

ABSTRACT

Technical Barriers to Trade – Improving the Trade-Related Capacity of Small and Medium Enterprises in the Beverage Sector of Trinidad and Tobago to Export to the European Market

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With the progressive erosion of tariffs and other forms of non-tariff barriers that can restrict international trade, countries are turning to Technical Barriers to Trade (TBTs) as a means of regulating markets, protecting their consumers and natural resources, and possibly discriminating against imports in favour of domestic products. For food product exporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries, the impact of these technical barriers applied as standards and regulations is more damning because in many respects they lack the necessary Trade-Related Capacity to implement the various technical requirements in export markets; a prerequisite for international competitiveness. This study develops a joint holistic theoretical framework that will guide a Trade-Related Capacity Building Approach (TRCBA) in standards towards international competitiveness for SMEs in the beverage industry in Trinidad and Tobago. Preliminary analysis of findings calls for action particularly as standards and regulations are not likely to go away anytime soon. The thesis proposes a tripartite/joint framework approach for trade-related capacity building in SMEs in Trinidad and Tobago. It concludes that the ability of SMEs to foster productivity, efficiency in product and process methods towards international competitiveness, requires joint and regional efforts. The thesis argues that although SMEs are designed to compete with each other, in order to improve their trade-related capacity to meet product standards in export markets, collaborations particularly in precompetitive areas needed to improve their physical and professional capacity are important to improve their trade related capacity.

Keywords - Chukwudi David Anyanwu; Technical Barriers to Trade; Small and Medium Enterprises; Beverage Industry; Standards; Regulations; European Union; Trinidad and Tobago