

COMMUNAUTE ECONOMIQUE DES
ETATS DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST



ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF
WEST AFRICAN STATES

Original: French

**Training of trainers Workshop on the ECOWAS Trade
Liberalization Scheme**

Abuja, 27 to 29 September 2011

FINAL**R**REPORT

Abuja, September 2011

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The first training workshop for members of the National Approval Committees (NAC) of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme, comprising of five Member States, took place from the 27th to 29th September 2011 at Nanet Suites Hotel, Abuja (Federal Republic of Nigeria).
2. The following Member States were represented :
 - Republic of Cape Verde
 - Republic of Guinea
 - Republic of Guinea Bissau
 - Republic of Liberia
 - Federal Republic of Nigeria
 - Republic of Sierra Leone

The following organisations also participated in the meeting:

- GIZ (German Cooperation)
- USAID Agribusiness and Trade Promotion (ATP) Project
- USAID West Africa Trade Hub

The list of participants is attached as an annex.

II. OPENING CEREMONY

3. The opening ceremony was marked by three speeches, the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, the Representative of the Acting Director of the ECOWAS Customs Directorate, and the representative of GIZ.
4. In her message, Mrs. Beatrice ARCHIBONG, Counsellor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria and chairperson of the session, congratulated the ECOWAS Commission for having initiated such an important workshop on the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme. She hoped that the workshop would provide a deeper understanding of the ETLS approval process and enable NAC members to sensitize exporters of the advantages of the scheme, in their respective countries.
5. The representative of the ECOWAS Customs Directorate, Mrs. Kinza Jawara Njai, on behalf of His Excellency James Victor Gbeho, the President of the

ECOWAS Commission, welcomed the participants. Following a reminder of the different stages in the regional economic integration process in West Africa, she highlighted one of the most important being, the Free Trade Area. She emphasized the need of Member States to be well informed about the elements of the scheme to enable their products benefit from the scheme.

6. The representative of the ECOWAS Customs Directorate, also highlighted the crucial role of the National Approvals Committees (NACs) in the structure of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme and stated the objectives of the meeting as:

- (i) Train NAC members on the regulations of the Scheme, including the approval process and its implementation.
- (ii) Enable participants to train other members of their committees as designated in the protocols in their respective countries.
- (iii) Reduce the delays in the issuing of approvals, and provide adequate sensitization of officials in the fore front of the scheme and the general public
- (iv) Have an Improved and efficient implementation of the scheme

7. After having reminded participants of the necessity of realizing the free trade area, the representative of GIZ, Mrs. Petra Voionmaa, underlined the importance of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme. She also congratulated the ECOWAS Customs Directorate for having initiated this workshop for training NAC members who are the essential pillars for sensitizing the population that wish to benefit from the advantages of the scheme.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

8. The following bureau was elected:

- Chairman: Nigeria
- Rapporteurs: Guinea
Liberia

IV. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

9. The following agenda was adopted:

Item 1 : **General** Presentation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme

Item 2 : Practical case study: Approval Procedures of Nigerian NAC.

Item 3 : **Group** working session on the ETLs Approval Procedure.

Item 4 : Any other business
Reflections on Mandate of the NACs

OUTCOME OF DELIBERATIONS

Item 1: PRESENTATION OF THE ECOWAS TRADE LIBERALISATION SCHEME

10. The ECOWAS Commission gave a presentation on the procedures of the approval of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme. It focused in particular upon the determination of the criteria for approval based on the ECOWAS rules of origin. To be considered as originating from ECOWAS the product must fulfill at least one of the following rules of origin according to article 2, protocol A/P1/1/03:

- i. Products wholly produced in Member States according to article 3 of protocol A/P1/1/03
- ii. Goods which have been produced in the Member States but contain materials which were not wholly obtained from Member States, provided that such materials have undergone operations and processes that confer Community origin as defined in article 4 of protocol A/P1/1/03

11. The ECOWAS Commission subsequently provided

- a. A calculation of the proportion of 60% local content in the products (b) to (i) cited in article 3, paragraph j
- b. The criteria for change of tariff headings which must be reflected in the first 4 letters of the HS code.

