

FOREWORD

The advent of the Single European Market in January 1993 represents an important landmark in the history of international trade. The European Community (EC) is a major trading partner of Commonwealth developing countries which have traditional economic ties with member states and enjoy special access to the EC market. Any changes in the marketing environment in the EC resulting from the harmonisation of product standards, common product liability rules, environment and consumer protection policies, and in health and safety requirements, will therefore have profound implications on the trade of Commonwealth developing countries.

The Single European Market is based on a complex legislative programme which may appear daunting to Commonwealth exporters. Among the most important elements are the standards certification and testing procedures, where lack of knowhow could hamper Commonwealth manufacturers and exporters in making design and quality improvements in their export products which are crucial for market entry. The complicated rules of origin represent another area which could adversely affect the export interests of Commonwealth developing countries and divert trade from third countries to the EC market. The possible interaction of rules of origin and other trade barriers, such as quotas, could result in a systemic bias in favour of sourcing in Europe rather than importing into Europe.

The Single Market nevertheless offers new and far greater opportunities to the Commonwealth business community. But Commonwealth exporters will have to gear themselves up, produce goods according to buyers' specification, and understand the new rules and regulations relating to product standards, certification and testing procedures in order to take advantage of a large market of 320 million people. This Guide is accordingly designed to help them understand the changes which are taking place in Europe and to provide practical advice on how to export successfully to the European Community.

The Guide is divided into three parts. Part I provides an introduction to the EC, explaining the removal of barriers to form the Single European Market, the implications for Commonwealth exporters and the broad details of the EC's trading rules with Commonwealth countries. The Single European Market has broken down many of the physical and technical barriers and this will have a great impact on Commonwealth exports. Many technical standards are being set at European level and in other cases the EC has adopted a policy of recognising standards set by individual member states. This will eliminate the need for Commonwealth producers to comply with different national regulations.

The Guide explains how issues of quality, product safety, packaging and concern for the environment have been translated into specific EC legislation. Time, money and effort will have to be spent to determine if products meet EC rules and regulations on these key points.

Preferential access to the EC market gives Commonwealth exporters an edge over competitors with reduced or tariff-free entry into the EC. Chapter 3 of Part I provides a background to the different trading agreements negotiated by the EC with Commonwealth countries.

Part II of the Guide is a practical, product-based survey of the key factors governing access to the EC market. It is organised with reference to the products listed in the EC Common Customs Tariff (CCT) code. The chapters outline general EC legislation related to each product group, giving guidance on such factors as standards, technical specifications, associated packaging requirements and any special condition for Commonwealth exporters to sell into the EC. The main European trade associations, trade fairs and exhibitions and other helpful contact points are listed. Then each chapter also summarises the EC import regime for three categories of Commonwealth exporters. These categories are based on country of origin and are as follows:

African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States

Countries which benefit from the General System of Preferences (GSP)

Least Developed Developing Countries (LDDC)

Each category of exporters is able to benefit from varying levels of trade preference or restrictions. Corresponding information on duty levels, quotas, rules of origin and required documentation is provided to guide Commonwealth exporters. The Guide highlights the following specific product examples:

Frozen Prawns and Shrimps
Cut Flowers
Canned Fish
Dyes and Chemicals
Tyres
Leather Garments
Hides and Skins
Leather Goods
Wooden Doors/Windows
Household Textiles
Carpets and Rugs
Woollen Knitwear
Footwear
Jewellery
Hand Tools
Printed Circuit Boards
Brake Pads
Bicycles
Non-automatic Weighing Machines
Toys
Domestic Furniture

Detailed information is provided on legislation, product specification and market structure. The purpose of these product examples is to provide more guidance on how to export a particular product to the EC. For example, there are very stringent rules on safety requirements concerning physical and mechanical properties; flammability; chemical and electrical properties for toys. Details of these requirements are given in the product example to assist Commonwealth exporters wishing to sell these products in the EC.

The Guide concludes with a reference section, listing important names, addresses and contact points of main organisations relevant to trading with Europe, together with some sources of useful publications. It is intended that these contact points and publications will serve as a starting point for further research into product areas and target markets to ensure successful marketing to the Single European Market.

The wider and more integrated Single European Market offers exciting opportunities for Commonwealth exporters, but rewards will not come readily. It will be up to the exporter to identify those products which could feasibly be exported into the EC and decide how to take advantage of preferential access rules. Exporters need to be well informed of the standards required to be competitive in the market and to take action to meet these standards. If these steps are followed, then the Guide will enable Commonwealth exporters to be well prepared to sell to the Single European Market.

A G Barve

Director

Export and Industrial Development Division