



Trade Negotiations and Pro-poor Services Reforms: Focus on EPAs for Central and West Africa

**Laico Hotel Libreville, Gabon
23-25 October 2008**

Aide Memoire

Introduction

Trade in services is a dynamic area of international trade, presenting African countries significant challenges and opportunities especially with respect to exports and enhanced competitiveness. Countries in both Central and West Africa would like to include a chapter on services and investment in Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) that they hope to conclude with the European Union. Just a few months away from completing these crucial negotiations several lingering questions remain unresolved.

First, barriers to services trade and investment are found 'behind the border' in terms of domestic laws and regulations. These may, for example, impact on whether and how foreign services providers can enter a market and/or the treatment they receive relative to domestic firms once in the market. The relevant stakeholders do not yet understand the relationship between commitments to be made in EPA negotiations and how they relate to the process of creating a regional market or similar commitments entertained in the GATS negotiations at the WTO. Particular aspect is the potential role of services reform in reducing transaction cost and improving the overall effect on firm competitiveness. This would require a better understanding of the domestic regulatory landscape across a number of strategic sectors and linking these to the potential rules and regulatory provisions considered in the negotiations.

Secondly, trade in services are negotiated based on requests and offers tabled by the parties to the negotiations, requiring an effective consultation process particularly involving the private sector operators and consumers associations.

Finally, to secure pro-poor outcome complementary support measures should be identified as part of a comprehensive trade in services export promotion strategies.

It is essential that these concerns are properly attended to prior to concluding the negotiations.

Objective

The objective of this workshop is to review the progress of EPA trade in services and investment negotiations -- informed by analytical work and the views of the various regional and international stakeholders-- and provide a set of recommendations for ensuring pro-poor outcomes. The specific objectives are:



- Better appreciation of the state of play of the EPAs and the associated opportunities and challenges ahead;
- Enhanced involvement of stakeholders, particularly the private sector and consumer associations;
- Review of rules imbedded in the EPA legal text;
- Identify a roadmap especially on remain work at the sectoral level.

Organisation and participants

The meeting is organized for the Central and West African regions by ILEAP and with support from GTZ, COMESEC, and DFID. The meeting will be attended by negotiators and trade in services and investments professionals and consumer associations from Central and West Africa. The meeting will also be attended by a limited number of non-African participants.

In sum about 60 participants are expected and will include:

- Government officials directly involved in the conduct of services trade negotiations for Central and West Africa in the context of EPAs, the WTO and regional integration initiatives;
- Non-state actors such as the private sector and civil society and in particular representatives of professional associations and/or individual firms engaged in or interested in exporting services to the EU; and
- Researchers in academia, think tanks and regional research networks concerned with trade and regulatory policies who can provide on-demand assistance to regional and national negotiators in the formulation and negotiation of request and offers.

Resource persons will be drawn from ILEAP's roster of advisors and partner institutions, including African research institutions and think-tanks.



Agenda

23 October	
08:30 - 09:00	Registration
08:30 - 09:00	<p>Opening Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative of CEMAC/ECCAS Secretariats • Dr. Dominique Njinkeu, Executive Director, ILEAP • H.E. Mr. Patrice TONDA, Minister of Trade, Industry, and in charge of NEPAD, GABON
9:00 – 9:30	<p>Session I: State of Play on Trade in Services Negotiation of the CA and WA EPA</p> <p>This session will state where review the state of services trade negotiations and highlight key threats and opportunities for African countries</p>
9:30 - 11:00	<p>Session II: Analysis Of Options And Opportunities For African Countries</p> <p>This session will seek to understand the market for trade in services in the EU, including an assessment of developments in selected sectors. It will also review the EC-CARIFORUM EPA and the EC Revised Offer at the GATS, and identification of gaps, if any between the two.</p> <p>Presentation: R.V. Anuradha</p>
11:00-11:30	Coffee Break
11:30-13:00	<p>Session II: Analysis Of Options And Opportunities For African Countries</p> <p>This session will look at focusing services provisions to make Central and West African EPA pro-poor, informed by the EC-CARIFORUM EPA.</p> <p>Presentation: Ms. Silke Trumm</p>
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch,
15:30 - 16:00	Coffee
16:00-17:30	<p>Session III : Investment and establishment provisions in EPAs.</p> <p>This session will present the investment and establishment provisions of the EPA horizontally, with illustration from selected infrastructure and ICT sectors.</p> <p>Presentations: Daniel Crosby and Silke Trumm</p>



17:30-18:00	<p>Session IV: Methodology for Sectoral Review</p> <p>This session aims to introduce the methodology to be used for the sectoral analysis that will be the main focus of work on the second day. For each sector discussions will center on a range of opportunities that exist in European market as well as the impediments that could be addressed in the EPA negotiations. The discussion will identify, where relevant, remaining work for preparing and negotiating requests and offers in both Central and West Africa. Discussion in each sector will identify and consider mechanisms for involving the relevant stakeholders. Participants will be split into sub-groups to prepare the recommendation that will be reported back at plenary sessions.</p>
24 October	
08:30 –10:30	<p>First break-away session and reporting back: Group 1: Telecommunications and ICT <i>Facilitator: Daniel Crosby</i></p> <p>Group 2: Audi-Visual Services <i>Facilitator: Anuradha R.V</i></p> <p>Group 3: Ecommerce <i>Facilitators: Abdoulaye Ndiaye</i></p>
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee Break
10:30 – 12:30	<p>Group 1: Financial Services (banking and insurance) <i>Facilitators: Beatrice Chaytor</i></p> <p>Group 2: Educational and Professional Services <i>Facilitators: Andre Monkam</i></p> <p>Group 1: Transportation <i>Facilitators: Daniel Crosby</i></p>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 15:30	<p>Session V: Review of EPAs chapter text on trade in services and investment</p> <p>This session will critically review the substance and structure of the EPA texts on services of Central and West Africa, including the various protocols being considered and rules currently imbedded in the proposed EPA text. This review will be informed by an analysis of the CARIFORUM EPA text, among others.</p>



	<i>Presentations:</i> Beatrice Chaytor, Silke Trumm and Sekou Doumbouya
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 – 17:30	Session V (continued)
17:30 – 18:30	Summing up on stock sector specific work. This session will prepare a check list of and an identification of an agenda for completing the sector specific requests and offers.
25-26 October (Parallel session for CA and WA)	
08:30 – 10:30	Session VI: Overall approach to the preparation of Request and Offer This session will in view of the previous two days discussion revisit the state of preparation of request and offer in each sub-region and propose an overall approach and a work program for timely completion of pro-poor EPAs in the two regions.
10:30– 11:00	Coffee Break
10:10 – 12:30	Adoption of report and closing