2011:10 Sida Review

Jens Andersson

Review of the Technical Barriers to Trade Mentorship Programme 2008-2011

Final Report

Sida

Review of the Technical Barriers to Trade Mentorship Programme 2008-2011

Final Report
September 2011

Assignment undertaken by:
Jens Andersson

Sida Review 2011:10
Sida

Authors: Jens Andersson, Indevelop AB

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

Sida Review 2011:10

Commissioned by Sida, Department for Long-term Programme Cooperation

Date of final report: September 2011

Published by Citat

Art. no. Sida61462en

URN:NBN urn:nbn:se:sida-61462en

This publication can be downloaded from: http://www.sida.se/publications

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Valhallavägen 199, Stockholm
Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64
Postgiro: 1 56 34–9. VAT. No. SE 202100-478901
E-mail: info@sida.se. Homepage: http://www.sida.se

TABEL OF CONTENTS

FIGURES

Executive summary

The Swedish National Board of Trade (SNBT) will soon finalise a three-year mentorship programme within the area of Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) for a selection of African countries financed by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Sida has commissioned an external evaluation of the programme to assess the results and produce lessons learned for the design of similar programmes in the future.

The mentorship programme is highly relevant given that participation on the TBT Committee and the use of the TBT Agreement were low amongst the participating countries when the programme began. The programme was preceded by substantial discussions on TBT-related technical assistance taking place both on the TBT Committee and in other events attended by Sida and the SNBT. The impact of trade or poverty reduction was not possible to assess during the evaluation. However, the logic linking programme activities to such results holds at a theoretical level. Nevertheless, the programme would have benefited from a deeper exploration of its potential causes and effects. In particular, the link between standards and poverty reduction, relevant institutional mechanisms, and how they could function in weak environments would have benefited from additional analysis.

The design of the mentorship programme appears conceptually sound and likely to achieve the programme objectives. The mentorship approach contrasts with the supply-driven and short-term character of many technical assistance activities. It involves an expert public agency and hands-off, demand-driven support over a substantial period of time. The approach is based on real-world activities in the form of participation on the TBT Committee, as well as individual working plans that identify and address gaps in the national infrastructure.

The programme's monitoring matrix contains three programme outputs. Programme output 1 shows indications of high achievement levels, such as increased mentee's participation on the TBT Committee, and knowledge and understanding of the TBT Agreement. Participants appreciated the activities, which were performed as planned. Presence was high among capital-based experts. However, getting Geneva-based participants to attend the activities was a challenge. Output 2 demonstrates increased regional and national cooperation. It consisted of organising a mid-term meeting in Kenya, which was completed in a satisfactory manner. Participants reported a number of achievements that reinforce these results: the empowerment of individual capital experts, strengthened links between capitals and Geneva, and improved communication and coordination between countries. However, the lack of involvement of regional institutions and structures reflects one major shortcoming of the programme. This shortcoming threatens the sustainability of the results.

Output 3, which is increased capacity building, shows less evidence of achievement. This discrepancy highlights the gap between the programme's focus on developing individual capacities and the need for organisational development and institutional change at the national level. The individual working plan is the key tool to bridge this gap. Success depends on commitment by national administrations and the agencies supporting the individual programme participants. In this respect, important achievements within the programme should be noted, even though assessment of the implementation levels of each individual working plan within the evaluation has not been possible. The participants themselves developed and appreciated the working plans, which were also subject to approval by national authorities, used in the daily work of the participants, and subject to regular reporting and follow-up.

The participants have reported increased TBT-related action associated with programme activities in terms of legislation, enquiry points, and awareness-raising, as well as in other areas. Increases in the number of outgoing notifications from three countries, work on the implementation statements of at least two countries, and coordination among participating countries on trade concerns (such as tobacco) occurring during the programme period can all be objectively observed.

Accordingly, this evaluation concludes that the mentorship programme has reached its project objective for the participating countries as a group; that is, to “increase the application and implementation of the TBT Agreement.” The sustainability of these results remains a concern. Continued regular participation in TBT Committee meetings is highly unlikely for financial reasons. Additionally, the programme has primarily benefited a number of individuals. The capital-based experts, in particular, are well-placed to act as change agents in their respective administrations, which gives credit to the programme’s selection process, but it is unclear if capital-based experts will continue to play this role once the programme is over. Staff turn-over and changes in management and political leadership, with concomitant alterations in priorities, institutions, and budgetary allocations, may obliterate achievements not firmly anchored in national institutional frameworks.

Participants highly rated the overall quality of support and the SNBT management of the mentorship programme. The selection process generated the participation of relevant and dedicated capital experts who remained in the programme throughout its duration. Efforts were made to enhance the involvement of Geneva-based delegates. Activities were carried out within and even below budget. However, the SNBT could have given more attention to a few issues, including clearer division of labour within the project organisation, better use of the website, more action on formulating follow-up to the programme, better storage of documents, more systematic monitoring, and better preparedness for the evaluation. Additionally, the SNBT must prove its worth because its fee levels are not below those charged by Swedish consultants.

The evaluation concludes with the following recommendations:

1. **Formulate phasing-out and following-up activities carefully**. Phasing-out activities should be linked to concrete outcomes and contain an important regional element, even involving relevant regional organisations. A systematic follow-up of each individual country’s working plan should be done to determine which objectives have been reached. The SNBT should engage in more long-term follow-up activities.

2. **Examine the programme logic**. Sida and the SNBT should jointly further examine the conceptual underpinnings of the programme logic. This examination should centre on the direct and indirect links between implementation of a WTO agreement, such as the TBT Agreements, and poverty reduction, which is the goal of Swedish development cooperation. For instance, Sida and the SNBT could jointly organise a workshop on the issue, bringing in researchers who can present concrete case studies on trade reform and poverty reduction.

3. **Sharpen the mentorship approach**. Bridging the individual-institution gap is the key challenge in a mentorship approach. Account should be taken of the lessons learned listed in this report, including involving stakeholders in the design phase, involving regional bodies, being realistic about individual working plans, strengthening monitoring, developing phase-out/monitoring in advance, and choosing an implementing agency based on cost-benefit considerations.

4. **Continue to develop the SNBT's development cooperation framework**. This issue is somewhat outside the scope of this evaluation and has not been analysed in depth. Yet the issue deserves a specific recommendation because this is the SNBT's first external evaluation.

The SNBT has taken great strides in a short time period to establish a coherent framework for its development cooperation activities. This works needs to continue. the SNBT must work on analysing the linkages between trade policy, poverty reduction, and institutional change in poor countries; the division of labour within projects; securing qualified personnel who can contribute to mentoring activities; and ensuring that programmes are monitored and documented properly. With a SEK 18 million aid budget, the SNBT should give more consideration to strategic thinking to avoid spreading itself too thin. The SNBT should also give more consideration to its overall monitoring and evaluation framework to track results and record lessons learned.

Acronyms

ARSO	African Organisation for Standardisation
DFID	Department for International Development
EAC	East African Community
ICO	International Cooperation Office
INEC	Sida's previous department for infrastructure and economic cooperation
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
PTB	German Metrology Institute
QUISP	Quality Infrastructure and Standards Programme
RBM	Result-based Management
REC	Regional Economic Community
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SNBT	Swedish National Board of Trade
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
SQMT	Standards, Quality Assurance, Accreditation, Metrology
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Swedish National Board of Trade (SNBT) will soon finalise a three-year mentorship programme within the area of Technical Barriers of Trade (TBT) for a selection of African countries financed by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Sida has commissioned an external evaluation of the programme in order to assess the results and produce lessons learned for the design of similar programmes in the future.

1.2 Objective of the evaluation

The terms of reference of the evaluation, dated 24 May 2011, are included in Annex 1. The main aim of the assignment is to evaluate whether the TBT mentorship programme has fulfilled its objectives. This assignment includes identifying and considering any poverty-reducing links and effects of this type of programme. Additionally, Sida seeks an analysis and description of what has worked well and suggestions for improvements to similar future programmes.

1.3 Methodology and limitations

Indevelop has been engaged as consultant to perform the evaluation under Sida's Framework Agreement for Reviews, Evaluations, and Advisory Services on Results Frameworks. Independent consultant Jens Andersson performed the evaluation as sub-contractor to Indevelop. Indevelop had the overall professional and contractual responsibility for the assignment. The preliminary approach and methodology was presented to Sida in an inception report dated 13 June 2011.

The original terms of reference contain a number of evaluation questions. A revised list was presented in the inception report and approved by Sida. The programme also has a monitoring framework, which served as a starting point for measuring results.

The main data collection activities consisted of a visit to Geneva during the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) TBT Committee meeting, which included participation in mentorship activities, and a visit to the SNBT in Stockholm, both in June 2011. Participating countries were not visited and access to national and committee stakeholders was limited because of time and distance constraints. Consequently, many of the qualitative results come from the interviews and documents of the programme participants, making this evaluation largely dependent on self-assessments, which have been difficult to verify. This situation limited the possibility to assess objectively any changes in national institutions induced by the programme, hence limiting higher level results that may have been achieved with this additional assessment.

A full draft report was discussed in a meeting between the evaluator, Indevelop, Sida, and the SNBT in August 2011. Both Sida and the SNBT produced written comments on the draft.

1.4 Report outline

The following section describes the evaluated intervention, that is, the mentorship programme itself. Section 3 reviews the findings of the evaluation, including a discussion of the programme logic and approach. Section 4 draws some evaluative conclusions. Section 5 concludes the report with a discussion of lessons learned and recommendations.

2. Description of the mentorship programme

The mentorship programme is aimed at supporting the implementation of the WTO TBT Agreement (see Box below) in selection Eastern African countries in order to increase competitiveness, protect consumers, and reduce poverty. The programme emanates from a concern with the low level of implementation of the TBT Agreement among African countries and was developed in dialogue between senior officials in Sida and the SNBT.

The programme is implemented by the SNBT and funded by Sida as the sole donor. It runs over three years and the total programme budget is SEK 7.5 million (approximately EUR 0.83 million when this report was being written). Sida's decision to contribute was recorded on 21 April 2008 by the Head of Division of INEC, the department responsible for trade, private sector, and financial systems at the time. Funds came from appropriation 8:1.9 development cooperation Africa, Regional programmes, which had been delegated by the Africa department in December 2007. INEC's based its decision on an assessment memo dated 8 April, and on terms of reference and budget from the SNBT.

A formal agreement on the mentorship programme was concluded between INEC's Head of Division and the SNBT's General Director on 25 April. The agreement explicitly refers to the terms of reference and budget. Consequently, those documents constitute the point of departure for this evaluation. The programme agreement was concluded as a special project under the existing Framework Agreement between Sida and the SNBT (dated 2 April 2007). The Framework Agreement was revised on 4 May 2009 and is being renegotiated at the time of writing to reflect changes in Sida's internal organisation and contractual requirements—particularly regarding auditing. Until a new agreement is concluded the mentorship programme falls under the 2009 Framework Agreement, according to its paragraph 25.

