

Overview of the Strategic Planning Process

In December 2007, a review of the Center was undertaken to help establish the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the Center. As part of this review, staff and graduate students participated in focus groups. The results of this report are available in the supplementary materials (Internal Review for the Strategic Planning Process by John Eklund). As a result of this review, three key areas requiring further discussion emerged. These were discussed at a one-day retreat in March 2008:

I. Defining a compelling mission for GTAP

While the Center's values are pretty clear, it was felt that our mission statement was too long and focused on our role as facilitators, thereby not necessarily reflecting what all of us actually do or where we want to go. Our new mission statement is:

To provide leadership in economic policy analysis through better data, fostering collaboration and research.

II. Establish prioritization so that main issues can be addressed

The Center team had numerous ideas which could be addressed by the Center related to both the data base and research; however it was clear that we did not have sufficient resources to undertake all of these ideas. It was therefore suggested that we prioritize the main issues we would like to address. These ideas were further divided into four areas for discussion, the first three of which were discussed at the retreat.

- a) **Data Quality:** Over the past several years the quality of the underlying GTAP Data Base has consistently appeared as the most important concern among our board members and other data users. What can be done to improve the data quality?
- b) **Energy and Environment:** Energy and environmental concerns are becoming more important topics for research. What role does GTAP want to play?
- c) **The GTAP Model, the Network and Training:** In the past GTAP has always suffered from the perception that our programs make it too easy for poorly-trained users to produce bad analysis. More recently other potential concerns have surfaced: including the increasing number of competing courses, the increasing number of untrained and price-sensitive users from developing countries, and the perception that CGE models have not kept pace with economic theory.
- d) **Research Opportunities in Trade and Development:** The Center has always had a long list of possible research projects/extensions to the GTAP model and data base. Current interests include: poverty analysis, linking GTAP to national models, finance theory, FDI, migration, labor standards, FTAs, dynamics, time series data bases, and NTBs.

III. Ensure GTAP operates effectively.

The Center faces a number of issues related to how it operates. Three issues are listed below; the first two of these were discussed at the retreat.

- a) Attracting new talent, and Training and retaining graduate students and staff: Obtaining and retaining high quality staff is currently the biggest problem faced by the Center.
- b) Going global with EU and Asia-Pacific offices: One idea which has been suggested for helping GTAP overcome many of the difficulties above is to open up regional offices with a few individuals working remotely on GTAP-related projects.
- c) Funding strategy: Core funding is provided by the board with data sales increasingly providing a large portion of the core funding. While current funding is sufficient for current staffing, it is clear that the center is significantly under-staffed and we will need to take advantage of funding opportunities to attract and fund new talent.

Goals 2008-2012

As a result of discussions at the retreat, the Center team developed 5 new goals for the next 3 to 5 years. These are mentioned below and outlined in greater detail in the relevant sections below.

- 1 ***Data Goal:*** To Improve the quality of Data Products.
- 2 ***Research Goal:*** To actively participate in quantitative economic analysis of pressing global concern in the areas of: Trade and Development and Global Energy and Environment issues
- 3 ***Model Goal:*** To promote further development of GTAP-based models
- 4 ***Education Goal:*** To expand and improve global economic analysis education worldwide
- 5 ***Staffing Goal:*** To actively seek and encourage talented staff and graduate students