**2019 Performance Review**

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| Trade and Customs | In 2019, COMESA strove to advance work on improving the functioning of the internal market through adoption of digital technology-based initiatives such as the DFTA; finalising the eCO prototype and ready for piloting; the draft regulations for implementation of the eCO has been completed and recommended for consideration by the technical committees; finalised the development of the draft COMESA Guidelines for the AEO Programme implementation; signed the co-delegation agreement with UNCTAD for development of the COMESA Regional Customs automation support centre (CARSC) and the regional trade information portal (TIP) and assessing the implementation of the simplified trade regime at the four project borders. The following progress was noted;  i. Held the 2nd regional workshop on the COMESA Digital FTA in 10-12 June 2019 in Malawi.;  ii. Conducted focal point persons sensitization workshops on the EDF 11- Programmes on SSCBTI and TFP.  iii. Finalized the development of regulations for the implementation of the eCO and recommended for consideration by the technical committees,  iv. Finalized the development of Draft COMESA Guidelines the for the AEO Programme implementation,  v. Signed the co-delegation agreement with UNCTAD for development of the COMESA Regional Customs automation support centre (CARSC) and the regional trade information portal (TIP).;  vi. Undertook missions to targeted border posts under the the EDF11-SSCBTI to assess the situation on the ground;  vii. Facilitated national consultative meetings and provided capacity building trainings on the development of COMESA AEO Programme for Eswatini (on 15-17 May 2019) and for Malawi (on 25-27 June 2019) under the EDF 11- TFP.  viii. Organized the 2nd COMESA Digital FTA workshop and the 1st COMESA TWG of AEO Experts meetings under the EDF 11 - TFP.  ix. Coordinated and convened national sensitization workshops for ratification of the TFTA in various Member States  x. Participated and provided technical inputs in the Tripartite Negotiations on Trade in Goods, Trade in Services and Competition Policy.  xi. Organized the Sixth COMESA Annual Research Forum which included showcasing of Innovations in the region.  xii. Facilitated implementation of the COMESA Virtual Masters Degree Programme in regional integration. Six Universities signed MoUs with COMESA, Kenyatta University admitted students in September 2019, University of Mauritius and Open University of Mauritius are on course to admit students by January 2020  xiii. Calculated the 2019 Sugar Quota allocations for the Kenya Sugar Safeguard  xiv. Organized the second Sugar Safeguard Sub-Committee Meeting  xv. Finalized review of papers and released the sixth and seventh ediction of Key Issues in regional integration as well as the policy briefs  xvi. Supporting the Tripartite and the AfCFTA through policy papers  xvii. Organized the NTB focal Points Meeting  xviii. Organized the seventh meeting of Trade in Services Committee Meeting  xix. Organized the fourth Meeting of the Trade and Trade Facilitation Sub-committee  xx. Organized the fifth Heads of Customs Sub-committee meeting  xxi. Organized the 35 Committee on Trade and Customs  xxii. Built capacity of Malawi on REPSS  xxiii. As chair of the Tripartite Task Force, undertook coordination, preparation and organization of the Tripartite meetings  xxiv. Convened Tripartite meetings to develop guidelines, regulations and Manuals for implementation of the various Annexes to the Tripartite Agreement. .  xxv. Coordinated and convened a meeting of Regional Experts to support development of regulations/mechanisms for the implementation of TFTA Annexes on TBT and SPS.  xxvi. Coordinated and convened meetings of the Tripartite Task Force to develop Tripartite Capacity Building Strategy.  xxvii. Coordinated and Convened meetings of the Tripartite Sub-Committee on Resource Mobilization, to finalise the Tripartite Resource Mobilization Strategy.  xxviii. Coordinated and convened Tripartite Consultative Meetings for AfCFTA negotiations.  xxix. Participated in AfCFTA negotiations |
| Infrastructure | (i)       The 1st Stakeholder Workshop for Port Sudan Corridor was convened in Khartoum, Sudan in January 2019 where the following were achieved;  ·       The Corridor Strategic Plan and Financial Strategy were validated  ·       The Draft Corridor Agreement was prepared and presented for comments to Corridor Member States  ·       Roadmap for the development of the Port Sudan Corridor agreed to.  (ii)        Recruitment of consultants to conduct three studies on COMESA Carrier License, Development of OSBP Institutional and Legal framework for Kasumbalesa border post and Capacity Building on OSBPs was finalized;  (iii)      TORs to recruit consultants to provide consulting services on Road Safety Management, Review of Performance of Chirundu OSBP and Review of Matama-Galabat OSBP Institutional and Legal Framework were finanlized and recruitment process is ongoing  (iv)      A meeting of Directors of Civil Aviation was convened in Egypt in March 2019 to consider Egypt’s reservation and proposals and review the Agreement and Regulations to establish the COMESA Seamless Upper Airspace Agency in line with the decision of the 38th Council of Ministers Meeting;  (v)       The COMESA CNS/ATM Project was closed by the AfDB on 30th June 2019 at the expiry of the Grant Disbursement period. A Project Closure Mission to COMESA was undertaken by the African Development Bank in June 2019. The Project Completion Report (PCR) was prepared and submitted to the AfDB. The Project Implementation Unit (PIU) was closed at the end of the project;  (vi)      A training workshop on Inland Water Transport Challenges and Opportunities for the establishment of a navigational line between Lake Victoria and Mediterranean Sea (VICMED) Project was conducted in Egypt in June 2019 as part of Capacity Building support for VICMED footprint countries;  (vii)     The € 8million EDF Support to air transport sector development programme formulation was finalized and submitted to the European Union in April 2019;  (viii)   Capacity building for member states capacity on Financing and Implementation of Energy Projects;  (ix)      Training Seminars on Comprehensive Power Market Concepts, Nord Pool Training Academy, Oslo, Norway and Copenhagen, Denmark, were undertaken for COMESA, Eastern Africa Power Pool (EAPP) and Southern African Power Pool (SAPP);  (x)       Specialized Training on Wholesale and Retail Market Monitoring for Chief Executive Officers and Senior Officials from Energy Regulators Association of COMESA, EAC and SADC;  (xi)      The Eleventh Joint Meeting of Transport and Communications, Information Technology and Energy successfully held in Nairobi.  (xii)     COMESA signed an MoU with the Global Water Partnership Southern Africa to collaborate on issues of water in Infrastructure.  (xiii)   COMESA also sought to initiate work on a petroleum study to establish the status in the regional and opportunities for collaboration among the member states. The terms of reference were developed however the activity could not take off due to lack of funds.  (xiv)   Under the EDF 11 Financed project implemented by Regional Association for Energy Regulators for East and Southern Africa (RAERESA) the training needs assessment (TNA) for Women in Energy (WIE) was conducted in-conjunction with the Regional Regulatory Associations (RRAs) in the EA-SA-IO region to establish the baseline and training programmes required to be implemented.  (xv)    Finalisation of the Formulation of ICT EDF 11 programme for creation of an enabling environment for ICT sector in East and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO)  (xvi)   COMTEL Project reviewed and plans underway to hold a stakeholders meeting to decide on the strategic direction of the project |
