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THE SECOND KNOWLEDGE SHARING ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT GOOD PRACTICES

The second Knowledge Sharing Event on Trade and Investment Good Practices was organized by the TradeCom II PMU on 4-5 February 2020. It aimed at disseminating, as widely as possible, relevant “good practices” developed by TCII-supported programmes under the Programme Estimate 2, the Rapid Response Facility and the Grant Component. The Knowledge Sharing Event was attended by a total of 110 participants mostly representing the beneficiary ACP Countries and Regional Economics Communities (RECs).

In his opening key-note address, H.E. Dr. Patrick I. GOMES (Secretary-General of the ACP Group) insisted on the role of the ACP Secretariat in building and sharing knowledge across the ACP Group on all results of the TradeCom II Programme. Uncertainties in the multilateral trade system demand solid knowledge and require stronger capacities to innovate and enhance knowledge on global trade issues and to deal with the difficulties emerging from the demographic dividends, such as the youths who leave their countries in search of better opportunities. This calls for reinforcing production and trading capacities in the ACP countries to also benefit the youth.



Ms Carla MONTESI, Director at EC DEVCO (Dir. C - Planet and Prosperity) highlighted the constructive approach to the event and considered this event as an opportunity to identify good practices that can be scaled up, including an analysis of their impact on trade.

Five clusters of “good practice” cases were proposed for the second round of knowledge sharing from the 16 programmes implemented by the TradeCom II Programme under the Programme Estimate 2, 52 RRF Projects and the 7 Actions under the Grant Component. These good practice cases were built around the following targeted clusters:

- 🌐 Trade Policy and Regulation
- 🌐 The EPA and WTO Processes
- 🌐 Custom Matters
- 🌐 Quality Infrastructure and Standards
- 🌐 Trade and Investment (The European Investment Plan; Private sector competitiveness).

Under the first cluster “Trade Policy and Regulation”, representatives from DG TRADE and beneficiaries such as WAEMU, OECS, COMESA and REPOA considered successes of national and regional trade policies in sustaining trade expansion and overcoming trade obstacles, and deliberated on replicable good practices and new needs / challenges going forward.

Representatives from DG TRADE, Cameroon, CROSC, Ivory Coast, Comoros, Djibouti, UNECA, in the Cluster 2 “The EPA and WTO Processes”, demonstrated EPA implementation good practices and lessons learnt that can be disseminated at national and regional levels; and progress in attaining common negotiation positions at the WTO.

The Cluster 3 on “Custom Matters”, with the contribution of beneficiaries from Solomon Islands and representatives of DG Trade, FAIMM, UNECA, considered demonstrable successes in increasing efficiency and reducing transaction costs associated with the movement of goods across borders, the good practice cases for replication, and new needs going forward.



Under Cluster 4 on “Quality Infrastructure and Standards” demonstrable regional and national quality infrastructure good practice cases in support of export competitiveness were presented by representatives of CROSQ, ARSO, OAPI and beneficiaries such as Mozambique, Guyana and Mauritania.

Under cluster 5 on “Trade and Competitiveness”, presentations of representatives of the European Commission’s DEVCO, ACP Secretariat, Papua New Guinea, DG Trade, RMCE, GSA, Mauritius, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Repoa, Trapca focused on, inter alia, the European External Investment Plan (EIP) as a tool to contribute to sustainable development, improve the investment climate, tackle roots of migration, encourage private investment and focus on jobs and growth. The aim of EIP is to go beyond classical development assistance and rather use the financial means to influence other streams available to achieve the SDGs.

Furthermore, the discussions of this session considered innovative approaches towards supporting the private sector competitiveness, identifying the good practices and the measurement of their success thus far, and new needs going forward.

The two-days event was closed with a presentation of the TCII Team Leader, Ahmed Ndyeshobola, on the recommendations on the way forward for the TCII Programme and the statements of Antti KARHUNEN, Head of Unit, Private Sector Development, Trade, Regional Integration of DEVCO, and Viwanou GNASSOUNOU, Assistant Secretary-General, Sustainable Economic Development and Trade Department of the ACP Secretariat.

The Event was thought by all the participants to have been a great success in terms of participation and quality of discussions and demonstration of good practice experiences from the national and regional programmes supported by the TCII Programme. Clear recommendations emerged that such great successes should be replicated in all ACP Countries and further supported in a medium term by the European Union through a third TradeCom Programme.



