhanced through the workshops. To further enhance the impact of the workshops, senior researchers from the more established ARTNeT institutions now participate as resource persons. Some financial support is also provided to selected participants after the workshop, to support the application of the analytical techniques learned in issues related to the approved ARTNeT research programme.

19. To complement these trainings, ARTNeT provides visiting fellowships to researchers from least developed countries. The first fellowship was awarded to a researcher from Tribhuvan University in Nepal to conduct research at the Thailand Development Research Institute under the supervision of a senior trade researcher of that institution.

20. Capacity-building also takes place through implementation of the research programme. As a rule, regional research teams always include researchers from at least two ESCAP subregions and one least developed country. For example, the trade facilitation research team includes researchers from Fiji, Indonesia and Nepal, and the research team on agricultural trade liberalization includes researchers from Bangladesh, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

21. ESCAP, as the ARTNeT secretariat and through its external technical advisers, also provides significant substantive and technical support for the researchers. ESCAP has also facilitated access to trade data and related analytical tools through its established links with ITC, UNCTAD and others. The ARTNeT Institutional Advisory Board⁵ has expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the substantive/technical support given by the secretariat to the members/researchers (see also para. 25).

⁵ The Board is composed of representatives of 10 leading research institution members of ARTNeT.

B. Delivering demand-driven studies on trade issues to strengthen policy formulation

22. The initial ARTNeT research programme was discussed and approved by representatives of Governments and research institutions during the First ARTNeT Consultative Meeting of Policymakers and Research Institutions, held on 29 October 2004. Government officials from 14 countries and senior researchers from 12 countries attended the meeting. The ARTNeT research programme 2005-2006 was discussed and approved during the Second ARTNeT Consultative Meeting in Macao, China, on 6 and 7 October 2005, following a survey of ARTNeT government focal points on priority areas for research.⁶ Government officials from 15 countries and senior researchers from 13 countries attended the meeting.

23. More than 12 research institutions in 10 countries in the region have been involved in implementing the demand-driven research programme, including the Cambodia Development Resource Institute, Cambodia; the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia; the Chinese Academy for International Trade and Economic Cooperation, China; the Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh; the Research and Information System for the Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries, India; the Institute for Policy Research and Development, Nepal; the Institute for Policy Studies, Sri Lanka; the Philippines Institute for Development Studies, Philippines; Peking University, China; and the University of the South Pacific, Fiji.

24. In order to enhance the quality of the research, external technical advisors have been recruited to advise, on a selected basis, research team members involved in the trade facilitation thematic study and the agricultural trade liberalization regional study. Staff at ESCAP Trade Policy Section, Trade and Investment Division also provide technical support for the researchers and research teams, as appropriate.

25. All policymakers participating in the Second ARTNeT Consultative Meeting of Policymakers and Research Institutions (6-7 October 2005), during which preliminary research results and findings were presented, confirmed the usefulness of the research efforts undertaken, with 44 per cent of the government officials indicating that they expected the research outputs to be “very useful”. In addition, the presentation of the preliminary results of the ARTNeT trade facilitation studies at the OECD Global Forum on Trade Facilitation (18-19 October 2005), and of the ARTNeT studies on regional agricultural trade liberalization at the WTO/ESCAP/ARTNeT Regional Seminar on Agriculture Negotiations for Asia-Pacific Economies, were well received by trade negotiators and policymakers participating in these events. The fact that the research was being conducted by a network of national researchers and research institutions seemed to be particularly appreciated.

⁶ The substantive content of these successive research programmes was discussed in the introduction of this note.

C. Improving dissemination of trade research results to policymakers

26. Under the current project framework, direct dissemination of research results to policymakers takes place on an annual basis during ARTNeT consultative meetings of policymakers and research institutions. To further strengthen dissemination and interactions between researchers and policymakers, ESCAP has arranged for the participation of ARTNeT researchers to other multi-stakeholder meetings organized by, or in cooperation with, ARTNeT partners.⁷ As the resources of the network grow through increasing or new contributions from existing or additional ARTNeT partners, respectively, consultative meetings of researchers and policymakers are expected to become more frequent and thematic, based on the model of the planned ARTNeT Consultative Meeting on Trade Facilitation and Regional Integration, to be jointly organized by UNDP and ESCAP in August 2006.

