

COMESA Conducts National Consultative Workshop for Trade Facilitation Programme Implementation in Zambia



Participants to the consultative workshop at the Sandy's Creation in Lusaka

COMESA under the 53 Million Euro, 11 European Development Fund (EDF) funded project is conducting a consultative meeting to identify the gaps that Zambia has in the implementation of activities under the COMESA trade facilitation programme.

The objective of meeting is to discuss and agree with coordinating ministries and relevant key stakeholders of the targeted Member States on modalities to transform the indicative list of activities implementation of the work plan for the next fiscal year (November 2019 to November 2020).

This is in line with indicative border specific activities indicated in the Description of the Action (DOA) as well as receive inputs and way forward for the sub-delegation agreement. Also to be addressed are inputs for preparation of the 2019/20 work plans and budgets for activities to be implemented at the five border posts.

Participants to the two-day workshop have been drawn from Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry, Ministry of Finance, Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA), Immigration, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Public Works, among others.

The meeting being held at Sandy's Creation in Lusaka from 5-6 February 2020 is expected to create an enhanced understanding of the scope and expected outcomes of the project by the country, review and agreed on border specific activities for support planned under the EDF11-TFP and collect inputs to develop the country action plan.

It is also expected that the meeting will agree on institutional and project management arrangements for implementation of the activities under the sub-delegation agreement.

The workshop was officially opened by the

director of foreign trade in the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry Ms. Lillian Bwalya. EDF Programme Coordinator Mshuka Kamwela made remarks on behalf of COMESA.

COMESA Secretariat on 20 November 2018, signed an Agreement with the European Union for the COMESA Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP) to be funded under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF11).

The Programme aims to support the implementation of identified trade facilitation related activities that will contribute to deepening regional integration, improving inclusive regional economic growth and enhancing competitiveness of the region.

Similar consultative meetings have also been conducted in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti.

Digital Financial Inclusion for MSMEs Project is Key - CBC



Participants to the business case study under the CBC Digital Financial Inclusion Project for Micro Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Egypt.

“From these information-sharing sessions, we were able to gain an appreciation of the existing gaps and collaborative opportunities around electronic payments systems in COMESA, and their immense potential to revolutionize payments in the region,” Ms. Uwera said.

The COMESA Business Council has implored MSMEs to embrace digital finance in their day to day running of business transactions as this will ease trade facilitation.

For this reason CBC has been conducting a business case study under the CBC Digital Financial Inclusion Project for Micro Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs). The study has been carried out across nine pilot countries, namely: Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Egypt and Mauritius.

The objective of the study is to develop a business case for a Regional Common Digital Payment Policy guideline and framework

that supports the development of the digital payment scheme for MSMEs in the region.

To this end, the CBC team was recently in Egypt and Mauritius where they met with key industry stakeholders. In Egypt the CBC team met with Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), the Agricultural Export Council (AEC), and the Central Bank of Egypt. Other meetings were held with the Egyptian Micro Finance Federation, Agricultural Bank of Egypt, Agricultural Export Council, AFREXIM Bank and Egyptian Bank Co.

The discussions afforded the CBC team to understand the country's financial inclusion agenda in its monetary reform and establish multiple synergies with the project.

The Digital Financial Inclusion MSME training workshop, organised in collaboration with the Federation of Egyptian Industries' SMEs was also a resounding success.

Interactions helped the team to gain invaluable insights for the project, coupled with a lively session delving into the scope of how CBC's Business Facilitation services can support the SMEs in gaining access to wider markets across the region.

In Mauritius, CBC in partnership with the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) ran a highly successful

project awareness and consultative workshop with local SMEs and engaged various key stakeholders and drivers of digital financial inclusion to facilitate an understanding of the mechanisms of current trade dynamics.

The meetings also highlighted how digital payments, and partnerships across the region can ease trade and enhance the assimilation of SMEs into larger competitive markets in COMESA through digitally integrated solutions.