GSA AND ARSO

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR EXPORT COMPETITIVENESS OF WOMEN-LED SMES AND STANDARDS PROMOTION IN COSMETOLOGY SECTOR IN AFRICA

The programme “Capacity building for export competitiveness of women-led SMEs and standards promotion in cosmetology sector in Africa – GSA and ARSO” aimed at providing technical support to the Global Shea Alliance (GSA) and to the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) to support women-led small cosmetics producers in West Africa, and to promote harmonized standards to mainstream cosmetology into the formal sector in Africa. As flagship activities of the programme, a Regional Training and Validation Workshop on increased Export Quality and Competitiveness in the Shea-based Cosmetics Sector in Africa was held in Accra on 30 October 2019 and a Regional Harmonization and Validation Workshop was held in Nairobi, Kenya from November 26 to 29, 2019



REGIONAL TRAINING AND VALIDATION WORKSHOP ON INCREASING EXPORT QUALITY AND COMPETITIVENESS IN THE SHEA-BASED COSMETICS SECTOR IN AFRICA

The workshop provided the platform to validate the technical and simplified manuals on “Quality management for export and competitiveness in the cosmetics sector”, and “Export Management and Documentation Requirements— Conformity and Compliance Requirements for Shea Cosmetics Exports”, which were developed as part of project implementation. These manuals provide practical and simplified information on enhancing quality for export, requirements for packaging and labelling as well as how to obtain international certification for selected markets for shea-based cosmetic products, mainly in the European Union market.

Addressing participants at the opening of the workshop, Riccardo Tintis, TCII Programme Manager, outlined components of the project support on Export Management and Documentation Requirements— ensuring Conformity and Compliance Requirements for Shea Cosmetics Exports, focusing on women-owned small cosmetics; the production of a manual on Quality Management for export and competitiveness in the cosmetics sector with a special focus on shea-cosmetics.

Speaking at the ceremony, Aaron Adu, Managing Director of GSA, said GSA was committed to working together with all shea value chain stakeholders to promote the growth of the industry in Africa and around the world. Additionally, GSA was committed to supporting governments with information and technical assistance in designing strategies to maximize the value added and jobs created by the shea industry. To conclude, the Managing Director of the GSA thanked the TradeCom II



Programme for the support provided in putting together the export manuals and hoped that the manuals will help improve export potential for shea cosmetics.

The workshop was structured in 4 sessions:

- 📍 Quality Management and Best Practices in Cosmetics Sector including Packaging & Labelling, Consumer Marketing and standards for cosmetology;
- 📍 Export Management and Documentation Requirements, tapping into Export corridors for Regional and International markets as well as Governments assistance in the cosmetics sector in West Africa;



- 📍 Consumer Marketing and Customer Retention; and
- 📍 Validation of the Quality Management Manual, Export Management and Documentation Study Report, and Publicity Materials.

During and after the workshop, the participants praised the quality of the presentations delivered and the manuals presented. The presentations provoked a flow of discussions and comments from participants, which made the workshop day very lively and full of productive discussions.



REGIONAL HARMONIZATION AND VALIDATION WORKSHOP HELD IN NAIROBI, KENYA FROM NOVEMBER 26 TO 29, 2019

About 30 participants from 12 African countries met at the Hilton Hotel Nairobi, Kenya from November 26 to 29, 2019 to harmonize and validate standards in the cosmetology sector for the first time. They discussed conformity assessments procedures recommended for harmonization in order to support the cosmetology and wellness sector in Africa. In addition, the workshop explored ways of enhancing awareness creation on the benefits of standards in the cosmetology and wellness sector in relations to trade requirements. The workshop further discussed safety, health and trade concerns related to cosmetology and wellness.