The terms of reference state that the overall goal of the mentorship programme is to "enhance the capacities to participate in international trade, in a way that contributes to the overall goal of poverty reduction." The various levels of results and their link to programme activities and indicators are summarised in a monitoring framework that appears in an annex to the terms of reference (Annex 2). The programme objective is to "enhance the application and implementation of the TBT Agreement of selected sub-Saharan African countries." This objective includes strengthening the national framework of the TBT Agreement and increasing awareness of the TBT Agreement. Three expected results are listed:

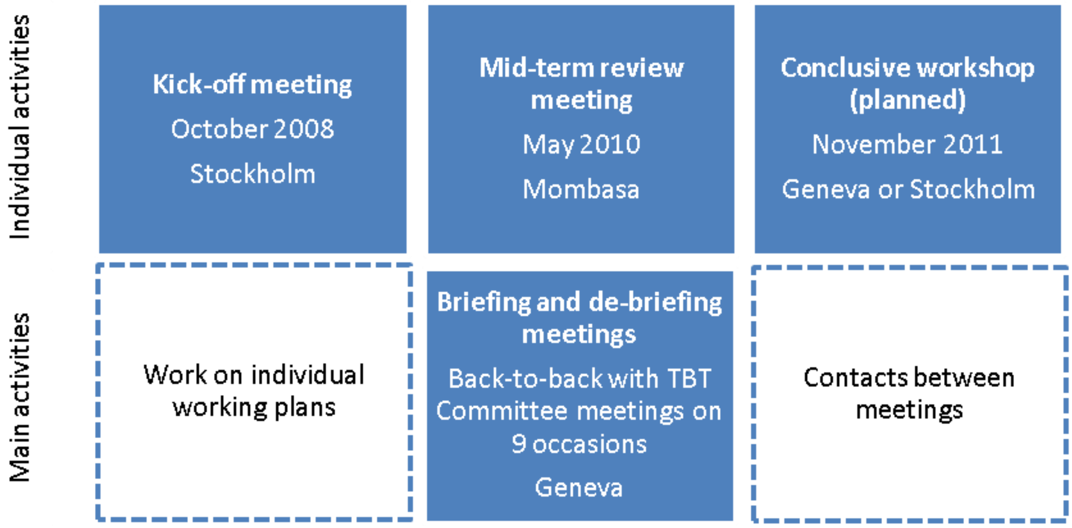
1. Increased participation in the TBT Committee and knowledge and understanding of the TBT Agreement.
2. Increased regional and national cooperation.
3. Increased capacity building (which means organisational change in national institutional frameworks).

The SNBT takes on the role of 'Mentor' in the programme and seven sub-Saharan countries were invited to participate as 'Mentees'. The mentorship approach, programme set-up, and participant selection process are discussed in detail below. The countries initially invited were Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. However, Ethiopia left the programme at an early stage, which explains why that country is not considered in this report. Participating countries were required to nominate two mentee representatives, one from the capital and one from the mission in Geneva. The mentees received travel, hotel, per-diem, and insurance. There was no cost sharing. The activities of the actual programme are summarised in Figure 1.

Before the start of the programme, the SNBT visited Tanzania and Uganda to meet representatives of local authorities to plan for the project and nominate delegates. The actual programme began with a kick-off meeting in Stockholm for the 13 nominated mentees.[1] The meeting included presentations of mentors and mentees, seminars on Swedish aid and trade policies and the WTO TBT Agreement, and development of individual working plans that were to provide the basis for the countries' participation in the programme. Consultants from Hifab, a project management company, assisted with the drafting of the individual working plans using the Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) approach. The governments of the participating countries later adopted the working plans.

Briefing and de-briefing meetings held back-to-back with the TBT Committee in Geneva three times per year form the core of the program. Nine sessions have been organised thus far, with the final meeting to commence during the TBT Committee in November. The aim of these meetings between Mentor and Mentees is to discuss the individual working plans and the work of the TBT Committee. Between meetings Mentees are supposed to work on their individual working plans and can send questions to the Mentor, if necessary. These activities, which are included with dotted lines in the figure, are not explicitly listed in the programme terms of reference. Figure 1. Activities of the mentorship programme.

Figure 1. Activities of the mentorship programme.



In May 2010 a mid-term review meeting was organised in Mombasa. During the week-long meeting, each country's implementation of the TBT agreement was discussed and additional action points for the development of the mentorship programme were identified. Representatives from Kenyan ministries, government agencies, and the private sector were present, along with the participants of the mentorship programme. A workshop in November 2011 in Geneva or Stockholm will conclude the mentorship programme.

[1] Ethiopia did not nominate a participant from the Geneva mission.

Box: The WTO TBT Agreement

The WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade is an outcome of the so-called Uruguay round of trade negotiations concluded in 1994. The agreement aims to ensure that technical regulations, standards, and conformity assessment procedures, including sampling, testing and inspection procedures, do not create unnecessary obstacles to trade. The basic provisions and principles (which also apply to conformity assessments) are the following:

Non-discrimination and national treatment. Imported products should be accorded treatment no less favourable than that accorded to like products of national origin.

Avoidance of unnecessary obstacles to trade. When a government is preparing a technical regulation to achieve a certain policy objective, the regulation should not be more trade-restrictive than necessary to fulfil its legitimate objective.

Harmonisation of technical regulations, standards, and conformity assessment procedures. The Agreement calls for the use of existing international standards as a basis for setting national technical regulations.

Acceptance of technical regulations as equivalent. The Agreement encourages Members to accept "equivalent" technical regulations of other Members if these regulations adequately fulfil the objectives of their own domestic regulations.

Transparency. To help ensure transparency, all WTO Members are required to establish a single central government notification authority and a national enquiry point. Members have to notify other Members through the WTO Secretariat technical regulations for which there are no international standards, or which differ from existing international standards and may have a significant effect on trade of other Members, before they are adopted. The same notification requirements apply to conformity assessment procedures. Reasonable time should be allowed for other Members to comment on proposed technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures before their entry into force.

Technical assistance: The Agreement calls on Members to provide technical assistance to other Members. Technical assistance can be targeted to, for example, the preparation of technical regulations, the establishment of national standardising bodies, the participation in international standardisation bodies, and the provision or strengthening of adequate equipment and capacities for testing and certification.

Special and differential treatment. The Agreement contains several provisions aimed at providing differential and more favourable treatment to developing countries, including: Members shall take account of the special development, financial, and trade needs of developing countries; developing countries are not expected to use international standards that are not appropriate to such needs; and the TBT Committee can grant developing countries time-limited exceptions in whole, or in part, from the obligations of the Agreement.

Enforcement and dispute settlement. The TBT Committee is the major forum to consult on matters pertaining to the operation of the agreement and discuss concerns about the regulations, standards, and conformity assessment procedures and their implementation. In order to resolve disputes between countries on TBT matters, the TBT Agreement refers to the WTO Dispute Settlement Body.

3. Findings

3.1 Programme logic and approach

The evaluation's terms of reference question whether the Mentorship Programme is likely to have any lasting impact, and if this impact is likely to contribute to poverty reduction—especially because poverty reduction is the overall objective of both the programme and Swedish development cooperation. Because the attribution of a limited range of programme activities to the impact level in an evaluation conducted over a short period of time poses a significant challenge, Sida agreed that the evaluation would instead assess the programme logic and discuss suitable indicators for assessing progress at these levels. However, time constraints limited in depth discussion of new indicators during the evaluation.

The programme logic represents the system that links programme activities to its results framework. An impact diagram based on the original programme document and monitoring matrix proved to be a useful tool for visualising the complexity of these links (fig. 2). The impact diagram is only a simplified map of the real world from the perspective of the mentorship programme. In reality, many more inter-linkages, causes, and effects are at play and depend on local conditions, processes, and other donor interventions.

The diagram reveals a long chain of links between programme activities and any poverty reducing impact. How well is this chain covered in the programme documents? After initial comments regarding the link between trade, growth, and poverty, and the difficulties of countries in sub-Saharan Africa to benefit from the gains of an open trading system because of weak institutions and low competitiveness, two direct links between the TBT Agreement and poverty reduction are mentioned in the programme document. The first link is the enhancement of the legislative framework, which should facilitate trade, enhance economic efficiency within the private sector, and lead to economic growth and higher welfare. The other link is improved product quality, and thus protection of consumers, on the domestic market. These brief remarks are covered in a couple of paragraphs.

The document is also unclear on some specific issues addressed by the programme:

1. Which elements of the TBT Agreement are most important to implement in a developing country? The programme document lists a number of TBT-related needs in developing countries. However, the document dwells less on the underlying causes and constraints or the level of implementation of the TBT Agreement suitable for developing countries. For example, should regular participation in the TBT Committee really be a priority for the poorest countries? How is the TBT Agreement relevant to their small and weak private sector? The programme focuses on setting up national TBT coordinating committees or networks while leaving the rest to the individual working plans. The explicit and implicit assumptions in the programme logic presumed more analysis on this issue.

2. How might the TBT Agreement promote improved regulations, standards, and testing infrastructure? This more conceptual question is triggered by the tendency of the programme to assume that implementation of the TBT Agreement leads to improved standard setting and, hence, an enhanced business environment at the national level. The TBT Agreement promotes transparency and best practices, but how implementation can be used to leverage change in the overall standard setting infrastructure at the national level deserved further analysis.

3. How can empowered individuals change national TBT-related institutions? The activities of the mentorship programme are clearly focused on building the capacity of individuals to deal with the TBT Agreement, but in order to achieve the programme objectives local institutions need to change. This common challenge of capacity building activities should be a central concern for the mentorship programme to address. More explicit analysis in the programme document of ways of bridging the individual-institutional gap would have been beneficial.

The programme logic would have been more convincing if the programme document had addressed these issues more thoroughly. The SNBT is an agency specialising in trade policy. Thus the SNBT could be expected to describe more fully the underlying links of the programme logic and deal more critically and systematically with the potential positive and, no less important, negative effects of the TBT Agreement implementation on growth and poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. As a government agency, the SNBT should consider development concerns in all its activities according to the Swedish Policy of Global Development (PGU). At the receiving end, Sida has long experience working with standards issues with a view to reducing poverty. Thus Sida has a responsibility to ensure that this link is clearly reflected in the programmes they fund.

The programme monitoring framework gives a clear overview of the programme and how activities link to programme objectives. The framework, which also includes a number of indicators, is relatively focused and realistic in terms of project objectives and activities. The main shortcoming is that the SNBT has not consistently used the framework to monitor progress. The SNBT could have tracked most of the indicators proposed and presented them in a concise manner in the annual reports—especially the indicators on activities, participation, satisfaction, national networks, notification (which was used in the report), and working plans. The indicator on realised individual working plans is more difficult to use because completion is difficult to determine, takes time, and depends on many external factors. The SNBT could have asked participants to report on the number of staff working on TBT in each country. The indicator analysing resources for continued participation in the TBT Committee meetings after the programme duration is relevant, but may be difficult for the programme to influence.

The difficulty in bridging the individual-institutional gap could be one reason why mentorship is considered, but rarely attempted, to aid funded capacity building. Also, bridging the individual-institutional gap requires long-term technical expertise and a hands-off approach. Instead, many development interventions are one-off training events or direct technical assistance. For this reason, the mentorship programme is interesting to study. The programme document briefly introduces the mentorship approach. Important features include:

