

Project Steering Team for Regional Cross Border Programme Inaugurated



Delegates at the inaugural meeting of the Projects' Steering Committee on trade facilitation

Small cross border traders are among key beneficiaries of new projects whose implementation is now one year underway across the COMESA, EAC and SADC Tripartite region.

The projects are; the 15 million euros Regional Small-Scale Cross Border Trade Initiative (SSCBTI), while the second is a 53m euros Trade Facilitation Project. These are funded by the European Union under the 11th European Union Development Fund (EDF 11) to increase formal small-scale cross border trade flows.

The Projects' Steering Committee (PSC) has been set up and had its first meeting Lusaka, Zambia from Monday to Wednesday last week,

and reviewed the progress of the projects' implementation so far and outlined its mandate.

The PSC will provide the overall policy and strategic guidance and specifically, coordinate implementation among various actors, who have been delegated and co-delegated to handle various aspects of the entire programme.

Fifteen Member States were represented at the meeting. These were: Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The SSCBT initiative is designed to

address challenges facing small scale traders which include high transactions costs arising from delays at the border, high taxes and high transport costs; corruption and harassment among others. In COMESA region, small cross border trade accounts for 30 to 40% of total trade.

"These challenges are the basis for the COMESA Cross Border Trade Initiative which the programme aims to address and thus facilitate and formalize this trade," said Dr Kipyego Cheluget, Assistant Secretary General in charge of COMESA programmes when he addressed delegates.

At the meeting, it was observed that representatives of the cross-borders

are not fully equipped to defend the interests of their members. Further, there is no adequate data (disaggregated by gender) to fully understand small scale informal trade and there is lack of adequate border infrastructure for such trade.

The Trade Facilitation Programme aims at increasing intra-regional trade flows of goods, persons and services by reducing the costs and delays of imports and exports at specific border posts. This will be addressed through reduction of non-tariff barriers (NTBs), implementation of digital Free Trade Area (DFTA), World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA), improvements of the Coordinated Border Management (CBM) and liberalization of Trade in Services and free movement of persons.

Implementation of the two projects is expected to contribute to higher revenue collection for governments at the borders, increase security and improved incomes for traders.



Dr Kipyego Cheluget, Assistant Secretary General (Programmes)

Specific activities of the projects have been co-delegated to UN agencies to implement owing to their expertise and competences in the respective areas. These are: the International Trade Centre (ITC) the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

Some activities of the programme will be for the whole of the COMESA/

Tripartite region while others will be focusing on the targeted borders, namely: Chirundu, (Zambia /Zimbabwe); Mchinji/Mwami, (Malawi/Zambia); Moyale, (Ethiopia /Kenya) Kasumbalesa, (DR Congo/ Zambia) and Tunduma/Nakonde, (Tanzania /Zambia).

The PSC is made up of experts from the COMESA Secretariat, who will be the main drivers of the project and will include representatives from the European Union, the IOM and the five targeted Member States.

The Head of Cooperation at the European Union delegation to Zambia and COMESA Mr. Gianluca Azzoni stressed the need for effective coordination in the programme implementation between COMESA, the Member States and the Multilateral agencies involved in the implementation.

Comoros' Capacity to Fight Money Laundering Strengthened



Participants at the National Money Laundering and Terrorist Risk Assessment workshop in the Comoros.

As rising cases of money laundering and related crimes continue to pose global threat to peace and security, regional countries are taking measures to reinforce their capacity to combat the crime.

The Union of the Comoros is one the states that have taken this threat seriously and is working with stakeholders to enhance its capacity to fight money laundering and terrorism financing.

Last week in Comoros capital Moroni, over 100 staff from vulnerable sectors of the economy including banking, bureau de change, insurance and real estate, were trained on the use of World Bank National Risk Assessment tool in assessing their country's Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing (ML/TF) risks.

The training took place on 2 – 4 October 2019. It was supported by COMESA Maritime Security (MASE) programme funded by the European Union and facilitated by World Bank experts.

According to experts, assessment of countries' risks and application of risk-based approaches is a



requirement in the global fight against the vice hence the importance of undertaking national money laundering and terrorist financing risk assessment.

“This helps in prioritization of resource allocation, formulation of policies relating to anti-money laundering and combating financing of terrorism,” said the experts.