Table 1. List of ARTNeT working papers by trade focus area (as of June 2006)

A. Trade facilitation	
No. 3	Costs and benefits of implementing trade facilitation measures under negotiations at the WTO: an expert survey by Yann Duval
No. 4	An evaluation of the need and cost of selected trade facilitation measures in India: implications for the WTO negotiations by Sachin Chaturvedi, RIS, India
No. 5	An evaluation of the need and cost of selected trade facilitation measures in China: implications for the WTO negotiations by Chen Wenjing et al., CAITEC, China
No. 7	Why trade costs matter by Prabir De, RIS, India
No. 8	The need for and cost of selected trade facilitation measures relevant to the WTO trade facilitation negotiation in Nepal by Pushpa Raj Rajkarnikar et al., IPRAD, Nepal
No. 9	The need and cost of selected trade facilitation measures in Bangladesh: implications for the WTO negotiations by D. Bhattacharya et al., CPD, Bangladesh
No. 10	An evaluation of the need for selected trade facilitation measures in Indonesia: implications for the WTO negotiations by Yose Rizal Damuri, CSIS, Indonesia
B. Agricultural trade liberalization	
No. 11	Preferential trading agreements and agricultural liberalization in East and Southeast Asia by Gloria O. Pasadilla, PIDS, Philippines
No. 12	Rules of origin and non-tariff barriers in agricultural trade: perspectives from Bangladesh and Cambodia by Uttam Kumar Deb, CPD, Bangladesh
C. Other trade focus areas	
No. 1	Trade research institutions in Asia-Pacific: capacity-building needs in developing countries by Hing Vutha et al., CDRI, Cambodia
No. 2	Explaining the supply-side constraints to export-led growth in selected Pacific island countries by Yenteshwar Ram et al., USP, Fiji
No. 6	Modeling the Doha round outcome: a critical view by Biswajit Dhar, IIFT, India
No. 13	Proposed changes to WTO special and differential treatment provisions: an analysis from the perspective of Asian LDCs by Mustafizur Rahman, CPD, Bangladesh

⁷ These meetings are: Delivering on the WTO Round: High-level Government-Business Dialogue for Development, 4-6 October 2005, Macao, China; WTO/ESCAP ARTNeT Regional Seminar on Agriculture Negotiations for Asia-Pacific Economies, 29-31 March 2006, Xian, China; Government-Business Dialogue on Empowering Business to Play a Proactive Role in the WTO Negotiations, 4-5 May 2006, Singapore; and the FAO Regional Workshop on Agricultural Trade and Development in the Context of Multilateral and Regional Trade Agreements, 14-16 June 2006, Bangkok, Thailand.

27. To allow for continuous and timely dissemination of relevant research outputs of ARTNeT members and partners to policymakers and other stakeholders, ESCAP facilitated the launch of an ARTNeT working paper series and a policy brief series. As of June 2006, 13 working papers and 6 policy briefs have been released (see tables 1 and 2). The six policy briefs have been systematically distributed at trade-related events in which ESCAP participated, including the sixth WTO Ministerial Conference, held in Hong Kong, China. ARTNeT newsletters are also sent out by electronic mail on a quarterly basis to ARTNeT government and research institution focal points to keep them aware of research outputs and other network activities.

28. ARTNeT publications have been disseminated mostly in electronic format, and through a dedicated ARTNeT website (www.artnetontrade.org) launched in June 2005. The website features separate sections for researchers and policymakers that cater to their specific need. Since February 2006, the ARTNeT website has also featured an online searchable database of trade-related publications providing links to full-text publications of all ARTNeT members, as well as those of relevant partners and organizations, including the Asian Development Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the World Bank and WTO. Visits to the websites have increased steadily, with a 92 per cent increase in monthly visits between December 2005 and May 2006 (9,934 visits were recorded in May 2006, including 3,378 visits to the publication page alone).

