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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**ACP-EU TBT PROGRAMME REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE WTO SPS COMMITTEE
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COMMUNICATION BY THE ACP GROUP

The following communication, received on 9 March 2016, is distributed at the request of the ACP Secretariat.

The ACP-EU TBT Programme is a €15 million trade capacity building vehicle aimed at contributing to improved competitiveness in local, regional and global markets by enhancing the export capacity of economic operators in ACP countries. In discharging this aim, the TBT Programme seeks to strengthen the capacity of ACP countries and regions to influence and comply with TBT requirements of external trading partners, as well as to define and enforce legitimate and adequately harmonised TBT on internal markets while drawing maximum advantage of the existing WTO TBT Agreements. The Programme's activities are grouped around three prioritised areas of intervention, viz.:

- a. Upgrading and strengthening quality infrastructure institutions;
- b. Empowering economic operators and export sectors; and
- c. Disseminating results and experiences.

Since its launch in March 2013, the TBT Programme has developed and implemented 65 projects in ACP countries with beneficiaries being national and regional quality infrastructure institutions, exporters and trade associations.

In spite of the Programme's nomenclature, its activities have also ventured into the realm of the SPS Agreement. The interpretation of the realm of the TBT Programme's activities resides in the definition of SPS measures as captured in Annex 1 that makes specific reference to testing, inspection, certification, risk assessment; and packaging and labelling requirements directly related to food safety.

Of the 65 projects implemented by the TBT Programme, 11 have a specific SPS dimension. The most significant of these are as follows:

1 042-14: SCIENTIFIC AND LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A QUALITY AND SAFETY STANDARD FOR KAVA PRODUCTION AND TRADE IN THE PACIFIC REGION

1.1. This comprises two critical elements, i.e.:

- a. complete the scientific sampling of relevant kava cultivars and ensure that kava is produced and processed according to good agricultural practices, recognized FAO-Codex regional and international standards;
- b. draft an international standard for kava for consideration within the FAO-Codex regional process, more specifically in the Codex Coordination Committee North America South West Pacific (CCNASWP).

1.2. The draft standard based on international standards has been completed and is now subjected to internal consultations by individual Pacific ACP States and will be reviewed at the CCNASWP meeting in September 2016.

2 021-14 DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ECO-LABELLING SCHEMES IN THE FISH SECTOR VANUATU AND THE PACIFIC REGION

2.1. The project had the following two principal objectives, viz.:

- a. complete a situation analysis and needs assessment study and assess the enabling conditions for harnessing sustainable trade opportunities;
- b. support the enhancement of institutional capacities of key public and private sectors on sustainable fisheries management through the introduction of eco-labelling schemes.

2.2. The project resulted in the acceptance that in spite of the initial and ongoing costs of certification, a stringent ecolabel coupled with sub-regional marketing brand-sharing strategy could herald new commercial opportunities for ACP Pacific fishing industry. In addition, additional regulatory systems were required at both national and regional levels.

3 009-13 HARMONISATION OF AFRICAN STANDARDS - TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

3.1. The project aimed to support the harmonization of African Standards within the scope of the THC 13 on African Traditional Medicine. The project beneficiary is ARSO, the African Organisation on Standardisation. As a result of the TBT Programme intervention, the inter-governmental consultations on adopting the draft standards are now well advanced among the 12 participating African states. In addition, four specific modules for training on the key WTO obligations of ARSO member States were implemented.

4 070-15 ARSO DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION AND CREATION OF AWARENESS ON AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL STANDARDS AND CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT

4.1. This project aims at facilitating intra-African trade through promotion and dissemination of free flows of information on standards, conformity assessment, technical regulations and related matters to demonstrate compliance with quality standards, consumer requirements and technical trade regulations; and enhance the implementation of harmonised African standards among the African farmers availing summarized outreach materials as value addition tools to production for agricultural transformation.

4.2. Specific elements include (a) upgrading the African Trade Web Portal and thereby enhance its capacity to act as a "one-stop-shop" source of information for concerned economic operators; (b) disseminate harmonized African standards to interested stakeholders in ARSO member States; and (c) promote awareness on African agricultural standards and conformity assessment for the empowerment of the African small holder farmers, traders and processing enterprises.

