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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**INFORMATION ON SPS-RELATED ACTIVITIES OF
THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE (ITC)
(MARCH – MAY 2022)**

COMMUNICATION FROM ITC

The following communication, received on 27 May 2022, 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 Iraq: Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-food Value Chain and Improving trade policy (SAAVI) (September 2020-April 2025 / Donor European Union)

1.1. This project aims to support stabilization and governance through building the capacities of key Iraqi institutions to deliver public services, as well as sustainable job creation through the development of human capital and the enhancement of private sector's competitiveness. This EU-funded project focuses on the development and implementation of sector strategies for high-potential products, as well as on defining more market-oriented policies to improve predictability and efficiency in the business environment. SAAVI also provides assistance to enhance Iraq's trade policy and supports the country in its WTO accession process.

1.2. Under the project, an introductory workshop was held in March 2022 on the WTO Agreement on the Application of SPS measures in support to preparation of policy makers and key institutions for implementation of WTO Agreements on TBT and SPS. An SPS training pack in Arabic was disseminated to participants.

1.3. A second workshop specifically geared to implementing the transparency related functions and functioning of SPS National Enquiry Point and SPS National Notification Authority is planned before the end of 2022.

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

1.4. 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.

1.5. In regard to training of officers of the Plant Biosecurity Division of Department of Agriculture (DoA) on identification and pest management of EU-related quarantined pests the list of pests and vegetables, flowers, tropical plants and aquatic plants has been identified. A total of nine training workshops is planned in online, face to face, and laboratory practical modes between July and October 2022 followed by case studies applying the methodologies imparted.

1.6. Two trainings of officers of the Department of Fisheries (DOF) and key stakeholders on EU legislation on fish and fishery products, including ornamental fish, and on Codex Code of Practice

for Fish and Fishery Products is being organized to be held between 13 and 20 July 2022 . These will be held in person, and with a view to technically support the DOF Competent Authority responsible for aquatic animal health and improve the ability to meet EU legislation for fish and fishery products, as well as improve market access of ornamental fish to the European Union.

1.7. Support is also being provided to the Disease Control and Veterinary Biosecurity Department in epidemiology modelling for animal diseases to develop epidemiology modelling competency on animal diseases to determine magnitude and speed of disease and most suitable intervention/control measures.

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

1.8. The project aims to foster inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction in the Philippines through improved Philippines' trade performance and competitiveness and specifically by putting in place a National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) that promotes export competitiveness, and a quality management and control systems for exported food products better aligned with international best practices.

1.9. A handbook on good practices related to hygiene and food safety for small and medium-sized enterprises, based on Codex General Principles of Food Hygiene, has been prepared in Tagalog language. Online interactive training modules based on the guide are under development to contribute to technical support for export-oriented operators along the value chain on food safety best practices and international standards, which upon completion will be transferred, with the guide, to the Food and Drug Authority and Philippine Trade Training Centre for deployment in their awareness raising and training activities. A similar guide aimed at the fisheries sector is also planned, as well as on Good Agricultural Practices.

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

1.10. 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.

1.11. Work is advancing on the Myanmar Platform on Quality and Food Safety featuring quality requirements for selected product-market combinations (avocado, coffee, honey, and tea targeting EU markets) with featured Trainer-cum-Counsellor expert profiles and service provider institutions in Myanmar.

1.12. The project has supported the submission of the National Residue Monitoring Plan (NRMP). Several brochures and guides on hygiene and food safety in honey production were developed. Seven food safety advisers were trained on good beekeeping practices, GHP an HACCP and supported honey producers in Myanmar to implement the principles.

1.13. Two private food testing labs are being supported for compliance with ISO/IEC 17025.

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

1.14. 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.

1.15. 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 on MRLs has been completed and mechanisms will be put in place with DoA to ensure the database is updated regularly.

1.16. A Ministerial Guidance on 'Measures Responding to Non-Compliance Export of Plant Product and Regulated Articles to European Union Import Regulation' has been finalized. The project is currently providing support to develop relevant SOPs and training for DoA staff to review TRACES/EUROPHYT AND RASFF notifications and put in place procedures to respond to non-compliance and interceptions.

1.17. A series of field missions to gather samples of selected commodities for pesticide residue monitoring is currently underway. The samples will be analysed during training with a national expert in June and July. The project is also supporting PPC and DoA to draft a pesticide monitoring programme plan which is due to be completed by August. The review of plant health and pest management guidelines in line with EU requirements has also commenced.

1.18. The project will continue to support DoA on the use of TRACES for targeted exporters and DoA. Going forward Lao People's Democratic Republic will take the necessary steps to request an electronic signature for TRACES. Continuous support will be offered to DoA and exporters to implement TRACES.

1.19. In Viet Nam, the project supported the upgrading of the PPD website to ensure easy access of information on the safe use of pesticides and pest management. The official relaunch of the website is due to take place in early June, date to be confirmed by PPD.

1.20. In plant health the development of 14 SOPs on morphological methods in the road map to strengthen the capacity of laboratories has commenced. The development of SOPs (PCR and ELISA method) to detect and inspect pests of major agricultural and food stuffs products exported to the European Union has commenced.

1.21. The bilingual (English and Vietnamese) document on EU regulations related to food safety and phytosanitary for imported plant and food agricultural products for inspection has been finalized and officially launched in a hybrid online workshop in March. The book is available in both print and electronic version. The development of a manual on Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) has commenced. The manual is currently being tested in a series of fields with relevant stakeholders.

1.6 Thailand Arise Plus Project (November 2020 – October 2023 / Donor European Union)

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

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

1.24. A technical guide on the revised EU legal framework for organic production is being developed including a generic part which is of relevance to all third countries interested in exporting to the European Union and a part customized for Thailand . In addition, the new legal framework will be compared to the existing Thai and ASEAN organic standards.

1.25. The training material on organic production for farmers and producers is being drafted. The project will focus on rice and mangosteen organic production in two regions of the country.

1.26. An awareness campaign on organic agriculture and consumption was launched.

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

1.27. Fifteen Quality Champions were trained on food safety, including HACCP.

1.28. Twelve 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).

1.29. Quality and food safety/SPS requirements for priority product market combinations identified under the project (coffee to the European Union, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, Viet Nam) available on the Lao People's Democratic Republic Quality for Trade Portal.

1.30. First part of training of food inspectors attached to FDD implemented.

1.31. Ongoing cooperation between the Centre of Medical Science of Thailand and the Food and Drug Department of Lao focuses on assistance to strengthen the pesticides and chemical laboratory.

1.32. Posters developed by Codex, WHO and others are being finalized for printing by the Food and drug Department for translation/reproduction to sensitise on COVID-19 and hygiene.

1.33. Trainings to the SPS National Enquiry Point and National Notification Authority has been completed. This included the development of Standard Operating Procedures, Terms of Reference, and sensitization trainings on SPS/TBT Issues, including the operation of the new e-Ping system.

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

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

1.35. 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 is ongoing with continuing provision of trainings to the department of plant protection in SPS compliance as well as to animal health related departments on the monitoring of slaughterhouses.

1.9 EU–Bhutan Trade Support Project (2012–2023 / Donor European Union)

1.36. 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.

1.37. Training support on food hygiene and food safety to Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA) staff and SMEs, is ongoing.

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