Background

International trade can support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in developing countries and play a positive role in pro-poor growth and sustainable development. It can create employment, enhance access to technology and knowledge, raise productivity, increase the variety and quality of goods available to consumers, stimulate capital inflows, increase foreign exchange earnings, and generate resources for sustainable development and poverty reduction. However, this positive relationship is not automatic and does not necessarily take place in all countries and contexts. Both national policies and international action need to be adopted and implemented to maximize the positive impact of trade on poverty. The design of effective national policies, as well as the formulation of negotiating positions for international forums dealing with trade issues, must be grounded in thorough analysis of data, trends and past experiences, and based on a careful assessment of the possible impacts of various policy options and negotiation outcomes. In this respect, academic institutions and, more broadly, researchers are key in generating the analysis critical to inform policymaking.

In an effort to leverage researcher–policymaker cooperation to support countries in the design of pro-poor trade policies, the Virtual Institute, UNCTAD’s academic cooperation programme, is offering the fourth edition of this online course, which complements its teaching material and academic workshops on trade and poverty. The course was developed by Guido Porto (National University of La Plata, Argentina) and Nicolas Depetris Chauvin (African Centre for Economic Transformation, Ghana, and University of Buenos Aires, Argentina), in collaboration with David Jaume (National University of La Plata) and UNCTAD experts from the Division on International Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities; the Division on Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes; and the Division on Globalization and Development Strategies. The course will be tutored by Virtual Institute economist David Zavaleta.

Objectives

The objective of the course is to provide participants with the empirical tools needed to assess the impact of trade and trade-related policies on poverty and income distribution. For this reason, the course is a hands-on technical course with emphasis on the manipulation of data and the use of econometric tools. It will teach participants how to:

- Estimate or simulate the welfare and poverty impact of trade policy or trade shocks caused by changes in international prices and the volume of international trade on different segments of the population;
- Do ex post analysis, i.e. analyse episodes of trade reform and compare the “before” and “after” for some key outcome variables (poverty rates, per capita consumption, wages, etc.);
- Apply the techniques learnt to produce policy research reports (that could be used by national policymakers) and academic papers empirically assessing the impact of trade policy and trade shocks on poverty and income distribution.

The topics and techniques covered in this course are currently an active research area in economics. Researchers are engaged in developing new methods, investigating the different channels through which trade affects poverty, and analysing the effects in different countries. After completion of this course, the participants will be able to contribute to this growing literature.

A more detailed description of the course content, as well as the course timetable, are provided in the annex.

Target audience and course prerequisites

The course targets researchers from universities, research centres and government institutions in developing and transition countries involved in research and teaching of international trade and trade policy, who are interested in enhancing their quantitative skills and conducting policy-relevant research on trade and poverty issues as they relate to their countries. Qualified women candidates are particularly encouraged to apply. The number of participants is limited in order to assure appropriate support throughout the course.

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Hold a Master’s degree in Economics;
• Have completed courses on statistics, econometrics, development economics and international trade, including knowledge of basic trade theories (Heckscher-Ohlin model, specific factor models, etc.) and their implications for factor remuneration (i.e. Stolper-Samuelson), and basic understanding of trade policy instruments and their implications;
• Have access to Stata software (not provided as part of the course) and be able to statistically describe micro-data with this software. Familiarity with the Stata commands needed to create tables and graphs used in the preparation of papers and reports is also required;
• Have excellent knowledge of English, including technical terminology.

Please note that in order to successfully complete course activities, participants should plan to dedicate 12–14 hours per week throughout the duration of the course.

Funding

Thanks to the support from the Government of Finland, the Virtual Institute will be able to exempt the selected participants from the fees associated with access and e-tutoring services provided in the course.

Participants will also receive the course and other relevant literature on CD/DVD free of charge.

After the course

Participants with passing grades will be awarded a certificate of completion. The top 10 course graduates will receive a copy of the UNCTAD/World Trade Organization book, “A Practical Guide to Trade Policy Analysis”, published by the Virtual Institute.

Application information and deadline

To apply, follow the instructions at http://vi.unctad.org/services/online-courses/966-tap18reg. Your application must include a detailed curriculum vitae and a letter of nomination from your institution indicating its support of your application and explaining how your participation in the course will contribute to your future work and the work of the institution.

The deadline for applications is 13 May 2018. Applications received thereafter or incomplete applications will not be considered. For assistance with the online application process, please contact susana.olivares@unctad.org.

Requests for further information or clarification about this course should be sent to: vi@unctad.org

A selection committee will review each application and select the course participants based on the supporting documents and the relevance of the course for their research, policy advice and teaching work.

Participants will be advised of their selection by 17 May 2018.

Annex: Content and timetable of the course

The course is structured into an introduction and six modules, with each module building on the previous one. For each module, we provide:

• A short reader summarizing the main theoretical issues;
• An accompanying multimedia lecture by course co-author, Nicolas Depetris Chauvin, based on PowerPoint slides. The lecture extends the content of the reader and incorporates examples from the literature on trade and poverty analysis;
• A hands-on Stata application based on a seminal paper, which includes the source of the data; the policy question being analysed; the methodology required to address the question; a discussion of the economic implication of the results; a short reader with step-by-step instructions; and a multimedia “hands-on” lecture. Data and Stata do files for each application are also provided;
• An annotated reading list describing and applying the different techniques covered in the course;
• A short test.

A final exercise will allow participants to apply the new knowledge to a practical example.

The course content may be run entirely from the CD/DVD provided or from the Virtual Institute website. However, an Internet connection is required to interact with the course tutor and complete end-of-module tests and final exercise.

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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1: 4–10 June</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Familiarization with course website. Preparatory readings. Learning objectives. Topics and course structure.</td>
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<td>Week 5: 2-8 July</td>
<td>Catch-up week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9: 30 July-5 August</td>
<td>Catch-up week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10: 6-19 August</td>
<td>Final hands-on exercise</td>
<td>Application of the techniques learned in the course to an assessment of some of the impacts of trade liberalization on household welfare in a developing country. The exercise focuses on gender issues, in particular whether there is a gender bias in the effects of food prices, remittances and tourism.</td>
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