

AID-FOR-TRADE: CASE STORY

CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

The EDF (European Development Fund) Funded Commonwealth Secretariat Trade Policy Formulation, Negotiation and Implementation (“Hub and Spokes”) Project

AID-FOR-TRADE CASE STORY

**The EDF (European Development Fund) Funded
Commonwealth Secretariat Trade Policy
Formulation, Negotiation and Implementation (“Hub
and Spokes”) Project**



CONTENTS

Page(s)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.	BACKGROUND]	1-2
2.	PROJECT RATIONALE AND DESIGN]	2-5
3.	OVERVIEW OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT]	4-5
4.	HIGHLIGHTS OF PROJECT INTERVENTIONS, SUCCESSES AND LESSONS LEARNT]]	5-6
5.	TRADE POLICY CAPACITY BUILDING AND INPUT INTO THE POLICY FORMULATION AND NEGOTIATING PROCESSES]]	6-11
6.	ESTABLISHING AND MANAGING PUBLIC PRIVATE SECTOR CONSULTATIVE NETWORKS]]	11-13
7.	IMPLEMENTING POLICIES, EXPLOITING (NEW OR ENHANCED)] AND MARKET OPPORTUNITIES]]	14-15
8.	CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD]	15-16



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hub and Spokes Project is a joint capacity building programme which is co-sponsored by The European Commission (EC), the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec) and the Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie (AIF). The ComSec, through the Commonwealth Action (Project) Team, has responsibility for Project implementation in ACP Member States within the Caribbean, Pacific, Eastern as well as Southern Africa regions and African Union (AU). The AIF has responsibility for Project implementation in the West and Central Africa regions. The EC is the principal funding source of the Hub and Spokes Project, contributing just over €10 million. The Commonwealth Secretariat has contributed over €4 million and the AIF approximately €3 million.

The Hub and Spokes Project has been an Aid-for-Trade initiative that has generated considerable traction in the Caribbean Region. As at June 30 2010 an estimated total of 1,769 persons in CARICOM States (excluding the OECS) and 1,069 persons in the OECS have been trained, exceeding the target of 2,000 set for the entire ACP, with approximately 50% being women. This can be partially attributed to rigorous project management through the continuous evaluation of Project performance, against articulated goals, through the compiling of semi-annual progress reports and projected work programmes by individual RTPAs and TPAs. In addition, stakeholder consultation was used to provide valuable feedback and identify possible points of capacity building intervention.

Other key success factors and best practices, which may have general applicability include:

- *utilization of a bottom up approach to policy formulation and integrating the private and public sectors as well as NGO's into the consultative process from the outset.*
- *formulation of country-specific frameworks which allowed for flow of information and feedback, between and among all stakeholders and integration of the Hub and Spokes Project work programme into that of the implementation agency (organization)*
- building of partnership and collaboration with third party donors/organizations so as to augment the Project's resources
- complementing the internal Project expertise, where necessary, through collaboration with national, regional and multilateral institutions.
- ensuring Project interventions were also primarily demand driven
- restricting interventions to those that have widespread acceptance as a policy priority
- ensuring that private sector also interests are addressed
- *initiate interventions at the formative stages, cherry picking areas for concentration, while adopting an approach, which covers policy formulation through to capacity building and implementation*

The Project scope and available resources conditioned the breadth of its capacity building interventions. However, significant strides were made towards achieving the overarching project goal. Interventions straddled the following:

- *Trade Policy Capacity Building and Input into the Policy Formulation and Negotiating Processes*
- *Trade Policy Formulation*
- *Implementing specific WTO Agreements and integration into the world trading system*
- *Training in Trade Policy Issues*
- *Establishing and Managing Public Private Sector Consultative Networks*
- *Implementing Policies, Exploiting (new or enhanced) and market opportunities*

