

(Thursday October 6th 2011, Castries Saint Lucia) An Aid for Trade Strategy for the OECS was the subject of a teleconference convened by the Trade Policy Unit on 20th September.

Representatives of the Inter American Development Bank (IDB) informed trade officials of the plan to complete an Aid For Trade Strategy for CARICOM Member States by March 2012 with funding from the IDB. It was agreed that the national Aid For Trade Focal Points would convene consultations in order to identify national Aid For Trade priorities and officials will meet again to agree on OECS Aid For Trade priorities.

The representatives of the IDB also informed the officials of a **Freight Logistics Project** for CARICOM also being funded by the Bank. The Project will amongst other things, identify and analyze the regional and global maritime trade corridors used by CARICOM countries; forecast trade challenges or opportunities for strategic commodities in CARICOM countries; examine the performance of freight logistics and trade facilitation measures for three regional hubs (Jamaica, Dominican Republic and Barbados).

The benefits of the Project are increased availability and reliability of data and information in the areas of freight logistics, maritime transport and trade facilitation, identification and analysis of regional trade and shipping patterns, a Regional Maritime Trade Corridors Action Plan with recommendations aimed at: reducing transport costs, improving transport services and infrastructure, increasing the competitiveness of the region's goods and services and improving information quality and access for decision making.