

Press Release

For immediate release

ANTI-COUNTERFEIT AGENCY DIGITISES CORE OPERATIONS

NAIROBI, Kenya, 20th August 2018: The Anti-Counterfeit Agency (ACA) has today signed a financing agreement worth US Dollars One Million Five Hundred Thousand (\$1,500,000) towards supporting digitalisation of its operations and services. The funding comes from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) channeled through TradeMark East Africa (TMEA), who will provide technical and project financing support to the agency with the aim to better and efficiently serve their stakeholders nationally, regionally and globally.

The proposed digitalization project is twofold: First, it will involve development of ICT-enabled solutions for ease in detection of counterfeits by consumers; ease the process of reporting on counterfeiting by intellectual property rights (IPR) owners. Secondly, it will involve support to research and awareness programs to establish the national public awareness level on counterfeiting and the implementation of a “Training of Trainers (TOT) program on matters of counterfeits.

The signing was witnessed by the Anti-Counterfeit Agency chairperson Mrs Flora Mutai, TMEA Kenya Country Programme Director, Ahmed Farah and UKAID Head of Sustainable Economic Development, Ian Mills.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, the Anti-Counterfeit Agency chairperson Mrs Flora Mutai appreciated the support from TMEA towards digitising its operations. She noted the increased challenge posed by counterfeiters who are using modern technology to copy trademarks and industrial designs up to undetectable levels. She said:

“Technology has now moved to the wrong hands. We are witnessing illicit trade crime sophistication due to “IT in wrong hands”. 3D Technology and access to online markets and sources are a click away; 3D Technologies - can copy anything including trademarks, holograms, barcodes etc. copying and passing-off a lot easier and distinct. We will now nab them using Quick Response System among other measures”.

TMEA Kenya Country Programme Director – Ahmed Farah said, *“The overall aim of this project and intervention is to take the necessary steps to mitigate and eliminate counterfeiting and to subsequently create an attractive and conducive trade environment for businesses to flourish. This automation is in line with the East Africa governments’ trade facilitation initiatives that reduce barriers to trade”*

This financing agreement comes at a time when there is increased outcry from manufacturers and consumers due to the increased trade in counterfeits in the country. Counterfeiting adversely affects IPR owners’ investments, government revenue and safety of the public. With the government’s drive on the big four agenda, ensuring that manufacturers intellectual property rights are respected is a critical success factor for the Manufacturing Agenda.

The digitalisation once implemented will ensure that, ACA inspectors, other law enforcement agencies, IPR owners and the members of the public have at their disposal instruments and tools that will deter counterfeiting, enhance the process of detecting, reporting and impounding counterfeit goods, and ensure a transparent process on how counterfeit goods are destroyed.

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About TradeMark East Africa

TradeMark (**Trade** and **Markets**) East Africa is a multi-purpose donor funded, not -for-profit Aid for Trade organisation, established to support the growth of trade – both regional and international – In East Africa. TMEA operates on a not-for-profit basis and is funded by the development agencies of the following countries: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, UK, and USA. TMEA works closely with East African Community (EAC) institutions, national governments, the private sector and civil society organisations.

Established in 2010, TMEA supports a portfolio of programmes across the East Africa Community partner countries, working closely with our partners - the EAC Partner States, EAC Secretariat, the private sector and civil society - TMEA has made a significant contribution to this growth by delivering large scale impact in its highly successful first strategic phase which was completed in December 2017.

TMEA is now embarking on its second strategic phase for the six years from 2017/18 to 2022/23 known as “*Strategy 2*” which seeks to increase trade by unlocking economic potential anchored on 2 key outcomes:

- • Reduced barriers to trade; and
- • Improving business competitiveness.

We believe there are a number of pathways from increased trade to **sustainable, inclusive prosperity** through, for example, job creation, poverty reduction, economic growth, increased government revenue, enhanced economic welfare, and greater economic resilience.

TMEA has its headquarters in Nairobi with offices in Arusha, Bujumbura, Dar es Salaam, Juba, Kampala and Kigali.

To find out more, please visit the TMEA website at www.trademarkea.com

About Anti-Counterfeit Agency

The Anti-Counterfeit Agency was established under the Anti-Counterfeit Act 2008 as a State Corporation with the mandates to enlighten and inform the public on matters relating to counterfeiting, combat counterfeiting, trade and other dealings in counterfeit goods, devise and promote training programs to combat counterfeiting and co-ordinate with national, regional or international organizations involved in combating counterfeiting.

It is a state corporation currently within the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Trade. Although the Act was passed by Kenya's Parliament in 2008, it came into force on 1st July 2009 with the principal aim of prohibiting trade in counterfeit goods. The Agency came into operation in June 2010.