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ANNEX I

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of the Americas and the Caribbean for 2024 part V and 2025 part II

Action Document for Support to the Implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) to Increase Trade and Investments with the EU (2024– 2028) Phase 3

MULTIANNUAL

This document constitutes the multiannual work programme within the meaning of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, within the meaning of Article 23 of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

<p>1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act</p>	<p>Support to the Implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) to Increase Trade and Investments with the EU (2024– 2028) Phase 3 OPSYS number: ACT-62135 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)</p>
<p>2. Team Europe Initiative</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>3. Zone benefiting from the action</p>	<p>The action shall be carried out in Antigua & Barbuda; the Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Grenada; Guyana; Haiti; Jamaica; St Lucia; St Vincent and the Grenadines; St Kitts and Nevis; Suriname; Trinidad & Tobago.</p>
<p>4. Programming document</p>	<p>Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP) for the Americas and the Caribbean for the period 2021-2027 – Caribbean window</p>
<p>5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results</p>	<p>Priority area 2.2.2. Caribbean-EU Partnership on Economic resilience and Trade S.O.1: Trade and investment between the Caribbean and the EU is enhanced in the framework of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and the Caribbean private sector grows in a sustainable manner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R1: Private sector’s competitiveness, economic diversification and sustainable practices are increased, with a special focus on MSMEs, women and youth, and Caribbean-EU business-to-business links are enhanced; • R2: Caribbean business environment and investment climate, including digital and innovation drivers, regional quality infrastructure and economic regulatory convergence are ameliorated. • R3: EPA provisions are effectively implemented, barriers to market access are progressively removed and trade and investment opportunities between the Caribbean and the EU are enhanced.

PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION				
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Not applicable			
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	<p>Main SDG: SDG 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and particularly targets 8.3 and 8.17</p> <p>Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and where appropriate, targets: SDGs 9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation, SDG 10 Reduce inequalities within and among countries, SDG 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns and SDG 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development, and particularly targets 17.9, 17.10, 17.11, 17.12, and 17.18</p>			
8 a) DAC code(s)	33120 – Trade Facilitation (100%) 33130 – Regional Trade Agreements (100%)			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	47000 – Other multilateral institution 47011 – Caribbean Community Secretariat			
9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Climate change mitigation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Internal markers and Tags.	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/
	digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	digital skills/literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Connectivity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	/	
energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
education and research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Migration @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Reduction of Inequalities1 @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	<p>Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020141</p> <p>Total estimated cost: EUR 15,100,000</p> <p>Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 14,000,000</p> <p>The contribution is for an amount of EUR EUR 5,500,000 from the general budget of the European Union for financial year 2024 and for an amount of EUR 8,500,000 from the general budget of the European Union for financial year 2025, subject to the availability of appropriations for the respective financial years following the adoption of the relevant annual budget, or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.</p> <p>This action is co-financed in joint co-financing by: European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) for an amount of EUR 1,100,000</p>			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing²	Direct management through a grant – direct award to Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) - (Component 2: TBT).			

1 For more information, please consult: The European Commission inequality marker - Publications Office of the EU (europa.eu) and Inequality Marker – Complementary Guidelines Application of the I-Marker to SSC fiches and Action Documents | Capacity4dev (europa.eu)

² Art. 27 NDICI

	<p>Indirect management with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.2 - (Component 1: Intellectual Property Rights and Innovation).</p> <p>Indirect management with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.2 - (Component 3: SPS).</p> <p>Indirect management with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.2 - (Component 4: EPA and Caribbean Single Market and Economy Facility - CSME -).</p>
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1.2 Summary of the Action

The **Economic Partnership Agreement** (EPA) between the EU and CARIFORUM is a regional trade and development Agreement between the EU and its Member States and 15 Caribbean countries. The Agreement was signed in October 2008 and entered into provisional application on 29 December 2008. In 2020, this Agreement was provisionally applied by the EU and its Member States and by 14 Caribbean States.³ Haiti still needs to ratify the Agreement in parliament before applying it, due to domestic legal requirements. By the end of 2023, 25 EU Member States and 10 Caribbean States had ratified the EPA.⁴

The EU - CARIFORUM EPA is asymmetric in terms of commitments, but ‘comprehensive’ both in the geographic and thematic sense. The Agreement covers the whole region and includes not only provisions on trade in goods, but also trade in services, trade-related issues and an important development component with the EU commitment towards fostering long-term sustainable economic growth in the Caribbean.⁵

The CARIFORUM EPA establishes sustainable development as the presiding principle governing the whole agreement. Article 3 of the agreement states that "the objective of sustainable development is to be applied and integrated at every level of the economic partnership". Aspects of environmental cooperation includes; technical assistance in meeting product standards in EU markets; facilitation of voluntary schemes including labelling and accreditation schemes; assistance to develop production of goods and services beneficial to the environment; Public awareness and education programmes in environmental goods and services.

At the end of 2020, the European Commission published the **10-year Evaluation Study**⁶ of the EU-CARIFORUM EPA looking into the implementation, economic and sustainability impact of the Agreement for the 14 CARIFORUM partner countries and the EU, as well as at cooperation commitments and relevant cooperation assistance. A formal Joint Review process of the EPA, currently ongoing, takes place every 5 years, including a Trade and Development Committee, and a Joint Council. Both the study and the Task Force work of the 5-year review have noted several challenges and shortcomings in the implementation of the commitments, particularly on the side of CARIFORUM partner States. These are mostly related to capacity constraints, so EPA-tailored cooperation remains crucial to overcome these implementation challenges.

Since the signature of the agreement, the EU has provided financial support (through the EDF) to advance in its implementation, mainly by increasing capacities and supporting investments in the sanitary and phyto-sanitary, quality infrastructure, innovation and intellectual property rights, technical assistance in legal drafting, customs, trade facilitation and competition. These programmes have been key in closing the gap with the EU’s standards for trade, although there is still wide room for improvement. There is unanimity among CARIFORUM stakeholders on the importance of the EPA support programmes for the development of their trade-enabling infrastructure and the EU expertise provided. Stakeholders believe that the support to the EPA to a large extent contributes to improving the quality of agro-based products through SPS and TBT related interventions to facilitate entry in EU markets and world markets in general. Agro-based products also constitute the most important export products of most Caribbean countries. At the same time, the programme strengthens export capacity generally by targeting innovation through the IPR component.

³ Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

⁴ On the Cariforum side, the agreement has not been ratified yet by the Bahamas, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago; on the EU side, the agreement has not been ratified yet by Hungary, Poland and Slovenia.

⁵ A factsheet on the EU-CARIFORUM EPA can be found : https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/content/eu-cariforum-economic-partnership-agreement#toc_10

⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/policy-making/analysis/policy-evaluation/ex-post-evaluations/>

All together, this effort also creates **better opportunities for EU firms to enter the Caribbean market**, and promote investments in **alignment with the Global Gateway and the investment agenda** in the Caribbean. A set of EU-funded studies on the sectoral opportunities for EU investment under the EPA show significant potential.⁷

The ongoing 11th EDF EPA programme (2019-2025) is geared towards building on the benefits derived from the 10th EDF EPA Support programme and is structured along 6 complementary components: (1) Innovation and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR); (2) TBT; (3) SPS; (4) Capacity building in the areas of Competition, Procurement, Trade Facilitation and customs, (5) legal drafting; and (6) support for implementation of EPA and CSME at the national level.

