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TRADECOM II NEWS

INFORMATION BULLETIN OF TRADECOM II PROGRAMME

HARNESSING THE BLUE ECONOMY FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ACP STATES

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#edd21 15-16 June 2021

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HARNESSING THE BLUE ECONOMY FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ACP STATES EDD21



The 14th edition of the European Development Days (EDD 2021) took place on 15-16 June 2021 under the theme “The Green Deal for a Sustainable future” and was fully digital due to COVID-19 restrictions. The EU-ACP TradeCom II Programme organised a lab debate on “Harnessing the Blue Economy for Sustainable Economic Development of ACP States with the subtitle: Attaining SDG 14: Investing to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans and marine resources for sustainable development” in ACP Countries

The session moderated by **Ms Cristelle Pratt**, the Assistant Secretary-General for the Environment and Climate Action of OACPS Secretariat, discussed the implementation of blue economy initiatives as they relate to trade and investment and measures to attain SDG 14 whose objective is to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development,” and other related goals. Discussions centred on emerging opportunities that the blue economy offers in areas such as coastal fisheries and aquaculture, biotechnology, maritime transport and energy.

Cristelle Pratt opened the floor recalling that oceans cover 72% of the surface of our blue planet and constitute more than 95% of the biosphere. The world’s oceans, seas, and coastal areas are vital to the livelihoods and food security of billions of people around the world, and to the economic prosperity of many nations.

The blue economy resource base in the ACP Group is more than twice of its land mass; three times larger than their land mass for the Caribbean ACP States, and over 40 times larger than the Pacific region’s land mass.

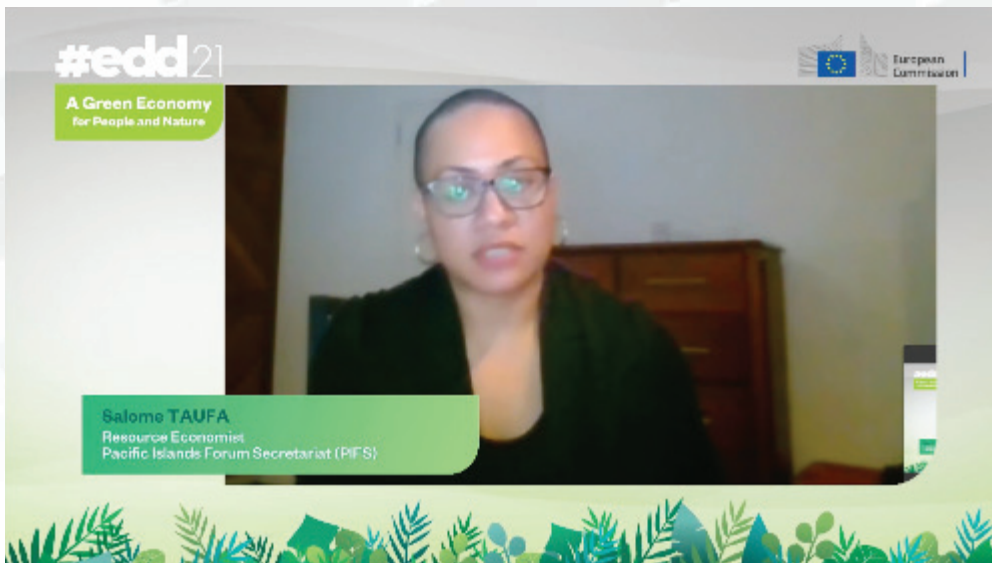
The ACP countries have a great potential to exploit the maritime resources and deep-sea minerals and pharmaceuticals, and alternative renewable energy resources for sustainable expansion and intensification of, inter alia, inshore and oceanic fish production, recreation, tourism, and transport sectors. These key aspects are also captured in the brochure that was prepared for this session and widely distributed.

The contribution of **Salome TAUFÄ**, Resource Economist of the Pacific Islands Secretariat, focused on two policy instruments, under development, aimed at promoting the sustainable use of the Pacific Ocean resources through the blue economy lens.

In 2019, the Forum Leaders noted that securing the future of the Blue Pacific requires a long-term vision and carefully considered the strategy for regionalism, and a collective commitment to achieve it. Reflecting on this, Forum Leaders endorsed the development of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

This Strategy is still under development and it has been undergoing comprehensive consultations with Forum Leaders’ members and key stakeholders. Ocean is indeed a key underpinning and cross cutting strategic area of focus.

