



Supporting Service Sector Development and Negotiations

14-17 March 2011

Mensvic Grand Hotel – Accra, Ghana

Aide Memoire

Background

There exists today, including in West Africa, widespread recognition that a fundamental factor in economic and firm competitiveness is the state of the services sector – in particular in core infrastructural services such as finance, telecommunications, transportation and energy and a host of other essential business services. Referring to a singular ‘service sector’ however is misleading, as in fact it comprises an enormously diverse range of sectors, each with their own peculiarities, regulatory challenges and knowledge specificities. Developing and strengthening these sectors in a systematic manner is a very challenging task, often exacerbated by the political realities of attempting to do so in parallel with identifying strategic interests to underpin possible negotiations on trade in services.

Such a dilemma is currently facing the West African region (amongst others) – attempting to improve the availability of efficient, cost-effective and high quality services, while at the same time developing and strengthening often-nascent national/regional service sectors and providers, in addition to navigating simultaneously the multiple waters of possible services negotiations – intra-regionally (ECOWAS & UEMOA), multilaterally (WTO) and bilaterally (e.g. EPA).

In this respect, services experts from across the region are expected to provide, both directly and indirectly, a myriad of advice and support to their respective Ministries, governments and firms. This calls for synthesising an adequate understanding of broader policy objectives vis-a-vis services sector development, the current state of affairs in any number of sectors, the role of regulatory reforms to underpin sectoral development, as well as the role, if any, in services negotiations and commitments to support such efforts. While it would be unrealistic to expect any single individual to retain such knowledge across the spectrum of services in the economy, it is essential that there is a ‘knowledge anchor’ who understands this process sufficiently to help manage the broader national/regional processes.

How does one proceed in the absence of a holistic services policy framework (which is so commonly the case)? What type of analysis is required to inform decision-making and what elements must it include (e.g. regulatory/policy audits, competitiveness assessments, etc.)?

What kind of process can be envisaged for helping to support this work? What stakeholders should be involved and how can their engagement be facilitated in light of pervasive capacity deficits in both the public and private sector? What technical and financial assistance can be drawn upon to help undertake such work?

Objective

The proposed training session is aimed at enhancing the capacity of the West African Technical Working Group on Trade in Services, alongside the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions and select regional experts, to better understand the range of issues – as alluded to above – at play in service sector development and negotiations.

With a primary focus on training rather than advancing the substantive technical work itself, participants are expected by the conclusion of the workshop to have a more detailed understanding of the elements that are required to design, manage and implement a more comprehensive approach to services sector development and in particular services negotiations. A key methodology for doing so, in particular as it relates to the analytical dimension, will comprise group exercises focussed on regulatory audits and/or competitiveness assessments for a select number of sectors.

Organisation and participants

This regional training workshop is being co-organised by ILEAP (International Lawyers and Economists Against Poverty)¹ and the Commissions of ECOWAS and UEMOA. The regional training will be attended primarily by members of the West African Technical Working Group on Trade in Services, established by the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions and selected regional services experts.

Resource persons will be drawn from the ILEAP Secretariat and its roster of advisors, as well as partner institutions, including African research institutions and think tanks.

¹ This training is undertaken as part of ILEAP's work programme on trade in services, which is engaged in West Africa (and across the continent) at both the regional and national level. This work programme is supported by IDRC, CIDA and GIZ.



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DRAFT Agenda

Monday 14 March	
9:00 - 9:30	Registration
9:30 - 10:30	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ECOWAS• UEMOA• ILEAP• Official opening – Commissioner of Trade, Customs and Free Movement of Ecowas Commission
10:30 - 11:15	Session I: Setting the context – service sector development and national development plans <p>This session will provide an overview of what can be done to promote service sector development and how the deficit for accounting for services in national development plans, export strategies, etc. can be overcome. Input from participants will be sought on these questions and the extent to which they are attended to at the national level.</p> Presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ILEAP Q&A
11:15 - 11:30	Tea