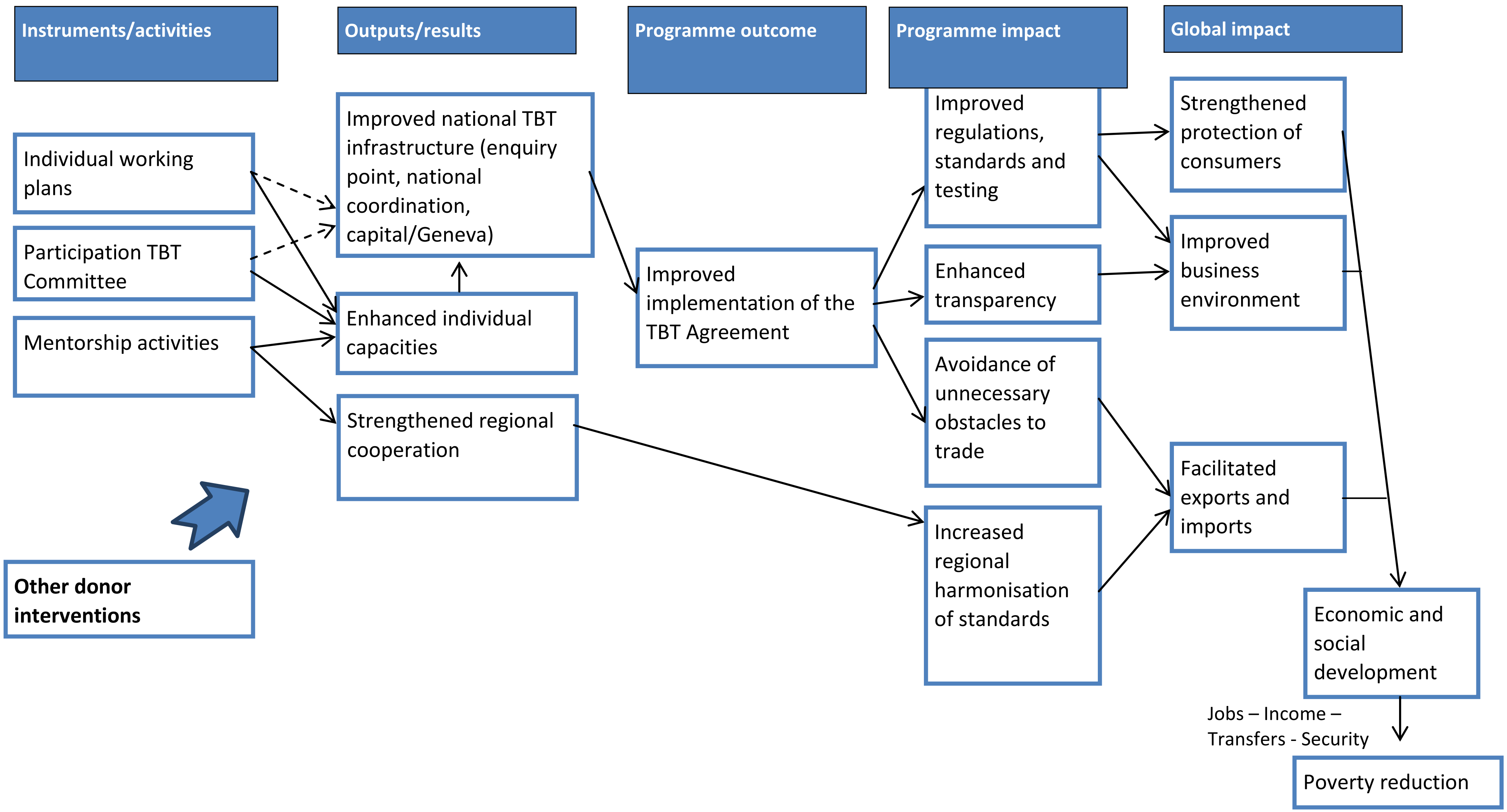
- A person with experience and knowledge takes on the role of mentor.
- The less knowledgeable persons commit to learning and trying new ways as mentees.
- The mentor remains neutral and allows the demands and needs of the mentees to guide the activities.
- The mentor-mentee relationship is underpinned by mutual trust.

In summary, achieving enduring results within the programme depends ultimately on participants promoting change in their national administrations. The programme has limited direct influence in this regard. However, if the program can influence this change, then the programme can achieve its objective to improve implementation of the TBT Agreement and eventually contribute to alleviating poverty as illustrated in the impact diagram. Measuring this change without country level analyses remains a challenge. The analysis of the chain of events linking programme activities and higher level objectives could have been made more explicit in the programme documents.

Participants noted during their interviews that they were not involved in setting the programme's overall objectives or in designing activities. Additionally, the short period between the field trip and the first activity left the SNBT with little time to anchor objectives. The programme could have been shaped differently had the participating countries been involved in the design phase. For example, including more national activities to learn from and following up on realities on the ground could have been instructive. Such an approach could have also promoted awareness and ownership within national administrations.

No follow-up or phasing-out period was foreseen when the programme was decided. This omission has been discussed at various points during the programme activities, but at the time of this evaluation, no concrete proposal has been made on what phasing-out activities should aim to achieve or of what they would be comprised. At the mid-term meeting in Mombasa in May 2010, the SNBT was given the responsibility to lead "extension of the Mentorship Programme in terms of timing and funding to enable effective implementation (e.g. the need for national workshops for major stakeholders such as the Regulators and Legislators)." Discussions with Sida have ensued and Sida seems prepared to fund some phasing-out activities. During briefing meetings, participating countries were asked to prepare project proposals on potential follow-up activities, but only Burundi and Uganda have done so, which indicate of a lack of ownership by the participating countries or a lack of emphasis by the SNBT.

Figure 2. Impact diagram of the mentorship programme.



3.2 Results of the mentorship programme

The mentorship programme's monitoring framework clearly outlines the expected results of the programme. This section covers the indicators presented in the monitoring framework as well as intended and unintended results that are not covered by those indicators. This section focuses on the activity, output, and outcome levels, while the previous section discussed the impact level.

Selection of countries and participants

Sida's original assessment memo states that the country selection was made according to Sweden's new development policy, which focuses on sub-Saharan Africa. The SNBT's initial presentation of the programme adds that the countries should be within the same geographical area and be parties of related regional trade groupings in order to strengthen regional interaction and allow the exchange of experiences and information on the TBT Agreement. Five to eight participants is suggested as optimal. The SNBT notes that the seven selected countries belong to various, and sometimes overlapping, regional communities (REC) in eastern and southern Africa. For example, all of the five EAC countries—Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda—are included in the group.

Ethiopia, the only country that is not a member of the WTO, left the programme at a relatively early stage. Resource constraints prevented Ethiopia from nominating a Geneva-based participant. Ethiopia's capital-based participant left the programme after the third TBT Committee in June 2009 and was not replaced, which meant that Ethiopia stopped participating in programme activities altogether. Reportedly, the SNBT attempted to contact Ethiopian authorities but to no avail. In the end, no official explanation has been offered by Ethiopia and no contacts with Ethiopia have been made during the evaluation. Consequently, Ethiopia does not feature in the following discussion.

The other countries have participated in the programme at a high rate. No obvious signs exist that the Zambian participants felt excluded from interactions with the EAC participants in the programme. On the contrary, a group spirit reigned, with participants sharing experiences and learning from each other. Zambia also shares REC membership with Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda (COMESA) and Tanzania (SADC). With the exception of Ethiopia then, the country selection was successful.

The programme document mentions that regional organisations should be invited to the mid-term review meeting. Yet no attempts have been made to involve representatives from RECs or to include regional structures in the programme activities. Neither have good explanations been offered for this omission. Involving RECs would have benefited follow-up activities and the sustainability of the results, especially the interaction between countries. While working directly through a REC was possible, such an approach may have created unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles.

Both a capital-based and a Geneva-based participant from each country were invited to the programme as a means to ensure sustainability by strengthened relationships between capitals and Geneva. National authorities nominated individual participants through a formal communiqué based on specifications in the terms of reference established by the SNBT in consultations with Sida. While the SNBT reserved the final decision on the participants, they did not reject any nominees.

The key qualifying requirement of the capital-based participant was:

"Professional experience of working with the TBT Agreement and thereto-related issues, such as being the head of the Enquiry Point function or responsible for the notification authority function according to the TBT Agreement. He/she must work practically with the issues today and at least five years back in time as from today and continuously during the whole period of the Mentorship Program. In order to keep secure the sustainable effects, he/she must have at least ten years left to retirement when the program is over.”

The capital-based participants have remained the same throughout the programme, with the exception of the Rwandan participant, who was replaced in March 2009 reportedly because the first individual was not the correct choice. Four of the participants are women and two are men. All six are from their respective national bureaus of standards, except the participant from Burundi, who is from the Ministry of Trade. Participants hailing from bureaus of standards are primarily working with the enquiry point side of TBT activities, while the notification authority generally resides within a ministry. Accordingly, participants are not directly responsible for the outcome of one of the main indicators of the programme, that is, the number of notifications to the TBT Committee. Bureaus of standards are technical agencies, or parastatals, that usually have less influence than ministries on policy making, institutional arrangements and budgetary decisions, and convoking stakeholders. During their interviews, participants unanimously emphasised the importance of raising awareness at the national level. Involving the correct stakeholders is a key issue to be addressed in any discussions on phasing-out or replicating the mentorship programme.

Although individual participants’ qualifications were not examined during the evaluation, the participants all appear to have been appropriately selected and deeply involved in national TBT activities. At least four participants had been sponsored by the WTO to participate either in internships at the WTO, advanced training on TBT issues, or information exchange. The WTO Secretariat notes that through these activities it identifies capable individuals that assistance programmes—such as the mentorship programme—could assess when selecting candidates for support.

Turn-over amongst the Geneva-based participants has been high because diplomats are subject to regular rotation and are often called to other duties. Only Kenya and Rwanda have participated with the same Geneva-based delegates since the beginning of the programme. The latest roster of participants lists all men, but at least two women have participated in the programme.

Participation in mentorship activities

Participation in the main programme activities—briefing and debriefing meetings—has been very high among capital-based participants at between 80 percent and 100 percent (excluding Ethiopia). Attendance amongst Geneva-based participants has been much lower at between 13 percent and 59 percent. Programme participants attribute this lower rate of participation to the heavy workload of these officials. The Geneva missions of the participating countries are generally small and each diplomat must cover a wide range of organisations and meetings. For example, the Geneva-based participant from Rwanda covers WTO, UNCTAD, ITC, and investment promotion for Rwanda. The SNBT attempted to schedule programme meetings to avoid conflict with other meetings (for example, early in the morning) and to stay in contact with the Geneva missions, which would result in increased attendance from Geneva. This approach improved attendance somewhat. However, more proactive motivation and encouragement by both mentors and capital-based participants was still necessary.

When asked, programme participants agreed that the low attendance from Geneva-based officials had a negative impact on the programme because the views of the Geneva-based officials were not heard. Yet the heavy workload of the Geneva-based participants was acknowledged. Even so, all the capital-based participants reported that the involvement of Geneva-based officials in the programme had improved the interaction on TBT issues, which was previously nearly nonexistent. Capital and Geneva-based participants regularly meet bilaterally in connection with TBT Committee meetings. Geneva missions play an important role by assisting with notifications issues, coordinating trade concerns (for example, on tobacco; see below), drafting statements to get the right language, and sharing information on important preparatory meetings. The Geneva-based representatives stated that they appreciated learning more about TBT issues and liaising with capital experts.

Participation in the TBT Committee

Before the programme none of the six countries participated regularly in the TBT Committee from capitals, with the possible exception of Kenya. Nevertheless, a majority of the capital mentees had at least some exposure to the TBT Committee, thanks to having participated in WTO-sponsored training and workshops, which were held back-to-back with Committee meetings. The WTO Secretariat cannot sponsor participation in the TBT Committee directly. Apparently, TBT has not been a priority of the Geneva missions of the mentee countries. As previously mentioned, the missions are usually staffed by few professionals who alrealy have a broad range of organisations and activities to cover.

The programme has allowed the capital mentees to participate in nine sessions of the TBT Committee over a period of nearly three years. According to the mentees, cost concerns will likely prohibit this level of participation when the mentorship programme ends. Hence, including phase-out plans within the design-phase is important—for instance, stipulating that mentees' authorities initially pay part of the costs (such as air ticket or hotel expenses).

Participation in committee meetings has, above all, allowed the capital-based participants to accumulate considerable individual experience of the concrete procedures and processes of the TBT Committee. The evaluation consultant witnessed signs of informal networking between the capital mentees and other committee stakeholders at the TBT meeting, even though the programme does not contain activities aimed at actively promoting contacts with delegates outside the mentorship group. Such networking is an important benefit of being physically present at the committee meetings.

Participation benefits for national administrations are more uncertain. In Uganda and Kenya, national TBT Committees (see below) prepare positions ahead of meetings and report back. One participant described physical participation in TBT Committee meetings in these two countries as the "missing" link in the TBT cycle. The capital participants from Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zambia do not have a committee. In these countries, participants report to their supervisors, making it uncertain to what extent information is disseminated.

The capital-based Kenyan participant oversees a five-person unit responsible for trade affairs at the Kenyan Bureau of Standards. She is assisted by an economist who has attended WTO advanced training on TBT and has followed her work. Her supervisor is knowledgeable about TBT issues and she has a counterpart at the Ministry of Trade who is responsible for SPS/TBT issues. The Ugandan participant also has colleagues with whom to share experiences. The situation is less certain in the other countries. How much capacity accumulated during the mentorship programme will be sustained if the participants leave their current duties remains unclear. Accordingly, participants must feel and be strongly encouraged to "make a difference" at national level in this kind of programme. Putting the onus on the participants themselves is not enough because the problem involves the nature of knowledge management within their organisations.

Individual working plans

As already noted, the programme aims to promote implementation of the TBT Agreement at national level, while activities occur primarily at global and individual levels. The individual working plans are the main tools used within the programme to increase the likelihood that increased individual capacity is translated into organisational and institutional change. Surprisingly, the individual working plans are not listed as main activities within the programme.