In doing so, the 2050 Strategy will consider science, innovation and research, access to sustainable marine transport, renewable energy, biodiversity and ecosystems, multi-stakeholder partnerships and access to sustainable financing.



2021 is crucial for the Climate and for Sustainable Development. The blue economy is one of the ways in which we could truly achieve in building forward better, where we can invest in sustainable development, particularly around enhancing the natural environment and using those investments to build livelihoods which are sustainable, and which also create more value addition for our economy.

Africa's relationship with the ocean has often been defined as a partnership with external investors with minimum value addition created for the African economies. We should look at the blue economy as a **space** for climate resilience recognizing that ocean is one of the

most important climate regulators that exists.

In recognizing all those aspects, the African Union has adopted in 2020 the Africa's Union Blue Economy Strategy that is built of five main pillars:

1. Fisheries, aquaculture, conservation and sustainable aquatic ecosystems
2. Shipping/transportation, trade, ports, maritime security, safety and enforcement
3. Coastal and maritime tourism, climate change, resilience, environment, infrastructure
4. Sustainable energy and mineral resources and innovative industries
5. Policies, institutional and governance, employment, job creation and poverty eradication, innovative financing.

Fishery sector is particularly important for Africa. Africa has the second largest growth in fish consumption with a projected increase of 27% between 2018-2030. Therefore, it is important to highlight the importance of addressing fishery in management of resources which empowers local communities and allows

The second policy instrument is the Blue Pacific Economic Strategy. Since the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific will be a high level, long-term policy instrument that will guide works in the Pacific Region in the next 30 years, to complement that, a concept note to develop a Blue Pacific Economic Strategy has been developed with the aim to assist the Forum Members to stabilize their economies against COVID-19 impacts, build resilience to future shocks and support their long-term recovery efforts. A key feature of this Strategy will be on the sustainable ocean economy in which the blue economy will be a driver of ocean-based economic activities.

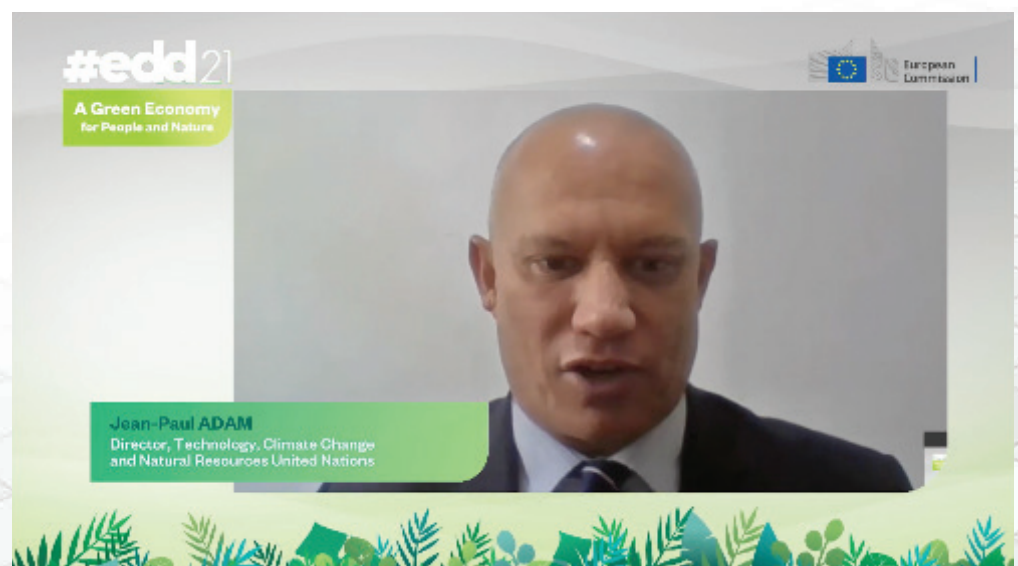
Key areas for consideration include fisheries, a long-standing priority area for regional co-operation amongst Forum Members. To diversify the revenue streams, the Members will look to increase and explore other opportunities including nature-based solutions and more innovative financing mechanism.

The Strategy will also explore opportunities in aquaculture, an area that is largely underdeveloped in the Pacific, maritime transport, renewable energy and ocean finance.

This Strategy will articulate and capture existing policy instruments to harness the blue economy including the Pacific Aid for Trade Strategy 2020-2025 which has a critical role in turning trade policies into real world trade development.

It will also incorporate a Pacific Islands Private Sector Strategy that is also under development which aims to assist the private sector to boost trade and business competitiveness as well as facilitate collaboration to promote business growth.

