

FACILITATION OF TRADE IN SERVICES NEGOTIATIONS

BACKGROUND

The CEFTA Joint Committee established the Subcommittee on Trade in Services and the Negotiating Group on Trade in Services to broaden cooperation in the services trade and administer the negotiations on liberalisation among the CEFTA Parties. The negotiations on trade in services liberalisation officially started in July 2014. The main objective of the negotiations is to ensure progressive liberalisation and mutual opening of services markets by removing barriers to services trade among the CEFTA Parties. The negotiations are expected to be finalised by the end of 2016 and the resulting Additional Protocol on Trade in Services implemented as of 2017.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The objective of the project was to support the activities of the CEFTA Negotiating Group on Trade in Services and within the broader framework to assist in implementation of the CEFTA. The purpose of the assignment was to: (i) assist the Chair of the Negotiating Group on Trade in Services; and (ii) assist the Secretariat in administering the negotiations.

ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The consultant provided an assessment of the model that was developed by the Services Negotiating Group on a harmonised minimum level of specific commitments and suggested some im-



provements in order to facilitate the negotiating process amongst the Parties. Further, the consultant also produced guidelines on multilateral negotiations, in order to facilitate the conduct of the negotiations.

Before each round of negotiations the consultant prepared in cooperation with the CEFTA Secretariat the necessary documents, such as consolidated offers based on individual Parties' offers and background briefs. During the negotiating process the consultant had an active role in steering the negotiations, advising and guiding the negotiators towards achieving a successful outcome. After each round of negotiations, the consultant prepared a report on the progress achieved and highlighted the subsequent steps to be undertaken in order to reach the next level in the process.

IMPACT ON CEFTA

The study has provided the CEFTA Parties with valuable research and analysis that can support their negotiations as well as identifying potential actions to facilitate trade in this area. Key issues highlighted by the study include:

- The need to take both a regional and an individual approach since it is important that CEFTA Parties do not only focus on their individual relationships with the EU but also pursue regional cooperation
- The need for administrative support to overcome gaps in legislation, a lack of technical expertise and limited resources for the development of the sort of infrastructure required to successfully implement an MRA
- The need to simplify and rationalise where possible as differences in titles, regulatory status and educational requirements add to the complexity of mutual recognition.
- The importance of international standards and moving towards a different concept of cross-border working and mobility, which should be factored into CEFTA MRAs and discussions on professional services integration.

SUMMARY PROJECT INFORMATION

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| Dates: | September 2013-June 2014 |
| Budget: | <i>n.a.</i> |
| Partners: | World Bank Group, CEFTA |
| Financiers: | World Bank Trade Trust Fund |
| Beneficiaries: | Ministries responsible for trade |

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