



## OUR APPROACH



### HOW TO CONTACT THE TBT PROGRAMME?

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at the request of the ACP Group



**TBT PROGRAMME**  
OVERCOMING TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE



Improving **Competitiveness** and  
**Access** to Export Markets



# CONTEXT

## WHAT ARE TBT AND WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

→ The term **TBT** refers to mandatory technical regulations and voluntary standards that define specific characteristics of a product, such as its size, shape, design, labeling, marking, packaging, functionality or performance, as well as the associated “conformity assessment procedures” (e.g. testing, inspection and certification activities). TBTs are usually introduced by government authorities to achieve legitimate public policy objectives. Among these we can highlight: protecting human health and safety, animal and plant life, health and environmental concerns, and safeguarding consumers from deceptive practices. While serving these policy objectives, the measures nonetheless have a trade effect and can create major trade obstacles for other countries.

As a result of globalization and increasing tariff liberalization, international economic exchanges have grown exponentially over the recent years and have become a major source of economic growth and social development. The emergence of global value chains has reshaped the structure of international trade. Participating in global value chains requires access to both import (sourcing of intermediary products) - and export markets as well as increased specialization, technological innovation, dynamic service sectors and continuous adaptation to evolving international standards. As traditional trade barriers, such as tariffs and quotas, are being reduced and phased out worldwide, these technical requirements are becoming increasingly decisive.

Complying with increasingly complex technical requirements is a huge challenge for developing countries and, in particular, for small and vulnerable economies, since they entail significant additional costs in terms of establishing effective compliance systems and building the required human capacity and infrastructure. SMEs in developing countries, many of which are in the ACP Group, are more and more excluded from the new production and trade patterns due to many structural impediments and supply-side obstacles they are facing

The WTO TBT Agreement plays a vital role by establishing rules and procedures regarding the development, adoption, and application of voluntary product standards, mandatory technical regulations, and the conformity assessment procedures. The five underlying principles of the WTO TBT Agreement are: transparency (WTO notification); non-discrimination, proportionality, preferred use of international standards and equivalence (accepting technical regulations of other Members as equivalent, whenever possible). The WTO TBT Agreement is an important tool at the disposal of ACP countries to tackle unnecessary barriers to trade and improve market access.



in achieving production efficiency and competitiveness. Also on the demand side, markets have become even more demanding as consumers place a high premium on quality, safety and innovation. The weakness of productive capacity, quality and productive infrastructure, services and trade-related skills inhibit many ACP countries from accessing global markets and their integration into international production and supply chains. ACP exporters are nonetheless increasingly aware of the need to strengthen compliance in the TBT field and to improve overall productivity and product quality. However, they typically do not have the resources, knowledge and capacity to develop and implement appropriate quality management system solutions

This is a challenge that the ACP countries are currently facing: how to pursue their own national policy objectives (safety concerns etc.) without creating unnecessary barriers to trade for other countries while at the same time developing their competitiveness and expanding their exports in regional and international markets.

# PROGRAMME

## WHAT IS THE TBT PROGRAMME?

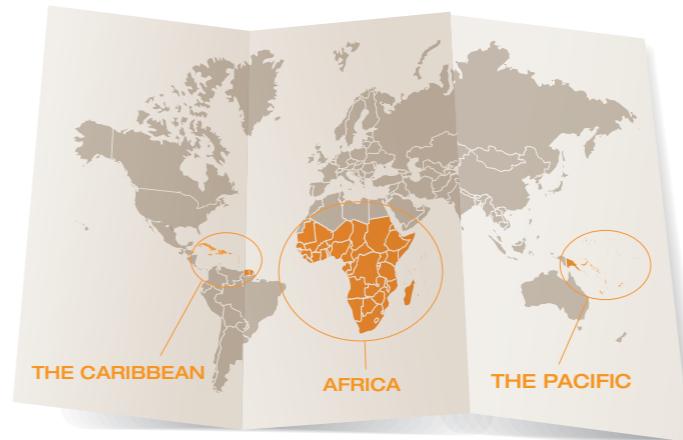
The ACP EU TBT Programme is a 15 million euro trade-related technical assistance programme funded by the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund and implemented, on behalf of the ACP Secretariat, by the Brussels-based TBT Programme Management Unit. The Programme was launched in March 2013 and will run until July 2017. The ACP EU TBT Programme is DEMAND-DRIVEN and as such ACP countries and ACP Regional Quality and Regulatory Infrastructure Institutions are encouraged to play an active role in the implementation in order to maximize the programme's relevance and impact.

The Programme will tackle TBT issues in ACP countries and regions by providing training, strengthening Quality and Regulatory Infrastructure, which has a key role to play in the implementation and enforcement of TBT agreements, and also addressing compliance issues of productive sectors.



The Programme will focus its intervention in the following three areas:

- 1 Upgrading and Strengthening **Quality Infrastructure Institutions**
- 2 Empowering **Economic Operators** in priority export sectors
- 3 **Disseminating** Results, Good Practices and Experiences



## WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM THE PROGRAMME?

- All ACP States
- ACP Quality and Regulatory Infrastructure Institutions
- ACP Regional Organisations
- ACP Government Ministries and departments responsible for trade matters
- ACP Civil society & Private sector organisations
- Other relevant stakeholders playing an active role in achieving the objectives of the TBT Programme

## WHAT ARE THE TBT PROGRAMME SERVICES?

- Technical Assistance
- Studies, reviews and regulatory impact assessments
- Training
- Twinning, mentoring and training
- Support to existing sectoral platforms for dialogue
- Facilitation of exchange of experience and best practices

## HOW TO APPLY IN 3 STEPS?

- 1 Check the eligibility criteria on the TBT Programme Web site
- 2 Download and complete the project request form,
- 3 Submit the project request form to the TBT PMU

