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**Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

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**INFORMATION ON SPS-RELATED ACTIVITIES OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE (ITC)  
(NOVEMBER 2018 – FEBRUARY 2019)**

The following communication, received on 4 March 2019, is being circulated at the request of the ITC.

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The International Trade Centre is continuing its efforts to assist enterprises to meet technical requirements. An update of selected SPS-related activities of interest to the WTO Members is provided below.

**1 PROJECTS**

**1.1 UN cluster on trade and productive capacity:  
Myanmar upgrading horticulture supply and sustainable tourism to develop business linkages (donor Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) trust fund)**

1.1. This project for Myanmar aims at improving the economic situation in the Inle Lake (Shan State, Myanmar) area through the upgrade of the horticulture supply capacity and the development of sustainable tourism. It will be implemented by a cluster of four UN agencies gathered in the UN Trade Cluster (ITC, ILO, UNCTAD and UNIDO), through the establishment of value chains leading to income generation and employment creation. Within this framework, ITC will assist the Inle Lake area in gaining in its position as a touristic destination.

1.2. The ITC component is related to project OUTCOME 2: Inle Lake area (Shan State) gained in its position as a touristic destination. The strategic market positioning focuses on sustainable inclusive and responsible tourism. Business opportunities for male and female workers and entrepreneurs have increased and stabilized.

1.3. ITC will be responsible for three outputs: Output 2.1 (The Shan State Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MoHT) as well as the MTF/Myanmar Tourism Marketing (MTM) association are enabled to design, apply and promote an updated and suitable branding strategy); Output 2.2 (Products and services of Inle Lake inbound-tour operators and tourism related businesses (Hotel, Transport, Guides) are enhanced to managerial ASEAN standards and promoted internationally, nationally and in Shan State); and Output 2.3 (Inle lake tourism enterprises, community producers and service providers are enabled to supply goods and services to the tourism in line with tourists' and tourism industry's requirements related to quality and food safety, including procuring local horticulture produce).

1.4. The project started its inception phase in January 2019, which is intended to last until the end of April 2019.

1.5. Under this inception phase, for the food safety component from 23 to 28 February 2019 ITC conducted an assessment on the quality and food hygiene practices in place of food operators and services in support by the relevant institutions and to collect needs to be addressed by the project. An awareness workshop on hygiene and food safety was conducted by ITC food safety experts for approximately 50 hotels and restaurants and associated stakeholders in Taunggyi on 28 February.

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## **1.2 Myanmar: Inclusive tourism development with focus on Kayah state (consolidation) & Tanintharyi (extension) (NTF IV) (1 December 2017 – 30 June 2021 / Donor Netherlands)**

1.6. The NTF IV Myanmar project is part of the Netherlands Trust Fund IV programme with the purpose of increasing the competitiveness of producers and exporters in selected sectors within priority developing countries. NTF IV Myanmar builds on the results of "NTF III Myanmar - Inclusive Tourism focusing on Kayah state" by expanding tourism product development to an additional state of Myanmar (Tanintharyi) and further consolidating the achieved results at national and Kayah state level. The Intermediate SPS-related outcome of this project is to enhance quality of services in hotels, restaurants and food handlers with particular focus on food safety in Kayah and Tanintharyi region in Myanmar. Five trainers-cum-counsellors previously trained under NTF III on hygiene keep on coaching operators and sensitizing on food safety.

1.7. Refreshment training on hygiene and coaching on documentation was conducted in Loikow from 20 to 23 February 2019 by ITC good safety experts. A plan for follow up is being developed.

## **1.3 Myanmar: Improving food safety and compliance with SPS measures to increase export revenues in the oilseeds value chain) (August 2015 – extended till 31 March 2019 / STDF 486)**

1.8. The project Implemented by ITC in close collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce - MyanTrade and Department of Agriculture is reaching its end.

1.9. More than 90 Myanmar oilseeds value chain stakeholders got together for the "Experience sharing and sustainability" final project workshop on 16 February 2019 in Yangon to share achievements and challenges, lessons learnt and recommendations for sustainability. The activities conducted have prioritized interventions along the oilseeds value chain to raise awareness among producers, processors and exporters and strengthen capacities to improve compliance with Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures as well as food safety control systems.

1.10. A total of around 900 stakeholders have been sensitized on the need for and implication of hygiene practices and food safety system in Myanmar and for the international trade.

1.11. The project has produced a solid foundation of knowledge and skills on food safety for around 480 farmers and 15 trainers from the Department of Agriculture (DoA) regional extension offices, who built capacity on GAP, five collectors for improved hygiene and segregation practices at their storage facilities, 11 processors who implemented Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Codex based food safety system and 11 Trainers Cum Counsellors for consolidated capacity to advise the companies on HACCP.

1.12. As a result, 180 farmers applied and obtained the national GAP certification and six processors successfully achieved internationally recognized certification for their food safety management system in compliance with Codex HACCP.

1.13. Details of these activities can be found on the project Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/itcoilseedsmyanmar>.

1.14. A first round of recommendations and follow up actions for sustainability for the oilseeds sector have been given. Further, a small high-level group meeting with public and private sector key stakeholders took place on 17 February 2019 in Yangon, and specific interventions for development and adoption of policies and regulations, strengthening of institutions, private sector involvement as well as possible linkages with other ITC projects such as new EU-Funder project Arise plus in the country have been identified and will be further explored.