| Agriculture and Industry | Industrialization  31.           Among the ministerial decisions made during their meeting held in Lusaka in 2017, Ministers responsible for Industry, tasked the Secretariat to produce a document of Regional Guidelines on the Local Content and to review the Action Plan of the Industrial Strategy. The two documents were discussed and adopted by the Committee meeting of Ministers of Industry held at Nairobi, Kenya, in June 2019.The Division is preparing to go ahead with the domestication of the guidelines and the Action Plan of the Strategy.  Agriculture and Livestock  32.           Following the biennial review report on the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) to which COMESA Member States actively participated, the focus for the period 2018-2019 was to assist selected COMESA Member States to domesticate the Malabo commitments. D.R. Congo, Seychelles, eSwatini, Zambia, Burundi and Zimbabwe expressed the need to the Secretariat for this support while others directly engaged some technical partners for the same purpose which at the end of the day was jointly coordinated with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the AUDA- NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA).  33.           The Division participated in the15th CAADP Partnership Platform Meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya where AUC, RECs, Member States and partners shared and discussed best practices, identified strategies and policies to foster enhanced market access and intra-regional trade in agricultural commodities and services for inclusive and sustainable development.  34.           The Division coordinated with AUDA-NEPAD, an independent technical review of the COMESA RAIP that will be presented to the Technical and Ministerial Committee meetings on Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources for adoption in 2020.  35.           The Division in collaboration with AUC and other REC supported mutual accountability on CAADP process through training and technical assistance to the Member States on 2nd Bi-annual review reporting.  36.           A project proposal entitled “Enhancing Regional Seed and Agricultural Commodity Trade in the Common Market for Eastern and Central Africa (COMESA)” has been developed and submitted to Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) for grant funding. In collaboration with Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), the Division is also developing a project proposal on “Agricultural Research and Innovation Fellowship for Africa”.  37.           Under Livestock most of the activities attended to consisted of establishing the mapping of enterprises in major livestock exporting countries and basic data on import and export of live animal (beef and small ruminants) and meat as well as developing manuals for grades and standards to be used by exporting and importing countries for price negotiation and ordering. This was meant to create market linkages between exporting and importing countries enterprises and market actors.  Investment Promotion  38.           Most of the work under the unit was desk research activities on investment trends and ease of doing business due to lack of funding allocated to the intervention. Follow up was also done on the Union of Comoros progress done following taken resolutions by the High-Level Meeting on the ease of doing business held in that country during 2018.  SPS&SQAM-TBT  39.           Activities undertaken under the Unit included (i) supporting COMESA export companies to develop/implement food safety plans that meet import regulations under the new U.S. Food Safety Modernization Act ( FSMA ), (ii) assessment of national reference laboratories in Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Madagascar and Zambia to identify gaps in line with FSMA requirements – customized technical support will be provided under the 2020/2021 Work Programme to close the gaps (iii)facilitating plant health competent authorities (national plant protection organizations or NPPOs) to harmonize quarantine pest lists and phytosanitary import conditions for 10 most traded commodities in the tripartite (Maize, Sorghum, Soya-bean, Sed Potato, sunflower, cotton, beans, rice, groundnuts, wheat) , (iv) facilitating plant health competent authorities to harmonize pest risk analysis (PRA) approaches, (v) facilitating food safety competent authorities to institutionalize risk profiling and risk assessment in national food control systems, (vi) facilitating the COMESA reference laboratory coordinating mechanism (COM-LAB) and mutual recognition of conformity assessment procedures for maize trade, (vii) prioritization of SPS capacity building needs and investments in Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda, (viii) convening the NPPO technical working group and the 9th technical meeting of the SPS subcommittee (ix) production of the SPS Annual Report and the FSMA Training Manual.  Seed Development Programme  40.           Lack of quality and improved seed in the COMESA countries has contributed significantly to food insecurity and poverty. The availability of quality seed in this region in terms of variety, accessibility, and volume currently stands at a meagre 20%. This is caused by lack of a harmonized seed policy environment in the region exhibited by diverse and complex seed trade laws / regulations for seed production, certification, variety release and phytosanitary / quarantine measures for seed import and export cross the borders. Total seed being traded in the COMESA-EAC-SADC Member States averages USD1.4 billion, equivalent to less than 2% of global seed trade.  41.           In view of the above, the COMESA Seed Programme initiative was created in response to the COMESA Ministers of Agriculture directive in Seychelles, 2008 for COMESA to develop the regional harmonized seed trade regulations. In the period between 2010 and 2014, COMESA through its Specialised Agency of the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA), facilitated the gazette of the COMESA Seed Trade Harmonization Regulations in May, 2014 and developed a strategic plan, the COMESA Seed Harmonization Implementation Plan (COMSHIP). The overall goal of COMSHIP is to implement COMESA Seed Trade Harmonization Regulations leading to increased seed production, reliability, trade and competitiveness of the Seed Industry in the COMESA region. Currently, the COMESA region is accessing less than half a million metric tonnes of quality seed, against the requirement of about two million tonnes. Through COMSHIP, growth of COMESA seed business is poised to grow up to 5 billion USD in the next 10 years. Below is status of the COMESA Seed Harmonisation Implementation Plan (COMSHIP)  42.           