



**Committee for Development Policy**

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Development Policy and Analysis Division

# Capacity building experiences in least developed countries

Building on existing and harnessing innovative  
mechanisms

Ana Luiza Cortez,  
Committee for Development Policy Secretariat

*DCF Belgium High-level Symposium  
Rethinking development cooperation for the SDGs: country level perspectives and lessons  
Brussels, 6-8 April 2016.*



# BACKGROUND: CDP, Secretariat and LDCs

# The CDP and its Secretariat

## Subsidiary expert body of ECOSOC:

- 24 members (personal capacity)
- economic, social and environmental fields; geographic and gender balance

## Functions:

- Provides policy advice on emerging issues
- Contributes to multilateral deliberations: MDGS, IPOA, SDGS
- Conducts the triennial review of LDCs

## The Secretariat:

- UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- Substantive support
- Manages CDP programme; Interface: UN delegations, UN system
- Maintains CDP website
- LDC capacity building projects

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the UN DESA website. The address bar shows the URL [www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/index.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/index.shtml). The page header includes the UN logo and the text "Welcome to the United Nations. It's your world." Below this is a navigation menu with "Development" and "Departments" (with a dropdown arrow) and "DESA" (with a dropdown arrow). A large banner features the UN logo and the text "DESA Development Policy and Analysis Division".

The main content area is titled "The Committee for Development Policy" and contains a section for "Committee for Development Policy News". The news items are:

- 22 December 2014**
  - Presentations at the national workshop on Graduation from the LDC category, 9-10 December 2014, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
    - The Least Developed Country Category: Overview
    - International Support Measures for the least developed countries
    - The LDC criteria and indicators
- 4 December 2014**
  - Presentations at the Workshop on building institutional capacity in the use of trade-related international support measures, 17-21 November, Geneva
    - Briefing by the UN CDP Secretariat for the LDC group at WTO

The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with sections: "DPAD" (DPAD Home, About DPAD, Publications), "Committee for Development Policy" (About CDP, CDP Publications, LDC Information, LDC Data Retrieval), and "World Economic Monitoring" (Project LINK partnership, Global Economic Outlook Database, Global Modelling Tools, World Economic Vulnerability Monitor).

