



CARIFORUM-EU EPA

A Partnership that Counts



Doing Business in Europe in the Post Covid-19 Era

Small and Micro Enterprises (SMEs) seeking to do or continue doing business in the EU using the EPA need to be aware of the trends in the market place so that they can position their business to respond. According to the Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries (CBI) of the Netherlands, (How SMEs from developing economies can prepare their export business for (post)corona trends in Europe) Covid 19 accelerated the need for more professionalism in developing countries. Buyers now select products in a different way and the requirements they have for suppliers are much higher on many fronts than before. To meet the new standards, suppliers in developing countries need to review aspects of their business.

The sustainability and environment trend

European consumers are investing more and more into their health. This has increased the demand for health-enhancing products and services. Covid-19 has increased concern for the planet. Europeans would like to preserve the positive effects that Covid-19 has on earth, e.g. due to fewer flights and less traffic between home/work. Covid-19 has further strengthened the trend of sustainability, the need for transparency and the preference to buy more local. The consumer of today wants to know where products come from, corresponding working conditions and knowledge of materials of which it is made. According to the IBM Consumer Survey (2020), 71% of Europeans find traceability very important and are willing to pay a higher price for it.

What does this mean and what can an SME do?

The CBI advises that the sustainability, social responsibility and traceability trend means that suppliers need to comply with European regulations with regard to the working conditions of the employees who produce the product and make complete information available to (potential) buyers and/or consumers in an accessible way. The same applies for transparency about the use of materials and production. In both the food and non-food industries, there is a clear trend that consumers and retailers increasingly want to trace products. Make this possible by making the relevant information available.

To gain the confidence of European buyers, it is useful to obtain well-known certifications that are relevant to your industry. Think of the Rainforest Alliance, Fair Trade, EU Organic or Vegan Society. Excelling on these environmental trends helps to differentiate yourself as a supplier.

