



13 October 2021

(21-7738)

Page: 1/5

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: English

**INFORMATION ON SPS-RELATED ACTIVITIES OF
THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE (ITC)
(JULY-SEPTEMBER 2021)**

COMMUNICATION FROM ITC

The following communication, received on 12 October 2021, is being circulated at the request of the ITC.

The International Trade Centre is continuing its efforts to assist enterprises to meet technical market requirements. An update of selected SPS-related activities of interest to WTO Members is provided below.

1 PROJECTS

1.1 Malaysia Arise Plus Project (February 2021 - January 2024 / Donor European Union)

1.1. In partnership with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the project aims to support inclusive and sustainable trade growth and poverty reduction in Malaysia, while contributing to economic integration in the ASEAN region. Work with the Department of Agriculture (DOA) has commenced towards reinforcing the control mechanism for pesticides, including the control of counterfeited pesticides, and use of invertebrates as biological control agents (IBCs). Training is being programmed currently to improve awareness and understanding on EU legislations, including sustainable practices, in fish and fisheries sector.

1.2 Philippines Arise Plus Project (March 2021 – February 2025 / Donor European Union)

1.2. In partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry, the project supports progressive achievement of the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 and realization of the 2nd and 3rd pillars of The Philippines Development Plan (2017-2022).

1.3. The overall objective of the project is to foster inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction in The Philippines. The specific objective of the project is to improve The Philippines' trade performance and competitiveness. Among its expected results are putting in place a National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) that promotes export competitiveness, and quality management and control systems for exported food products better aligned with international best practices.

1.4. Training of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Department of Agriculture, attached agencies and food industry associations is being organized between 28 October and 4 November 2021. The training will cover EU Regulations on processed food; EU standards development, adoption and promotion; risk profiling and risk assessment; EFSA EU Directives, and transposition thereof into national regulations. A needs assessment of the above-mentioned Philippine national agencies will follow to build their capacities to be accredited as EU-recognized competent authorities.

1.3 EU-EAC Market Access Upgrade Programme - MARKUP (July 2018 - July 2022 / Donor European Union)

1.5. This project aims to contribute to the economic development of the East African Community (EAC) region (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda), with the specific objective to improve market access of agro-industrial crops and horticultural products such as avocado, cocoa, coffee, spices and tea to the European Union, and among the five EAC partners.

1.6. Support to nine avocado producer groups in Kenya is now complete with the groups being successfully certified to GlobalG.A.P.

1.4 Uzbekistan - Facilitating the Process of Accession to the WTO (February 2020 - February 2025 / Donor European Union)

1.7. The project supports Uzbekistan's development plans to modernize its economy through leveraging the process of WTO accession. The specific objective of the action is to create a trade environment that is in conformity with the World Trade Organization (WTO).

1.8. A series of online training workshops on implementing ISO 17025, ISO 17065 and auditing integrated management systems were held between 15 June and 9 July 2021. Work is ongoing on the review of the food safety law to support improved alignment to the SPS Agreement.

1.5 Myanmar Trade-Related Assistance (Arise Plus – Myanmar) (July 2019 - June 2023 / Donor European Union)

1.9. The ARISE Plus project aims at building inclusive and sustainable trade growth in Myanmar through support to MSMEs in selected value chains enhancing food safety and SPS compliance (targeting tea, coffee, honey, horticulture products) and trade policy formulation and implementation.

1.10. An initial version of the Myanmar Platform on Quality and Food Safety was developed featuring quality requirements for selected product-market combinations (avocado, coffee, honey, and tea with a target of the EU market). Trainers-cum-counsellors are featured with expert profiles on the Myanmar Quality Connect tool, as well as service provider institutions.

1.6 Tajikistan: Enabling Market access for Agricultural Products through Improved Food Safety System (March 2018 - February 2022 / STDF - PG-447 implemented by ITC in collaboration with FAO, in particular for output 1 on the regulatory control system)

1.11. The goal of the project is to improve the export competitiveness of Tajik SMEs and food safety through better use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines with a focus on honey and apricot sectors.