COMSHIP has been officially launched in 18 COMESA Member States, namely Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, DR Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, eSwatini, Uganda Zambia, Zimbabwe with the exception of Libya.  43.           Seven COMESA Member States of Burundi, Malawi, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe have completely aligned their national seed laws to the COMESA Seed System. DR Congo have draft national seed regulations awaiting parliament approval while Ethiopia gazetted the Ethiopian Seed Certifications Standards in December 2016 with the aligned Plant Quarantine Proclamation of the federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia of 2017 and the Ethiopian Seed Regulation 375/2016 are yet to be gazetted in 2018.  44.           The COMESA Seed Training Programme was developed and implemented. 270 delegates (23% female) were trained from 13 COMESA Member States, namely Burundi, Djibouti, D.R Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Rwanda, eSwatini, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.  45.           The COMESA Variety Catalogue is on-line with 58 varieties regionally released. The programme has developed and produced 4.5 million COMESA Seed Labels and 2,500 Certificates to be utilized by seed companies for large seed assignment crossing the borders and in-country seed trade in smaller packages. |
| Gender and Social Affairs | 57.           In 2019, the Gender and Social Affairs Division continued to advocate for gender equality, empowerment of women and youth and social development through development of gender mainstreaming tools, training, engaging stakeholders, outreach, establishing partnerships, and dissemination of policy frameworks and council decisions, establishing gender technical working group. The progress in 2019 is highlighted under the two programme areas; gender equality and women empowerment; and Social Development as follows;  (i)    Gender guidelines developed  (ii)   Professionals from Secretariat and Member States trained on Trade and Gender  (iii) Sensitization missions to Zimbabwe, Uganda and Eritrea on the Social Charter, implementation of Council decisions on Gender;  (iv) Contribution to the AU Gender Strategy and Action Plan  (v)   Agreement with SDC on the Youth Project for CHF840,000 signed and funds for project disbursed, and implementation began;  (vi) Established the COMESA Youth Desk through recruitment of an officer to manage the youth project;  (vii)  Disseminated the COMESA Gender Policy, HIV/AIDS Policy; and Gender Statistics Bulletin to Member States  58.           The following was achieved under the 50MAWS Project;      (i)          50MAWS digital platform www.womenconnect.org developed and operationalized;     (ii)          Technical support and orientation of the EAC and ECOWAS project team on the functionalities and features of the 50MAWS Project digital platform Provided.      (i)          15 National Content Developers for the 50MAWS Project recruited and trained     (ii)          50MAWS Communication Strategy developed and validated; and publicity materials (brochures, banners) produced;  (iii)          Engaged about 600 stakeholders including media to introduce the 50MAWS Project in 14 member States; Established project country teams comprised of government, private sector, women organizations, FEMCOM Chapters, and civil society organizations |
| Governance Peace and Security | The Governance Peace and Security Unit was allocated $70,000 from the Secretariat to support countries that are going into elections in the region in 2019. COMESA was invited to observe three (3) elections of Comoros, Malawi and Tunisia. With the available funding, the unit managed to deploy election observes to only Comoros (24th March 2019) and Malawi (21st May 2019), due to limited funding, no observers were deployed in Tunisia elections that were scheduled for September and October 2019. In implementing its mandate in developing the regional capacity to disrupt illicit financial networks in the Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean (ESA-IO) region, in the year 2019, MASE programme has delivered support including the following;  (i)               Electronic platform for information sharing created and delivered to Madagascar,  (ii)              Over 150 anti-money laundering stakeholders’ officials sensitized on ML/TF including law enforcers,  (iii)             Mutual evaluation for Tanzania undertaken  (iv)            FIU analysts form six countries namely; Zambia, Madagascar, Comoros, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia trained in comprehensive analysis |
| Institutional readiness |  |
| Resource Mobilisation and International Cooperation | 100.       During the 2019 annual work programme, a paper on the operationalization of the Common Market Levy, was developed and presented to the Meeting of the Ministers of Finance and Central Banks Governors, as directed by the 34th meeting of COMESA Council of Ministers held in November 2018, in Lusaka, Zambia. The Market Levy is provided for under Article 168 of the COMESA Treaty, which has been ratified by all Member States, hence the paper provided the rationale for its operationalization.  101.       For the regional integration programmes to be effectively implemented, Member States need to take full ownership and identify sustainable modalities of financing the integration agenda. In line with the consultations undertaken by the Secretariat, there is a need to study how far the AU Levy has progressed in resolving the financing challenges at the AU. Within this study, there is a need to fully understand why only fifteen (15) countries have operationalized the AU Levy (out of which, 4 are COMESA members); within the COMESA region, learn from those (Djibouti, Kenya, Rwanda and Sudan) that are implementing it, as well as lessons from other regional organizations (ECOWAS and ECCAS) where similar modalities are being implemented, among other issues. It should be noted that currently, the financing of the COMESA integration agenda is overdependent on the donors’ funding and as a result, a lot of programmes have been slowed down  102.       However, in the short to medium term, the funding of COMESA integration programmes will continue to be financed with support from Development Partners through grants (Extra budgetary resources). Extra budgetary resources will include all types of grants and technical assistance from development partners in terms of both financial and technical support extended to facilitate implementation of COMESA programmes. There is a need therefore, to continue actively engaging with national, regional and international strategic partners to leverage the benefits of inter-dependence and participatory decision making for the benefit of Member States, the private sector, the academia and other stakeholders. It includes collaboration to leverage technical assistance training and sharing of information concerning lessons learned and best practices.  103.       