The proposed 3rd phase of the EPA support will focus on four main areas of intervention that will contribute towards building on the benefits achieved under the previous EDF support programmes, with a bigger role in strengthening the private sector and creating opportunities for EU investments These include: (1) Innovation and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR); (2) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT); (3) Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS); and (4) EPA and CSME Standby Facility. The overall objective of the programme is the continued contribution to the integration of the Caribbean into the world economy and its specific objective is the effective operation of the EPA to enable more trade and investments with the EU.

The programme is further complemented by a parallel support to the CARIFORUM Directorate to ensure their EPA coordination role. The supported activities will continue to stimulate innovation and competitiveness in the private sector; increase compliance to international food safety standards; solve quality related challenges through the improvement of regional and national quality infrastructure; and strengthen national capacities for the EPA and CSME.

Across the programme components, the prioritisation of support will also be linked to the level of implementation of the EPA commitments.

1.3 Zone benefitting from the Action

All four components of the Action shall be carried out in Antigua & Barbuda; the Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Grenada; Guyana; Haiti; Jamaica; St Lucia; St Vincent and the Grenadines; St Kitts and Nevis; Suriname; Trinidad & Tobago out of which Antigua & Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, St Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad & Tobago are not included in the list of ODA recipients.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

The EPA is a comprehensive Agreement of indefinite duration, which goes beyond the typical trade agreement by being asymmetric, providing duty-free and quota-free access to the EU market and containing commitments on trade in services, investment, trade-related issues such as competition policy, government procurement, intellectual property rights, as well as sustainable development aspects.

To date, the potential of the EPA has not come to full fruition as CARIFORUM states grapple with issues some of which include sustained gaps in human resources, and uneven capacity in both private and public bodies across the region to utilise technical assistance to take advantage of the EPA.

A recently concluded mid-term review of the EPA support programme highlights a high degree of relevance to its stakeholders as the measures contained within programme provides vital support to business and the enabling environment to overcome the impediments to trade prevalent within the international and regional trading space.

Though many benefits are being derived from the programme of support to the EPA, many gaps still exist. So far, the private sector has not yet been able to sufficiently utilise the opportunities opened by the EPA, also due to constraints in the region's institutional environment. There has been limited outreach to the wider private sector, including main representative private sector bodies. Business Support Organisations and business associations,

⁷ Cross-Cutting Report - <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Kj5aGziXWMIh5afal0c7siCiHfvLrckI>

with some exceptions, have not been thoroughly included and strengthened in the role as potential multipliers, and there have been limited interlinkages between the different components of the Programme and the EU funded Private Sector Support Programme (CEDA), also with some exception.

Improving the trade infrastructure in the Caribbean will also allow EU firms to increase trade and potential investments in the region, in alignment with the Global Gateway and the investment agenda in the Caribbean, across a wide variety of sectors. A series of sectoral studies carried out by DG TRADE, through an FPI facility, showcase the potential the EPA provides for such investments and economic opportunities.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Component 1 - Innovation and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

CARIFORUM countries continue to face the hurdle of returning to productivity levels of the pre-pandemic period. The 2023 Global Innovation Index shows that nine Latin American and Caribbean countries perform below expectations on innovation, and even the leading country ranks 49th out of 132 economies. In terms of innovation and developing innovation ecosystems, the Caribbean, in particular, lags behind other regions of the world. It is noted that innovation is a key component needed in spurring productivity. This however is dependent on an enabling environment that activity promotes policies geared to continuously promote technological adoption and business innovations across the entire business cycle. Importance should be placed on governments focusing on policies facilitate businesses' efforts to innovate and improve productivity.

The implementation of the Intellectual Property Rights continue to present as a game changer for developing countries. According to UNCTAD In a global economy increasingly driven by innovation and knowledge, intellectual property (IP) can propel sustainable development and economic transformation in the world's 45 least developed countries.

The 1st Phase of the Innovation and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) component has made significant strides in harmonising the various IP frameworks across the region and developing the regional infrastructure on IP to foster interregional trade. In addition work has progressed on supporting member states accede to major international IP treaties (see further below), which contribute to the harmonisation of IP issues across borders to the extent that they generate the minimum required convergence on IP issues that facilitates international trade on products and services involving IP.

Significant support has been lent to regional IP offices to reduce capacity constraints exist in the area of IP which place limitations on the development of some sectors, for example cultural services and creative industry, which to a significant extent depend on the ownership and management of IP rights. Attention has been paid to geographical indications, designs, trademarks, plant variety protection and patents, and their largely untapped potential for value creation and new business models. Knowledge dissemination and information sharing related to IP was improved, across stakeholders, sectors and the society at large.

The CarIPI project had made significant progress, but there are still many shortcomings in the development of Innovation and Intellectual Property in the region. Several countries do not have any Design Legislation in place (KN, GR, SR), the Trade Mark laws are outdated in most countries, the IP offices have backlogs and capacity constraints, the negotiations for the mutual protection of GIs have still not been concluded.

It is foreseen that a second phase of the project, will address these shortcoming and continue to support innovation, economic diversification, and private sector development - through the use of the IP systems. These would translate in more activities to strengthen capacities, technical and legal support, and awareness raising, and in particular reaching out to more stakeholders, particularly local MSMEs and a focus on youth and women in all their diversity, creating a wider informed community.

Women's participation in patenting varies substantially across world regions, sectors, and industries. When analyzed by region, women inventors account for 21% of all listed inventors in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Women inventors tend to be concentrated in specific disciplines, with biotechnology, food chemistry and pharmaceuticals being the top three fields for women in 2020 .

In Caribbean economies, the impact of gender inequality on innovation remains an important issue; these economies rank high in the region in terms of women's participation in the labor market but less so in terms of innovation. Different studies confirm firstly, that, a more balanced participation of men and women within an enterprise is one of the factors that can improve the likelihood of Caribbean firms to innovate.

Specific attention to environmental sustainability, with actions intended to support in particular the green, the blue, and naturally the orange economy would be also envisaged. Moreover, contingent on political will, this could also include taking steps to create a regional IP administration.

Component 2: Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)

Technical Barriers to Trade (TBTs) present a major challenge to exporters and policymakers⁸. Existing Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) impede intra-regional trade and preclude the region from fully entering international markets. Many exporters from the Caribbean have limited access to internationally-recognised Quality Infrastructure services within the region resulting in high costs for sourcing these services outside the region .