Amongst the stakeholder meetings convened were meetings with the Bank of Mauritius; Mauritius ICT Authority; the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation (TCI); Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance; Economic Development Board (EDB); Mauritius Export Association (MEXA); Mauritius Ports Authority; MCB Microfinance; Standard Chartered Bank; Emtel, and SME traders and companies.

CBC Chief Executive Officer Sandra Uwera who led the team indicated that meetings provided CBC a platform to understand the needs of the Member States.

“From these information-sharing sessions, we were able to gain an appreciation of the existing gaps and collaborative opportunities around electronic payments systems in COMESA, and their immense potential to revolutionize payments in the region,” Ms. Uwera said.



New COMESA Members of Staff Inducted



Assistant Secretary General Amb. Cheluget (middle gray suit) with the new and old members of staff. Among them Ms Providence Mavumbi (left to Amb. Cheluget), Mr. Ahmed Abdelsalam (Amb. Cheluget right), Ms. Raumnauth Darshenee and Mr Silver Mwesigwa

Fifteen new members of staff who joined COMESA in the past six months have been taken through an induction programme to prepare them for their new roles at the Secretariat. Among them are two directors, one in charge of Agriculture and Industry and the other for Trade and Customs and the Head of the COMESA Liaison office in Brussels. Others are professional staff recruited from Member States and support staff mainly drawn from the host country, Zambia.

The orientation programme was organized by the division of Administration and Human Resource to help the new staff fit in the Secretariat's multicultural environment that brings together 21 nationalities.

The new staff in the professional category are:

Ms Providence Mavumbi, Director of Agriculture and Industry, Mr Hugh Onyango, Director of Trade and Customs, Mr. Ahmed Abdelsalam, Head of COMESA Brussels Liaison Office, Mr Silver Mwesigwa, Head of Procurement, Ms. Raumnauth Darshenee, Social and Cultural Affairs Officer, and Mr. Norbert Ndayishimiye, Internal Auditor.

Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe welcomed the new staff and called on them to apply their skills and experiences in making a positive impact in promoting the regional integration agenda.

"This is the beginning for a new journey in the realm of regional integration and it's my hope that you shall bring all the experiences from your various places to help build on what we already started," she said.

Assistant Secretary General in Charge of Programmes, Ambassador Kipyego Cheluget advised the new staff to observe diplomatic etiquettes in their day-to-day endeavors, adding that they are now ambassadors of a diplomatic institution.

"Ensure that you observe high levels of discipline as you begin your journey with COMESA. Remember that you are now diplomats and you now represent COMESA in what you do and so choose the places you go to, what you do and how you do them and manage yourselves," Dr Cheluget said.

During the two-day orientation program, the staff received briefings from all divisions, units and projects.

COMESA Diary

Meeting/Activity	Date	Venue
Inauguration of Kanakantapa Cassava Cluster by the Federation of National Associations of Women in Business in Eastern and Southern Africa - FEMCOM	14 February 2020	Chongwe, Zambia
Reopening of Textile Garment Cluster by FEMCOM	14 February 2020	Villa Elizabeth, Lusaka
National Launch of the 50 Million African Women Speak Platform in Zambia	26-27 February 2020	Lusaka
Training in Basic DSGE modelling and forecasting for monetary policy formulation (CMI)	2 - 6 March, 2020	Nairobi, Kenya
Training in Fiscal stress Testing (CMI)	9 - 13 March 2020	Nairobi, Kenya
Training workshop in International Financial Reporting Standards 9 (IFRS 9) and Review of ICAAP (CMI)	25 - 29 May, 2020	Nairobi, Kenya
Training Macro and Micro Stress Testing (CMI)	15 - 19 June, 2020	Nairobi Kenya

COMESA Conducts Cross-Border Market Infrastructure Bench Marking Study



Cross border traders at Kasumbalesa border post

It has been discovered that lack of market infrastructure near borders reduces the connection between traders and customers. In addition, poor quality, or absence of, storage facilities often result in traders selling perishable stock at losses to prevent spoilage. Women cross border traders who deal primarily with low value, perishable primary products are particularly susceptible to this occurrence. This is clearly not conducive environment to have a competitive business.

To help alleviate the problem, the COMESA Secretariat and other stakeholders such as the Cross Border Trade Associations (CBTA) undertook detailed needs assessments (under EDF 11 SSCBTI Result Area 5) at selected border areas which include: Mwami/Mchinji, Kasumbalesa, Chirundu and Tunduma/Nakonde, to identify infrastructure that will support small scale cross border traders to trade with ease, reduce trading times and costs and improve the general livelihoods of border communities and other people who depend on cross border trade to earn a living.

The study which took place from 20 to 24 January 2020 at Rubavu Cross-Border Market, Rwanda was spearheaded by Mr. Tasara Musorori, Ms. Moreblessing Loxton, a Cross Border Trade and Infrastructure Expert and Mr. James Tajebwa. The main objective of the mission was to collect bench marking data that will form an evidence base for the technical recommendations to stakeholders who have submitted preliminary designs and bills of quantities for reviewing and advice. Furthermore, the benchmarking data will assist to support further steps arising from the findings and recommendations of the detailed needs assessments.

During the tour the team reviewed the operations

and infrastructure that support small scale cross border trade initiative in Rwanda and Congo DR at Rubavu/Goma OSBP as well the operating model between Cooperatives and the local authorities at Rubavu Cross Border Market to enable evidence-based technical advice to CBTAs and local authorities who have provided land for border market construction, including management structure and security arrangements.

The team also reviewed the process taken from needs identification, feasibility studies, concept designing, detailed designing, construction and operating of the border markets, including lessons learnt and areas of improvement.

The needs assessments have come up with border specific recommendations of the infrastructure that will be developed and delivered at Chirundu, on both the Zambian and Zimbabwean sides; Mwami, at Chipata; Kasumbalesa, on both the Zambian and DR Congo sides, and Nakonde on the Zambian side. A total of six sites have been identified for construction of border markets and highlevel concept or preliminary designs will be required to form the basis of feasibility studies at the identified site.

The outcomes of the feasibility study will inform the detailed designs and form the basis of preliminary costs for each site. It is on this background that the Secretariat carried out a study tour to benchmark and collect evidence of good practice and lessons learnt at the Rubavu/Goma border market in Rwanda.

FEMCOM to Launch Kanakantapa Cassava Cluster and ZFAWIB Garment Factory in Zambia



Cassava Cluster initiative in Zambia

The Federation of National Associations of Women in Business in Eastern and Southern Africa (FEMCOM) is set to launch the Kanakantapa Cassava cluster factory situated in Chongwe area about 50 kilometers east of Lusaka. FEMCOM is also set to hand over textile equipment to the textile and garment cluster based in Lusaka's Villa Elizabeth area.

At the Kanakantapa Cluster FEMCOM on 5 August 2019 committed over USD 12,000 to support the refurbishment of the Cassava cluster initiative so that it can bring back the lost exaltation that the initiative was known for. The support went towards the purchase of new cassava processing

equipment, reinstallation of new water reticulation facilities and general maintenance of the facility.

Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe, FEMCOM Chief Executive Officer Ruth Negash and the FEMCOM chapter in Zambia are expected to grace the occasion slated for Valentine's Day February 14 2020.

Once launched the two clusters will help the women in business get access to new equipment to process the cassava and garments which will result in them contributing to the economic development of the country and region as large.



United Nations Resident Coordinator, Dr. Coumba Mar Gadiou (L) courtesy call on Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe



Ms. Raumnauth Darshene, Social and Cultural Affairs Officer



Mr. Ahmed Abdelsalam, Head of COMESA Brussels Liaison Office



(L-R) Chief of Conference Services, Dr. Alick Minizha with Ms Providence Mavumbi, Director of Agriculture and Industry



(L-R) Ms Jeromine K. Fanjanirina with Mr John Mukuka of HR



(L-R) Director of Infrastructure, Mr Baptiste Mutabazi and the new Head of Procurement Mr Silver Mwesigwa



New staff induction in session



Mr. Norbert Ndayishimiye, Internal Auditor