PARTICIPANTS’ FEEDBACK

The workshop was attended by 20 participants from 16 countries (Bangladesh, Barbados, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China, Costa Rica, Gambia, India, Jordan, Nigeria, Russia, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda). There were two participants from South Africa and four from Senegal.

Three participants were doing research only, while the majority were also involved in teaching, mostly in regular academic programmes, but also in short courses for government officials. One participant worked for the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) office for Eastern and Southern Africa and was in charge of setting up research networks in the region.

The summary of participants’ feedback below is based on 19 questionnaires that were returned.

A. EXPECTATIONS

In general terms, the participants expected:

- To increase understanding of key current trade policy questions, as well as the rationale and criteria for choosing an appropriate method to answer them;
- To enhance their capacity to conduct trade and trade policy analysis by familiarizing themselves with, and getting access to, the sources of trade data and the tools and methods for the conduct of such analysis;
- To take advantage of networking opportunities with other participants engaged in a similar kind of research, and with resource persons from international organizations.

Within and in addition to these general expectations, a number of participants had concrete individual expectations depending on their previous background and future career/work plans. Some participants had a fair knowledge of quantitative methods but did not use them yet to analyze trade issues – their expectations therefore lay in this area. Others had some knowledge of trade analysis tools but wished either to get more proficient in their use or to get familiar with some tools that they have not used so far. Many
participants had a specific research project at their workplace for which they were seeking to strengthen their skills. The participant from IDRC wished to be better equipped to evaluate research proposals submitted to his agency, and to be at the cutting edge of quantitative tools and topical research questions in the area of trade. One participant expressed the expectation to get an insight into the techniques and latest research ideas at international institutions.

For all the participants, the workshop either fully met their expectations (2 participants), or to some extent (7 participants) or considerably exceeded them (10 participants). Some comments accompanying the general ratings are below:

“The workshop has been able to provide the overview and introduce basic ways to use each of the methods”.

“I was able to get to know the most up-to-date techniques in trade policy analysis, as well as new sources of information”.

“My expectations are realized. I appreciate a lot the access to databases you provided”.

“We did not only get theoretical background but also got to do practical exercises”.

“Par rapports à mes premières attentes, je suis satisfait étant donné que je suis en mesure maintenant d’utiliser l’approche sectorielle du modèle de gravité – par ailleurs, j’ai découvert l’utilisation et la pertinence du modèle ATSPM”.

“My expectations were met and also exceeded. The workshop was empowering on a personal level as it equipped me with the tools necessary to raise the quality of my research endeavours and my trade policy discussions.”

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**B. PREPARATION**

Prior to the workshop, the participants were provided with a CDROM containing preparatory reading, and a compilation of CVs of all the participants.

**Preparatory reading:**

- All participants felt that the preparatory reading was very relevant because it highlighted and introduced the issues to be addressed at the workshop. Two participants specifically stressed the relevance and usefulness of the paper by Piermartini and Teh.

- The amount of readings was considered just right by 15 participants, with one saying it was too much and three others calling for more readings to be provided before the workshop. In particular, it would have been useful to get some “general papers” on trade policy to prepare those participants who are less familiar with topical trade policy issues. Also, there was a call for more materials on SMART, GSIM and GTAP.
• With regard to the difficulty of the readings, they were rated just right by all participants but one who thought they were too easy. Some French-speaking participants noted that it required more time for them to read the materials in English and that it would have been good to have the readings translated into French.

Participants' CVs:

All participants but one appreciated receiving in advance the CVs of other participants since it allowed them to identify people whose past work indicated potential for future networking and contacts. One participant suggested that it would also have been useful to receive similar information about resource persons in order to be able to see their profiles and prepare relevant questions for them beforehand.

C. LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The participants were asked to indicate to what extent their knowledge and skills have been enhanced during the workshop on the different topics addressed, using one of the following four statements.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>No knowledge has been added.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>I have gained some additional insights but I would need more training to apply the knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>The topic was (relatively) new to me, but I feel I can continue the learning on my own and apply some of it without further formal training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>I feel I have added substantially to previous knowledge and am able to apply most of it.</td>
</tr>
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The answers to this question varied not only based on the actual learning experience at the workshop but also depending on the previous knowledge the participants had of the different areas. For instance, one participant had been a delegate of his country at the WTO and had therefore a very good knowledge of research questions of relevance to policy makers. Other participants had been actively using one or another tool presented at the workshop so their rating of the newly acquired knowledge reflected this experience.

