

Tralac EPA Review Workshop

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The Negotiation Experience: Government – Private sector Interface



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Background to ATF

- ◆ The ATF of Namibia was founded in 1999 as an incorporated association not for gain’.
- ◆ The main objective: Namibia is engaged in a plethora of important and complicated trade negotiations
- ◆ and hence the private sector formed this body to represent its interests.
- ◆ ATF is staffed by a Trade Advisor and a Special Trade Advisor .

Functions of the ATF

- ◆ represents the trade interests of the agricultural sector,
- ◆ Provides a link between Namibia's diverse agricultural interests and Government
- ◆ lobbies nationally and internationally for improved trade conditions for the sector,
- ◆ gathers and disseminates information relevant to agricultural trade as well as to interact with similar non-state actors in partner countries with a view to achieving Namibia's agricultural trade objectives.

ATF and EPA Negotiations:

- ◆ The ATF became involved in the EPA negotiations in 2004, on a technical level.
- ◆ Organised workshops with industry to develop position papers for various negotiation pillars.
- ◆ Attended meetings of the BLNS market access team.
- ◆ The active participation of the ATF in the negotiations ended in March 2007.

Namibia and the initialing of the IEPA:

- ◆ The Namibian Govt initialled the Interim EPA with the EC accompanied by a statement that the concerns which Namibia had identified throughout the negotiations **would be addressed** in the next round of negotiations.
- ◆ Namibia had delayed the initialling because the text of the IEPA in that form had long-term detrimental policy implications.
- ◆ The failure of Namibia to initial the Agreement, would have resulted in the immediate secession of beef exports to EU markets also affecting table grapes and fishery exports.
- ◆ The industry prepared a statement in the media expressing its grave concern as to the losses that would be incurred by the industry as well as the nation.
- ◆ Losses to the economy were quantified and this was submitted to the Cabinet and this was greatly influential in initialing the Agreement.

Some Contentious Issues for Namibia

- ◆ The non-negotiable MFN treatment provisions sought by the EC;
- ◆ The freezing of export taxes/levies/charges and thus Namibia's ability to use such measures as incentives for value addition and manufacturing;
- ◆ The abolition of quantitative restrictions on imports with impacts on cereal production and thus contributing to food insecurity in Namibia;

Some Contentious Issues Con't

- ◆ Inadequate provision made for Infant Industry Protection;
- ◆ Prescriptive regulations for the administration of the free movement of goods within SADC EPA states in a manner that may not be compatible with SACU

Lessons Learnt

- ◆ Due to the lack of transparency from Government to the private sector, there was no clarity on any matter.
- ◆ Industry was unable to give input to the process when the contentious issues arose.
- ◆ There was insufficient information available hence there was not proper basis to advice.

Way forward

- ◆ The delayed initialling resulted in a larger negotiation space for the Namibian Government
- ◆ After the initialling, the MTI convened a meeting to brief the industry on the negotiation process.
- ◆ It was at that meeting that a small task force was formed to look into the contentious issues as well as provide detailed research and inputs by the private sector through the National Trade Forum, to base negotiation positions on.
- ◆ The ATF together with industry representation is now fully involved in the preparation of position papers as input into the next round of negotiations.



Thank You!

- For listening!