1. BACKGROUND

The “Hubs and Spoke” Project on *Building the Capacity of ACP Countries in Trade Policy Formulation, Negotiations and Implementation*” is an integral part the TradeCom Facility. The latter was launched in December 2004 and is a funded by the European Commission under the 9th EDF (European Development Fund). The TradeCom Facility specifically targets trade design and participation by ACP countries in the ongoing Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations, for capacity building assistance. *The Facility was allocated €50 million for the period 2004-2009 and included Analytical and Institutional Capacity Building components.*

The Hub and Spokes Project is a capacity building programme co-sponsored by The European Commission (EC), the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec) and the Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie (AIF). The ComSec, through the Commonwealth Action (Project) Team, has responsibility for Project implementation in ACP Member States within the Caribbean, Pacific, Eastern as well as Southern Africa regions and African Union (AU). The AIF has responsibility for Project implementation in the West and Central Africa regions. The EC is the principal funding source of the Hub and Spokes Project, contributing just over €10 million. The Commonwealth Secretariat has contributed over €4 million and the AIF approximately €3 million. The Project, which was originally set to end on 31 December 2010, has been extended through to 30 June 2012 with an injunction of €4.5 mmillion by the European Commission.

The aim of the “Hubs and Spokes” Project is to promote the effective participation of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries in international trade negotiations and to strengthen their capacity to formulate, negotiate and implement trade policies, thereby enabling them to take advantage of new market opportunities and enhance their integration into the global economy. The Project has four main components:

- Supporting ACP countries in analyzing, formulating, negotiating and implementing trade policies;
- Training and sensitizing key stakeholders in ACP countries on trade policy issues;
- Supporting ACP countries in developing national and regional consultative networks for improved stakeholder consultation and involvement in trade policy formulation; and
- Establishment of appropriate mechanisms for notification of trade policy measures to the WTO.

2. PROJECT RATIONALE AND DESIGN

It should be recalled that the Doha Declaration identified “enhanced market access, balanced rules, and well targeted, sustainably financed technical assistance and capacity-building programmes” (**Paragraph 2 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration**) as necessary ingredients for international trade to drive economic development and

meaningfully contribute to poverty alleviation in developing countries, which form the majority of the overall WTO Membership. The Hubs and Spokes Project was conceived as a direct response to this call by Ministers of WTO Member States.

an important feature of the Project is the allocation of Regional Trade Policy Advisers (RTPAs) or “Hubs” in regional bodies and Trade Policy Analysts (TPAs) or “Spokes” in Ministries of Trade in ACP capitals and regional bodies. The RTPAs, *inter alia*, provide technical advice in respect of the negotiation of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), multilateral and regional trade negotiations, compliance with WTO Agreements and other trade-policy related issues. The TPAs are expected to conduct research and analysis to inform trade policy development and support the domestic trade negotiating agenda of the individual countries to which they are stationed.

“Hubs” were made available to Regional organizations such as African Union (AU); Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC); West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA); Caribbean Community (CARICOM); Southern Africa Development Community (SADC); Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS); and Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). At the peak in 2009, there were twenty-six (26) “Spokes” (TPAs) at post. The Project also provides funding for capacity building activities identified by the RTPAs in collaboration with their host organisations. Activities funded by the Hubs and Spokes Project have included workshops; seminars; support to delegations of host governments to attend negotiation sessions; short courses and study tours. The Project also funds all travel costs by RTPAs and TPA for travel authorized by the host organisations.

For the Caribbean, the technical assistance provided by the Hub and Spokes Project came at juncture when the Region was engaging in the process of negotiating new trade agreements including the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The Region was also attempting to fully understand, and discharge obligations under the World Trade Organization (WTO) and implement CARICOM’s bilateral trade agreements. In addition, regional governments as well as the private sector were actively looking for new market opportunities as they sought to use increased trade as a tool for delivering sustained economic growth and alleviating poverty.

