UKTP – CARIFORUM

The United Kingdom Trade Partnerships (UKTP) Programme aims to increase trade from African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) to the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU) by maximizing the benefits of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). In the Caribbean, the UKTP Programme works in partnership with the CARIFORUM Secretariat and national and regional stakeholders. It is funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC).

The UKTP Programme offers a unique platform to scale-up an agile response to the economic crisis that accompanies the Coronavirus (COVID-19) health crisis by leveraging market intelligence, working with targeted sectors and institutions and facilitating export linkages. It has two broad components: (1) Trade and Market Intelligence; and (2) Sector Support.

Selected sectors

Following consultation with national and regional institutions and a comprehensive market analysis across 14 CARIFORUM EPA countries, two sectors have been identified under the UKTP Programme:

Specialty foods: valued-added agricultural products which are organic, locally-owned and authentic to the region; and

Creative industries: including animation, film and music.

There is a great potential in raising the agro-processing capacity of CARIFORUM countries in order to diversify exports and to create greater linkages with the tourism industry, retail and wholesale markets. The region is well placed to take advantage of the trade in cultural goods and services to promote Caribbean cultural identity within a framework of sustainable economic growth.

Results

The outcome of the UKTP Programme will be increased trade between CARIFORUM EPA partner countries and the UK/EU. This will be achieved by:

1. Increased awareness of EPA preferences and benefits;
2. A more transparent business environment for exports;
3. Improved institutional/business services to support market access;
4. Increased capacity to export to the UK/EU market;
5. Activated market opportunities.

Trade Market Intelligence Component

AWARENESS OF EPA BENEFITS

The UKTP Programme will build awareness of the advantages of EPA preferences and benefits for CARIFORUM countries. In partnership with regional and local institutions, ITC will conduct a modular training programme to improve awareness and understanding of preferential market access conditions under the EPA.

The training will include export analysis to identify attractive markets and products, guidelines on EPA rules of origin and the opportunities associated with the EPA. This way countries can prioritize exports with preferential access and develop strategies to capture untapped export potential. The training programmes will primarily cater to the needs of exporters, producers, government extension staff and trade support institutions. These ‘EPA champions’ will employ their market analysis skills to advise local firms, especially SMEs.

In response to the economic turbulence following the COVID-19 crisis, exporters can use timely market information, including EPA preferences where applicable, to anticipate demand swings and to pinpoint long-term growth potential for particular goods.

Monitoring the business environment

A business survey will evaluate the experiences of importing and exporting firms in CARIFORUM countries and will document the diverse challenges they face in reaching their target markets. It will identify the regulatory and procedural impediments at the national level that companies face when trying to meet the requirements of the UK/EU markets.

To keep up-to-date with evolving regulatory and procedural conditions, including temporary trade and operational obstacles following COVID-19, a regional monitoring mechanism will bring to light firm-level concerns to relevant policy makers. This mechanism will build the capacity of relevant Ministries to identify, monitor and address trade impediments that arise. It will raise private sector awareness regarding the prevalence of non-tariff measures and trade-related obstacles. In addition, governments will be able to use ePing, the World Trade Organization’s notification system to inform and encourage a dialogue with the private sector on regulatory changes.

Sector Support Component

Improving institutional/business services

Trade and Investment Support Institutions (TISIs) help prepare businesses to export and connect with partners in target markets. The UKTP Programme supports TISIs to improve managerial and operational performance and to assist their client SMEs reach UK/EU markets. Support is provided through advice, training and information on areas like development of organizational strategies, refining service offerings and putting measurement frameworks in place. As an immediate response to the COVID-19 situation, the UKTP Programme will provide online training and coaching on topics such as using digital tools to enhance business efficiency.
**Strengthening export capacity**

Enterprises looking to export to the UK/EU face challenges in product development, quality control, marketing and branding.

Faced with the COVID-19 global recession, SMEs must excel in meeting export market requirements and product quality expectations of customers in an increasingly competitive environment. Under the UKTP Programme, SMEs will benefit from direct capacity building interventions on export market requirements, product quality, branding and sustainability. The programme will provide tailored support for improved supply-chain linkages, sector coordination and better export results in a time of uncertainty.

To achieve this in the specialty foods sector, ITC will apply its Alliances for Action (A4A) methodology, one which connects all levels of the value-chain from production to export. Each partner will contribute or invest according to their area of expertise to enhance the competitiveness of SMEs. A4A core principles include local ownership and resilience-building through a market-based approach.

**Activating market opportunities**

Diversification of market channels and products will be the springboard for new market opportunities and sector development.

Niche markets can be accessed by identifying the right distribution channels, ensuring product compliance with UK and EU standards, and developing a strong marketing strategy.

The project will promote and develop exports from the specialty foods and creative industries sectors in CARIFORUM to UK and EU markets through commercial targeted activities related to potential market opportunities, such as identification of partners/buyers and organization of market activities. The project will target both niche/specialty and mass markets, prioritizing good, ethical trade and sustainable practices.

**Institutional partners**

- CARIFORUM Secretariat
- Caribbean Export Development Agency
- Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)
- Caribbean Network of Service Coalitions
- Ministries of Trade and Commerce
- Ministries of Agriculture
- Ministries of Culture
- Trade and Investment Support Institutions such as JAMPRO, CEI-RD, Export Saint Lucia and others
- Chambers of Commerce and Export Associations

**Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals**

Through increased trade and investment, the UKTP Programme supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by contributing to poverty reduction SDG 1, the creation of jobs SDG 8, and integrating firms into the international value chain SDG 9. It also prioritizes gender equality and strategic partnerships as part of its outcomes SDGs 5 and 17.