A delay in the nomination of participants prevented an agreement on the overall implementation objectives at the national level before the kick-off meeting in Stockholm as originally planned. Instead, the working plans were initiated during the kick-off meeting. Participants developed the working plans following the LFA methodology. They were assisted by consultants from Hifab. The matrices were finalised and adopted by the participating countries at the second briefing meeting in March 2009. This adoption represents an expression of local ownership. Yet what this entails in terms of actual integration with local strategies and processes remains unclear.

The plans are structured as LFA matrices containing development objectives, project objectives, results and outputs, and activities, in addition to indicators, means of verification, and risks and assumptions. The development objectives include various statements of increased trade, improved competitiveness, and poverty reduction, while the project objective for all plans is implementation of the TBT Agreement. The outputs and results include strengthened coordination of TBT activities (including the establishment of a national TBT Committee), increased participation in TBT Committee meetings, improved notifications, training of stakeholders, and enhanced physical quality infrastructure.

Participants reported finding the LFA methodology and matrices to be useful tools for identifying gaps and formulating solutions. According to the SNBT, participants also had to report on progress by realising the working plans in writing and orally during each briefing meeting, which was a good way to maintain the pace of implementation and share information. However, the information provided in the reports was not compiled and assessed systematically within the programme.

Clearly, implementation of the working plans is subject to many factors outside the control of the participants or the mentorship programme. Needs and corrective action are easier to identify than priorities amongst activities. Nevertheless, the distinction in responsibility between the individual participants and the participating countries and institutions is unclear in the programme. Because the working plans transcend the individuals, they could have benefited from a clearer prioritisation of tasks and division of labour, without which the realisation of 50 percent of working plans remains unrealistic. At the same time, the programme document introduces a measure of realism in recognising that establishment of a TBT national committee takes time and is not part of the expected programme results or indicators.

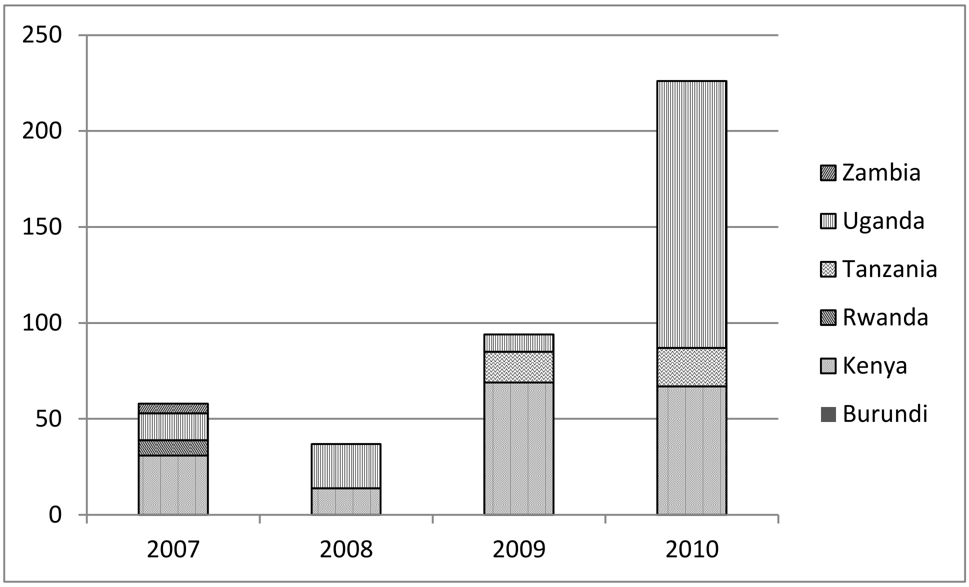
This evaluation did not review the implementation status of individual working plans. While one participant claimed that most activities in the working plan had been addressed, another argued that most activities were left untouched because of lack of funding. The progress report of one of the participating countries is included in Annex 3. The report shows that many activities were not carried out. Apparently, funding the working plans was a major obstacle. As one participant stated,"When I showed this to my boss, his first reaction was: Who is going to pay?"

Implementation of the TBT agreement

As previously mentioned, exactly what implementation of the TBT Agreement entails in the African context was not a central feature of the original programme document. This section discusses elements of TBT-related work at the national level, including national TBT Committees, trade concerns, notifications, statements of implementation, and notifications. For further explanation, see the Box on the TBT Agreement above.

Kenya had established national TBT Committees before the programme began, and Uganda had organised a joint SPS/TBT Committee. According to the Kenyan participant, the Kenyan committee was ineffective at the start of the mentorship programme, but the programme has contributed to revitalising and reconstituting the committee. The capital-based participants from Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania,and Zambia have made proposals to their respective ministries for national coordinating committees, in some cases years ago. Yet no action had been taken thus far. Only recently, funds have been released for a national TBT Committee in Tanzania. In the four countries, the officials rely on informal networks with relevant stakeholders, which could constitute the embryos of formal networks. Overall, countries have established national SPS committees to a greater extent than TBT Committees, which can be attributed to the importance of agricultural exports (and imports) in these countries.

Figure 3. Number of notifications to the TBT Committee among participating countries 2007-2010.



The number of outgoing notifications among the participating countries increased from 37 in 2008 to 226 in 2010 (fig. 3). Clear indications of increased notification activity for Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania during the programme period are apparent, which the participants attribute to individual efforts induced by the mentorship programme. Uganda alone accounts for 139 notifications in 2010. In Uganda and Tanzania, the notifications are all from the bureaus of standards, which illuminates the difficulty in reaching out to other legislative bodies. Zambia and Rwanda have not submitted any notifications since 2007 and Burundi has never submitted any notifications. Successful notification procedures depend on factors such as supportive legislation, an active notification authority, national coordination among stakeholders, and knowledgeable legislators.

During the mid-term review meeting, the mentorship programme participants agreed to collaborate informally on horizontal matters. This collaboration was tested in the two trade concerns raised by programme countries during the programme period. The first trade concern, which centred on Canada's Bill C-32 amendment to the Tobacco Act, involved Burundi (which has no direct interest in tobacco), Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia, in addition to several other countries. Representatives from Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia participated in a coordinated response to the Canadian regulation and made statements in two consecutive TBT Committee meetings in June and November 2010. The second trade concern, which centred on Brazil's Draft Resolution No. 112 of 29 November 2010, involved Kenya, Tanzania, and Zambia in addition to other countries, on the issue of maximum levels of tar, nicotine, and carbon monoxide permitted in tobacco products and the prohibition of additives. Kenya, Tanzania, and Zambia joined a number of countries in making statements on this issue during the TBT Committee meeting in March 2011.

During the TBT Committee meeting in June 2011, Kenya was the target of a trade concern related to alcohol labelling raised by Mexico and US. Reportedly, Uganda engaged in informal bilateral consultations with the EU on labelling of beverages during the committee meeting in November 2009.

Before the programme started, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda had issued statements of implementation and administration of the TBT Agreement under article 15.2. During the programme period, Tanzania updated its statement (2010) and Zambia finalised a statement in mid-2011 that, for procedural reasons, has not yet been formally submitted. Burundi still has not submitted its statement of implementation because the government decided to wait for the establishment of a national coordinating committee on TBT issues. Rwanda's statement needs to be updated.

Reporting from the programme and participants indicates increased activity in other TBT-related areas, such as new legislation, organisation, and participation in national and regional workshops, training events and advocacy activities, comments on the notifications of other countries, increased numbers of requests to national enquiry points, and investments in physical infrastructure. However, these activities were not studied in detail because of the difficulty comparing previous periods and related mentorship activities within the limited scope of this evaluation.

Participants' own assessment

A questionnaire was distributed to the capital-based participants to facilitate systematic and quantitative feed-back on the mentorship programme. The full results are available in Annex 4. Participants rated the overall relevance of the programme very highly (question 1). In terms of where the contribution has been most important (question 5); it is not surprisingly in terms of participation in the TBT Committee followed by networking within the region and with other countries. The contribution to notification and the standards institutions (where participants work) are also rate highly. The favourable rating of equality between women and men may be based on the relatively equal gender composition of participants, especially because the programme lacked any gender focused components. The programme contributed slightly less (but still significantly) to political awareness and functioning of the enquiry point. Interestingly, the programme is considered to have contributed the least to national coordination and stakeholder consultations, a key element of the national working plans. All the areas received a rating above three. Disagreement among participants is the highest (as shown by the standard deviation) in the bottom range of areas. This disagreement may reflect some participants rating all components highly, while others did not.

These relatively favourable rates are consistent with comments made during the interviews, such as "the programme made me expert," "I felt empowered," and "it opened my eyes." A range of positive results are mentioned in the presentation of the mentorship programme made by Kenya on behalf of the participating countries at the last TBT Committee meeting in June 2011. The presentation mentions, among other points, the establishment and improved functioning of national enquiry points, identification of implementation gaps, and increased notifications to the WTO. Issues needing attention that were also noted in the presentation included establishing mechanisms of information exchange between different enquiry points, promoting awareness on TBT matters to stakeholders such as the business community and regulators, and strengthening the institutional capacities for standards and conformity assessment bodies.

3.3 Regional cooperation and other donor activities

To some extent, the mentorship programme has remained isolated from other regional and national development programmes. This isolation is understandable considering that the mentorship programme is a global affair with a hands-off approach and a relatively small budget. However, the programme's objectives go far beyond the organisation itself and its participants. The programme document states that ARSO and REC Secretariats would be invited to the mid-term review meeting, but this was not done. Consequently, the programme had the potential to connect directly with many on-going regional activities and donor contributions.

Regional cooperation and regional secretariats have already been addressed. Research shows that TBT is not an important issue in sub-Saharan African regional trade agreements, with only one of eight agreements surveyed referring explicitly to the WTO TBT Agreement.[2] Additionally, few, if any, regional bodies, committees, or consultation mechanisms focus on TBT issues.[3] However, related activities do exist. For example, a Standards Technical Management Committee (STMC) within the EAC structure is responsible for developing and harmonising East African standards, which includes a Technical Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance.[4] A SQMT Department within the EAC Secretariat services the committees.

UNIDO is the main donor mentioned in the interviews, followed by the EU, that assists with training and physical infrastructure, among other things. To which programme interviewees are referring is unclear, but UNIDO will soon finalise (July 2011) a NORAD funded five-year project aimed at building standards related trade capacity in agro-industry within the EAC. Also, a long-running German-funded project aims to develop a regional SQMT architecture in the EAC implemented by the German metrology institute PTB. Trade Mark East Africa initiated by DFID and the EAC Secretariat has recently signed an MOU to promote regional integration, including capacity building for the SQMT office. A project of particular relevance in the Ugandan context is the recently initiated Quality Infrastructure and Standards Programme (QUISP).

Some of the capital-based participants state that they are or have been in direct contact with other donors. In at least one case, the working plan was used in the discussions. In Uganda, the QUISP can possibly fund participation in SPS/TBT Committee meetings.

[2] Meyer et al. (2010), p. 2.
[3] Idem, p. 17.
[4] http://www.eac-quality.net/

3.4 Programme management

Background to the SNBT's development cooperation activities

The SNBT is an independent government agency under the Ministry for Foreign Affairs employing some 90 people.[5] According to its website, the SNBT's main activity is to provide the Swedish government with analyses, recommendations, and proposals on trade policy matters. The work is conducted in three main areas: EU's internal market, EU's external trade regime, and international trade policy, including the WTO. The SNBT officials regularly participate as government experts on various EU committees and working groups in Brussels and Geneva. The Swedish entry into the European Union has decreased the direct participation of the Swedish administration in general, and the SNBT in particular, in multilateral trade negotiations. In recent years, the SNBT has focused on free-standing analytical products.

The SNBT recently moved from limited participation in Sida-funded development projects, like many other Swedish government agencies, to developing its own development cooperation activities. A key stepping stone in this process was a unique government decision to allocate SEK 10 million per year of Sida's global funds to the SNBT for trade-related aid activities starting in 2008. According to the last government decision in early 2011, the SNBT will benefit from these funds until at least 2014. The funds are channelled through Sida based on an annual work plan and activity report from the previous year. Separate auditing must also be carried out. Additionally, the SNBT is taking on individual assignments from Sida and may also work for other funding agencies.

