

TRADE ASSISTANCE THROUGH MULTIPLE PARTNERSHIPS

Findings of the evaluation of three EU-funded trade assistance programmes in the Africa Caribbean Pacific (ACP) region

Evaluated programmes:

- Integration to the Multilateral Trading System and Support to the Integrated Framework, MTS component p. 2
- All ACP Institutional Trade Capacity Building Facility (Trade.Com) p. 4
- Capacity Building in Support of the Preparation of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) Programme p.6

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This brochure aims to share the findings of the evaluations of three international trade-assistance programmes implemented by the European Commission and the ACP Secretariat over the period 2002-2014. The goal is to provide stakeholders with elements about the performance, good practices and lessons learned of these trade assistance programmes. These will form a part of a continuous knowledge building effort to enhance their effectiveness. In particular, this brochure examines whether related capacity building initiatives help the supported institutions in the long term and how that is reflected in the service offered to the beneficiaries. It points at commonalities amongst the three programmes, shared good practices and lessons learned referring to key milestones, differences on the achievement of results and recommendations for future interventions in the sector.

KEY TOOLS

used during the evaluation

- Financing Agreements
- Country Strategy Papers
- Contracts with Project Management Units
- Planning documents
- Progress reports & technical reports
- Reports on activities, research, studies, etc.
- Mid-term & final evaluations of Programmes
- Meetings with relevant stakeholders (governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as International Organizations) from ACP countries and WTO

A COMPARATIVE FOCUS: good practices from commonalities in approaching Trade Assistance

A coherent vision. To frame trade assistance support in the ACP Region with the view of common overall objective: to contribute to the promotion of sustainable development and economic growth through better integration of ACP countries into the world economy.

A common approach. To encourage the process of integration of ACP countries into the international trade, especially by fostering the understanding of trade-related issues in ACP countries.

Awareness raising focus. A constant focus on awareness raising activities remarkably fostered the consciousness about the benefits of international trade on sustainable development for ACP countries.

Common values. Promotion values of transparency and good governance through a participatory approach of non-state actors (NSAs) in the process of formulation of trade policies and trade negotiation positions.

Open process based on lessons learned. Each programme leaves behind a high number of individual experiences that become valuable lessons learnt for successive Programmes.

Respect of differences among ACP regions. To prioritize interventions according to the demand and needs in terms of organisation in order to channel different needs among the ACP Countries with the view of the longterm effects.

While strong commonalities had been the ground basis to conceive all trade related assistance programmes, some differences remain:

- The MTS Programme concerned capacity development required for the negotiations on the accession of ACP countries to the WTO ;
- The Trade.Com Programme took care of institution building of national and regional organizations involved in trade policies;
- The EPA Support Programme aimed at direct assistance towards the establishment of Economic Partnership Agreements as of September 2002.

Programme	Implementation period	EU contribution (in euro)
MTS Programme	2009 - 2014	17 million
Trade.Com Programme	2003 - 2012	58 million
EPA Support Programme	2001 - 2007	24 million

Integration to the Multilateral Trading System (MTS)

The programme “*Integration to the Multilateral Trading System and Support to the Integrated Framework*” (MTS Programme) was implemented as a joint initiative of the European Commission and the ACP Secretariat under the 9th European Development Fund. The programme’s overall objective was to contribute to an effective Aid for Trade which will enable ACP countries’ integration into the multilateral trading system. The programme’s purpose was to support the integration of ACP countries within the multilateral trading system, to mainstream trade into their national development strategies and to translate trade needs into Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

The MTS component was a decentralised operation implemented through a Project Management Unit (PMU) based in Brussels (from 2009 to 2014). It was a demand driven scheme with requests for assistance introduced by the beneficiaries directly to the PMU, dealing with technical and administrative tasks and support to beneficiaries in project implementation.

