

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

OPERATION OF THE STANDARDS AND TRADE DEVELOPMENT FACILITY

Note by the Secretariat¹

1. At the Doha WTO Ministerial meeting held in Qatar in November 2001, the heads of the WTO, FAO, WHO, OIE and the World Bank committed their organizations to work together to strengthen the capacity of developing countries in meeting SPS standards. The establishment of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) in September 2002, resulted from this joint commitment.²

2. The purpose of the STDF, which is managed by the WTO, is to facilitate the collaboration between the partner organizations in enhancing the capacity of developing countries. This is to be achieved through the cooperation between the relevant institutions in SPS-related activities, including through the development of joint institutional projects, and provision of STDF-funded projects in developing countries. The STDF will support information exchange, development of databases, tool kits and learning materials on trade-related SPS issues to better coordinate capacity building projects. Furthermore, the STDF will provide funding for pilot projects in capacity building in individual countries or through regional initiatives in direct support of the Doha declaration.

3. The STDF is now operational.

STDF-funded Proposals and Projects

4. The STDF Working Group met in May 2003, to discuss initial project preparation proposals and projects. At this meeting, agreement was reached to provide a maximum of US\$10,000 to finance the preparation of three project proposals. The project proposals will subsequently be submitted for approval to the STDF Working Group.

5. The projects to be prepared concern the development of:

- (a) best practice models for transparency of SPS measures at a national level, not just with respect to Article 7 of the SPS Agreement, but also with respect to Codex, OIE, IPPC and in liaison with the private sector;
- (b) a planning framework for SPS capacity building at the national level, making use of various needs assessment tools, and integrating the perspectives of the public and private sectors; and
- (c) a sanitary chapter to the ALIVE programme being developed by the World Bank for African countries.

¹ This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or to their rights or obligations under the WTO.

² The STDF history and objectives are summarized in document G/SPS/GEN/371.

6. At the May meeting, the Working Group also decided to fund a project to develop a tool for assessing and evaluating national veterinary services' capacity to benefit from the SPS Agreement. The evaluation tool will be applicable to veterinary services worldwide. A maximum of US\$37,000 will be provided by the STDF for this project.

STDF Website

7. An STDF website has been established at www.standardsfacility.org. The website contains a description of the goals and objectives of the STDF, links to the websites of all partner institutions and the criteria for project selection. Instructions and forms for seeking project preparation grants or funding for projects are also available on the website. Additionally, each of the partner organizations will make available their training materials on SPS-related standards.

8. At this time, the website is only in English, but French and Spanish versions should be available shortly.

STDF Database

9. The STDF working group approved, in principle, a database project to facilitate the collaboration between relevant institutions. The database will contain information on past, current and planned technical assistance activities to enhance the capacity of developing countries to meet sanitary and phytosanitary standards. The database will permit the partner institutions and other donor organizations to avoid duplicating efforts and to take advantage of opportunities to fill gaps and exploit synergies in the provision of SPS-related capacity building.

10. The STDF database will likely be based on the existing WTO/OECD Trade Capacity Building Database (TCBDB)³, and contain data on flows of SPS-related technical assistance. The database will be accessible through the STDF website www.standardsfacility.org.

Future Activities

11. The Policy Committee of the STDF will meet in mid-November 2003, to provide further guidance for the operation of the Facility. The STDF Working Group will also meet at that time, to consider requests for funding of projects which have been submitted through the STDF website, as well as the project proposals under development. In addition, interested donor organizations and national agencies will be invited to a roundtable discussion on their role in the STDF and SPS capacity building.

³ See <http://tcbdb.wto.org/index.asp?lang=ENG>