



PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

ESA-EC EPA Negotiations-Trade in Services Training for ESA countries

TRAINING SESSIONS TO BE HELD MAURITIUS 24 – 26 FEBRUARY 2009

Following a proposal made by Mauritius at the level of the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) Group for capacity building in the formulation of negotiating positions on an informed basis, the COMESA Secretariat has secured the assistance of EU/ ACP TradeCom Facility to hold a series of workshops in selected COMESA. The session for Mauritius will be held from 24 – 26 February 2009.

The objective of these training sessions is for each of the member states of COMESA to build capacity in order to prepare for negotiations in services and specifically in preparing their schedules of commitments in the EPA negotiations.

All the member States of COMESA have signaled their agreement to include services in the EPA negotiations because of the growing appreciation of the role and value of services in the global economy and the potential benefits to be derived from engaging in services trade. The services sector (including transportation (maritime & air), tourism, financial & business services, and professional services) is of great importance to the economic development of many ESA countries.

The key objective of the training sessions will be to provide the ESA countries concerned with the tools to identify the key services sectors for their economy, taking into account their development goals. This would enable them then to define their offensive and defensive trade interests in the context of the negotiations. ESA countries must also be aware of the priorities and positions of key actors in the negotiation process so as to better define their negotiating strategies and arguments.

The training sessions will provide an opportunity for consultation and discussion and will help to build capacity for both public and private sector players from Mauritius in the following areas:

- to prepare offer and demand schedules for services in the context of wider national and regional development needs for the purposes of effective negotiation.
- to gain an awareness of the priorities and positions of the EC and other actors in the negotiation process.
- to identify gaps in information and strategies required to support the EPA and other future negotiations and appropriate follow-up action at national and regional level.
- to enhance national negotiating capacity in regional negotiations on services.

For more information please contact the EPA Focal Point in Mauritius for the hosting of these training sessions. The Focal Point is Ms Isabelle Ramdoo, Trade Policy Analyst, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Cooperation: Tel (+230) 2138244) Email: mdramdoo@mail.gov.mu