

Key findings & results of the EU-ACP SIA

The Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) of the EU-ACP Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) has yielded a set of twelve overall conclusions and recommendations for negotiators and other stakeholders that can help ensure that the EPAs promote development that supports economic, social and environmental sustainability. They reflect the body of work that has been undertaken through case studies in key sectors and they are considered to be broadly relevant for the diverse regions and countries of the ACP.

Regional integration:

- **Regional integration (recommendation #1).** The EU and ACP countries should strive to ensure coherence between EPA negotiating configurations and overlapping efforts at regional integration and should ultimately pursue, at regional level, strategies for developing key economic sectors and for promoting sustainability.

Trade measures:

- **Market access - tariffs in the EU (recommendation #2).** All ACP countries should retain duty free and quota-free access to the EU market and access to the EU should be improved for the few products not yet fully liberalized.
- **Market access - tariffs in the ACP countries (recommendation #3).** To mitigate potential negative impacts of reciprocity and encourage positive impacts, negotiators should classify some products as “sensitive” and ensure that there is an appropriate safeguard provision in the EPA taking into account the goal of promoting sustainability.
- **Rules of origin (recommendation #4).** Negotiators should explore policy options to simplify and relax rules of origin that will encourage increased trade in transformed products.
- **Trade in services (recommendation #5).** Negotiators should increase commitments in the services sectors examined in this SIA to improve certainty and transparency, and encourage trade, and support sustainable development.
- **Foreign Direct Investment (recommendation #6).** The EPAs should contribute to a stable climate for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and encourage FDI and regional investment that support sustainability through, *inter alia*, including means of cooperation to achieve compliance with environmental and social regulations at the national level by foreign investors.
- **Standards and accreditation (recommendation #7).** EU-ACP cooperation on standards should focus on addressing obstacles to trade, maintaining high levels of protection for consumers and the environment and assisting ACP countries to develop their own national and regional approaches to Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and technical barriers to trade (TBT).
- **Trade facilitation (recommendation #8).** The EU should engage in ongoing cooperation with the ACP on several areas related to trade facilitation, including, *inter alia*, customs, transportation, technology, business information and human resources.

Measures to promote sustainable development:

- **Diversification and increased value added (recommendation #9).** Development cooperation should focus on priority needs for diversification of production and exports towards higher value-added products, with an emphasis on reinforcing economic and industrial sectors impacted by the EPAs, while ensuring the sustainability of new development.
- **Data collection on trade and sustainability (recommendation #10).** Development cooperation should focus on technical cooperation and assistance to collect information and data on trade and sustainability to support sound policy development.
- **Capacity building (recommendation #11).** Development cooperation should focus on capacity building to promote sustainable development in both the private and public sectors with an emphasis on training, research and development, and a sound regulatory framework.

Institutional mechanisms and oversight:

- **Institutional mechanism to monitor implementation (recommendation #12).** A permanent institutional mechanism should be developed to monitor the implementation of the EPAs from the perspective of economic, environmental and social sustainability.