Table 2. ARTNeT Policy Briefs, August 2005-June 2006

No. 1	Ongoing WTO negotiations and the issue of preference erosion concerns of Asia-Pacific LDCs by Mustafizur Rahman, CPD, Bangladesh
No. 2	Strengthening trade research capacity for policymaking and negotiations by Gloria O. Pasadilla, PIDS, Philippines
No. 3	An overview of the economics of outsourcing by Ramkishan Rajan et al., NUS, Singapore
No. 4	Liberalization of market access in GATS Mode 4 and its importance for developing countries by Rahul Sen et al., ISEAS, Singapore
No. 5	Formulas for industrial tariff reduction and policy implications by Moonsung Kang, KIEP, Republic of Korea
No. 6	Implementation of trade facilitation measures: needs, costs and other issues for the WTO negotiations by Florian Albuero, UP, Philippines

IV. EFFICIENCY OF PROJECT DELIVERY

29. All activities set out in the project document have been carried out in a timely manner. Country participants, mainly from Governments and national-level research institutions, are direct beneficiaries of over 70 per cent of the ARTNeT project funds provided by IDRC, Canada.

30. ESCAP has systematically sought collaboration of relevant international organizations and partners in implementing all ARTNeT activities. In an effort to maximize the use of resources and

foster multi-stakeholder dialogues and networking, ARTNeT events are often organized back-to-back with other ESCAP events. For example, the Second ARTNeT Consultative Meeting was held back-to-back with an ITC/ESCAP high-level government-business dialogue in Macao, China, resulting in multi-stakeholder synergies and more efficient use of resources.

31. Many ARTNeT activities have been implemented through cost-sharing arrangements with ARTNeT core partners, including UNCTAD, UNDP and WTO, taking full advantage of the synergies between ARTNeT and the WTO/ESCAP Programme of Technical Assistance for Asia and the Pacific. Synergies between the analytical work of ESCAP and that of ARTNeT member institutions has also been exploited, resulting in more and higher quality outputs and tools. For example, the ARTNeT Trade Publication Database and the ESCAP Regional Trade Agreement Database are in the process of being integrated, which is expected to result in a more powerful resource for both researchers and policymakers.

32. Assessing the efficiency of ARTNeT is challenging, as its design is unique and very little information is available on the operations and costs of similar regional networks in other parts of the world, which could be used as benchmarks. Communications with international organizations that have supported or been involved in projects and activities of a similar nature suggest, however, that ARTNeT has developed very quickly and delivered significant outputs with a limited budget.

33. The fact that many core ARTNeT partners have significantly increased their support to ARTNeT since it was launched (for example, there was an 80 per cent increase in WTO financial support to the ARTNeT research programme between 2005 and 2006) suggests that the network may provide a unique and efficient collaborative platform for the delivery of a coordinated regional trade research programme and related dissemination and capacity-building activities.

V. CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

34. As compared with many other research networks, ARTNeT, with a regional intergovernmental organization as its secretariat, is uniquely positioned to strengthen interactions between policymakers and the research community. The recognized experience of IDRC in development research and research networks and the direct involvement of WTO in many of the network activities further strengthens the capacity of the secretariat to foster the delivery of more relevant trade policy research and facilitate dissemination and sharing of research and analysis to policymakers through the network. As a result, ARTNeT is emerging as an effective regional platform for inter-agency collaboration and research-based multi-stakeholder dialogues.

35. However, identifying the most promising researchers to deliver quality research outputs has been difficult, as trade research capacity in some of the countries in the region is low.⁸ Given the limited resources of the network, balancing capacity-building objectives with that of delivering high quality studies is probably the most challenging issue faced by the network at this time. In the short to medium term, significant emphasis on building the trade research capacity of emerging researchers and institutions may be needed so that the network can evolve into an eminent generator of “homegrown” trade policy research over the long run.

36. ARTNeT government focal points have suggested that trade research capacity-building workshops should be open to government officials involved in trade policy analysis as well, in order to enhance in-house government capacity in trade research and facilitate networking between researchers from ARTNeT member institutions and those from ministries responsible for trade policy. As mentioned above, this suggestion was implemented to the extent possible during the Second ARTNeT Capacity Building Workshop on Trade Research. However, the secretariat, in collaboration with its members and associate members, will need to find more effective ways in the future to allow for the sharing of information between government officials involved in policy analysis and design and ARTNeT researchers.