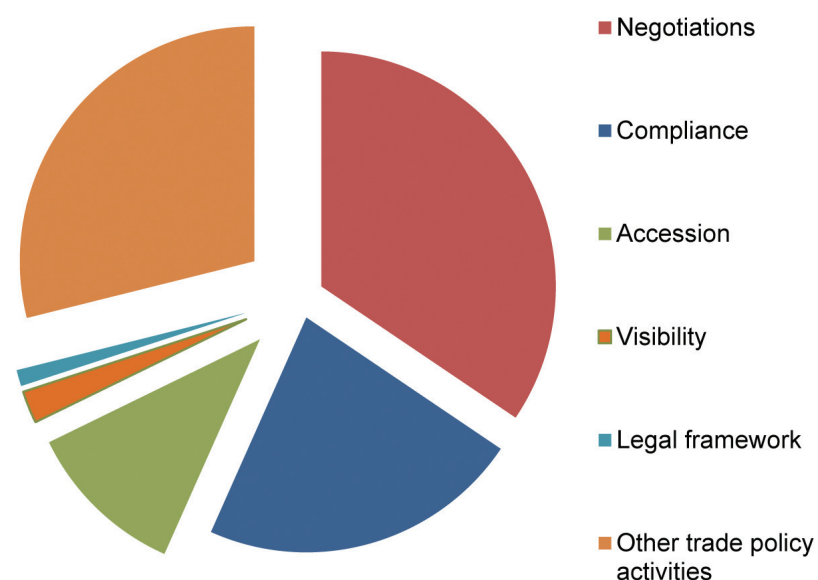
Specific results achieved:

- Enhanced participation of ACP countries in the multilateral trade negotiations and protection of their interest and concerns in the WTO negotiations;
- Increased compliance of ACP countries with their WTO commitments and strengthened regional and national capacities to implement WTO commitments;
- ACP use of the WTO Legal Framework;
- Additional ACP countries joined to the WTO.

Main data:

About 90 projects have been implemented over a five-year period. The projects implemented under the Programme components were related to negotiations, compliance, legal framework, WTO accession in the beneficiary ACP countries, as well as other trade policy activities, development of technical papers, assistance to ACP countries in the preparation of WTO meetings and Intra-ACP meetings.

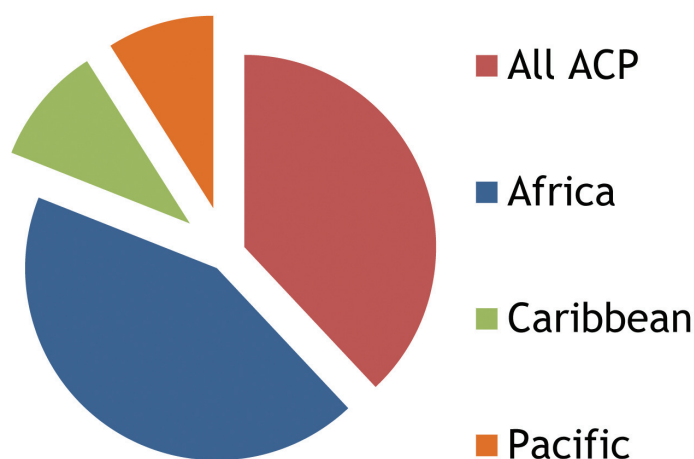
The graphic representation of sectoral distribution shows how well the initial forecast for the programme’s plan of activities was in line with what has been realised.



SECTORS	N° OF PROJECTS
Negotiations	31
Compliance	20
Accession	10
Visibility	2
Legal framework	1
Other trade policy activities	26
Total	90

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF PROJECTS

The geographical distribution of the projects was ensured by allowing all ACP countries to benefit from the programme, through ACP-wide, regional or national projects. A regional approach was encouraged as being more cost effective and enabling assisted Member States to harmonise regional positions in various negotiations fora.



