CONTRACT TO STUDY TRADE FOR POVERTY REDUCTION

The University of Adelaide’s Institute for International Trade is undertaking a $465,000 12-month study to identify effective trade policies for poverty reduction in the Asia Pacific region.

The project is being supported by AusAID and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and will involve several Schools within the University of Adelaide as well as academic and business researchers throughout the region.

Jim Redden, Senior Lecturer and Senior Program Manager for the University’s Institute for International Trade, said: “We are aiming to provide governments and policy-makers in the Asia Pacific region with examples of trade policy and practices that have assisted in reducing poverty. Experienced researchers from a range of developing countries will work with us to develop case-studies evaluating the impact of trade reform and recent global economic developments on some of the most disadvantaged groups in our region.

“We know there is a clear link between long-term economic growth and poverty reduction when growth is inclusive of, or specifically targets, poorer communities. But linking the needs of the poor with a more open trading economy can be a very complex equation. We need much more factual evidence to explore exactly what sort of trade policies are needed on the ground to bring benefits to some of the poorest communities.”

Experts from the University of Adelaide, the WTO and AusAID will work with colleagues in the Asia Pacific exploring such themes as the relationship between labour migration and remittances, the vital importance of trade in services for the future of poorer countries, the needs of small and island economies, and the role of transnational companies in helping or hindering poverty reduction.

“We need more targeted solutions for specific situations. For instance, how can circumstances be improved for women working as cheap labour in factories across Asia? What sort of trade policies do newly emerging countries such as East Timor need to put in place to deal with youth unemployment, lack of infrastructure and rural poverty?” said Mr Redden.

A book will be produced offering informed analysis on appropriate trade strategies and capacity-building measures for long-term poverty reduction.

This project builds on the recent publication of an earlier Institute for International Trade-managed project Managing the Challenges of WTO Participation: 45 Case Studies co-edited by Institute Executive Director Andrew Stoler and published by Cambridge University Press.

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