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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)  
(MARCH – OCTOBER 2016)**

The following communication, received on 25 October 2016, 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 projects of interest to WTO Members is provided below.

**1 PROJECTS****1.1 Afghanistan: Trade-related assistance**

1.1. A new three-year project funded by the European Union is being launched in November 2016 aiming to strengthen human and institutional capacities in trade policy, strategy formulation and implementation, with active engagement of the private sector. Quality management, SPS measures and regional regulatory cooperation will be amongst the focus areas of this project. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) of Afghanistan will be the main counterpart and beneficiary of this project.

**1.2 Myanmar: Improving Food Safety and Compliance with SPS Measures to Increase Export Revenues in the Oilseeds Value Chain (STDF 486)**

1.2. Under this three-year project implemented in close collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce, Department of Trade Promotion and Consumer Affairs, the main activities carried out in the reporting period are as follows:

- A baseline study along the value chain and the market surveys were completed. Findings were shared at a validation workshop on 6-7 June 2016, attended by 72 participants (17 women). The first meeting of Project Steering Committee was also held on 7 June 2016;
- Expressions of interest were publicly launched and selection of the beneficiary processors, collectors, experts to be trained has reached its final stage. Training activities will start in November 2016; and
- National Project Manager attended many meetings to synergise and complement work with other development partners.

**1.3 Sri Lanka: Improving Safety and Quality of Fruits and Vegetables (STDF/PG/354)**

1.3. The project implemented in close collaboration with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and the Department of Agriculture, ended on 30 June 2016. During the reporting period:

- 100 more farmers were trained on GAP, pests controls and on usage of pesticides safety kit;
- A study tour was organized to Thailand for the 12 best performing farmers and extension officers, enabling a better understanding of good practices and market requirements;

- An experience sharing workshop was held for more than 50 stakeholders to cascade the lessons learned on implementation of new practices in compliance with international standards;
- Upon the request of the Government of Sri Lanka, two expert missions were facilitated to review the pesticides control system, pesticide laboratory capacity and provide initial recommendations in preparation of the EU Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) audit;
- Two feasibility missions by an international buyer of dehydrated fruits and international supplier of packaging were facilitated by the project to enable linkages with international markets;
- The final project workshop was held on 29 June 2016 where more than 100 stakeholders from the public and private sector reviewed the project achievements and discussed its sustainability, in particular, with regard to the establishment of the national SPS and TBT national committee, adoption of the Sri Lanka national GAP standard and linkages between trained farmers and exporters

*Project information and links to project videos are available under <http://www.spssrilanka.lk>.*

#### **1.4 Tajikistan: Develop a project proposal to address food safety needs focusing on the National Food Safety Strategy (STDF PPG 447)**

1.4. ITC is implementing the Project Preparation Grant in close collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan:

- An expert field visit was conducted from 4–14 April 2016 where consultations were held with stakeholders and priority food safety capacity building needs were identified.
- Based on the findings, the project proposal is under development.

#### **1.5 Zimbabwe: Strengthening the national sanitary and phytosanitary institutional framework**

1.5. This project aims to improve the SPS infrastructure in order to facilitate exports to the European Union and the neighbouring countries. As part of the activities planned, three workshops were conducted during the reporting period.

- A workshop on Rules of Origin was held on 9 September 2016 where 40 SMEs learnt about the methodological basis on which different RoO regimes are based, and associated concepts and provisions;
- A workshop on Risk-Based Official Controls was held on 26-30 September 2016;
- A third workshop was held with the Ministry of SMEs and Cooperative Development, on the WTO Agreements on TBT and SPS (11 and 12 October 2016) where 22 SME participated to clarify the main concepts related to standards and technical regulations (TBT/SPS), their importance, differences and relationship between these, and relevant information resources.

## **2 OTHER ACTIVITIES, PUBLICATIONS, OR INTERVENTIONS OF INTEREST**

### **2.1 SME Competitiveness Outlook SMECO 2016: Meeting the standard for trade**

2.1. SME Competitiveness Outlook is the yearly flagship publication of ITC. This year's edition focuses on standards and regulations. The report combines data analysis, academic insights, thought leader opinions and case studies to provide guidance for policymakers, business managers and standard setters. Standards and regulations have a major impact on SME competitiveness. By meeting the standards, SMEs increase their chances to connect to international value chains and consumers.

2.2. The report contains:

- Governance insights for voluntary sustainability standards;
- New evidence on how standards and regulations affect trade and business performance;
- Guidance for SMEs on how to select and implement standards and regulations;
- A policy action plan to strengthen SMEs' ability to meet standards and regulations.

Full report in English and executive summaries in English, French, Spanish and German are accessible at <http://www.intracen.org/SMEOutlook/SMECO2016/>.