REGIONS	% OF PROJECTS
All ACP	38
Africa	43
Caribbean	10
Pacific	9
Total	100%

GOOD PRACTICES OF THE MTS PROGRAMME

Predictability

Focused, timely, pro-development and highly responsive to trade development needs and priorities. Technical assistance and capacity building activities responded to the needs and conditions of beneficiary countries. ACP countries could rely on the Programme and trust that the activities have direct positive impacts that could have been observed in the Accession negotiations with WTO.

An all-inclusive approach

An all-inclusive approach concerned trade and development policies. MTS Programme activities (training, seminars, workshops or studies examined policy options that enabled ACP countries' integration into the multilateral trading system. Policy options responded to the ACP countries trade and development needs.

A multi-disciplinary method

The MTS Programme brought its expertise in trade and development, research and analysis, intergovernmental consensus building and technical cooperation. The programme developed a multi-disciplinary method to address multilateral trading system issues and trade negotiations.

Integration to MTS facilitated

Strengthening of the beneficiary ACP countries' capacities and capabilities facilitated the integration into MTS. Core groups of experts created in some ACP countries continue the integration process.

Ownership building

In some countries, the Committees identified and oversaw the effective capacity building needs and priorities. This ensures more sustainable activities consistent with national needs. This aspect can be observed for projects in many ACP countries.

Training material of good quality

Quality training material, research and information made available, widened the policy options on trade issues. The trained negotiator's knowledge of complex issues of integration to the Multilateral Trading System improved substantially. They have used the skills and knowledge gained in preparations and negotiations.

Contribution to trade negotiations

Trade negotiation teams on WTO and trade policy issues took advantage of effective assistance and coaching.

Multi-disciplinary support

Multi-disciplinary support by the MTS Programme is effective in building trade policy-making capacity.

Flexibility

The MTS assistance has been flexible and in line with the requirements of each integration stage.

THE MTS PROGRAMME: RECOMMENDATIONS

Multi-year programming: Capacity building is an ongoing process, and requires updates in the fast changing international trade environment.

Flexibility in programme implementation: Applications allowed at the individual ACP countries and regional level offered a great opportunity for ACP Countries to benefit through shared lessons learnt on specific methods and experiences.

Enhance proactive participation of private sector: While the government's role is to facilitate international trade, the fact of promoting private sector organizations will allow them to be closely involved in the capacity building activities.

All ACP Institutional Trade Capacity Building Facility (Trade.Com)

The Trade.Com Facility with a budget of 58 million EUR aimed at supporting regional integration organizations / Regional Economic Communities (REC) and ACP countries to develop their own strategies and capacities in trade policy and negotiate bilateral, regional and international agreements effectively. A Programme Management Unit together with the Commonwealth Secretariat (Comsec) and l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) implemented the Programme.

Trade.Com components

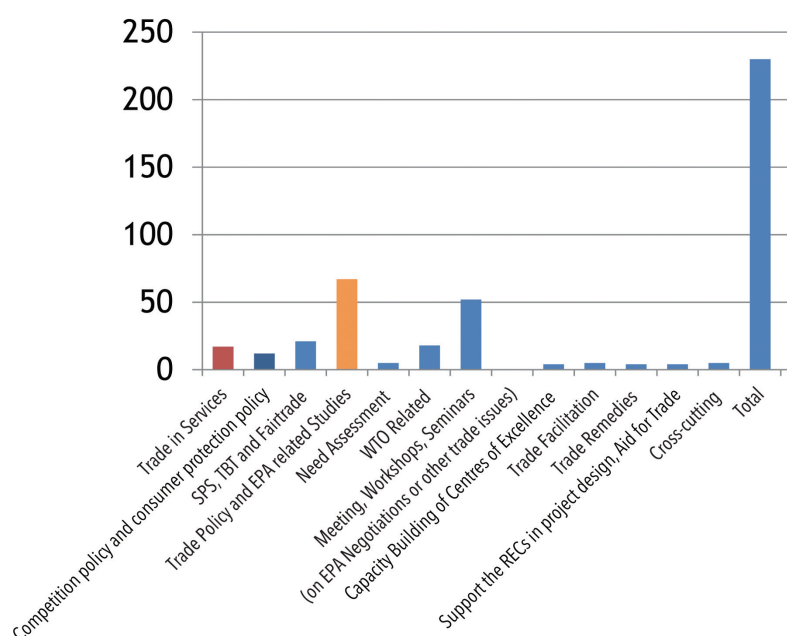
Trade.Com was composed of four original components. For the extended period of December 2010 – June 2012 a new was added:

