



3rd TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

EU-EAC CORE PROGRAMME

DATE: WEDNESDAY 4.12.2024

VENUE: VIRTUAL MEETING (MS TEAMS)

Implemented
by



1. Introduction

The meeting was attended by teams from the EAC Secretariat, represented by the Director of Customs and Trade and the Principal Officer of International Trade; the European Union Delegation, represented by the programme officer for Tanzania; All LOT service contractors, which included Fischer Consulting in consortium with DT Global implementing Lot 1, Expertise Advisors implementing Lot 2, and GOPA Worldwide Consultants implementing LOT 3 and representatives from GIZ, coordinating the EU-GIZ Lifted Programme. All representatives from implementing agencies, EAC and EUD attended the technical committee. A list of meeting participants is attached to this report.

2. Opening Remarks from EAC

The EAC thanked all participants in attendance while emphasising the importance of taking stock of the progress in the EU-EAC CORE Programme and the LIFTED Programme. In addition, the technical committee served as a ground for aligning the following activities in the upcoming year and addressing outstanding implementation issues.

3. Recap of the 2nd Technical Committee Meeting.

The meeting noted that in the 2nd Technical Committee Meeting, Lots 1 and 2 could not provide detailed progress updates at the time they were still in their respective inception phases; however, they delivered their updates to the Regional Steering Committee (RSC). LOT 3 was able to present its annual work, which has been the basis of its implementation in 2024. To date, the project has made substantial strides in communication and visibility and the development of the result-based monitoring framework. It was highlighted that strategies have been agreed on to establish coordinated information collection and dissemination approaches. The Lot further continues to strategise on developing a result-based monitoring and evaluation framework for the EU-EAC CORE Programme, with a joint log frame expected to be finalised by the end of December 2024. This log frame will serve as the foundation for a digitalised result-based monitoring system, and reporting structures will be agreed upon amongst the Vendors, the EAC Secretariat and the European Union Delegation to ensure comprehensive and timely reporting to the EAC Secretariat and the EU delegation. The committee emphasised the need to organize various meetings to address outstanding issues for the successful implementation of the EU-EAC CORE Programme as a whole.

4. Presentation- EU-GIZ Leveraging Integration Frameworks for Trade in Services and Civil Society Organizations in the East African Community (LIFTED).

The LIFTED representative highlighted the need for guidance from the technical meeting on addressing pending issues like the proposed governance structure for the EU-GIZ LIFTED, that is, how to organize the first steering committee meeting and the technical Committee Meeting to discuss all outputs properly.

The LIFTED programme's implementation status was presented, with highlights on key components and complementarities with the EU-EAC CORE programme collaboration has focused on areas such as negotiating the removal of restrictions, conducting diagnostic studies, regulatory audits, and increasing the availability of trade in services data. Efforts are underway to streamline the cross-border movement of professionals through operationalizing Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs), with CORE addressing accountants and insurance professionals while LIFTED targets engineers and additional professions. Joint policy advocacy and awareness initiatives include annual trade in services conferences under CORE and trade platforms under LIFTED, ensuring coordinated events for public-private sector dialogues.

The LIFTED representative further presented its milestones, which included finalizing the contractual processes,

new partnerships, acquired equipment, development of communication and visibility tools, and monitoring and evaluation systems.

Given the above, the meeting resolved that:

- I. The meeting agreed on the need to revisit technical coordination meetings between LIFTED, the CORE Programme, and the EAC, noting that it is essential to address outstanding issues in a focused setting outside the Technical Committee
- II. A meeting with EAC, EU, and GIZ is to be convened on Friday, 6th December, at 2:00 pm EAT

5. Presentation of LOT 2 progress report and outstanding issues

Ebenezer Laizer, Team Leader Lot 2, presented their progress since February 2024, highlighting key responsibilities such as developing a supervision mechanism, monitoring Lot 1's compliance with its contract, and ensuring deliverables are met. He emphasized that Lot 2's responsibilities include conducting site visits, organising joint meetings with Lot 1 and the EAC Secretariat, and participating in technical committee meetings. In addition, he presented the supervision mechanism, stating the required assessment tools such as LOT 1 TORs, contracts, work plans, change requests, best practices, consultation meetings with EAC, and expected outputs such as reviewed and approved reports.

