

SERVICES POLICY REVIEWS

REALIZING THE POTENTIAL OF SERVICES

GLOBAL CONTEXT

International trade in services expanded rapidly between 1980 and 2013 – faster than both global GDP and merchandise trade – with total exports increasing from about \$400 billion to \$4.7 trillion. Developing economies have achieved strong growth in their services exports since 1990, boosting their share of world exports from 18.1 per cent in 1990 to 30.1 per cent in 2013. Developing Africa and Asia recorded the sharpest growth.

Services are also essential to the efficient functioning of economies. Services, and in particular infrastructural services, improve value addition, promote employment and facilitate trade in manufacturing and agriculture. Services can transform economies. Yet many Governments face challenges in identifying and addressing the services-related needs of the domestic economy and then translating them into policy and negotiating positions, with a view to enhancing the quantity and quality of services output. UNCTAD assists developing countries to seize the opportunities offered by a services-driven development strategy. UNCTAD developed Services Policy Reviews to systematically analyse the economic, regulatory and institutional frameworks that impact on the services sector of a given country. Services Policy Reviews provide recommendations to policymakers to improve policies as well as regulatory and institutional frameworks and to identify trade policy options that advance national and sectoral development objectives.

HOW ARE SERVICES POLICIES REVIEWED?

UNCTAD carries out Services Policy Reviews at the request of Governments. Each Review includes policy analysis and research, as well as multi-stakeholder meetings at the national level for fact-finding, awareness-raising and consensus-building. Once completed, the Reviews offer policy recommendations for the overall services sector of a developing country and for the specific sectors chosen by the Government.

The recommendations focus on how a country can more effectively expand its services sector, creating jobs and helping to raise living standards. UNCTAD can further assist Governments in the implementation of the policy recommendations presented in the Reviews.

RESULTS AND IMPACT AT A GLANCE

- In May 2015, UNCTAD concluded the first Services Policy Review for Bangladesh – the fifth least developed country to benefit from such assistance. The Review is expected to help the country in formulating pragmatic policies for its emerging services sectors and to participate in the negotiations in the World Trade Organization on services waiver.
- Following the Review for Uganda (second phase) in 2015, the country committed to implementing its policy Recommendations.

- The Services Policy Review for Paraguay, presented in 2014, included the telecommunications sector. The telecommunications regulatory agency of Paraguay then confirmed that one of the Review's policy recommendations had been incorporated into the National Plan for Telecommunications.

PROGRAMME FACTS AND FIGURES

Services Policy Review
programme scope: all regions

Programme start date: 2009

Reviews per year: 2–3

Number of Reviews to date: 12,
Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Uganda (2 phases),
Rwanda, Lesotho, Bangladesh, Angola,
Jamaica, Paraguay, Peru, Nicaragua

Programme website:
[unctad.org/
services/sprs](http://unctad.org/services/sprs)

DONORS/ FUNDING SOURCE

Current: United Nations Development
Account, UNCTAD General Trust Fund
on Services, Development and Trade

Past: China, France, Spain,
the United Kingdom, the United
Nations Development
Account