

PROJECTS TERMINATED

Cambodia public-private sector dialogue on WTO and trade in services

Duration 2004 till mid-2005

Beneficiaries Cambodian services industry representatives and Government officials

Project Partner Ministry of Commerce (MOC)

Implementing Agency IDEAS Centre (International Trade, Development, Economic Governance, Advisory Services), Geneva

1. Background

Cambodia, a success country within the Integrated Framework, has been, together with Nepal, among the first two LDCs to accede to the WTO at the Cancun Ministerial meeting in September 2003. During the accession process and negotiation, in-country work and assistance has been devoted mainly to creating and adapting the legislative environment, to ensure that Cambodia can live up to the WTO obligations it will take up shortly. Cambodia's private sector companies still have relatively little knowledge about the WTO and the role it should be playing in future, to help co-define Cambodian trade policy and shape national positions in view of international trade negotiations.

IDEAS' project aims at informing and working with the services sector in Cambodia on the impact and opportunities arising from WTO membership.

2. Overall Goal and Content

Overall, the objective is assist the private sector interface effectively with Government in ensuring advantageous implementation of WTO obligations and developing helpful negotiating positions for ongoing trade negotiations in Geneva. The project shall contribute to enhancing the policy dialogue between the Cambodian Government and the private sector. It shall initially focus on one specific economic sector, namely services.

In the first months, the project shall raise the WTO and GATS awareness of Cambodian service sector companies. Later on, emphasis will be set on developing the necessary knowledge and skills for a policy dialogue that shall bring benefits to both the Government and the private sector.

Simultaneously, priority service sector issues shall be taken up, and submissions presented to the Government, possibly also with analytical inputs and support by Cambodian researchers and experts. Finally, with the help of advocacy program, the Cambodian civil society - NGOs, think tanks, and so forth - shall also be included in policy discussions of public interest.

3. Objectives

The project has three major objectives:

- ▶ Assist Cambodian service companies understand the principles and functioning of the WTO (in particular, also of the GATS) as well as the role of private sector representatives in helping shape Cambodian service sector policies and positions in ongoing trade negotiations.
- ▶ Foster a public-private dialogue on Cambodian service sector priority issues and reforms related to their country's WTO accession.
- ▶ Contribute to the creation of efficient consultative mechanisms for a national public-private dialogue on trade policy and trade negotiations.

4. Activities

The project will draw upon the specialised services of one international expert, Mr. David Woods, for capacity building of the service sector (workshops and tailored advice). In Cambodia, associated national consultants will help create and organise the service sector organisation. IDEAS Centre will focus on providing advisory services to the MOC for its participation in the policy dialogue with service companies and the civil society.

5. Contacts

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