

All ACP Conference on Geographical Indications in the ACP Countries - Adding value to limited volumes

Date: 3rd, 4th and 5th November 2010, 8.30-18.00
Venue: **Radisson Blue Royal Hotel, Salon 1**
Address: Rue du Fossé-aux-Loups, 1000 BRUSSELS, Belgium

An All ACP Conference on Geographical Indications is being organised by the Trade.Com PMU from 3-5 November 2010, in Brussels. The Conference will bring together ACP producers, policy makers and their EU counterparts to continue the dialogue on the implications of GIs as a tool for development.

The Conference will be the culmination four regional workshops held in Douala, for OAPI members and other French speaking African (27th and 28th April 2010); in Cape Town for ARIPO member states and other English speaking African countries (10th and 11th May 2010); in Trinidad and Tobago for the Caribbean Region (14th and 15th June 2010) and in Fiji for the Pacific Region (25th to the 27th August 2010).

Geographical Indications (GIs), which allow producers to establish a link between the characteristics, quality and reputation of a product and a given place/territory, offer a possible differentiation solution for ACP producers. In addition to their product-marketing and value-enhancement benefits, GIs also make it possible to trigger a dynamic of local development based on a local-product approach.

Because they have been extensively used by European countries for a long time, GIs were often deemed to be particularly European. And yet, in recent years, GIs have gradually become a global phenomenon and are subject to an important debate in the Doha Development Round of the World Trade Organisation. In this context, ACP and EU countries have certain common interests when it comes to the protection of GIs insofar as both groups of states have ratified the "Draft modalities" (TN/C/W/52) and thereby defend the adoption of a higher level of protection for GI products other than wines and spirits. The Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights currently provides for a higher level of protection only for wines and spirits while both ACP and EU countries have comparative advantages in a number of products. The consumer habits in several major markets are increasingly turning towards traceability of products and "GIable" ACP products may benefit from a more attractive price and spill-over positive developmental, social and environmental effects.

The Conference will consist of presentations on various aspects of GIs by ACP and EU experts and producers, followed by match-making between some EU and ACP stakeholders and a Round Table on "The need to assess cooperation and technical assistance on GIs". On the third day of the Conference an exhibition of ACP and EU GI products will be held allowing participants to discover and experience material examples of GIs.

It is our hope that the Conference will further contribute to a sharing of best practices and to developing a way forward on the use of GIS to stimulate economic development.

If you are interested to participate in the workshop, we kindly ask you to register for the conference by sending an e-mail to Monique.Bagal@trade-com-acpeu.org.