- Component 1 implemented by the PMU, aimed at reinforcing local analytical and research capacities for trade policy formulation, while encouraging the systematic participation of all stakeholders in the process.
- Component 2 implemented by Comsec and OIF provided immediate assistance for ongoing negotiations through the recruitment of a pool of ACP trade experts and the training of ACP negotiators ("Hub and Spokes or H&S").
- Component 3 implemented by the PMU, promoted catalytic pilot activities for institutional reinforcement in trade support services, especially through the creation of an enabling regulatory environment to overcome technical and sanitary and phyto-sanitary barriers for trade development.
- Component 4 covered the role of the PMU in coordinating dissemination of information generated under components 1, 2 and 3.
- Component 5 reinforced capacities of national and regional institutions to design and implement trade strategies, including negotiation and implementation of trade agreements and long-term capacity building programmes through the provision of relevant studies and institutional support.

Main data:

Trade.Com Programme led to the identification, formulation and implementation of 230 projects, training events, workshops and technical meetings.

Trade.Com objectives were consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, countries' needs, global priorities and partners' and EC's policies.



TRADE RELATED AREAS	NUMBER OF PROJECTS
Intellectual property rights	16
Trade in services	17
Competition policy and consumer protection policy	12
SPS, TBT and fairtrade	21
Trade policy and EPA related studies	67
Need assessment	5
In general WTO related	18
Meetings, workshops, seminars related to the EPA negotiations or other trade issues	52
Capacity building of centres of excellence	4
Trade facilitation	5
Trade remedies	4
Support the RECs in project design, aid for trade	4
Cross cutting	5
Total	230

EPA: Economic Partnership Agreement
 REC: Regional Economic Communities
 SPS: Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
 TBT: Technical Barriers to Trade

FOCUS ON Hub & Spokes (H&S), one of the key components of Trade.Com

The Hub & Spokes component was designed after a programme run by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) under which young recently graduated professionals would be sent out to ministries and other institutions in developing countries. The Hub & Spokes trade analysts had to be nationals of another country than the country where they were working. They were making an assessment of the country needs; this assessment was checked by the focal point based at the Ministry of Trade.

The Comsec and OIF together developed and implemented the Hub & Spokes project for the ACP regions, whereby **Hubs** were placed in regional organizations and **Spokes** were detached to national agencies/institutions. The project's main focus was intended to be on the WTO and EPA negotiations, the specific needs were identified and formulated by the Hub & Spokes Project in the needs assessment papers developed at the beginning of the project.

Hub & Spokes trade analysts contributed to the realisation of the training programmes, workshops, and awareness-raising sessions with over 17,000 participants on trade-related issues in 36 countries in 6 regions. A total of 120 regional organisations officials received training and coaching positively evaluated in programming and project preparation skills. The train was evaluated positively and resulted in the development of 17 project identification fiches.

The H&S component provided assistance to improve the participation of RECs and ACP countries in the international trade negotiations. Comsec Hub & Spokes analysts produced 88 negotiating briefs, issue and position papers on trade capacity building and OIF analysts contributed to 70 similar projects in West and Central Africa. Regional trade policy advisers and trade policy advisers were involved in negotiations and became full-time institutional resources to host entities. It is difficult to ascertain, the performance of beneficiaries in trade negotiations without donor support.

