

The Centre has two core services:

### **1) Trade policy advice to developing countries**

The high-level policy and negotiating advice we provide is aimed at enhancing developing countries trade policy making capacity by strengthening the knowledge of national officials of multilateral trade negotiations techniques, strategies and tactics in order to improve their negotiating capacity. The assistance provided is demand driven in the sense that its design, implementation, and objectives respond to and address the development priorities of country beneficiaries rather than to the agenda of the donors. This means that the beneficiary fully enjoys the “ownership” of the assistance.

IDEAS Centre provides developing countries timely and tailored advice to accompany the WTO negotiating process. The comprehensive approach together with the process and demand driven approach leads to an assistance that is customized to the client’s needs. IDEAS Centre assumes the role of a pro-active advisor which understands the dynamics and challenges of the process at hand and works together with its clients on addressing them.

The objective of the Centre is to advise the Governments so as to enable them to do their job through the knowledge of the negotiation process and the policies affecting them. The centre does not do the work for the client Government as it believes that only the nationals have the knowledge and the responsibility for developing the country.

The Centre’s work is non-partisan and focuses on achieving practical results. IDEAS Centre is independent, that is to say that IDEAS does not promote donor’s commercial policy. This allows IDEAS to act as a trusted and confidential advisor and to analyse what is in a country’s best interest.

IDEAS Centre provides trade policy advice on:

- [WTO accession](#) : IDEAS Centre helps countries gain accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and participate effectively in trade negotiation round(i.e. Laos, Tajikistan, Serbia and Lebanon);
- [Multilateral trade negotiations](#) : assistance is given to groups of countries to defend concrete interests in the negotiation (i.e. the cotton initiative of the C4)
- [Regional negotiations](#): currently we are assisting some acceding countries in their negotiations for free trade agreements with the EU (i.e. Mozambique, India)

### **2) The Geneva Trade and Development Forum (GTDF)**

The GTDF is a platform where the various stakeholders active in trade and development can engage in substantive debates on emerging issues/challenges faced by developing countries and produce concrete and innovative solutions that promote a better integration of developing countries into the world economy.

The approach is a concrete one: identify concrete positions which have a chance to be adopted and which help developing countries to integrate into the world economy. The

positions are discussed and prepared by a small group of countries representing various interests in WTO so as to ensure that proposals have a chance to be adopted.

The Forum seeks to catalyze forces to act in order to support disadvantaged countries in making their voice heard and their interests taken into account. Building knowledge, capacities and confidence of PDCs on emerging issues

The GTDF currently focuses on four key and pressing upcoming topics of interest to developing countries:

1) The WTO Accession process

The GTDF has constituted a group of 8 WTO members from developed, emerging and developing countries called the Friends of Accession (FOA) that care about the systemic concerns of the process, are conscious of possible negative implication on the development if the current trend is to be continued in the future and who have the voice and the power to act within the organization. The FOA have made proposals that have been largely used by the IGDC in its submission of 9 October 2009 (enclosed for your perusal). The GTDF has also organized a mini-ministerial meeting of acceding countries to gather their concerns and viewpoint on the process. For more information on this initiative, please click [here](#).

2) Climate change, trade and developing countries

This initiative aims at raising the awareness of poor developing countries about the risks associated with climate related measures by informing them about the various policy options in effect or under consideration in national legislation to offset competitiveness and leakage concerns. The initiative also seeks to encourage poorer countries' involvement in the climate change / trade debate and strengthen their capacity to defend their interests throughout the process. More information is available [here](#).

3) Capacity-building in Geneva “the young wolves”

We have created a group of a dozen Geneva-based delegates from African countries who are dynamic, engaged in the trade negotiations and interested in pushing the interests of poorer countries in multilateral trade discussions. The group is dubbed the “young wolves” referring to the innovative and dynamic features as well as the engagement of the group members. The initiative aims at providing the group with the information needed to raise their awareness, build their capacities and define their positions on systemic and new issues through regular and carefully prepared meetings. Selected topics depend on the interest of the young wolves, the context and the possibility to bring constructive inputs to the process. They can pertain to issues negotiated in different fora (WTO, regionally, etc.) or to emerging trends. More information is available [here](#).

4) Building an inclusive international trade architecture

The objective is to establish a powerful and dedicated coalition of developing, emerging and OECD countries – the trade governance constituency for change – committed to identify solutions and strategies to maintain and foster an efficient, legitimate and inclusive international trade architecture. The work is based on existing recommendations – such as the ones developed by the Sutherland Report or

the Warwick Commission – and on research and reflection elaborated by partner institutions from developed and developing countries. Work will be analyzed from a poorer countries perspective. This initiative seems to be particularly in line with your AfT priority area dedicated to “good governance and the fight against corruption” as it also seeks “to strengthen the multilateral trading system through the WTO” and “to strengthen the poorest countries’ capacity to participate in international trade negotiations”. More information on this initiative is available [here](#).

#### **Our value added**

IDEAS Centre is in a position to offer a broad range of services of interest to international and regional organisations, governments, enterprises, academia and civil society.

In summary we believe that IDEAS has the following advantages:

- a comprehensive approach to policy and negotiating advice
- a track record of dealing with WTO accession negotiations
- the ability to analyze WTO issues in an economy-wide and overall development perspective
- The Centre is based in Geneva and is at the forefront of activities involving the World Trade Organization (WTO). It has strong contacts into the WTO and Geneva-based development community
- the Centre has a small structure and results-based philosophy which allows for greater flexibility in its project design and allows it to respond to real-time negotiating needs
- the Centre is neutral, independent and dedicated to development, meaning that the advisory services provided are confidential and the assistance is tailored to areas where it will have the best developmental impact

#### **Our team and assets**

IDEAS Centre is chaired by late Arthur Dunkel, former GATT Director-General, and managed by Nicolas Imboden, former Swiss Government Trade Delegate and Ambassador in charge of Swiss economic cooperation with developing countries. Their combined policy know-how, government and private sector experience are strong assets to enrich international trade and development policy debates. The Centre’s other ongoing activities and projects underpin its policy recommendations on trade, development and global governance issues.

IDEAS Centre is totally independent and does neither represent, nor pursue specific interests. We are strongly dedicated to contributing to the formation of a more development-friendly international trading system, one that contributes to peace, prosperity and stability for all in the world.

The staff of IDEAS consists of a core team of experienced professionals, who have a long standing experience in trade negotiations (bilateral and multilateral) and in development issues.

Specific technical inputs for example, legal expertise, research and analysis, training, production of learning material are outsourced to specialized institutions and experts