

COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

ECOWAS COMMISSION



COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO

**EPAU Technical Committee Meeting  
Abuja, January 06, 2011**

*REPORT*



THE AFRICAN CAPACITY  
BUILDING FOUNDATION

FONDATION POUR LE RENFORCEMENT  
DES CAPACITES EN AFRIQUE

## **Introduction**

Members of the Economic Policy Analysis Unit's (EPAU) Technical Committee met in Abuja, Nigeria (River Plaza Room # R17) on January 06, 2011, at the invitation of the Commissioner Macroeconomic Policy of the ECOWAS Commission to reflect on EPAU's draft work program for approval and pave the way for its successful implementation. The meeting was the first of its kind since the launch of the Project. The Meeting was called to order at 11:00 am.

### **1. Participants**

The participants included the following:

- Director, multilateral surveillance (Chair);
- Director, Private Sector (member);
- Executive Assistant to the Commissioner (member);
- Principal Program Officer of Research Representing the Director of Research and Statistics (who joined the meeting later on);
- Manager, EPAU (Secretary).

*Absence with apology:* Director of Finance.

The full contacts of the participants at the EPAU's first Technical Committee meeting is provided at the end of this report.

### **2. Agenda of the meeting**

The Agenda for this first EPAU's Technical Committee Meeting was as follows:

1. Introductory remarks of the Chair;
2. Composition of the Technical Committee;
3. Presentation and Discussion of EPAU's Work Program;
4. Any Other Business.

### **3. Proceedings of the meeting**

#### **3.1 Introductory remarks**

The Chair of the TC welcomed the members of the TC and thanked them for making time to attend this very important meeting. He recalled the objective of this first TC meeting which is to peruse the Unit's work program. He insisted on the importance of EPAU as a think tank for the Commission. EPAU through its work could bring visibility to the Commission's activities, he therefore exhorted the participants to make time to involve themselves or their respective directorates in the successful implementation of the Unit's activities.

After these introductory remarks the Director of EPAU was asked to address the second point of the Agenda.

#### **3.2. Composition of the Technical Committee**

The Director of EPAU used the opportunity proffered to wish all the members a prosperous New Year. Addressing the membership of the TC, he presented the TC as a governing body whose

membership was determined in the signed Grant Agreement (page 21). The composition was as follows: *Director, Private Sector Development; Director, Research and Statistics; Director, Multilateral Surveillance; a representative of the Commissioner for Macroeconomic Policy; NEPAD Advisor and the EPAU Project Manager*. However, the position of NEPAD Advisor does no longer exist in the Commission. Consequently, the Commissioner suggested that in view of the important role of Finance in the successful implementation of the Project, the Director of Finance be nominated to be a member of the TC. This was approved by the Meeting.

In the discussions that followed members argued for the need to expand membership of the TC to other Departments in the Commission. The idea being that in the Project document, one of the governing bodies, namely the Steering Committee (SC), includes these other Departments i.e (*Commission for Trade, Customs and Free Movement; Commission for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources; Commission for Infrastructure; Commission for Human Development and Gender; WAMI; WAMA*). In order for the Commissioners of these Departments to fully participate in the deliberations of the SC meetings, it is important that they are informed on the EPAU's activities. This cannot be done unless they have a representative in the TC. In light of the above, the Meeting recommended that the TC be expanding to include: *Director of Agriculture; Director of Trade; Director of infrastructure; Representatives of PASP, WAMI and WAMA*. It was also felt that the Commission for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) be included in the SC since it was the only Commission left out and thus its Representative be member of the TC.

### **3.3. Presentation and Discussion of EPAU's Work Program**

The EPAU work program was presented and discussed section after section.

*On Institutional strengthening*, the Meeting wondered why it was limited to EPAU and not extended to the entire Commission. The Director of EPAU argued that the institutional strengthening being addressed here has to do with providing the necessary equipments and material to the newly created Project to be fully operational. However, this issue can be raised during the review of the Project to see to what extent resources could be made available to strengthen other Directorates. The Director of the EPAU presented the status of EPAU Staff. He indicated that, not only the Support Staff (Account Assistant, Administrative Assistant and a Driver) has not being recruited; the positions of the Publication Officer and that of Principal Program Officer of Research are yet to be re-advertised. This may delay project implementation.