Opening his intervention, **Jean Paul Adam**, Director of the Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Management Division of UNECA, recalled that



real inclusion and participation through the value chain.

In terms of coastal and maritime tourism, this sector has been evolving positively pre-COVID-19 into one of the most important economic sectors for Africa. Eco-tourism is well developed in Africa, particularly around the land base resources. There are opportunities to further build on this going further using the maritime spaces.

The development of energy resources through the blue economy is exploring new opportunities which include offshore wind energy, photovoltaic panels and wave energy. The projections show that this sector will provide 7% of Africa’s energy needs by 2030.

In terms of challenges going forward, Mr. Adams focused on the ability to finance investments in the blue economy.

Innovation can play a key role to help sustainable finance for African countries. For example, the Government of Seychelles re-purchased a part of its sovereign debt with support of external partners. After re-financing this debt, the savings achieved were re-invested in terms of climate conservation. Currently UNECA is running similar experiences in West Africa, particularly in Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal.

The opportunities to raise additional finance are also through blue bonds, also experienced in Seychelles in 2018. Africa as a whole has a share of less than 1% of the global sustainable bond market. There is an opportunity to leverage the vast expanse of Africa’s oceans, to be able to tap into those financing opportunities for climate resilience.



After an interesting and very interactive Q&A session, Ms Pratt thanked all main speakers and the remotely connected participants and recalled the commitment of the OACPS and the European Commission to advance the key issues raised during the discussions and to enhance the collaboration with all agencies in the field including UNECA, the Regional Economic Communities, Governments and private sector agencies to enhance the benefits arising from the blue economy for the wealthy of our people and the attainments of the SDG 14 – Life Below Water.

Ms Taufa closed her intervention wishing greater collaboration with development partners to improve economic recovery efforts and the formation of a sustainable ocean economy in response to COVID-19 pandemic challenges.

In conclusion, Mr Adams pointed out that the blue economy for Africa is a relative new frontier, but one that represents huge opportunities for sustainable development and in particular to address the concerns of accelerating growth in the post-pandemic era.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE AFRICAN TRADE ARRANGEMENTS

UNECA

The implementation of this TCII contribution agreement by UNECA, with support from the OACPS and funded by the EC, aims to build the capacity for inclusive and equitable trade targeting policy makers and the private sector to increase the capacity of African private sector to take better advantage of preferential trade agreements and arrangements. This project is part of a broader programme of the ECA/ATPC that aims to boost intra African trade and accelerate private sector development.

The second steering committee of the action was held virtually on 23 April 2021.

The objective of the meeting was to review the progress that has been made so far and also discuss the work plan for the remaining part of the project, which has been adjusted in order to respond to the disruptions and opportunities that have been presented by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

During the session, ATPC presented the main findings of the five main studies of the project.

Study 1: PTA Utilization

This study investigates the extent of the utilization of preferential trade areas (or lack thereof) by African countries and their business.

Main findings:

- 🌐 preference utilization in African RECs varies, ranging from less than 5% (for certain flows in ECOWAS) to 78 % for EAC-eligible imports into Uganda.
- 🌐 In all countries surveyed, awareness and information about PTAs was the biggest challenge, in addition to SPS challenges followed by technical requirements, customs procedures and rules of origin.
- 🌐 Women-represented firms were found to utilize PTAs less and also find the requirements more challenging than for other firms on average.
- 🌐 Youth represented firms utilize PTAs less than average but do not experience as many challenges with requirements as women-represented firms.

Study 2: Negotiating Institutions

The aim of this study is to enhance the capacity of the African private sector to better engage in the negotiation and implementation of PTAs and particularly those relating to trade in services.

Main findings and recommendations:

- 🌐 Negotiating teams should actively communicate on trade policy objectives, publication of event calendars, written and oral briefings and debriefings. Communication channels used should be of easy and continuous access.
- 🌐 Negotiating teams must ensure a balanced representation of the interests of companies of all sizes including MSMEs, when calling for contributions.
- 🌐 The private sector should ensure that representatives are duly mandated and that their guidelines are neither too strict to preclude any positive negotiating outcome nor too loose to leave room to persona interpretation on committal matters.
- 🌐 CSOs should actively engage with governmental and parastatal agencies to ensure that the expression of interests is well conveyed.

Study 3: PTA Compliance

This study is oriented at strengthening the capacity of the private sector to comply with rules of origin and TBT/SPS requirements and take better advantage of PTAs.

