



The Commonwealth

Supporting Trade Competitiveness in the Commonwealth

Recognising the commodity dependence and domestic challenges for product and market development in many member countries, the Commonwealth Secretariat's Trade Competitiveness Section (TCS) of the Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate (TONR), provides technical assistance to member countries to improve their trade competitiveness in global markets. Interventions are targeted at the national level, and where requested, escalated to the regional and pan-Commonwealth levels.

TCS supports members states in key focus areas to build resilient and sustainable economies

Adopt innovative approaches to enhance domestic production and tap into global value chains.	Improve market access through well-negotiated trade agreements.	Build competitiveness within services sectors through regulatory co-operation and reforms.
Facilitate investments and improve the investment climate.	Modernise trade facilitation processes in order to lower the cost of trade.	Escalate issues to the regional and/or pan-Commonwealth levels.

Our flagship pan-Commonwealth programmes

- The Commonwealth Trade Finance Facility; and
- The Intra-Commonwealth SME Association (ICSA) Trade Summit

The programmes support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 8 and 17, as well as the National Development Agendas of many countries given that trade has been recognised as a key area of priority for supporting the achievements of the SDGs on employment creation and reducing poverty.

Specific areas of expertise

1. **National Trade Policy** – Support member countries to design and implement national trade policies and export strategies including e-readiness and e-commerce strategies to secure sustainable market access for priority exports.
2. **Trade in Services** – Support member countries to develop regulatory frameworks to provide stability and predictability in trade in services. With a keen focus on diversification of typical trade portfolios, digital trade in services has become a niche intervention, as has capacity-building support for trade in services negotiations.

Contact the TCS team

Head of Section

Opeyemi Abebe

o.abebe@commonwealth.int

commonwealth.int

Advisers

Yinka Bandele

y.bandele@commonwealth.int

commonwealth.int

Yawar Qazi Naeem

y.naeem@commonwealth.int

commonwealth.int

Lawrence Othieno

l.othieno@commonwealth.int

commonwealth.int

Assistant

Research Officer

Anamta Afsar

a.afsar@commonwealth.int

commonwealth.int

For further details, contact

Luisa Sala, Programme

Assistant

l.sala@commonwealth.int

commonwealth.int

Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House, Pall Mall,
London SW1Y 5HX, UK

thecommonwealth.org

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3. **Trade Facilitation** – Support member countries and/or regions with niche, highly targeted interventions to build institutional capacity to engage and implement trade facilitation initiatives.
4. **Investment Facilitation** – Support member countries' investment facilitation and promotion programs and capacity building on treaty negotiations, project proposal development, project appraisal and investment portfolio for targeted investors. Also provide technical assistance on regulatory and policy reforms for improving the business climate to attract investment in critical sectors of the economy.
5. **Cross-cutting Trade and Development Issues** – The TCS also supports gender and youth initiatives in partnership within and outside the Secretariat, that aim to increase the participation of women and young people in global trade and promote inclusivity in the design of trade policies that reflect the ambitions of member countries to achieve the SDGs for women and youth.

The Section responds to requests from Commonwealth governments or apex institutions and provides technical assistance to address competitiveness issues. For 2019/2021, the Section is providing technical assistance to **13 countries** directly, as well as **4 regional projects** and **3 pan-Commonwealth programmes**, which provide capacity-building support to 49 member countries.

Examples of technical assistance programmes during 2019/21 strategic plan

Country	Project
Barbados	Logistics Chain Analysis-Barbados Ports Authority
Belize	Export diversification –capacity building for the Export Unit, BELTRAIDE
Botswana	Review and Designing the National Export Development Strategy 2018-2023
Brunei	Regulatory Frameworks to facilitate Trade in Services
CAIPA/Caribbean Export	Improving the Business Climate - Strengthening Procedures to Start a Business in the Caribbean
Cameroon	Development of an E-commerce Strategy and capacity building for MSMEs on digital trade
East African Community	Development of International Cargo Transit System and implementation of Authorise Economic Operator (AEO) schemes
The Gambia	Development of a National Export Strategy
Kenya	Provide technical support on Trade Negotiations
Lesotho	Country Brand Strategy and Management Framework
Malawi	Review of National Export Strategy 2012-2018 and Design of a Successor NES
Nigeria	Support for the development of Trade in Services database
OECS	Development of a regional E-readiness Assessment and capacity-building in the six Eastern Caribbean member states of OECS.
Seychelles	Port Development Study to assist the development and management of Port Victoria.
Sri Lanka	Development of an E-readiness assessment and capacity-building for women MSMEs
Tonga	Investment Facilitation, investment promotion and profiling
West Africa	Support the development of an ECOWAS Investment Facilitation framework
Pan Commonwealth-Small States	Commonwealth Trade Finance Facility for Small States
Pan Commonwealth	Facilitating trade and business development through the Intra Commonwealth SME Association.