From humble beginnings, the SNBT's aid portfolio has grown to around SEK 18 million in 2011 and employs 10 full time staff. The SNBT's latest annual report lists seven activities financed by Sida and over 20 activities financed by the SEK 10 million budget line. Many of the activities in the latter category are project preparation activities of limited scale. The SNBT has no separate policy or strategic document. Rather the SNBT is guided by the general policy framework structuring Sweden's overall development cooperation, such as the Policy for Global Development and the government's thematic policies and country strategies, in addition to the demand from developing countries.

A separate unit—International Cooperation Office (ICO)—was created in a reorganisation in the autumn of 2010 to manage the growing aid activities. This reorganisation also implied a centralisation of the aid activities within the SNBT. The unit is headed by a former senior Sida official and employs three staff who work with aid projects. ICO is vested with ultimate responsibility of the aid activities at the SNBT. ICO also provides administrative support to the project managers who are located in the SNBT's substantive departments. Aid activities are firmly anchored in the agency and interviewees saw them as beneficial to the SNBT's core activities.

The mentorship programme

A mentor and a project manager, who both work at the SNBT's Department for Trade and Technical Rules, currently implement the mentorship programme. The head of ICO has formal responsibility for the project and the staff during project activities. ICO also provides administrative support to the project.

The division of labour between the various programme functions was not clear at the start of the programme because the mentorship programme was the first major programme managed by the SNBT. Initially, the programme contained both a project manager and an administrative project coordinator,

[5] http://www.kommers.se/In-English/

but the two roles were merged at an early stage and the level of necessary administrative support is unclear. Consequently, the project manager took on an administrative role, despite being a professional staff member. This situation has not changed with ICO's creation nor with increasing administrative support from ICO's side. Employing professional staff for administrative duties may not be an efficient use of resources. It may negatively affect the working morale of the project manager and the status of the project manager role. Additionally, knowledge transfer within the SNBT between a senior mentor and junior project manager may suffer.

A project manager may find working on both EU and WTO issues while performing the dual duties of analyst and project manager to be a challenge. These are supported by the organisation and supervisors, for example, in the form of project management training and rescheduling of regular duties. According to interviewees,aid activities have increasingly found a place in the organisation. The potential of aid activities to enrich the regular work of the SNBT, especially through better understanding the trading capacity of developing countries, is recognised.

The mentor is a senior TBT expert and former head of the department, while the project manager has worked with the SNBT for about 18 months. The mentor has remained the same throughout the programme. The project manager has changed twice and the project secretary changed a couple of times. Until the reorganisation last year, the mentor was head of the department and responsible for some 25 staff. His change of duties freed up time to engage with the project. The SNBT staff recognises the frequent change of project manager as a problem. The change may have disrupted continuity, for examples, in terms of documentation. Yet no indications are evident(such as comments from project participants) that project activities were substantially affected. The most recent passing of the project manager responsibilities worked well.

The SNBT staff involved in aid activities have access to a manual developed by ICO that covers issues ranging from the government's aid policies to internal processes, but the current project manager did not seem familiar with the document. All project managers are required to attend LFA/RBM training. The current project manager of the mentorship programme has attended a course on SPS/TBT issues at the World Trade Institute in Geneva.

The pace of the programme mainly follows the activities related to participation in the TBT Committee meetings three times per year, which according to the SNBT, involve the following main steps:

1. Participants are contacted 1.5-2 months before a meeting and the mentor distributes WTO documents as they are circulated by the WTO Secretariat.
2. A letter of invitation is sent out 5-6 weeks before the meeting together with a programme for the meetings and mentorship activities, and information on practical arrangements. The SNBT organises and books insurance, hotel, and air travel. The WTO provides meeting facilities free of charge.
3. Participants arrange for their visas themselves with assistance from the SNBT, if needed.
4. The agendas of the mentorship meetings are distributed one week before the meetings.
5. The mentor chairs the briefing and debriefing meetings, while participants take turns as secretaries. The project manager distributes cash per-diems.
6. Minutes are usually circulated ahead of the following meeting.

No particular administrative problems are reported regarding participation, even though the project manager, at times, must spend time responding to requests by participants regarding changes in travel and the meetings schedule.

The most important administrative issue encountered during the evaluation concerns documentation. No simple system for access to the numerous documents and reports that were produced during the mentorship programme is evident. This absence may be explained by changes in project management and in the SNBT's documentation system. Work was initiated within the SNBT during the evaluation to compile and scan the relevant documents. The SNBT expects that the new documentation system and the experience of this evaluation will leave the SNBT better prepared in the future. Official WTO/TBT-related documentation is available from the WTO's TBT Information Management System.[6]

Substantial e-mail communication between meetings allowed sharing of documents as well as communicating a few substantive questions to the mentor. An internally developed website intended to serve as a forum for questions and exchange of information was abandoned as e-mail was deemed sufficient for the needs of the programme. The relative inactivity within the programme between meetings indicates that participants made limited use of the mentorship facilities in their daily work on an ongoing basis.

The SNBT charges standard fees for its participation in the mentorship programme, which amounts to SEK 900 per hour for administrative staff, SEK 1000 for experts, and up to SEK 1,250 for senior experts. The fees differ according to the basic salary of the staff involved. The fees are determined by the SNBT to cover all its direct, indirect, and overhead costs according to the Fee Regulation (Avgiftsförordning - 1992:191), but the fees do not include any profit margin.[7] This fee arrangement is standard practice by most Swedish government agencies involved in these kinds of activities. The SNBT has shared a document demonstrating how the fees have been calculated. The fees have been vetted and approved by the Swedish National Financial Management Authority (Ekonomistyrningsverket).

The SNBT's fee levels appear to be high by Swedish standards. The reasonability of Swedish aid money contributing to the financing of the General Director of a Swedish government agency (included in "support functions") is worth discussing. The Swedish National Audit Office emphasises the importance of not setting fees too low or too high; both cases lead to inefficient use of resources.[8] As a buyer of services, Sida should consider the added value of using the SNBT compared to other service providers.

The programme budget and financial outcome through July 2011 are shown in Figure 4. As shown, the programme is well below budget. The SNBT's fees represented 62 percent of the total programme cost of SEK 4.3 million. Time-constraints have prevented an in depth evaluation of the efficiency of the programme.

[6] Available at http://tbtims.wto.org/.

[7] The SNBT's fee levels were increased to SEK 970, SEK 1070, SEK 1240, and SEK 1440 in 2011. For example, the SEK 1070 fee consists of costs for salary including social benefits (50 percent); training, travel, etc. (8 percent); support functions (23 percent); and facilities, IT, etc. (19 percent).

[8] Riksrevisionen (2011).

Figure 4. Programme budget and outcome (SEK).

	Budget (3 yrs)	Actual cost June 2008 - Sept 2009	Actual cost Sept 2009 - Sept 2010	Actual cost Oct 2010 - Jul 2011	Total	Outcome compared to budget
Field research trip	287 500	290 664	0	0	290 664	101%
Main activities	5 053 800	1 755 074	1 154 694	935 139	2 909 768	58%
Introductory meeting Stockholm	722 000	509 010	65 695	0	574 705	80%
Mid-term meeting Africa	582 000	0	472 938	0	472 938	81%
Conclusive meeting	396 000	0	0	0	0	
Website	100 000	30 000	2 500	0	32 500	33%
Review	200 000	0	0	0	0	
Miscellaneous	158 700	0	0	0	0	
Total	**7 500 000**	**2 584 748**	**1 695 827**	**935 139**	**5 215 714**	70%

Two annual reports on the mentorship programme have been shared with Sida. The reports show activities and financial status. Individual activities are presented and the notification indicator, in particular, is discussed, but the LFA framework is not systematically used to track and present progress. The LFA is required in all the SNBT projects, but no systematic thinking on monitoring and evaluation of results is present. Additionally, the SNBT seemed unprepared for this evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation would merit more attention, in particular because the SNBT's aid budget has expanded significantly. The SNBT's overall development activities have been audited by Grant Thornton and the Swedish National Audit Office. An auditing requirement will also be included in the revised framework agreement with Sida.

Participants' own assessment

The evaluation questionnaire also asked capital-based participants what they think about various aspects of the SNBT's management of the mentorship programme. Annex 4 shows that both the overall quality of support and, in particular, the overall ability of the SNBT to manage the mentorship programme are given high ratings. Various aspects of the mentorship programme yield overall high to very high ratings. Contacts with the other participants and the mid-term review meeting in Mombasa are given the highest marks. The mentoring between meetings gets a slightly lower mark than the other aspects, with the exception of the programme website, which apparently never found its place in the programme. The relatively less enthusiastic appreciation of mentoring between meetings reflects that this programme feature was not used in a substantive way.

During the interviews no negative remarks of any kind were made towards the expertise, skills, or behaviour of the SNBT staff, even though the issue was explored in depth with only one capital-based participant. The participant appreciated the friendly attitude of the SNBT team in addition to the strong technical expertise and "fatherly" attitude of the mentor. The mentor handled the mentoring approach well and was always ready to answer seemingly "stupid" questions. The participant argued that Sweden was a good donor that released funds quickly and did not impose conditions.

4. Evaluative conclusions

4.1 Relevance and impact

The relevance of the mentorship programme is reflected in participation on the TBT Committee and that the use of the mechanisms of the TBT Agreement was very low when the programme started. The programme was preceded by substantial discussions on TBT-related technical assistance on the TBT Committee and in other events attended by Sida and the SNBT. Additionally, the relevance of the programme is rated very highly by all participating countries. However, a more thorough initial analysis of the programme logic could have reinforced the relevance.

The programme logic relies on a string of assumptions about the changes needed to link the activities of the mentorship programme with its objectives. These assumptions hold at a theoretical and intuitive level, but a deeper exploration of their causes and effects, both positive and negative, would have benefited the programme. Such an exploration would include elaborating on the complex links between standards, trade, growth, and poverty reduction, issues that the SNBT should be well placed to analyse and address. Of particular importance would have been the exploration of concrete questions such as: which are the most important elements of implementing the TBT Agreement in a developing country? How might the TBT Agreement promote improved regulations, standards, and testing infrastructure? How can empowered individuals change national TBT-related institutions? Addressing these questions means focusing on institutional mechanisms and how they may function in weak contexts. The SNBT could potentially gain from its developing cooperation activities in this key area. Hopefully, these experiences will be documented in the future.

The original programme document included a monitoring framework that gave a clear overview of the programme and how activities link to programme objectives. The monitoring framework also includes a number of indicators. The framework is focused and realistic regarding project objectives and activities. The main problem is that the SNBT has not consistently used the framework to monitor progress. The SNBT could have tracked most of the indicators proposed and presented them concisely in the annual reports. The indicator on successfully implemented working plans is key. Determining if the working plans have been realised within the context of the programme can be difficult because the content of the working plans differs between countries and implementation of the working plans depends on a number of factors external to the programme. Instead, a selection of generic indicators could have been included as checkpoints of institutional progress, just as the number of notifications has been used as an indicator of progress.

The design of the mentorship programme looks very good on paper and contributes to possible achievement of the programme objectives. The mentorship approach contrasts to the supply-driven and short-term character of many technical assistance activities. The approach involves an expert public agency, hands-off demand driven support over a substantial period of time, and real-world activities in the form of TBT Committee participation. Additionally, the individual working plans aimed at identifying and rectifying gaps in the national infrastructure.