Under the H&S component, both COMSEC and OIF (*Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*) developed technical knowledge and advice in drafting policy documents, engaging stakeholders in rules of origin procedures, and organizing and running training programmes for stakeholders. They have assisted in bilateral discussions, provided very technical support on legal issues and assisted with EPA negotiations as advisers.

GOOD PRACTICES OF THE TRADE.COM PROGRAMME

The Trade.Com project for the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (**ESAMI**) built the in-house teaching and research capacity of the Trade Policy Training Centre in Africa (TRAPCA) by training selected ESAMI consultants and contributing to the development of TRAPCA as a leading education provider and research centre in the trade field in the ACP.

Trade.Com completed a project for the **University of the West Indies** providing support for multiple graduate students from the OECS, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago to pursue the Master programmes in international trade policy.

A Trade.Com-supported study set out the policy options for the trade facilitation architecture necessary for the establishment of the **OECS Economic Union**.

The Trade.Com project for **Kava producers** in the Pacific region provided legal and scientific arguments that contributed to the lifting of the ban on Kava in the EU.

Trade.Com supported four projects in ACP countries on **Intellectual Property (IP)** that enhanced compliance with the WTO TRIPS Agreement and institutional strengthening of the IP offices in the countries concerned.

Four projects enabled improvements in meeting of the requirements for **fair trade** and comparable labels for designated products and exports (fish, rice, cotton and sugar). These included strategies and road maps for obtaining certification.

Two sets of guidelines for **regional harmonization** of competition policy were provided with success to the COMESA and ECOWAS Secretariats.

Three projects contributed to the strengthening of private sector organizations in the context of **EPA opportunities**.

CONCLUSIONS

Significant contributions on trade related areas

The Trade.Com Facility has made significant contributions in the ACP in trade and trade related areas and has achieved the expected results. Beneficiaries have expressed wide satisfaction with regard to the activities undertaken.

Important impact on implementation of trade strategies

Trade.Com interventions significantly contributed to enhance capacities of ACP countries and Regional Organizations to design and implement their own trade strategies and to participate effectively in international trade negotiations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to promote regional expertise

It is quite important to build capacity for implementation of regional strategies; each Regional Trade Coordinating Committee (RTCC) could establish a programme for human resource development to create a body of regional expertise in trade related assistance (TRA) and regional integration.

More support to the private sector

In future interventions, it is a priority to emphasize a stronger support of H&S components to supply-side challenges linked to private sector development and improvements of the regulatory environment.

Capacity Building in Support of the Preparation of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA)

The project for capacity building in support of the preparations of EPA negotiations was formally signed by the EC and the ACP Secretariat in 2001 with the Project Management Unit (PMU) functional in 2002. The end date of its activities was 2007. Its main purpose was to provide assistance to assist ACP countries, regional organizations, private sector organizations and other non-governmental actors in their preparation for and conduct of the EPA negotiations. A mid-term evaluation was undertaken in September 2004.

Activities included:

- EPA impact assessments and specific study work aimed at developing negotiating positions for ACP countries and regions;
- Training in policy analysis and negotiating techniques for ACP officials leading negotiating teams;
- Targeted technical assistance to ACP countries and regional integration groupings mandated to follow up the EPA negotiations;
- Conferences and workshops on issues related to trade negotiations.

A brief overview on the programme:

The benefits of integration into the world economy are potentially significant if the EPA process is managed well. Inherent risks exist, for example, in removing national customs duties, which may provide a substantial percentage of a national income. To manage inherent risks, both parties to new trading arrangements should be fully informed and able to negotiate. To reach that position, preparation has to be undertaken on both sides, the ACP preparing their economies to face up to the competition on the world market, in order to challenge their current marginalized position and to eradicate poverty. This Programme «Capacity Building in Support of the Preparation of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA)» is a significant component of such preparation and its success was of huge importance to the EPA process as an integral part of the new development philosophy enshrined in the Cotonou Agreement.

