

Aide Memoire: Identification Mission for the Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS) of the Integrated Framework (IF), July 6-11, 2007.

1. In a letter dated June 21, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Honorable Olubanke King-Akerele, invited the World Bank to take the lead in conducting the DTIS for Liberia. An identification mission was launched by the World Bank at short notice in order to respond to the request by the Minister for an immediate launch of the IF process. The mission was led by Philip English, trade coordinator for West Africa, and supported by Emmanuel Fiadzo, senior economist in the Liberia country office. The mission wishes to thank Minister King-Akerele and her advisor, Bako Freeman, for their support.
2. The mission met with a variety of key stakeholders in order to understand the existing state of trade-related analytical work, and identify priority issues and sectors for the study. In particular, the mission took note of the recently completed Comprehensive Agricultural Assessment and the Trade and Export Promotion Framework. These provide an important basis for the DTIS. The mission recognized the importance of coordinating the DTIS with the ITC-supported program at the Ministry of Commerce. It also confirmed that considerable work is on-going on forestry and customs, so it may not be necessary to hire specialists in these areas. On the other hand, mining and fisheries appear to be worthy of attention, in addition to the major agricultural sub-sectors.
3. The mission clarified the details of the IF process for the Minister and her advisor, and prepared the attached outline of steps with a tentative timeline. This represents an abbreviated process as compared to the usual sequence, as it would eliminate the joint identification mission typically conducted with some of the other IF agencies. This seems warranted given the need to align the exercise with the preparation of the PRSP, as well as the fact that ITC is already actively involved in Liberia. However, it will be necessary to seek the approval of the other IF agencies.
4. It is also suggested that an IF sensitization workshop might be planned to coincide with the WTO accession workshop proposed by the WTO for September. In addition to building understanding of the IF program among the stakeholders, this could help the WTO participate in the preparation of the DTIS terms of reference.

Next steps

5. World Bank task manager:
 - Obtain approval from IF agencies for the proposed approach;
 - Propose a sensitization workshop to the IF secretariat;
 - Develop terms of reference for review by Government and the IF agencies;
 - Identify external consultants for the main DTIS mission in October.

6. Ministry of Commerce:

- Identify a focal point for the IF;
- Prepare a request to the UNDP for the use of the funds available to build the Ministry's capacity to support the DTIS process;
- Collect all relevant documentation and transmit to the task manager;
- Establish a technical inter-ministerial committee;
- Identify national consultants for the main mission.