5 050-15 MARKET ACCESS CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME FOR THE CARIFORUM REGION

5.1. The purpose of this project is to develop and execute a comprehensive one-year Market Access Capacity Building Programme for the CARIFORUM region and to strengthen the export capacity of agro-processing firms and skills of services providers in the field of certification in CARIFORUM countries with the emphasis on food safety.

5.2. The specific deliverables of this project are five-fold, namely, (a) develop comprehensive training material focusing on Traceability, Quality Management Systems, Risk Assessment and HACCP; EU and US approaches to food safety requirements; and ISO 22000 – Food Safety Management Systems requirements for any entity in the food chain; (b) support the food safety capacity of select Caribbean firms through training consistent with the the Train-Trainers Methodology; (a) draft action plans for selected firms for the implementation of food safety requirements targeting the US and EU markets; (d) evaluate and assess the selected companies by contacted monitoring experts; and (e) update practical training material and supplement the with case studies.

6 057-15 SUPPORT AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN ACTORS FOR PROMOTING QUALITY AND IMPROVING COMPETITIVENESS FOR BETTER INTEGRATION OF TOGO TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE

6.1. The specific objective is to improve the legislative and regulatory framework and strengthen the capacity of QI institutions. The project results are as follows: (a) the quality infrastructure has been assessed and the regulatory, legislative and operational framework is improved; (b) strengthened capacity of QI institutions; (c) actors in the food sector have been trained in the culture of quality and prepared for certification; and (d) the public and private actors are sensitized on the requirements of the WTO TBT and SPS Agreements and international standards for the integration of Togo in both regional and international trade.

7 047-15 HORTICULTURE TRADE ENHANCEMENT AND CERTIFICATION IN RWANDA

7.1. This project is aimed at supporting select Rwandan horticulture producers and exporters to comply with food safety requirements and thereby improve their respective level of competitiveness and effective market access. In terms of specific interventions, this project had two dimensions, namely, (a) to train and support selected small-scale farmers for the Global GAP certification; and (b) to strengthen the capacity of local service providers and trade bodies to support horticulture producers and exporters in the process for certification.

7.2. Results attained were an assessment of the capacities and needs of the horticulture producers and exporters with recommendations for improvements presented and consulted with the beneficiary. In addition, a number of Rwandan service providers and trainers from trade-related organisations were trained on food safety and quality, good agriculture practices, export quality management system and effective access to markets. The project thereby resulted in a band of small scale-Rwandan farmers attaining compliance with the requirements and standing ready to apply for Global GAP certification.

8 014-14 STRENGTHENING QUALITY AND FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS FOR PINEAPPLE PRODUCERS WITH EXPORT POTENTIAL IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

8.1. This project's overall objective was to support select pineapple production and exporters to comply with food safety requirements, technical regulations, standards and conformity assessments procedures of their major trading partners. The specific objectives were to enhance the capacity of the pineapple producer association (APROPIC) and other relevant intermediary organizations in the area of food safety (specifically, traceability, food quality and food safety, etc.).

8.2. The project delivered the following concrete results, namely, (a) strengthen institutional capacity of the association of pineapple producers and trade-related institutions in the Sanchez Ramirez region; (b) training of select trainers on food safety, export quality management system, traceability, food quality, etc.; and preparing pineapple producers to apply for ISO 22000 or Global GAP certification.

8.3. In supporting the abovementioned projects, the TBT Programme has collaborated closely with a cluster of other TRTA providers, most notably, UNIDO, PTB, OIML, TradeMarks Programmes, STDF, ITC and UNCTAD. The Programme has also benefitted from close synergies with other EU national funded initiatives such as TRAQUE (Ghana) and SMAP (Kenya). Finally, one metric of the successful work undertaken by the Programme is that it has almost fully exhausted its initial project funding. This degree of financial utilisation also highlights the ACP's deep recognition that establishing effective national cum regional SPS regimes constitute a sine qua non to securing effective access to the markets of major trading partners.

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3 March 2016