4.2 Effectiveness and sustainability

To what extent the programme achieved its project objectives is a key issue. First, this section will review the indicators included in the monitoring matrix:

Indicator	Actual achievements
Project objective: To increase the application and implementation of the TBT Agreement.	
14 trained people.	Achieved for all except Ethiopia, who dropped out. Geneva officials had difficulties attending. Six trained capital experts and between six and ten Geneva delegates were involved.
No. of notifications increased.	Partly achieved with increases for Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda; but no notifications from Burundi, Rwanda, and Zambia.
No. of comments on other members' notifications increased.	No information available. Has not been monitored by the programme.
Establishment of a national network to discuss TBT related issues.	Achieved only partially. The programme can be associated with a revitalisation of the national committee in Kenya and the recent decision to establish a committee in Tanzania. Participants have made proposals to establish committees in Burundi, Rwanda, and Zambia, but these proposals have not been realised.
Output 1: Increased mentee's participation in the TBT Committee and knowledge and understanding of the TBT Agreement.	
Nine main activities and two single activities.	Achieved. Activities organised as planned, with the second single activity planned for November 2011.
80 percent personal presence in at least three main activities and in single activities.	Achieved, but the indicator is a bit unclear. Attendance rate of over 80 percent in all main activities for capital experts and between 13 percent and 59 percent for Geneva delegates. Attendance of above 80 percent in four main activities (briefing and debriefing meetings).
80 percent satisfaction by participants.	Achieved. High satisfaction in surveys made by both the SNBT and the evaluation.
100 percent completed working plans.	Achieved. All countries have working plans.
Website visits and usage.	Website developed, but not used much.
Output 2: Increased regional and national cooperation.	
Mid-term meeting organised.	Achieved. Activity organised as planned.
Over 80 percent presence.	Nearly achieved. 75 percent attendance from programme participants.
Over 80 percent satisfied.	Achieved. High satisfaction in surveys made by both the SNBT and the evaluation.
Output 3: Increased capacity building.	
100 percent satisfactory completed working plans.	Achieved. All countries have working plans.
50 percent realised plans.	Difficult to define "realisation." The participants appreciated and used the plans. The plans have been subject to regular discussion and reporting, but the levels of realisation have not been systematically monitored.
No increase in staff working on TBT.	No information available. Has not been monitored by the programme.

Resources given for continued participation on TBT Committee after programme completion.	Not achieved.

The matrix shows a high level of achievement of programme output 1 (participation and knowledge) and output 2 (regional and national cooperation). These results are strengthened by a number of achievements reported by participants, such as the empowerment of individual capital experts, strengthened links between capitals and Geneva, and improved communication and coordination between countries. The lack of involvement of regional institutions or structures is a major shortcoming of the programme, which threatens the sustainability of the results.

Achievement output 3 (capacity building) is less evident. Capacity building is a key component of the programme because it focuses on developing the national TBT infrastructure. As previously discussed at length in this report, the programme as currently designed can have, with some exceptions, only indirect influence in this respect. This situation illuminates the gap between the programme's focus on development of individual capacities and the need for organisational development and institutional change at the national level. The individual working plan was the key tool to bridge this gap. The participants themselves developed and appreciated the plans, which were also subject to approval by national authorities, used in the daily work of the participants and subject to regular reporting and follow-up. But the plans were ambitious and had cost implications beyond the scope of influence of the programme, leaving assumptions about broader ownership and influence of a programme such as this in question. Nevertheless, important achievements within the programme are evident, even though assessment of the implementation of each individual working plan within the evaluation has not been possible. The participants have reported increased TBT-related action, such as legislation, enquiry points, awareness-raising, and in other areas, that they associate with programme activities. Increases in the number of outgoing notifications from three countries, work on statements of implementation of at least two countries, and coordination among participating countries on trade concerns (such as tobacco) occurring during the programme period can all be objectively observed.

In view of these achievements, this evaluation fairly concludes that the mentorship programme has reached its project objective for the participating countries as a group, which was to "increase the application and implementation of the TBT Agreement." However, the sustainability of these results remains a concern. Continued regular participation in TBT Committee meetings is highly unlikely for financial reasons. Additionally, the programme has primarily benefited individuals. The capital-based experts, in particular, are well-placed to act as change agents in their respective administrations (which gives credit to the programme's selection process), but whether they will continue in this role once the programme is over remains to be seen. Finally, staff turn-over and changes in management and political leadership, with concomitant alterations in priorities, institutions, and budgetary allocations, may obliterate achievements not firmly anchored in national institutional frameworks.

Participant interviews indicate that Kenya and Uganda have achieved a level of sustainable maturity that embedded the programme participants from these countries in a favourable institutional framework with support from supervisors, colleagues, and national committees. However, this claim must be validated through a deeper, country-level analysis. In the other countries, the institutional landscape is less certain and less developed. Programme participants from these countries state that they are "alone," are subject to bureaucratic and hierarchical procedures, and rely on informal contacts and networks.

The programme, and this evaluation, have not had access to sufficient information to determine whether fundamental and sustainable changes have really taken place, even though indications to that effect are evident in all countries. As one participant from the weaker group of countries stated: “Now we know where we are, where we want to go. A process has started. We have to continue.”

The evaluation has not found any signs that environmental, gender, or HIV/Aids issues have been considered in the design and implementation of the mentorship programme activities.

4.3 Programme management and efficiency

Participants highly rated the overall quality of support and the ability of the SNBT to manage the mentorship programme. Administrative arrangements and communication with the SNBT are also given high marks. The SNBT seems to have been appreciated from both substantive and administrative perspectives. The selection process generated participation of relevant and dedicated capital experts that remained in the programme throughout its lifetime. Efforts were made to enhance the involvement of Geneva-based delegates. Activities have been carried out within and even below budget.

Against this positive background remain a few issues pertaining to programme management and efficiency of the mentorship programme that are worth highlighting:

- **Division of labour within the SNBT**. The division of labour has evolved over the programme period, especially with the creation of ICO. However, the project manager has a mainly administrative role, despite being a professional staff member. Whether this situation is an efficient use of resources is questionable. Employing professional staff in an administrative role may affect negatively the working morale of the project manager and the status of the project manager role. Additionally, the SNBT’s internal knowledge transfer between mentor and project manager may suffer, which may affect the SNBT’s ability to implement similar programmes in the future.

- **Website**. The website is the single programme component that did not perform well. This underperformance may be attributed to weak IT infrastructure and usage among programme participants. It may also indicate low activity levels between the Geneva meetings. This issue illustrates how mentorship should be relevant to the daily work of participants and how monitoring of activities should be well organised.

- **Follow-up**. No clear ideas of how to follow-up or phase-out the programme have emerged from the programme, even though this concern was expressed early in the programme. The SNBT and the programme participants share responsibly for inaction on this point.

- **Documentation**. A wealth of information and reports was generated during the programme, but it was not systematically stored. Digitalisation did not commence until the evaluation began requesting documents. Even then, not all documents were made accessible to the evaluator in digital form. This significant weakness hopefully prompts the SNBT to perform better in the future as the new digital documentation system improves and experience from aid activities increases.

- **Monitoring**. All interviewed the SNBT staff agree that the programme is a success, but the programme has not systematically monitored institutional changes to which the programme may have contributed at the national level. Instead, the programme has relied on participants’ self-reporting. A more systematic approach to monitoring, based on indicators of expected institutional and organisational change should be developed in future programmes.

- **Evaluation.** The SNBT appeared relatively unprepared to this evaluation, despite that the evaluation is included in the original budget and has been discussed with Sida for some time. However, this external evaluation is the SNBT's first. Short timeframes during the evaluation and the interference of summer holidays may also explain the SNBT's unpreparedness. Another explanation may be an unclear division of labour between the SNBT's units on addressing the evaluations. Additionally, systematic thinking on overall monitoring and evaluation of aid activities within the SNBT, apart from using LFA matrices at project level, has been evident.

- **Lack of overall strategic framework**. The SNBT does not have any internal policy or strategy on development cooperation. Instead, a demand-driven approach has generated numerous activities, according to the latest annual report to Sida. Does the SNBT risk losing focus and spreading itself too thin?

- **Value for money**. The SNBT's services are expensive, which means that the SNBT must prove its added value all the more. As a government agency, the SNBT has institutional advantages (such as participation in TBT Committee meetings), but, as emphasised during the evaluation, the mentorship programme depends on the skills and experience of the mentor. If the SNBT loses staff because of turn-over and further employs of junior staff, senior expertise might be recruited instead from the consulting world. Another potential added value of the SNBT lies in developing institutional twining and relationships, especially because the SNBT has its own budget for such activities.

5. Lessons learned and recommendations

In terms of design and implementation, the mentorship programme represents a good reference point for the development of similar projects in the future. Elements worth highlighting are the selection process that secured continuous participation, involvement (and actual participation) of participants from different parts of national administrations, the use and follow-up of individual working plans, the demand-driven nature of the topics raised, involvement of a well-respected and knowledgeable mentor and public official, continuous interaction over a number of years in conjunction with the meetings of an international forum (the TBT Committee in this case), much appreciated regional activity, the relatively simple and clear design of the programme, and the use of a monitoring matrix. The mentorship approach as such is appealing and the SNBT has demonstrated well how it can be executed.

How involved can and should be a mentor be in the strategic and daily work of the participants? For example, in the context of the TBT mentorship programme, should the SNBT provide active support when mentee countries raise trade concerns? The functioning of the TBT Committee does not allow for mentors to interfere during discussions (and incidentally mentors are not allowed to sit with mentees under country flags in the room). But a mentor could help mentees prepare for all aspects of the meeting agenda, with particular emphasis on the most important items such as trade concerns.

Success is likely to depend as much on the execution of a project as on its inherent design. First, a clear and focused problem must be addressed. Second, the mentor must have substantive insights to offer in the form of technical expertise. Third, a high degree of trust and openness between the mentor and participating individuals, as well as among participants themselves, is necessary. The importance of a clear division of labour within the mentor organisation cannot be emphasised enough.

The substantive action of the TBT mentorship programme occurs during meetings. Face-to-face interaction has advantages over distance activities because the former provides for more vivid discussion free of technical constraints. But the relative inaction between meetings questions how a mentorship programme can remain relevant and support the daily work of the participants. Can activities be designed that promote regular interaction? Are question and answer sessions necessary? How can a website or other technical tools be useful? Would in-between situation-status questionnaires help?

Bridging the gap between activities focused on individual participants and promoting organisational and institutional change is a key challenge identified in this report. Clarity and realism about what the programme can achieve, and the roles and responsibilities of the individuals participating in programme activities and other parts of national administrations (including other donors) are all necessary to bridging this gap. Ownership could be increased by involving participating countries in the design phase and allowing sufficient time for the integration of overall objectives and activities by national authorities. Other steps are possible, but what can be achieved within the realms of a limited aid programme are restricted.

Monitoring results at the national level remains a challenge, especially for a global programme of this type focused on a limited number of individuals. In the future, a more rigorous monitoring structure, with a baseline and a limited selection of indicators (such as the number of questions to enquiry points, or the circulation of relevant notifications to concerned stakeholders) that are actually tracked throughout the programme should be used. This approach should be balanced against the resources needed to collect and compile the information. Carrying out an external evaluation and publishing the report are important to assess results, enhance transparency, and disseminate lessons learned. Setting aside a separate budget and engaging in systematic documentation of programme activities and results, in addition to giving access to the programme participants are key to the smooth performance of evaluations.

Finally, ideas on phasing out and/or follow-up should feature in the design phase and be discussed in a serious way during the programme. The secretariats of regional communities and other structures should be involved in the programme development phase, especially regarding its regional aspects. This lack of involvement is another weakness of the mentorship programme.

This evaluation concludes with the following recommendations:

Formulate phasing-out and following-up activities carefully

The mentorship programme deserves a well-considered second phase that ideally includes both phasing-out and following-up activities to build on the achievements and make them sustainable. Ownership is key. The design of the second phase is a joint responsibility of the participating country representatives, the SNBT and Sida (and possibly the secretariats of regional communities, as appropriate). During the summer and autumn, concrete and well-anchored proposals can be prepared for discussion at the last programme activity in November. The type and timing of activities will depend on the demand of the participating countries and the constraints of the financial and human resources offered by the SNBT and Sida. Without anticipating the outcome of that process, the following types of activities may be considered:

National activities. Participating countries have all demanded national activities, mainly focusing on raising awareness of stakeholders. These demands should be more clearly formulated and anchored to concrete outcomes. One-off events of general character are unlikely to be effective. Additionally, cost-sharing could enhance ownership, for example, by having national administrations cover all costs of local facilities and travel.

