



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Foreign  
Agricultural  
Service

# FACT SHEET

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## FAS' Role in Trade Capacity Building

Trade capacity-building (TCB), or trade-related technical assistance, supports U.S. trade policy objectives by enhancing developing countries' ability to trade. TCB activities strengthen other countries' agricultural institutions and regulatory systems, encourage compliance with international norms, and foster adoption of U.S. approaches to agricultural policy and regulatory procedures. TCB supports the President's National Security Strategy by promoting free trade and open markets as a way to spread economic prosperity.

In identifying TCB priorities, FAS coordinates with its overseas offices, the U.S. Trade Representative's Office, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the U.S. Department of State. FAS also draws upon technical expertise in other USDA agencies, the Food and Drug Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, land grant universities, and the private sector. Activities include U.S. experts providing instruction in other countries, as well as foreign government officials, scientists, or university professors coming to the United States for training.

### WTO Doha Development Round

USDA's top trade policy priority—a successful conclusion to the Doha Round—recognizes the importance of trade to developing countries. TCB gives

developing countries an incentive to participate in the Doha process. By helping countries that are joining the WTO understand and meet their new commitments, and by helping member countries address problems with compliance, TCB strengthens the multilateral institution. And by fostering economic growth, TCB builds markets for the future.

### Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)

The United States is concluding a growing number of FTAs with developing countries. In addition to promoting market access, FTAs encourage economic growth and closer political ties to countries important to U.S. national security objectives. Because of these linkages, technical assistance is now an integral part of the negotiating package. TCB helped to conclude the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) negotiations by convincing CAFTA countries to provide more access for U.S. meat and poultry by helping them understand U.S. regulatory procedures and how to take advantage of trade opportunities.

### Technical Trade Barriers

TCB is also a critical tool to address the many technical barriers that impede access for U.S. agricultural products in markets throughout the world. By helping countries

develop transparent, science-based regulations and by increasing understanding of the U.S. regulatory system, TCB can expand future access for U.S. agricultural products. Likewise, this assistance enables recipient countries to access other world markets. All countries gain from stronger infrastructure and regulatory systems, frameworks for monitoring and mitigating plant and animal diseases, and compliance

with international norms. In addition, TCB can assist international standards-setting bodies. Adoption of international laws and standards benefits U.S. agricultural exporters and enhances the ability of developing countries to trade. This leads to economic development and growth, and ultimately greater capacity to purchase U.S. products.

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