CARIFORUM States continue to face constraints in the implementation of measures and technical barriers ⁹to trade (TBT) to adopt them in pace with the developed countries. This is due to small size, high costs and capacity constraints. This leads to erosion of the preferences under EPA. CARIFORUM States have also concerns about the increasing role of private standards in affecting the region's trade performance and makes it difficult to engage with high-value supply chains. Private standards are often more stringent than regulatory requirements. CARIFORUM exporters are unable to meet the technical requirements and produce the certification required to gain access to the market due to limited institutional and human capacity and financial constraints.

Under the 10th and 11th EDF, Technical assistance has been provided in the area of TBT to CARIFORUM to address increasing the use of internationally recognised Regional Quality Infrastructure by the regional and national quality institutions and by the private sector. In particular; closing quality gaps in value chains; communicating the importance of Quality Infrastructure (QI) to stakeholders; and strengthening regional frameworks in standards development, metrology, accreditation, conformity assessment.

The Mid-term review of the 11th EPA support programme, points to the needed for continued support to TBT within key policy areas, notably; the deepening of support for macro- & meso-level actors at the national level; the inclusion of private sector laboratories; the development of key laboratories, nationally, as well as the development of regional labs.

Component 3: Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures

In many CARIFORUM countries, national Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) and quality systems and domestic agricultural producers are unable to meet or comply with international Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards for trade in agriculture and fisheries products¹⁰. This has resulted in reduced access to global and regional markets due to insufficient capacity to ensure the SPS status that trading partners require. Fragmented legislation, multiple jurisdictions, inadequate enforcement, limited human resources and chronic underfunding undermine the effectiveness of SPS systems in the region. In recent years, several national and regional interventions have addressed these challenges to varying extents. However, as the requirements of trading partners evolve to meet the needs of their consumers, countries must continuously work to strengthen their SPS controls. Strong SPS systems are therefore key for allowing countries to benefit fully from trade opportunities in European and other international markets.

In 2017, the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) project conducted a study¹¹ in the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM) countries, which sought to identify the specific costs and benefits of compliance and non-compliance with Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) requirements and their effect on market access and livelihood of stakeholders. It aimed to increase understanding of the role and importance of SPS requirements in relation to imports and exports. The study has shown that investments in the upgrading of SPS conditions in the 15 CARIFORUM countries provide clear positive benefits, well more than costs involved. However, resources available from government budgets and donors are insufficient to meet all identified SPS capacity needs.

The 11th EDF SPS project has been progressing efforts towards strengthening the SPS regulatory environment, and compliance through capacity building for food producers and fisheries sector in all CARIFORUM member states. Significant achievements have be made in the the modernization of the current SPS environment through the provision of a policy framework; assistance in improving the technical capacity of public and private sector

⁸ <https://ideas.repec.org/a/eee/ecmode/v126y2023ics0264999323002511.html>

⁹ https://eulacfoundation.org/system/files/digital_library/2023-07/The%20EU-CARIFORUM%20EPA%20Regulatory%20and%20Policy%20Changes%20and%20Lessons%20for%20Other%20ACP%20Countries.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.edfspscariforum.online/about-the-project>

¹¹ https://standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_PPG_733_P-IMA_CAHFSA_TOR_v5_Final.pdf

stakeholders to implement processes and procedures necessary for trade; and the improving the coordination among stakeholders involved in national and regional SPS controls of fisheries products, compliance by companies to meet food safety standards.

Given the positives of the current project more work is needed to cover gaps in the improvement of labs through regional collaboration, training new issue facing labs dealing with pesticides residues, veterinary. drug residues; and the continued strengthen of the implementation of the GAP certification at farm level.

Component 4: EPA and CSME Standby Facility

The CSME and EPA Standby Facilities were created out of the need for a flexible and rapid mechanism to provide capacity-building to CARICOM and CARIFORUM Member States. Numerous bottlenecks were identified at the national levels that were preventing actions taken at the regional level to bear full its full impact. This Standby Facilities would ensure that CSME and EPA programmes implemented at the regional level, complemented actions being implemented at the national level.

The 11th EDF facilities has provide wide support for various projects involving support to companies to strengthen their capacity to meet international food safety standards, national business support institutions with focussed programmes of business support, as well as of strengthening the capacity of national institutions providing quality and trade facilitation services. The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) has been effective in identifying projects, supported the formulation of projects, and facilitates the procurement of consultants and equipment and other aspects of project implementation.

The Stand-by Facility format has been a very successful tool in advancing the effective implementation of the EPA at the national level. It strongly complements the activities of the other components under the EPA support programme, and its thematic and demand-driven approach responds well to EPA implementation needs and Caribbean partner priorities, including the Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME). It can also provide an entry point for potential EU investors to link up with the projects being proposed at country level and leverage potential opportunities under the Global Gateway Investment Agenda.

The mid-term review of the EPA programme suggested that the Standby facility should be continued, albeit thematically within the scope of other projects'/components' activities on regional level. A stronger more flexible governance structure will be needed as some member states still face unique capacity constraints which make implementation of projects on a timely bases difficult.

Complementary Support to CARIFORUM in the implementation of the EPA (not under this Action):

In parallel to this programme, a grant is being provided to the CARIFORUM Directorate to support the implementation of the EPA. In previous programmes, this has been used to address efforts to increase regional cooperation and integration; improve the implementation of the CARIFORUM/EPA and enhance CARIFORUM/EU Cooperation.

Identification of main stakeholders and corresponding institutional and/or organisational issues (mandates, potential roles, and capacities) to be covered by the action:

The main stakeholders are the implementing agencies, which are EU specialised agencies, the regional organisations and the various entities at the national level which will not only assist with implementation of the activities in their own country but will also benefit from it.

For Component 1 (IPR), the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) will be the implementer. It will work together with the Office of Trade Negotiations (OTN) of the CARIFORUM Directorate which is coordinating the implementation of IP and GIs provisions of the EPA and with the CARIFORUM Member States' IP Offices. The latter will assist with implementation of measures at the national level but also benefit from the Action.

Component 2 (TBT) will be implemented by the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt Institute (PTB), which is the German Metrology Institute and the specialised technical cooperation implementing agency of the Federal Government of Germany. It will work in partnership with the Secretariat of CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) and the Instituto Dominicano para la Calidad (INDOCAL), from the Dominican Republic. CROSQ will ensure a regional approach to the QI whilst involving the national quality infrastructure institutions of CARIFORUM: the National Standard Bodies (NSB), National Metrology Institutes, National Accreditation Bodies and focal points, national conformity assessment bodies. The latter will also be beneficiaries through capacity building initiatives. The private sector will also be targeted and benefit from the planned support

for QI development and implementation for key commodities and awareness raising activities. NSB will also assist with the development of national quality awards which will be beneficial to both consumers and private sectors.

Component 3 (SPS) will be implemented by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the specialized agency for agriculture of the Inter-American System that supports the efforts of its member states (34 countries) to achieve agricultural development and rural well-being. Other stakeholders will include the CARICOM Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFSA), the CARICOM Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the CARICOM Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), as well as the relevant national institutions.

For Component 4 (EPA and CSME Facility), the implementer will be the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), in coordination with the NAO offices, National EPA implementation units and CSME national focal points.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to advance the sustainable integration of the Caribbean region into the world economy.