On the international scene and specifically on promotion of international cooperation and strategic partnerships, the unit will also continue to promote/strengthen international cooperation and strategic partnerships between COMESA and various international and regional organizations. This encompasses enhancing COMESA’s influence amongst cooperating partners in collaboration with the AUC, and other RECs, participation in the coordination for the midyear AU-RECs Coordination meetings and other relevant preparatory events/meetings, participating in bilateral and multilateral cooperation fora -such as the AU-EU forum, the FOCAC, TICAD, among others, building mutually beneficial relationships/partnerships, commitment and willingness to share resources such as ideas, time and technical support.  104.       For the last 9 months under implementation of the 2019 workplan and budget, the unit facilitated and coordinated the participation of COMESA in various fora, including negotiations of various development partners funding to COMESA programmes, solicitation of donor resources as well as participation in the 1st Mid-Year Summit of the AU-RECs Coordination meeting that was held in July 2019. Out of the above engagements and initiatives/activities, the following achievements were realized;  (i)      An initial paper on the operationalization of the common market levy was developed and presented to the meeting of Senior officials of Ministries of Finance and Central banks  (ii)     Scholarships were secured from the Peoples Republic of China to COMESA member states. A total of three candidates already benefiting from the arrangement  (iii)   Programming of the funds under the EU support to COMESA through the 11th EDF is almost complete  (iv)   The unit also coordinated the review and amendments of the EU-DMROs High Level Group mandates and rules of procedure for engagements with the EU on the cross regional envelop  (v)    Coordinated and facilitated the signing the 11th EDF Regional Indicative programme (RIP) Amendments agreement with the EU  (vi)   Coordinated COMESA participation and involvement in both policy organs and preparatory meetings for the AU Assembly  (vii) Facilitated the finalization of the tripartite resource mobilization strategy, which was adopted by the 8th TSMC of the tripartite Ministerial Committee held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in June 2019.  (viii)                Coordinated and facilitated the accreditation of various ambassadors and special representatives to COMESA  (ix)   Facilitated and coordinated the negotiations and signing of various MoUs between COMESA and Strategic partners  (x)    Arranged and coordinated the hosting of the 2nd Joint COMESA-Development Partners forum  (xi)   Commenced engagements with the Japanese Government, aimed at formalizing the bilateral cooperation between COMESA and Japan, among others; |
| Brussels Liaison Office (BLO) | (i)              Resource Mobilization, the BLO, within the COMESA team, plays an important role in the identification and mobilization of resources for the projects/programmes related to the consolidation of Regional Integration, such as, among others: (i) COMESA sub-envelope under 11th EDF; (ii) COMESA Projects supporting regional trade implemented by Trade Division; (iii) the COMESA capacity building project for an amount of Euros 2,4 million, and (iv) on the identification of the 8 East African regional projects submitted to the ACP-EU PSD Programme which projects are all related to Trade and Private Sector Development “East African Region in the ACP configuration framework”.  The extra-resources mobilized so far for the approved projects in 2018 - 2019 and under implementation by the intra-ACP PMUs, with a very active role and contributions of the BLO, are to the tune of around Euros 2,8 million. Thanks to this presence in Brussels for COMESA, most of the projects submitted to the Intra-ACP PMU-Facilities are funded and monitored effectively.  (ii)             Concerning the support to facilitate development cooperation and regional integration, the Office continues to maintain good cooperation relations with the European Commission, its Member States and other EU institutions such as EIB, the ACP Group of States Secretariat. The BLO is also making linkages with other International Institutions cooperating with COMESA and represented in Brussels such as: UN-Habitat, WTCO, IMO, UNIDO, etc, to present and defend COMESA interests where necessary.  (iii)           As regards to the follow up and/or representation on issues related to multilateral trade, the COMESA BLO participates actively in the meetings organized at all levels at the ACP, EU and various other stakeholders in the field of multilateral trade matters in Brussels. Timely, BLO is representing the COMESA Secretariat in Geneva for meetings organized by the WTO and the ITC on trade multilateral matters.  (iv)              As regards the EPA negotiations between ESA configuration and the EC, the COMESA BLO continues its support to the ESA-iEPA MS in their implementation process. Its support includes contributing in follow up with the EU and the ESA-EPA region on the contentious issues. The BLO keeps also updated the Ambassadors of COMESA Member States in Brussels, negotiating under the ESA umbrella on the state of play of the negotiations. |
| COMAid Unit | In 2019, the COMAid Unit strove to achieve the activities and goals set out in the work programme. The key achievements include;  (xii)         Successful implementation and closure of the 9th EDF RISM Programme;  (xiii)        Extension of the 10th EDF RISM programme from 24th November 2019 to 24th November 2020;  (xiv)        Disbursement of about Euro 4 million to Member States for project implementation;  (xv)         Finalization and signature of 7 project documents for Comoros (7th and 8th Calls), DR Congo (8th Call), Madagascar (8th Call), Malawi (8th Call), Uganda (8th Call), Zambia (8th Call) and Zimbabwe (8th Call);  (xvi)        Set up and implementation of all projects under the 10th EDF;  (xvii)      Approval of the remaining 50% (€895,630) of funds to Zimbabwe under the 8th Call for Submissions;  (xviii)     Finalization of project implementation under 10th EDF by Burundi and Malawi;  (xix)        Preparation of detailed country reports highlighting keys achievements attained under the 9th EDF programme;  (xx)         Improved visibility of the programme which included production of country documentaries, articles, signing ceremonies and participation at the Global Aid for Trade Review. |