11:30 - 12:30	<p>Session I: Setting the context – service sector development and national development plans (con’t)</p> <p>Commentary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments from one representative from each country <p>Q&A</p>
12:30 - 14:00	<p>Lunch</p>
14:00 - 15:00	<p>Session II: Using services negotiations to promote sector development</p> <p>This session will provide a short overview of the different elements involved in preparing for services negotiations – both substance and process – and in doing so highlight how the preparatory process can be directed to support longer-term sector development objectives.</p> <p>Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILEAP <p>Q&A</p>
15:00 - 15:15	<p>Tea</p>
15:15 - 16:15	<p>Session III: The request</p> <p>This session aims to delve deeper on the inputs that go into preparing a request and how these can benefit broader sector development objectives. How to secure information on export opportunities and barriers in foreign markets? What is needed to assess the competitiveness of a domestic service sector?</p> <p>Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILEAP <p>Q&A</p>

16:15 - 17:15	<p>Session IV: The offer</p> <p>Session Four aims to delve deeper on the inputs that go into preparing an offer and how these can benefit broader sector development objectives. The emphasis will be on understanding, via regulatory/policy audits, the policies and regulations that do exist, as well as addressing concerns when they are absent. Assessing domestic sector competitiveness will also be revisited however in the context of enhanced exposure to foreign competition.</p> <p>Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILEAP <p>Q&A</p>
Tuesday 15 March	
09:00 - 11:30	<p>Session V: Sector study: infrastructure services and telecoms</p> <p>This session will examine the telecommunications sector as a case study, addressing both regulatory/policy audit issues and those related to competitiveness assessments.</p> <p>Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILEAP <p>Q&A</p>
11:30 - 11:45	Tea
11:45 - 13:15	<p>Session VI: Sector study: professional services and accounting services</p> <p>This session will examine the accounting services sector as a case study, addressing both regulatory/policy audit issues and those related to competitiveness assessments.</p> <p>Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILEAP <p>Q&A</p>
13:15 - 14:45	Lunch

14:45 - 16:15	<p>Session VI: Sector study: professional services and accounting services (con't)</p> <p>Continued from above.</p> <p>Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILEAP <p>Q&A</p>
Wednesday 16 March	
09:00 - 10:00	<p>Session VII: The challenge of aid for trade in services</p> <p>For an area with such economic importance, service sectors are not commonly targeted under aid-for-trade programmes. This session will discuss this in more detail and offer participants an opportunity to exchange views and experiences in directing development cooperation resources to national/regional priority service sectors.</p> <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILEAP • Participants
10:00 - 11:00	<p>Session VIII: The role of the private sector and other non-state actors in sector development and negotiations</p> <p>The input of the private sector and other non-state actors on deliberations surrounding services sector development and negotiations is essential. This session will present the concept of 'service coalitions' in developing countries as a vehicle for private sector engagement. It will also afford participants the opportunity to share experiences and ideas for engaging with a broad range of stakeholders on these issues, as well as to offer views on the feasibility (or existence) of coalitions nationally.</p> <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILEAP • Participants
11:00 - 11:15	Tea

11:15 - 12:30	<p>Session IX: State-of-play on services preparations</p> <p>This session will examine the state-of-play of preparations at the national and regional level with regards to services negotiations in various fora (e.g. intra-regional, EPA, WTO, etc.). Issues to be considered include: strategy, approach to preparations, undertaking policy/regulatory audits, competitiveness assessments, targeting aid for trade in services interventions, etc. Participants will help to identify deficits that can be addressed on both substantive and process.</p> <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECOWAS • UEMOA • Participants
12:30 - 14:00	Lunch
14:00 - 15:30	<p>Session X: Road Map</p> <p>This session will enable an interactive discussion to examine the next steps for advancing work on service sector development and negotiations in West Africa.</p>
15:30 - 16:00	Tea
16:00 - 16:30	<p>Session XI: Closing session</p> <p>The closing session will conclude the training workshop</p>
Thursday 17 March	
09:00 - 17:00	<p>West African Technical Working Group on Services – working session</p> <p>The day will be dedicated to the specific planning of a future work programme for the West African Technical Working Group on Services in the context of possible negotiations under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).</p>