The Specific Objective of this action is the effective implementation and operation of the EPA to enable more trade and investments with the EU.

The Outputs to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objective are:

- 1.1 Support the modernisation of the Intellectual Property and Innovation systems in CARIFORUM countries.
- 2.1 Increase the use of internationally recognized quality infrastructure to support inter-regional and international trade.
- 3.1 Increased compliance by CARIFORUM States with international SPS measures, standards and procedures.
- 4.1 Strengthened national capacities for EPA and CSME implementation at the national level.

Across the programme components, the prioritisation of support will also be linked to the level of implementation of the EPA commitments.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1

Support the modernisation of the Intellectual Property systems in CARIFORUM countries.

Innovation and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) – Phase 2:

The activities will include:

- Improving the capacity of the productive sector to create, protect, utilize, commercialize and enforce IPRs – with special focus on businesses operating in the emerging sectors of the economy: blue, green, and orange. EUIPO will work to unlock the potential of IP in creative industries; help companies to identify IP assets; and support companies to build an IP strategy for export.
- Enhancing the capacity and skills of women and youth on the use of the IP system. This will include mentorship programmes for female entrepreneurs and support to potential GI value chains that are dominated by females.
- Creating more efficient and harmonised IP administrations, offering high-quality services to the users with targeted support actions for MSMEs. The focus will be on digitalisation and efficiency at IPOs; harmonisation of laws and policies to foster regional integration; building capacity to create a “customer focused” culture in the administration of IPRs, in order to reduce time and costs for those seeking protection.

- Increasing awareness on the importance of IP protection among policy makers, businesses and society at large. Different activities will be aimed at mobilising separate target groups including business/productive sectors; policy-makers, public authorities and institutions; IP lawyers and representatives; and schools.

Activities related to Output 2.1:

Increase the use of internationally recognized Quality Infrastructure to support interregional and international trade.

Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) – Phase 3:

The activities will include:

- Strengthening regional frameworks and national QI Institutions. This will be done through; developing a national laboratory policy; hosting one metrology school at one designated CaRL in the region; and improving regional QI concepts through participation in key regional and international conferences;
- Strengthening the competencies of private and public sector QI organizations. Actions will include: preparing at least 5 additional Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) for accreditation; supporting 7 SMEs for certification; certification training to SME in eight (8) countries; supporting eight (8) CARIFORUM countries of NSBs and/or firms to be certified in ISO 9001; and delivering intermediate QI training courses online.
- Improving stakeholder’s knowledge the value of QI through: the implementation of new National Quality Awards (NQA) Programmes; public relations, communications, and training initiatives.

Activities related to Output 3.1:

Increased compliance by CARIFORUM States with international SPS measures, standards and procedures.

Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures - Phase 3:

The activities will include:

- Continued improvements in the SPS regulatory framework. Improvements in the SPS regulatory framework will include: the implementation of Regional AHFS Policy early warning systems; the upgrades of legislation for specific countries; improvements in AHFS coordination by providing in depth technical assistance and training; and the design and implementation of a SPS information systems.
- SPS capacity building. Actions will include; medium/long term training for staff in the public sector in key AHFS areas, digitization of SPS services; strengthening laboratory testing, accreditation, and the development of business models for labs; training, guidance, equipment and certification for select value chains, including the introduction of a data management system; and the continued focus on awareness building around food safety and SPS culture

Activities related to Output 4.1:

Strengthened national capacities for EPA and CSME implementation at the national level.

EPA and CSME Standby Facility – Phase 3:

The activities will include:

- This 3rd phase of the project will benefit from a stronger more flexible governance structure that will aid in the efficient distribution of support, by prioritising merit of the proposal over geographic distribution, and ensuring reasonable levels of co-financing from the beneficiaries and partners. The facility will continue to be a demand driven mechanism to implement projects which will have to demonstrate relevance to the EPA and CSME.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

Outcomes of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project).

The EIA (Environment Impact Assessment) screening classified the action Category B not requiring an EIA, but for which environment aspects will be addressed during design.

Outcome of the CRA (Climate Risk Assessment) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project)

The Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening concluded that this action is no or low risk (no need for further assessment).

The EPA presents a platform for CARIFORUM countries to increase trade both inter-regionally and internationally to the EU market. This increase in trade volumes for member states increase maybe have several positives including increase in revenue and jobs particularly for the Micro and Small enterprises. At the market level it can bring many benefits, such as lower prices, greater variety, and higher incomes. However trade could also have a negative impact on the sustainable development of small and vulnerable economies, though the potential for pollution, deforestation, and biodiversity loss.

The components of the EPA support programme will make accommodation for the possible negative impact on the environment. Under the IP component specific attention to environmental sustainability, with actions intended to support in particular the green, the blue, and naturally the orange economy is also envisaged. It will have a particular emphasis on environmental sustainability, encompassing climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The TBT component will foresee the development of the national laboratory infrastructure a critical input for trade, which will contribute to health and safety and the protection of the environment. The programme will have a positive impact on environmental sustainability as the standards to be introduced and the conformity assessment system to be improved, will enable less environmentally harmful practices, more efficient use of raw materials, and improvements in the health effects of products.

The SPS component is expected to have a beneficial environmental impact (improved food safety, product standards, including environmental).

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that Gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/ programme.

A study done on by UN Women¹², concluded that the CARIFORUM-EU EPA ranked the highest among all other applicable free trade agreements in the region, in term of gender responsiveness.

CARICOM has included a Gender and Development programme in its Human and Social Development Directorate. The main objective of this programme is to mainstream gender in CARICOM programmes and policies. The CARICOM Gender and Development programme also aims to provide technical support to Member States in policy development and also to increase gender mainstreaming in the work of the CARICOM regional agencies.

Where appropriate the Design and Monitoring Frameworks for projects will include indicators which require sex disaggregated data, and set targets for the participation of women. The CDB has developed a Gender Equality Policy and Operational Strategy (GEPOS) for mainstreaming gender responsive actions into its operations and projects design, implementation and impact. It will ensure that there is a gender balance among beneficiaries of the action with a clear definition of the goals with regard to gender to ensuring that women are well represented at middle- and higher levels of the intervention (including private sector).

EUIPO has will design activities to strengthen capacities, technical and legal support, and awareness raising, and in particular reaching out to more stakeholders, particularly local MSMEs and a focus on youth and gender.

¹² https://caribbean.unwomen.org/en/materials/publications/2021/8/role-of-gender-in-caricom-and-cariforum-regional-trade-agreements_caribbean

Human Rights

The Caribbean has a history of robust representation of labour and human rights and is ranked as one of the regions with the greatest stability in its governance and transparency framework. The programme will build on this framework and in accordance with the work done by the ILO on the implementation of core labour standards under the EPA. The programme will align with the principles of the regional ILO office, the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) and the Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC) to assist CARIFORUM States to address their obligations under the EPA.

