

**AUSTRALIAN PROPOSAL FOR A NON-TARIFF MEASURES
WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products,

RECALLING that Ministers had acknowledged the importance of non-tariff measures (NTMs) and their impact on trade in information technology products when they agreed on the need for discussion of this issue (paragraph 3 of the Annex to the Ministerial Declaration on Trade in Information Technology Products, Singapore, December 1996),

NOTING that liberalised trade in IT products can assist participants to take advantage of the benefits of electronic commerce and the information economy, which contribute directly to improving competitiveness and economic development,

NOTING that as of 1 January 2000 tariffs on ITA I had been eliminated and that arrangements for further tariff liberalisation are under consideration,

AGREEING that, in parallel with tariff liberalisation, there is a need to identify non-tariff barriers to the expansion of trade in information technology products and to explore how such non-tariff barriers could be eliminated,

AIMING to complement work carried out by WTO bodies under other agreements, such as the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade,

ACKNOWLEDGING the conclusion of an agreement on basic telecommunications and continuing negotiations under the WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services,

WELCOMING the work on NTMs already undertaken by the Committee on the provision of national experience papers by participants,

AGREES to proceed with a work programme on NTMs, focusing *inter alia* on standards and conformance, including arrangements to :

- identify NTMs which are significant impediments to trade in information technology products;
- examine the economic and developmental impact of such measures on trade in information technology products and the benefits which would accrue to participants from addressing their undue trade-distorting effects;
- develop findings and recommendations for action to be taken by the Committee or referred to other relevant WTO, intergovernmental or industry bodies.

The Committee will establish working groups for this purpose. The working groups should, as appropriate, draw on the expertise of industry, regulatory, and relevant WTO and other international bodies. The working groups should take due account of any future expansion of the product coverage as provided for in paragraph 3 of the Annex to the Ministerial Declaration on Trade in Information Technology Products. The Committee will meet to consider findings and recommendations of the working groups no later than July 2001.

Participants will not introduce regulatory measures which would unduly restrict trade in a manner inconsistent with the objectives of the work program.

Work Program on Non-Tariff Measures: Proposed Work Streams

Work Stream	Issues	Action
Standards	Divergences among national standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review steps in global, regional and bilateral fora that have led to progress • review developments in international standards bodies, identifying impediments to successful resolution of their work and proposing appropriate links/channels of cooperation • examine the factors which inhibit countries' participation in the deliberations of international standards bodies
Conformance	<p>Multiple testing and certification</p> <p>Import licensing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine the value and feasibility of the development and publication of accurate, detailed and accessible regulatory information would facilitate trade in IT products and provide a base for considering further mutually beneficial outcomes • examine the principles for regulatory practice which both ensure the integrity of legitimate regulatory protections and maximise the benefits of greater trade facilitation for all participating countries • examine the application of risk-based assessment by regulators to the setting of conformity assessment requirements (taking into account the work being undertaken by organisations such as the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation/International Accreditation Forum (ILAC/ID) and IEC) • review the objectives and coverage of import licensing régimes for IT products • examine the cost-effectiveness and technical merits of mechanisms such as mutual recognition arrangements/agreements (MRAs), suppliers' declarations of conformity and the unilateral recognition of other countries' conformity assessment • review unilateral recognition by any one country of other countries' standards as equivalent to its own • examine the possibility of improving the transparency and clarity of current import licensing regimes for IT products and review the benefits of decreasing the administrative burden and cost of compliance with import licensing regimes (e.g. number of approval bodies)

It is envisaged that there would be a working group for each stream; the working groups would review the national experience papers provided by participants and would support each other by the continuous exchange of information.

ITA Work Program on NTMs: Timeline

Committee of Participants	Working groups
<p>ITA 2000/2 – June</p> <p>ITA considers proposed work program identifying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parameters of work program – relationship with TBT, Services Negotiations Work streams Working mechanisms Time frame for work program <p>July-September</p> <p>ITA participants provide written comment on proposals to Secretariat by mid-September</p> <p>ITA 2000/3 – September-October</p> <p>Committee adopts work program</p> <p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant issues within work streams clearly identified Working groups established – Chair/membership finalised Secretariat to assist <p>ITA 2000/4 - December</p> <p>Progress reports from Working Group Chairs</p> <p>ITA 2001/1 – February/March 2001</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from participants on progress reports Update from Working Groups <p>ITA 2001/2 – June/July 2001</p> <p>Consideration of Findings and Recommendations of Working Groups</p>	<p>October/November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairs convene working groups As appropriate, industry representatives (drawn from cross-section of ITA membership) and relevant international bodies to be invited to support the activities of Working Groups Establish work plans through to April <p>May 2001</p> <p>Chairs submit Findings and Recommendations to Secretariat</p> <p>Secretariat to circulate papers to members out of session (4-6 weeks before next ITA meeting)</p>