



**Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

**REPORT  
WORKSHOP ON SPS-RELATED MARKET ACCESS CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES  
MONDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2013  
WTO, CENTRE WILLIAM RAPPARD, GENEVA**

**NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT<sup>1</sup>**

The Secretariat of the World Trade Organization held a workshop on SPS-related market access challenges and opportunities in Geneva, Switzerland, on 14 October 2013.

The WTO funded, through assistance from the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund (DDAGTF), the participation of 46 governmental officials from developing country Members and Observers who had previously completed the WTO's advanced SPS course. Eleven out of the 16 speakers and moderators were former participants of the advanced SPS course. Total attendance was close to 200, and included Geneva- and capital-based delegates, as well as participants from intergovernmental organizations and academia.

The workshop was an interactive activity focussing on the funded participants' and other speakers' experiences in addressing specific SPS-related market access challenges. It provided an open platform for discussion and experience sharing, and aimed to identify common challenges and replicable ways forward. This was also the first time to bring together former participants of the WTO's annual advanced SPS course from 2005-2012, so the workshop provided an opportunity to view the longer term benefits of this course, and to evaluate what has worked and what could be improved.

The workshop consisted of three sessions, each approaching the overall theme – gaining and enhancing market access – from different angles. Session 1 focused on different governmental roles in market access, exploring how governmental officials can through their own initiative directly influence the market access process. Session 2 dealt with the role of collaboration between the public and private sectors in market access, and session 3 focused on the role of technical cooperation.

The presentations from this workshop will be made available under the SPS Gateway at [http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/sps\\_e/events\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/events_e.htm), and the programme for the workshop is contained in G/SPS/GEN/1270.

**1 DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT ROLES IN ENHANCING SPS-RELATED MARKET ACCESS  
(SESSION 1)**

1.1. This session started with an excerpt from the STDF video "Trading safely: Protecting health, promoting development" and a presentation of a study about a shrimp export suspension put in place by Benin from July 2003 until February 2005. Thereafter, government officials presented, through practical case stories, how they have addressed SPS-related market access challenges in their work. OIE and IPPC provided an overview of their resources available to assist Members with market access challenges. The session aimed to identify factors that are essential in creating and enhancing market access (such as alignment and common objectives within the government), and to illustrate how individual actions can make a difference in this respect. The session was moderated by Ms Carol Thomas from IICA.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

### **1.1 Benin – Export suspension on shrimp**

1.2. The ground for discussion was set by an excerpt from the STDF video "Trading safely: Protecting health, promoting development", which portrays the causes and consequences of Benin's self-imposed shrimp export suspension.

1.3. Professor Romain Houssa from the University of Namur presented his paper "The unintended consequence of an export ban" (2013),<sup>2</sup> which analysed the impacts of the Benin suspension on small-scale actors (fishmongers and fishers) and on exporting firms. Although the suspension had been lifted in 2005, exports had not recovered, and the different actors involved in the supply chain continued to suffer from it. Macro-level factors such as poor institutional environment, small size of the sector, and high dependence of the EU market had contributed to the persistent negative welfare effects. At the firm level, producers and exporters had suffered from a decline in demand and prices, limited access to alternative sources of income, and overfishing.

1.4. Mr Houssa identified diversification as key in economic recovery, and stressed that both the government and the private sector needed to collaborate, inform each other, and anticipate problems, instead of taking a "wait and see"- approach. Donor interventions should be sequenced, and domestic institutions must take a proactive approach so as to fully benefit from received aid.

### **1.2 Madagascar – A negotiator's role in the lifting of an EU ban on products of animal origin**

1.5. Next, Ms Clarisse Maharavo from the Ministry of Agriculture of Madagascar explained how her country had addressed an EU ban on products of animal origin, put in place in 1997. After years of unsuccessful negotiations, Madagascar had obtained a derogation to the ban in 2010, allowing it to export certain animal products to the European Union. Here, Ms Maharavo's role was instrumental: She had attended the WTO's advanced SPS course in 2007 and during this course, discussed with a representative from the European Union the possibility of requesting a derogation. In 2011, the ban on products of animal origin from Madagascar was completely lifted.

1.6. Ms Maharavo outlined the various factors that had contributed to a positive solution to the problem. These included strong commitment from the private sector, technical competence of governmental officials, technical and financial assistance, and most importantly, a strong belief that a solution could be found. In Ms Maharavo's words, "nothing is impossible in life, one just has to have the courage to take action".

### **1.3 Chinese Taipei – Cooperation between different government agencies to support the export of orchids**

1.7. Mr Tse-Wei Chen from the Chinese Taipei's Bureau of Animal and Plant Health Inspection and Quarantine (BAPHIQ) outlined how different government agencies had worked towards gaining new export markets for orchids. Orchids, Chinese Taipei's most important ornamental plant export, are transported in growing media and subject to strict phytosanitary requirements in export markets.

1.8. The market access process had involved establishing a national agenda through joint meetings between different stakeholders (government agencies, producers and exporters), raising awareness about the SPS Agreement among researchers, analysing the situation in light of the applicable provisions of the SPS Agreement, and liaising with the importing countries. Owing to all these efforts, new markets had been gained for orchids, and Chinese Taipei was working towards further market opening.

