

FEBRUARY 2019 COMESA INFORMATION

1. COMESA, EU signs €10m facility to support the private sector (February 18, 2019)

The business community in COMESA Member States is set to benefit from the Euro 10 million kitty provided by the European Union to support increased private sector participation in regional and global value chains.

This follows the signing of a financing agreement between the EU and COMESA to implement the Regional Enterprise Competitiveness and Access to Markets Program (RECAMP).

The RECAMP program will run for five years focusing on three priority value chains, namely; agro-processing, horticulture and leather and leather products.

The program has two key areas: the first is to ensure that competitiveness and market access of small and medium enterprise (SMEs) and other firms in the targeted value chains are sustainably enhanced.

The second area will focus on improving the business environment for SMEs and other firms in the selected value chains by complementing current national strategies developed by member states for economic transformation through industrialization.

2. AfDB extends funding to the Tripartite Capacity Building Program (February 22, 2019)

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has provided USD 2.9 million supplementary funding for the Tripartite Capacity Building Programme (TCBP). The funds will be used to complete critical activities that are essential to the smooth operationalization of the TFTA.

Among them is the completion of the industrial and Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) databases, training of border staff and women traders in risk based sanitary and phytosanitary measures, finalization of the manual on use of Tripartite Rules of Origin and implementation of the Value Chain action plans that are outstanding.

The initial TCBP grant of US\$7.5 million was signed in November 2013 to support market integration, industrial and infrastructure development pillars of the tripartite work program. As the executive agency, COMESA applied for supplementary funding in April 2018 following the depreciation of the initial funding against the USD dollar which had resulted in a reduction of the amount to USD 7 million.

AfDB president Mr. Akinwumi Adesina who met COMESA secretary general Chileshe Kapwepwe, underlined the role of women in trade and called on the tripartite RECs to partner with the bank in seeking ways to empower women. He further called on partnerships on the area of investment of staple processing zones.

3. COMESA seeks to raise its global share of seed trade value to 5% (February 25, 2019)

COMESA targets to increase its share of the total global seed trade value from 2 to 5 percent in the next three years. This will be done through the implementation of the COMESA Seed Harmonization Implementation Plan (COMSHIP).

To this end, the COMESA Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) is collaborating with the AfricaSeeds – the implementing Agency on seed programs of the Africa Union – in coming up with an integrated seed sector within the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Plan (CAADP) agenda aligned with the National Agriculture and Food Security Investment plans (NAFSIPs).

In a mission prepared by Dr. John Mukuka, a seed development expert at ACTESA, the increase in the regional seed trade value will be accelerated through the implementation of the COMSHIP complemented by the new SKG platform.

4. Coming soon: A Regional Code on Anti-Corruption Compliance(February 27, 2019)

COMESA will soon develop Regional Model Code on Anti-Corruption Compliance to help enterprises in the region improve their business environment. The initiative is part of the activities under the COMESA Business Council (CBC) Integrity Project which is being implemented in partnership with the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE).

The objective of this initiative is to build the capacity of the private sector to stem corruption and enhance their participation in transparency and reform initiatives thereby achieve a good and enabling business environment.

The regional code will provide a guide for anticorruption compliance amongst enterprises in the COMESA region and will be available for their use and adoption.

The World Economic Forum estimates that corruption increases the cost of doing business by up to 10% on average. Countries that score badly on the World Bank's Doing Business Indicators also score poorly on the Corruption Perceptions Index. This suggests that highly corrupt countries also have difficulty attracting business.

(Source: <https://www.comesa.int/>)