Main data:

Since its establishment in July 2002 to 2007, 178 projects were implemented.

The projects included a mix of studies, technical assistance, training, meetings and workshops.

The PMU received a total of 224 requests.

MAIN AREAS COVERED:

Agriculture	Mining
Investment	Tourism
Fisheries	Clean Development Mechanism
Forestry	

Summary Table of Requests Received and Implemented in the Period 2002/2007

REGION	Requests Received*	Requests Implemented*
All ACP	61	48
Southern Africa	15	11
Caribbean	27	21
Western Africa	47	40
Eastern Africa	29	25
Central Africa	39	31
Pacific	6	2
Total	224	178

Summary Table of Imprest Account Studies Implemented in the Period 2002/2007

REGION	Impact Studies Implemented	Seminars Implemented
All ACP	3	28
Southern Africa	6	7
Caribbean	10	13
Western Africa	30	27
Eastern Africa	22	20
Central Africa	16	24
Pacific	0	2
Total	87*	121

* One request may include several components.

Effectiveness

All regions have received support under the Programme and achieved equitable geographical coverage. At the regional level, with specialist units operating, there was a greater capacity to identify needs and request support under the Capacity Building Programme. This applied also at the national level for governments with strong public administrations and established policy formulation processes, being equipped to make use of the support offered through the Programme.

Impact and sustainability

The programme funded the elaboration of national impact studies, regional studies and briefs on specific issues on which ACP negotiators needed guidance. It helped to increase the awareness of ACP governments as well as non-state actors by providing insight into what is at stake during EPA negotiations. The assistance through consultation meetings between the governments, private sector and civil society representatives and regional coordination meetings generated in-depth information about sectors, facilitated informed proposals during negotiations, and stimulated the involvement of non-state actors in trade-related issues. These outputs were widely used in the negotiation process by ACP countries and regions and constituted the basis for national and regional negotiating positions as well as final agreements where applicable.

CONCLUSIONS	KEYS RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>ACP Countries and RECs were assisted in their preparation for trade negotiations with the EU</p> <p>The Programme ensured that ACP States and ACP regional integration organizations were sufficiently ready in terms of their mandate and capacities to meet the Cotonou obligation to commence negotiations with the European Union (EU) on EPAs as of September 2002.</p>	<p>Continue to involve the private sector</p> <p>Private sector involvement in EPA negotiations is necessary. There is a need for strengthening capacities on EPA implementation both at the regional and national levels.</p>
<p>A useful programme for beneficiaries</p> <p>In the whole ACP Region, the Programme contributed to the formulation in EPA negotiations and facilitated the working group and the formulation of their positions. ACP negotiators are now better equipped and prepared.</p>	<p>Trade assistance continues to be needed</p> <p>A demand for capacity building from stakeholders still exists. Stakeholders may benefit from the support on specific subjects of EPA implementation such as the rules of origin.</p>

Beyond the assessment of the three trade-related programmes, a comprehensive analytical evaluation was carried out to allow a better understanding of commonalities amongst the three programme interventions. All three programmes were designed as all-ACP capacity building demand-driven programmes and intended to be complementary to national and regional indicative programmes and to thematic programmes which focused on supply-side issues, including private sector development programmes. The programmes were implemented over the period 2001 – 2014. They aimed at building capacities of ACP countries and regional economic communities to formulate and implement trade policies and to effectively participate in trade negotiations in order to support their integration into the world economy and thus contribute to the promotion of sustainable development and economic growth in the ACP region.

Relevance: The programmes purpose and objectives were relevant to, and consistent with, the Cotonou Agreement signed by the EC and the ACP States. The Cotonou Agreement foresaw the gradual introduction of a new, WTO compliant, trade regime guided by economic partnerships between the European Union (EU) and ACP States and regional groupings. In order to facilitate the EPA negotiations, the agreement emphasized the need to strengthen regional integration initiatives and to enhance the policy formulation capacity and negotiating techniques of ACP States and regional trade organisations. The chosen intervention strategies were relevant to the needs of the targeted beneficiaries at the time and were consistent with achieving the objectives specified in the Cotonou agreement.

