

the contracting-out of public services to which EC itself gives such emphasis; and it could yield major savings and improvements in performance.

5 New Ideas and Initiatives

This paper has made a few suggestions, summarised here, which could be put forward in pursuance of GNM's call for new forms of support. In most cases, of course, these are ideas which have not yet been studied and they would therefore require discussion and feasibility assessment before adoption:-

1. An early study into the need for the establishment of a **new specialised agency**, and a specific funding programme to design, finance and administer **micro-credit and savings schemes**, and **micro and small enterprise support programmes**, covering workshops, cluster marketing and logistical facilities, etc.
2. The creation of a specific programme for **PS organisation support**, with an ACP/EU Steering Committee, managed probably by CDI, which will provide funds for advisers, computerisation and communications, TA from Euro PS organisations, and intra-ACP and international links.
3. Creation of a special programme for **PS on-the-job training** (not just institutional) in technical, commercial and management skills, with PS participation in planning and execution. The programme, managed again by CDI, would provide finance and TA for planning, procuring and monitoring in-company training courses, including overseas attachments.
4. A more extensive support programme for **trade development and investment promotion**, including creation of regional, intra-ACP and international contact and communications networks, funds for more visits and meetings, and links between PS business and trade associations, with the same range. Again managed by CDI, this programme will require specialist trade development people, and will include setting up wide-ranging and comprehensive **benchmarking** and **quality and competitiveness** improvement programmes.
5. The establishment of a special programme to develop and finance a coherent, devolved, self-help **strategy for new enterprises**, involving:-
 - A **project identification, preparation and implementation support scheme**, based on local service providers and self-help.
 - A new **contact and communication network**, Internet-based, supporting intra-ACP, regional and international links, not just with Europe.
 - ACP-entrepreneur-based support for new **joint-venture studies**, to supplement schemes focussed on European technical partners.

- A comprehensive **entrepreneur- training and development scheme**, to provide local help with project formulation and development, links with others, and early-stage financial backing.

6 Observations and Conclusions

- 6.1 DraCom is right to see the PS as the main driver of economic growth, and to aim at a coherent and integrated strategy for its support. It is strong on concepts, but less precise on practicalities. The EC proposals need to be made more concrete, more specific, and more action oriented. ACP should press for an **action plan** to be worked out and costed at the start of negotiations.
- 6.2 It is welcome to see DraCom promise “an increased volume of **resources**”; but the plans need to be detailed and costed in advance, to ensure that the resources committed are sufficient.
- 6.3 DraCom’s approach seems to remain Euro-centred, with assistance flowing from Europe, often as much for the benefit of European exporters, investors and consultants, as of ACP beneficiaries. ACP needs to insist on all programmes being seen as principally for the **benefit of ACP businesses** and accordingly opened to other ACP, local and regional, if not also international players.
- 6.4 DraCom plans seem still to be driven by EC and its advisers. ACP should insist on full and **equal participation**, if not the leading role, in identifying overall and national problems and priorities, and designing action plans.
- 6.5 DraCom is right to focus on the **enabling environment** and building investor confidence. PS must always focus on risks and costs, and therefore has to have stability, transparency, and efficiency. But it is principally for ACP States to initiate action to provide this.
- 6.6 DraCom is right to focus on building capacity of **PS organisations**; but it does not go far enough in detailing the extent of support needed, which should cover trade and investment promotion activities and links, as well as dialogue with States, with a special funding programme.
- 6.7 DraCom is right to aim at building up local service providers; but this needs to be expanded into a comprehensive programme of **support and training for ACP entrepreneurs** and new projects, including contact and communications facilities, a project preparation scheme, and on-going **,on-the-job training** for PS businesses.
- 6.8 DraCom is right to focus on **micro and SMEs** as means to increase employment and combat poverty; but specific programmes, and a **specialised agency** are probably needed for this purpose. A study should be undertaken.