The activities are designed to 'leave no one behind' in line with the human rights-based approach. The action ensures that groups with specific needs (women, persons with disabilities, youth, among other groups) will take an active part in demanding transparency and accountability from their leaders, participate in decision-making processes related to the delivery of local services and access a more friendly and efficient justice delivery system. To this end, a consultation process with right-holders about their needs and aspirations will be carried out along the different stages of the project's cycle.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. This implies that tackling disabilities is not in itself an objective, however the programme aim at improving the livelihood of citizens in vulnerable by introducing them to new job market avenues, including those with disabilities.

Reduction of inequalities

Not targeted as a significant objective. Some components may take some aspects into consideration when providing tailored support to member states

Democracy

While supporting democratic principles is not the main focus of the action, the programme will engage with social actors like civil society organizations, in the context of the CARIFORUM-EU Consultative Committee and non-governmental agencies, with the objective to enhance their skills and capacity to participate to policy and political dialogue.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

This programme does not target these areas as a significant objective. However the support provided under the various components will aid member states in the CARIFORUM Region engage in remedies that would contribute to the sustainable economic development of the individual countries and contribute to overall economic resilience

Disaster Risk Reduction

Not targeted as a significant objective. Some components may take some aspects into consideration when providing tailored support to member states

Other considerations if relevant

Not applicable

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
Technical	Commitment on the part of the national institutions to participate in the different components of the programme.	Medium	Medium	Working with focal points and key bodies to strengthen information and awareness
Political	Unstable socio political environment in some countries	Low	Low	Increase the network of partners in member states to improve implementation rate
Technical	Differences in capacity and implementation ability of the national institutions participating in the Programme;	High	High	Components to be designed to take into account the uneven capacity across the region. Technical assistance and support to build capacity will run in parallel with technical support.
Technical	Logistical problems affecting activities on a regional basis, e.g. regional specialisation of institutions (e.g. laboratories), but also travel to attend meetings. Cost of regional travel high	High	High	Hybrid systems to be considered in future: Face to-face necessary to establish / consolidate regional networking. Remote to facilitate better intermittent follow-up coaching
Technical	Limited outreach to the private sector	Medium	Medium	Need for strengthening information and awareness raising about the programme's activities involving private sector bodies, and close partnership with CEDA.
Technical	Limited outreach to the wider public sector and policy makers.	High	High	Strengthen awareness raising about the programme's activities to wider public sector and policy makers
<p>Lessons Learnt:</p> <p>Lessons learnt and recommendations from the Mid-Term Evaluation of 11th EDF EPA Programme, completed in 2023, covering all 6 components, will be taken into account in the design and implementation of the EPA Phase 3 programme. The review of the 11th EDF EPA, concluded that its relevance remain high among key stakeholders, and address prevailing impediments to trade. However the regions private sector is yet to fully take advantage of the EPA and the support programmes, due to limit outreach of the projects. The following the recommendations made to address these gaps include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for strengthening information and awareness raising about the programme's activities involving private sector bodies. • There is a need to strengthen awareness raising about the programme's activities to wider public sector and policy makers. 				

- More organised exchange of information / coordination between implementers and stakeholders under the different components of the programme.
- A value chain approach should be reflected in future programming, to address gaps in support to firms at the micro level. This approach should include, marketing / sales support, leading to real contracts with buyers in regional and international markets.
- There is a need to institutionalise the trainings that are being provided under the different components of the Programme, as these trainings will continue to be needed as refresher courses or trainings for new staff. This can be achieved by involving existing training bodies in the CARIFORUM Member States (including universities) and/or by providing them on-line on existing or newly to be established eLearning platforms.
- Limitation in trade logistics in the region was cited a major bottleneck, reducing competitiveness due to increased transportation time and cost of it was apparent. Support to address this impediment will be needed to be reflected in future programming.
- During the period of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, capacity-building measures have concentrated on remote sessions, however, remote capacity building is ambiguous. Hybrid systems to be considered in future. Face-to-face necessary to establish / consolidate regional networking. Remote excellent to facilitate better intermittent follow-up coaching.
- Under most programme components substantial work has been done on policy formulation and drafting legislation at regional and national level and to a lesser extent developing regulations. In follow-up programmes, further work on developing regulations will be required, as well as to ensuring implementation.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is to support the EU-CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement. It will enable the EU to support CARIFORUM Member States take advantage of the EPA by supporting the commitments detailed in particular under Article 4, on regional integration and Article 7 which states “*development cooperation for regional economic cooperation and integration, as provided for in the Cotonou Agreement, shall be carried out so as to maximise the expected benefits of this Agreement*”.

This action also supports Article 8 of the agreement which sets out cooperation priorities; which include: (i) the provision of technical assistance to build human, legal and institutional capacity in the CARIFORUM States so as to facilitate their ability to comply with the commitments set out in this Agreement; (iii) the provision of support measures aimed at promoting private sector and enterprise development, in particular small economic operators, and enhancing the international competitiveness of CARIFORUM firms and diversification of the CARIFORUM economies; (v) enhancing the technological and research capabilities of the CARIFORUM States so as to facilitate development of, and compliance with, internationally recognised sanitary and phytosanitary measures and technical standards and internationally recognised labour and environmental standards; (vi) the development of CARIFORUM innovation systems, including the development of technological capacity; and (vii) support for the development of infrastructure in CARIFORUM States necessary for the conduct of trade.

Improving the trade infrastructure in the Caribbean will also allow EU firms to increase trade and potential investments in the region, in alignment with the Global Gateway and the investment agenda in the Caribbean, across a wide variety of sectors. A series of sectoral studies carried out by DG TRADE, through an FPI facility, showcase the potential the EPA provides for such investments and economic opportunities.

Regarding Intellectual Property Rights, this action will support the modernisation of the IP systems in CARIFORUM countries by promoting the protection of IPR, such as patents, trademarks, geographical indications and copyrights, which will enable CARIFORUM Member States to become integrated into and reap the benefits of Global Value Chains. It is hoped that with high standards of IPR protection in the Caribbean, the Region will be able to attract more investment, stimulate more innovation and, as a result, develop more rapidly.

The programme will also support CARFORUM member states to enhance their technical capacities through the use of internationally recognized Quality Infrastructure to support interregional and international trade. TBT, QI comprises the procedures and services offered by private and public institutions in the areas of standards, technical regulations, metrology, accreditation, and conformity assessments like testing, inspection, certification, as well as quality culture promotion. These procedures and services are needed to assure compliance of products and services with legal safety requirements, as well as market driven consumers' quality expectations within the Caribbean but also to penetrate the European market. By ensuring and rationalising the availability of such services in the Caribbean, as well as their international recognition and harmonisation, the action aims to create the conditions to promote the EPA objectives of strengthening regional and international trade and sustainable economic development. In addition, the availability of such services in the Region will allow the private sector to source such services regionally.