The Meeting advise the Director to meet with the Director of Finance to find a common ground so that an Account Assistant is assigned to the project while awaiting a new recruit. Both the Account Assistant and the Director should attend a training session on ACBF procedures (these procedures are said to be very demanding).

*On Policy analysis and research*, three dimensions of research were to be considered: In-house research, commissioned research and the Journal of West Africa Integration. The first dimension did not raise any discussion. On the second dimension, the Director provided the Meeting with some clarifications. Using the Grant Agreement (Page 20) as a basis, he argued that, the Donor (ACBF) explicitly mentioned that the EPAU Team should work closely with other projects that ACBF supports in West Africa (some of which are CEPA, NISER, CAPE CAPES, CEPOD, CAPEC, WAIFEM). This therefore guided this second dimension which as to do with commissioned studies. That is, the EPAU liaising with key stakeholders will identify every year a topic to be investigated by all the think tanks supported by ACBF. In order to ensure that the research outputs are of the highest quality, that the methods of analysis are sound and harmonized across the different think tanks, the Director proposed a sequential approach that includes an inception and interim review workshops and an External review of the final document.

On the third dimension and having in mind the need to build the capacity of a critical mass of African professionals and cadres capable of undertaking a through policy analysis and research, the Director suggested to use the sequential approach highlighted above rather than the usual approach which consist in advertising call for papers and then send the papers to reviewers for perusal and make decision on whether the paper is publishable or not. The advantage of the sequential approach is that it helps build the capacity of the targeted group unlike the usual approach in which completed papers come from all over the world and do not necessarily contribute to build the capacity of West African professionals and cadres.

The Meeting was informed that the Directorate of Research and Statistics has in its Work Program plans to launch a Scientific Journal. After the floor discussion, the Meeting recommended that only One Scientific Journal be launched and proposed that EPAU should be given the mandate to operate the journal. Notwithstanding that both teams have to work closely on this activity. On the thematic areas, the Meeting noted that the private sector was not explicitly quoted. Although issues related to the private sector could be tackled under other themes (i.e. financial and industrial development), the Meeting recommended adding a new thematic area titled: Private Sector development, civil society and regional integration in West Africa.

*On monitoring and surveillance*, the Director proposed to identify focal points in member States who will produce monthly surveillance reports to complement the existing quarterly reports that the NCCs produce. These monthly reports should be based on the National Gazette and Circulars (Arrêtés) of key Ministries. The Director suggested that these reports be put on EPAU's website (discussion platform). The Meeting argued that since these reports tackle very sensitive matters they should not be posted directly on the website. The meeting also propose that the focal point for monthly reports be an Official from ACBF supported Think Tanks in member States. However, for countries where there are no such Think Tanks, Officials from local Think Tanks could be used.

*On capacity building and training;*

Given that within the Commission this activity falls under the mandate of the Human Resource (HR) Directorate, the Director was advised to collaborate with that Directorate in implementing training activities. The Director of EPAU should take advantage of the training needs identified by the HR Directorate.

*On governance* (Steering Committee) the Meeting recommended that given the important role of Peace and Security in the development process of the sub region, the Commission for Peace and Security should be added to the SC raising its membership number to 10. The Meeting also recommended that the Technical Committee meets twice a year right before the Steering Committee meeting.

*On the budget*, the Director was requested to cross check some of the figures since they appear to be very small compare to the type of activities that they intend to fund. This is especially the case for workshops.

In addition to the above discussions a more general concern was raised and discussed. It as to do with the fear that the activities of the newly established EPAU could overlap with the mandate of the West African Institute based in Cape Verde which is also an ECOWAS initiative. The Meeting recommended that the Director collaborates with the institute to avoid duplication of efforts.

The Meeting approved the proposed work program subject to its revision taking into account the above concerns. The Meeting was brought to an end at 01:45pm.

**LIST of PARTICIPANTS**

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