## **1.4 Sri Lanka: Feasibility study for value addition in the fruit and vegetable sector (1 October 2017 - extended to 31 March 2019 / STDF PPG 576)**

1.15. The development of the feasibility study for value addition of five selected export crops (pineapple, papaya, banana, mango and passionfruit) and strategic plan for the Lanka Fruit and

Vegetable Producers Processors and Exporters Association (LFVPPEA) is almost finalized. A partnership agreement - Memorandum of understanding - was signed between LFVPPEA and a leading company in dried fruits in Italy, Noberasco on 22 February 2019 for market opportunities, Transfer of skills, knowledge, technology. A stakeholder workshop was conducted in Colombo with more than 40 public and private stakeholders on 26 February 2019 to collect feedback on the feasibility study and strategic plan and raise awareness on the export opportunity for dehydrated products.

### **1.5 Sudan: WTO Accession (March 2018 - February 2019 / Donor Japan)**

1.16. In support of the accession of Sudan to the WTO, ITC is helping the operationalization of designated National Notification Authority and National Enquiry Point for SPS through development of operating procedures and guidance to apply the procedures. Terms of Reference for National TBT and SPS committees have also been prepared. The first National TBT committee was held in January 2019. This project has ended with a following project envisaged.

### **1.6 Burundi Market Access Upgrade Programme (MARKUP) (July 2018 – June 2022 / Donor European Union)**

1.17. This new project to enhance quality infrastructure services with particular focus on coffee and tea sectors has been launched. Needs assessment missions have been held and an in-depth needs assessment of the laboratories conducted. Preparatory work towards the drafting of a national quality policy is ongoing.

### **1.7 Afghanistan: Trade-related support assistance (August 2016 – July 2019/ Donor European Union)**

1.18. This project aims to strengthen human and institutional capacities in trade policy, strategy formulation and implementation, including quality management and SPS measures. The Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) is the main counterpart; beneficiaries include Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Ministry of Health (MoPH), National Standards Body (ANSA) and relevant sector associations.

1.19. As part of the activities related to strengthening SPS and TBT NEPs and NNA, training workshops were held between 23-28 February with special regard to the transparency provision related obligations of the TBT and SPS Agreements, with practical sessions conducted on the e-ping and TBT and SPS NSS.

1.20. To strengthen the Food Safety capacity of the country, in partnership with Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) ITC has organized a two week training for nine officials from relevant Afghan Ministries and Authorities. It aimed at providing in-depth understanding of the food safety control system in India and set an example of how food safety control system is effectively carried out in different countries. It is expected that this will further improve the draft proposal and action plan on the development and enforcement of the food safety control system in Afghanistan.

1.21. The project held a regional standardization workshop in Herat between 10 and 12 December 2018 that aimed at raising awareness of, and train executive and/or technical staff of private enterprises (producers, processors, exporters) and relevant public sector on the importance of standardization, standard development/adoption activities at ANSA, Quality Management System (QMS), Food Safety Management System (FSMS). It is expected that the same training will be replicated in other regions as well.

1.22. ITC has been providing assistance on the National Quality Policy. Currently the draft has been circulated among the stakeholders and awaiting the final consultation feedback.

1.23. Draft Legal Metrology has been drafted and will be reviewed. Stakeholders' comments will be collected in the coming months and the submission for endorsement shall take place.

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### **1.8 Tajikistan: Enabling market access for agricultural products through improved food safety system (March 2018 - February 2021 / STDF - PG-447)**

1.24. The goal of the project is to improve export competitiveness of Tajik SMEs and food safety through better use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines with focus on honey and apricot sectors. It enhances high value market access for Tajik agri-food producers and processors and increases the level of safety of Tajik domestic food by reducing the risk of contamination and improving the systems of control and monitoring of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines.

1.25. The project activities began by collecting baseline data on import, distribution, storage, use, sales and control of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines in Tajikistan. The baseline data revealed several SPS related challenges for Tajik honey and dried apricots related to export to European markets.

1.26. A mapping of laboratories and an analysis on SME access to finance supported the results of the baseline study. In the project the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations is a key partner since the first component "Regulatory and control system for use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines established and operational" will mainly be implemented by FAO. ITC will concentrate its work on the other three outputs, namely to "Strengthen capacity of the project beneficiaries on the usage of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines", to "enhance access to finance for SMEs in compliance with SPS measures and to "Increase linkages along the sector value chain and export markets".

### **1.9 SYMST: Systematic Mechanism for Safer Trade (December 2018 – October 2021 / Donor European Union)**

1.27. ITC has started implementing a new project with the aim to improve food safety through better governance in Thailand and Lao PDR.

1.28. The target sector of this action is the agro-sector, covering food products of plant origin. The action focuses on compliance with EU and international markets. ITC intends to strengthen the regulatory framework for control of plant health and pesticides in the fruits and vegetable sector and other plant products (i.e. rice in the case of Laos) through the application of norms and standards and improve market access.

1.29. The project has three results:

- Result 1: Improved awareness and knowledge of private sector and authorities in Thailand and Lao People's Democratic Republic on plant health and pesticides issues in fruits, vegetables and other plant products;
- Result 2: Improved performance of the regulatory and control institutions and improved capacity of the fruits, vegetables and other plant products supply chain actors to comply with plant health and pesticides control in Thailand, and Lao People's Democratic Republic;
- Result 3: Strengthened market access opportunities and facilitated business linkages of fruits, vegetables and other plant products actors from Thailand and Lao People's Democratic Republic to European Union and regional target markets

1.30. The inaugural mission to commence the SYMST project was carried out in February 2019.

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