In addition, the action will increase compliance by CARIFORUM States with international SPS measures, standards and procedures. Increased awareness of and concern about food safety in the EU and other developed countries has resulted in developing countries having to deal with stricter SPS requirements when exporting their produce. Such requirements relate to the protection of animal or plant life and health; risks arising from additives, contaminants or disease-causing organisms in foods, beverages or feedstuffs; or the entry, establishment or spread of pests. International SPS measures are based on the World Trade Organisation (WTO) SPS Agreement, international standards and recommendations or guidelines. Through the present support, in particular strengthening national administrations and competent authorities, supporting farmers and private sector to comply with regulatory and commercial requirements for SPS measures, the ation aims to contribute to a better access of the Caribbean to the European and world markets. Lastly, the action will strengthen national capacities for EPA and CSME implementation at the national level, in a demand-driven, co-financing format.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

PROJECT MODALITY (3 levels of results / indicators / Source of Data / Assumptions - no activities)

Results	Results chain (e): Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (e): (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Overall Objective Impact	To continue the contribution to the integration of the Caribbean region into the world economy	1 Trade revenue for selected commodities	1 Baseline year 2024 – to be determined at the beginning of the Programme)	10% increase (can be revised based on actual baseline data) by 2028	1. Sector trade data (as collected by Trade ministry, national exporters and manufacturers associations etc.) 2. UNTAD/WORLD BANK	<i>Not applicable</i>
Specific Objective Outcome	To facilitate the effective operation of the EPA to enable more trade and investments with the EU	1.1 Private actors in key economic sectors have been supported to solve their quality related challenges through the access to improved Quality Infrastructure, SPS and IP services. 1.2 Public actors in key economic sectors have been supported to solve their quality related challenges through the access to improved Quality Infrastructure, SPS and IP services.	1.1 TBD at the beginning of the Programme 1.2 TBD at the beginning of the Programme	1.1 TBD at the beginning of the Programme 1.2 TBD at the beginning of the Programme	1.1 Case studies (to be compiled by Programme implementers) 1.2 Mid-term and final report of the project	Adequate engagement of key stakeholders Enabling operating environment of the QI, SPS and IP institutions remains stable.
Output 1 Support the modernisation of the Intellectual Property systems in	1.1 Improved capacity of the productive sector to create, protect, utilize, commercialize and enforce IPRs – with special focus on businesses operating in the emerging sectors of the economy: blue, green, and orange.	1.1.1 Number of SMEs supported and benefited from the action. 1.2.1 Number of women and youth participated and benefited from capacity building events (co-)	1.1.1 TBD at the beginning of the Programme	1.1.1 TBD at the beginning of the Programme	1.1 Project narrative reports 1.2 Mid-term and final reports	Adequate engagement of key stakeholders Enabling operating environment of

<p>CARIFORUM countries</p>	<p>1.2 Enhanced capacity and skills of women and youth on the use of the IP system.</p> <p>1.3 More efficient and more harmonised IP administrations offering high-quality services to the users with targeted support actions for MSMEs;</p> <p>1.4 Increased awareness on the importance of IP protection among policy makers, businesses and society at large.</p>	<p>organised – by gender /sector/ country.</p> <p>1.3.1 Number of IP offices and MSMEs offering high quality services from action.</p> <p>1.4.1 Number of new policy makers, businesses and other stakeholder disaggregated by category, sex, and youth) exposed to awareness building activities.</p>	<p>1.2.1 TBD at the beginning of the Programme</p> <p>1.3.1 TBD at the beginning of the Programme</p> <p>1.4.1 TBD at the beginning of the Programme</p>	<p>1.2.1 TBD at the beginning of the Programme</p> <p>1.3.1 TBD at the beginning of the Programme</p> <p>1.4.1 TBD at the beginning of the Programme</p>		<p>the IP institutions remains stable</p> <p>IP offices are receptive to digitisation platforms</p> <p>Poicy makers receptive to changes in legislation on IP</p>
<p>Output 2</p> <p>Increase the use of internationally recognized Quality Infrastructure to support interregional and international trade</p>	<p>1.1 Regional Frameworks and national QI Institutions have been strengthened.</p> <p>1.2 Competencies of private and public sector QI organizations have been strengthened.</p> <p>1.3 The value of QI has been further promoted and stakeholder’s knowledge thereof has improved.</p>	<p>1.1.1 One national policy developed</p> <p>1.1.2 One metrology school hoster at CaRL</p> <p>1.1.3. Regional and international conferences in QI concepts attended</p> <p>1.2.1 At least 5 additional Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) for accreditation</p> <p>1.2.3 8 SMEs in 8 countrie supported to ISO</p> <p>1.2.4 No of QI training cources develived online (disaggregated by n^a of participants and sex)</p> <p>1.3.1 No of new quality awards delivered</p>	<p>All baselines TBD at the beginning of the Programme</p>	<p>All targets TBD at the beginning of the Programme</p>	<p>1.1 Project narrative reports</p> <p>1.2 Mid-term and final reports</p>	<p>Adequate engagement of key stakeholders</p> <p>Enabling operating environment of the QI institutions</p> <p>Policy makers agree to areas of support</p> <p>Public receptive to communications on QI.</p>

		1.3.2 No of new public relations, communications, and training initiatives completed				
Output 3 Increase the compliance by CARIFORUM States with international SPS measures, standards and procedures.	1.1 Regional AHFS policy framework developed 1.2 Strengthen SPS Capacity Building	1.1.1. Regional AHFS Policy (early warning systems) Implemented 1.1.2. Legislation in specific countries upgraded 1.1.3. AHFS Coordination in 4 countries improved 1.1.4. Information systems in SPS Services delivered 1.2.1 Training for staff in public sector in AHFS (disaggregated by sex), and digitization of SPS services delivered 1.2.2 Laboratory testing, accreditation, development of business models for lab strengthen. 1.2.3 Training, guidance, equipment and certification (select value chains) delivered 1.2.4 Awareness building on food safety/ SPS culture completed	All baselines TBD at the beginning of the Programme	All targets TBD at the beginning of the Programme	1.1 Project narrative reports 1.2 Mid-term and final reports	Adequate engagement of key stakeholders Enabling operating environment of the QI institutions Policy makers agree to areas of support Public receptive to communications on QI.
Output 4 Strengthened the capacities for EPA and CSME implementation at the national level.	1.1 Strengthened national capacities for EPA and CSME implementation at the national level.	1.1.1 Number of approved projects rated satisfactory or very satisfactory on completion.	All baselines TBD at the beginning of the Programme	All targets TBD at the beginning of the Programme	1.1 Project narrative reports 1.2 Mid-term and final reports	Adequate engagement of key stakeholders Beneficiaries will have the capacity to implement the

						projects effectively Political environment stable enough to carry through projects completion
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4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner territory

4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is **48** months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Financing Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

4.3 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures¹³.

4.3.1 Direct Management (Grants)

Grants: (direct management) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) – Phase 3: increase the use of internationally recognized Quality Infrastructure to support interregional and international trade.

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

The objective of the grant is to increase the use of internationally recognized Quality Infrastructure to support interregional and international trade.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

Direct grant. Refer to paragraph (c)

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB). PTB is the National Metrology Institute of Germany, with full technical competence in all fields of Quality Infrastructure. They have not been pillar assessed.

