

TradeCom II Support to the EAC

PRESS RELEASE

Title of Project: “Targeted Support to the EAC for the Implementation of the Tripartite FTA Agreement-Trade Policy and Export Development to the EU Market” Project

Location: The geographical area to be covered by the Project is the EAC member states namely: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and South Sudan.

Date: Intended implementation starting date – December 2016

Duration: 12 months

Web: www.tradecom-acpeu.org

Background

TradeCom II is a Programme financed by the UE at the request of ACP Group. It is designed to facilitate the integration of ACP Countries in the global economy and value chains by improving, *inter alia*, their capacity:

- to formulate and implement suitable trade policies,
- to participate effectively in multilateral Trade negotiations under the WTO and to implement the trade agreements to their benefit, and
- to strengthen their competitiveness.

TradeCom II Programme has translated the needs of ACP beneficiaries into a number of relevant and implementable projects.

Support to the EAC

“Targeted Support to the EAC for the Implementation of the Tripartite FTA Agreement-Trade Policy and Export Development to the EU Market” is a project designed by TradeCom II Programme in collaboration with the East Africa Community.

It is designed to support the East African Community (EAC) and its member states to strengthen their capacity to implement the Tripartite Free Trade Agreement, and export development to the EU markets.

The East African Community is the regional intergovernmental organization of the Republic of Burundi, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Republic of Uganda, and recently South Sudan, with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania. On sub regional cooperation, the EAC has maintained strong bonds of collaboration with the COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) and the SADC (Southern African Development Community) under the Tripartite arrangements to establish a wider regional market to support rapid industrialization, trade expansion and fast tracked development of infrastructure linking the member countries of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

The 3rd Tripartite Summit of Heads of State and Government’s signature of the TFTA Agreement on 10 June 2015 forms the basis of a mature trading relationship between the EAC and the tripartite member states, encompassing not just a Trade in Goods regime, but also Trade-related Issues. The tripartite market will help companies to enhance their competitiveness through, *inter alia*, joining the inter regional and global value chains and sourcing the best inputs at the best prices from all across the tripartite regions of 26 Member States and beyond.

Project outputs

The Project contributes to:

- develop and operationalize regulations for the implementation of the NTB Act;

- improve the monitoring of the implementation of the framework for elimination of NTBs;
- design a long-term EAC export Promotion Strategy for the period 2017-2030; and
- promote awareness activities on the trading opportunities and benefits under the Tripartite, for business communities including women and youth entrepreneurs.

Intervention areas

To support the implementation of the tripartite agreement and the underlying development of the region's exports to the EU market, the areas of intervention contemplated under this project are three.

- The first support area under this project is its support to the EAC Directorate of Customs and Trade in implementing the EAC framework for eliminating non-tariff barriers through:
 - a gap assessment process for the implementation of the EAC Elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers Act-2015;
 - the design of regulations and operational procedures for the implementation of the Non-Tariff Barriers Act; and
 - a Strategy document for elimination of the Simplified Trade Regime (STR) related NTBs.
- The second area is on the long-term export development strategy which is the first of its kind in the region. The project will promote:
 - a swift review of the implementation of the EAC Export Promotion Strategy (2013-2016) in terms of opportunities, challenges and lessons learnt; and
 - the design of a successor and long-term EAC Export Promotion Strategy (2017-2030), which consider the opportunities arising from the new trade environment in particular the TFTA and forthcoming trade agreements, and a streamlined and transparent value chain export compliant system.
- The third area of intervention is developing and implementing a strategy for continuous engagement with the business community (including women and youth entrepreneurs) over the trading opportunities in the TFTA and EU markets. The project includes:
 - an awareness programme targeting the business community and their respective associations over the evolving opportunities and benefits of the Tripartite Agreement (and the Simplified Trade Regime) and access to the EU markets;
 - a training on elimination of non-tariff barriers, the Long-Term EAC Export Promotion Strategy, opportunities and benefits of the TFTA and access to the EU Markets and the Simplified Trade Regime (STR) and
 - dissemination of sensitization material on the EAC STR in both English and Kiswahili as part of the regular awareness programme.