Regional activities. Organising six national events will be time consuming and resource demanding for the SNBT. The value-added mentorship programme relies on the exchange between participating countries. Regional activities, instead of national activities, may be considered over a determined period of time. The ultimate objective could be to create a regional network that also involves regional secretariats (such as the EAC).

Monitoring. A systematic follow-up of each individual country's working plan is recommended. The follow-up would determine which objectives have been reached and which have not. The key institutional constraints should be listed. Phasing-out and follow-up activities may be designed based on this information.

Follow-up activities. Once the programme is phased-out, follow-up activities requested from the participating countries could be considered. First, the SNBT could support the participating countries as a means of gaining attention from regional bodies and other donors in order to connect with regional processes and donor funded activities. Regional activities could be a means to this end. Another could be contacts with donors working at regional and national levels, such as UNIDO, EC, Germany, and Trade Mark East Africa. The SNBT could mentor the development of concrete project proposals for follow-up activities. Second, the SNBT could formulate its own follow-up, which would not need to be resource demanding. This follow-up could involve continuing to mentor from a distance or responding to enquiries on a needs-basis, staying in touch with delegations during TBT meetings, and following-up with project participants annually to track progress. After a suitable time period—perhaps a year or two—a more systematic follow-up could be performed. This time lag could provide a valuable opportunity to assess lasting effects associated with the mentorship programme.

Examine the programme logic
Sida and the SNBT should jointly further examine the conceptual underpinnings of the programme logic. This examination should centre on the nature of the direct and indirect links between implementation of a WTO agreement, such as the TBT Agreements, and poverty reduction, which is the goal of Swedish development cooperation. The programme logic needs to move beyond simplified assumptions that trade reform leads to stronger institutions, which lead to increased economic activity that finally leads to poverty reduction. The review of the programme logic above highlighted a number of concrete issues in this respect. For instance, Sida and the SNBT could jointly organise a workshop on the issue, bringing in researchers who can present concrete case studies on trade reform and poverty reduction.

Sharpen the mentorship approach
Bridging the individual-institutional gap is the key challenge in a mentorship approach. The involvement of different stakeholders from the outset in the design, conception, and means of delivery could enhance the effectiveness and ownership of the mentoring approach. Monitoring needs to be addressed more carefully and follow-up activities addressed well in advance. Individual working plans need to be more realistically adapted to the limited capacity of an individual to change, what in some cases is, the whole system. A stronger focus, then, should be put on participants' commitment. Participants are directly exposed to the programme and they are the ones who have the highest responsibility for a successful outcome of the programme. Participants must make a difference. Finally, the selection of the implementing body in any future mentorship programmes should be based on a full cost-benefit analysis. Because the fees charged by Swedish government agencies follow no set rules, Sida should feel free to negotiate the fees or buy its services through a tender process.

Continue to develop the SNBT's development cooperation framework

This issue is outside the scope of this evaluation and has not been analysed in depth. Yet the issue deserves a specific recommendation because this is the SNBT's first external evaluation. The SNBT has taken great strides in a short time period to establish a coherent framework for its development cooperation activities. This work must continue. This evaluation shows that the SNBT must work on analysing and concretising the links between trade policy, poverty reduction, and institutional change in poor countries; the division of labour within projects; securing qualified personnel who can contribute to mentoring activities; and ensuring that programmes are properly monitored and documented. With SEK 18 million aid budget, the SNBT should give more consideration to strategic thinking to avoid spreading itself too thin. The SNBT should also give more consideration to its overall monitoring and evaluation framework to track results and record lessons learned.

Annex 1 – Terms of reference of the evaluation

Draft: 24 May 2011

Ingela Juthberg
TERMS OF REFERENCE
REVIEW of the TBT Mentorship Programme 2008-2011

1. Evaluation purpose

The Swedish National Board of Trade carried out a "Mentorship Programme" related to the World Trade Organisation Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade. This program is evaluated herein. Sida's Regional Africa Unit for Environmental and Economic Development (REED) and Sida's Department for Programme Cooperation (PROGSAM) will use the review to follow-up with the program, draw lessons from the pilot project, and assess support for similar projects in the future. Other Sida departments and units may also use the evaluation to consider support similar to the Mentorship Programme in the future. Additionally, if the concept of the Mentorship Programme is found viable, the evaluation shall assist the Swedish National Board of Trade, and possibly other partners with which Sida will cooperate, in the design of similar future projects.

The aim of this assignment is to evaluate whether the TBT Mentorship Programme, carried out by the Swedish National Board of Trade, has fulfilled its objectives. This assignment includes identifying and considering any poverty-reducing links and effects of this type of programme. Additionally, Sida seeks an analysis and description of the programme's successes as well as suggestions for improvements to similar future programmes.

2. Intervention Background

Differences in technical requirements on products—the "technical barriers to trade" (TBTs)—illustrates one reason why sub-Saharan Africa countries have had limited benefit from the positive effects of global trade. A national quality and product safety infrastructure is needed to address TBT requirements, thus increasing the the number of products from sub-Saharan Africa reaching the world market,.

In 2008, Sida decided to use its Frame Agreement with the Swedish National Board of Trade (SNBT) for an assignment aimed at providing support to selected African countries. The support was geared to aid in understanding, influencing, and implementing the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, a measure that would increase their countries' competitiveness and protect their citizens, with the long-term goal of reducing their poverty.

Sida's funding, which totaled of SEK 7 300 000, was to cover a three-year pilot period during which the the SNBT would provide support to national experts from Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia, and their respective representatives to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Geneva (the mentees). This "Mentorship Programme" consists of informative and interactive meetings before and after the regular sessions of the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (the TBT Committee), which are held three times a year on the WTO's premises in Geneva. The aim of the Programme is enhanced knowledge on the TBT Agreement, and thereby enhance the capacity to influence discussions and negotiations with regarding the agreement, as well as building capacity to implement and use the TBT Agreement in the participating countries and regions, which would lead to increased participation in regional and international trade.

3. Stakeholder involvement

The evaluators shall interview all staff involved in the delivery of the Mentorship Programme at the SNBT. This includes staff at several different levels, from the Director of the Division concerned to the Programme Manager to the Programme Administrator.
How the utilisation-focused evaluation approach is to be applied for this review is to be discussed between the evaluators and Sida.

4. Evaluation questions

Sida has identified a number of questions regarding the Mentorship Programme. However, should the evaluators find the questions too numerous or extensive, too difficult to interpret, or impossible to answer as intended, the evaluators shall consult with Sida to decided jointly on a more reasonable approach. Sida requested that the evaluators draw conclusions on the following:

a) Has the TBT Mentorship Programme fulfilled its objectives at the level of output, outcome, and impact? Objectives that were not well designed at the outset may be discussed here. Therefore, this work includes whether the objectives for the Mentorship Programme have been clearly defined, and whether relevant measurable indicators were identified when the Mentorship Programme was designed. If not, which indicators would the evaluators suggest for the Mentorship Programme? Is it still possible to say something about the Mentorship Programme's fulfilment of the indicators suggested by the evaluators?

b) Is the Mentorship Programme likely to have any lasting impact and will this impact contribute to poverty reduction? This measure includes identifying aspects that could ensure a poverty-reducing effect in similar programmes in the future.

c) How has the aptitude of the SNBT staff, and the SNBT consultants, involved in implementing the Mentorship Programme been relevant to the objectives and the "relevance" evaluation criteria? This measure includes assessing the SNBT staff's expert knowledge in TBT-negotiations, which includes deep knowledge about the developmental dimension of the TBT negotiations, the implementation of the TBT Agreement and possible negotiations outcomes, as well as the use of the TBT Agreement. Possessing sufficient geographic and cultural knowledge relevant to the participating countries and regions is also important. Additionally, the SNBT staff must possess relevant social and teaching skills. Evaluating the aptitude of the SNBT to implement the Mentorship Programme includes analysing the ability of the SNBT to ensure that the mentees are the most relevant ones[9], and that environmental, gender, and HIV/AIDS issues have been considered in the design and implementation of the activities, when relevant. Furthermore, determining whether comments, questions, and suggestions by the mentees regarding the content or format of the Mentorship Programme have been addressed, which lessons the SNBT itself has drawn from the activities undertaken, and which improvements the SNBT has incorporated in the delivery of the Mentorship Programme as a result of the lessons learned are all critical areas of evaluation. Finally, evaluation in this area includes whether the webpage for the Mentorship Programme functioned as planned.

d) Have the mentees have been active on the TBT Committee, and if so, how? Has the Mentorship Programme contributed to the mentees' activity on the TBT Committee? And, regarding relevance, do

[9] This could be measured by asking the SNBT how participants were selected, by enquiring with the Chairman and Secretary of the WTO TBT Committee, and by asking the participants who else from their country they would consider relevant.

the mentees and other stakeholders judge the activity as useful? What would they have included, what could they have done without, and, if they are dissatisfied, what they would have preferred instead?

e) Has the exchange of TBT-related information between stakeholders within each participating country increased? If so, has this increased information been useful?

f) Has the Mentorship Programme increased the TBT-related work within the participating countries and among them (and possibly other neighbouring countries)? Have national networks been created to enhance TBT-related work and reporting? Has the number of TBT-related notifications to the WTO increased? Have comments on other countries' notifications from the countries (or regions) the mentees represent increased? Has the work of the national TBT Committees led to other measurable results? This indicator will specify whether effects are national or regional in character.

f) Did mentees participate in cost-sharing?

g) Any other aspects the evaluator deems pertinent for making judgements regarding the quality, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the TBT Mentorship Programme will be assessed.

5. Recommendations and lessons

Keeping the aims of this evaluation assignment in mind, Sida expects the final report to answer questions similar to those listed above. The main questions of concern to are whether the TBT Mentorship Programme has fulfilled its objectives and whether any poverty-reducing links and effects of this type of programme can be identified. Judgement of poverty-reducing links may rest on a qualified discussion regarding the project design.

Additionally, Sida seeks lessons regarding the TBT Mentorship Programme's successes and failures. These lessons includes an overall assessment of whether the concept is worth replicating, recommendations regarding which parts to retain in a future similar project, identification of limitations and omissions, and recommendations for improvements.

Furthermore, Sida assumes that the final report will inform the reader on the cost-effectiveness of this type of Mentorship Programme, and measures for further cost-efficiency.

6. Methodology

Sida suggests that the assignment be implemented by way of desk studies, presence at briefing and debriefing meetings, and interviews and questionnaires. The evaluator and Sida can discuss methodology, especially whether a mix of interviews and questionnaires shall be used. The presence at the briefing and debriefing meetings requires the evaluator to be present in Geneva for the meeting of the WTO TBT Committee on 15-16 June 2011. Please observe that these are preliminary dates as indicated by the SNBT and the WTO; the briefing and debriefing sessions may be held prior to or after those dates. Should the activities or dates change, Sida will advise the evaluator on how to proceed, subject to the availability of the evaluator.

A detailed description of evaluation methods proposed by the evaluator should be part of the call-off response. The proposed methodology shall minimise the burden of this evaluation on the intended beneficiaries. This aspect shall be kept in mind by the evaluators during the implementation of this assignment.

A possible approach is described below. The assignment could include four primary tasks:

Task 1: Study available material

The evaluator shall:

- Study all available documentation, including the project description, the Frame Agreement, and the Specific Agreement between Sida and the SNBT, the annual reports, reports from the briefing and debriefing sessions of the TBT Mentorship Programme, reports from the start-up, mid-term meetings, questionnaires filled out by mentees, reports of the WTO TBT Committee, and any other relevant documentation.

This task will be undertaken as a desk study using existing written material.

The background material for the Assignment consists, inter alia, of:

- the project description
- the Frame Agreement between Sida and the SNBT
- the Specific Agreement between Sida and the SNBT
- the annual project reports (both narrative and financial)
- audit reports covering the Mentorship Programme
- reports from the briefing and debriefing sessions
- reports from the start-up, mid-term, and final meetings
- questionnaires filled out by mentees
- Information available through the website of the Mentorship Programme: http://www.kommers.se/pptbt0810
- reports of the WTO TBT Committee
- any other relevant documentation

Task 2: Assist at meetings

The evaluator shall:

- Assist at a meeting of the WTO TBT Committee Meeting, including the briefing and debriefing sessions of the TBT Mentorship Programme.