### **1.4 Belize – Actions to open up an export market for corn**

1.9. Mr Zetina from the Belize Agricultural Health Authority described a problem faced in exporting corn to a destination market, which required phytosanitary treatment with methyl

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<sup>2</sup> Houssa, R. and Verpoorten, M.: The Unintended Consequence of an Export Ban: Evidence from Benin's shrimp sector. University of Namur, Centre for Research in the Economics of Development, 2013. Available at: <http://www.unamur.be/eco/economie/recherche/wpseries/wp/1304.pdf>.

bromide, prohibited in Belize in accordance with the commitments undertaken in the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

1.10. Resolving the market access problem had required extensive cooperation and communication between the public and private sectors, and proactively reaching out to the trading partner and discussing the phytosanitary treatment options. As Mr Zetina pointed out, "there is no excuse not to pick up the phone and try to resolve the problem".

### **1.5 IPPC – Market access manual**

1.11. Ms Ana Peralta from the IPPC introduced the IPPC Market Access Manual, published in October 2013 and available at <http://www.phytopsanitary.info/>. Having been developed to inform national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) about the phytosanitary aspects of market access negotiations, the manual explains the rights and obligations of NPPOs as they apply to trade in plants and plant products, and aims to provide concrete steps for achieving and maintaining market access. Similarly to previous speakers, Ms Peralta emphasized the need for broad-based (technical and policy-level) coordination, as well as advance planning, in negotiating market access for plants and plant products.

### **1.6 OIE – Using OIE standards to enhance market access**

1.12. Mr Okita from the OIE explained how OIE standards can contribute to addressing animal health-related market access problems. Noting that 60 per cent of human pathogens are zoonotic and that 40 per cent of the specific trade concerns raised in the SPS Committee have concerned animal health, Mr Okita emphasised that adherence to OIE guidelines – among others on establishing disease-free areas or monitoring disease status – is crucial in market access negotiations. Equally important is appropriate certification to ensure standards compliance. Mr Okita also stressed that only high-quality veterinary services can effectively implement the relevant standards, and thus gain credibility among trading partners.

## **2 THE ROLE OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS IN ENHANCING SPS-RELATED MARKET ACCESS (SESSION 2)**

2.1. The speakers in this session explored, through practical case stories, how partnerships between government agencies and the private sector can facilitate market access. Grouping former and current governmental officials and a speaker from an importers' association, the session gave different points of view on the drivers behind such partnerships, various partnership modalities, scopes, objectives, challenges faced and lessons learned. The session was moderated by Mr Fitzroy White from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of Jamaica, who crystallized the message of this session by noting that "one hand cannot do the clapping" – similarly, collaboration between the public and private sectors is crucial in the process of market access.

### **2.1 Fresh Produce Importers' Association of South Africa – A public-private partnership approach towards enhancing market access opportunities for COMESA horticulture exporters**

2.2. Ms Marianna Theyse from the Fresh Produce Importers Association (FPIA) of South Africa outlined how the organization cooperates with the South African government on strategic phytosanitary issues, including through setting priority areas for imports, and identifying where technical capacity building is required. Stemming from this public-private cooperation, FPIA had embarked on a project to assist COMESA exporters to meet the plant and plant product import requirements of South Africa. This project, funded by Trademark Southern Africa, had involved triangular cooperation between COMESA, FPIA, and the government of South Africa in setting import priorities, compiling pest information packages for risk analyses, conducting pest risk analyses, and agreeing on import conditions for a range of plant products.

### **2.2 Chile – Cooperation between the public and private sectors**

2.3. Ms Velia Luz Arriagada Ríos from the Agriculture and Livestock Service of Chile described how the Chilean private sector is involved in decision-making through stable and continuous state policy. Ms Arriagada stressed the importance of agriculture in the Chilean economy, and explained

how, in the course of the past decades, her country had been able to diversify its agricultural exports and become an important player in the market. In this respect, cooperation between the public and private sectors was key. As Ms Arriagada explained, "every player must understand their role – if you look at the growers, exporters etc. – they all understand their role in winning and keeping markets".

2.4. In Chile, the private sector is involved in trade negotiations through consultations and project-specific operational agreements which often involve the government and exporters associations. Among its many benefits, this effective cooperation between the public and private sectors has brought along information sharing, innovation, infrastructure and funding.

### **2.3 Kenya – Public-private partnership in SPS compliance for maintaining horticulture export markets**

2.5. Mr Washington Otieno from CABI International explained how public-private partnerships have facilitated market access for the horticulture sector in Kenya. Mr Otieno emphasised that SPS compliance is a joint effort between public and private sector institutions – both must appreciate the work of the other, and roles must be clearly defined to as to ensure complementarity. Structured dialogue is essential, and should take place within a well-established institutional setting. In Mr Otieno's words, "communication is not just about memoranda and circulars – it is about getting people to know exactly what you want to achieve, and what is in it for them".

