

The ensuing plenary session will be chaired by His Excellency Daniel Evina Abe'e, Ambassador of Cameroon and Chairman of the ACP Sub-Committee on Investment & Private Sector, during which the Consultants will present, and participants will debate, a series of recommendations for an ACP PSD Strategy and modalities and instruments for its implementation.

After the first plenary, three regional consultations involving the geographic regions of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific will be held to allow consideration of recommendations and amendments to the strategy to take account of issues, challenges and solutions peculiar to particular regions.

The findings of the regional consultations will be presented to a second plenary on Day Two chaired by Her Excellency Vilma Kathleen Mc Nish, Ambassador of Jamaica and member of the ACP Bureau. Development partners will then present their views on the new ACP PSD Strategy. The final session of the event will present the final conclusions and upcoming steps which are to be integrated into the draft recommendations.

Beyond the Symposium

Beyond the symposium, a number of steps will be taken before the ACP PSD Strategy can be implemented. These include the preparation of the Draft ACP Private Sector Development Strategy, incorporating contributions from the Symposium and consideration and revision of the draft by the ACP Subcommittee on Investment and Private Sector. The Strategy will then be approved, first by the ACP Committee of Ambassadors and finally by the ACP Council of Ministers before implementation can begin.

The strategy that will emerge from this exercise will guide discussions regarding private sector development support between the ACP Group on the one hand and the European Union and potential future strategic partners on the other.

Further information can be obtained at the website of the ACP Secretariat (www.acp.int) and of the ACP Private Sector Development Strategy (www.acp-privatesector.com).



New Private Sector Development Strategy

High-Level Symposium
10-11 November 2014
ACP House - Brussels, Belgium

High-Level Symposium on Private Sector Development Strategy in ACP Countries



Concept Note

A two-day Symposium will be held on November 10-11, 2014 at the ACP Secretariat in Brussels to make concrete recommendations on the operationalization of a Private Sector Development (PSD) Strategy in ACP countries and regions. The results of the Symposium will be submitted to the Committee of Ambassadors for consideration in view of the 100th session of the ACP Council of Ministers, scheduled in Brussels, from 9 to 12 December 2014.

Background

In recent years, the increasing recognition of the developmental role of the private sector, the additional demands being made for support to the sector, the withdrawal of support to the Centre for the Development of Enterprise (CDE) and the need to ensure more coherence in its PSD programming has led the ACP to decide on the formulation of an overall PSD strategy for the Group.

The framework for a new private sector support strategy was approved by the ACP Council of Ministers on 24 May 2014 and a Joint Cooperation Framework for Private Sector Development in ACP Countries was adopted by the ACP-EU Council of Ministers in Nairobi, in June 2014.

For the operationalization of the ACP Private Sector Development Strategy, the ACP Business Climate PMU (BizClim) has recruited a Consultant who has provided expertise and logistics for an in-depth consultation across the ACP regions and the organisation of the Symposium.

Two consultants conducted the consultation of stakeholders in ACP Regions and capitals. They have worked closely with the partners in the regions (Regional Economic Communities and private sector organisations) to take note of their opinions and highlight common proposals on new approaches and private sector development instruments. The reflection on private sector support was preceded by important endeavours by the ACP Secretariat to assess the effectiveness of its instruments and their policy and strategic underpinning. Over the last few years, the ACP Secretariat has undertaken major reflections on relevant themes, comprising inter alia SME access to finance including the the European Investment Bank (EIB) managed Investment Facility, improving the effectiveness of the Centre for the Development of Enterprise (CDE) and the development of renewable energy.

Pillars of the strategic framework

The central role of the private sector in economic development, job creation and the maintenance of social stability has been globally recognised and accepted and has become an essential component of most development agendas. This emphasis on the private sector has also been central to the policy process driven by the ACP Secretariat and is manifested in past and current ACP-EU PSD programmes such as the ACP Business Climate Facility (BizClim), the Competitive Industries and Innovation Programme (CIIP) and the ACP-EU Microfinance Programme, among others.