Efficiency: Most programmes had a certain delay at the beginning. However, ultimately the speed of implementation had increased to acceptable levels. For the Capacity building for EPAs programme for example 85.5% of the total allocated budget had been used for the activities.

Effectiveness: The trade programmes under review were able to provide numerous relevant technical assistance to ACP countries. Under Trade.Com for example about 500 negotiators or policy makers from ACP countries were trained. The Hub and Spokes programme reached over 17,000 participants on trade-related issues in 36 countries in 6 regions. As a result, the beneficiary ACP countries could adopt strategic positions on assessments of the likely impact of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), start or strengthen the process of formulating trade policies and upgrade regulations and procedures to ensure World Trade Organisation (WTO) compliance.

Impact: The EU trade-related assistance provided to ACP countries through EPA Support, Trade.Com and MTS Programmes had for a common overall objective to contribute to the promotion of sustainable development and economic growth through a better integration of ACP countries into the world economy. The programmes' purpose was to support the integration of ACP countries in the international trading system by improving their capacities to design and implement their trade strategies and to effectively participate in trade negotiations. The link between the overall objective and programmes' purpose denoted by the assumption that international trade foster economic growth is widely recognised by many economic studies. Therefore, the positive contribution of the Programmes to the overall objective was realistic.

Sustainability: The three programmes consisted of a heterogeneous set of activities leading to results with various degrees of sustainability. In most cases, the design of the projects implemented in the framework of the Programmes did not put adequate emphasis on the sustainability of expected results. The provided support was too often motivated by short-term requests from the beneficiaries rather than by long-term objectives to build sustainable capacities to formulate and implement trade policies and to effectively participate in trade negotiations, as stated in Programmes' logical frameworks.

Visibility: The three ACP-EU trade-related assistance programmes achieved various degrees of visibility. An example of good visibility results were achieved by the Trade.Com Programme because of its field presence in ACP countries and regions through the Hub and Spokes component. Also the pro-active awareness-raising about the Programme in ACP countries by the PMU's staff was an important factor.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

EU Trade-related assistance Programmes improved partner countries' knowledge of trade policy issues and contributed to their integration into the multi-lateral trading system. Yet the long-term impact of such support on development and poverty reduction is often difficult to assess and varies considerably

Even if EU trade-related assistance programmes achieved positive results, further improvements are required, in particular regarding aid programming, donor harmonization and donor-recipient partnerships, to enhance the effectiveness of trade-related assistance programmes

It is essential that future interventions promote broad-based ownership of trade policies in the partner countries and strengthen their capacity to identify trade-related priorities and capacity gaps

Trade programmes need to enhance collaboration with all relevant stakeholders in the partner countries during design, delivery and review phases. Broad-based buy-in implies the involvement of stakeholders from other Ministries, the private sector and civil society

A communication strategy that explains the objectives, resource allocations and operations will be a good way to counter misperceptions and increase interest among the local stakeholders

The EU and partner countries should be encouraged to use monitoring and evaluation tools more systematically in the Trade Assistance Programmes and to allow adjusting of the activities where necessary, taking into the lessons learnt of future aid programming and ensure mutual accountability for the results

The EU and partner countries should focus on achieving results. They should adopt a collaborative, results-based management approach, where clear, realistic and measurable programme objectives are defined and translated into expected outcomes and required outputs, with timetables for implementation (including information on the sequencing of outputs) and costing. In addition, it is important to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder involved in the delivery of outputs

The EU and the ACP Group play an important role in helping developing countries to strengthen their capacity to formulate trade policies consistent with national development plans, participate in trade negotiations and implement trade agreements that facilitate market access. These should also help strengthen developing countries' supply-side capacity to allow them to become more competitive in the international markets