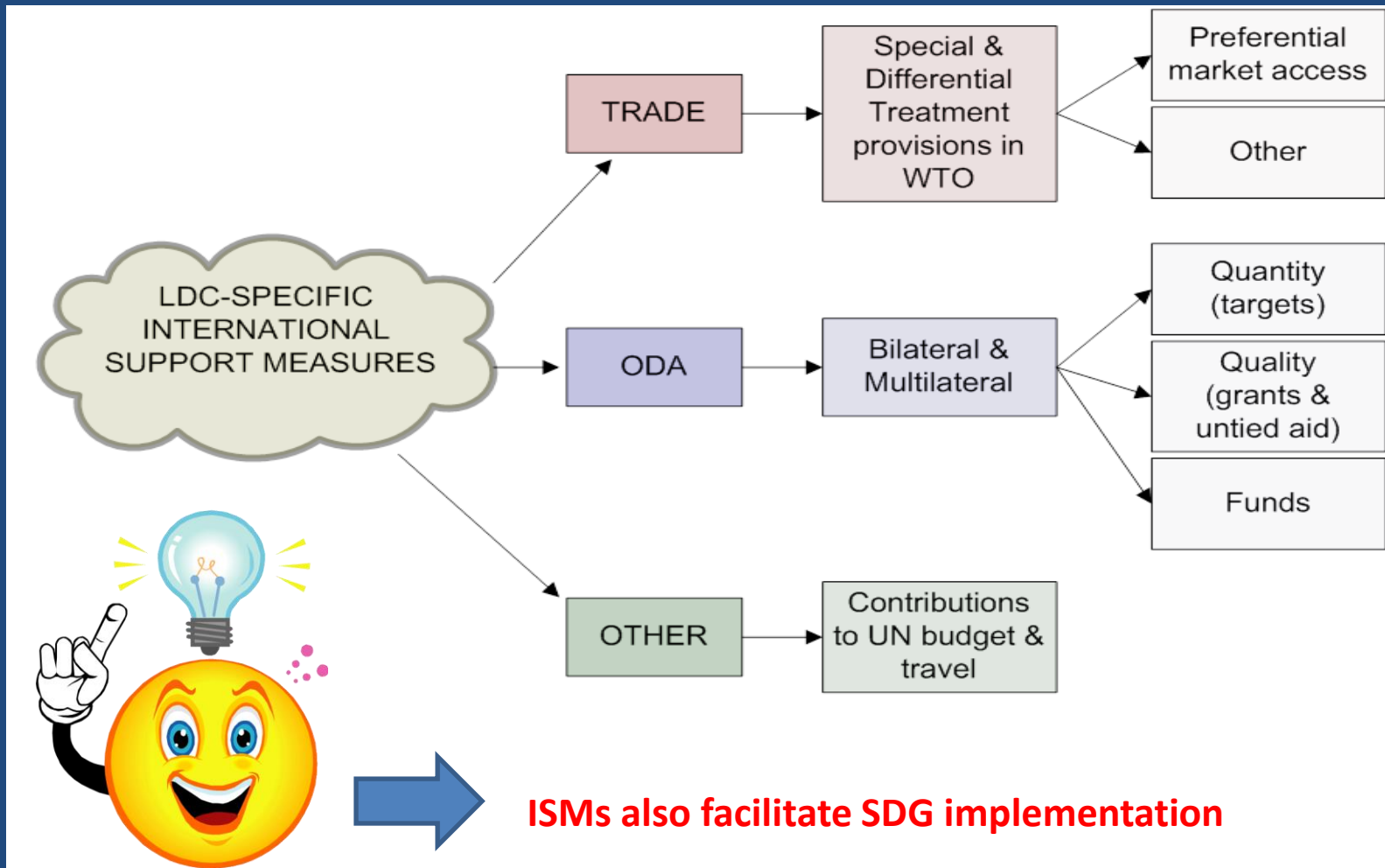
The right sidebar contains a search box for the DPAD website and several news categories: "CDP Plenary Meeting" (23-27 March 2015), "CDP Resolutions and Decisions" (ECOSOC Resolutions and Decisions, GA Resolutions and Decisions), "CDP Statements" (CDP Statements, CDP Presentations), and "CDP News Archive" (Past CDP News, CDP Newsletter).

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the system clock as 1:19 PM on 10/02/2015, along with various application icons.