The Strategic Framework for ACP PSD covers four priority areas of intervention:

- i. Improving the business climate for private sector development;
- ii. Developing and strengthening entrepreneurship and micro-enterprises;
- iii. Increasing access to finance for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs); and
- iv. Strengthening competitiveness and access for MSMEs to regional and global markets.

Besides guiding principles, the Framework sets key elements that are expected to offer new opportunities and approaches to supporting private sector development. These include:

- Support for institutional capacity-building;
- Streamlining instruments for Private Sector Support;
- Investment Promotion Support;
- Enhancing SME Access to Finance and exploring new Financial Tools;
- Increasing the Private Sector's contribution to Improving the Infrastructural Framework;
- Restoring Trust and acknowledging the Risks inherent in the ACP Private Sector;
- Mobilising resources in ACP countries and regions and international research funding;
- Creating a Network of ACP Private Sector Stakeholders;
- Focusing on Regional Presence; and
- Strengthening the ACP Secretariat.

The Private Sector Development Strategy will be guided by the Strategic Framework and will articulate the strategic options that the ACP should pursue over the next five years as well as define objectives and outputs, implementation modalities and instruments, institutional and governance arrangements and resource requirements.

The Process

On September 19, 2014, a kick-off meeting was held at the ACP Secretariat in Brussels where the following critical components of the exercise were agreed upon:

1. Consultations in all ACP regions by onsite visits of two consultants to the following stakeholders:
 - A. Regional Economic Community Secretariats: ECOWAS; ECCAS; EAC; COMESA; SADC; PIFS; CARIFORUM;
 - B. Key regional private sector organisations;
 - C. European Commission and European Union delegations in countries visited;
 - D. European Investment Bank and key Regional Financial Institutions (Africa Development Bank);
 - E. Key development partners and donors (including but not limited to World Bank/IFC, UNIDO, UNDP; CGAP).
2. Engagement will be broad, through a widespread opinion poll. A questionnaire has been developed and disseminated to stakeholders that could not be met individually. In addition, the questionnaire is also available online (www.acp-privatesector.com) for comments solicited from the general readership. The questionnaire seeks the input of stakeholders on the main elements of the Strategy and their suggestions on key areas that they feel should be included.
3. A High-Level symposium at which the consultants' draft report will be presented. Stakeholders of the six regions of the ACP will reach consensus on the main components of the Strategy before the document is presented to the various organs of the ACP for adoption. The Symposium will allow for intensive deliberations about the ACP PSD Strategy in plenary and in group consultations.

The Symposium

Main objective: The main objective of the Symposium is to convey an "All ACP Platform" of action and implementation mechanisms to stimulate the expansion of the private sector in ACP countries and regions.

Expected results: The Symposium will be an opportunity to make concrete recommendations on the operationalization of the Private Sector Development Strategy in ACP countries and regions. The results of the Symposium will be submitted to the Committee of Ambassadors for consideration in view of the 100th session of the ACP Council of Ministers, scheduled in Brussels, from 9 to 12 December 2014.

Participants: The Symposium will be hosted by the ACP Secretariat and will be attended by approximately 100 participants representing public and private sector stakeholders including ACP Missions and Embassies, Private Sector actors and intermediary organisations, ACP Regional Economic Communities, International Organisations and other development partners.

Date and Location: The Symposium will be held on Monday 10th and Tuesday 11th November, 2014 at ACP House, Avenue Georges Henri 451, B-1200 Brussels, Belgium.

Structure: Opening statements will be made by His Excellency Dr. Ousmane Sylla, Ambassador of Guinea and Chairman of the ACP Committee of Ambassadors, His Excellency Mr. Alhaji Muhammad Mumuni, Secretary General of the ACP Group and Mr. Achille Bassilekin, Assistant Secretary General in charge of Sustainable Economic Development and Trade.