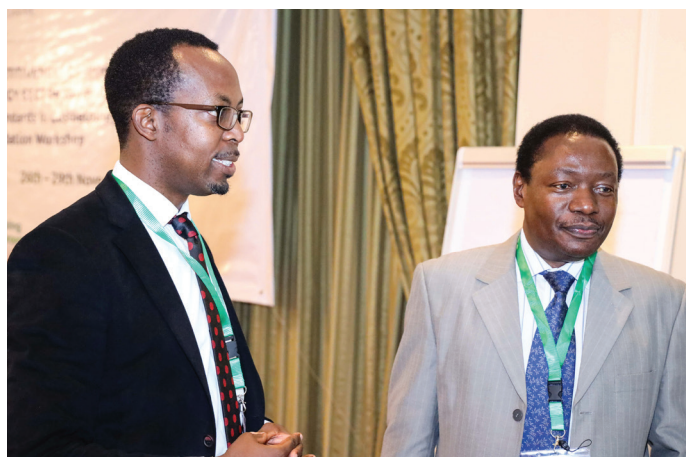
Addressing participants at the opening of the workshop, Peter Namutala Wanyoyi, Principal Standards Officer of Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) highlighted the importance of standards in the economy, especially in cosmetics, cosmetology and the wellness sector.

He emphasized the role Standards play in trade facilitation and market access of goods and services by providing practical solutions to problems within the Industry and highlighted the fact that the Cosmetics industry is an important source of income and employment in the African region. He also brought to the attention of the delegates the critical role standards harmonization plays in Africa as a whole with Cosmetics being one of the most important commodities in the region and in the global economy.

Ahmed Ndyeshobola, Team Leader of Tradecom II Programme, briefly presented the outputs of the ARSO component of the support programme which included: a diagnostic study on health and cosmetic trade issues; an assessment of cosmetology standards; harmonization issues of these standards and the related conformity procedures; marketing of these outputs to key stakeholders and the validation process of these outputs. He highlighted that he was eager for the discussions ahead and planned to consult the participants with the intention of getting views on the implementation of the programme as well as reflection on the possibilities for sustaining these outputs going forward.

The workshop was structured in 5 technical sessions:

1. Diagnostic study on health and trade issues related to the cosmetics industry;
2. Assessment of African standards related to cosmetology and wellness: Divergences and gap analysis;
3. Harmonizing standards and conformity assessment procedures in the African cosmetics industry;
4. Presentation & Discussion of Publicity and Awareness Materials for the Cosmetology Industry;
5. Finalization of consensus on proposed harmonizes standards and conformity assessment procedures for cosmetology and wellness.



MOZAMBIQUE

TARGETED ASSISTANCE FOR EPA IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH SPS CONFORMITY FOR FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE, AND ENHANCED EXPORT CAPACITY OF FISHERIES IN MOZAMBIQUE

NATIONAL TRAINING AND FINAL WORKSHOP



In the context of the support programme “Targeted assistance for EPA implementation through SPS conformity for fisheries and aquaculture, and enhanced export capacity of fisheries in Mozambique” a 5-days national training and a final workshop took place from the 10th to the 14th of February 2020 in Maputo.

This support programme was oriented to improve and facilitate the expansion and diversification of Mozambique’s fish and aquaculture production and export potential developing the national standardisation strategy for the fisheries sector and support the implementation of the SADC-EU EPA in Mozambique with regard to the country’s fisheries sector.

The 4-days training, attended by 25 representatives from the beneficiary institutions and the fishing sector, was aimed at conveying an integrated view of current food security reality, as well as a greater understanding of the critical factors for the application of a quality assurance system in fishing and in the marketing of fish.

In particular, the training was structured in 8 clusters:

- 🌐 Fish-sales markets, features and their requirements;
- 🌐 Aquaculture food security system requirements and biosafety techniques for aquaculture;
- 🌐 Ice Production: Methods and Application of Ice in the conservation of Good Quality Fish;
- 🌐 Food security in artisanal fishing: characteristics and contribution to good fish quality;
- 🌐 ISO 22000 - requirements: Feasibility of its application in the Fishing Industry;
- 🌐 Roadmap for the application of ISO 22000-2018 in the fisheries sector (basic documents, forms, procedures and other);
- 🌐 Analysis of a “checklist” for checking ISO 22000 compliance: Certification; and
- 🌐 Harmonized System (HS) and Fishery and aquaculture products.

