

PROGRAMME

Monday, 10 December 2018
Marrakesh, Morocco

19:00 WELCOME
Cocktail

Tuesday, 11 December 2018

08:30 REGISTRATION

09:00 OPENING CEREMONY

- Welcome address by ITFC and ITC
- Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
- Group picture

09:30 ITEM 1: TACKLING NTMS AND PROMOTING REGIONAL INTEGRATION: WHERE DO WE STAND?

- ITC's work and key achievements
- Efforts made by national governments

Questions and Answers

Open discussion

11:00 COFFEE BREAK

11:15 ITEM 2: INITIATIVE OF DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS IN THE REGION

12:30 LUNCH



PROGRAMME

14:00 ITEM 3: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? THEMATIC ROUNDTABLES TO ESTABLISH NEXT STEPS TO ACHIEVE GREATER TRADE INTEGRATION



ROUND TABLE 1
NTMs and regional integration: rules of origin, trade information and implementation of existing trade agreements

ROUND TABLE 2
Customs procedures: efficient risk management and trade facilitation at the border.

ROUND TABLE 3
Quality requirements and management: standards, harmonization, mutual recognition and conformity assessment

17:00 CLOSING OF DAY 1

19:00 WORKING DINNER

Wednesday, 12 December 2018

09:00 ITEM 4: PRESENTATION OF ACTION PLANS AND PROPOSED PROJECTS TO FURTHER ENHANCE REGIONAL TRADE INTEGRATION OF EACH ROUNDTABLE

- NTMs and regional integration
- Customs procedures
- Quality requirements and management

10:30 COFFEE BREAK

10:45 OPEN DISCUSSION

12:00 CLOSING

CONTEXT



In today's global trade landscape, deeper regional integration is an important policy choice that governments can make to ensure the creation of markets for their small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Arab region has made integration and better connection of its markets a priority, and which is on an upward trajectory, but the figures show that compared with other regions, intra-Arab trade remains low, despite a number of existing regional trade agreements.

International trade can be a powerful engine for sustained economic growth, generating new job opportunities and stimulating structural transformation towards production activities with higher value added. The general global tendency to reduce tariffs within the context of the World Trade Organization has generated new opportunities for developing countries, least developed countries and transition economies.

Non-tariff measures (NTMs) however remain a major impediment to international trade in general and intra-Arab trade integration in particular. They are of particular concern to exporters seeking access to foreign markets and needing to comply with a range of technical regulations, product standards, customs procedures and other requirements.

In response, the International Trade Centre (ITC) launched in 2010 a programme to survey enterprises on their experiences with NTMs and related trade obstacles. These business surveys have been implemented in over 70 countries worldwide, including several Arab States. Based on the first results, in April 2014, a high-level regional roundtable on NTMs was held in Tunis, Tunisia, where participants formulated recommendations on reducing NTM-related trade cost to foster regional integration. Survey findings and recommendations are summarized in the ITC publication *"Making regional integration work – Companies perspectives on NTMs in Arab States"*.¹

These recommendations have helped inform national and regional initiatives, including technical assistance projects, such as the USAID-funded project on regional Integration in MENA countries as well as the Aid for Trade Initiative for the Arab States.

JUSTIFICATION

ITC, with support from USAID and ITFC, is taking the initiative to organize an interactive High-Level Regional Workshop where delegates from the Arab countries and relevant regional organizations will have the opportunity to take stock of progress made over the past years in tackling impediments to regional trade integration and to define the next steps. The workshop will allow exchanging views, learning from experiences, and sharing of ideas new initiatives at the national and regional level aimed at reducing trade cost. ITC will use the results of the workshop to inform its technical assistance and define its priorities for the region for the years to come.

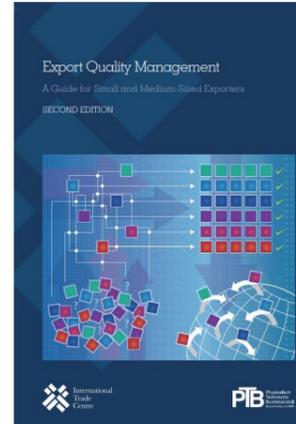
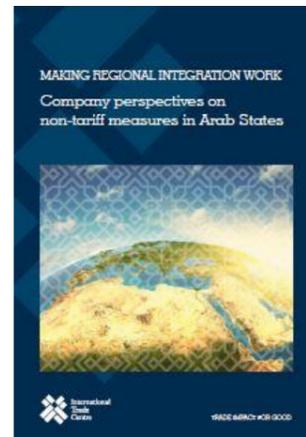
This workshop is intended for high-level representatives from the Ministry of Trade, the Customs Authority and Standards and Quality Management institutions. The deliverables of the workshop include an action plan for further reducing NTM-related trade obstacles within the Arab region through concrete projects and implementation of such action at the regional level.

OBJECTIVES

- Present the work undertaken by ITC and by national governments over the past years aimed at reducing trade cost and increasing regional integration;
- Agree on the implementation of action plans for the way forward to address NTMs of mutual interest to the Arab countries, particularly with regard to quality requirements, customs procedures and the implementation of GAFTA.



AVAILABLE PUBLICATIONS



More reports and event materials will be made available at:

www.ntmsurvey.org/arabregional2018

Supported by:



FOR MORE INFORMATION

About the event
www.ntmsurvey.org/arabregional2018

International Trade Centre (ITC)
www.intracen.org



Trade and Regional Integration in the Arab States

High-level regional workshop

11-12 December 2018
Marrakesh, Morocco