The Comorian Minister of Finance and Budget Mr Said Ali Chayhane, who was the chief guest at the event, expressed his government’s commitment to curbing financial crimes which he described as potentially damaging to economic development.

“Our country will now be regarded positively in the global market after this training, considering our strategic location on the map,

which can be used as a route for transnational crimes,” he said.

He added that identification of the risks was an important aspect of development and transparency and since Comoros was also a member of other regional groupings, it is imperative to be involved at every level to ensure its development is not hindered.

Minister Chayhane thanked COMESA for continuously supporting Comoros to ensure the country’s anti-money laundering capacity is strengthened. In the past, COMESA MASE has provided support to train Comoros Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) analysts in tactic and strategic analysis and law enforcement agencies in financial investigations and asset recovery.

The country has also received

support towards joining regional inter-governmental action group against money laundering and attachment of government officials to Financial Intelligence Units in other countries for benchmarking.

At least six ministers attended the opening ceremony of the workshop. These were ministers in charge of Justice, Interior, Health, Education, Telecommunications, and Public Works. Other guests included representatives of the World Bank, Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa, the Diplomatic Community in Comoros, Central Bank of Comoros various anti-money laundering stakeholders and COMESA.

COMESA Endorses Animal Health Strategy for Africa



COMESA has endorsed the Animal Health Strategy for Africa (AHSa) which was formulated by the African Union -Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR). The strategy aims at enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the livestock sector and to promote investments, coordination of efforts, partnerships and multi-sectoral/

multidisciplinary approaches to addressing animal health issues on the continent.

This endorsement was made last month in Kenya during the AU-IBAR workshop for members of the Continental Animal Health Platform in Africa (CAHP-Africa), which COMESA subscribes.

Themed ‘One Voice to Catalyse Equitable Growth of the Livestock Sector’ the workshop was also intended to enhance harmonization and coordination for implementation of key livestock policies, legal and investment frameworks on the continent.

In addition to the strategy, the participants also endorsed the

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Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Implementation Plan. These will now be submitted to the Scientific Technical Committee at the African Union Commission (AUC) for consideration before subsequent approval by the Executive Committee at the next AU Summit.

The forum brought together over 30 multiple stakeholders drawn from Member/Partners States in regional organizations including COMESA, the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Agriculture Economist Mr. Joel Okwir, represented COMESA at the workshop. In his report, Okwir said drafting of the biennial publication of the State of Animal Health in Africa (SAHA) was initiated.

“The biennial publication will provide general information and in-depth analyses of selected themes in Animal health in Africa to support decision-making for priority actions,” Mr Okwir said.

The Director of AU-IBAR Professor Ahmed Elsawalhy noted that the Animal Health Strategy for Africa articulates the animal health component of Livestock

Development Strategy for Africa (LiDeSA) by providing a shared vision of animal health interventions on the continent.

“AHSA is aims at enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency and promotes investments, coordination of efforts, partnerships which is needed in Africa,” he told the delegates adding that Continental Animal Health Platform in Africa was instituted to support the implementation of animal strategy.

ESREM Supports Creation of Energy Regulator for Southern Africa



The COMESA led project on Enhancement of a Sustainable Regional Energy Market for the Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and Indian Ocean (ESREM/EA-SA-IO) Region is supporting the establishment of an energy regulatory authority in Southern Africa.

This will be achieved by transforming the current Regional Energy Regulators Association of Southern Africa (RERA) to an authority to deal with regulatory

issues relating to cross-border energy. The new Authority will be named SARERA (Southern Africa Development Community Regional Energy Regulators Authority). The transformation is expected to be complete by 2021.

Last week in Johannesburg, 3- 4 October 2019, ESREM brought together members of RERA for a two-day regional workshop to validate a study done to develop a framework and roadmap towards the transformation. In its current form as

an association, RERA does not have a mandate to provide regulatory oversight over the regional energy market in SADC.

COMESA through the Regional Association of Energy Regulators of Eastern and Southern Africa (RAERESA) is implementing the seven million European Union funded ESREM project to deliver, among others, the enhancement of Regulatory Capacity of the National Regulatory Authorities and strengthening capacity of the Regional Associations

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and power pools. These include RERA, RAERESA and the East Africa and Southern Africa Power Pools (EAPP and SAPP).

In the transformation of RERA, the role of ESREM-RAERESA is to guide the process.