The aim of the final workshop, held in Maputo the 14th of February 2020 and attended by 45 participants coming from the Beneficiaries, the donor community and the private sector, was to disseminate the outputs of this support programme, namely:

- 🕒 Regulatory and institutional capacity to meet international and regional standards for fisheries products enhanced;
- 🕒 Export competitiveness potential of fisheries and aquaculture sector strengthened;
- 🕒 A national strategy for standardization and conformity assessment developed;
- 🕒 The capacity to manage certification and standardization processes enhancing;
- 🕒 Roadmap for ISO 17020 and ISO 22000 accreditation processes developed and implementation supported;
- 🕒 Fisheries industries to meet the international Standard ISO 22000;
- 🕒 Capacity to implement trade in fisheries within the framework of the EPA enhanced; and
- 🕒 Enhanced trade facilitation framework for fisheries and aquaculture developed.

Mozambique's Fisheries potential as both an earner of foreign exchange through exports and as a supplier of much needed protein for the population, can be greatly enhanced with relative ease. The application of Best Practice in terms of hygiene and attendant certification of suppliers will improve access to overseas markets.

The installation of cold chain facilities will improve penetration to local and international markets. Development of Cooperatives particularly for the artisanal sector will improve access to funding for small scale processing and technical help.

In addition, the very significant investment in training, using the training concept accountability principles and the already trained beneficiaries' personnel, will help disseminate the health and safety requirements and other technical needs to a very wide section of the Fisheries Community.

Lastly the Final Workshop, where representatives from both the Beneficiary Institutions, academia, and the Private Sector were very well represented, has resulted in the development of a future programme for the Sector which should benefit all concerned.





ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

DEVELOPMENT OF A TRADE EXPORT STRATEGY FOR ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES, AND A GI CERTIFICATION SCHEME FOR QUALITY EXPORTS IN GUYANA FINAL TRAINING AND VALIDATION WORKSHOP

This programme, designed with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Commerce (MFACT) of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the government of Guyana, was aimed at:

1. developing and disseminating a national Trade and Investment Export Strategy and Implementation Plan for St. Vincent and the Grenadines; and
2. improving export competitiveness in Guyana through GI Certification Schemes for quality products.

The final training and validation workshop of the first component which validated and made all beneficiaries aware of the contents of both the National Export Strategy for St. Vincent and the Grenadines (aims, actions, beneficiaries, implementers, timetable, etc.) and of its "Implementation and Funding Plans", took place at the Grenadine House from February 10 to 13, 2020.

The main objective of the National Export Strategy is to revitalize the country's performance through its smooth and gradual integration into the regional and global economy.

During the Training and Validation Workshop and Awareness Event, attended by 107 persons, representing both private and public sector for all the sectors covered with the NES (Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Medicinal Cannabis, Travel and Tourism, Craft and Cottage Industry and Light Manufacturing), minor changes were required to be made to the NES draft document under discussion, which was therefore validated. Requested changes were introduced into the NES document in the following days and a final version was submitted to the MFACT. On Friday 21 February 2020, the team was invited to present the National Export Strategy to the Cabinet, which approved the document.



CROSQ, ARSO, PIFS

TARGETED ASSISTANCE TO STRENGTHEN REGIONAL TRADE-RELATED QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH INTRA-ACP PARTNERSHIPS FINAL VALIDATION AND TRAINING WORKSHOP

The TradeComII support programme “Targeted assistance to strengthen regional trade-related quality infrastructure through intra-ACP partnerships” was aimed at improving CARICOM’s capacity in standards and technical regulations development and implementation. As an output and deliverable of the programme, the final validation and training workshop held in Saint Lucia from January 21 to 23, 2020 were aimed at:

- presenting and validating the findings of a Comparative Research Report on CARICOM and the EU on the development and implementation of Standards and associated Technical Regulations (Days 1 & 2);
- presenting and validating the Study on the situation and use Sustainability Standards in CARICOM (Day 2);
- training stakeholders in EU Standards and Regulations on Packaging and Labelling (Day 3).

On behalf of TradeComII Programme, Paula Hippolyte-Bauwens, TCII Regional Trade Expert, commended the work that was done through this support programme, which contributed to improving the trade and export capacity of the small island developing States of the Caribbean, while creating intra-ACP linkages and fostering true South-South cooperation.

Other presentations made by the CROSQ CEO, Deryck Omar; Verne Emmanuel, the Director of Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards and Fabiana Silva, the representative of the Contractor Quality Institute, further emphasised the importance of the development and implementation of standards in the Caribbean for increased exports and for human security issues, and the importance of harmonising standards for trade facilitation purposes. The Keynote speech was presented by Thomas Edmund, Chairperson of the Saint Lucia Council on Standards.