A key consideration in the Hub and Spokes Project design and implementation has been the adoption of a consultative approach when formulating trade policy which incorporates all relevant stakeholders. This approach ensured the mainstreaming and integration of trade policies so derived into overall domestic development and trade negotiating strategies. The Project also focused on building capacity, skills and expertise in Ministries of Trade, other affiliated agencies and the private sector, as well as national and regional institutions charged with responsibility for trade policy formulation and negotiations.

Consistent with the integrated and practical approach to delivering capacity building assistance, under the Caribbean Hub and Spokes Project, two (2) **Regional Trade Policy Advisers (RTPAs or ‘Hubs’)** were assigned to the Region -one in the Caribbean Community Secretariat and the other at the OECS Secretariat. In addition, eight (8) **Trade Policy Analysts (TPAs or Spokes)** were allocated to the Region – one each to Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago, the CARICOM and OECS Secretariats,.

3. OVERVIEW OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT

The CARICOM Secretariat was designated manager of the Hub and Spokes Project serving Belize, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. The OECS Secretariat manages the Project serving Dominica, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Hub and Spokes Project has been fully integrated into the CARICOM Secretariat and has made a significant contribution to building capacity of CARICOM Member States served to engage in the negotiation of trade agreements and the formulation of trade policies. This can be attributed to efforts to ensure that the work programme of the Project was guided by the overall work programme of the CARICOM Secretariat and the conduct of periodic needs assessments by the RTPA. As at June 30 2010 an estimated total of 1,769 persons in CARICOM States (excluding the OECS) and 1,069 persons in the OECS were trained. This exceeds the target of 2,000 set for the entire ACP, with approximately 50% being women. Additionally, the Project has also made significant contributions in other areas, *inter alia*:

- provided effective assistance with respect to CARIFORUM’s preparations for and negotiations of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Community;
- conducted training on rules of origin in all beneficiary Caribbean countries, as well as training in the areas of export subsidies and fisheries subsidies negotiations at the WTO;
- provided the draft CARIFORUM-EU Rules of Origin Protocol, which formed the basis of the negotiations on Protocol I – Concerning the Definition of the Concept of ‘originating products’ and Methods of Administrative Cooperation – of the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement;
- coordinated the development of an EPA Implementation Road Map which set out in chronological order, the commitments to be discharged by CARIFORUM countries;
- assisted in the formulation of trade policies and strategies in Member States; facilitated the establishment of trade-related networks and private sector involvement in the development of trade policy;
- facilitated the establishment and functioning of a Regional Task force on cultural Industries; and
- assisted in the establishment of the Coalition of Services Providers in some Member States.

The total expenditure on initiatives implemented in the Caribbean Region under this Project thus far is approximately €1 million with the Caribbean Region accounting for approximately 40% of the Project intervention budget allocated for the ACP. Within the Region it should be noted that 40% of expenditure were with respect to trade policy formulation while 35% has been dedicated to initiatives relating to exploiting market opportunities.

It is envisaged that over the next eighteen (18) months the Project will continue to play a critical role as the Region strives to meet the new challenges of an international trading environment that places a premium on innovation and competitiveness.

4. HIGHLIGHTS OF PROJECT INTERVENTIONS, SUCCESSES AND LESSONS LEARNT

Having allowed for a greater understanding of the background and origins of the Hub and Spokes Project, as well as its design, performance and impact, the focus will now be shifted to highlighting a few of the strategic capacity building interventions undertaken by the Project. This will be undertaken in an attempt to elicit and demonstrate key lessons learnt, success factors and best practices, which may have general applicability to Aid-for-Trade initiatives geared at building capacity of developing countries in trade policy formulation, negotiation and implementation.

strategic capacity building interventions undertaken by the element of the Project manager by the CARICOM Secretariat will be examined in the context of the extent to which the overarching project aim and subsidiary objectives, as well as the objectives defined for the Initiative by the Recommendations of the Director-General's Task Force on Aid-for-Trade, have been achieved. The latter include (i) enabling developing countries to use trade more effectively to promote growth, development and poverty reduction and to achieve development objectives; (ii) to assist smooth integration into the world trading system; and (iii) to assist in the implementation of trade agreements.

