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**COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN  
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The Fifth Meeting of the Project Steering Committee for the Great Lakes Trade  
Facilitation Project

**30<sup>th</sup> November, 2017**

**Lusaka, Zambia**

**Minutes of the Meeting held in the SGs' Boardroom at 10:00 hours**

(TB-jm)-17

## **Members Present**

1. Mr. Clement Kanyama, Director, Finance, Chair
2. Ms. Lanka Dorby, Director, IT
3. Mr. Wilson Chizebuka, Statistics
4. Mr. Mwangi Gakunga, Head of Corporate Communication
5. Mr. Zerezghi Kidane, OiC, Trade and Customs
6. Mr Adrien Ndayisaba, Coordinator, Trading for Peace
7. Mr. Thomas Barasa, Project Coordinator
8. Ms. Joyce Mutale, Procurement Specialist
9. Mrs Joyce Kamau, Human Resources Expert
10. Mr. Rajub Neetyanand, Project Accountant
11. Mr. Willis Osemo, GLTFP Web Developer
12. Ms. Cissy Kirambaire, M & E Expert
13. Mr. Tasara Muzorori, Senior Trade Officer

## **Meeting Agenda**

### **The agenda for the meeting was as follows:**

- 1) Welcoming remarks by the Chair;
- 2) Adoption of Agenda;
- 3) Review of the previous minutes and matters arising;
- 4) Summary Progress Report on Implementation of 2017 GLTFP Work Plan;
- 5) GLTFP Disbursement & Expenditure Report for 2017
- 6) Updated GLTFP Procurement Plan for 2017
- 7) Updated GLTFP Procurement Report as at 24 November 2017
- 8) Draft GLTFP 2018 Work Programme and Budget Estimates;
- 9) Issues raised by the Bank on Efficiency in the use of Funds
- 10) Preparation for the Bank Supervision Mission on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and RCC meeting in Kigali, Rwanda on 14-15 December 2017;
- 11) Any other business

### **1. Welcoming remarks by the Chair**

The Director of Finance, Mr Clement Kanyama who chaired the meeting on behalf of the Assistant Secretary General for Programmes, Ambassador Dr. Kipyego Cheluget, welcomed every one to the meeting and proposed that agenda no 9: Issues raised by the Bank on Efficiency in the use of Funds be given priority since he had other urgent engagements and would not stay for the entire duration of the meeting. He pointed out that the issues raised by the World Bank were important and noted that COMESA as an international institution conducts its financial management based on the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

## **2. Adoption of the Agenda**

The meeting adopted its agenda as stated above without amendments.

## **3. Review of the Previous Minutes and Matters Arising**

There were no substantial matters arising from the previous minutes except a few editorials in the attendance list due to misspelling of some names

## **4. Summary Progress Report on Implementation of 2017 GLTFP Work Plan;**

The project Coordinator presented a summary of project progress as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and indicated that detailed quarterly reports had been circulated at the end of every quarter. Members of the PSC reviewed all the activities implemented and requested that certain sections of the report required updating. They also pointed out that activities that are on-going should not be reported as completed. The project Website Developer presented the GLTFP Website to the PSC members, and showed the uploaded information on the recently concluded training of Trade Information Desk Officers (TIDOs) held at the COMESA Secretariat in Lusaka, Zambia.

## **5) GLTFP Disbursement & Expenditure Report for 2017**

The PSC noted the improvement in expenditure of funds especially in the third and fourth quarters although the overall expenditure compared to disbursed funds was still low. Out of the total budget, an amount of US\$ 1,241,244 was planned for implementation of activities for the period January to September 2017. The actual expenditure for first nine months of 2017 amounts to US\$ 512,476.35 which represents a consumption rate of 41.3% for the period under review.

## **6) Updated GLTFP Procurement Plan for 2017 and Updated GLTFP Procurement Report as at 24 November 2017**

The project Procurement Expert presented both the Updated Procurement plan for 2017 as well as the Procurement report for the same period.

The PSC noted delays in implementation of certain activities, especially the ones related to development of training modules for Training of Trainers and delivery of the actual training. Also delayed was the development of the Project's Communication and Advocacy Strategy. It was also noted that quite a number of procurement tasks had been completed,

It was agreed that there is need to start the procurement of the 10 tablets and IT would provide the Specifications to the project Procurement Expert. The PSC also raised the concern about the variation between the amounts budgeted for and actually spent where there were cases of over-expenditure and in others under expenditure and called for improved planning and execution of the procurement plan in order to minimize such variations.

## **8) Draft GLTFP 2018 Work Programme and Budget Estimates**

Members of the PSC scrutinised the draft work programme and budget and identified additional activities, for example, holding of bilateral meetings on the Simplified Trade Regime (STR) in the three countries at technical and ministerial levels. Other activities related to gender mainstreaming whereby a number of meetings were proposed and included in the revised work plan and budget. Some activities were also rescheduled and aligned with the relevant Divisions that will lead in the implementation.

## **9) Issues raised by the Bank on Efficiency in the use of Funds**

The Project Accountant presented a summary of issues raised by the Bank on efficient use of project funds and proposed recommendations/options and pointed out that the issues being raised by the Bank also featured in other donor funded projects. The Chairman noted that the concerns raised by the Bank were valid and pointed out that in deed, COMESA as a leading regional/international organisation was operating on the key principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the management of funds. The three main concerns raised by the Bank and the proposed solutions were as follows:

a) GLTFP should review and explore cost efficiencies for supporting implementation of activities so as the cost incurred reflect to actual on the ground. The PSC agreed that hence forth, for delegates, COMESA would meet all costs including full board accommodation and pay an out of pocket allowance of USD 40.00 which is within COMESA 's financial rules and regulations.

b) World Bank Group noted that considerable resources are being spent on DSA and air fares for COMESA staff participating in the implementation of activity. GLTFP should rationalize participation based on staff who will add value as regards to implementation of activities. The PSC agreed that participation of COMESA Staff in GLTFP activities would be based on the expected contribution of the staff in attaining the activities' objectives and outputs.

c) World Bank Group had proposed the transfer of financial resources to project Member States for implementation of activity to save on costs incurred by the project accountant in servicing meetings in project countries. The PSC agreed that whereas maintaining the current COMESA practice is preferred, there was need to explore further options that could lead to more efficiency in use of project funds. They recommended a meeting of finance/project experts to explore the matter. These would be discussed with the Bank during the Supervision Mission planned for 4<sup>th</sup> December 2017 in Lusaka, Zambia.

## **10) Preparation for the Bank Supervision Mission on 4th December 2017 and RCC meeting in Kigali, Rwanda on 14-15 December 2017**

Members of the PSC were reminded about the Bank Supervision Mission planned for 4<sup>th</sup> December 2017 during which there would be a meeting in the morning between the Bank and PIU and later in the afternoon with the entire PSC. Members of the PSC were requested to attend the meeting. The PSC was also informed that preparations for the RCC meeting to be held in Kigali, Rwanda from 14-15 December were at an advanced stage and that some of the issues being raised by the Bank could be discussed at the RCC meeting should they not be resolved during the supervision mission.

**11) Any other business**

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1.00 pm