In most cases, the participants felt that they had added substantially to their previous knowledge and were now able to apply most of it.
Sessions on the link between research and policy-making:

The participants felt that the workshop had added to their knowledge particularly in the three sessions focusing on the link between research and policy making, namely choice of methodology (11 participants rated their knowledge as D at the end of the workshop), communication with policy-makers (10 D ratings) and the identification of research questions (9 participants gave rating D). Several participants commented on these sessions as very useful for orienting their future research and one participant recommended that policy-makers should also attend the whole seminar. One participant suggested that it might have been more useful to schedule the session on the choice of methodologies towards the end of the workshop after all the tools have been presented. The session on communication with policy makers would have gained if there had been case study presentations on the situations in the countries.

Sessions on sources of data and trade data analysis tools:

With regard to the sources of data, all participants highly valued the free access to data available in MAcMAP and WITS and some of them specifically expressed a wish to benefit from such access on a permanent basis, and also to get access to other sources of data that are currently not available for free, or to which the access is otherwise restricted.

There was an overall understanding that that given the duration of the workshop and the wish to present all the tools in a coherent manner and in connection with policy making, it was not possible to go in-depth with regard to every individual tool. This explains many of the ratings B, which mean that the participants would wish to receive more training before they can comfortably use the particular tool, unless they already had some previous experience with this tool. The participants felt this way in
particular with regard to CGE (where they commented that more time and practice would be needed given the complexity of the models), the gravity models and to some extent MACMAP that had been unknown to many participants before the workshop. On the other hand, the participants felt rather comfortable with the partial equilibrium models and WITS where 15 and 17 of them respectively said they could now use them independently without further training or with some self-training (ratings D and C). There was a comment that greater attention could have been devoted at the workshop to data interpretation, perhaps getting deeper into some of the research papers that had been highlighted or distributed at the workshop.

D. CONTENT AND FORMAT

Choice of topics:

All participants rated the choice of topics as very good (16) or good (3). One participant commented that a discussion on existing quantitative work on services would also have been useful.

Number of topics:

Most participants (15) considered that given the time allocated to the workshop, the number of topics was just right. Four said the topics were too many - one of them acknowledged the logic of the choice of topics and the links between the topics, while the other three felt that it would have been better to limit the number of topics, possibly to two or three, such as tools and models only. Some participants proposed that advanced courses be organized on individual topics of the workshop that would make it possible to go into greater depth. CGE was a case in point in this regard, but some participants also felt a similar need for more time to be spent using gravity models, especially the use of STATA.

Balance between theory and practice:

The balance between theory and practice was generally considered as just right (16 participants). One participant commented that he enjoyed the practical side of things, especially with the help of experts; another one appreciated the papers and presentations not being too academic, but rather policy oriented. Most participants expressed a wish to have had more practical exercises on CGE. Two felt that there was too much theory in the workshop, relative to the practical sessions.
E. RELEVANCE AND USEFULNESS OF THE WORKSHOP FOR PARTICIPANTS’ WORK

• All participants found some (15 participants), or all (3), *data sources and tools of use for their work*. Among those specifically quoted most frequently were partial equilibrium models (9), gravity models (8), WITS (7), MAcMAP and CGE (4 each). Three participants additionally mentioned access to data as particularly useful, and one pointed out that the literature distributed would be of help for his research. One participant provided the following broader comment on the relevance and usefulness of the workshop:

> "All topics will be useful. The power of applying any one model or accessing any type of data lies not in mastery of any one tool or database, but in understanding their explanatory power, and in being equipped to make an informed decision regarding their contextual relevance. Assuming that policy-related research is demand-driven and solution-oriented, the choice of tools and methods utilized would be dictated by the research questions rather than the love of any one tool, technique or database."

• All participants intend to *use the knowledge and materials from the workshop in their work*: 14 in teaching, 14 in research, 12 in consultations with policy makers and 6 in policy-related publications.

**Teaching**

Among the uses in teaching the following were mentioned: introduction of a new chapter on partial equilibrium models in a Masters course on modelling; use of modeling options for empirical assessment of trade theories; use of partial equilibrium for trade policy analysis; use of MAcMAP in a macroeconomics course; practical exercises using models for tutorials on international trade; short courses for civil society, parliamentarians and policy makers; assisting students of a MSc. in international trade policy to become familiar with the databases and models, their usefulness, assumptions and limitations; organizing a regional course on the topic of the workshop for researchers within CARICOM/CARIFORUM; and orienting students and teachers to UN databases and VI resources.

