



A farm worker cleans the solar panels of a solar water pump in Jagadhri, India.

05

Conclusion

The clean energy transition is critical to achieve net zero goals and is a key element of most economies' nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement, to keep global warming under a 1.5° Celsius threshold. The clean energy transition also has trade integration potential, as it helps to advance industrial development and addresses capacity constraints in energy generation capacity.

A key message of this report is that developing economies can benefit from the trade integration opportunities that arise during a global transition towards clean energy. The report examines opportunities available in various segments of the clean energy value chain, and explores ways in which Aid for Trade can support economies in exploiting these opportunities.

More than 60 per cent of donors and partners who responded to the 2022 Aid for Trade Monitoring and Evaluation questionnaire indicated that existing energy and power generation infrastructures proved an impediment to a sustainable development transition. Estimates by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reveal that US\$ 60 billion worth of funds that were committed towards the energy sector over the period 2011-21 were marked as serving climate objectives. This accounts for 30 per cent of all climate-related Aid for Trade measures during this period.

However, more can and needs to be done to help developing economies and LDCs to capture the trade dividends from a clean energy transition. This report notes that Aid for Trade can support developing economies and LDCs in integrating into emerging international value chains for minerals, manufacturing and services. It highlights the opportunities for value chain integration in five value chains: those for wind, solar photovoltaic, hydropower, hydrogen and nuclear energy. Using various case studies and samples, the report highlights ways in which Aid for Trade can help developing economies and LDCs facilitate productive value chain participation in these value chains.

Moving forward, Aid for Trade can be used to enhance the supply-side infrastructure of economies to reduce trade costs and improve competitiveness. Aid for Trade can also be leveraged to reduce technological barriers and support research and development initiatives. This can be combined with investments into human capital to ensure that the domestic labour force has adequate skills and experience to maximize productivity and export competitiveness. The skills are often transferable, meaning they can create positive feedback loops that benefit trade potential in other sectors.

Aid for Trade can also be used to help MSMEs in developing economies and LDCs build productive capacity. This is a necessary step to ensure value chain participation. For instance, the report observes that MSMEs can be provided with adequate assistance to comply with quality assurance frameworks, certifications, and conformity assessment measures that improve market access. The report also highlights the potential use of Aid for Trade to explore the use of carbon capture, utilization and storage technologies in developing economies and LDCs. Such technologies can help to insulate domestic economies from substantial adjustment shocks as they make the transition from producing and using carbon-emitting energy to cleaner energy.

At the heart of realizing the opportunities from a clean energy transition is investment. Aid for Trade is playing a useful role in this regard. Moving forward, Aid for Trade flows can further mobilize blended financing to support the deployment of clean energy activities. Well-coordinated technical assistance programmes, coupled with facilitatory trade and investment policy frameworks can help to encourage investments in clean energy technologies. Aid for Trade can also be used to leverage different forms of financing to support the development of infrastructures that help to accelerate value chain integration in developing economies and LDCs.



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## **Aid for Trade in Action: Supporting the transition to clean energy**

The transition to clean energy offers opportunities for developing economies and least-developed countries (LDCs) to exploit the export potential of this transition and to accelerate their growth prospects.

The WTO-led Aid for Trade initiative provides significant support to these economies to help them develop their energy sectors and transition to clean energy. However, sustained support is required to ensure that firms benefit from the trade opportunities that will emerge as a result of the clean energy transition.

This report highlights the role that Aid for Trade can play in mobilizing financial resources to deliver targeted assistance and to help developing economies unlock export opportunities created by clean energy. It also underlines the role of development partners in helping firms integrate into clean energy value chains by investing in the production of clean energy technologies, such as green hydrogen and solar power.

