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OECS officials continue work on their negotiating positions on intellectual property

Intellectual property and trade officials as well as private sector representative met in Saint Lucia during 10-12th August to continue preparing an OECS position on the intellectual property matters being negotiated in the World Trade Organisation. One of the main issues that was discussed was the identification of possible geographical indications from OECS Member States. A geographical indication (GI) is a name or sign used on certain products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g. a town, region, or country). The use of a GI may act as a certification that the product possesses certain qualities, is made according to traditional methods, or enjoys a certain reputation, due to its geographical origin e.g. "cheddar cheese" this type of cheese is associated with a particular location in the UK. The GI designation helps to distinguish the product and can be used in advertising campaigns.

Some WTO members such as the OECS Member States want this type of treatment to be extended to products other than wines and spirits and have identified products such as bay rum made in St. Lucia and Dominica, coffee grown in Dominica and cocoa from Grenada as potential GIs. Officials will continue discussion on the negotiating issues in October.

The workshop was a collaborative effort of the Trade Policy Unit and the Geneva Mission and funding was provided by the European Union under an ACP multilateral trading system project.

Public and private sector representatives consult on exporting services to Canada and the United States of America

The Trade Policy Unit convened a consultation to discuss the Draft Final Report of a Technical Study relating to enhancing services trade in Canada and the USA through Bilateral Trade Agreements. The Consultation which took place on 30 August in Antigua and Barbuda provided Services Officials and Representatives from the Coalitions of Services Industries and the Chambers of Commerce with information on barriers and constraints that have impeded the performance of OECS services trade and provided negotiating strategies for enhancing the export opportunities into Canada and the USA for sectors of interest such as cultural (entertainment), professional, management consulting, health tourism, education, construction services and ICT services.

The main objective of the consultation was to review the assessment of existing and emerging market opportunities for OECS Services Exports to Canada and the United States of America in order to obtain tangible benefits for services exporters from the imminent Trade Agreement with Canada and any future Free Trade Agreements the USA. The consultation also discussed the sectors for which development assistance should be sought, sectors and/or sub-sectors in which regulatory reform, institutional strengthening and marketing and development programmes are required in order to increase exports.

The workshop was facilitated under the OECS Trade Capacity Building Programme financed by the Inter-American Development Bank.

If you have questions about trade policy issues:

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An Update from the OECS Trade Policy Unit on Trade Matters of Importance to the Sub Region