



SADC SECRETARIAT REPORT ON SPS ACTIVITIES

The following communication, received on 14 November 2018, is being circulated at the request of the secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

1 COORDINATION OF SADC SPS ACTIVITIES

1. The end of the first phase of the EU-SADC Regional Economic Integration Support (REIS) Programme coincided with the restructuring of the SADC secretariat. In that regard, the position for Sanitary and Phytosanitary matters became flexible and not provided for in the subsequent financial year, albeit the SPS activities were provided for. Arrangements have been made for the position to be active in the 2019/2020 financial year. This has resulted in limited participation and reduced frequency of reporting by the regional office at the international level.

2 THE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL ENQUIRY POINTS AND THE NATIONAL NOTIFICATION AUTHORITIES

2. The meeting of the National Enquiry Points and the National Notification Authorities was convened on 15-17 February 2017 to promote awareness on the alignment between the WTO SPS Agreement and the SPS Annex to the SADC Protocol on Trade. The meeting was attended by 13 member States, namely Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The participants were able to identify and prioritize key issues regarding the transparency mechanism and to enhance the ability of the NEPs and NNAs to honor their regional and international transparency obligations.

3 DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSALS TO ACCESS THE STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE FACILITY (STDF)

3. The SADC SPS Coordinating Committee met on 6-10 November 2018 to consider the progress on the work plans of the SADC Sub-Committees on Food Safety, Animal Health and Plant Protection. The other main deliverable of the meeting was for each of the groups to formulate a project proposal to apply for technical assistance funds to the STDF. Proposals were sent to the STDF secretariat, which yielded the guidance that further work needs to be done on the proposals. The guidance was sent to the Sub-Committee focal persons, which are still to convene the Sub-Committees to action the comments provided. One of the challenges that were faced by the Food Safety Committee was the inconsistency of the constituency of the persons attending the meetings. Subsequent meetings have emphasized the inclusion of the National Codex Focal Points.

4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SADC BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR SMALL SCALE FARMERS TO COLLECTIVELY ACCESS MARKETS

4. Under the REIS programme, a consultant was commissioned to develop a manual that will be used by small-scale farmers to collectively access markets. The survey was based on the beef and sugar industries of Eswatini, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa. This was the view to establish how small-scale farmers organized themselves to be in a position to link the bigger corporates, which participate in the specific product value chains. The validation meeting for the manual was held on 20-21 June 2018, attended by Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The member States concurred that more work needed to be done on the manual to separately consider the three aspects of SPS.

5 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SADC REGIONAL EARLY WARNING AND RAPID RESPONSE SYSTEM

5. Under the REIS programme a consultant was commissioned to do a survey on the development of a SADC Regional Early Warning and Rapid Response System. The report of this survey was reported for validation to the SADC SPS Coordinating Committee meeting of the 6-10 August 2017. The survey was based on three SADC member States and this caused the member States to resolve that the report be put on hold until further work could be done covering more SADC member States.

6 DEVELOPMENT OF APPLICATIONS FOR THE CODEX TRUST FUND

6. The SADC secretariat received a request for support from member States' National Codex Contact Points to develop a regional application to the Codex Trust Fund. It was stated that member States of the SADC region had attempted countless times with no success to secure assistance from the Codex Trust Fund. A meeting was convened on 26-28 September 2018, attended by Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe to facilitate the development of the regional application. Lessons learnt from the ECOWAS region at applying for the fund were used as guidance. Upon further reflection, the meeting concurred that due to the vast disparities between the Codex systems of the various member States, each member State should develop their own application, to be supported by the WHO and FAO office within the member State. Member States were expected to submit their applications by the closing date of 30 November 2018.

7 THE EU-SADC ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

7. A survey was commissioned to investigate the current situation in selected SADC member States regarding their compliance with the requirements of the WTO TBT and SPS Agreements. This was with regard to their ability to facilitate WTO-compatible market access to EU market as catered for under the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The validation meeting was held on 22-23 January 2017 and it was concluded that the SADC-EPA member States need to be trained on the requirements of the export market. One of the key points made at that meeting was that export-led growth in the Southern African region was dependent on meeting certain international standards demanded on the export market and that without these being met, or technical requirements being respected, the promise of duty-free, quota-free market access to the European Union held very little value. The meeting was attended by Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, the EU Delegation and the SADC Cooperation in Standards (SADCSTAN). The meeting endorsed the eleven recommendations of the survey, which advised the SADC secretariat on how the TBT/SPS matters of the EPA should ideally be handled. The general approach is to align the EPA-related TBT and SPS activities with the activities happening in the rest of the SADC member States.

8 THE EU-SADC TRADE RELATED FACILITY (TRF)

8. A majority of the project proposals submitted to the TRF by twelve SADC member States are to do with the improvement of TBT and SPS systems in the member States. In the SPS area, the requests consisted of 41 consultancies, 25 procurements and 54 training sessions. Consultancy requests included institutional capacity building; profiling of certain aspects of the three-sisters, improvement of conformity assessment regimes and the development of standard operating procedures. Procurement was more to do with acquisition of farm infrastructure and testing equipment with accessories. Training requests included the attachment of staff to competent bodies, ways of complying with the various requirements of the TBT Annex to the SADC Trade Protocol and the execution and deployment of electronic information platforms. From the regional viewpoint, the requests reflected the general crosscutting weaknesses in the SPS systems of the member States, which can be addressed with regional workshops that will allow for a cross-pollination of ideas amongst the member States. In view of the delayed commencement of the project, only the key consultancies and training sessions will be performed, with the member States having been called upon to reprioritize their training and consultancy needs.

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