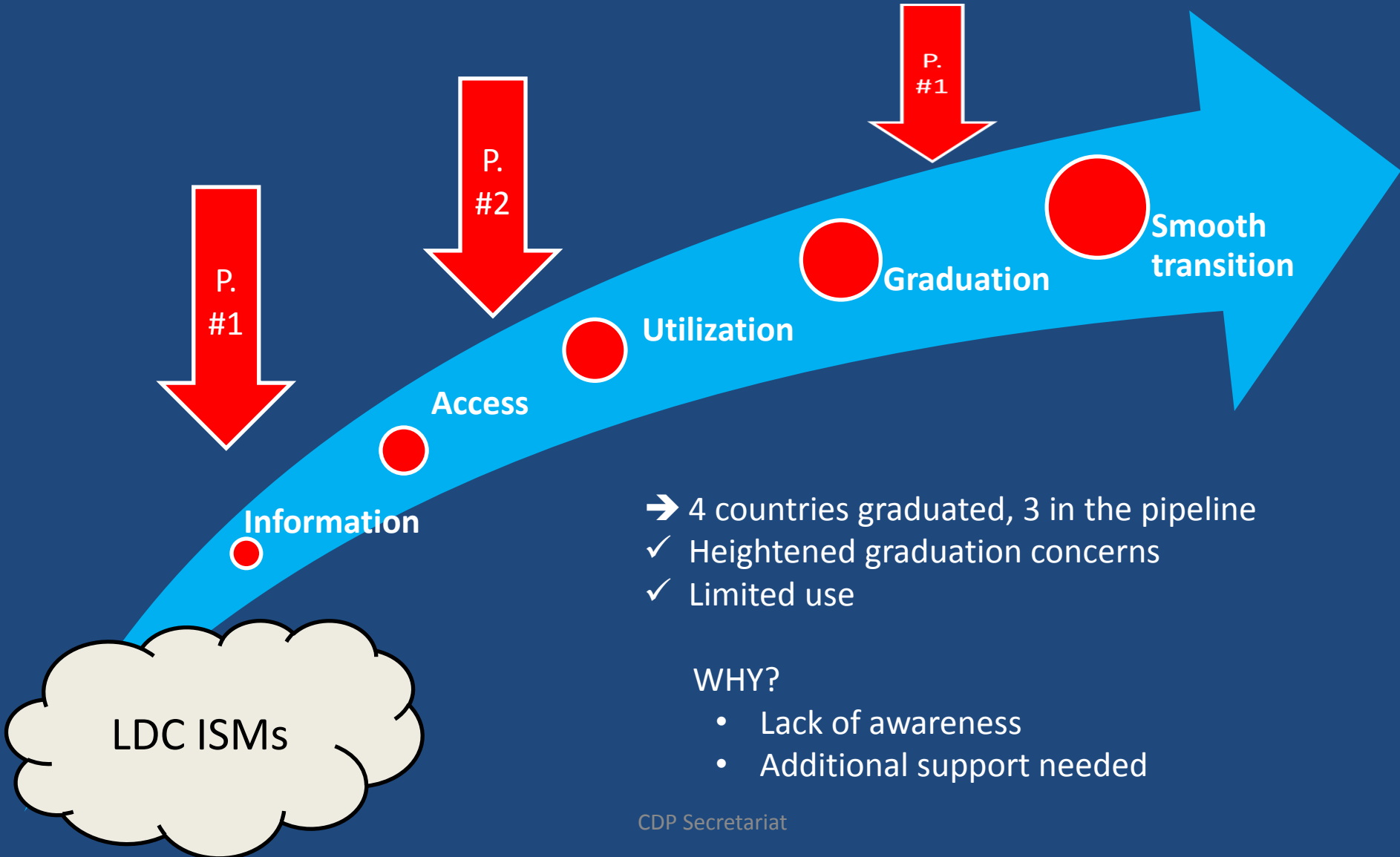
# The least developed country category

- Concern about countries consistently lagging behind
- Special measures for catching up with other developing countries
- Category created in 1971, set of indicators
- LDCS:
  - Currently defined: Low-income countries suffering from structural handicaps to sustainable development
    - Identified by the CDP → Economic and Social Council → General Assembly → adds/removes country to the list
- Since 1991 triennial reviews

# LDC status → Access to Special International Support Measures (ISMs)



# International Support Measures (ISM) at work




The image shows a construction site at sunset. The sky is a gradient of orange and yellow, transitioning to a clear blue at the top. In the foreground, the silhouettes of several construction workers are visible, working on a complex structure of steel beams and scaffolding. The workers are positioned at various heights, some standing on horizontal beams and others reaching up. The overall scene is one of active construction during the 'golden hour' of the day.

# THE PROJECTS



# Project # 1

- **What?** Consolidated catalogue of existing ISMs:  new tool!
- **What for?** Greater use; better preparation for transition from the category
- **How?** Surveys: bilateral and multilateral donors, trading partners and LDCs
- **Who?** CDP-DESA with OECD, WTO and UN system
- **Greatest challenge?** WTO special differential treatment
- **Solution?** Hands-on training workshops:
  - Learning by doing:
    - Pilot cases and first drafts: testing and improving the surveys
    - Staggered implementation: 2 groups of LDCs: English and French speaking
  - Learning from each other:
    - Peer review
    - Group and open discussions
  - Resource persons and experts
  - Reaching out: WTO and Eif
  - Delivering as one: UNCTAD, ITC, UNDP

# www.un.org/ldcportal

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the UN Support Measures Portal for Least Developed Countries. The browser's address bar shows the URL [esango.un.org/ldcportal/](http://esango.un.org/ldcportal/). The page features a blue header with the UN logo and the text "Support Measures Portal for Least Developed Countries". Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, Trade, Development Assistance, General Support, Find a support measure, and Learn more. The main content area includes a large banner image of a conference titled "FOURTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES" held in Istanbul from May 9-13, 2011. Below the banner, there is a section titled "Improving Access to Support Measures" with a paragraph explaining the portal's purpose. To the right, there is a "Connect to us" section with social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, and a "Find a Support Measure" button. Below the main text, there are three columns of content: "Trade", "Development", and "General Support", each with a "New! Coverage" button. The right sidebar contains a "Latest stories" section with a headline: "When should concessional loans be reported as ODA?". The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the system clock as 1:20 PM on 10/02/2015.