5. TRADE POLICY CAPACITY BUILDING AND INPUT INTO THE POLICY FORMULATION AND NEGOTIATING PROCESSES

Best Practices and Lessons learnt:

Project implementation in the Caribbean Region has been characterized by a focus on substantively and sustainably building regional capacity in formulating and implementing trade policy. A significant proportion of the Project resources (technical and financial) has been dedicated towards supporting Member States in analyzing, formulating, negotiating and implementing trade policies; as well as in training and sensitizing key stakeholders in key trade policy issues.

A Key Success Factor with regard to the Hub and Spokes Project achieving its goals has been the utilization of a bottom up approach to policy formulation and integrating the private and public sectors as well as NGO's into the consultative process from the outset. What has also been central to ensuring success is the formulation of country-specific frameworks which allowed for continuous flow of information and feedback, between and among all stakeholders, both at the formulation and implementation stages. It is also critical that, as is the case with the Hub and Spokes, the Project work programme be integrated into that of the implementation agency (organization), where this is applicable.

Another Strategy that contributed to the achievements of the Project was the building of Partnership and collaboration so as to augment the Project's resources. Thus third party donor funding and technical collaboration were mobilized with the aim of ensuring that Project resources were not spread too thinly. The WTO was successfully utilized in this way by the Hub and Spokes Project.

Capacity building technical assistance centred on the implementation of the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA); WTO and bi-lateral trade negotiations, as well as monitoring the performance and implementation of trade-related Agreements; the design of country-specific trade policy; and other trade policy related issues.. Visits to Member States and Missions were periodically conducted to provide policy advice, access capacity and review strategic outcomes; and seminars, workshops, technical meetings etc. conducted in areas deemed capacity-deficient.

Additionally, in order to complement the internal Project expertise, where necessary collaboration with national, regional and multilateral institutions were utilized in order to meet peculiar capacity building needs of Member States and the Region.

Project interventions were also primarily demand driven, while ensuring consistency with the articulated priorities of the External, Economic and Trade Relations Programme of the CARICOM Secretariat. Germane in this regard were Trade Policy Formulation; the regional integration process; the WTO negotiations/agreements; and Aid for Trade.

The Project's work programme aimed at providing assistance to Member States to adhere to their WTO commitments; educating the public and private sector on the current status of specific negotiating areas in the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations; furthering the regional integration process through sensitizing the public and private sectors, as well as civil society on the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME); the Services sector; building the capacity of Member States to engage in bilateral trade negotiations; and assisting Member States in developing trade-related policy.

Key Capacity Building Initiatives, Points of Intervention (Success Stories):

Four major capacity building initiatives emanating from the CARICOM Secretariat Hub and Spokes Project, sought to build capacity among Caribbean countries in analyzing, formulating, negotiating and implementing trade policies; as well as train and sensitize key stakeholders. They were:

Trade Policy Formulation

In respect of policy formulation, the RTPA in collaboration with the assigned TPA compiled a comprehensive Draft Trade Policy and Strategy for Trinidad and Tobago, 2011-2015. This document is currently being examined by CARICOM Secretariat to determine if it could be the basis for developing a harmonized regional trade policy.

In addition, existing consultative mechanisms like the Technical Coordinating Committee of the Ministry of Trade of Trinidad and Tobago, which is comprised of technical officers from, inter alia, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Bureau of Standards, the Business Development Company and the Manufacturer's Association, were utilized to provide feedback on successive iterations of the Policy. Further, an ad hoc Technical Review Team was established to review the Draft Policy in detail and make recommendations for improvements.

Similarly, the RTPA was also involved in the consultative process development and recasting of a Draft Regional Industrial Policy, which draws heavily from relevant aspects of the Draft Trade Policy and Strategy Developed for Trinidad and Tobago.