**Research**

A number of possible uses for research were also put forward. The group from Senegal attending the workshop envisaged developing a project in the coming months using the gravity model for the analysis of intra-WAEMU trade. Other plans included analysis of regional integration, impact of PTA and FTA on bilateral trade, impact of MFA phase-out, issues related to quota-free duty free access, preference erosion, gains from NAMA, poverty analysis, impact of agricultural policies on poverty, development of a gravity model for South Africa, and development in cooperation with UNDP of a CGE model for Cambodia. One participant wished to use the data introduced at the workshop to develop a trade policy fact sheet for his country. Another wished to use the knowledge from the methodology session in his/her research.
Work with policy makers

A number of sessions also appeared to be of interest for the work with policy makers. One participant said that the last session allowed him to have a better idea of what policy makers expected from researchers. Others said that they would make increased efforts to work more closely with policy makers by, for example, consulting with them over the development of research proposals. One participant planned to establish relations with the Ministry of Trade to define research topics for his institution that would be useful and could be used in policy-making. Policy briefs were mentioned as one of the means of communication of research results to policy makers.

Knowledge sharing and dissemination

Most participants intended to share the knowledge and tools from the workshop with their colleagues by making available the materials, organizing briefings and seminars (ateliers de restitution), as well as discussions about how the institution can facilitate knowledge diffusion on the tools and methods presented at the workshop, or providing access and coaching on the use of databases. Six participants said they would make the materials available to students who should also benefit from innovations in their teaching. One participant said he would encourage his students to take up trade analysis as topics for their Masters theses. Other channels for sharing the outcomes of the workshop included with policy makers (2), donor agencies (2), and with supervisors (2) and the media.

Potential barriers

With regard to potential barriers that may prevent the participants from communicating and disseminating their knowledge gained in the workshop, the highest number of them (13) mentioned the need for more material (data, software…). Six participants wished to receive more training, mostly more advanced, in-depth and practical, on the same tools. Two participants needed support from colleagues and three did not see any obstacle. One participant was concerned about the workload that might prevent him/her realizing his/her plans, another wished to receive e-mail support from the presenters in case of need, and yet another one said that the lack of funds was sometimes an obstacle.

F. ORGANIZATION

Overall feeling of the workshop:

The overall feeling the participants had about the workshop was generally excellent or good, as shown in the chart below. The organization of the workshop was rated by most participants as excellent or good, with one participant considering it not satisfactory and disappointing and saying that an
international organization should make a minimum effort with regard to the participants (coffee breaks, lunch, etc.). Two participants would have appreciated help in booking the hotels, and another two wished for interpretation into French. The main suggestion for improvement with regard for the venue was to allocate a larger room with a computer for each participant. One participant noted that distributing the powerpoint slides for next day the evening before would help participants to prepare for a more informed discussion.

Overall feeling of the workshop

![Graph showing overall feeling of the workshop with ratings for venue and facilities, organization of the workshop, conduct of the workshop, opportunities for sharing and networking, and balance methodologies-application in a policy context.]

Duration of the workshop:

With regard to the duration of the workshop, for most participants (16) it was just right. Three participants would have preferred to extend the duration to cover in greater depth the various techniques, and allow for more practical exercises and space for questions-answers. One of them suggested that two extra days would do, another felt 10 days altogether would be appropriate.

Medium for receiving documentation:

The number one medium for receiving presentations, readings, etc. before and after the workshop was CD-ROM solicited by 16 participants. The second was by e-mail (11 participants), followed by online access (7) and a paper version of documents (6).
Overall comments on the workshop:

Below are some overall comments with regard to the workshop. Four points for the future that were repeated several times were suggestions to: (a) organize this kind of workshop in regions to reach to a wider audience; (b) organize advanced workshops for individual tools; (c) provide future access to the sources of data and tools, as well as new relevant information, to universities; and (d) make possible an open access and dialogue with resource persons in the event clarification or guidance are needed to continue building skills in the techniques presented. Suggestions regarding the workshop itself included guided tours of the WTO, for instance, and the provision of Internet access for participants to check their e-mail.

"This one-week course is an excellent course. It helps to build capacities (research and using analytical tools) of universities and research institutions".

"The workshop is really useful for trade researchers as well as lecturers. It would be a solid foundation for further/advanced training workshops in the future on a particular model. In this regard, more training courses should be organized."

"J'ai trouvé l'atelier très intéressant. Les thèmes abordés me sont d'une grande utilité. Des ateliers de ce genre devraient être souvent organisés à l'intention des universités".

"Want to thank Vi for this excellent programme. If possible, it should be replicated in regions to bring more participants".

"Access to different tools should be extended as long as possible."

"The knowledge will soon disappear without practice and access to databases and software. So, special treatment for participants with regard to access to databases would be very helpful for us."

"It was really well conceived and organized. Thanks a lot!"

"Bonne préparation à l'avance avec suffisamment d'information. Bravo."

"I really enjoyed the workshop. It exceeded my expectations. Thank you for organizing it and providing us with literature. Very nice meeting you all and hope to see you in the future again."