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REPORT ON THE ECOMARK AFRICA(EMA) PROGRAM TO THE COORDINATOR OF THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROGRAM.

Introduction

Ecomark Africa (EMA) is African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) Program with the mandate of promoting:

1. The Eco- Mark ecolabel in Africa for sustainably produced products and services
2. Certification of products and services conforming to the following 4 sustainability standards:
 - ARS/AES 1:2014 – Agriculture-sustainability and ecolabelling
 - ARS/AES 2:2014- Fisheries-sustainability and ecolabelling
 - ARS/AES 3:2014-Forestry-sustainability and ecolabelling and
 - ARS/AES 4:2014-Tourism-sustainability and ecolabelling

Other standards will be included later in the programme as they are harmonized

3. African producers to access local and international markets for sustainably produced goods and services.
4. Particular Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) to get certified and access niche markets.

Its worth noting that most of the countries indicated interest on sustainable Tourism because of its potential in wealth and job creation among women and youth as well as protecting the environment.

The programme will create a platform where African products which meet certain stipulated sustainability criteria will be audited and successful products and services awarded an ecolabel. The Ecomark denotes that a product adheres to acceptable environmental sustainability standards.

Planned activities

In order to realize the above mandate, EMA has planned for the following activities:

- i. Registration of EMA at the EUIPO and WIPO
- ii. Development of an EMA business plan and its approval by the Advisory Committee

- iii. Convening of a key stakeholders meeting for the sectors covered by the 4 sustainability standards.
- iv. Development of the ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme (ACAP) a Conformity Assessment Programme for certification of goods and services that comply to the requirements of the various sustainability standards.
- v. Development of Rules and Procedures for the ACAP.
- vi. Benchmarking the EMA certification scheme with other Certification schemes with a view to working closely and issue dual certification marks
- vii. Identified 5-member state countries that will participate in the EMA pilot project.
- viii. Build capacity among Certification Bodies, Laboratories, Producers and Stakeholders to allow the certification Trial in 5 countries
- ix. Development of training materials, training of trainers and selection of participants for building capacity in the 5 countries that will result in certification to EMA standards
- x. Develop Capacity of Cleaner Production Centres (CPCs) to identify firms to award Ecolabels. Identification of at least three products/ services to undergo eco-Labeling auditing and certification
- xi. Certify 3 companies in any of the 4 sustainable standards with an Ecomark and link the same to European market.
- xii. Development of IT platform needed to control processes and sharing of information and experiences with stakeholders

Achievements

- i. Eco-Mark has been registered under EUIPO and on final registration stage under WIPO
- ii. the EMA Business Plan was approved
- iii. A key stakeholders meeting has been scheduled for 27th Feb 2018
- iv. The ACAP system with its rules and procedures have been finalized and approved
- v. 8 countries have been prioritized for the implementation of the pilot project and commitment letters and TORs for the project signed with the respective National Standards Bodies. These are Zimbabwe, Kenya, Cameroon, Rwanda, Ghana ,Senegal, Nigeria and Mauritius .

Conclusion

The planned activities are going on as scheduled and are expected to be finalized by August 2018. As indicated in the introduction, sustainable tourism is very critical in the wealth and job creation among the youth and women. ARSO has limited funds for this and EMA would appreciate support to populate and implement these standards in other African countries other than those preselected. Implementation of these standards for Sustainable products would rebrand African product and open up new market.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Hermogene Nsengimana
Secretary General.