1.12. The project partner (FAO) is working on guidelines regarding the food control and monitoring system with a focus on honey and dried apricots. In this regard, a series of online seminars were held.

1.13. A study tour for 12 representatives of the Tajik honey sector (private and public) to Ukraine is being organized to understand best practices of beekeeping, compliance with related legislation and export procedures to the European Union.

1.14. Advisory visits of previously developed trainers and experts to final beneficiaries in the honey and apricot sectors were carried out to observe and advise on the implementation of good practices, control procedures and discuss proposed changes in the control and monitoring systems. A total of 50 visits to three project regions were conducted.

1.15. A dedicated set of communication materials on the application of veterinary medicines and pesticides are being developed.

1.16. Market linkages with buyers were established in the honey and apricots sectors between Tajik and international buyers.

1.7 SYMST: Systematic Mechanism for Safer Trade (Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam) (December 2018 – October 2022 / Donor European Union)

1.17. The overall objective of the project is to improve food safety through better governance in Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam. The project aims to strengthen the regulatory framework for control of plant health and pesticides in the fruits and vegetable sector and other plant products through the application of norms and standards to improve market access.

1.18. In Lao People's Democratic Republic, support is underway to provide access and make information available regarding registered pesticides, target uses, national/Codex MRL setting for target commodities for export. A database providing relevant information is also being developed under this activity.

1.19. An internal consultation meeting took place on the draft Ministerial Guidance on 'Measures Responding to Non-Compliance Export of Plant Product and Regulated Articles to European Union Import Regulation'.

1.20. Preparation is underway to support DOA on MRL training. The list of equipment and consumables required for the training has been finalized, and procurement of required items has commenced.

1.21. A series of online consultation and field training are planned in October and November including, virtual training on the EU Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) for target export company; internal consultation on a draft EU manual on plant health and disease management, and training in targeted provinces; preparation of DOA awareness campaign on challenges and rules for export of rice and watermelon; training on MRL pesticide analysis for target active substances in Luangnamtha province, Vientiane capital and Champassak province.

1.22. In Viet Nam, the first virtual training on TRACES took place (23 July 2021) in Hanoi with 88 participants, and 12 government officials and companies. This workshop gave an overview of the EU regulations in terms of exports and certification of fruits, vegetables, and other plant products on the use of TRACES for Vietnamese authorities and operators. A second training programme on TRACES took place on 14-16 September. The second event provided a broader training focused on coaching both the economic operators and the authorities on the day-to-day use of TRACES. The training also provided assistance on technical issues when using and issuing a phytosanitary certificate or using the administration functions of TRACES e.g., managing the users, managing the operators, etc.

1.23. The development of the bilingual (English and Vietnamese) document on EU regulations related to food safety and phytosanitary for imported plant and food agricultural products for inspection commenced. A virtual meeting was organized on 9 September and attended by the Plant Protection Department (PPD) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and relevant stakeholders to discuss the first draft of the document. A virtual meeting was also organized on 27 September and attended by PPD and relevant stakeholders, to present the outline of the bilingual book titled "EU food safety and plant health regulations for imported plant products", the methodology and timeline of the book was presented to stakeholders.

1.8 Thailand ARISE Plus Project (November 2020 – October 2023 / Donor European Union)

1.24. The new ITC implemented ARISE Plus Thailand project, aims to support inclusive and sustainable economic growth through international trade in Thailand.

1.25. Under this overall objective, ITC supports the enhancement and dissemination of organic agricultural practices in line with EU standards.

1.26. An online training series on ISO/IEC 17065 covering requirements and organic standards, implementation for organic certification and group certification was carried out in July/August 2021. The training series comprised three 3-day sessions and was conducted by the Management System Certification Institute (MASCI) in Thailand. The plan is to repeat the session during the first half of

2022. In addition, a supplementary session on the new Thai organic legislation and standards (currently in the final stages of development) will be conducted for the same training participants.