Main findings:

- 🌐 There is a general lack of awareness among private sector operators on the RoO, TBT and SPS requirements in PTAs.
- 🌐 Even when private sector operators are fully aware of the requirements, they face challenges in complying with the requirements, due to financial and technical capacities.
- 🌐 MSME and women-owned business are particularly challenged in complying with RoO, TBT and SPS requirements

- 🌐 Greater efforts are needed to provide tailored technical assistance to comply with PTA RoO, TBT and SPS requirements, to enable private sector operators to take advantage of preferential access (including under AfCFTA) and integrate into regional and global value chains.

Study 4: Informal Cross-Border Trade

The objective of this study is to improve the capacity of both private and public sector actors to support informal traders to better tap into preferential market access opportunities and gradually formalise their trade.

Main findings:

- 🌐 Informal cross border traders (particularly women) in the ECOWAS region face significant challenges in accessing the benefits of PTAs.
- 🌐 Learning from the experiences of EAC and COMESA, an effective STR can be developed for ECOWAS to reduce the costs of ICBT and gradually incorporate informal traders into the formal trading system.
- 🌐 There exists a significant lack of data on ICBT flows in the ECOWAS region;
- 🌐 Greater efforts are required to strengthen the financial and technical capacity of governments to collect data on ICBT.

Study 5: E-commerce

The study on e-commerce is aimed at strengthening the capacity of the African private sector to take better advantage of e-commerce in PTAs

Main findings:

- 🌐 Firms reported to have increased online sales and diversified into new markets through e-commerce during Covid-19.
- 🌐 Top 5 reported challenges to cross-border e-commerce include 1) postal competence - delivery and transport costs; 2) issues on taxation - foreign taxation, double taxation, VAT regulations; 3) lack of reliable payment solutions; 4) unawareness regarding national and regional rules; 5) custom duties and custom procedures.
- 🌐 Gender difference emerged in terms of e-commerce and data use.
- 🌐 The AfCFTA can provide a common and guiding framework for taxes, data protection, privacy policies and stronger enforcement which can help build online consumer trust in African economies and facilitate B2C e-commerce.

The meeting was attended by the Trade Law Centre (tralac), Trade Policy Training Centre in Africa (TRAPCA), African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the private sector.

CONSOLIDATING THE OECS ECONOMIC UNION THROUGH TRADE CAPACITY BUILDING AND POSITIVE SPILL-OVERS TO CARICOM

OECS

The OECS Grant Action entitled, “Consolidating the OECS Economic Union through Sustainable Trade Capacity Building (STCB)”, is EU-funded programme under the grant component of the ACP TradeCom II Programme, executed by the OECS Commission. The programme’s aim is to assist OECS member states and the OECS Commission to fully implement the OECS Economic Union in order to deepen regional integration and facilitate integration of members into global markets through greater participation in regional and international value chains.

Over the last few months, the action has made significant strides in advancing STCB efforts in the member states. These include increasing the number of trained and certified trade professionals in the member states, advancing its commitment to conducting value chain studies for unlocking the productive capacity of new and innovative products, developing technological platforms to improve access to trade information and enhance the data analysis and decision-making capabilities of member states as well as strengthening relations with the business community through trade engagement strategies which will be aligned with their needs.

In relation to increasing the pool of trained and qualified trade practitioners, the ACP TradeCom II programme has made a firm commitment to capacity building and demand-driven education. It is currently in the process of finalizing a programme of specialized short courses in Trade at the Border: for Customs Officials/Brokers, Trade and the Blue Economy, Trade and Sustainable Development Goals, Trade for Lawyers, Introduction to Trade for the Caribbean Business persons and Introduction to Trade Negotiations with the University of the West Indies through its Shridath Ramphal Centre (UWI-SRC). These courses, which cover a variety of issues critical to trade policy in the OECS region, are aimed exclusively at OECS policy makers and trade practitioners from the public and private sector who are desirous of honing their skills over a short period of time.

In addition to the short courses, this OECS project has offered scholarships to twenty-one (21) students to undertake studies at UWI-SRC in the area of International Trade Policy. This initiative has proven to be a resounding success with all of the students satisfying the completion requirements to earn a Master’s in International Trade Policy (MITP). Due to this success, an additional ten (10) scholarships are to be offered to students from the member states.