## **2.2 Export Quality Management publications and workshops with PTB**

2.3. Workshops were conducted in Palestine in March 2016 and in Kyrgyzstan in May 2016 that enhanced the knowledge and skills needed by business support organisations to effectively support SMEs to improve quality management and comply with the prevailing market access requirements.

## **2.3 Non-Tariff Measures (NTM) programme**

2.4. The ITC Non-tariff Measures (NTMs) Programme ensures that the concerns of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) about regulatory and procedural trade obstacles are brought to the attention of policymakers and other stakeholders at the national, regional and multilateral level, enabling them to take concrete actions to address these. The programme also contributes to increasing the transparency of NTMs through data collection and dissemination and provides thought leadership through research and analysis.

### **2.3.1 Transparency of information: trade regulations in ITC's Market Access Map**

2.5. ITC continues to be active in collecting and disseminating information on trade regulations, including SPS and TBT measures. To date, information for 90 countries, searchable by product and partner country, are available on ITC's Market Access Map: <http://www.macmap.org>. ITC is currently in the process of further developing the module on trade agreements, rules of origin and related certification, in order to make the information more accessible especially to small businesses.

2.6. Complementing this information, ITC has also joined forces with UNDESA and the WTO to develop a tool that allows companies, enquiry points and other stakeholders to receive alerts about SPS & TBT notifications for products and countries of their interest. This tool, called "ePing" (<http://www.epingalert.org>) will be officially launched on 8 November 2016 at the occasion of the TBT Committee meeting.

2.7. Finally, following up on the NTM Survey results, ITC in collaboration with UNCTAD has recently launched a pilot project in Bangladesh that aims at documenting and better disseminating administrative procedures related to exporting, including certification processes. First results are expected by end 2016.

### **2.3.2 Documenting SME experiences with NTMs: NTM Surveys**

2.8. In 2015 and 2016, NTM Surveys were launched in more than ten countries – the latest in Namibia. Surveys document the experiences of exporters and importers with NTMs and allow identifying potential for reducing trade cost that these measures often imply, without undermining legitimate objectives they serve. 2016 has seen many survey results coming in, based on interviews with more than 3,200 companies.

2.9. Survey validation workshops were held in Mali (May 2016), Philippines (June 2016), Dominican Republic (July 2016) and Benin (October 2016). In addition, a high-level roundtable focusing on regional integration in ECOWAS was held in June 2016, based on the survey results in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali and Senegal. The event, which brought together participants from 13 ECOWAS member countries, was organised in close cooperation with the African Development Bank and with the participation of the ECOWAS and UEMOA commissions. One of the three thematic roundtables focused on issues related to product quality and food safety. Further information about the ECOWAS event can be found on <http://www.ntmsurvey.org/ecowas2016>.

2.10. For the first time, ITC has also tested a "survey update". In Sri Lanka, around 40 of the companies that had been interviewed in 2010 and that reported NTM-related trade obstacles were re-contacted in September 2016 to monitor whether changes have occurred and/or new challenges have emerged. Overall, the results suggest that their situation has improved *vis-à-vis* 2010. Particularly administrative processes, including customs clearance at exports and certification

processes appear more efficient, notably thanks to investment in automatization. At the same time, new challenges emerged, especially when trading with India and China.

### 2.3.3 Upcoming events/dates to note

- 8 November: launch of e-Ping
- Upcoming stakeholder meetings on NTM survey results:
  - Uganda: 26 October
  - Comoros: 7 November – jointly with STDF event
  - Ecuador: 9 November
  - Seychelles: 3 November
  - Jordan: 29 November
  - Kyrgyzstan: 12 December (date tbc)
  - Ethiopia: 12 December (date tbc)
- EU survey results will be presented for the first time on 17 November in Brussels as part of the Market Access Advisory Committee. The survey of over 8,000 companies across the 28 member States gives insights on obstacles to trade between the European Union and developing countries and a benchmark and point of comparison for survey results from other countries.

### 2.3.4 Further information

2.11. NTM-related publications, including country-specific survey reports, can be accessed free of charge at <http://www.intracen.org/publications/ntm>. Survey results are available in a more interactive format via <http://www.ntmsurvey.org>. For more information about ITC's NTM programme, please contact [ntm@intracen.org](mailto:ntm@intracen.org).

### 2.4 2016 World Export Development Forum (WEDF): Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 12-13 October

2.12. The 2016 WEDF was co-organized by ITC and the Sri Lanka Export Development Board. The event saw participation of the Sri Lankan President and Prime Minister, the heads of the Commonwealth and of UNESCAP, Ministers from China and Hungary and a number of important and innovative policy makers and business leaders. The event served as a platform for exchange of ideas and views of how SMEs can connect and compete on the global stage. Business-to-business meetings were held for nearly 200 companies. The WEDF 2017 will be held in Hungary.

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