A summary of presentations reveals that the interests of the beneficiaries mainly focused on strengthening their trade performance, enhancing quality for export, as well as for health and safety reasons. The fact that the support programme reached out to Africa (ARSO) and the Pacific (PIFS) region proved to be a successful feature in that it contributed to South-South exchanges in the ACP context and developed and enhanced linkages with comparable standards organisations in Europe and the ACP. It also provided a sterling opportunity to

private sector stakeholders to become aware of the importance of standards and focus on harmonising regional standards so that they are better able to penetrate foreign (EU) markets.

The training sessions were led by the two experts of the Technical Assistance Team (TAT) using power-point presentations. The methodology followed consisted of presentations of survey strategies and the analysis of results, followed by group work, to allow national standards experts to discuss the issues raised in the presentations, through the use of a number of guiding questions. These were very insightful as they revealed the various working systems within the Caribbean region in the area of standards development and implementation, the challenges and ideas on the way forward.

The TAT presented their areas of research and outcome documents: Survey on Standardisation Practices and Results in CARICOM and a Comparative Analysis Research Report on CARICOM-EU standards development and regulatory support. Finally, they presented the results of the study on Sustainability Standards using the results of the knowledge sharing event that took place with ARSO in 2019 as part of this programme.

The final day of the workshop was a training session on Labelling and Packaging Requirements for accessing the EU market. For this event, private sector representatives were also invited to be present so as to increase the impact of the training and reach out to SMEs which are on the forefront of exports.

A general presentation was made on EU labelling and packaging requirements, followed by group work with practical exercises and examples for reflection and reporting by the experts on standards and from the private sector.

Participants found the 3-days workshop very interesting as it helped them better understand the complexity of the EU decision making system. However, they were acutely aware of the differences between the two regions and were highly motivated to review the recommendations made by the experts. This exercise of information sharing and knowledge transfer in the area of harmonisation of standards was of prime importance, and emphasised the fact that many Caribbean countries have market access to the EU but are not able to enter, often because of standards (“market access but not market entry”).

RMCE

TARGETED SUPPORT TO THE REGIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE (RMCE) FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KEY TRADE COMPONENTS OF ITS APEI PROGRAMMES VALIDATION WORKSHOP

The two-days final training and validation workshop of the support programme “Targeted support to the Regional Multidisciplinary Centre of Excellence (RMCE) for the Implementation of the Key Trade Components of its APEI Programmes”, was held from 11th to the 12th December 2019 at the RMCE headquarters, Ebene, Mauritius and benefitted from the contributions of representatives of European Delegation to the Republic of Mauritius, as well as all the Representatives of RMCE Member States. Riccardo Tintis, Programme Manager of TradeCom II Programme attended the event, both as panellist and as participant.

The meeting was chaired by Fletcher Tawonga Nyirenda, Commissioner of Immigration (Operations) who expressed gratitude to TradeCom II for providing technical and financial support to APEI, in general and the RMCE.

The workshop was structured in 3 clusters:

1. Movement of business persons and professionals in APEI countries

In this session were presented the “Draft Framework for Implementation of the ABTC” and the “draft Architecture for information sharing and policy deliberation on the ABTC”. The setup of a Business Mobility Group (BMG) was also proposed during discussions. The BMG will identify issues relevant to connectivity, hold policy discussions and submit suggestions to governments.



2. Enhanced cooperation in trade in Architectural services.

The Mutual Recognition Agreement deals with the facilitation of movement of professionals within member countries. An agreement can be reached as long as practices are not restrictive and common objectives are met during future negotiations with other countries in the region.



3. Enhanced APEI business climate and intra-private and private/public dialogue

The second day of the workshop focuses on the presentation of:

- 📍 proposed Business Facilitation Framework for APEI Member States;
- 📍 Report from the in-house peer-review of the Business Facilitation framework held on 27 November 2019;
- 📍 List of Priority sectors in APEI.

Riccardo Tintis of TradeCom II then took the floor and encouraged the RMCE and all the stakeholders who participated in the event to make effective use of the outputs produced and now owned by APEI members. He described that the RMCE is now equipped to take the lead on issues of Business Facilitation, as well as providing capacity building and institutional development to enhance trade and investment among APEI countries and monitoring of the implementation of the MRA (for architects), as well make operational the APEI Business Travel card.