Further to this success, some of MITP students are currently undertaking internships within some of the OECS and CARICOM regional institutions where they are actively working on programmes and initiatives geared toward enhancing our integration processes. Such undertakings include contributing to the development of the value chain

studies to unlock the benefits from production and exports of Roots and Tubers, Cocoa, and Fresh Fish from member states. This undertaking, which is scheduled to commence in August 2021, will be performed by an international firm and will supported by the aforementioned TIFP students. The findings of these studies will be essential in enabling the member states to identify their comparative advantage in the production and marketing of the identified commodities in both regional and international markets. It is expected that the studies will help member states determine market channels as well as help to uncover constraints, and examine income and job creation in the respective areas.

Recognizing the importance of readily-available statistics and intelligence data to informed decision-making, the TradeCom II programme has prioritized the development of a Trade Information and Facilitation Portal (TIFP) for the OECS region. This TIFP is geared toward (a) the aggregation and analysis of trade statistics and (b) the collection, management and publication of relevant trade-related information from each Protocol Member State. The portal will also serve to enhance and support the functioning of the OECS Customs Union and the Eastern Caribbean Economic Union (ECEU) as well as monitor the performance therein. The development activities are being conducted by the International Trade Commission (ITC) and the portal is expected to be completed by December 2021. Effective January 2022, comprehensive real-time information will be accessible to traders, policy makers, academia, and other interested parties on import, export and transit procedural requirements.

Coupled with the development of this portal, the initiative has sought to embark on the development of a Private Sector Trade Engagement Strategy. This strategy will serve to broaden and deepen the engagement of the private sector in the development, negotiation, implementation and evaluation of national, regional and international trade policy as well as in strategic discussions on trade-related issues. It is anticipated that the strategy will take into account the diverse views and aspirations of all the relevant actors in the region and increase opportunities for private sector participation in the trade policy and decision-making mechanism in the ECEU. It is expected that Calls for Proposals will be published in September 2021.

As noted, there is a lot of expectations on this OECS action. Many opportunities exist on the horizon for persons to access valuable information, enhance academic capabilities as well as contribute to the development of select initiatives toward the advancement of the Economic Union

STRENGTHENING THE PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION SYSTEM IN CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICA

OAPI

The African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI) has launched the project “Strengthening and Promotion of the System of Plant Variety Protection (PPOV)”, with the financial and technical support of the European Commission, the OACP Group under the TradeCom II Programme, and the relevant international plant variety bodies. This initiative aims to strengthen the promotion of the plant variety protection system in the 17 OAPI Member States, with a view to boosting agricultural productivity, ensure food security and promote sustainable development while giving Member States’ agriculture a better chance of being competitive on the local market.

The implementation of the project will stimulate agronomic research in the 17 Member States, through capacity building of research centres, human resource training and awareness-raising. It is in the framework of capacity building that OAPI organized two national seminars to raise awareness of actors in the agricultural sector in Congo and Gabon



NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION IN CONGO

25-27 May 2021, Brazzaville, Congo

This meeting was addressed to local stakeholders in the agricultural sector and aimed at raising their awareness on the importance of the protection and enhancement of new plant varieties.

The work was led by experts from the partner organisations in the project, including: UPOV (International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants), CPVO (Community Plant Variety Office), GEVES (Group for the Study and Control of Varieties and Seeds), NAKTUINBOUW, SEMAE.

The first day of the meeting highlighted the importance of the protection of a plant variety, for its breeder, the role of an intellectual property office in the granting of intellectual property rights, the value of establishing quality guiding principles for conducting a DHS review (distinctiveness, homogeneity, stability) of a new plant variety, and the impact of Research & Development in the public-private sector partnership.

This first stage, which ended with a very practical and demonstrative intervention by Cécile MARCHENAY of Naktuimbouw on the DHS tests applied to the examination of new varieties of tomatoes, generated lively interest and exchanges.

The exchanges on the second day raised new questions about the process of listing new varieties in national and regional species catalogues, the distinction between approval and certification, but also the process of exploiting the results of research, among others.

OAPI (Organisation africaine de la propriété intellectuelle), CNRA (Centre national de recherche agronomique, Côte d’Ivoire), SEMAE (L’interprofession des semences et plants, ancien GNIS), and AFSTA (Association africaine du commerce des semences) represented some of the different structures in presence and video conferencing.

The intervention of Omega-conseil, a local agro-export company, has made possible to foresee certain challenges in terms of collaboration between the public research sector and the private sector in order to promote the marketing in sufficient quantity of quality seeds from research centres.



The last day highlighted the important steps for the commercialization of a plant variety. Steps that range from creation to protection, through certification after multiplication in seed. This consultation promoted a round table of SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) of the seed sector in the Congo. The state of the situation raised some points to work in the short and long term to bring solutions to the difficulties identified.

