

Training Workshop Empowers Lesotho's MSMEs with Critical Trade Tools

Session on AEO, STR, and Digital Platforms Boosts Cross-Border Trade and Competitiveness

Maseru, Lesotho – 03 October 2025 - The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development (MTIBD), in partnership with the Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) and with support from the German Development Cooperation (GIZ), successfully hosted a capacity-building workshop for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) on 30th September 2025 at the Lehakoe Club in Maseru.

Themed “Empowering MSMEs for Regional and Global Trade,” the workshop aimed to enhance the competitiveness of Lesotho’s MSMEs by providing practical training on key trade facilitation instruments. These included the Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programme, Simplified Trade Regime (STR), and digital platforms for managing rules of origin and customs procedures.

Held within the framework of Lesotho’s increasing integration into the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and ongoing implementation of the SADC-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), the workshop addressed critical knowledge gaps that limit MSME participation in regional and international markets.

Key areas covered during the workshop included:

Authorised Economic Operator (AEO): Guidance on the accreditation process that enables trusted traders to benefit from streamlined customs procedures and expedited clearance.

Simplified Trade Regime (STR): Training on using simplified procedures for low-value consignments under SADC and AfCFTA frameworks, which are particularly beneficial for informal and small-scale traders.

The REX System: Hands-on instruction on how to self-certify the origin of goods exported to the EU under the EPA, thereby reducing reliance on third-party certifications.

EU Origin Facilitator: A demonstration of the online tool that assists traders in understanding complex rules of origin and determining product eligibility.

Private Shopper Module: An introduction to an innovative platform developed by RSL to support MSMEs in navigating customs clearance processes with greater ease and transparency.



The event brought together a diverse mix of MSMEs actively engaged in cross-border trade. It highlighted the strong collaboration between government institutions, revenue authorities, and international development partners in fostering an enabling environment for trade and economic growth.

This workshop was implemented within the Regional Value Chains Lesotho (RVCL+) project. The RVCL+ project is co-funded by the European Union (EU) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany. It is managed by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development (MTIBD) of Lesotho and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, as part of the Cooperation for the Enhancement of SADC Regional Economic Integration (CESARE) programme.

The workshop reflects Lesotho's strong commitment to positioning its MSMEs as active players in both regional and global value chains. By building the capacity of traders to navigate frameworks such as the AfCFTA and the SADC regional market, as well as agreements with international partners like the EU, Lesotho is enabling its businesses to seize emerging trade opportunities, diversify export destinations, and strengthen their competitiveness in an increasingly integrated global economy.

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