| Climate Change Unit | (i)              Training was undertaken for 46 participants in climate negotiations. Eleven of these were female, representing 24%. Arising out of this training, key issues for negotiation at the 2019 Bonn Intercessional and COP 25 were discussed and agreed  (ii)             Implementation of the 5 CSA projects in 5 MS continued as planned  (iii)           Eswatini - 82 farmers incorporated Climate Smart Agriculture Practices into their farming systems; 20% of the farmers started implementing the business model that complies with Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) standards; One (1) cold chain for storage is under-rehabilitation while 82 farmers are receiving loans from the revolving fund, of which 50% are women while 6% are youth. In addition, 3 demonstration plots were established, and 124 farmers were trained on Conservation Agriculture (CA) practices and principles.  (iv)           Madagascar - 1,824 farmers were provided with seeds of cover crops such as Mucuna, Stylosanthes and cowpea; 603.5 ha was put under CA; 1,744 farmers (of whom 32.3% female) adopted CA; 27 Nursery workers, (of whom 6 are female) were supported with potting bags and other materials; 557,351 tree seedlings were planted as part of reforestation; 6,527 fruit tree seedlings were also planted by 554 farmers (31.8% female); while 239,877 linear meters of hedgerow were planted by 863 farmers. To promote best practices in biopesticides, 1,607 farmers were provided with seeds of bio-pesticides and repellent plants. To fight food insecurity and improve the incomes of rural households, 285 farmers were provided with seeds of forage and safety plants, specifically the orange fleshed sweet potato (rich in Vitamin A) vines and fodder plants.  (v)            Seychelles - The project recruited farmers. The project will focus on irrigation. Procurement process for the tanks, pumps and fittings to support irrigation is ongoing  (vi)           Uganda- Baseline survey was commissioned; and the relevant taskforces were put in place. 45 Executive members of the 15 selected cooperatives and 42 members of the schools’ management boards from the 14 selected schools were oriented on the project implementation strategies. An exposure tour for 46 members from selected CSA cooperatives was undertaken for the participants to envision investments in value addition and agro-processing.  (vii)         Zimbabwe - Training for, Up-scaling Conservation Agriculture and Agroforestry, planting of vegetables and herbs, composting as well as leadership skills was undertaken for 188 participants of whom 110 participants (59%) were female. These included students and lecturers.  (viii)        Capacity Building for COMESA on Climate Resilience -11 COMESA staff including: Experts in Gender and Social Affairs, Energy; Governance, Peace and Security; Human Resources and Administration; Statistics; Legal and Institutional Affairs; as well as Information Communication Technology were sensitized on resilience building providing them with the general understanding of resilience and mainstreaming of climate change in the implementation of their programmes and projects. Priority actions in each area were identified for Senior Management consideration.  (ix)           Inter-REC resilience building - COMESA convened an inter-REC resilience meeting, attended by the AUC, SADC, EAC and IOC. The meeting was also attended by the United Nations organisations (UNDP, UNECA and UNEP) to bring their global perspectives to further inform the development of the COMESA Regional Resilience Framework.  (x)            Climate Resilience Building for Member States - Sensitization workshop was held, attended by 52 participants of whom 11 (21%) were female. Member States (a) were sensitized on the benefits of resilience; (b) shared knowledge, best practices and experiences on resilience building in Member States; (c) identified gaps, challenges and opportunities to mainstream resilience in national development; (d) examined policy requirements to achieve resilience; and (e) provided inputs into the draft COMESA Regional Resilience Framework.  (xi)           Capacity Building in NDC Target Indicator Tracking - Fifty-six (56) participants, twenty-one (21) female (38%) and thirty-five (35) male. Member States were oriented on the following areas (a) Introduction to the NDCs; (b) Transforming NDCs into action; (c) Nature of NDCs in each member state; (d) Adaptation in NDCs; (e) implementation and Measuring Reporting and Verification (MRV) frameworks; as well as (f) the Global Stock take.  (xii)         Capacity building in Green Finance - Eighty-four (84) participants were trained consisting of fifty-seven (57) male and twenty-seven (27) female (32%). Member states were oriented on (a) NDC Financing and the Role of Private Sector (b) NDC Implementation and Green Financing; (c) Opportunities for Access to Climate Finance and (d) they also shared success stories in mobilizing resources. |
| Statistics | In 2019, COMESA strove to advance work on implementation of the COMESA Statistics Strategy through the following programmes;  i. Statistics to support market integration;  International Merchandise Trade Statistics  Under the technical assistance and capacity building on international merchandise trade statistics;  (i)              COMESA undertook a EUROTRACE technical support mission to the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia on reconfiguration of their SQL Server domain.  (ii)             COMESA participated in a workshop on the impact of Zambia joining the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) organised by the Ministry of Commerce Trade and Industry (MCTI) on 9 January 2019. A presentation was made on using Tariff Reform Impact Simulation Tool (TRIST) model to analyse the short-term effects of the TFTA on Zambian imports and revenues.  (iii)           COMESA participated at the workshop jointly organized by United Nations Statistics Division and African Union Commission that looked at looked at International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) 2010 Implementation challenges and ways to overcome the challenges on 24 – 28 June 2019.Two presentation were made on SDMX implementation and work done on trade data quality and quantity improvement by COMESA.  (iv)           The COMESA participated in the AUC’s SHASA 2 Specialized Technical Group on External Sector Statistics on 30 April – 2 May 2019 in Kigali, Rwanda. The meeting was aimed at evaluating the implementation of the harmonized format for trade data and data sharing at country level. Key recommendations from the meeting were;  ·       AUC support COMESA to undertake training of its Member states in the EUROTRACE SQL Server in June/July 2019.  ·       AUC compile a guidance note on trade indices and organize training in 2019.  ·       AUC collaborates with RECs on data collection for trade statistics.  Small Scale Cross Border Trade Statistics  2019 witnessed the deeper implementation of development of SSCBT statistics under the 11th EDF COMESA Cross Border Trade Initiative (CBTI) and the Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project (GLTFP). Key activities under the EDF-11 were;  a)    Scoping missions to Tunduma border in Tanzania on 28 – 31 January 2019. The mission objectives were to map existing data collection initiatives at the border and also to engage the Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on the SSCBT’s initial work plan focused on the border post.  b)    Sub regional Training of Trainers workshop for five (5) countries namely Congo DR, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The workshop was organized on 6– 10 May 2019 in Kafue, Zambia. The main objective of the workshop was to train Master Trainers who are in turn expected to train their respective enumerators and supervisors for SSCBT data collection. A total of twelve participants (1 female and 11 males) were trained.  c)     Procurement of IT equipment (10 desktop computers, 10 Laser jet printers, 10 routers and 95 Tablets) to be used for SSCBT data collection at the target project borders.  d)    The key activity under the GLTFP was a joint bilateral SSCBT statistics mirror exercise for Rwanda and Uganda on 24 to 26 June 2019. The exercise was attended by fifteen participants (3 females and 12 males).  