- c. The calculation of value-added which must be at least 30% of the ex-factory price minus taxes of the products (article 4, paragraph 2 of the mentioned protocol)

12. Finally, the ECOWAS Commission made a comprehensive presentation of the approval process, and stressed the necessity of having a functioning NAC in each Member State. In addition, it informed the participants that the Certificate of Origin is the proof of the origin of a product and is issued by the competent authority in a Member State.

Item 2: CASE STUDY

13. The ECOWAS Commission invited the host country, Nigeria, to present its NAC as well as its internal process of awarding the ETLS approval to applying enterprises. Nigeria made her presentation by referring to the following points:

- a. The location of the agency for collecting the application form for admission into the scheme
- b. The method of completing the application form for admission into the scheme
- c. The NAC meetings examining the application forms
- d. The authority responsible for issuing the certificate of origin
- e. The transmission of the dossier to the ECOWAS Commission

14. After this presentation the participants congratulated Nigeria for her presentation and asked questions related to the duration for processing the document and to the frequency of NAC meetings held to examine the applications.

Item 3: GROUP WORKING SESSION ON THE ETLS APPROVAL PROCEDURES

15. The second day was devoted to work in country groups in order to put into practice the knowledge on Rules of Origin acquired on the first day. Each Member State dealt with one hypothetical case of an application for approval based on the rules of origin.

16. At the end of the group work, the plenary session allowed every Member State to present its assessment of its hypothetical application by justifying the criteria considered for approval.

17. At the end of these presentations, Member States had a better general understanding of the process of approval into the scheme. The Member States participated actively in the group work.

Item 4: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

18. The issue of the mandate of the NACs was discussed. A proposal of expansion of the NACs' mandate was made to enable them to transmit information on the scheme within Member States but also to facilitate their recognition as a separate entity. This issue of any other business will be discussed in more detail at the annual meeting of NACs.

19. Regarding the ETLS website, the Commission brought to the attention of participants its completion and launch by the end of this year.

VI. CLOSING SESSION

20. The closing session was marked by two contributions. The first was that from Mrs. Kinza Jawara Njai who applauded the work done by the delegates and appreciated the quality of debates which took place during the workshop. She insisted that, after returning to their respective countries, the NAC members will in turn train everybody implicated in the scheme. She finally wished participants a safe journey back.

21. Finally, Mrs. Beatrice Archibong, Counsellor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nigeria and Chairperson of the meeting thanked participants for their keen participation throughout the session. She also thanked the ECOWAS Commission for its determination and commitment to ensure that the Trade Liberalisation Scheme becomes a reality. Finally, she wished all delegates safe journey to their various destinations.

DONE IN ABUJA THE 29th SEPTEMBER 2011

TRAINING OF TRAINERS ON THE ECOWAS TRADE
LIBERALIZATION SCHEME MECHANISMS WORKSHOP

Handed Signatures of the Participants

MRS. BEATRICE ARCHIBONG
CHAIRPERSON

For the Meeting

Done in Abuja, the 29th September 2011

THE PARTICIPANTS

COMMISSAO DA CEDEAO

ECOWAS COMMISSION



COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO

TRAINING OF TRAINERS ON THE ECOWAS TRADE LIBERALIZATION SCHEME (ETLS) MECHANISME WORKSHOP

Nanet Suite Hotel the 27th to 29th September 2011

VOTE OF THANKS

The participants of the training of trainers on the ETLS mechanism workshop in Abuja Federal Republic of Nigeria from 27 to 29 September 2011 expressed their deep gratitude to His Excellency **GOODLUCK JONATHAN**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Government and people of Nigeria for the warm and fraternal welcome accorded to them and the excellent facilities placed at their disposal to ensure the success of their deliberations.

Done in Abuja, this 29th September 2011

THE PARTICIPANTS