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

Home - Support Measures ... x +

esango.un.org/ldcportal/

UN Welcome to the United Nations. It's your world. Search UN website Go

Sign In Register

Support Measures Portal for Least Developed Countries

Home Trade Development Assistance General Support Find a support measure Learn more

FOURTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES  
9-13 May 2011, ISTANBUL

### Improving Access to Support Measures

This Portal gives users access to information about special international support measures (ISMs) adopted by the international development community for countries included in the LDC category. ISMs are meant to assist LDCs in confronting their special development challenges and in achieving progress towards graduation from the category. The measures can be grouped into 3 broad areas of assistance:

Connect to us

Find a Support Measure

Latest stories

- When should concessional loans be reported as ODA?  
Members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Trade Development General Support

New! Coverage New! Coverage New! Coverage

1:20 PM 10/02/2015

# Project # 1: Lessons and Findings

- 😊 Wealth of information: ISMs and their use → feeding back to normative and analytical work; triggered action at country level
- 😊 Helped building up partnerships
- 😊 Hands-on, needs-targeted workshops are effective: avoid lectures
- 😞 Use, nature, maintenance and sustainability as challenges



From suppliers' side: ISMs to be strengthened

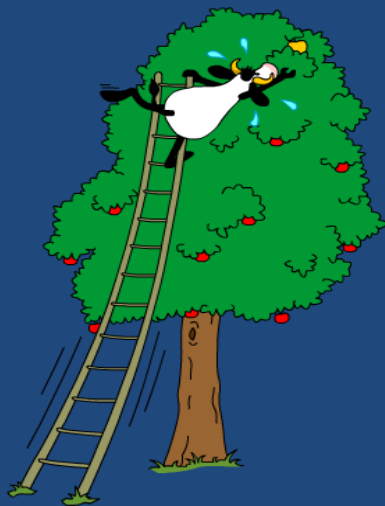
- design flaws
- gaps in delivery
- “neutralizers”
- lack of coherence in international policy making
- under funded; disconnected to goals



From recipients' side: ISM use requires capacity

- Productive
- Institutional
- Effort, greater ownership

# Institutional constraints to ISMs access and utilization



- Lack of information sharing among stakeholders (country level: trade-related ministries, exporters, producers, standardization bodies, private sector)
- Communication and coordination failures (internal and external)
- Inappropriate institutional arrangements in and among government agencies
- Deficiencies related to human resources



**MOVING ON...**

**PROJECT # 2**

# Project #2

- **Objective:** increase capacity in LDCs
  - to set priorities in accessing and effectively using the trade-related ISMs
  - tackle institutional constraints in accessing and sharing information on trade-related ISMs
- **Who?** CDP-DESA initially, partnerships created
- **How?**
- Bottom-up: identification of country-specific priorities and challenges
- Building up: pilot countries participated in Project # 1
- Staggered: sharing country experiences, fine tuning
- Avoiding duplication: delivering as one
- **New:** private sector participation

