



5 June 2023

(23-3817)

Page: 1/3

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: English

ECOWAS IMPLEMENTED SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY ACTIVITIES DURING THE PERIOD OF MARCH - JULY 2023

COMMUNICATION FROM ECOWAS-USAID SENIOR SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY (SPS) STANDARDS ADVISOR

The following communication, received on 4 June 2023, is being circulated at the request of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its partners work to implement and address SPS related issues at regional level that contribute to the vision to create an economic union and common market. In line with this objective, ECOWAS is implementing many agreements designed to support the free movement of goods and people throughout the region.

1.2. In view of improving and strengthening SPS activities in the ECOWAS and Sahel region, the following activities were implemented during the period of March to July 2023.

2 PLANT HEALTH AND PLANT PROTECTION

2.1 Participation in the AU-IAPSC Harmonization of Phytosanitary Regulation for Prioritized Commodities

2.1. One of the factors that promote agricultural development is the proper use of phytosanitary measures to ensure safe and fair trade of agri-products. When properly implemented, it can contribute to attain the SDGs. It is with that perspective that the AU-IAPSC convened the continental harmonization of phytosanitary regulation of prioritized commodities to emphasize the importance of science-based phytosanitary decisions, collaboration, cooperation, capacity building, information sharing, political support and enhanced investment in assuring safe and fair intra/inter-Africa and international trade in agri-products.

2.2. The objectives of the meeting are to:

- Initiate the process of and further enhance the harmonization of the member States phytosanitary regulations;
- Identify priority commodities and other regulated articles for which phytosanitary harmonization will be conducted;
- Prevent the introduction of quarantine pests or limit the introduction of regulated non-quarantine pests with prioritized imported commodities and other regulated articles;
- Promote information sharing among all relevant plant health/phytosanitary stakeholders, related traders and merchants, public and private sector stakeholders.

2.3. Next step

- Conduct pest risk analysis (PRA) on the harmonized regulated pest list;
- Establish a list of quarantine/ regulated non-quarantine pests;

-
- Identify phytosanitary measures to mitigate the identified phytosanitary risks for traded commodities;
 - Build consensus and adopt the list of regulated pests.

2.2 National sensitization on the principle of mutual recognition between countries in SPS matters, as defined in the ECOWAS 2010 regulation: Use of harmonized phytosanitary certificates and facilitation of intra-regional trade - Case of Burkina Faso

2.4. Improving access to markets, whether local, regional or international, is essential to the sustainable transformation of food value chains in West Africa and the Sahel. However, it is recognized that the region as a whole continues to suffer from an insufficient level of intra-community trade despite its potential and assets. This, certainly because of the non-application of the principle of mutual recognition and also of the use of the harmonized phytosanitary certificate. Indeed, intra-regional trade is still weak in West Africa and the Sahel. According to ECOWAS statistics, it represents 15% of the value of overall commercial transactions in the region. When we compare this level of transaction with the volume of production of certain commodities - more than 70 million tonnes of cereals, more than 61 million head of cattle - and now between 70 and 80% of the products consumed by households are marketed in this vast market.

2.5. In addition, the transport and marketing of agricultural and livestock products originating in the Community area are negatively impacted by obstacles linked to the non-application of mutual recognition and use of the harmonized phytosanitary certificate along the trade corridors, thereby hampering the movement of these products from production areas to consumption areas. These obstacles include incidental expenses or illicit collections, numerous checkpoints and long stops at mobile checkpoints (customs, police, gendarmerie, water and forestry, transport unions, etc.). Similarly, the lack of professionalism of the actors (often resulting in the absence of documentation to be provided on the loads and the non-compliance of the means of transport), and above all the use of the harmonized phytosanitary certificate, constitute factors of hassle and cost increase at destination.

2.6. To address the above identified challenges, the West Africa Food System Resilience Program (PRSA/FSRP), supported by the World Bank, has set itself the objectives, among other things, of "Harmonizing regional agricultural trade policies on critical issues of food system resilience", and consequently reduce trade barriers and harmonize sanitary and phytosanitary standards in order to facilitate the free movement of agricultural products. It is in this context that this national awareness meeting is organized in Burkina Faso.

2.7. The main objective is to raise the awareness of the authorities and the various stakeholders of cross-border trade in order to reduce or eliminate obstacles/harassments to trade in agro-pastoral products.

2.8. Specifically, to:

- Discuss with phytosanitary inspectors, stakeholders on the extent of obstacles and hassles to cross-border trade in general and those observed on the Burkina-Faso and Côte d'Ivoire corridors in particular;
- bring the inspectors and the various stakeholders to agree on the appropriate measures to reduce, or eliminate the various obstacles and hassles to the development of trade in agro-pastoral products;
- sensitize and train phytosanitary inspectors on the mechanism of mutual recognition and use of the harmonized phytosanitary certificate;
- Sensitize control officers at border posts on community directives and agreements to facilitate the free movement of agro-pastoral products.

2.9. More than 60 stakeholders including national competent authorities, phytosanitary inspectors, police, immigration officers, traders, transit officers sensitized. It is expected the proper implementation of these measures will contribute to facilitate intra-regional trade.

3 FOOD SAFETY

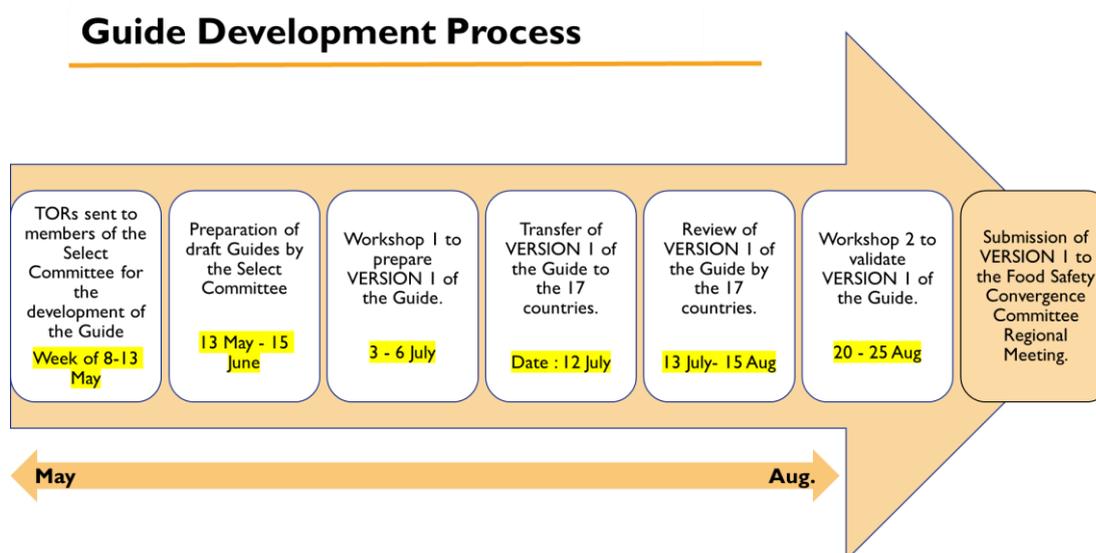
3.1 Training workshop on "Development and Monitoring of a risk-based Harmonized Sanitary Inspection and Decision-Making Guide"

3.1. Following the growing challenges of food safety, the ECOWAS Commission and its partners have established in July 2022 a regional food safety regulatory convergence forum for better regional coordination and harmonization. The regional food safety convergence has adopted an action plan for 2023 and beyond and one of the key activities among others is "to develop a risk-based harmonized inspection, certification and decision-making guide for foodstuffs and training of sanitary inspectors". The application of a harmonized sanitary inspection and decision-making guide will contribute to improve countries' sanitary inspection system, food business operators' environment and services, thus improving regional food safety compliance, protecting human health and ensuring regional safe trade of agriculture products.

3.2. This training aims to:

- build the technical capacities of sanitary inspectors to develop and monitor sanitary inspection and decision-making;
- establish a technical working group, as a forum for exchanges between countries, to develop harmonized regional template guides for sanitary inspection to be presented at the next annual West Africa and Sahel regional food safety and regulatory convergence meeting.

3.3. Next steps are highlighted in the figure below:



4 ANIMAL HEALTH

4.1 Vaccination of animals to eradicate pest des petits ruminants PPR

4.1. A vast regional vaccination campaign led and implemented by the Regional Animal Health Centre (RAHC) based in Bamako, Mali has helped to track and vaccinated thousands of animal in the region.

5 GENERAL CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

5.1. The ECOWAS Commission takes this opportunity to thank all partners for their continuing support in advancing SPS-related issues in the ECOWAS and Sahel sub-region, and to call for more collaboration, technical assistance and support for future implementation.