Implementing specific WTO Agreements and integration into the world trading system

*In respect of Building the capacity of CARICOM countries to implement specific WTO Agreements and assisting in their smooth integration into the world trading system, Project interventions focused on CARICOM countries benefiting from extensions under Article 27.4 of the SCM Agreement for the phase out of certain export subsidies to meet their multilateral commitments. Accordingly, the RTPA in collaboration with the WTO Secretariat organized a **Workshop on Export Subsidies**, which sought to assist CARICOM Member States in seeking extensions under Article 27.4 of the SCM Agreement for the phase-out of certain export subsidies and in bringing their export subsidy programmes into conformity with the SCM Agreement pursuant to the General Council Decision of 31 July 2007.*

As a consequence of the Project's intervention the Member States concerned have all compiled and notified to the WTO Action Plans for the elimination of their respective export subsidy programmes.

At the national level, the Project through the technical intervention of the RTPA in collaboration with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and Economic Development of Belize assisted with the following:

- Conduct of the WTO mandated consultations with the beneficiaries of Belize's three export subsidy programmes (Commercial Free Zones, Export Processing Zones and Fiscal Incentives)
- Preparation of a Draft Action Plan leading to full compliance by 2015;
- Preparation of a WTO notification of progress made towards becoming fully compliant
- Preparation of a draft of the official beneficiary notification letter regarding the elimination of export subsidies and
- Formation of a Technical Working Group on Export Subsidies that would ensure the implementation of the Action Plan

The Project in collaboration with the WTO Secretariat conducted **Workshop/Consultations on the Implications of the WTO Doha Development Agenda Negotiations on Fisheries Subsidies**. This initiative was aimed at building Regional capacity as well as that of individual Member States' in terms of their understanding of and capacity to participate in the Fisheries Subsidies negotiations of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations.

The Region has also benefited from the preparation of Briefs and empirical analyses of issues relating to key trade policy issues. In this regard a Briefing Vademecum for the 6th WTO Ministerial, Hong Kong, December 2005 was compiled by the RTPA and Briefing Notes were prepared for Ministers participating at the Ministerial in Geneva, Switzerland, July 2008. These briefings along with the results of empirical analyses conducted by the RTPA facilitated the engagement of individual Member States and the Region in the multilateral trade negotiations.

Technical Working Group on Export Subsidies

With respect to the Technical Working Group on Export Subsidies the RTPA worked closely with the Head of the CARIFORUM EPA Implementation Unit, established by the Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (March 2009), to compile a Re-worked Roadmap for Implementation of the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement in Chronological Order.

The 'Re-worked Roadmap' greatly assisted the Secretariat in, providing Member States with a clear understanding of their implementation commitments, since it distilled the myriad of legislative, institutional and policy actions to be undertaken at the national and regional levels, as well as provided applicable timelines. The Roadmap also

served to identify key points of intervention for Aid of Trade and formed the basis of the development of national implementation plans.

Training in Trade Policy Issues

With regard to training and sensitization, the Project has contributed to building capacity of Member States in several cross-cutting trade policy issues through facilitating and/or collaborating in the hosting of training workshops in areas such as Rules of Origin, Dispute Settlement Mechanism, Export Subsidies, Intellectual Property, ICT, Tariffs as an instrument of trade policy and the fundamentals of tariff renegotiations that enhanced knowledge and negotiating skills of Ministries, the private sector, NGOs, academia and the Regional Integration Organisations.

6. ESTABLISHING AND MANAGING PUBLIC PRIVATE SECTOR CONSULTATIVE NETWORKS

Best Practices and Lessons learnt:

When seeking to establish and manage consultative networks on trade policy, it may be best to restrict Aid-for-Trade interventions in developing countries to initiatives that have wide-spread acceptance within the particular Region or country as policy priorities in respect of diversifying national economies. It is also essential that the private sector has a vested interest and for the area of focus to be one that has not been completely tapped out by other donors.

