



TRADE FACILITATION CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

Venue: Banjul, The Gambia

Date: 31 March – 1 April 2015

CONCEPT NOTE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The ECOWAS Trade Negotiation Capacity Building (TNCB) project is funded by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). It is designed to overcome some obstacles to the efforts of ECOWAS member states to intervene effectively in international negotiations and multilateral trade agreements. It also aims to build the capacity of the ECOWAS Commission to negotiate on behalf of its member states. In practice, this will take into account: the development of know-how negotiators, increased bargaining skills to intervene in specific areas such as intellectual property and trade in services; and the development of skills in international trade negotiation.
2. The Trade Negotiation Capacity Building (TNCB) project is in its second phase. During this phase, the project has worked to set up and/or operationalise Inter-Institutional Committees (IICs) in 15 ECOWAS countries.
3. The IIC functions as a platform to:
 - Analyze the Trade Policy and negotiation strategies
 - Prepare and support trade negotiations
 - Coordinate and build consensus on trade related issues between Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Private Sector, Academic structures, civil society and other stakeholders.
4. The Gambia is a Member of the WTO and as such it is under the obligation to comply with the requirements arising from the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. In the very short term, The Gambia, as a Least Developed Country, is expected to:
 - Notify its category A provisions
 - Ratify the TFA
 - Deposit acceptance of the Protocol of Amendment to the WTO (ASAP)
 - Notify its Category B and C provisions
 - Establish a National Trade Facilitation Committee
 - Inform the WTO of its technical and financial assistance requirements for the implementation of Category C provisions

5. In order to provide assistance to The Gambia to comply with its short terms obligation under the WTO TFA, the Trade Facilitation workshop would provide public and private trade facilitation stakeholders the opportunity to designate, on individual basis the provisions of the TFA into Category A (implementation upon entry into force), B (deferred implementation) or C (linked with acquisition of capacity through assistance and support) and indicated the date of their choice for the implementation of respective provisions.

II. WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

6. The workshop aims to:
 - Facilitate the Categorization of the 36 TFA provisions into A, B or C
 - Provide notification recommendations

III. PARTICIPANTATION AND SPONSORSHIP

7. The ECOWAS Commission as well as the ITC will facilitate the workshop.
8. The members of the IIC will participate. In addition to the IIC membership, participants should include representatives from the following institutions:
 - Ministry of (Foreign) trade
 - Ministry of Industry
 - Ministry of Agriculture
 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 - Ministry of Finance / Treasury
 - Ministry of Health
 - Ministry of transport
 - Customs Administration
 - Phytosanitary Inspection Administration
 - Veterinary Inspection Administration
 - Other Border Administration agencies
 - National Trade Facilitation Committee members

- Chamber of commerce
- Freight-forwarder and logistics providers
- Large traders
- SMEs

9. A total of 40 participants will be sponsored by the ECOWAS Commission.

IV. PLACE AND DATE

10. The workshop will take place from 31 March – 1 April 2015 in Banjul, The Gambia. The specific venue will be communicated in due course.

V. METHODOLOGY

11. The IIC meeting will be divided into various sessions as detailed in the agenda annexed to this Concept note. During each session, participants will have the opportunity to exchange view and share experiences. All sessions will be held in plenary.

VI. FURTHER INFORMATION

12. For more information on the organization of the workshop you are kindly requested to direct all your inquiries to Ms Yemisi IDOWI, Email: okuyemiid@yahoo.com.