# Project implementation

## Two phases:

### 1. **Diagnosis and validation:**

field studies and background research to detect institutional constraints

### 2. **Intervention:**

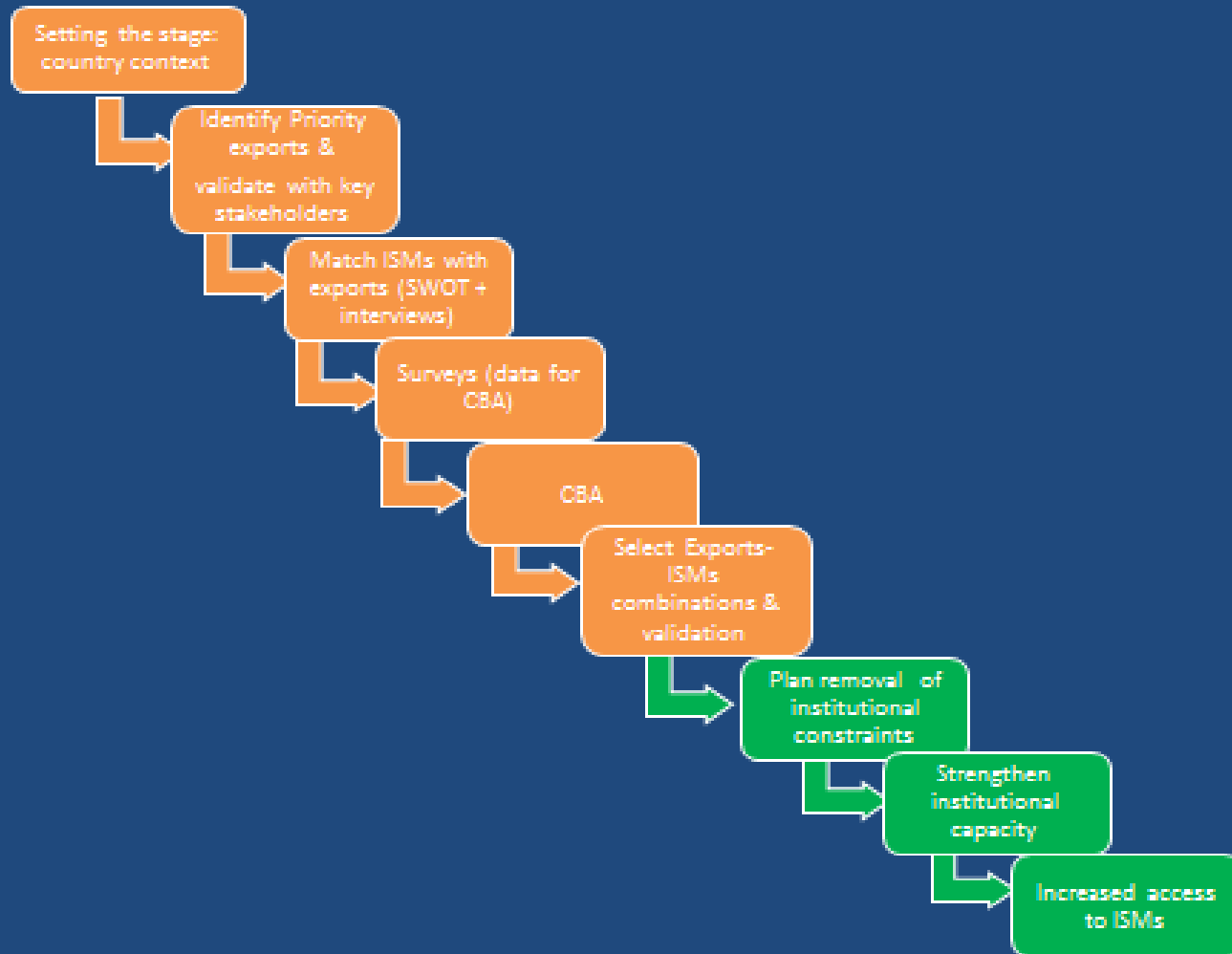
identification and implementation of measures to address constraints

## Pilot countries:

- Uganda, the Gambia, Lesotho and Nepal

- **Country context:** identify priority exports & validation
- **Matching** ISMs with exports (SWOT + interviews)
- **Prioritizing:** surveys; CBA; selection Exports-ISMs combinations & validation
- **Plan** removal of institutional constraints
- **Strengthen** institutional capacity
- **Increased access/use ISMs**