Strategically, it is also best to initiate interventions at the formative stages, cherry pick areas for concentration, and adopt an approach, which straddles policy formulation through to capacity building and implementation. It is also critical for the *Network* to be continuously supported through strategic project interventions, until the articulated Project determined goals have been achieved. Finally, third party donor funding and technical collaboration should be sought to ensure that allocated resources are not spread too thinly. In this regard UNESCO was such an Organization utilized by the Hub and Spokes Project.

Key Capacity Building Initiatives, Points of Intervention (Success Stories):

Regional Task Force on Cultural Industries

The Project collaborated with the Directorate of Human and Social Development of the CARICOM Secretariat in the establishment and funding of the activities of the Regional Task Force on Cultural Industries, which was mandated by CARICOM Heads of Governments.

The Regional Task Force on Cultural Industries was launched on 23 October 2008 in Georgetown, Guyana. This body was mandated by a joint meeting of the **Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED)** and the **Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD)** in 2008 to develop a comprehensive Regional Development Strategy and Action Plan for the Region's Cultural Industries. Resources to support the work of the Task Force have been provided by the European Union, through the Hub and Spokes Project (US\$75.000), which is administered by the Commonwealth Secretariat in collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat.

The Twenty-member Task Force comprises representatives from a wide cross section of relevant sectors: Ministries of Culture, Trade and Finance; industry representatives; educational institutions; the private financial sector; and representatives of regional organizations including the OECS Secretariat, Caribbean Export, culture and trade representatives in the CARICOM Secretariat. The Task Force, has met three times and engaged two consultants who conducted research during 2009-2010 and produced the following reports: a) *The Design and Impact of an Exemptions Regime for the CARICOM Cultural Industries*; b) *Incentives Schemes in Member States for Cultural Industries and Disincentives for their Growth and Development*; c) *International Best Practice in Government Policy: Incentives for Cultural Industries Development*; and d) *Educational Policy and Facilities for Education in the Arts and Culture in Member States*.

These studies are being used to inform the preparation of the Regional Strategy and Action Plan, which will include recommendations for an appropriate incentives regime and financing mechanism for the cultural industries; data for inclusion in national registries of artistes and cultural workers; resolving classification issues related to cultural products and services; addressing challenges in free movement under the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME); ensuring the appropriate treatment of culture in trade negotiations and trade agreements; strengthening regional institutions in culture, especially the Caribbean Festival of Arts (CARIFESTA).

The Strategy, when completed, will be presented to Ministers of Culture, Trade and Finance, and ultimately the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community to adopt a harmonized policy framework for cultural industry development.

Coalitions of Service Industries

Given the emergence of the Services sector as the major growth pole within the Caribbean region, the Hub and Spokes Project was also instrumental in the establishment of and strengthening of Coalitions of Service Industries in individual CARICOM countries. To this end the focus was on strengthening the coalitions of services providers in Member States such as Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Barbados, as well as establishing coalitions in Belize,

Jamaica and Suriname (*as well as St. Kitts, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Antigua and Barbuda in collaboration with the OECS Secretariat*).

To ensure continuity and success the Project subsequently funded capacity building initiatives targeting individual Coalitions. These included workshops to develop negotiating positions and assess market opportunities for the ongoing CARICOM-Canada FTA negotiations; as well as building capacity in Intellectual Property and ICT Innovation.

7. IMPLEMENTING POLICIES, EXPLOITING (NEW OR ENHANCED) AND MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

Best Practices and Lessons learnt:

In the Caribbean region there has also been a strategic focus on building capacity in policy implementation as well as assisting Member States in taking advantage of market opportunities presented by Trade Agreements. Accordingly analyses were conducted to highlight key points of intervention for Aid for Trade since success in this area also required supply-side capacity building and a regional approach to policy prescriptions. It was also necessary to go beyond the approach of merely providing stakeholders with an understanding of the contents of Trade Agreements and move towards assisting the private sector to take advantage of new market access opportunities.