At the workshop, various keynote speakers hailed the move to transform RERA as it was part of a study conducted to develop the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RIDMP).

The Director General of the Department of Energy of South Africa Mr. Thabane Zulu observed that the SADC region had identified infrastructure development as a priority in developing the RIDMP, which is an opportunity for Member States to strike consensus on priority projects.

According to the study, the region faces the challenge of insufficient energy supply to serve increased industrial production and access. Despite the current interconnectivity achievements through the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP), the study also revealed that, the region still faces several challenges with regard to energy delivery, access and

price.

“The implementation of the RIDMP is key to unlock the full potential of our region gifted with vast and diverse energy resources such as hydro, coal, gas and solar through regional integration,” he said.

The Chief Executive Officer of the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA), Mr. Christopher Forlee said the transformation of RERA will expand cross-border trade in energy, promote investment and competitiveness of regional electricity trade.

In her remarks, the Vice chairperson of RERA and Energy Regulations Board of

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-Mr. Thabane Zulu

Zambia (ERB) Chief Executive Officer Ms. Langiwe Lungu expressed gratitude to the European Union (EU) for the support towards the implementation of the Project on Strengthening RERA in general and organizing this Validation Workshop in particular.

Senior Programme Officer at SADC, Mr. Moses Ntlamelle noted that the developments in the energy sector were critical as they have the potential to contribute to the regional integration, industrialization and reduction of poverty in the region.

Among the workshop participants were representatives of the Energy Regulatory Authorities and Power Utilities, Regulatory Institute of Electricity and Water Services of Angola, Botswana Energy Regulatory Authority, National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA), Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority of Tanzania, SADC Secretariat, SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREEE), Southern African Power Pool Coordination Centre, Malawi Energy Regulatory Authority and COMESA.

COMESA Maiden Presence at Uganda International Trade Fair

For the first time, COMESA Secretariat is participating in the 27th Uganda International Trade Fair (UGITF) currently underway at the Lugogo grounds in Kampala. This is part of COMESA outreach strategy to engage directly with stakeholders and share information and knowledge on regional integration programmes.

The 10 days annual event opened to the public on Wednesday last week. COMESA information stand has mainly attracted business people, academicians/ researchers, students, teachers and lecturers from basic and higher institutions of learning from across Uganda.



COMESA stand at the Uganda International Trade Fair



According to the Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA), over 300,000 show goers are expected to walk through their gates this year making the fair a premier business event for the country.

COMESA presence is therefore an

opportunity to raise public awareness on regional integration programmes, demonstrate their impact and encourage various stakeholders to take advantage of the business opportunities that it provides. Assorted publications on regional integration are available at the stand.

Launched 27 years ago, the Trade Fair attracts hundreds of local and international exhibitors who display their goods, products and services. President Yoweri Museveni is expected to officially open the show on Monday 7 October 2019.

Cassava Cluster Project Transforming Lives in Kenya



Ms Ruth Negash

The demand for cassava in the international market has been rising and the need for efficient markets and a better coordinated cassava value chain among cassava producers and processors has become even more important.

It is estimated that the current potential market for starch is 66 million tonnes thus providing opportunities for cassava producing countries in COMESA region to exploit.

This has inspired the COMESA Federation

of National Associations of Women in Business in Eastern and Southern Africa also known as FEMCOM, to pilot cassava cluster projects in selected Member States.

The pilot programme is being implemented in 10 COMESA cassava growing countries namely Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Madagascar, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The objective is to enhance the competitiveness of cassava MSMEs by building their capacity for integration in intra-regional trade.

One of the success stories is the, Tangakona Commercial Village Cassava Cluster initiative in Kenya's Busia County. The cluster received funding from COMESA through the Regional Integration Support Programme (RISP) in 2015. Since then, it has managed to grow its business and now supplies value added cassava products across the country.

Last week, COMESA/FEMCOM and Farm Concern team conducted a monitoring and documentation visit to the Cassava clusters in Busia. The team found that farmers have now registered their value-added products with the Kenya Bureau of Standards thus meeting the required quality standards for the national and

regional markets.

The Tangakona Cassava Cluster supplies over 10,000 tons of Cassava chips per month to "Trufoods" an agricultural company based in Nairobi. This has helped them expand their production of Cassava allowing them to build a new structure accommodating their offices.