# Project implementation

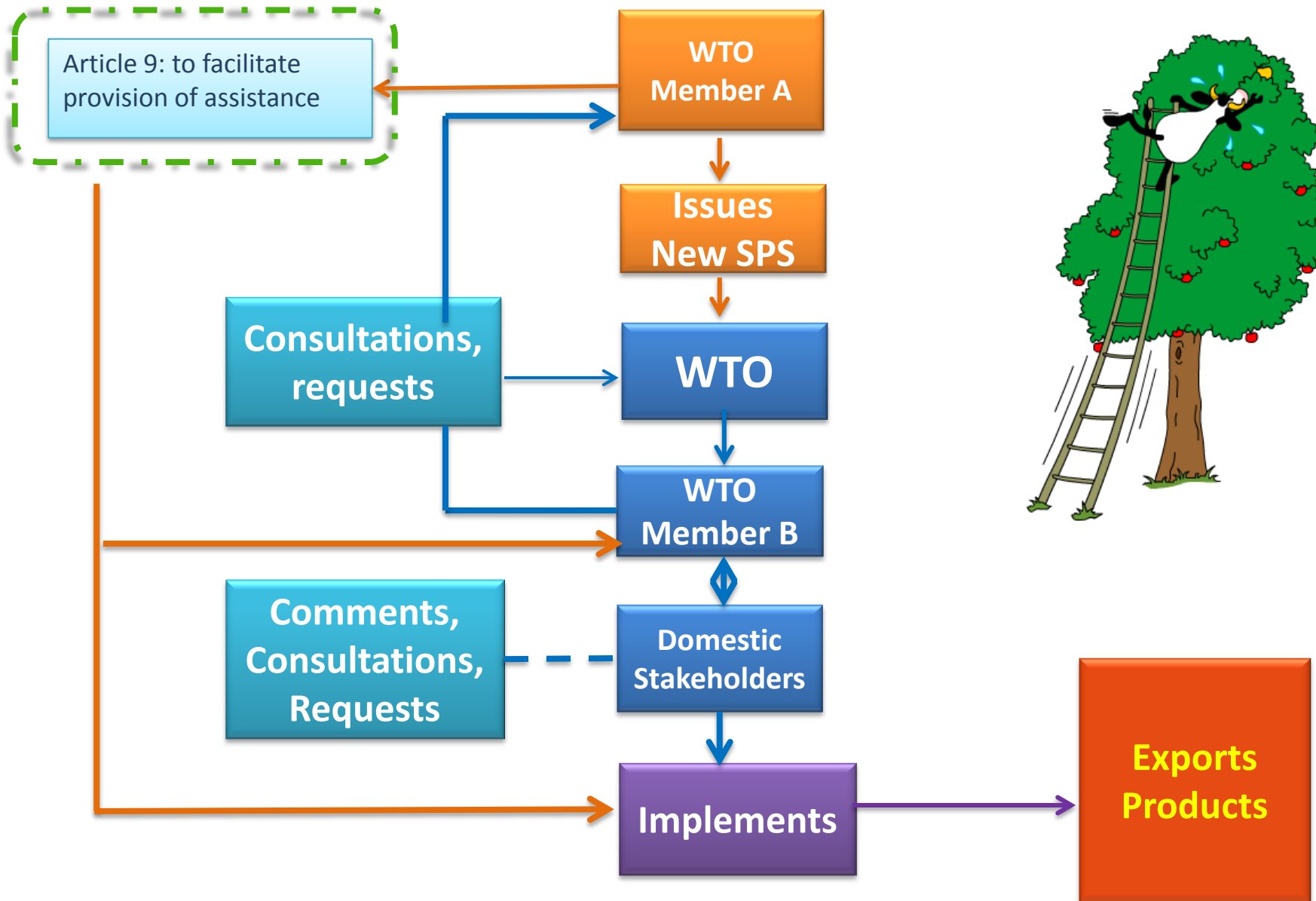




## *Common finding: communication gaps between public and private sector in SPS and TBT area*

- Regulations that define product requirements by importing countries
  - Sanitary and phytosanitary requirements: food safety, animal and plant life or health
  - Technical barriers to trade: standards and regulations: to ensure product quality and safety; prevention deceptive practices; protect health and environment
- Lack of knowledge and compliance acts as barriers to trade
  - National information flows are fragmented
  - Existing notification mechanisms not reaching stakeholders