The three days of work concluded with suggestions from experts, including the importance of focusing the research on varieties of high ecological and economic value. The workshop also emphasized the responsibility of researchers who should work on the knowledge sharing. The administration of

the Research Centres, in order to contribute to the promotion of the varieties should organize the the marketing strategy for those plant varieties. To put in place an efficient recovery strategy, CEMAC should work on aspects of harmonisation of methods and work in synergy with other economic areas such as ECOWAS.

In his closing statement, the Director General of the IRA (Institut National de la recherche Agronomique du Congo) thanked the OAPI and UPOV but also the partners, the Experts and the participants for the quality of the interventions and their support to strengthen the technical capacities of the actors of the local agricultural chain.



NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION IN GABON

31 MAY - 2 JUNE 2021, LIBREVILLE, GABON

The capital of Gabon, Libreville hosted for three days, from May 31 to June 2, 2021, agricultural researchers, seed and agricultural companies, to discuss national strategies to be put in place to ensure better protection and enhancement of locally developed plant varieties to support Gabon's agricultural development policy.

The national workshop on "Protection of New Varieties of Plants", organized by the OAPI (African Intellectual Property Organization), was attended by international and African experts, who have shared their experiences and trained national stakeholders on examination techniques to ensure the quality of the plant variety to be developed, the value of setting up an ecosystem to exploit the variety, the interest of protection with the OAPI to ensure respect for the breeder's right and to secure the means of marketing the variety.

At the end of this meeting, it was noted the strong will of the Gabonese State to develop the varietal sector and the quality of the researchers and breeders who work daily to advance this sector. However, it was highlighted the need for an adequate legal framework for the development and exploitation of seeds, as well as strategic and technical support for the development of quality varieties.

The meeting in Libreville followed the seminar held in Brazzaville, Congo from 25 to 27 May 2021.

SUPPORT ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT

PAPUA NEW GUINEA, SAMOA, SOLOMON ISLANDS, TONGA, FIJI, TIMOR LESTE

EUROPEAN UNION BUSINESS, TRADE & INVESTMENT CONFERENCE, 2021

The project is designed in collaboration with PNG-EU Business Council, PNG Investment Promotion Authority (IPA); PNG National Trade Office (NTO) and the Department of Commerce and Industry.

The project objectives are 4-fold:

1. Strengthening business, trade and investment ties between the EU and PNG+5 (plus Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Timor-Leste) through:

- 🌐 the Launch and operationalization of the PNG-EU Business Council,
- 🌐 the preparation and the dissemination of a short readable version of the final report of the first EU-PNG Business, Trade and Investment Conference and an updated EPA brochure.

2. Providing adequate information on key commercial and investment sectors in PNG+5 to European business operators in the Pacific region.

The project will provide:

- 🌐 the drafting of a technical report on the investment climate—doing business in Papua New Guinea in general (including legal and technical requirements);
- 🌐 a framework for a database regarding EU businesses operating, trading and investing in PNG (and the other 5 EPA countries);
- 🌐 an update of the user-friendly summaries of development strategies for specific sectors discussed at the EU-PNG Business, Trade and Investment Conference (agriculture, energy, forestry, infrastructure, ICT and services);

- 🌐 the dissemination the development strategies among the relevant economic operators in PNG;
- 🌐 the draft of a trade protocol for key products identified including coffee and cocoa and an additional product among: rubber saps, vanilla, fish and marine products, wood products, copra.

Furthermore, the project will:

3. Capacitate the key beneficiaries on the key business, trade and investment focus of a B2B Conference.

A one and half-day in-house training will be conducted for the technical staff of the IPA and PNG National Trade Office on the promotion of trade and investment flows from the EU

4. Raise Businesses' awareness and ownership of the benefits of the EPA between the EU and PNG/Fiji/Samoa/Solomon Islands (plus Tonga and Timor-Leste).

Under this component the project will prepare background briefs on trade and investment in products obtained through the sustainable management of natural capital, on the EU perspectives on trade and investment aspects of sustainable development and on trade and investment opportunities in environmental goods and services consistent with sustainable development and EPA principles.

The activities under this support project will start in the following weeks and will be implemented with combination of virtual and physical modalities during a period of 3 months starting from July 2021. The main conference event will be held towards the end of October 2021.

