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HUB**
SOUTHERN AFRICA

SUCCESS STORY

Creating the Blueprint for Good Trade

USAID helps to create plan for regional trade and integration among fifteen southern African nations



USAID Southern Africa Officials at the CTFP Workshop in Johannesburg in early September 2015

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is an inter-governmental organization designed to support socio-economic cooperation and integration as well as political cooperation among 15 southern African countries: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. SADC was established in its present form in 199 and has headquarters in Gaborone, Botswana.

SADC is responsible for many initiatives that support cooperation and mutual benefit among its member nations, including the SADC Free Trade Area as well as 27 different legally binding protocols, including SADC Protocols on Trade, Development, Energy, and Gender. USAID's Southern Africa Trade Hub works closely with the organization on a number of important activities and strategic plans.

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Improving the trading conditions and efficiency of even one country is an ambitious undertaking: doing so simultaneously with all neighboring countries so that trade procedures are harmonized, unified, and consistent throughout the region is even more difficult. USAID's Southern Africa Trade Hub prepared a Comprehensive Trade Facilitation Programme (CTFP) that enables SADC's Member States to just do that: the program provides a useful five-year blueprint with realistic deadlines that can be easily tailored to the specifications and current level of progress already made in each country.

With 27 distinct activities based on the four pillars of transparency, predictability, simplification, and cooperation, the CTFP covers the entire range of enhancements that Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries need to optimize trade, including National Single Window, Trade Information Portals, an interregional transit management system, and other tools of the twenty-first century.

The CTFP was developed after extensive consultation with stakeholders including a workshop in September 2015 at which SADC Member States reviewed the document and provided their input. Participants at the workshop affirmed how valuable it was to organize previously fragmented trade facilitation concepts and ground them in a single source document that any player in the trade chain can understand.

On September 10, 2015, USAID's Southern Africa Trade Hub submitted the final version of the CTFP document to SADC officials. It is expected that final approval for the program will be obtained at the SADC Ministers' Meeting in November 2015, paving the way for SADC to implement the CTFP over the next five years. With the program, USAID's Southern Africa Trade Hub has offered a blueprint that all SADC countries can use to turn the region into a powerhouse of efficient, streamlined trade.

Using the WTO's Agreement on Trade Facilitation as a roadmap, the CTFP takes a holistic approach to trade facilitation and envisions nothing less than structural transformation of the SADC region. Implementation of the CTFP will reduce the costs of doing business, allow for greater advantage of AGOA benefits, encourage foreign direct investment, and lead to the greater industrialization of southern Africa.