

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPS AGREEMENT

Information for the Workshop on 31 March 2006

Communication from Bangladesh

The following communication, received on 30 March 2006, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of Bangladesh.

1. In preparation for the Workshop on the Implementation of the SPS Agreement, participants were invited to provide information relating to their experiences in relation to the issues to be discussed.

Question 1: How regularly do representatives of your country participate in meetings of the SPS Committee?

2. Representatives from Bangladesh regularly participate in SPS meeting.

Question 2: Who usually participates from your country (Capital-based experts or, Geneva-based trade representative)?

3. Usually officials from Ministry of Commerce (MOC) or official from the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh in Geneva participate in the meeting.

4. Bilateral and multilateral issues relating to trade are directly co-coordinated by MOC and SPS issues are being implemented by different development Ministries, such as the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MOFL), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF), Ministry of Industry (MOI), etc. Depending on the issues, representative from different Ministries can participate in the meeting. Since shrimp is the second largest export products of Bangladesh and sanitary issues are directly related to MOFL, officials from MOFL have been nominated by MOC to participate in this meeting.

Question 3: What information do you receive regarding meetings of the SPS Committee and how do you receive this information?

5. MOC receives information through the mission in Geneva regarding meetings of the SPS Committee. Other Ministries relating to SPS issues receive the information from MOC. Besides, information is received through local seminars and meetings organized by different Ministries and organization, by email, the WTO website, publications and newsletters, etc.

Question 4: Does your country have a SPS national committee?

6. There is a "National Advisory Committee" since 2002, in relation with WTO issues, headed by the Minister for Commerce. The Secretary of MOC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MOFL, MOA, MOEF and MOI, Chairman of National Board of Revenue and Bangladesh Tariff Commission, Vice-Chairman of the Export Promotion Bureau, and all stakeholders (who are directly related to SPS issues) from different Ministries are the members of this committee. The Director General of the WTO Cell, MOC, is the Member-Secretary of this committee.

7. To assist the "National Advisory Committee", there are five "Working Groups" working on WTO agreements and rules. There is an Action Plan and Strategy and all working groups are working with this Action Plan and Strategy. "Working Group-3" is directly working with the SPS Agreement, Agreement on Agriculture and TRIPS (Agriculture related) and headed by the Joint Secretary of MOA.

Question 5: How do your exporters find out about your trading partners new SPS requirements?

8. The exporters learn about the trading partner's new SPS requirements through MOC and other relevant Ministries mentioned earlier. Through internet or participating in local seminars and training programs, the exporters also find out about requirements. Moreover, exporters are always aware of their trading partner's requirements through internet or direct correspondence.

Question 6: What national mechanisms can be created to ensure that stakeholders in your country are informed in a timely manner of new SPS requirements, so that the SPS requirements of the trading partners can be evaluated and so that the relevant stakeholders can be taken into account when responding to SPS notifications?

9. Implementing Agencies under MOFL (Department of Fisheries and Department of Livestock), MOA, MOEF and MOI are responsible for ensuring the implementation of SPS measures in the field of agriculture sectors and agriculture sub-sectors (fisheries and livestock); plant and environmental issues; food safety and quality. Most implementing agencies have their own technical and extension wings.

10. The technical wings are working with a scheduled program up to field level to create awareness of the stakeholders. Technical wings are responsible to give technical support and to arrange seminars, symposiums, workshops and training programs on SPS measures. They have a strong monitoring and verification team. They have worked on this throughout the year and by this time a remarkable development already has been achieved on these issues.

11. The extension wings are working in the Districts and Upazila levels. There are Taskforce Committees in all Districts and Upazila for implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary measures. Through a monitoring plan, members of the "Taskforce Committee" visit in the field to see the condition of implementation. For proper planning, monitoring and supervision of all works under the technicals and extension wing, there is also a "National Taskforce Committee" in the relevant Ministries.

12. Moreover the Public Health Engineering Department launched "Sanitation Program". Under these programs all the stakeholders will be under compulsory sanitation programs by 2010. This program is a great contribution for development of this sector and people are now aware of the SPS requirements.

13. In Bangladesh, there has already been a remarkable change on SPS measures in the field of food safety and quality, following the introduction and implementation of HACCP. Now Bangladesh is producing very hygienic and safe food for the local and international consumers.

Question 7: How can members identify the relevant domestic stakeholders and promote effective interaction among those stakeholders that can be sustained over years?

14. In every region, there is a registered association of domestic stakeholders. If any one wants to identify any member of the stakeholders, it is possible to identify them through the executive committee of the association. Interaction increased through discussion, training and seminar and personal contact with field level officials.

Question 8: How can information about SPS requirements be transmitted to groups outside of capital?

15. It is transmitted outside capital through local administrations, training of public and private sector officials, sensitization and awareness campaign programs, seminars and symposiums.

Question 9: Has there been any national planning on how to implement the SPS Agreement in your country if so was this planning developed using a particular methodology?

16. The Government of Bangladesh has taken several steps for implementation of SPS measures, which are:

- (a) Up-grading of existing rules and regulation on SPS measures. For example, existing regulations have been updated. Fish Inspection and Quality Control (FIQC) Rules, 1997 were amended in purview of EC directives. Traceability regulation, Country of Origin of Levelling (COOL), Eco-levelling, and all other recent directives have been incorporated in the regulation. New regulations on Hatchery, Fish Feed are being formulated.
- (b) Up-grading of existing laboratory facilities;
- (c) Formulation of laboratory accreditation board;
- (d) Formation of high power supervisory audit and verification team;
- (e) Development of methodology of traceability of agriculture and aquaculture products; and
- (f) Risk assessment is under process of examination.

17. Under MOC, the "National Advisory Committee" and five "Working Groups" are working to implement the SPS Agreement. Each Ministry which is responsible for SPS issues is involved in those working groups. Besides, each Ministry has an individual strategy on specific issues for the implementation of SPS measures.

Question 10: How does your country indent it technical assistance needs?

18. Considering the existing facilities and shortfall, the country identifies the field of technical assistance needed.

Question 11: What has been yours country's experience in both the request and supply of SPS related technical assistance?

19. There is an on going project funded by EU-UNIDO on "Strengthening of Fish Inspection and Quality Control Service in Bangladesh". The following are the important aspects which are going to be implemented by the project:

- (a) Existing Laboratory to be modernized to ensure appropriate testing facility of Fish and Fishery Products;
- (b) Quality assurance by up-dating existing monitoring systems;
- (c) Development of value-added products;
- (d) Human Resource Development through compliance of HACCP, training, women development, study tour, consultative meeting, visit, monitoring and evaluation;
- (e) Management Development; and
- (f) Research and investigation.

20. Bangladesh requested the European Communities to provide more technical and financial assistance, mainly in the fisheries and livestock sectors. The European Communities is going to arrange a training program for technical personnel in France and Indonesia.