On her maiden tour of the Cluster, FEMCOM Chief Executive Officer Ruth Negash expressed satisfaction with the success of the cluster.

"You can see for yourselves that if we empower the businesses of cassava farmers through capacity building on commercialization of small holder enterprises, major results can be achieved by our African people creating jobs and reducing poverty in the region," she said.

In 2016, Kenya produced approximately 600,000 metric tons of cassava.

Market opportunities for farmers and processors include cassava flour as a replacement for wheat flour, cassava starch as a raw material for food and non-food industries and cassava chips for domestic livestock feed sector and export.

COMESA/ ASARECA Sign Pact to Promote Agriculture



Executive Director of ASARECA Professor Jean Jacques Muhinda (L) and COMESA SG Chileshe Kapwepwe

In the current fast-changing global economy, innovations, improved technologies and practices are key to agricultural transformation as they support smallholder farmers and other agricultural producers to become competitive. Not only do they increase agricultural productivity and sustainability, but they also reduce losses in the value chains thus enabling adaptation and mitigation of the effects of climate change.

Cognizant of this, COMESA has forged strategic partnership with the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), to develop solutions to challenges that face farmers in the region. These include poor access to improved technologies, limited knowledge of good production practices, climate change, limited innovations, poor access to market and weak enabling policy environment.

The partnership was sealed today, in Lusaka, through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the Executive Director of ASARECA Professor Jean Jacques Muhinda and the COMESA Secretary General (SG), Ms. Chileshe Kapwepwe.

Under the MoU, the two organizations

will collaborate in agriculture research, food and natural resources management, markets and market information systems; capacity building; agricultural knowledge and technology transfer; and policy development and harmonization.

According to the SG, these issues are aligned to the COMESA Regional Agriculture Investment Plan, the Medium-Term Strategic Plan, and new ASARECA Strategic Plan as well.

“It is therefore in COMESA’s interest to form strategic partnerships for implementation of Agricultural Research for Development to foster economic integration and indeed we are committed to regionally coordinated AR4D,” she added.

In the recent past, COMESA and ASARECA have implemented joint programmes approved by the Council of Ministers of the regional bloc, especially in the areas of the seed trade harmonization regulations, climate change adaptation and biotechnology for some Member States, with notable benefits.

Reacting to the conclusion of the MoU, Prof. Muhinda said: “I am excited to be your partner and we have the same

objectives for the development of our region.” He noted that 10 out of 12 ASARECA Member States are in COMESA.

ASARECA has also appointed Ambassador Dr. Kipyego Cheluget, Assistant Secretary General in Charge of programmes in COMESA, as the Vice Chair of its Board of Directors. The Board unanimously endorsed the appointment last month, on 17 September 2019 in its meeting in Kampala, Uganda.

Under the COMESA Treaty, Member States commit themselves to cooperate in agricultural research and extension, utilizing existing national agricultural research and extension institutions on a network basis for the benefit of the Common Market. This enables agricultural research in the region to play a leading role in promoting market and income generation-oriented agriculture. In addition, COMESA is implementing the Agenda 2063 and CAADP/Malabo Declaration whose aims include accelerated and inclusive agricultural transformation in Africa. The pact with ASARECA is therefore expected to provide impetus towards the realization of these goals.



Students from Ndola Trust School based in the Copperbelt Province in Zambia on a study tour at the COMESA Secretariat in Lusaka on 23 September 2019. Students' visits are part of COMESA's Corporate Social Responsibility initiative to raise awareness amongst young people on regional integration programmes. Assistant Secretary General (Programmes) Dr. Kipyego Cheluget (in blue shirt) welcomed and addressed the students.

COMESA DIARY

Meeting/Activity	Dates	Venue
Trade and Customs Meetings	14 – 25 October 2019	Kenya
Tripartite Sectoral Ministerial Committee on Infrastructure (TSMCI)	28 - 31 October 2019,	Lusaka,
ESREM's National-level workshop on regulatory policy, autonomy and governance	8 – 10 October 2019.	Djibouti
Retreat for COMESA Institutions	24th November 2019	Lusaka
Intergovernmental Committee - Institutions	25th November 2019	Lusaka
Intergovernmental Committee-Secretariat	26th to 27th November 2019	Lusaka
Celebrating 25 years of COMESA	28th November 2019	Lusaka
COMESA Council of Ministers	29th November 2019	Lusaka

