**Project: Opportunities for the Caribbean to Capitalise on Regional Branding through Geographical Indications (GIs).**

Investment and focus on intellectual property rights (IPR), especially Geographical Indications in the Greater Caribbean is of great importance to the economic development and innovation of the Region. The region is host to a diversity of cultures and is rich with traditional knowledge which can be marketed to the wider world given the appropriate protection and know how provided for in the TRIPS Agreement. It offers new branding strategies for the differentiation of products originating from the ACS region.

The Region has already enjoyed some substantial success through GIs in its rum industry. As a substantial employer and a significant source of government revenue, rum is a product of critical importance to the social and economic well-being of the Region, which has enjoyed extended protection under Article 23 for its rum-producing countries such as Barbados – Mount Gay Rum, Jamaica – Appleton Estate Rum and Guatemala – Ron Zacapa Centenario.

These benefits therefore, are important aspects to be considered if the Greater Caribbean is to fully pursue the creation of GIs for select products of particular export interest and regional branding.

Additional benefits such as to promote cultural development through trade and economic integration; support for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the quest to penetrate new markets and trading partners and also incorporate these SMEs into the value chain., with the ultimate goal being to boost the economy of the Greater Caribbean while increasing the national production as a result of increased demand from the ACS Member countries.

***General Objective:*** *To further goals for export diversification and intra-regional and extra-regional trade for the ACS Members by capitalising on regional branding through the utilisation of geographical indications. The project utilises a two-prong approach which takes into account firstly, the individual Member States and their unique products to capitalise on geographical indications; and secondly, on a regional scale where commonalities exist.*

***Specific Objectives:***

*• To develop products with export potential for individual Member and Associate Member States,*

*• To identify commonalities amongst the region’s products to be considered for regional branding.*

*• To better exploit opportunities of export interest through the untapped potential of geographical indications*

*• To ignite growth in infant industries with export potential*

*• To strengthen cooperation between the private and public sectors*

*• To reduce production costs through local sourcing.*

*• To facilitate greater cooperation and collaboration among Member and Associate Member States to identify these opportunities where commonalities are found.*

*• To promote, on a reciprocal basis, the development and sale of local products in all the markets of ACS Member Countries*

*• Promote cultural development through trade and economic integration*

*• Support Small and Medium-Size Enterprises (SMEs) in the quest for penetrating new markets and trading partners*

*• Incorporate SMEs to value chains*

*• Boost the Greater Caribbean economy.*

*• To increase national production as a result of increased demand from the ACS Member Countries*