# Example: SPS Agreement



# Problem:

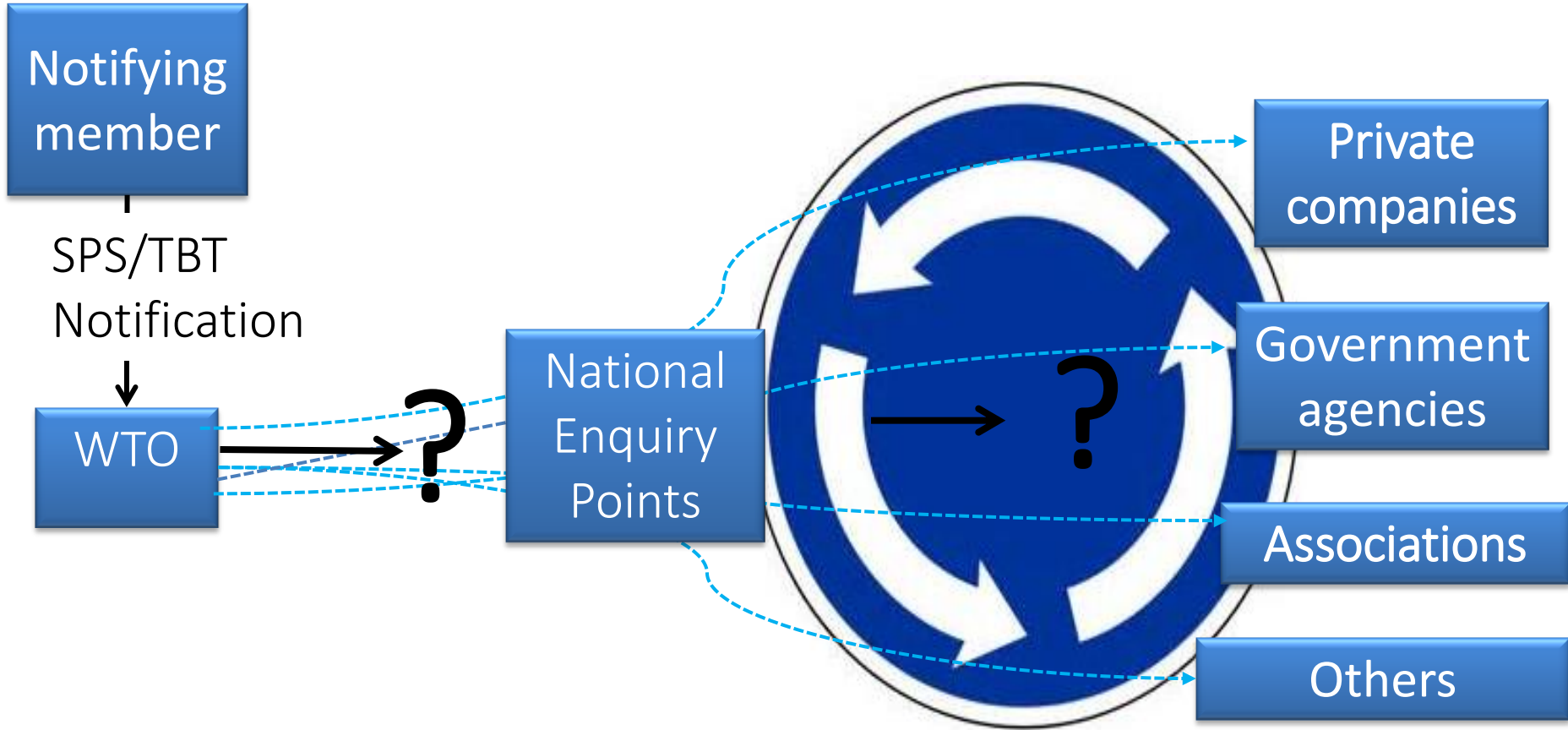
- Lack of knowledge of and compliance with SPS and TBT requirements



# Solution:

- Electronic notification system: **new tool!**
  - Facilitate dissemination of SPS and TBT notifications from WTO to stakeholders in LDCs
  - Increase awareness and understanding of SPS and TBT measures

