

CARIFORUM EPA

SUPPORT TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CARIFORUM-EU EPA

PROJECT'S HIGHLIGHTS

NEWSLETTER 3 OCTOBER 2016

The project was designed to support the EPA Unit and CARIFORUM Member States to strengthen their capacity to implement the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

CARIFORUM countries and the EU started the EPA negotiations in April 2004 with an ambitious negotiating roadmap covering the full range of trade issues. The EPA covers trade in goods and services, investment, trade related issues including innovation and intellectual property as well as links to development cooperation.

The agreement signed in October 2008 reflects that content and forms a comprehensive and far reaching agreement. It aims at establishing a trade partnership consistent with the then Millennium Development Goals (presently the SDGs) and the Cotonou Agreement. The CARIFORUM-EU EPA promotes the gradual integration of the CARIFORUM Member States into the world economy, in accordance with their political choices and development priorities.

To facilitate the implementation of the EPA, CARIFORUM established a regional EPA Implementation Unit to provide direct support on technical, legal services and to coordinate technical assistance in Member States. The EPA implementation unit became operational on 1st July 2009 but faces a number of challenges, especially in the form of institutional and operational capacity. The lack of financial and human resources to accommodate the increased demands related to its implementation has become a hindrance for the EPA implementation process.

This project developed by the TradeCom II programme in collaboration with the CARIFORUM Directorate provides a timely opportunity to address the inherent challenges and thus, facilitate the effective EPA implementation.

Divided in three components, the project will be launched in December 2016 for a duration of 12 months.

The first component will enhance the legal and regulatory framework of CARIFORUM States by supporting the enhancement of the legal and regulatory framework of the CARIFORUM States by, *inter alia*, updating the four service sector model bills. The project will also support the preparation of a Mutual Recognition Agreement [the CARIFORUM MRA].

The second component will support the effective monitoring of the EPA through the design and operationalization of a monitoring system, and revision of the EPA Implementation Roadmap. The new Monitoring System will be based on internationally accepted monitoring and evaluation principles that can be effected at the national and regional levels.

The third component will promote awareness activities, in particular knowledge sharing regarding the opportunities and benefits of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA, through the preparation of public education materials.