

Network of Practicing Non-Oil Exporters of Nigeria (NPEN)

1.0. Introduction and Background.

NPEN is a not-for profit organization registered under the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. NPEN is a platform for collaboration among different actors in the export value chain, with a focus on MSMEs. The membership of NPEN includes MSMEs producing or aspiring to produce for export, logistics companies, produce aggregators, financial institutions, private certification bodies, trade support public institutions, etc.

NPEN is an offshoot of the series of dialogues under the Non-Oil Exporter Community of Practice which is an initiative of the DFID supported Policy Development Facility II (PDF-II). Under this platform, PDF-II organized series of Non-Oil Export Dialogues aimed at eliminating the various barriers to non-oil exports in Nigeria, with special focus on MSMEs. The Dialogue series which focused on bringing stakeholders together, addressed such issues as access to finance, product quality and standards, export procedures and documentations, etc. Besides bringing the relevant MDAs in dialogue with the private sector actors, the Dialogue series also devoted special sessions to building the capacity of non-oil exporters on advocacy so as to enable them continue to engage the relevant MDAs on issues of interest to non-oil exporters.

Within the Community of Practice, a number of business to business networking and collaboration happened, leading to joint export initiatives, information sharing and handholding. In view of these and other benefits as well as the need for sustainability beyond the PDF-II intervention, the Non-Oil Export Community of Practice transformed into a standing business membership organization that will continue to sustain the outcomes of PDF II interventions. .

2.0. The gap we seek to fill

NPEN was borne out of the need to amplify the voices of MSME non-oil exporters in the making and implementation of policies that affect them. Years of government pronouncements on expanding non-oil efforts have not been matched with commensurate commitment in policy and process reforms. Government needs to consult with the MSMEs in setting policies affecting exports, but this has hardly been the case. There is a critical need to balance the voice and interest of the big businesses with the voice and interest of the MSMEs in the formulation and implementation of government policies affecting the private sector. At the moment, most policies seem skewed in favor of politically connected businesses, to the detriment of MSME exporters. NPEN represents the voice and interest of MSMEs in the export value chain with the view to improving the performance of non-oil exports in Nigeria. The areas of focus would include access to finance, standards and certification, market access, port processes, export logistics, etc.

Some of the methods that would be adopted towards realizing our goals include periodic public private dialogues, studies, targeted advocacy, media engagements, presentation of well researched position papers on matters of interest, etc.

3.0. Objectives of NPEN

The core objective of NPEN is to be a platform for dialogue and cooperation among actors in the non-oil export value chain in resolving the various challenges faced by non-oil exporters.

Some of the specific objectives of the NPEN are:

- To serve as a platform for continuous dialogue and cooperation among the actors in the non-oil export value chain.

- To regularly research and deliver to Government, evidence-based suggestions towards improving Nigeria's export performance, since advocacy has become a strategic imperative.
- To provide members with up-to-date market information and technical assistance on export processes and procedures.
- To encourage joint export initiatives among members.
- To advocate for the interest of members in government policies and trade

Vision

To realize increased Nigerian participation in non-oil export trade, with specific attention to the strategic positioning of members on global compliance and competition

Mission

To create a hub of interconnected players in the non-oil export sector, mutually committed to leading advocacy for the creation of an enabling environment for non-oil export trade and championing collaborative information sourcing, information sharing, and capacity building amongst members

4.0. Organisational Structure

NPEN is registered as a not-for-profit under Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act (i.e. as Incorporated Trustees).

a. General Assembly

The General Assembly is the highest decision-making body composed of all the members of the organization in good standing. The General Assembly meets at least once in a year to conduct its business which may include any of the following: election/removal of members of the Board of Trustees, election/removal of members of the Executive Committee, appointment or ratification of members of the Standing Committees, etc.

b. Board of Trustees

The organization would be made up of 9 to 11 Trustees to be appointed by the members in accordance with the constitution of the organization. The Trustees are the legal representatives of the organization with the capacity to bind the organization in contract, set the policies and procedures, and oversee the finances and property of the organization. The Trustees shall meet at least once in the year and as often as the occasion demands. A Trustee shall serve for a term of 4 years and may be renewed as necessary.

c. The Executive Council

The Executive council (EC) has statutory representation of prominent trade associations, pressure groups and key non-oil export supporting institutions. The Executive council is structured across regional representations and with considerations for gender balance. The EC meets more frequently than the BOT, and the outcomes of their meeting fits into the memo for BoT deliberations.

d. Management

The day-to-day activities of NPEN is overseen by a Secretariat. The Secretariat is made up of an Executive Secretary/CEO and such other staff as the organization may require from time to time. The Management team shall consult with the Executive Council and BoT from time to time. The ES/CEO shall serve for a term of 4 years and which is renewable for another term of 4 years but not more than 2 terms.

e. Technical/Working Committees

The technical committees shall comprise of experts in the following thematic areas namely: **Access to Finance, Access to Markets, and Trade Policy & Advocacy** providing advisory to and on behalf of NPEN.

Membership

Membership of the organization is based on registration and payment of membership dues. Membership is open to all natural and legal entities engaged in the export value chain. There are two categories: Individual Membership and Corporate Membership.

Membership dues are paid annually and the amount of the dues for the different category of membership are determined by the General Assembly.

Membership benefits include:

- Business Support from the Organization
- Networking Advantage
- Information as Regards the Non-Oil Export Sector
- Discounted Attendance at Fee-based Trainings and Conferences
- Effective representation for members with specific challenges with regulatory authorities and/or international clients
- Facilitated access to Government programmes and incentives

5.0. Activities of NPEN

Our activities include but not limited to the following:

- Periodic public private dialogues
- Research/Studies
- Non-oil export advocacy
- Media engagements
- Presentation of well researched position papers on matters of interest
- Seminars, trainings, and conferences on non-oil sector activities
- Annual non-oil exports conference, exhibition, and awards

6.0. Finances

The finance of the organization is drawn from the following sources membership dues, grants from local and international donors, grant from government agencies, grant from individuals and corporate bodies, fees from events (workshops, trainings, conference), etc.

All finances accrued to/by the organization is deposited in the organizations bank accounts. The Accounts are audited annually, and the audit reports presented to the General Assembly for adoption.

Handling of the organization's finances is in accordance with the Financial Policy/Manual.

PROPOSED NPEN ORGANISATIONAL/GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

