

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPS AGREEMENT

Information for the Workshop on 31 March 2006

Communication from Togo

The following communication, received on 24 March 2006, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Togo.

1. In preparation for the workshop on the implementation of the SPS Agreement, the Members have been invited to submit information on their experiences in respect of the subjects to be discussed.

Question 1

How regularly do representatives of your country participate in meetings of the SPS Committee? Who usually participates from your country (capital-based experts? Geneva-based trade representatives?) What information do you receive regarding meetings of the SPS Committee, and how do you receive this information?

2. Togolese representatives have never participated in SPS Committee meetings.
3. However, representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, namely from the Department of Livestock and Fisheries, the Department of Agriculture and the Togolese Institute of Agronomic Research (ITRA), participated in regional seminars on the WTO SPS Agreement in May 2003, in Cotonou, Benin, and in October 2005, in Bamako, Mali.
4. Information regarding the WTO is sent only to the Ministry of Trade and is not widely circulated.

Question 2

Does your country have a SPS national committee? How do your exporters find out about your trading partners new SPS requirements? 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 trading partners can be evaluated and so that the views of relevant stakeholders can be taken into account when responding to SPS notifications? In establishing such mechanisms, how can Members identify the relevant domestic stakeholders and promote effective interaction among those stakeholders that can be sustained over time? How can information about SPS requirements be transmitted to groups outside of capital?

5. Togo does not yet have an SPS national committee.

6. Exporters in Togo are informed of trading partners' new SPS requirements by foreign clients who are affected by the requirements, and by the competent authorities in the case of requirements that have been transmitted by the Ambassador of Togo in Brussels.

7. The creation of an SPS national committee run by the focal point and comprising the government officials, private partners and consumers, would enable information regarding SPS requirements to be circulated in a timely manner. This committee could meet once every three months and as and when necessary.

8. Relevant stakeholders could be identified according to their activities and functions.

9. Information concerning SPS requirements could be transmitted to groups outside of capital at committee meetings and by mail.

Question 3

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?

10. There has not yet been any national planning on how to implement the SPS Agreement, but contacts have been established and pursued since the WTO regional seminar on the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures, held in Bamako, Mali, in October 2005.

Question 4

How does your country identify its technical assistance needs? What has been your country's experience in both the request and the supply of SPS-related technical assistance? How can technical assistance supply and demand be most effectively matched, priority areas identified and duplication of donor efforts avoided?

11. Togo identifies its technical assistance needs according to the regulatory requirements of partner countries, when these requirements cannot be met owing to a lack of technical, material and financial resources.

12. Togo has not had any experience in the request and supply of SPS-related technical assistance, since it has never requested this type of assistance.

13. In order for technical assistance supply and demand to be most effectively matched, it would be desirable if, in response to the request, a field mission were organized to assess the needs in terms of quality and quantity in the areas concerned.

14. Priority areas will be identified according to their economic and social importance.

15. In order to avoid any duplication of donor efforts, consultations could be held between the Government and the donors concerned and an official list could be kept of the various donors and their fields of interest. In other words, in addition to concerted action, an inventory of the fields benefiting from SPS-related technical assistance could be drawn up and regularly updated.

16. Bearing in mind the above and in order to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the SPS Agreement at national level, it would be desirable for the WTO:

- To help finance participation in meetings; and
 - to send an expert to review the different situations in the countries concerned.
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