Statistics of International Trade in Services (SITS)  The following activities were undertaken during the 2019 work plan;  (i)    Enhancement of the COMSTAT Regional database with new components of Trade in services statistics;  (ii)   Capacity building engagement with Zambian stakeholders on the development of statistics of international trade in services in accordance with the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services (MSITS).  International Comparison Programme  The COMESA Secretariat, in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB) launched the 2017 International Comparison Programme (ICP) in February 2017. Under its purview, COMESA was overseeing the implementation of the ICP surveys in both the COMESA and SADC regions  The ultimate objective of ICP data is to be used in the computation of time series Purchasing Power Parities (PPPs). The PPPs provide a statistical superior alternative to official market exchange rates characterized by a high explanatory power.  After close to 2 years of data collection for both Price and National Accounts data, the African Development Bank in collaboration with COMESA and AFRISTAT, organized a data validation and closure workshop for the 2017 ICP round in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 1 - 5 April 2019. The main objective of the workshop was the validation and editing of all the data across the relevant surveys and National Accounts expenditures for the 50 participating African countries.  ii.          Strengthening Statistics to support the Gender Equality Strategic objective of the MTSP  With the launch of the 11th EDF programme on Small Scale Cross Border Trade, COMESA developed a comprehensive statistical framework to ensure engendering of SSCBT with the finalization of Border profiling survey questionnaire that has detailed gender disaggregated indicators.  iii.          Strengthening the development of Economic Infrastructure  Under this strategic objective, the 2019 round of the AIKP Surveys were launched in COMESA Member states.  iv.          Strengthening Technologies and Systems as Enablers for the Statistical System  a)    COMESA completed the pilot implementation of SDMX (specifically related to international merchandise trade statistics) with the Zambia Central Statistical Office.  b)    COMESA participated in a regional Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) training workshop jointly organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and African Union Commission (AUC) in Tunis, Tunisia on 18 – 22 February 2019.  c)     COMESA continues to be the lead in the roll out of software tools for compilation of international merchandise trade statistics. Taking the lead in SQL Server migration and as a member of the international technical user group, testing of the EUROTRACE.net version.  d)    The COMSTAT data portal continues to play a critical role in data dissemination. Based on the ratings under the African Information Highway programme, the COMSTAT portal hits peaked at 10,956 in the month of January 2019.  v.          Strengthen Capacity Building  The COMESA 2017-2020 Statistics Strategy identifies capacity building as one of its strategic objectives. Capacity building in statistics has been the flagship of COMESA’s interventions in Member States. This is evidenced by the fact that 76 experts that were trained in 2019 on various statistical subject.  vi.          Strengthening Strategic Partnerships  The following achievements were registered in this strategic objective;  a)    Signed an MoU with Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute of Eastern and Southern Africa (MEFMI) in Trade in services.  b)    Signed an MoU with Trade Mark East Africa (TMEA) on small scale cross border trade SSCBT.  Current Year (2019) Performance  The approved operational plan and budget estimates of GLTFP for 2019 is US$ 1,666,000. During the period under review, an amount of US$ 1,085,900 was earmarked for the implementation of activities namely conduct training and STR awareness creation workshops, convene meeting of STR Experts, conduct impact assessment on STR implementation at project, conduct 3rd Training of Trainers workshop in Member States, conduct TIDOs training workshop, editing and translation of Training Manuals into border languages, conduct study on sustainability of TIDs Office, conduct analytical study of STR at borders, hire of consultant to develop GLTFP communication and advocacy strategy, implementation of recommendations of communication strategy, conduct meetings with stakeholders in project countries to harmonise and improve SSCBT data collection, convene bilateral mirror exercise workshop, recruitment of full time Monitoring & Evaluation Expert, participation of M&E Expert in cross border surveys, conduct focused group discussions workshops, conduct of assessment mission to borders , servicing of Regional Coordination Meeting, enhancing capacity of project staff by training, payment of salaries for project staff.  Implementation of Component 2 - Implementation of policy and reforms and capacity building to facilitate cross –border trade in goods and services.  An amount of US$ 546,600 was budgeted for implementation of Component 2 during the six months of 2019 namely conduct training and STR awareness creation workshops, convene meeting of STR Experts, conduct impact assessment on STR implementation at project, conduct 3rd Training of Trainers workshop in Member States, conduct TIDOs training workshop, editing and translation of Training Manuals into border languages, conduct study on sustainability of TIDs Office and conduct analytical study of STR at borders.  During the period under review a total amount of US$ 371,456 was spent on conduct training and STR awareness creation workshops, convene meeting of STR Experts, conduct impact assessment on STR implementation at project, conduct 3rd Training of Trainers workshop in Member States and conduct TIDOs training workshop.  Implementation of Component 4 - Implementation support, communication, monitoring and evaluation.  An amount of US$ 539,300 budgeted for implementation of Component 4 during the six months of 2019 namely hire of consultant to develop GLTFP communication and advocacy strategy, implementation of recommendations of communication strategy, conduct meetings with stakeholders in project countries to harmonise and improve SSCBT data collection, convene bilateral mirror exercise workshop, recruitment of full time Monitoring & Evaluation Expert, participation of M&E Expert in cross border surveys, conduct focused group discussions workshops, conduct of assessment mission to borders , servicing of Regional Coordination Meeting, enhancing capacity of project staff by training, and payment of salaries for project staff.  During the period under review, a total amount of US$ 258,369 was spent on implementation of planned activities. The achievements for the first six months of 2019 can thus been summarised as follows:  (i)    Conduct of training and awareness workshop on STR at project borders;  (ii)   Convening Meeting of STR Experts;  (iii) Conduct impact assessment of implementation of STR at borders;  (iv) Conduct 3rd Training of Trainers Workshops in project countries;  (v)   Convene Bilateral Mirror Exercise Workshop between Rwanda and Uganda. |