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because the Action falls within article 195 (f) of the Rules of Application (RAP 2018)¹⁴, i.e. "an Action with specific characteristics that require a "particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation or its administrative power". There is no regional CARIFORUM umbrella organisation for Quality and Standards. There is a CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ), based in Barbados and a national organisation in the Dominican Republic (INDOCAL – Instituto Dominicano para la Calidad). The project directly builds on the 11th EDF EPA TBT programme, implemented between 2019 and 2024, also implemented by PTB. The main contracting partner and executing agency with overall responsibility for the results-based- and financial monitoring will continue to be PTB. PTB will therefore implement these activities in close cooperation with

¹³ www.sanctionsmap.eu. Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

¹⁴ Financial regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union (July 2018) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018R1046>

CROSQ and INDOCAL (implementing partners) to assure ownership and sustainability, avoiding institutional duplicity.

With its International Cooperation Department, it has been the specialised technical cooperation implementing agency of the Federal Government of Germany in this field for more than 5 decades and has a long standing relationship with the Caribbean. Considering this globally unique combination of expertise and capacities, PTB was therefore chosen to implement (in partnership with INDOCAL and CROSQ) the 10th and 11th EDF TBT Project. PTB combines both technical and project implementation expertise, in addition to an extended knowledge and experience in the Caribbean. PTB is active in a great number of developing countries and promotes projects for the establishment of a quality infrastructure. The strength of the institutional collaboration approach which underpins the Action will ensure that the most effective use is made of the available resources and create synergies.

4.3.2 Indirect Management with an entrusted entity

Component 1 - Intellectual Property

This action may be implemented in indirect management with the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO). This implementation entails to improve the enabling framework for trade and investment between the EU and CARIFORUM, in line with the EPA. The Specific Objective is to support modernisation of the IP systems in CARIFORUM countries with a view to facilitate the use of IP for sustainable growth, creation of decent jobs, and stimulate regional integration.

The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria; an agency or organisation specialised in innovation and intellectual property (IP) services, policy, information and cooperation with considerable experience in the the EU and CARIFORUM Regions.

This implementation is justified because since 2015 EUIPO has intensified cooperation with the CARIFORUM Directorate and the CARIFORUM States (CS). The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) is the European Union Agency specialised on Intellectual Property (IP) and responsible for managing the EU trade marks and designs, the Observatory in the fight against counterfeiting and piracy, as well as cooperation on IP. It also works with the Intellectual Property Offices of the EU Member States and international partners to offer a similar registration experience for trade marks and designs across Europe and the world.

The EUIPO has been the major implementing partner for EU-funded projects in the field of IP since 2012 and it is currently implementing a total of 8 projects, of which, 3 projects fall under the Development and Cooperation Instrument, in Africa (AfriPI), in the ASEAN Region (ARISE+ IPR), Mercosur (AI-Invest Green); 3 projects fall under the Partnership Instrument (IP Key South-East Asia, IP Key China and IP Key Latin America); 1 project falls under the European Neighborhood Instrument in Georgia (EUGIPP) and 1 project falls under the European Development Fund (EDF) in the CARIFORUM region (CariPI). The EUIPO's financial contribution to these projects is between 10% - 30% of the total budget of these actions.

EUIPO is currently implementing the 11th EDF Innovation and IP project (CarIPI). The project started on 01/11/2019 for a duration of 48 months. Following the signature of the amendment to the Contribution Agreement to increase the funds to reach an EUIPO contribution of 30% (1.2 M EUR), the duration was extended by 6 months until 30th April 2024.

In its four years of implementation so far, EUIPO has worked closely with a wide range of stakeholders from the CARIFORUM countries, the European Union, and the relevant international organisations. The goal is to assist businesses in CARIFORUM to create and manage trademarks, designs, plant varieties, and geographical indications, and hence increase their competitiveness in the global market.

The entrusted entity would carry out the following budget-implementation tasks: acting as contracting authority concluding, monitoring and managing contracts, carrying out payments and recovering moneys due; and any other relevant transactions.

If negotiations with the above-mentioned entity fail, that part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The implementation by this alternative entity would be justified because of the following criteria; The World Intellectual Property Organization

(WIPO) is the global forum for intellectual property (IP) services, policy, information and cooperation. It is a self-funding agency of the United Nations, with 193 member states. WIPO has considerable experience in the CARIFORUM Region and is aware of the peculiarities of small developing countries.

In case the envisaged entity and the replacement entity mentioned above would need to be replaced, the Commission's services may select another replacement entity using the same criteria. The entity should have considerable experience in providing intellectual property (IP) services, policy, information and cooperation in the CARIFORUM Region, and should understand the peculiarities of small developing countries.

Component 3 - SPS – Sanitary and Phyto Sanitary (SPS)

This action may be implemented in indirect management with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). This implementation entails building on progress made in advancing SPS in CARIFORUM and will initiate mainly regional priority actions in areas where capacity constraints exist but where little or limited actions have been implemented.

The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria; experience in delivering capacity building and technical assistance in food control and food standards, strengthening national and regional food control systems, providing food safety awareness, experience in working at both regional and country levels, and particularly in the context of SPS, TBT and EPA agreements. The entity should have proven experience in managing projects CARIFORUM Region.

Under the 11th EDF SPS project, IICA has made significant headway in increasing compliance by CARIFORUM States with international SPS measures, standards, and procedures so as to increase international and regional market access. Focus has been placed on advancing the development of the SPS regulatory environment in CARIFORUM ; improving public and private sector capacity to comply with SPS measures, standards, and procedures; and strengthening SPS capacity in the fisheries sector.

IICA has been working stakeholders from both the public and private sectors in the fifteen CARIFORUM countries. The final beneficiaries from the public sector include regulatory and inspection services, competent authorities, laboratories, and agencies involved in AHFS coordination and other specialised groups. Private sector beneficiaries (including women and youth) consist of stakeholders from a variety of value chains, primarily small and medium sized operators.

IICAs aim is to build on the work done under the previous 2 phases with a particular focus on the implementation of Regional AHFS Policy (early warning systems); Legislative upgrades for specific countries (where trade hindered by state of legislation); Improvement in AHFS Coordination (in depth technical assistance and training) and the design and introduction of information systems in SPS Services (for improved communication, cooperation). In addition SPS capacity building for the public sector staff in key AHFS areas, digitization of SPS services; laboratory strengthening - testing, accreditation, and development of business models; provision of training, guidance, equipment and certification (select value chains); and the introduction/coordination of data management systems for improved knowledge management.

The entrusted entity would carry out the following budget-implementation tasks: acting as contracting authority concluding, monitoring and managing contracts, carrying out payments and recovering moneys due; and any other relevant transactions.

If negotiations with the above-mentioned entity fail, that part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The implementation by this alternative entity would be justified because of the following criteria; FAO technical assistance in food control and food standards is being delivered at global, regional and country levels. It has provided assistance in the CARIFORUM Region in establishing and strengthening national food control systems including the formulation and revision of food legislation (acts and regulations) and food standards in the context of the SPS and TBT Agreements; conducted a wide range of workshops and training courses, with the intention of increasing awareness among developing countries, in particular, the importance of their complying with SPS and TBT measures to benefit from participating in the international food trade; and strengthening laboratory analysis and food inspection capabilities.