SUPPORT TO CARICOM NATIONAL STANDARDS BUREAUS TO IMPLEMENT THE TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE PROVISIONS OF THE EPA – PHASE II

The project “Support to CARICOM National Standards Bureaus to Implement the Technical Barriers to Trade Provisions of the EPA – Phase II” is aimed at supporting the beneficial integration of the economies of the CARICOM Member States into the regional and the global economy by following the guidelines of the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) provision of the EU - CARIFORUM EPA. It

was designed in partnership with the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) - the network of the 15 National Standards Bureaus (NSBs) of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) with collateral beneficial interest to INDOCAL, the national Bureau of Standards of the Dominican Republic.

The project is based on 2 components:

COMPONENT 1 - EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY APPLY EPA AND WTO TBT PRINCIPLES, GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND IN THE APPLICATION OF QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE MEASURES

Under this component will be reviewed and elaborated, in publishable quality, the Workbook to the CROSQ Regional Good Regulatory Practice (GRP) Guide and the Code of Practice of theoretical and application exercises to be used in the 15 Member States of CARICOM in e-copy PDF downloadable format. Those documents have been designed and developed under the ACP – TradeCom II project “Support to CARICOM National Standards Bureaus as Trade Related Institutions to Implement the Technical Barriers to Trade Provisions of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA” in 2019.

COMPONENT 1 - EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY APPLY EPA AND WTO TBT PRINCIPLES, GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND IN THE APPLICATION OF QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE MEASURES

After revision by the WTO expert(s) and subsequently validation by the 15 NSB CEOs and CROSQ Secretariat, the CROSQ Regional GRP Guide and National COP and the Workbook will be published in e-copy PDF downloadable format and a limited number of hard copies are shared with the African Organization for Standardization (ARSO) and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) for use.

This support project, started in July 2021 will have a duration of 4 months.



TARGETED SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GHANA-EU AGRIBUSINESS PLATFORM

This project has been conceived in partnership with the Ghana - European Business Organisation – Ghana (EBO GHANA) With the aim to increase the private investment in the agribusiness sector and make the most out of the public investment in the sector through the creation of the EU-Ghana Agribusiness Platform.

In particular, the activities of this project fall under two components.

1. TO IDENTIFY THE OPTIONS AND PREPARE RELATED WORKPLANS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE EU-GHANA AGRIBUSINESS PLATFORM

Within this component, the project will:

- 📍 Conduct a stakeholder analysis of the agri-business private sector and other actors to determine their needs;
- 📍 Conduct desk research and literature review on existing models and best practice cases, including key elements of its financial sustainability, for national and EU-linked agri-business platforms

- 📍 Draft a model for EU-Ghana Agribusiness Platform
- 📍 Formulate a set of relevant, simple and straightforward indicators to monitor the platform’s activities and objectives and propose an M&E system.

2. TO INCREASE THE VIABILITY AND SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF THE PLATFORM AMONG THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND CORE GROUP.

Following the activities under the first component, the team of experts will:

- 📍 Share the draft model of the EU-Ghana Agribusiness Platform with the key stakeholders;
- 📍 Carry-out consultation with the key stakeholders on the key elements of the EU-Ghana Agribusiness Platform model;
- 📍 Support EBO Ghana in obtaining the validation of the EU-Ghana Agribusiness model and in conducting a successful workshop to consider and validate the results of this support project;

The project, started in June 2021 will have a period of implementation of 5 months

TARGETED SUPPORT TO DEVELOP E-COMMERCE IN THE CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

The project “Support to Develop E-commerce in the Caribbean Countries” being implemented by Cecodda as member of the AESA Consortium, is oriented at (1) developing a feasibility study on the establishment of an e-commerce-based fulfilment centre to facilitate a sustainable increase in the competitiveness of the Caribbean exports and (2) increasing the viability of e-commerce in the Caribbean region by identifying underlying logistics and structural constraints and developing a strategy to address these challenges.

Under the first purpose, the aim of the activities is to:

- 📍 Conduct desk research on existing models for national and regional e-commerce-based fulfilment centres;
- 📍 Compile a list of existing fulfilment centres in the Caribbean’s key exporting centres—EU, UK, USA, Canada; identification of best practices in other e-commerce fulfilment centres in regional areas;
- 📍 Conduct a stakeholder analysis with the private sector and other actors to determine their needs related to the e-commerce trading environment;
- 📍 Draft a comprehensive feasibility study on the establishment of an e-commerce-based fulfilment centre for the exports of the Caribbean countries;
- 📍 Build a financial model to establish the e-commerce-based fulfilment centre either by developing a new centre or partnering with an existing centre(s);
- 📍 Develop a potential business model to govern the use of the centre addressing financial and regulatory/legal issues;
- 📍 Elaborate a roadmap for the implementation of the e-commerce-based fulfilment centre model;