| Legal and Corporate Affairs | (i)    Revision of Secretariat contract templates;  (ii)   Negotiation and conclusion of Donor Funded Agreements securing funding for activities for the Migration Programme;  (iii) Capacity building of a newly admitted member to Common Market on legal requirements under the COMESA Treaty; and  (iv) Conclusion of annexes under the Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement; |
| Strategic planning | (i)    Facilitated the Mid-Term Review of the 2016-2020 COMESA Medium Term Strategic Plan to assess how effective the MTSP has been in supporting the implementation of the COMESA integration agenda  (ii)   Undertook the January - June Assessment of the 2019 Work Plan highlighting achievements for the reporting period, challenges as well as solutions and recommendations.  (iii) Compiled a compendium of Council Decisions and the status of implementation for the period 2013-2018  (iv) Coordinated the preparation of the 2018 COMESA Annual Report  (v)   Continued to support and take part in activities with the aim to improve alignment of the Strategy with efforts at the continental and regional levels; activities included participation in the Africa Multi-Dimensional Index Training by the African Union Commission among others.  (vi) Revision and update of the 2019 Country Briefs on the status of COMESA integration and programmes.  (vii)                   Participated in the Task Force Overseeing formulation of the Capacity Building Programme Objective 3 under the EDF 11 and Working Group of the COMESA-USAID Regional Intergovernmental Organisation (RIGO) System Strengthening Programme.  (viii) Supported the Secretary General’s Office in undertaking special assignments as requested by the Secretary General such as research and drafting of documents and speeches |
| Internal Audit | 75.           For the period, January to June 2019, Internal Audit implemented its 2019 work programme that aims to improve internal controls, risk management and governance practices of the Secretariat as well as its Institutions. The Unit also completed audits that were carried forward from 2018. The following 2019 planned audits were executed by a staff compliment of three following the resignation of one Internal Auditor in February 2019: Secretariat; Statistics; COMESA Competition Commission; COMESA Programming system and Procurement. The Unit outsourced the follow up audit of the payroll to provide assurance to management on the extent to which audit recommendations had been implemented.    76.           The Unit also undertook an adhoc audit arising from management’s request. This was the audit of the 2017 COMESA Staff Rules and Regulations formulation and approval process. The Unit continues to optimize the functionalities of its audit management system and as a result, a repository of audit working papers, issues and reports are being built over time for reference. Key achievements were as follows;  i. Identified noncompliance matters in the area of work programming that are likely to impact on the effectiveness of COMESA Programmes  ii. Proposed internal control improvements on areas where both operational and strategic risks are not adequately being managed  iii. Sensitized Programme Managers on compliance requirements of the sub-delegation and sub-granting manuals which are pivotal in the management of the 11th EDF resources.  iv. Prepared the Secretariat for the 2018 external audit.    77.           These audits and initiatives had an overall positive effect on the Secretariat’s readiness to minimize and mitigate business disruption in the achievement of its mandate.  78.           For the period January to June 2019, Internal Audit utilized 36% of its approved budget on the following: staff emoluments, training of one of its staff and office administration.  79.           The remaining budget of COM$ 305,405 will finance staff emoluments during the remaining period of the year, consultancy of the IT audit of COMESA strategic databases, maintenance costs of the audit system, training of two staff and the audits of COMESA Institutions that are funded by Member States. |
| Corporate Communications | 110.       In 2019, the Corporate Communications Unit continued its main role of production of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials. This was done through design and publishing newsletters, books, factsheets, brochures on various COMESA programmes. The Unit also enhanced outreach activities aimed at enhancing COMESA visibility in MS and raising awareness through direct engagement with stakeholders including the media. Some of the key results were:  (i)              Conducted the COMESA Media Awards for 2019. The call for submission of entries made, adjudication of the entries done and the best entries identified. Three journalists from three Member States will be recognized during the next summit and awarded for their work in reporting regional integration programmes spearheaded by COMESA in the Member States.  (ii)             Generated content edited and published forty editions of the digital newsletter (e-COMESA), a weekly publication that provides news updates on COMESA events and activities. The newsletter is a reliable source of information to a wide spectrum of stakeholders and the media and disseminated through online platforms.  (iii)           Published four quarterly newsletters covering the implementation of COMESA programmes and activities, the inaugural edition of the project on Enhancement of a Sustainable Regional Energy Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (ESREM) newsletter was developed and published,  (iv)           Engaged media in several Member States for coverage of COMESA activities in those countries. The engagements involved organizing press conferences and interviews for publishing in newspapers and electronic media programmes. Among the countries were: Zambia, Kenya, Eswatini, Comoros, Malawi and Zimbabwe. COMESA events and activities covered included sectoral and policy meetings, launching of programmes, signing of grants with development partners. For example, the Unit facilitated interviews with ZNBC on regional integration featuring the trade division, on the national TV stations TV1 and TV2, facilitated TV interviews for the Secretary General on the Eswatini and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation during her maiden visits to the two Member States, facilitated interviews with Malawi TV during the launch of the leather design studio and Textile incubation centre, interviews with SG for the East African Business Times anchor story for July-August 2019 edition among others.  (v)            Conducted induction workshop for COMESA Communication Coordinators from member States, developed their terms of Reference and identified priority actions for publicity and visibility of COMESA programmes and events.  (vi)           Published three editions of Key Issues in Regional Integration Vol 5, 6 and 7. In addition a new publication know as Policy Briefs on Key Issues in Regional Integration was introduced and published for use by non -technical target. Other publications were the COMESA Gazettes and Annual Report 2018.  (vii)         Edited and carried out graphic designs for COMESA publications and publicity products.  (viii)        Carried out corporate branding of various COMESA Events and meetings in Member States and outside the region (e.g. Aid for Trade Global Review Forum, Source21 Expo, Eswatini and Uganda International Trade Fairs, Election Observation in Malawi and Comoros etc) and production of visibility materials  (ix)           Produced five video documentaries covering the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), easing trade across the border; Implementation of the Asycuda World in Comoros, COMESA @25 Corporate Video, RISM Leather and Textile value Chain in Zimbabwe, leather and textile value chains in Malawi and the ESREM animated promotional video. Further, 18 video news clips were produced and disseminated through online platforms and social media.  (x)            Supported implementation of the communication and visibility strategies for the following projects: the Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project; Maritime Security Project, ESREM Project and RISM. The support covered branding, publishing, newswriting, photography, production of documentaries among others.  (xi)           Constantly updated the COMESA Website and social media (twitter and Facebook) with information on new developments focusing on the implementation of programmes and related activities. This includes developing content for the French and Arabic sites.  (xii)         Strategic dissemination of COMESA information by establishing one stop information resource desks in trade fairs and expos and delivery of IEC material to libraries of national institutions participating in the trade fairs. Among them were; the Commonwealth Lawyers conference, Source21 High Level Business Summit and Expo, Eswatini International Trade Fair and the Uganda International Trade Fair.  (xiii)        Organized publicity activities and publicity and branding to mark the 25 years of COMESA (activities included production of a COMESA @25 Anniversary video. |
| Budget and Finance | Within the 2019 priority of delivering sound financial management, the Secretariat through Budget and Finance Division implemented holistic risk management activities:  -        Treasury and budget planning, control and reporting  -        Accounting and financial control  -        Grants financial control  -        Advisory and capacity building support  The above, has resulted in positive assurances from internal and external audits whilst enabling the Secretariat to focus on significant financial management risks. |
| Human Resources and Administrative services | **Human Resources**  Recruitment has been the key activity in the Unit and consumes a lot of time because the process is manual back to end. This year has witnessed an increased number of vacant positions in the Regular category and a much higher number in the projects especially the 11th EDF.  The payroll is still a challenge and problems continue to be experienced and there is a lot of manual work done to cross check and make corrections on omissions by the system. |
| **Library Resources**  Building a strong information collection in line with COMESA Programme areas has been in the forefront through acquisition of new information resources, subscription to online journals & subject databases, classification of information resources using Dewey Decimal Classification system, cataloguing using the Anglo-American Rules, barcoding of individual books, data entry onto the library system and spine labelling and appropriate shelving.  Building collaboration, partnerships and exchanges for Information dissemination through workshops, COMESA Summit, Book Fairs, and Trade fairs in Member States and stakeholders as well as learning international conferences |
| **Conference services**  The Conference Services Unit provides conference and meeting management services to the Secretariat, member States and stakeholders. This support includes the provision of Conference facilities, secretarial support, documentation, translation and interpretation services as well as general conference management support systems. |
| **Procurement**  (i)    Goods and services have been obtained cost effectively and within reasonable time to support programme activities.  (ii)   Several consultants have been engaged to undertake studies on behalf of divisions, projects and Member States.  (iii) To ensure a conducive working environment, the Unit undertaken refurbishments and renovations of offices and other facilities in the Secretariat to ensure a secure and healthy working environment.  (iv) The Unit successfully offered logistical services for the successful holding of scheduled meetings in 2019.  (v)   Offering advice and support to Divisions, Programmes and Units on procurement issues.  (vi) The Unit has built strong supplier relationships and has entered into several service level agreements with a number of suppliers and contractors. This has ensured good use of the limited staff resources in the Unit |
| Information Technology and Networking | In 2019, Information Technology Division continued to have a programme approach to implementing COMESA initiatives under various Strategic Objectives as follows;  (i)    Held the 2nd Digital FTA Workshop in Malawi where a working prototype of the electronic Certificate of Origin was presented, and Member States adopted it and invited countries to pilot;  (ii)   Carried out study tours in two (2) border posts in COMESA Member States (Galafi & Moyale), four Smart Borders (Estonia & Finland) which enabled the development of the Smart Border Terms of Reference. This visit provided an opportunity for cooperation in implementation of various initiatives in an MOU under discussion with the government of Estonia and COMESA;  (iii) Working with Legal and Corporate Affairs Division, Information Resource Centre, operationalized the COMESA intranet and added Council Decisions module to enhance the knowledgebase on COMESA programmes, Reports, Publications and other documents;  (iv) Developed Terms of Reference for engaging a consultant to carry out Business Process Re-engineering in order to achieve an Integrated paperless business operating environment with improved access to information and efficient reporting;  (v)   Revised the Terms of Reference for the design of a containerized fully functional Data center with adequate ICT equipment;  (vi) Installed and commissioned video conferencing facilities in five (5) Member States – Zambia, Mauritius, Comoros, Madagascar, Seychelles and the COMESA Secretariat;  (vii)     Enhanced the Paperless Conferencing tool to make it more efficient and robust. Conducted training on the tool to the Conferencing Unit staff to enable them use the tool;  (viii) Developed terms of reference for carrying out a system Audit for COMESA secretariat’s IT infrastructure and information systems (for us to find gaps)  (ix) Installed the necessary Infrastructure to Host 50 million women speak portal in COMESA server room to serve 36 member states. The content structure for 50 million women speak project was developed.  (x)   Installed a new backup system to secure the third level backup in addition to the current replication mechanism in place.  (xi) Provided the necessary support for all COMESA users/institutions and delegates in terms of uninterrupted ICT services (Servicing of paperless meetings , maintenance of Websites , Information systems ,online meeting facilities ,user peripherals, phone system , internet and network facilities etc. ) |