In case the envisaged entity and the replacement entity mentioned above, would need to be replaced, the Commission's services may select another replacement entity using the same criteria. The entity should have experience in the strengthening of food safety systems at an international and regional level.

Component 4 - EPA and CSME Standby Facilities

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with the Caribbean Development Bank. This implementation entails the selection, award and monitoring of implementation of projects of CARIFORUM Member states targeting implementation of EPA and CSME at the national level.

The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria; an agency or organisation with considerable experience in providing financial and technical support to national and sub-national governments and other entities within the CARIFORUM region, fostering development along the thematic lines of EPA commitments i.e. TBT, SPS, Trade Facilitation, Services, Investment, etc. The entity should also have experience in managing programmes and projects designed at enhancing CARIFORUM regional integration.

The choice of CDB as implementing partner is justified, as CDB has been an integral partner in effective implementation of the facilities for the past 10 years. The Stand-by Facility format has been a very successful tool in advancing the effective implementation of the EPA at the national level. The facility it supports the identification, formulation and implementation of key projects at national and regional level. It strongly complements the activities of the other components under the EPA support programme, and its thematic and demand-driven approach responds well to EPA implementation needs and Caribbean partner priorities, including the Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME).

The CDB is therefore well positioned to continue the support to CARIFORUM states especially having learnt key lessons which will ensure more effective and efficient implementation. The Bank also brings added value by providing additional resources to countries for implementation of the actions.

If negotiations with the above-mentioned entity fail, that part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with the Inter American Development Bank (IDB). IDB provides financial and technical support to national and sub-national governments and other entities in the region. IDB has a long history of driving progress in health, education, infrastructure, climate action and diversity, trade, and private sector development in the Caribbean. IDB has provided resources and technical assistance towards promoting integration of Cariforum countries into the world economy by enhancing their ability to benefit from trade liberalization and increased market access.

In case the envisaged entity and the replacement entity mentioned above, would need to be replaced, the Commission's services may select another replacement entity using the same criteria. The entity should have experience in channeling investment and grant resources, as well as technical assistance, towards promoting the integration of CARIFORUM countries into the world economy at the national level.

4.3.3 Changes from indirect to direct management mode (and vice versa) due to exceptional circumstances (one alternative second option)

In case components 1,3,4 cannot be implemented under Indirect Management with an entrusted entity, due to circumstances outside of the Commission's control, the action will be implemented under Direct Management via Grants. The purpose of the grant, the targeted beneficiaries, and the criteria used to select implementers would be the same as outlines per each component under 4.3.2.

In case component 2 cannot be implemented under Direct Management via Grants, due to circumstances outside of the Commission's control, the action will be implemented under Indirect Management with an entrusted entity. The criteria used to select this entity would be: an agency specialised in promoting, dynamizing and accelerating industrial development; through building resilient quality infrastructure. The entity must have significant experience internationally and within the CARIFORUM region in facilitating the development of regional standards, promoting the harmonization of metrology systems and supporting the sustainable production and trade of goods and services in the context of Trade Agreements.

4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Third-party contribution, in currency identified (EUR)
Implementation modalities		
Component 1 - Intellectual Property – Indirect Management with EUIPO	2 500 000	1 100 000
Component 2 - Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) – Direct Management with PTB	3 000 000	
Component 3 - Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures - Indirect Management with IICA	2 000 000	
Component 4 - EPA and CSME Standby Facility - Indirect Management with CDB	6 500 00	
Totals	14 000 000	1 100 000
Grand Total	15 100 000	

4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The overall responsibility for the Programme relies on the EU Delegation. The contractual responsibility for the individual components will be with the implementing agencies. A Programme Steering Committee (PSC) shall be set up to oversee and validate the overall direction and policy of the programme.

The PSC will be chaired by a representative of the EU Delegation, and will meet at least once annually. The PSC members will include representatives from: Caribbean States, European Commission and the implementing agencies, and other relevant partners.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action and may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, for the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action and ensuring effective coordination.

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of

implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (Outputs and direct Outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix (for project modality) and the partner's strategy, policy or reform action plan list (for budget support).

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

Implementing partners will provide project update and monitoring as per the requirements under the individual contractual agreements. Reporting and management will also be facilitated at the level of the PSC.

Monitoring and reporting should strive to assess how the Action is considering the principle of gender equality, human rights-based approach, and if possible, rights of the persons with disabilities, including inclusion and diversity. Indicators shall be disaggregated at least by sex.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a mid-term and/or final evaluation(s) will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

The mid-term evaluation will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular to identify possible adjustments to the programme.

The final evaluation will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that this programme is regional and a geographic representation should be taken into account.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least two months in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination¹⁵. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments.

The Financing of the evaluation may be covered by another measure constituting a Financing Decision.

Evaluations should strive to what extent the action is taking into account the human rights-based approach as well as how it contributes to gender equality, women's and youth's empowerment, and eventually, disability inclusion.

5.3 Audit and Verifications

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The 2021-2027 programming cycle will adopt a new approach to pooling, programming and deploying strategic communication and public diplomacy resources.

In line with the 2022 "[Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for External Actions](#)", it will remain a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to inform the relevant

¹⁵ See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. This obligation will continue to apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU member states.

However, action documents for specific sector programmes are in principle no longer required to include a provision for communication and visibility actions promoting the programmes concerned. These resources will instead be consolidated in Cooperation Facilities established by support measure action documents, allowing Delegations to plan and execute multiannual strategic communication and public diplomacy actions with sufficient critical mass to be effective on a national scale.

Appendix 1 REPORTING IN OPSYS

A Primary Intervention (project/programme) is a coherent set of activities and results structured in a logical framework aiming at delivering development change or progress. Identifying the level of the primary intervention will allow for:

Articulating Actions or Contracts according to an expected chain of results and therefore allowing them to ensure efficient monitoring and reporting of performance;

Differentiating these Actions or Contracts from those that do not produce direct reportable development results, defined as support entities (i.e. audits, evaluations);

Having a complete and exhaustive mapping of all results-bearing Actions and Contracts.

Primary Interventions are identified during the design of each action by the responsible service (Delegation or Headquarters operational Unit).

The level of the Primary Intervention chosen can be modified (directly in OPSYS) and the modification does not constitute an amendment of the action document.

The intervention level for the present Action identifies as (tick one of the 4 following options);

Action level (i.e. Budget Support, blending)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action
Group of actions level (i.e. top-up cases, different phases of a single programme)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#):
Contract level		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	Innovation and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) – Phase 2:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) – Phase 3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 3	Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures – Phase 3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 4	EPA and CSME Standby Facility – Phase 3
Group of contracts level (i.e. series of programme estimates, cases in which an Action includes for example four contracts and two of them, a technical assistance contract and a contribution agreement, aim at the same objectives and complement each other)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of contracts 1	