

16 August 2021

Concept Note: SADC Private sector involvement in identifying and resolving Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) and Promoting Regional trade and Development

Purpose of the meeting

The SADC Business Council (SADC BC), SADC Secretariat and GIZ is collaborating with the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) to convene the 5th instalment of the SADC Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) workshop focusing on Mauritius on Wednesday 8 September 2021 from 14h00 to 16h00. This meeting will provide logistics companies, retailers and manufacturers in Mauritius who are involved in the export / import business and regional trade with an opportunity to identify the major NTBs hindering their operations and to involve SADC and SADC BC to recommend necessary responses to identified challenges.

Background

The outbreak of COVID-19 has interrupted almost all global sectors including the supply chain systems that are heavily reliant on transport and logistics services, which allow movement of goods and services across the SADC region. Most governments in the region responded to COVID-19 by putting in place measures that include border restrictions and limitations on the movement of cargo across regional boundaries thereby affecting cross border trade. Although the measures are important, facilitating the movement of essential goods and services remains a priority for livelihoods, industry and economic sustainability for SADC and Africa at large.

The recent border delays and queues arising from border restrictions and limitations on the movement of cross border cargo because of COVID-19 disrupts supply chains and inhibits intra-regional trade. SADC identifies NTBs to trade as one of the main obstacles to intra-regional trade and hence regional integration.

What are NTBs?

Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) refers to any barrier to trade other than import and export duties that make trade difficult and costly. NTBs refer to restrictions that result from prohibitions, conditions, or specific market requirements that make importation or exportation of products difficult and/or costly. There also include unjustified and/or improper application of Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) for example sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and other technical barriers to Trade (TBT).

Identifying and resolving NTBs demands a great deal of coordination and cooperation among the various public and private sector stakeholders such as the ministries of trade, transport, health, agriculture or foreign affairs, customs authorities, customs brokers, traders, transport operators and freight forwarders. This is not an easy task, as different stakeholders are likely to have different and sometimes conflicting interests and individual perspectives to defend.

Since solving NTBs is a diverse and challenging subject with potential benefits for both business and government at national, regional, and international levels-this calls for combined effort between public, private sector and co-operating partners to jointly identify NTBs and formulate appropriate responses hence the purpose of the collaboration between the SADC Business Council, SADC Secretariat and GIZ-CESARE programme to hold NTBs workshops in SADC member states to identify and solve recurring NTBs in regional trade.

Mandate on removal of NTBs

The SADC identifies NTBs to trade as one of the main obstacles to intra-regional trade and hence regional integration. The removal of NTBs is outlined as a priority in the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Plan (RISDP), the SADC Industrialisation Strategy (SIR), the SADC Protocol on Trade, as well as the SADC Trade Facilitation Programme. The removal of NTBs calls for a combined effort from the public sector, private sector, and co-operating partners to jointly identify the major NTBs and formulate appropriate responses.

Who should attend?

The following people and organisations are expected to participate in the meeting:

- Logistics companies,
- Freight forwarders,
- Retail companies with a regional footprint
- Manufacturing companies with a regional footprint
- Customs officials
- Government officials with interest in trade
- SADC officials
- GIZ
- SADC BC members,
- Any relevant stakeholders

Kindly confirm your participation by 30 August 2021 via email to Ms Rooma Narrainen: narrainen@mcci.org and copy Tulo Makwati: tulo.makwati@thenbf.co.za,