

**Concept note of a workshop to launch**  
**a Development Account project on**  
*Strengthening capacity for evidence-based policymaking*  
*and the economic resilience of CARICOM*

**21-22 May 2024**  
**Bridgetown, Barbados**

UNCTAD jointly with ECLAC and partnering entities is organising a workshop on strengthening data and evidence-based policy on trade in services in the Caribbean region to be held in Bridgetown, Barbados, on 21-22 May 2024, as a hybrid event (in person and online). The workshop will launch a joint project, from 2024 to 2027, to strengthen capacity for evidence-based policymaking and the economic resilience of CARICOM. It will be organized back-to-back with the UNCTAD Global Supply Chain Forum, 21-24 May 2024, to facilitate broader exchanges with trade and transport experts from the region and beyond. The participants will attend a related session of the Global Forum on 22 May afternoon.

## **Background**

Trade in services is crucial for economic development, enabling diversification, foreign exchange earnings, job creation, and knowledge transfer, particularly in sectors like tourism and maritime transport. It also fosters competitiveness, integration into global value chains, and access to essential services, necessitating evidence-based policies and robust data support. Many developing countries, including in regions like the Caribbean, were heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate-driven disasters and policy action is challenged due to insufficient availability or quality of data on trade in services. The intangible nature of services poses many conceptual and practical difficulties for their measurement. This lack of comprehensive statistics hampers effective policymaking and trade negotiations, especially as economies grow and the service sector expands.

The project's objective is to strengthen the capacity and data infrastructure of CARICOM member States with bilateral support for at least four countries among the seven beneficiaries, namely:

- Antigua and Barbuda,
- Barbados,
- Dominica,
- Grenada,
- Saint Kitts and Nevis,
- Saint Lucia,
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Other countries may express interest to join at their own expense. The aim is to improve trade in services statistics for better evidence and effectiveness of services trade policymaking in the countries, for enhancing resilience and transformational change via services. In practice, the two related outcomes pursue enhancing the statistical capacity of countries to produce harmonized disaggregated and bilateral trade in services statistics on a regular basis and by improving their knowledge base and analytical skills using the new data architecture of services and services trade for strengthening economic resilience of the region.

The project will benefit from a Trade-in-Services Information System (TiSSTAT), developed by UNCTAD jointly with Western African countries. It is a modern tool designed to facilitate the collection and processing of statistics on international trade in services by national statistical authorities. The system enables the production of country-owned high quality and internationally comparable trade-in-services statistics while limiting initial investment costs and businesses' response burden significantly.

## **Event Goals and Objectives**

The event aims to:

- Emphasize the crucial role of services and trade in services for the CARICOM region, highlighting their contribution to economic diversification and resilience. Stress the importance of accurate international trade in services statistics for informed policymaking.
- Facilitate the sharing of globally agreed methods, good practices, and tools to compile high-quality, granular, and timely trade in services statistics. Focus particularly on measuring gender equality and inclusiveness within trade.
- Discuss the current practices and challenges in compiling trade in services statistics in CARICOM countries.
- Identify priority service sectors for economic diversification, as well as related policy areas and key data gaps to be addressed in collaboration within the capacity development project.
- The project will build on insights from other initiatives conducted in the countries, including by partners like the OECS Secretariat, CARICOM, ECLAC and the sub-regional office of ECLAC for the Caribbean region.
- Clarify the goals and objectives of the DA16 project on trade in services in CARICOM, ensuring alignment with national priorities and a shared understanding among all participants.
- Foster enhanced collaboration and partnership among key stakeholders and entities involved in the project, creating a conducive environment for future cooperation and knowledge exchange, including among statisticians and trade policy experts.
- Discuss further activities and needs to elaborate a project work plan, ensuring a clear understanding of planned activities and timelines.

## **Target Audience**

Two representatives of each beneficiary countries' national institutions will attend the event in person. Participants should have an expertise in areas relevant to international trade in

service and either related statistics or trade policy. Each country will nominate two experts: **1 statistical expert** working at a national statistical office or at an institution in charge of trade in services statistics and **1 policy expert** involved in services trade policy formulation. Other potential participants identified by countries or project partners, are highly encouraged to attend the workshop at their own cost or virtually.

The event is open for representatives of involved partnering agencies: Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), United Nations Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean Multi-Country Office (MCO), the UN Resident Coordinator, Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and their Members. Other interested stakeholders may contact the organizers.

