



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

East Africa Business Council receives grant from TradeMark East Africa, to reduce barriers to trade in the EAC

Nairobi, 20th August 2019: The East African Business Council (EABC) officially signed a grant agreement with TradeMark East Africa (TMEA).

This will support implementation of a 3 year programme, “Integrating Public-Private Sector Dialogue (PPD) for Trade and Investment in East Africa Community (EAC) Programme”.

The partnership will support EABC's advocacy efforts of improving coordination, reporting and resolution of Non Tariff Barriers along the corridors; harmonization and adoption of East African Standards/ Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures; improve adoption and harmonization of Customs and Domestic Tax-related policies and trade facilitation in the EAC.

To strengthen and sustain EAC's trade and investment, it is critical that an enabling environment is in place to guarantee growth and predictability. Public-Private Dialogue plays a crucial role in addressing constraints, providing short-term stimulus with long-term impact and contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction.

The project will enhance advocacy and dialogue on transport and logistics, trade facilitation, customs & tax, standards, and NTBs in a bid to increase trade and investments in the EAC. Also, the programme extends beyond the EAC and incorporates the COMESA, COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) and Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

“Inadequate trading regimes restrictions on the export of certain commodities, and lack of product diversification and the existence of NTBs continue to hamper intra-regional trade which is still low at 20% compared to other RECs,” said Hon. Peter Mathuki, EABC CEO.

The EABC is a key convenor of high-level regional Public-Private Sector Dialogue forums with an “Observer Status” at the EAC level will lead the coalition-implementing partners of the project.

Barriers to trading across borders such as multiple product standard inspections, bureaucratic trade procedures delay business transactions and increase the cost of doing business. The time it takes to export is at an average of 76.hrs which is too high compared to 12.5 hours in OECD High-Income Economies, WorldBank Ease of Doing Business report (2018).

“According to WorldBank Ease of Doing Business report (2018), the EAC is ranked at 149 out of 190 in the ease of trading across borders, as EABC, we will coordinate, set the agenda and facilitate evidence-based research on Public-Private Dialogues to reducing barriers to trade in the EAC region,” said Hon. Peter Mathuki, EABC CEO.

“We appreciate this partnership with TradeMark East Africa as it will support EABC to evaluate and monitor EAC policies to ensure they work for businesses at ground level and create momentum to accelerate needed the policy reforms to the business and investment climate in the EAC” said Hon. Peter Mathuki, EABC CEO.

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1. For more information:

For EABC

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2. About EABC

The East African Business Council (EABC) is the regional apex body of Private Sector associations and Corporates from the 6 East African Countries. It was established in 1997 to foster the interests of the Private Sector in the Integration process of the East African Community. EABC was granted observer status in organs and activities of the East African Community (EAC) and therefore, participates in various sectoral meetings, meetings of the Coordination Committee, the EAC Council of Ministers, and the Summit of the EAC Heads of State; with a view to ensure that the agenda of the Private Sector is well articulated and received by the policymakers.

Vision: Borderless East Africa for business and investment.

Mission: To promote sustainable Private Sector-driven growth.

EABC Membership is open to all national and regional associations as well as Corporates with interest in the EAC integration process or operations in the region. At the national level, EABC activities are coordinated through the EABC National Focal Points. These are Federal Chamber of Commerce and Industries Burundi (CFCIB), Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), Rwanda Private Sector Federation (PSF), Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF) and Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU).

For more information visit www.eabc.info.

3. About TradeMark East Africa

TradeMark (**Trade** and **Markets**) East Africa is an aid-for-trade organisation that was established in 2010, with the aim of growing prosperity in East Africa through increased trade. TMEA operates on a not-for-profit basis and is funded by the development agencies of the following countries: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Union, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom and United States of America. TMEA works closely with Regional Intergovernmental Organisations, like the East Africa Community, national governments, the private sector and civil society organisations.

The first phase of TMEA (2010-2018) delivered exceptional results which contributed to substantial gains in East Africa's trade and regional integration in terms of reduced cargo transit times, improved border efficiency, and reduced barriers to trade.

We are now in the second phase (2018 - 2023) where we will focus on:

1. Reducing barriers to trade; and
2. Improving business competitiveness.

We believe this will deliver large-scale impact in job creation, poverty reduction and enhanced economic welfare.

TMEA has its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, with successful operations and offices in EAC-Arusha, Burundi (Bujumbura), Tanzania (Dar es Salaam), Democratic Republic of Congo (Bukavu), Ethiopia (Addis-

Ababa), South Sudan, Uganda (Kampala) and Rwanda (Kigali). To find out more, please visit our website www.trademarka.com.