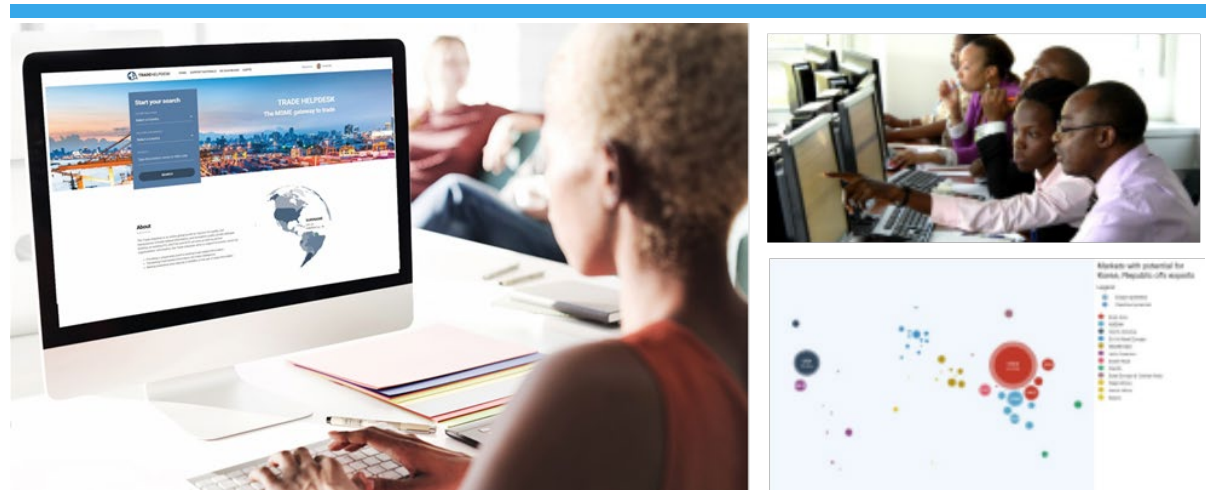


VIRTUAL CARIFORUM MEETING

UK Trade Partnerships Programme (UKTP)



Background Note

The current global health crisis is creating unprecedented challenges for our institutions and businesses across the globe as we try to protect vulnerable populations and mitigate the economic and social consequences of lockdowns. At the same time, trade support initiatives to help empower SMEs are becoming critical as firms seek to diversify their market risks, keep their supply chains moving, and adapt to shifting market conditions. Businesses need to be informed on and engaged in trade support initiatives.

In this context, the UK Trade Partnerships Project (UKTP) aims to promote trade with the UK, initially under the existing European Union (EU) Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between CARIFORUM and the EU and then under the CARIFORUM-UK EPA that will come into force at the end of this year. The implementation phase of the programme, funded by the government of the United Kingdom through the Department for International Development (DFID), will run from 2020 to 2022.

This project will increase exports under the EPA by increasing awareness of firms and institutions on how to access the UK/EU markets and better identifying trade obstacles across all eligible EPA countries. It will also build the ability of targeted firms/products to export to UK/EU markets. Following-up consultations with regional and national institutions, two sectors with high export potential have been selected under the UKTP CARIFORUM project:

1. Specialty foods: valued added agri-products with certain attributes such as authenticity, novelty, locally sourced, organic, non-gmo and ethnic
2. Creative industries, particularly music, film and animation.

This will be done through two components:

- Increasing private sector awareness of what EPA preferences are, how to use them, the business environment for exports to UK/EU markets and how to find market opportunities through communications campaigns and online trade portals.
- Promoting exports from target sectors in pilot countries through focused support and capacity building with firms, sector organisations, trade and investment support institutions, trade/business support providers and export promotion agencies.

To adjust to the specificities of CARIFORUM EPA in the current health and economic crisis, and accommodate regional priorities, ITC, together with the CARIFORUM Directorate and regional partners, have organised virtual regional meetings with relevant national and regional trade support agencies in CARIFORUM. The objectives of the meeting are to:

- Inform main objectives and desired impact of the UKTP.
- Refine activities and work plan of the UKTP interventions in CARIFORUM States.
- Determine synergies with the existing national and regional initiatives;
- Present ITC trade intelligence services and possible intervention in CARIFORUM;
- Take stock of the availability of trade information and information dissemination mechanisms in CARIFORUM States; and
- Review existing mechanisms to monitor business environment, including regulatory and procedural obstacles to intra and extra-regional trade in CARIFORUM.

The virtual meetings will take place via Webex on the 28th and 29th May 2020, bringing together representatives of the CARIFORUM Directorate, National EPA Coordinators, representatives of national, regional and sub-regional trade support agencies such as Chambers of Commerce, Statistical Service Units, Development Agencies, Trade Support Institutions and Government institutions of the selected CARIFORUM States.

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Agenda

28-29 MAY 2020

WEBEX

Day 1 – General Overview of the UKTP CARIFORUM Programme, 28th May 2020

09:30 **Online registration: access to the online meeting through Webex link**

Eastern Time Zone

10:00 **Opening remarks (CARIFORUM, UK Government, Caribbean Export, ITC)**

10:30 **Introduction to UKTP: objectives, activities and desired impact in pilot countries and the region**

The ITC will introduce the five outputs of the UKTP and presents the results of the inception report for the Caribbean. It will also shed light on the implications of Covid-19 on the design and implementation of UKTP activities in the region.

11:00 **Regional and national initiatives**

Delegations will be invited to present ongoing programs to find synergies with UKTP project.

12:00 **Discussion of UKTP work plan with Q&A**

All participants

13:00 **End of meeting**

Day 2 – Trade and Market Intelligence Component of the Programme, 29th May 2020

09:30 **Online registration: access to the online meeting through Webex link**

09:45 **Current challenges and opportunities of data collection and information transparency in Caribbean**

Delegations will be invited to present their country-specific interventions on current experiences and future challenges with getting access, processing, analysing and disseminating trade information in their country, in particular in times of covid-19.

10:45 **Discussion and recommendations on data and information transparency in the region**

11:15 **Virtual coffee break**

11:20 **Review of mechanisms to monitor the business environment in Caribbean**

ITC and CARIFORUM countries delegates will exchange views and experiences on identifying and monitoring trade constraints faced by businesses and fostering dialogue with private sector, as well as related challenges in times of covid-19.

12:15 **Discussion and recommendations on monitoring the business environment in the region**

13:00 **End of the workshop**

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