Moreover, representatives from the private sector and experts from other national, regional, and international institutions are welcome to join the workshop.

## Event Details and Logistics

The meeting will take place on 21-22 May 2024 in Bridgetown, Barbados.

**The venue:** Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, Two Mile Hill, St. Michael, BB11093,

**Travel Cost:** Country participants whom the organizers (ECLAC or UNCTAD) will fund, will receive a round ticket to arrive to Barbados on the day prior to the start of the event, daily allocation (DSA) to cover lodging and food cost (approximately 450 USD/day) for a maximum of three days and terminal expenses (250 USD/once). Participants may decide to stay for the duration of the Global Supply Chain Forum at their own expense if beyond the maximum DSA allowed.

By the ECLAC travel rules and regulations, DSA will be reimbursed upon participants' return home. In this light, it is important to ensure sufficient funds to enable the travel and to pay upfront to cover lodging, food, and transportation expenses. The reimbursement of DSA, at the end of the mission will be done upon the submission of boarding passes submitted to ECLAC.

**Hotel:** Participants are encouraged to make a hotel reservation at the soonest in the vicinity of the event premises. Some hotels can be found [here](#).

**Visa and entry requirements:** All visitors to Barbados must have a valid passport and a valid return ticket. Visitors from most countries around the world do not need a visa to enter Barbados except for 15 territories. Check visa requirements [here](#).

All travelers need to complete the online [Immigration and Customs form](#) 72 hours prior to arrival.

### Transportation:

Barbados [taxis](#) can be identified with a letter Z on their license plate. They can be reserved beforehand or hailed at the airport. Make sure to ask and verify the fare before accepting the ride. Shuttle services may also be available, depending on the hotel at which you are staying.

**Currency:** The national currency is the Barbadian Dollar. US Dollars are accepted. Nevertheless, change is given in the local Barbadian Dollar. Euros are not accepted. Some hotels provide currency exchange services.

As of 17 March 2024, 1 United States Dollar = 2 Barbadian Dollars.

Currency change may be carried out in commercial banks who follow the same exchange rates as the Central Bank of Barbados.

**Time:** The time zone of Barbados is Atlantic Standard Time (GMT-4).

**Event language:** The working language during the Workshop will be English.

**Connecting to the event:** A hybrid option to connect to the event will be provided, and the link will be shared closer to the event date for those who will not be able to attend in person.

## Global Supply Chain Forum 2024

The meeting will take advantage of the UNCTAD's Global Supply Chain Forum, which will take place on Bridgetown, Barbados, on 21-24 May 2024. For more information on the Forum, please visit UNCTAD website: <https://unctad.org/meeting/global-supply-chain-forum-2024>. The Forum will enable participants to benefit from the enriching programme related to transport, logistics and trade facilitation, and will help the project actors to reach a broader audience for the policy discussion.

UNCTAD will hold a side event on 22 May in the afternoon on *Trade in Services for Economic Diversification: Opportunities and Challenges for the CARICOM Region*. The session will provide a forum to identify opportunities and challenges in harnessing the potential of trade in services. It will consider how to strengthen the evidence base and effectiveness of policy action to strengthen the economic resilience of CARICOM countries. It will provide an opportunity for countries to share practices and identify areas for greater efforts jointly with trading partner countries and the international community. The session is organized jointly by UNCTAD, CARICOM, OECS and ECLAC.

## Expected Outcomes

- **In-depth discussion on project outcomes and outputs:** Participants will gain clarity about the outcomes and overarching goals and objectives of the project, ensuring alignment and shared understanding among all participants.
- **International Trade in Services Statistics:** Participants will gain a better understanding of the importance and value of international trade in services statistics and their role in effective policymaking.
- **Sharing of Best Practices:** The workshop will facilitate the sharing of globally agreed methods, good practices, and tools to compile high-quality, granular, and timely trade in services statistics. Based on practical examples of previous projects carried out in other parts of the world and considering existing initiatives in the CARICOM region, it will be possible to barnstorm on best solutions applicable for local specificity.
- **Identification of priorities for further work to address challenges and enable exchange of good practices:** Countries will be invited to share their current practices and challenges in how trade in services statistics are compiled in CARICOM countries; identify priority services sectors for economic diversification, related policy issues and data gaps. This will serve as a basis for the capacity development project.

- Discussion of Project Workplan: Participants will engage in discussions of the project workplan, get familiar with planned activities, aligning expectations and responsibilities for the successful implementation of the project.