Other strategies employed included the use of a programme approach to capacity building interventions, employing information generated from consultations to inform the next stage of Project work thereby allowing continuity in Project outcomes.

Key Capacity Building Initiatives, Points of Intervention (Success Stories):

Interventions in this area included a Workshop on Taking Advantage of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA – How to Do Business in the EU. This covered both goods and services, and CARIFORUM-EU EPA Implementation issues. This workshop which was conducted in Trinidad and Tobago, and is to be replicated in other Member States in 2011, has yielded immediate returns. The Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturing Association (TTMA) reported that some new exporters have already started making shipments to the EU based on the knowledge and skills elicited in workshop.

The RTPA also conducted a comprehensive analysis of the performance of all CARICOM's bilateral trade agreements, the results of which were presented to Regional Trade Ministers. This provided an understanding of the possible reasons for the less than satisfactory performance by CARICOM Member States under bilateral trade

agreements; an assessment of possible future policy prescriptions; and possible areas for Aid for Trade interventions.

In many Regional economies Free Zones have emerged as a trade-related policy instrument for boosting exports. Given the need to reconcile the export contingency elements of existing legislation with WTO law, the Project has been actively involved in reviewing and recasting domestic incentive programmes. Further, the RTPA has conducted initial stakeholder consultations and is currently involved in the formulation of a Strategic Plan for the Corozal Free Zone in Belize.

The Project has is also involved in supporting the formulation of trade-related laws/regulations. The Region has made significant strides towards preparation of the Harmonized Policy Framework to facilitate Intra-regional Trade in Financial Services, as well as the completion of the Harmonized Customs Legislature (Draft Bill).

8. CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

The Hub and Spokes Project has been an Aid-for-Trade initiative that has generated considerable traction in the Caribbean Region, with recognized deliverables and outstripping projected goals. This can be partially attributed to the continuous evaluation of Project performance through the compiling of semi-annual progress reports and projected work programmes by individual RTPAs and TPAs, each of which assessed the impact of each initiative undertaken. However, moving forward the possibility of utilizing more robust indicators of Project impact should be explored.

Perhaps due to its success, the Project in recent times received several requests from Member States which outstripped the available financial resources. As such, efforts have been increasingly made to navigate the increasing demand on the limited financial and technical resources available. In this respect there will continue to be a dedicated effort to utilize established strategic relationships in order to execute capacity building activities. Moving forward, interaction and continuous dialogue with the stakeholders and Member States will be the leading mechanism for providing valuable feedback to instruct activity programming.

The major planned initiative for 2011 will be the hosting of an EU Export Rally (workshop series) – Exporting to Europe under the WTO Agreements and EPA, which will consist of tailored two-day series of workshops as a follow up to the February 2010 Goods and Services EPA Awareness Workshop delivered in Trinidad. The Rally will target the private and public sectors and build capacity in the market access components of these Agreements and actually furnish the private sector with additional tools to get their goods and services to market in the EU. The countries targeted will be **Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Barbados, Jamaica and Suriname.**

The Workshop Series will utilize adult learning techniques, interactive hands on work assignments, ITC learning environment and Skype VOIP technology to enhance the retention level of participants. Each event will be designed to provide exporters with an increased understanding of how to export their good and services to the EU, in traditional and non-traditional markets, based on specific sectors identified before hand by key stakeholders. **The Rally will lead participants through the general concept of exporting and provide them with knowledge transfer and skill which will allow them to optimize export opportunities under the EPA and WTO Agreements relating to Intellectual Property and Services.**

This initiative will provide an ideal opportunity to employ more rigorous sustainable indicators of Project impact since it primarily targets the private sector and speaks to the issues of (i) enabling developing countries to use trade more effectively to promote growth, development and poverty reduction; and (ii); assisting in the implementation of trade agreements, which are central AfT objectives.

