

Proposal for Implementing the IMT-GT Trade Investment and Tourism Database (ITITD): August 2008

Background

1. The ITITD is a deliverable under the IMT-GT Roadmap 2007-2011 and appears as project 1.3.5 – “Establish a system for regularly monitoring and reporting cross-border trade and investment” under the purview of the Trade and Investment Working Group (WGTI) which is chaired by Malaysia. Although parked under the WGTI, ITITD will require cooperation from multiple agencies and thus involves other IMT-GT Working Groups. Indeed, data collection is a cross cutting deliverable under the respective Working Groups.

2. The implementation target is 2008-9. At the 1st WGTI meeting on 26-27 July 2007 in Banda Aceh, the Meeting expressed its support for the ITITD and requested ADB to ‘make a presentation similar to the BIMP-EAGA prototype as well as other features of the database...’ [Para. 26]. This target was reinforced at 3rd IMT-GT Summit on 19 November 2007 in Singapore as a key priority and again at the 2nd Annual IMT-GT Planning Meeting on 29-30 January 2008, in Phuket, Thailand. On both these occasions the assistance from ADB is deemed crucial.

Launching ITITD

3. The following are the sequence of activities for SOM’s consideration. The proposal is for a 2 stage approach, with staggered deliverables, including (i) a baseline database, with progress presentable for the December Summit as the immediate goal and (ii) a more definitive customised “IMT-GT” database as a goal for 2009. For stage 1, the creation of a baseline database, is relatively straight forward but involves 4 critical steps (Appendix 1).

- a. The development of database framework will commence immediately and undertaken by ADB. The format will be preliminary based on the BIMP-EAGA template and modified as needed. It will define the scope of the template needed (e.g. intra-IMT within countries, across countries, etc) and also identify and recommend solutions to special constraints (e.g. how to deal with transit trade, etc). ADB will engage a trade specialist to accomplish these tasks.
 - b. On completion, the proposed database framework is to be presented at the 2nd WGIT Meeting for their consideration. The 2nd WGIT Meeting represents a critical juncture for the project and for Member Country to decide on how best to proceed. As such, the participation of senior representatives of the central agencies is desirable at this meeting. In this regard, ADB may be able to assist by funding the participation of statistical agency representatives’ from each country to this meeting. Key decision point are:
 - i. Review and decide on findings from (a); the format and scope of the data template and constraints;
 - ii. Identify buckets of data, ranging from data available off-the-shelf, indirect methods of collection and to determine data unique for IMT-GT.
 - c. The encoding of data will require Member Countries to provide what data is available for uploading and chart a plan of action for the proceeding years.
 - d. ADB will provide the expertise required to upload the baseline database on the CIMT website which is concurrently being developed.
4. Given the technicalities involved, it is strongly suggested that an ITITD sub-working group Task Force be formed comprising of representatives of central statistical agencies, related agencies and national secretariats. Reporting to Senior Officials via CIMT, the

specific role of the ITITD Task Force will be to oversee the development of the database and ensure its sustainability by working with each country to jointly undertake the necessary actions.

Timeframes of Activities

5. Given the urgency of ITITD and that the Summit is fast approaching, an aggressive timeframe is proposed. Activities need to be conducted concurrently in order to meet the November deadline. Should major differences between BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT arise, necessitating a new framework for the ITITD model, then revisions to the two stage approach may be necessary. Regardless, it is pertinent to use the Summit as a milestone for completing a presentable ITITD version.

	Activity	Timeframe	Remarks
Stage1: Baseline Database for Presentation to IMT-GT Summit			
1.	Development of Database Framework	Nov. 2008	ADB to undertake development.
2.	Presentation to 2 nd WGIT Meeting		Subject to the WGIT convening a meeting.
3.	Encoding of data		Subject to data collected from Member Countries
4.	Creation of Baseline Datasets on CIMT Website, Progress Report to IMT-GT Summit	Dec. 2008	
Stage 2: Customised IMT-GT ITITD			
5.	Specific enhancements Analysis and Design of Customised Database Format: Interface, Reports, Tools, Assessment of functionality of proposed design. (To be conducted with Technical Officers of pre-determined IMC agencies)	Jan. 2009	
6.	Enhancement of Database Design	Jan. 2009	
7.	Development of Manual of Operations	Feb. 2009	
8.	Data Gathering and Programming	Feb - Mar. 2009	
9.	Final consultations meetings with governments and end users. User trails and feed back	Apr. 2009	
10.	Uploading of new datasets to Website and "live" launching of Database	May. 2009	
11.	Progress and review	Aug. 2009	

ACTION: SOM to finalise and endorse timelines.

Appendix 1: Stage One Steps