37. Following up on a recommendation that emerged from the First ARTNeT Consultative Meeting of Policymakers and Research Institutions on how to foster interactions between them, ESCAP invited Governments to nominate ARTNeT focal points. As of June 2006, 12 countries have nominated focal points. Countries interested in benefiting more fully from the ARTNeT initiative are invited to nominate a senior government official involved in trade and investment policy research and analysis, who will be able to contribute substantively during the ARTNeT annual consultative meetings and/or to identify government experts on topics related to the ARTNeT research programme.

38. At the same time, the secretariat may need to more aggressively disseminate research results and influence policymakers. Regular electronic newsletters and emails informing focal points of ARTNeT publications and activities may not be sufficient and more communications through regular mail may be necessary.

39. ARTNeT activities have so far involved institutions and participants from the East, North-East, South and South-East Asia, and the South Pacific. The Russian Federation has also actively supported and participated in many ARTNeT activities on a self-financed basis. No financial resources are available to support research and participation from other ESCAP subregions at this time. However, the launch of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central

⁸ See ARTNeT working paper No. 1 by Hing Vutha et al. on “Trade research institutions in Asia-Pacific: capacity-building needs in developing countries”.

Asia (SPECA) Network of Economic Research Institute (SNERI) in June 2006, modeled after ARTNeT, might allow for more involvement of SPECA countries in ARTNeT activities.

VI. CONCLUSION

40. ARTNeT is at an initial stage of development. Nonetheless, the review of ARTNeT activities and the feedback received from participants suggest that significant progress has been made in achieving the network's immediate objectives. Feedback from ARTNeT members and partners also indicates that implementation of the project has been timely and efficient, building upon other ESCAP programmes and activities, such as the WTO/ESCAP Technical Assistance Programme.

41. The need for such a network has increased, given the increasing complexities in the current trade policy environment. The mandate for ESCAP to continue to support ARTNeT has also been strengthened by the adoption of Commission resolution 62/6 on managing globalization through strengthened regional cooperation in trade and investment.

42. ARTNeT has sought to create synergies with other international organizations as ARTNeT core partners, notably UNCTAD, UNDP and WTO. The growing interest and commitments of these key international organizations to the network has increased the sustainability of the project. As support of the network continues to grow, ARTNeT may therefore evolve into a useful mechanism for coordinated implementation and dissemination of trade research programmes and results, respectively, as well as for capacity-building on trade and investment policy research for the benefits of Governments and national-level research institutions in the ESCAP region.

43. A long-term challenge for ESCAP, as the ARTNeT secretariat, is how to support ARTNeT so that it can evolve into the region's eminent generator of "homegrown" research and analysis to support trade policy formulation. Some of the immediate challenges, given the current financial resources of the network, include: (a) identifying and keeping promising research institutions and researchers in some least developed countries; (b) balancing capacity-building objectives with that of delivering high quality studies; and (c) strengthening the contribution of Governments in ARTNeT activities and sharpening the policy relevance of research.

44. The Committee is invited to review the programme and to provide further guidance to the secretariat on a strengthened relationship between research and policy formulation.

Annex

List of ARTNeT members and partners (June 2006)

1. ARTNeT members

Cambodia Development Resource Institute, Cambodia
Chinese Academy for International Trade and Economic Cooperation, China
Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh
Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia
Economic Research Institute for Trade, Lao People's Democratic Republic
Griffith University (GBS Department of Economics), Australia
Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, India
Institute of the Chinese Economy and WTO studies, Peking University, China
Institute for Policy Research and Development (IPRAD), Nepal
Institute of Policy Studies, Sri Lanka
Korea Institute for International Economic Policy, Republic of Korea
Philippine Institute for Development Studies, Philippines
Research and Information System for Developing Countries, India
Thailand Development Research Institute, Thailand
University of the South Pacific, Fiji (Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance)
Vietnam Institute of Economics, Viet Nam

2. ARTNeT core partners

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
International Development Research Centre (IDRC, Canada)
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
UNDP Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Initiative
World Trade Organization (WTO)

3. ARTNeT associate partners

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics and Environment (CUTS-CITEE)
School of Economics, University of Adelaide
Centre for Applied Economics and Policy Studies, Massey University

.