

COMESA and the African Union Commission (AUC) have signed an implementation agreement to scale up trade related infrastructure in border areas to support the Trading for Peace Programme in the Great Lakes region. This agreement articulates the coordination role of AUC and the tasks that COMESA must undertake to implement the project. The funding of the project comes from the German Development Bank (KfW) which donated a grant of 10 million Euros for a timeframe of five years starting from 2013. The financing agreement provides two windows of funding: a two million Euros component to assist AUC in the capacity development of the implementation of the Post Conflict Reconstruction Framework adopted by Heads of State in 2006 and a funding window to the COMESA Trading for Peace Programme with specific focus on establishing small scale infrastructure at selected borders to facilitate cross border trade and cooperation. This is with a view to promoting understanding among communities living in border areas towards the attainment of sustainable peace and security as well as development.

The project will target four border areas in countries emerging from conflict, namely Goma-Rubavu (DRC-Rwanda border); Gatumba-Kavimvira (Burundi-DRC border); Bunagana-Bunagana (DRC-Uganda border) and one border between Kenya and South Sudan.

For each border post the project will fund infrastructure such as markets, storage facilities/warehouses, feeder roads, and basic sanitation and accommodation facilities as well as administrative infrastructure for the Trade Information Desks and Custom and Immigration offices.

The project funds will also be used to support capacity building of various stakeholders involved in cross border cooperation including border officials, cross border traders' associations and trade information desk managers.

The Trading for Peace Programme, which was launched in 2006 with the financial support of DFID and USAID, has now gained another partner (German Government) which will allow the programme to respond to the needs of cross border traders and facilitate peace building efforts in post conflict countries.

The COMESA/AUC project is a pilot programme which will be extended to other parts of the region and RECs after a successful evaluation to be conducted during the pilot phase of five years. The financing agreement was signed in Addis Ababa on 29 November 2012.