MAURITANIA

STRENGTHENING MAURITANIA'S TRADE INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND COMPETITIVENESS

FINAL TRAINING AND VALIDATION WORKSHOP

The support programme Strengthening Trade Information Systems and Competitiveness in Mauritania was based on two thematic components:

1. The implementation of a National Commercial/Trade Information System in response to the need to gather and compile the trade and economic data available with the use of a computer tool in the form of an electronic commercial/trade platform easily accessible and usable by national and international commercial/trade actors;
2. Strengthening public health standardization capacities and improving the level of trade competitiveness in order to address the difficulties associated with the implementation of Mauritanian legislation relating to the standardization, certification and accreditation process.

The final training and validation workshop: "Raising awareness of public and private actors on the concepts of quality, standards and certification and their role in trade" took place on 04 December 2019 in Nouakchott.

The training and validation Workshop saw the active participation of 30 people with the presence of representatives of the key beneficiaries – the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, and the National Institute of Public Health Research. The Delegation of the European Union, which was also represented, appreciated the results achieved by this support programme and congratulated the team for its work. The workshop proceedings also highlighted the satisfaction of both beneficiaries and participants for the activities carried out throughout the support programme and for the concrete results achieved, in particular:

1) A critical mass of media to support an effective trade information system has been formed.

The development of the commercial/trade electronic platform for Mauritania was the tangible result of consultations with the relevant departments within the Ministry of Trade and Tourism such as the Computer Service and the National Statistical Office and of an in-depth study of the existing laws on the dissemination and communication of information in the respective databases.

The trade portal has been recognized by the Beneficiary and the participants as a government IT tool for collecting business information and assisting investors.

2) The situation of INRSP laboratories was assessed, training plans defined, experts in the laboratories were trained to prepare for accreditation, and public and private stakeholders were made aware of the progress attained.

The conducted evaluation was based on the analysis of the level of application and mastery of the standards: ISO/IEC 17025:2005, ISO/IEC 17025:2017, ISO 9001, metrological dimensions. The analysis also covered the legal status of research structures and the skills of laboratory staff. Educational tools have been developed and made available to the beneficiaries of the training courses, and legal texts have been distributed free of charge. Also, all laboratories belonging to the INRSP have received a blank audit to assess the level of compliance with the requirements for accreditation. The training sessions were attended by 25-30 people at a time and provided an opportunity to work on skills related to the quality management system in a structured manner. During the final training workshop for the validation of the results of this support programme, a part of the day was dedicated to the presentation of certificates and diplomas to the participants of the training cycle.

The project, which focused on the implementation of a national trade information instrument, was a key development catalyst for SMEs, industry and trade promotion institutions. On the other hand, the support programme has also benefited quality actors by improving their capacity for certification and compliance with international standards.

The strengthening of trade policies and rules, training aimed at increasing the skills of quality professionals through a series of targeted training courses on international quality norms and standards, have led to an improvement in the level of professionalism in the targeted sector, also highlighting the need to invest in infrastructure innovation, such as laboratories, staff training and access to market information

COMOROS

ACCESSION OF THE COMOROS TO THE WTO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL EPA FINAL TRAINING AND VALIDATION WORKSHOP

The final training and validation workshop of the support programme “Accession of Comoros to the WTO and implementation of the regional EPA” was organised in Moroni from 4 to 6 March 2020. It brought together some 40 stakeholders representing ministries and agencies, civil society and the private sector also to review the deliverables produced by the Tradecom II project experts.

The training and validation workshop was the third held in Moroni since the start of the implementation of this support programme. It follows a first training and capacity building workshop on trade policy (2-4 October 2019) and a second one devoted to the topics covered by the EPA negotiations between the European Union and the Eastern and Southern African (ESA) States (7-9 January 2020).

The objective of the workshop was to provide a multi-stakeholder exchange space for the presentation, discussion and validation of the documents resulting from the work carried out within the framework of the support programme.

More specifically, the objectives were the following:

- 🕒 To present the main deliverables planned for the support programme;
- 🕒 To make a general review of the legislative and regulatory texts prepared and submitted to the beneficiary;
- 🕒 To assess the actions carried out to date and measure the level of compliance with the commitments made within the framework of the support programme;
- 🕒 To identify the remaining measures/actions and prospects towards accession to the WTO.

The Director General of Economy and Trade was pleased that the support programme “Accession of Comoros to the WTO and implementation of the regional EPA” was carried through to its conclusion under excellent conditions. On behalf of the Government of the Union of the Comoros, he thanked the European Union for the support provided to the Comoros through the Tradecom II Programme and congratulated the consultants

and Comorian stakeholders: the former for the quality of the documents produced and the training provided, and the latter for the commitment and willingness they had shown since the beginning of the implementation of this support programme.

Part of the Workshop was devoted to the preparation of the fifth meeting of the working group scheduled for April 2020 in Geneva, as well as to the participation of the Union of the Comoros in the twelfth WTO Conference and the post-accession phase in general.

The main deliverables presented during the workshop are as follows:

- 🕒 Proposals for legislative and regulatory reforms;
- 🕒 The plan of legislative action and compliance with the WTO agreements;
- 🕒 The state of play in the negotiation and implementation of the EPA in the Comoros;
- 🕒 Proposals for the introduction of a system of exemption from customs duties and taxes;
- 🕒 The proposal to migrate to a domestic tax regime;
- 🕒 The assessment of adjustment related to the implementation of the EPA;
- 🕒 The proposal for an adjustment programme for non-asymmetrical trade opening with the EU.

At the end of the proceedings, the Comorian stakeholders who took part in the workshop recognized the timeliness of the meeting which, in their view, provided a useful space for open and inclusive exchanges between the members of the National Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC).

These discussions focused both on the results produced under this support programme, but also on the remaining challenges that need to be urgently addressed in order to enable the Union of the Comoros to complete its accession to the WTO and implement the EU-ESA iEPA under the most favourable conditions.



THE 8TH STEERING COMMITTEE OF TRADECOM II PROGRAMME

The 8th Steering Committee (SC) of the ACP-EU TradeCom II Programme was held at the ACP House on February 5th and 6th, 2019. The Committee was chaired by Mr. Viwanou GNASSOUNOU, Assistant Secretary-General responsible for Sustainable Economic Development and Trade at the ACP Secretariat and assisted by Mrs. Christiane LEONG, Expert Multilateral Trade Issues at the ACP Secretariat and Project Manager for the TradeCom II Programme.

DEVCO was represented by Mrs. Elisabetta SARTOREL (Programme Manager - PSD and Aid for Trade Actions).

Ahmed NDYESHOBOLA (Team Leader of TradeCom II Programme) with the support of Mrs Paula Hippolyte Bauwens (TCII Regional Trade Expert), Mrs. Christiane HAZIYO (TCII RRF Manager) and Mr. Oumar TALL (TCII Administrator) presented the activities carried out by the PMU during the period July-December 2019 and those that will be implemented for the period January 2020 to December 2021, namely the full implementation of the support programmes and projects under Programme Estimate 2, the Rapid Response Facility, the Grant component and the related administrative and financial issues.

In addition to the formal Steering Committee members, DEVCO and the ACP Secretariat, the meeting was also attended by representatives of the seven Grantees who presented their respective activity reports and future workplans.

During the meeting, the various stakeholders and observers were very positive in their remarks on the Programme's activities over the period July-December 2019. Furthermore, the workplan for the period up to the end of 2021 was approved by the Steering Committee.

The Chairman, ASG GNASSOUNOU, concluded the discussions by congratulating the work done by the PMU team, the commitment of the contractor of the Technical Assistance and the confirmed support of the EC in the implementation of the Programme. He also congratulated the seven grantees for their effective start in the implementation of the actions under their respective grant agreements.

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will take place in September 2020.

Glossary

ACP	Africa Caribbean and Pacific
CARIFORUM	Caribbean Forum
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation
DG DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDD	European Development Days
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
FTA	Free Trade Area
ITC	International Trade Centre
LDC	Least Developed Countries
NAMA	Non-Agricultural Market Access
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
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary

TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
TFTA	Tripartite Free Trade Area
TRA	Trade-Related Assistance
TRIPS	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
TPF	Trade Policy Framework
TTIP	Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WCO	World Customs Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation