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## FOREWORD, by Junior Lodge, Team Leader TBT Programme

The African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States faces a number of economic constraints characteristic of the overwhelming majority of ACP countries, that are either LDCs or SVEs. The major challenges of these countries are the followings: (a) trade dependent as measured by having a high share of total foreign trade as a percentage share of GDP; (b) reliant on tariff preferences, even though the value of such treatment is declining; (c) export concentration in terms of both products and destinations; (d) limited trade infrastructure to support enhanced regulatory framework, more so in new trade disciplines such as competition policy, intellectual property and public procurement, and more traditional ones such as trade in services; and (e) low export competitiveness arising from limited domestic market or sub-optimally integrated regional markets.



*Junior Lodge, InfoPoint Conference, April 2015*

These circumstances have resulted in ACP countries becoming exporters of primary products rather than processed goods - both agricultural and mineral. The domination of primary products in ACP exports can best be evinced from the Group's trade relations with the EU. In 2014, 78.5% of ACP exports to the EU were primary products (on an SITC-basis), rising to 88.1% if South Africa is excluded. The heavy weight of primary products in ACP exports is not limited to longstanding traditional partners such as the EU but also extended to emerging economies such as China. For example, while that country extended the product coverage of its LDC preferential arrangement in 2011, LDCs' exports (the majority of which are ACP members) remain dominated by oil. Indeed, the combined experience of ACP preferential arrangements reinforce the understanding that as tariffs decline, NTMs assume even greater importance as a test of effective market access. In this context, engaging ACP capacity to comply with the non-tariff measures of major trading partners assumes even greater importance. (...)

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## THEMATIC HIGHLIGHT

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### *Interview with Sid Boubekur, Head of CDE regional office in Southern Africa*



*Sid Boubekur, Head of CDE regional office in Southern Africa*

The TBT Programme organised an interview with Mr Boubekur, during the last month of June. The interview turned around four main questions: 1) What is the Private Sector Development Programme?; 2) What is new in the second phase of the PSDP, which started in Feb 2015?; 3) What are the synergies between the PSDP and the TBT programme?; 4) Have you seen any results so far and if not yet what are the expectations?. Please see below the beginning of the interview and don't hesitate to go on the TBT Programme web site to read the full exchange.

#### ***What is the Private Sector Development Programme?***

PSDP is an initiative of the Government of Botswana, represented by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) and the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), in partnership with the European Union (EU). The Programme is supported by the Centre for the Development of Enterprise and the Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry and Manpower

(BOCCIM). The goals of the Programme are to strengthen the value chain of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) and community based organisations (CBOs); promote SMME participation in procurement; enhance the service delivery of Intermediary Organisations (IOs); improve access to financing for SMMEs and empower women entrepreneurs. Besides BOCCIM, the other key partners involved in the PSDP are Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC), Local Enterprise Authority (LEA), Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA), Botswana Exporters and Manufacturers Association (BEMA), Botswana Bureau of Standards (BOBS), Botswana National Productivity Centre (BNPC), Hospitality and Tourism Association of Botswana (HATAB), Botswana Tourism Organisation (BTO) and Botswana Innovation Hub (BIH). Furthermore, the programme partnered with Financial (...)

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## PROJECTS' HIGHLIGHTS

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### *PACIFIC REGION: Scientific and Legal assistance for Kava production*



*Kava production from the Pacific, July 2015*

Kava, the roots of the South Pacific plant *Piper methysticum*, are an important pillar of the South Pacific culture and, as an export commodity, of the economies of the Melanesian and Polynesia states of Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa and the Solomon Islands.

Based on a February 2015 ruling by the German Upper Administrative Court, the “ban” on kava-containing medicinal products in the EU has been overturned. The longstanding inability to export kava to the EU wreaked economic injury to the Pacific Islands countries that are dependent on this important commodity trade.

With the German ban lifted, the kava products will now gradually return to the European market. In preparation of this return to commercial activity, a number of EU-funded projects have been developed to assist the ACP Pacific States. For example, An in-depth technical study followed by a High-Level conference held in Vanuatu in

March 2012 resulted in a call for a definition of ‘noble kava’ as a quality generally accepted as well-suitable for daily kava drinking in the South Pacific.

Incidentally, the reversal of the German kava ban makes a quality definition of kava a pressing issue, as there is the suspicion that the kava ban of 2002 was triggered by the use of ‘non-noble’ kava varieties (i.e., kava types not considered suitable for kava drinking because of their unpleasant effects). Work on a kava standard to be published by FAO Codex Alimentarius was started already in 2012, and with the upcoming regional conference of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) in 2016 in Port Vila, Vanuatu, the decision was taken to speed up the process by generating a broader database for the definition of specifications for the distinction between ‘noble’ and ‘non-noble’ kava. (...)

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## PROJECTS' HIGHLIGHTS

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### *ACP GROUP: Enhancing ACP Capacity in TBT Issues: Main highlights of the Informal WTO TBT Committee Meetings*



*WTO TBT Committee meeting, Geneva, June 2015*

The ACP Geneva project of the TBT Programme is an unusual type of support provided to the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries in at least two respects. First of all, the idea of collective ACP-level work and action on TBT – outside of the narrow scope of WTO negotiations – remains novel to the ACP Group in Geneva and to the ACP world more generally. This is reflected *inter alia* in the collaboration and consultation of delegates with clearly articulated interests in TBT work at the WTO.

Secondly, while TBT-related measures and activities are by their nature primarily addressed by capital-based officials, many ACP delegations in Geneva experience a deficit of communication with and instructions from capital on TBT matters. In spite of the challenges, the

ACP Geneva TBT project has delivered tangible support, for instance through Assisting ACP participation in three meetings of the TBT Committee. These are on 16-20 March 2015, 15-19 June 2015 and 2-6 November 2015). 10 ACP country delegates have participated at the WTO. At the June session, the TBT Programme supported the participation of ACP delegates from 10 countries, viz.: Jamaica, Samoa, Ghana, Vanuatu, Barbados. The PMU also attended the June meeting in order to assess the value of its intervention and was represented by Ms. Claudia Schiattarella (Project Manager) and Ms. Irina Kireeva (Expert on Technical Barriers to Trade)(...)

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## NEWS & EVENTS

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### *4th Steering Committee of the TBT Programme*



*4<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee of the TBT Programme, April 2015*

The fourth meeting of the Steering Committee of the TBT Programme took place on April 28, 2015 at the ACP House in Brussels. Chaired by Mr. Viwanou Gnassounou, ACP Assistant Secretary-General for Sustainable Economic Development and Trade, the meeting reviewed the Programme's activities in terms of project requests and overall implementation during the semester period September 2014 – February 2015.

In addition to the formal Steering Committee members such as those from DEVCO and the ACP Secretariat, the meeting was also attended by observers such as ARSO, AFSEC, AFRIMETS, AFRAC; the Pacific Island Forum (PIF); and the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB).

The various stakeholders and observers were generally positive in the remarks on the Programme's work while also recommending a series of measures aimed at

improving the working methods and impact of the PMU. The meeting also offered an opportunity to consider the Programme's future implementation strategy. Participants to the Steering Committee also made observations on a number of contextual challenges facing the PMU's work. Most notably, the imminent change in the PMU's leadership posts and the policy environment, including the launch of the African Union negotiations for a continental free trade area. One proposal emanating from the meeting's discussions concerns the dissemination of results (Priority 3 of the Programme), possibly through the convening of a workshop where the Programme's best practices and results can be presented and thoroughly analysed by beneficiaries and partners..(...)

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## NEWS & EVENTS

### *EC Info Point Conference: Overcoming Technical Barriers to Trade*



*EC Info Point Conference, June 2015*

In the context of the European Year of Development (EYD), the TBT Programme together with DEVCO and the ACP Secretariat organised a lunchtime event at the InfoPoint of the European Commission. The activity, held on June 2, was the first one convened in the context of thematic month dedicated to sustainable growth as part of the EYD calendar. The lunchtime presentation focussed on the series of challenges confronting ACP countries in the area of TBT Programme's efforts to overcome technical barriers to trade in the ACP. This work is couched in a context that and while ACP face high export requirements to gain effective market access, these countries require considerable TRTA needs to benefit from Global Value Chains. The interaction allowed the TBT Programme to inform participants its won interventions aimed at supporting the ACP countries to overcome these TBT challenges.

In his introductory remarks, Denis Salord, Head of

DEVCO Unit on Regional Programmes Sub-Saharan Africa and ACP-wide, noted a series of recent intra-ACP actions as well as the new challenges ahead related to the post-2015 agenda. Mr. Mootoa Rammoneng, Expert on Intra-ACP Projects Portfolio Management and Quality at the ACP Secretariat, recalled the Cotonou Agreement's objective on integrating the ACP countries into the world economy and the importance of the related intra-ACP instruments. (Junior Lodge, Team Leader of the ACP EU TBT Programme, presentation covered the following areas, i.e. the Programme's major work; the context of the rising use of TBT measures; the imperative of TRTA to ACP export performance; the mechanics behind the TRTA delivered to ACP states and regions; and the results achieved after 2 years of implementation. (...)

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## INSIGHT

### QUALITY CERTIFICATION SCHEMES FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND FOODSTUFFS

voluntary certification schemes focusing on quality agricultural products and foodstuffs in the EU and worldwide has increased significantly. Worth noting that most of them have been established during the past decade, marking particular interest of consumers for quality in relation to food and agriculture in general. Similar interest has been apparent in the ACP countries too.

Therefore, it is agreed that quality in agricultural production is not only an issue for every farmer but also for every consumer. It concerns commodities produced according to basic standards and specific quality products. Research conducted in several European countries showed that consumers are demanding higher quality products.<sup>1</sup>

Nowadays, the quality concept includes not only traditional ideas of quality such as taste, appearance and origin but also the use of processes that are “friendly” to people (producers), animals, and the environment. In addition research reveals that more and more consumers are appreciating results from sustainable agricultural production. Two thousand years and people still agree with Seneca, who said, “It is the quality rather than the quantity that matters.”

One of the ways in promoting agriculture and encouraging farmers to produce higher quality products is to support voluntary quality standards and schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs. The development and popularity of the certification schemes is driven by social demands for particular characteristics of the product or production method going along with operators’ desire to ensure that their suppliers meet specific requirements. Clearly, private certification is not needed to confirm compliance with legal requirements (such as food safety). Any certification scheme for agriculture or food sector must remain voluntary, however, once producers join the scheme participation becomes subject to particular established conditions and procedures.

The purpose of certification schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs is to provide assurance using certification mechanism that certain elements of production method or attributes of the product itself as described by the technical specifications are observed. . (...)

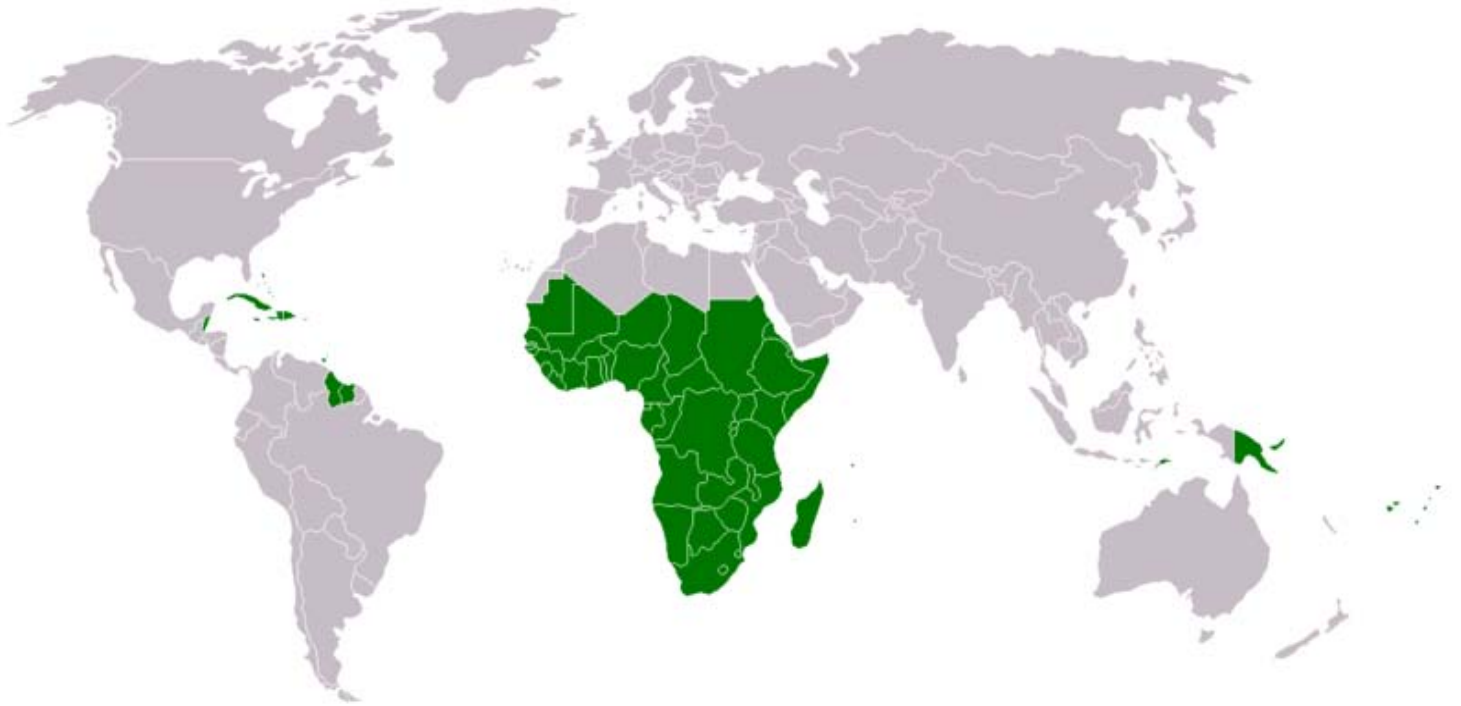
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<sup>1</sup>*In the EU over 440 different schemes in accordance with the Study made by the EU Commission (DG AGRI) - Research projects concerning Origin Labelled Products were conducted in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. For more information consult <http://www.origin-food.org/cadre/cadb.htm>.*

In the recent years the number of



## ONGOING PROJECTS



**ACP Geneva** – Enhancing ACP capacity in TBT issues

**ACP Geneva** – Support to the ACP Group

**BOTSWANA** –Reinforcement of QA Institutions

**BURUNDI** – Reinforcement des capacités BBN

**COMORES**–Appui à l’infrastructure qualité

**COTE D’IVOIRE** –Appui accreditation ISO

**GHANA** - Strengthening competitiveness of exporters

**MAURITIUS**–Regulatory Impact Assessment

**NIGER**–Renforcement des Capacités de l’IQ

**RDC** – Appuisystème de certification

**VANUATU** – Assistance for Kava production

## UPCOMING TBT EVENTS

- 9th AFRIMETS General Assembly, South Africa, **July 2015**
- 21th ARSO General Assembly, Addis Ababa, **August 2015**
- 5th International Proficiency Testing Conference, Timisoara, **September 2015**

### Additional information can be requested at:

ACP-EU TBT Programme  
Avenue de Tervuren 32 box 31  
1040 Brussels Belgium  
Tel : +32 2 739 0000  
E-mail : [contact@acp-eu-tbt.org](mailto:contact@acp-eu-tbt.org)  
[www.acp-eu-tbt.org](http://www.acp-eu-tbt.org)

