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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)
(JUNE 2022 – FEBRUARY 2023)**

COMMUNICATION FROM ITC

The following communication, received on 1 March 2023, 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. 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 during mid 2023.

1.3. Iraq Quality for Trade Platform has been developed and is ready for scaling. Quality and food safety/SPS requirements for priority product market combinations identified under the project (preliminarily - tomato, poultry and figs) to be featured on the Platform.

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. Activities include biosecurity of fisheries and aquaculture, plant health, animal health and sustainable agriculture practices including GAP, Organic, Green Livestock and agricultural waste management.

1.6. Training of officers of the Plant Biosecurity Division of Department of Agriculture (DoA) / Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) on identification and management of EU-related quarantine pests is nearing completion. Eight out of nine training workshops have been held between June 2022 and January 2023 consisting of: General introduction on plant biosecurity focusing on

selected food crops through the whole production system; General identification and management approaches of the pests fruit fly, leaf miner, whitefly and thrips; Pest risk analysis on selected EU quarantine pests; Plant quarantine inspection on pests and diseases for import and export commodities. A Workshop on Integrated Pest Risk Management and a study visit to a NPPO in Europe are being organized. Technical assistance on fertilizers was provided during the reporting period, through a series of interventions consisting of: Review the existing guidelines on registration process for fertilizers under the Malaysian context based on internationally accepted standards and propose recommendations to improve the guidelines; Training on technical and safety aspects for inorganic, organic, biofertilizers and supplements; Insights into changes in the EU Reg. 2019/1009 - laying down rules on the making available on the market of EU fertilising product - to be considered by Malaysian importers and exporters. A study visit of DoA Plant Biosecurity staff to update knowledge on-site, practical aspects of best practices in fertilizer production, and administration and enforcement of EU regulations is being held during 20-24 February 2023.

1.7. Training of officers of the Department of Fisheries (DOF) and key stakeholders was held in September 2022, related to EU legislation on fish and fishery products, including ornamental fish, and on the Codex Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products. Further training and onsite advisory assistance is being planned on fish disease surveillance, risk analysis and practical aspects of implementing the EU requirements. Assistance related to electronic catch and traceability in fisheries, and traceability of eggs and dairy products is being formulated.

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. During the reporting period, development of online interactive training modules on food safety for SMEs was completed. Competent Authority FDA's laboratory personnel were trained during September to December 2022 through two workshops on chemical testing of processed foods. Consisting of theoretical and practical sessions, these cover test method implementation and validation; pesticide, veterinary drugs residue, mycotoxin, and food additives analysis using LC/MS/MS and GC/MS/MS techniques. The third and final training on chemical testing is being scheduled. Training on risk-based sampling and analysis, microbiological testing and commercial sterility are planned next.

1.10. An expert mission was held in July-August 2022 to understand the current inspection protocols in place including processing and inspecting site visits towards the development of risk-based inspection protocols in fresh fruits and vegetables, coconut, and fisheries.

1.11. Based on the findings during the visit, six guides consisting of risk-based inspection checklists, guidelines, procedural manuals, and SOPs have been prepared for the above mentioned sectors. Training of FDA and DA on risk-based inspections is being planned including on implementing and putting in practice the developed guidelines, procedures, and SOPs.

1.12. Upgrade of the Philippine Rapid Alert for Food and Feed Safety system (PhilRASFF) is nearing completion, which was required to improve the ease of use of the operating system by and interoperability with current digital technologies. Pilot testing and training of authorities involved in border controls, food business operator premises and markets surveillance controls will be held during the course of this year on using the upgraded system.

1.13. Quality and food safety/SPS requirements for priority product market combinations identified under the project (Virgin Coconut Oil, Coconut Water, Coconut Flour) are scheduled to be made available in 2023 on the Philippines Quality for Trade Platform. Mappings of coffee and cocoa to the European Union have already been made available.

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

1.14. 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.

1.15. Work is advancing on the Myanmar Platform on Quality and Food Safety. The site already contains information on SPS and quality requirements for selected product-market combinations (avocado, coffee, honey, and tea targeting EU markets) and will soon feature similar requirements for select dried fruits. The site also features 25 expert (Trainer-cum-Counsellor and Quality Champion) profiles and 10 service provider institutions in Myanmar.

1.16. 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 and HACCP and supported honey producers in Myanmar to implement the principles.

1.17. 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)

1.18. 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.

1.19. The Viet Nam Quality for Trade Platform was made available, where users can discover quality and food safety/SPS requirements for priority product market combinations identified under the project (pomelo, dragon fruit to the European Union) as well as coffee to the European Union, the Republic of Korea and Thailand.

1.6 Lao ARISE Plus Project (2018-2023 / Donor European Union)

1.20. 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 Platform. In addition, through synergies with the SYMST project, requirements for basil, rice, and chillies to the European Union, and watermelon to China are also mapped.

1.21. Posters developed by Codex, WHO and others to sensitise on COVID-19 and hygiene have been translated, printed and distributed to the district offices of the Food and drug Department for placement in public spaces.

1.22. A launch event for a guide on the new ePing system was held with key stakeholders, including the SPS and TBT National Enquiry Points and the National Notification Authority.

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