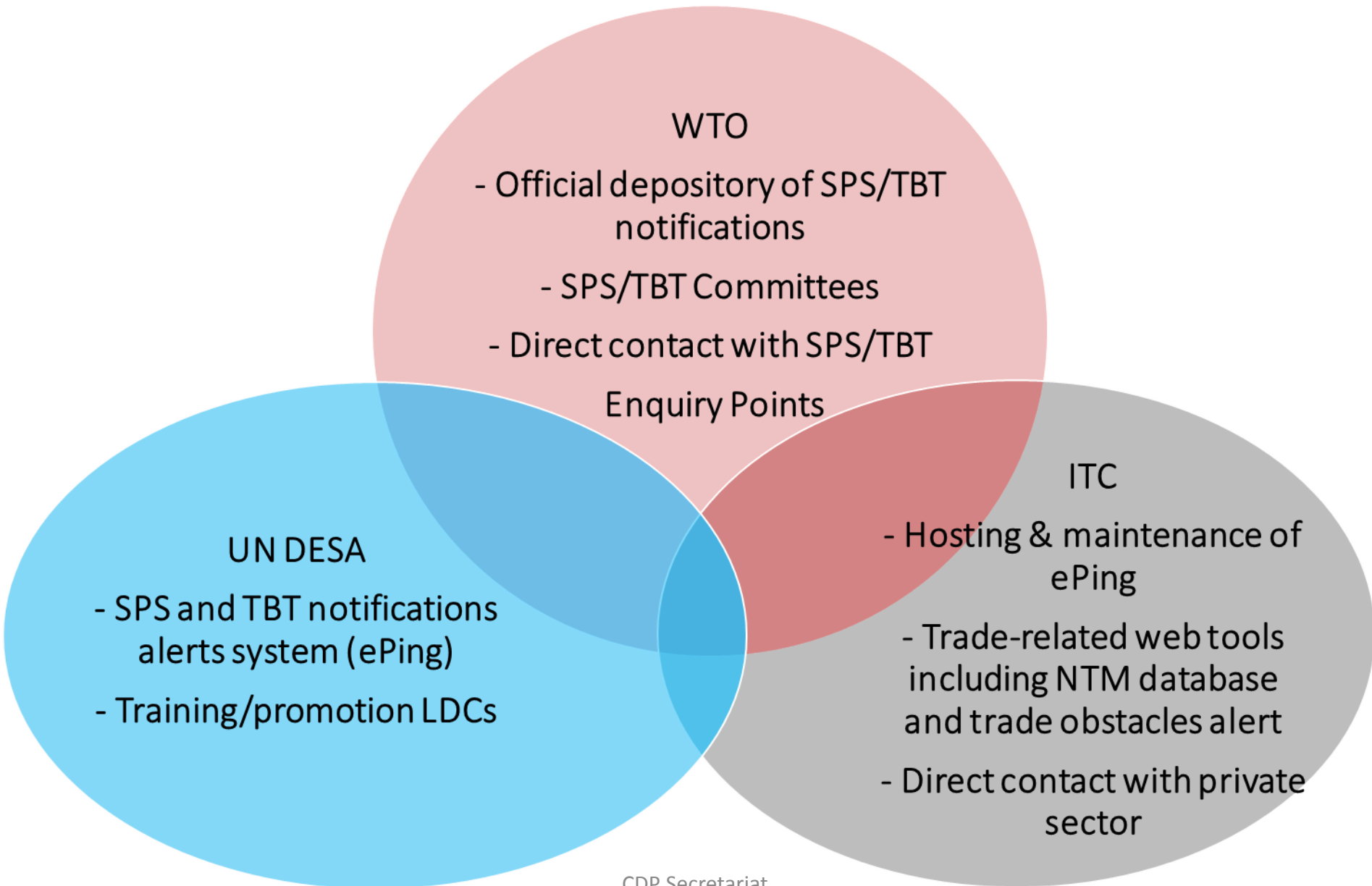




# Moving forward...



# Sustainability: tripartite co-operation



# Lessons and findings project #2

- Consultation and bottom-up approach matter
- Evolving approach and flexibility are important
- Tangible outputs: lasting and multiplier impacts
- Rely on existing expertise: developing countries too!!!!
- Forging cooperation and partnerships: requires effort and energy but extremely rewarding and effective:
  - Open communication channels: inform and update
  - Donor coordination needs more coordination: duplication
- Beyond LDCs: Australia, the Philippines, others → Virtuous cycle: testing, training and manuals
  - Leadership does not mean micromanaging: incubator of ideas, delegate!
- Look for synergies
  - multilateral level: Canadian initiative
    - Eping is now a component in WTO's TBT training
  - country level: SIDA and US-AID
- Sustainability:
  - Hook to existing processes can help
  - Partners (WTO, ITC); updating content, training
  - Training and dissemination at the country level: private sector involvement

# Additional information

[www.un.org/ldcportal](http://www.un.org/ldcportal)

[www.epingalert.org](http://www.epingalert.org)

[www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/index.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/index.shtml)