
Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration

MONITORING AND CONTROL OF TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE

Revision

I. BACKGROUND

1. The significant increase in the workload of the WTO in the years since its coming into existence has resulted in a situation whereby a number of individuals are funded on a long-term basis by Temporary Assistance (TA). The main reason for this development is that staff resources have, in many instances, not been wholly adequate to fulfil the Organization's increased responsibilities both in terms of breadth and volume of tasks. This reality has been recognized by the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration (CBFA) in the last two budget exercises, whereby a number of positions, in the same Division filled by the same person for at least four years, funded under TA have been consolidated into the regular staffing of the organization on a cost-neutral basis.

II. FUTURE POLICY

2. Henceforth TA funds will be provided and used exclusively for the following purposes:

- (a) for **temporary** peaks in workload, particularly in such areas as translation, word-processing, and, to a lesser extent, reproduction of documents;
- (b) for **occasional** situations which require manual workers for a short period of time, e.g. a large number of office moves which exceed the capacity of regular staff to effect in a reasonable period of time;
- (c) for replacement of staff on long medical leave and maternity leave;
- (d) to implement the WTO Internship Programme, normally limited to three months' duration per intern;
- (e) for short-term consultants to undertake specific tasks, such as in the informatics area; and
- (f) for overtime of staff required to work in excess of the normal work week;
- (g) for other purposes of an exceptional nature, subject to the approval of the CBFA.

III. PROPOSED ACTIONS

3. In order to reduce the number of staff funded from TA on a long-term basis, and to minimize the chances that such situations should recur, the following plan of action will be adopted:

- (a) the consolidation, on a cost-neutral basis, of five¹ positions, each filled by the same person in the same Division, to be accepted by Members of the CBFA in the context of the recommendation to the General Council on the revised budget for 2005;
- (b) the Human Resources Management Committee (HRMC) will examine those remaining long-term TA positions with a view to reassessing their continuing need; those positions whose continuing need has been reaffirmed by the HRMC will be examined to see whether a reallocation of posts, including vacant posts, can be used to advertise a post corresponding to the functions currently being handled on TA, thereby further reducing the number of long-term positions filled by TA;
- (c) other than replacement for staff on special leave without pay or on long sick and maternity leave, which is limited to the duration of the leave, any proposal for a new TA contract of more than **three months' duration**, or any extension of a TA contract over **three months** must be approved by the Deputy Director-General in charge of finance and administration who will report regularly to the CBFA in the context of the Progress Reports on Human Resources, on action taken in this regard;
- (d) no TA contract may be extended beyond 11 months of continuous service, unless exceptional circumstances so require, and only in a very limited number of cases each year, decided by the CBFA on the basis of proposals made by the Secretariat.
- (e) the extent to which TA associated with implementation of the DDAGTF and other trust funds is properly reflected in the staff resources available through those funds will be reassessed in order to avoid a situation whereby implementation of trust fund technical assistance activities relies disproportionately on regular budget TA resources.

IV. OTHER MEASURES WHICH COULD LIMIT EXPENDITURES ON TA:

- 4. The following measures will also be pursued in the context of limiting the use of TA:
 - (a) institute greater control on utilization of overtime and apply a mandatory policy for taking a certain amount of overtime as compensatory time-off;
 - (b) investigate creative solutions for situations when TA is used or proposed; and
 - (c) investigate other avenues for possible outsourcing which could impact on both regular positions and TA.
- 5. The Committee may wish to endorse the measures outlined in this paper.

¹ Four in the WTO Secretariat and one in the Appellate Body Secretariat.