This task requires the evaluator to be present in Geneva at the TBT Committee meeting of 15-16 June 2011.

Task 3: Conduct interviews and possibly send questionnaires

The evaluator shall:

- Conduct interviews with TBT Mentorship Programme mentees and other beneficiaries; people involved with the programme at the SNBT (including Christer Arvíus, Ingela Molin, Lennart Nordström and Thomas Hagman, and Sida (including Margareta Davidson-Abdelli and Ingela Juthberg); the WTO Secretariat (including Erik Wijkström); possibly the current or former chairperson of the WTO TBT Committee; and any other persons identified as a possible source of information during the above-mentioned interviews or during the evaluation process.

These interviews can be undertaken in person, by telephone, or in writing.

If the information collected in the three above-mentioned tasks is considered insufficient, the evaluator may send questionnaires to selected relevant individuals.

A selection the Mentorship Programme mentees and their superiors (that is, officials in national administrations) as well as other national and regional stakeholders shall both be asked (through interviews and questionnaires, for example) about how they perceive the Mentorship Programme and its effectiveness, impact, relevance, sustainability, and efficiency. They should be given the opportunity to comment on the inception report.

Task 4: Draft reports

The Evaluator shall submit an inception report, a draft report, and a final report.

Possible indicators for measurement could include:

- Attendance from concerned countries in the TBT Committee meetings before and after (where "after" would refer to the last phase of the TBT Mentorship Programme)
- Number of notifications before and after, and a judgement of their relevance
- Number of submissions to the WTO before and after
- Number of interventions in the TBT Committee before and after
- Number of questions to the mentor between meetings
- Number of questions to the mentor during meetings
- Number of national enquiry points established before and after
- Response rate of national enquiry points before and after
- Number of national TBT Committees before and after
- Number of meetings of national TBT Committees before and after
- Number of people, organisations, and private sector groups represented on the TBT Committees
- Diversity of stakeholder interests represented on the national TBT Committees before and after
- Indications of enhanced regional cooperation on TBT issues
- Training hours provided by the project mentees on TBT issues to others (before and after)

7. Work plan and schedule

The assignment is to be implemented between 30 May 2011 and mid September 2011.

The maximum amount of time that can be debited for this assignment is 140 hours. However, the number of hours must be reduced if only consultants from the most expensive category are used. The ceiling for reimbursable costs are SEK 20 000. The total ceiling this assignment can be debited is SEK 180 000.

8. Reporting

A first inception report shall be submitted to Ingela Juthberg (ingela.juthberg@sida.se) by 9 June 2011 at the latest. A draft report shall be submitted no later than 19 August 2011. The SNBT and selected stakeholders shall be given the opportunity to comment on the draft report. The final report shall be submitted two weeks, at the latest, after having received the comments from Sida and stakeholders.

The final report should be written in English with a maximum length of 30 pages, excluding Annexes. An Executive Summary of a maximum length of three pages, which contains the main findings, shall be included in the report. The Executive Summary shall include main conclusions regarding how the TBT Mentorship Programme has fulfilled its objectives, what has worked well, and suggested improvements for similar future programmes. The evaluator shall, as far as possible, adhere to the terminological conventions of the OECD/DAC Glossary on Evaluation and Results-Based Management.

As part of the assignment, and preferably before drafting the final report, the evaluator shall make a presentation of observations and preliminary conclusions to personnel concerned at Sida and the SNBT.

At the request of the SNBT or Sida, the evaluator shall make himself available for discussions on recommendations and conclusions.

9. Evaluation team

Apart from including advanced evaluation expertise, the evaluation team for this assignment must possess extensive knowledge in international trade policy, especially how it is implemented nationally in developing countries, and the functioning of the multilateral trading system. Furthermore, this assignment will be difficult to execute without knowledge of the content and implementation of the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade. Deep knowledge of the implementation, in a developing country context, of a similar WTO Agreement is required. The evaluation team also must be fluent in English, both oral and written. This fluency includes terminology used in international trade policy in general, and the WTO TBT Agreement in particular.

Furthermore, all individuals involved in this assignment are required to be completely independent of the evaluated activities and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

10. Other aspects

For Sida's human resource development, Sida personnel shall participate in the work as observers and accompany the evaluator(s) on visits in Sweden and in the field.

Annex 2 – The mentorship programme's monitoring framework

		Indicators
Development objective (impact)	Increase the capacities to participate in international and regional trade in a way that contributes to the overall goal of poverty reduction.	
Project objective (outcome)	Increase the application and implementation of the TBT Agreement.	14 trained persons. No. of notifications increased. No. of comments on other members' notifications increased. Establishment of a national network to discuss TBT related issues.
Outputs	**Activities**	**Indicators**
1. Increased mentee's participation on the TBT Committee and knowledge and understanding of the TBT Agreement.	Participation at TBT committee meetings (main activities). Seminars (single activities). National working plans. Website.	Nine main activities and two single activities.80 percent personal presence in at least three main activities and in single activities. 80 percent satisfaction by participants. 100 percent completed working plans. Website visits and usage.
2. Increased regional and national cooperation.	Midterm meeting.	Meeting organised. Over 80 percent presence. Over 80 percent satisfied.
3. Increased capacity building.	Draft proposal on network organisation. Knowledge and understanding institutional spread.	100 percent satisfactory completed working plans. 50 percent realised plans. No staff working on TBT increased. Resources given to continue to participate in TBT Committee after programme completion.

Annex 3 – Sample progress report

SNº	Planned activities	Achievement	Remark
1	Outgoing notifications Ingoing notifications	Not yet done Partially done	The outgoing notification work no longer handled by the bureau of standards. No feedback from the stakeholders on
2	Regulatory bodies are coordinated.	Ministry of Trade and Industry is the coordinator.	
3	National TBT Committee is established by December 2009. Regularly meet with the participation of all major stakeholders.	Not yet done	A paper proposing the establishment of the Committee was introduced to MINICOM for approval. Still waiting for feedback .
4	RBS is adequately equipped with high quality efficient laboratories by 2010 June: Four equipped laboratories (microbiological, organic chemistry, inorganic chemistry, and food and agriculture labs)	????	
4	TBT EP fully equipped. Increase of financial resources in the TBT work.	One printer (with a scanner and photocopier) was purchased by UNIDO under his program of technical assistance.	
5	Officials in charge of TBT implementation and TBT Committee members have adequate skills.	Only one official trained with the UNIDO support.	
6	Identification of different stakeholders (exporters, importers, and manufacturers) by December 2009.	Under preparation.	
7	All stakeholders, including business community, are aware of the importance of TBT implementation.	One awareness seminar on SPS/TBT Agreement and notifications training was organisation in collaboration with Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation 2-4 June 2010. Around 35 stakeholders attended the seminar.	

8	Participation in all international standards setting activities.	BS staff is participating in Codex meeting and participating in one ISO technical committee on environmental management as observer.	
9	Effective contact between Geneva permanent mission, bureau of standards, and the ministry.	Communication is running smoothly.	Geneva Mission helped in getting the technical assistance for the workshop organised in June on SPS/TBT Agreements.

Annex 4 – Responses to the questionnaire

1 = very low, 5 = very high

		Average	Median	St.dev.
1.	**How do you rate the overall relevance of the Mentorship Programme to your country's needs?**	4.8	5	0.37
2.	**How do you rate the overall quality of the support provided through the Mentorship Programme?**	4.3	4	0.47
3.	**Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following components of the Mentorship Programme:**			
	i) Selection of participants	4.5	4.5	0.50
	ii) Contacts with the other participants	4.8	5	0.37
	iii) Individual working plans	4.3	4.5	0.75
	iv) Briefing and debriefing meetings	4.5	4.5	0.50
	v) Mentoring between meetings	4.0	4	0.82
	vi) The mid-term review meeting in Mombasa in May 2010	4.8	5	0.40
	vii) Communication with the Swedish National Board of Trade	4.3	4.5	0.75
	viii) The Programme website	3.2	3.5	0.90
	ix) Administrative arrangements (tickets, hotels, per-diems, etc.)	4.5	4.5	0.50
4.	**How do you rate the overall ability of the Swedish National Board of Trade to manage the Mentorship Programme?**	4.5	4.5	0.50
5.	**How do you rate the contribution of the mentorship programme to TBT activities in your country in relation to:**			
	i) Generating/raising political commitment to TBT activities?	3.8	4	0.90
	ii) Participating in the TBT Committee?	4.8	5	0.37
	iii) Informal networking with other delegations?	4.5	4.5	0.50
	iv) Preparing notifications to the TBT Committee?	4.2	4.5	0.90
	v) Functioning of the national TBT Enquiry Point?	3.8	4	1.07
	vi) The national TBT Committee/network?	3.4	3	1.50
	vii) Consultation with the private sector and civil society on TBT issues?	3.4	3	1.02
	viii) Your national standards institutions?	4.3	4.5	0.75
	ix) Collaboration with other countries in the region on TBT issues?	4.4	4	0.49
	x) Equality between women and men?	4.3	4.5	0.75
6.	**What changes would you suggest in the focus, activities and/or organization of the Mentorship Program to make a similar future programme even better?**			
7.	**Any other comments.**			

Annex 5 – List of interviewed persons

Programme participants

Mr Anaclet Biru-shabagabo	Burundi
Mr Bernard Ntahiraja	Burundi
Ms Lucy Wanjiru Ikonya	Kenya
Ms Liliane Kamanzi	Rwanda
Mr Edouard Bizumuremyi	Rwanda
Ms Julitha Tibanyenda	Tanzania
Mr Lucas N. Saronga	Tanzania (by e-mail)
Mr George Opiyo	Uganda
Mrs Prisca Mulonda	Zambia

Others

Mr Christer Arvius	SNBT
Ms Ingela Mohlin	SNBT
Mr Thomas Hagman	SNBT
Mr Lennart Nordström	SNBT
Ms Malika Mahjoub	SNBT
Mr Petter Lycke	Ministry of Finance
Mr Fabrizio Sacchetti	European Commission
Ms Meike Wolf	European Commission
Mr Joao Magalhaes	Portugal
Dr Ben Manyindo	Uganda (by e-mail)
Representative of the US Trade Representative	US
Erik Wijkström	WTO

Annex 6 – List of main documents and literature

Programme documents

- Sida, Assessment memo (dated 8 April 2008) and decision (21 April 2008).
- SNBT, Original terms of reference, monitoring framework, and budget (May 2008).
- SNBT, Minutes from briefing and debriefing meetings.
- SNBT, Annual reports on the mentoring programme to Sida for 2008 and 2009 with appendices.
- SNBT, Proposal for fees 2011 (dated 2010-12-27).
- Programme participants, Individual working plans and various follow-up reports

Other documents

Meyer, N. et al. (2010), "Bilateral and Regional Trade Agreements and Technical Barriers to Trade: An African Perspective", OECD Trade Policy Working Papers, No. 96, OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5kmdbgfrgnbv-en

Riksrevisionen (2011), Statliga myndigheters tjänsteexport, RiR 2011:24.

SNBT, Annual report on SNBT's development cooperation activities to Sida for 2010.

WTO, TBT Information Management System, http://tbtims.wto.org/

REVIEW OF THE TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME 2008-2011

This report contains an external evaluation of a three year Sida funded mentorship programme for a selection of African countries within the area of Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT). The programme was implemented by the Swedish National Board of Trade (SNBT). The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the results and produce lessons learned for the design of similar programmes in the future. The programme had an innovative design and was found to be relevant and implemented in a satisfactory manner. However, the programme benefited primarily the participating individuals, which highlights a gap in the programme between the development of individual capacities and the need for organizational development and institutional change at national level. The evaluation concludes with some recommendations.

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Valhallavägen 199, Stockholm
Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64
Postgiro: 1 56 34–9. VAT. No. SE 202100-478901
E-mail: info@sida.se. Homepage: http://www.sida.se