With regard to the second purpose, the team of experts will:

- 📍 Draft a technical note identifying challenges and opportunities to exploit and changes required in the institutional regulatory framework for logistics, on-line payments facilitation, and digital and technological gaps to be filled by the exporting community to take advantage of e-commerce;
- 📍 Review of existing assessments to determine the existing gaps in e-commerce adoption in the Caribbean;
- 📍 Draft an action plan to implement the necessary reforms to enable an increased viability of e-commerce in the Caribbean export community;
- 📍 Organise a presentation of results and validation workshop with CEDA and CARIFORUM countries.

The project, designed in collaboration with the Caribbean Export Development Agency (CEDA) and the CARIFORUM member countries, started in July 2021 and the intended period of implementation of the contract will be 4 months.

AUC-AFCFTA TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO THE INVESTMENT PROTOCOL NEGOTIATIONS

One of the main pillars of the TradeCom II Programme is the support of the effective participation of ACP Institutions in trade negotiations. This project is designed to provide a range of highly-specialised technical services to the AfCFTA Secretariat and the Expert Group in the negotiations of the Investment Protocol of the AfCFTA.

The project, launched in June 2021 with a duration of 4 months, will provide:

- 📍 Support to the Expert Group (EG), the Negotiating Forum (NF) and the Senior Trade Officials (STO) of the AfCFTA in the negotiation of the Investment Protocol
- 📍 Technical documents relevant to the negotiations of the Investment Protocol
- 📍 Training to the EG, NF and STO in the key areas.

Support to the Expert Group (EG), the Negotiating Forum (NF) and the Senior Trade Officials (STO) of the AfCFTA in the negotiation of the Investment Protocol.

The team of experts will support, together with other experts identified by AfCFTA investment team, the negotiation meetings and, upon request, will attend the meetings of the Expert Group either physically or virtually.

Technical documents relevant to the negotiations of the Investment Protocol.

The project will provide to the Expert Group (EG), the Negotiating Forum (NF) and the Senior Trade Officials (STO) of the AfCFTA, presentations on the explanatory notes and policy briefs in the following key areas prepared:

- 🌐 Investment and Sustainable Development covering the key policy objectives of the future Investment Protocol and implications from sustainable development perspective; as well as possible key components and principles of Investment for Sustainable Development in the context of AfCFTA Investment Protocol;
- 🌐 Investment promotion and facilitation covering the current approaches and discussions around investment facilitation at various levels; and key considerations and implications for AfCFTA Investment Protocol;
- 🌐 Investment protection and regulation covering the current approaches under investment instruments and reforms processes at RECs level in Africa, and developing countries, including best practices at the global level; and considerations on how they can fit under the future AfCFTA investment Protocol;
- 🌐 Investment dispute settlement mechanism covering the new approaches on investment dispute settlement mechanisms within Africa and reforms at global level regarding Investor-State Dispute Settlement, as well as key implications for the AfCFTA Investment Protocol; and possible options for investment disputes mechanisms under the AfCFTA.

Training to the EG, NF and STO in the key areas.

Under this component, the project will ensure:

- 🌐 Capacity building upon request by the negotiating institutions on key identified gaps during the negotiation process;
- 🌐 Presentations and expert input on specific articles and topics as may be required by the Expert Group and the Negotiating Forum;
- 🌐 Training and capacity building to the Expert Group and NF on specific topics and key areas as necessary to advance the negotiations.

Glossary

ACP	Africa Caribbean and Pacific	SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
CARIFORUM	Caribbean Forum	SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation	TFTA	Tripartite Free Trade Area
DG DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development	TRA	Trade-Related Assistance
EAC	East African Community	TRIPS	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
EDD	European Development Days	TPF	Trade Policy Framework
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement	TTIP	Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
EU	European Union	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
FTA	Free Trade Area	UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ITC	International Trade Centre	WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
LDC	Least Developed Countries	WCO	World Customs Organisation
NAMA	Non-Agricultural Market Access	WTO	World Trade Organisation
NTB	Non-Tariff barriers		
NTPF	National Trade Policy Framework		
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States		
OIF	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie		
PACPs	Pacific ACP States		
PIFs	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat		
PMU	Programme Management Unit		
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership		
RTA	Regional Trade Agreement		
SADC	Southern African Development Community		
SDG	Sustainable development goals		