1.27. Planning for the development of training material on organic production for farmers and producers has started. The project will focus on rice and mangosteen organic production in two regions of the country.

1.28. Based on results of the workshop on the new EU organic legislation, a technical guide will be developed. The guide will highlight the changes and requirements with regard to the new legislation.

1.29. Upcoming activities are an International Register of Certificated Auditors (IRCA) approved lead auditor training for ISO 9001, an awareness campaign on organic production, as well as the planning of trilateral (Thailand, European Union and other ASEAN states) events for exchange of experiences in organic production and cross-learning.

1.9 Lao ARISE Plus Project (2018-2022 / Donor European Union)

1.30. Nine Quality Champions developed under the Arise Plus Lao People's Democratic Republic Quality Champions Programme are featured users on the Quality Connect tool, who, once certified, will offer their services to SMEs through the national chamber of commerce and industry (LNCCI).

1.31. A draft gap assessment report on the SPS/TBT National Enquiry Point and the National Notification Authority has been completed, and a validation workshop has taken place with key stakeholders. The next steps will be a training and sensitization workshop at the end of October.

1.32. Cooperation has been established between the Centre of Medical Science of Thailand and the Food and Drug Department of Lao People's Democratic Republic to provide assistance to strengthen the pesticides and chemical laboratory. Posters developed by Codex, WHO and others have been identified by the Food and Drug Department for translation/reproduction to sensitize on COVID-19 and hygiene.

1.10 Pakistan: Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (June 2019 – December 2024 / Donor European Union)

1.33. The project aims to contribute to the reduction of poverty through the development of rural MSMEs in selected districts within two provinces of Pakistan: Balochistan and Sindh.

1.34. During the period under report, ITC has been providing support to the food authorities in the two provinces on a variety of topics, including food safety standards and compliance in milk and meat sectors. Furthermore, ITC is providing training to the Department of Plant Protection in SPS compliance, as well as to animal health-related departments on the monitoring of slaughterhouses. ITC is also providing support to the provinces to develop foot and mouth disease (FMD) strategies in line with the recently approved federal policy, and on setting up disease control zones in the provinces. Two mobile laboratories are being purchased for the food departments which will then be operationalized, and training will be provided to the staff to use them as per best international practices. At the enterprise level, ITC continued to provide trainings to MSMEs (farmers and processors) in rural Sindh and Balochistan to improve their awareness on quality, SPS and food safety through GAP and GMP modules. ITC is planning for further outreach of these trainings in the future.

1.11 EU-Bhutan Trade Support Project (2012-2023 / Donor European Union)

1.35. The specific objective of the project is to increase export diversification, contributing to the implementation of the "Brand Bhutan" initiative, by improving the capacities of trade and investment policy formulation and implementation, and increasing exports in two selected value chains, i.e. horticulture (ginger/turmeric, mushrooms, and yak dairy) and textile handicrafts.

1.36. Under the sub-output on "Export and quality management capacities of stakeholders - from farmers to exporters - along the horticulture value chain built and coordination improved", ITC provides a hands-on step-by-step training programme on food hygiene and food safety based on Codex HACCP for Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA) staff and SMEs

spread over 10-12 months. The programme started in March for a pool of 14 trainers-cum-counsellors (TcCs) (12 from BAFRA) and 12 enterprises in ginger, turmeric, mushrooms and yak dairy products. This support is in progress.

For more information, please contact:

Khemraj Ramful, Senior Adviser, Export Quality Management, ITC

Tel: +41 22 730 04 87

Fax: +41 22 730 05 76

E-mail: ramful@intracen.org

Hema Menon, Trade Training Officer, Export Quality Management, ITC

Tel: +41 22 730 05 84

Fax: +41 22 730 05 76

E-mail: menon@intracen.org

ITC EXPORT QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Website: <http://www.intracen.org/eqm>

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/ITCstandards>