The meeting was informed of several key observations and concerns regarding the project's implementation. It was noted that Lot 2 is tasked with supervising Lot 1, specifically focusing on the development of the regional customs ICT platform; however, certain aspects, such as hardware provisions and integration solutions, were either incomplete or not within Lot 1's scope. Further, it was pointed out that some models, such as the valuation and risk management model, were developed through other initiatives but are not operational due to funding and maintenance issues.

Lot 2 Team Leader provided the following recommendations to the technical committee;

- I. EAC must address these gaps to ensure the project progresses smoothly and conduct a third assessment on the COMESA and SADC platforms (CTMS and TRIPS) before adoption.
- II. The need for clarity on the remaining workload for Lot 1 since some modules have already been developed by the East African Community (EAC) through other initiatives
- III. The EAC and Lot 1 contractor discuss the assessment report's findings and determine the way forward before proceeding to the next steps.
- IV. Review the valuation and risk management module to explore its potential use in adopting the CTMS and TRIPS platforms and conduct a due diligence assessment of these platforms before proceeding with their adoption.
- V. The Technical committee resolved that a meeting between LOT 1 and 2 is scheduled to revise a way forward for the existing issues

6. Presentation of LOT 1 Progress report and outstanding issues

Gerrit Fischer, Team Leader Lot 1, presented their progress and outstanding issues to the technical committee. He emphasised the need to develop user requirements to assess whether the existing modules meet these requirements, stressing the importance of involving the users in the process. Excluding them could result in failure due to a lack of ownership, hence proposing that the necessary meetings be convened.

Gerrit Fischer outlined the next project milestone, scheduled for February 25, 2025, which involves completing the user requirement specifications across all relevant aspects. He emphasised that once the user requirements are documented and signed off by representatives from the five participating partner states and South Sudan, they will clearly understand what the users expect.

The meeting raised concerns about the lack of a revised inception report and sought clarity on the integration review requirements and the status of the model development assessment.

The meeting agreed that the EAC project coordinator submit the inception report addressing the comments from the EUD representative.

The meeting also agreed that the project coordinator should consult about the agenda for the required meeting between 1, lot 2, EAC, and the EU. The meeting was decided to be scheduled no later than 13 December 2024.

7. Presentation of LOT 3 Progress report and outstanding issues

Wagala Staicy, Lot 3 Team Leader, outlined the key outstanding issues and upcoming activities for 2025, which included focusing on monitoring and evaluation (M&E), with implications for the implementation of Lots 1 and 2, as well as communication and visibility, conducting sectoral studies, and organising a peer-to-peer conference in financial services in Kampala and reviewing the accountancy MRA, working with OPC on corrections as they join IFAC, and developing a business guide for revised training services commitments. She also discussed capacity-building events for key personnel from customs and other stakeholders, highlighting that the team will begin online coaching and mentoring sessions in the first quarter of 2025, focusing on project management and the use of EU funds, setting up a digital evaluation plan with access for all Lots, and continuing regional visibility efforts through flagship activities. She pledged that the annual plan for 2025 would be attached to the minutes, highlighting key actions. Following the diagnostic studies and regulatory audits, it was noted that two additional sectors have been added, which will be discussed in a meeting between LIFTED and LOT 3.

She further encouraged all stakeholders to stay informed through the project website (<https://eu-eaccoreprogramme.com/>), which will be updated regularly. She emphasized the importance of collaboration between Lots 1 and 2 and with LIFTED to ensure the successful implementation of communication and visibility initiatives.

8. Closing Remarks

Flavia Busingye, the Director of Customs EAC, expressed gratitude to the team for ensuring all agenda items, including pending issues, were discussed. She emphasised the importance of putting more effort into concluding these issues.