### **2.4 India – Working with farmers to raise awareness**

2.6. Ms Subhodini Pillarisetti from the Government of Andhra Pradesh, India, explained how the public and private sectors had cooperated to address an export challenge faced by India due to aflatoxin contamination in chilli and the addition of carcinogenic Sudan Red Dye into chilli powder.

2.7. Government officials had trained so-called model farmers, who in their turn were responsible for 250 farmers. By this method, the government had been able to reach out to a large number of farmers and inform them about the use of Sudan Red Dye and post-harvest handling methods to avoid aflatoxin contamination. While successfully reaching out to farmers, the government had nevertheless faced difficulties in addressing the miller community, another key actor in the production chain.

2.8. Successfully overcoming the market access challenge had involved extensive communication and networking within the government, as well as between the government and the private sector. Infrastructure investments were made: for instance, the Spices Board of India had set up a testing laboratory for Sudan Red Dye and aflatoxins to control the quality of exports.

## **3 THE ROLE OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION IN ENHANCING SPS-RELATED MARKET ACCESS (SESSION 3)**

3.1. Speakers in this session presented, through practical case stories, how technical cooperation projects can contribute to creating and enhancing SPS-related market access. All three speakers were governmental officials and former participants of the WTO's advanced SPS course. The session discussed different project modalities, the development partners involved and project outputs with a view to identifying factors in that both recipients and providers should take into account to optimize the projects' market access impact. These included a need for effective needs assessment, strong national ownership, transparency, sequencing and cooperation on the provider side, and appropriate evaluation of results. The session was moderated by Mr Melvin Spreij, Secretary of the STDF.

### **3.1 Lebanon – EU technical assistance: Analysis of veterinary drug residues in imported and exported food products**

3.2. Ms Siham Daher from the Ministry of Economy and Trade of Lebanon described the potential market access impact of an EU TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange) project, aimed at strengthening technical capacity to analyse the presence of veterinary drugs in honey, meat and dairy products. Particularly honey provided export opportunities for Lebanon in Europe,

so a key objective of the TAIEX missions was to ensure that Lebanese honey was in conformity with EU regulations on veterinary drug residues. The project had involved systematic monitoring of beekeepers' practices and training of laboratory staff, and in 2012, Lebanon had been accepted on the list of countries eligible to export honey to the European Union. Ms Daher also noted the possible positive spillover benefits of the project in extending analysis to other products such as eggs, or in view of the growing European market for organic food.

### **3.2 Nepal – Ginger competitiveness project**

3.3. Mr Shree Ram Adhikari from the Department of Food Technology and Quality Control of Nepal described an on-going STDF project to enhance market opportunities for Nepalese ginger. Being targeted at ginger farmers, collectors, traders, cooperatives and producer/trader associations, the project aimed to tap into market access opportunities mainly in India. Mr Adhikari estimated that potential annual export value could be as high as 25 million US dollars, and noted the crucial role that correctly designed and implemented technical cooperation projects can play in enhancing Nepal's export opportunities.

### **3.3 Belize – Using the Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis Tool to prioritize SPS capacity building needs**

3.4. Ms Delilah Cabb from Belize outlined how her country had applied the Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis Tool to prioritize competing SPS capacity building needs. The STDF-funded project had been extremely successful. It had resulted in the identification of eight capacity building options through a process of considering pre-defined criteria – including trade impact – and weights assigned to each criterion. As a result, two government ministries had identified national funds to enhance SPS capacity, the private sector was investing more to meet requirements in export markets, and a specific commodity had gained new markets, doubling its export value.

3.5. More information on the MCDA tool is available on the STDF webpage at <http://www.standardsfacility.org/en/TAEcoAnalysis.htm>.

## **4 CONCLUSIONS**

4.1. The speakers of the workshop discussed various market access challenges, and ways to address these challenges. Spanning through different continents and countries, the workshop concentrated on sharing experiences rather than defining any "one size fits all"- solutions. However, some general trends could be identified.

4.2. The topic that surfaced as key in acquiring and maintaining market access in all three sessions was the need for cooperation and communication among different government agencies, between the government and the private sector, as well as with other actors involved, including industry associations and development partners, for instance. This cooperation must be structured and forward-looking, and all parties need to strive for complementarity, not competition. At best, such cooperation may be established in an institutional setting, but in the end, what matters is that all parties "roll up their sleeves" – as one of the speakers said - and work towards a common goal. Another speaker noted that "time is money" when facing market access challenges, so it is important that partners move quickly, flexibly and pragmatically to solve problems and find win-win approaches. Many speakers emphasised the usefulness of international meetings such as the workshop in that they provide a unique opportunity to liaise with trading partners and possibly resolve trade problems.

4.3. Another important overarching theme discussed was the role of the individual in bringing about change and results, in this case market access. This subject is very much in line with the motto of the WTO's advanced SPS course, "you make the difference". Market access does not just happen. People working in the government and in the private sector make it happen. This involves a lot of technical and policy-level work, and throughout, a proactive attitude towards resolving the problems faced. As the coaches of the WTO's advanced course João Magalhães and Kevin Walker noted in their closing remarks of the workshop, individuals must embrace their leadership potential, move beyond their comfort zone, and "strike out and do things".

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