

In an effort to guide Member States on the full process of seeking and utilizing Regional Integration Support Mechanism (RISM) support under the COMESA Adjustment Facility (CAF), COMESA held a workshop on the RISM/CAF guidelines. The RISM workshop was held at the Grand Palace Hotel 05-06 September 2012.

COMESA drafted a set of guidelines for CAF/RISM. These were finalized in July 2012, as a basis for enhancing the accessibility of RISM resources to Member States. Once the guidelines were ready, a call for submissions was launched.

A deadline of 09 November 2012 was given for countries to prepare and make their Submissions. Following the launch of the call on 09 August 2012, all the Member States that were administratively eligible for RISM support at the time of the call or that were likely to become eligible during the period of preparing responses to the call were invited to a RISM workshop in Lusaka, Zambia. The workshop was a continuous process of providing technical support to Member States for the preparation of bankable submissions.

The workshop announced the overall resource envelope available as RISM support under the Rider during 2012-2014. It confirmed that the bulk of this, 84 percent, is available for direct adjustment support to Member States, and the second largest proportion, 12 percent, is ring-fenced resources for revenue loss compensation for the few countries that are yet to enter the FTA. It also highlighted that the bulk of the remaining 4 percent is for indirect technical support to Member States for hiring national consultants, and activating the national inter-ministerial co-ordinating committees through national workshops.

The Secretary-General of COMESA, Mr Sindiso Ngwenya pointed out that towards supporting leveraging, Member States should prepare to provide their shares of counterpart resources. He stressed the point that RISM resources like other donor funds are only an additional or complementary form of support. He encouraged countries to work hard in preparing their Regional Integration Implementation Programme (RIIP) to support expeditious processes of approval and access to funds.

The Member States narrated their challenges in relation to the need for the descriptions of required actions, the definitions of certain indicators, and the establishment of baselines and targets. It was felt that these challenges could be addressed through further technical support

which should be provided by the COMESA Secretariat as well as through the national workshops which would co-opt national experts and responsible officers to provide additional technical support, at national level.

As a way forward, the workshop agreed to follow an agreed timeframe in requesting for further technical assistance, organizing national workshops and in finalizing the preparation of their submissions.

The workshop, held in Lusaka, Zambia, was attended by delegates from Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe.