



**Agency for International Trade
Information and Cooperation**

AITIC Initiative
***“Transfer of Business Skills: Making a Difference in Actual and
Potential Markets”***

I. Presentation of the Initiative

1. The objective of AITIC's *Transfer of Business Skills Programme* is to allow developing countries to build entrepreneurial capacity through the “loan” of experts by international companies. Businesses in least-developed and developing countries have particular needs. The secondment of an expert will help to fill the human resources gaps which hamper enterprises' potential for growth.

2. This type of skill transfer requires the involvement of « sponsoring » private sector businesses from developed (or emerging) countries, even though South-South partnerships are also encouraged. These companies, in keeping with their social responsibility commitments, would agree to promote the development of their future markets by sharing their “best practices”.

3. “Sponsoring companies” would convey their experience in terms of supply chain management, export market development, and, in particular, their expertise in identifying obstacles to business growth. Interested companies would indicate the countries with which they envisage establishing such a partnership and the type of human resources they would be willing to provide by filling out the attached questionnaire. The Chambers of Commerce or CEOs from developing countries would evaluate their needs in conjunction with AITIC which would act as an intermediary between the potential partner and the national authorities of the receiving country.

II. Needs and Capacity

4. **Needs** of developing countries: Many developing country private sector companies lack skilled labour in certain specific areas (sales and operations planning, supply chains, accounting, management, logistics, etc.). This shortfall seriously impairs their potential to produce and trade goods and services.

5. **Capacity** of the private sector in industrialised countries: These companies usually have highly qualified personnel in various specialised fields. This is a plus for efficient and competitive production on international markets as well as in the search for new markets. By transferring knowledge to developing countries, these countries would pool their good practices and raise the level of their future business partners.

III. The Role of AITIC

6. AITIC's assets as **facilitator for the acquisition of business capacity**: AITIC has built up a solid reputation in implementing training programmes specifically geared to meet the needs of developing countries. It has established close relations with the national authorities of its Participating Members¹ as well as civil society through training seminars, workshops and personalised assistance. The Agency has developed a fruitful dialogue with a network of chambers of commerce and industry as well as private enterprises in developing countries, which are aware of the challenges arising from the commitments made in the WTO, as well as the potential opportunities.

7. AITIC's comparative advantage in **skills transfer**: AITIC recently launched two training programmes aimed at addressing the eventual gaps in terms of trade and international trade negotiations of developing countries in the area of trade negotiation. Based on this experience, the Agency is seeking to make this expertise available to the private sector by playing an intermediary role between the partners involved in the programme and thereby increase the impact of their involvement in the Aid for Trade initiative².

8. AITIC is proposing to play the role of intermediary between programme partners by:

- providing potential participants in the programme with questionnaires to evaluate and match the "supply" and the "demand";
- setting up an inventory of the needs expressed by developing countries and the capacity offered by developed countries;
- facilitating the transfer of skills between the private sector partners, the national companies and the authorities of the beneficiary countries.

9. Benefits to be derived from this initiative by the private sector of developed countries:

- familiarisation with the business environment of future markets in developing countries;
- development of potentially useful business network.

IV. Modalities

10. In order to provide a platform that is flexible and adaptable to the needs of participants in the initiative, the *Transfer of Business Skills Programme* would last for at least three months and may be extended up to a year, if both parties agree. The decision to renew the project by three-month tranches could be taken following a tripartite evaluation by the donor, the recipient and AITIC of the progress achieved on a regular basis (to be decided case by case).

11. **Funding**: The company "lending its talents" could become a participant in the Aid for Trade initiative through this programme depending on the monitoring mechanisms which would be developed for this end by the OECD and the WTO. AITIC could assist companies in providing the necessary information on progress on the development of such procedures.

¹ See the list in Annex 2.

² The World Trade Organization's Aid for Trade initiative has placed the private sector at the heart of building business capacity in beneficiary countries.

Annex 1

Questionnaire (to be developed; questions are only indicative):

Recipient countries

Which are the sectors in which the country has a comparative advantage?

In what areas of activity is the building of business expertise and human resource development more needed?

What types of business skills are most in need, e.g. supply chains, financial management, quality standards, logistics, marketing and in general enhancing export potential?

What are the specific areas in which technology transfer would assist business development?

Developed countries

What is your comparative business advantage e.g., finance, management, accounting, logistics?

How do you see your company assisting counterparts in the developing world?

Has your company already participated in initiatives involving the transfer of business skills or training for developing countries? If so, please explain precisely what these programmes entailed.

Which of the countries included on the following list are among your current business partners or constitute potential markets?