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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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INFORMATION TO MEMBERS

INTRODUCING THE EU-FUNDED AGRINFO INFORMATION PROGRAMME ON NEW EU POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

COMMUNICATION FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

The following proposal, received on 28 February 2024, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of the European Union.

1. The European Union (EU) is hosting a hybrid SPS side event organized in partnership with the Committee Linking Entrepreneurship-Agriculture-Development (COLEAD), "Introducing the EU-funded AGRINFO information programme on new EU policies and regulations" on Tuesday, 19 March 2024 from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. (CET).

2. AGRINFO is a 5-year information programme funded by the European Union for developing and emerging countries with a budget of 7M€. The AGRINFO information system covers EU policies, regulatory and non-regulatory measures that have a potential impact on the competitiveness, market access and trade dynamics of agri-food and fisheries value chains linked to the EU market. Its overall aim is to contribute to improved food quality and safety, and to increased sustainability of food, agricultural production and fisheries, in partner countries.¹

3. Complying with EU regulations and standards is a major factor in achieving market access and encouraging domestic and foreign investment in trade. Evolving regulatory and market requirements can pose a challenge for developing and emerging economies exporting goods to Europe, impacting both private and public stakeholders. This programme provides access to clear and timely information with the overall aim of helping to minimise any negative impacts, while optimizing opportunities that result from new measures and regulations that affect production, business, and trade.

4. AGRINFO also aims to encourage greater participation by partner countries and stakeholders in consultation opportunities. The EU regulatory and policy-making process is explained through written guidance (as well as on-request webinars), and there is proactive communication to encourage and facilitate feedback to EU SPS/TBT notifications to the WTO, and EU consultations.

5. AGRINFO is a unique service that identifies, monitors and communicates information on regulatory changes that have a potential impact on the competitiveness, market access and trade dynamics of partner beneficiaries. It adds value to existing information sources by focusing on and highlighting changes that are most relevant to low- and middle- income countries, by identifying potential implications and recommended actions, and by proactively communicating so that this information reaches the people who need it at the right time, and in an understandable form.

¹ Partner countries are defined as low-income, lower-middle income and upper-middle-income economies, categorized according to the [DAC List of ODA Recipients](#).

6. The AGRINFO platform and communications also direct users to relevant complementary resources such as: [ePing SPS&TBT Platform \(ePing\)](#); [EUR-Lex](#); [Better Training for Safer Food \(BTSF\)](#); [Access2markets](#); [CBI](#); [ITC Standards Maps](#); and COLEAD [Library](#) and [E-learning](#).

7. COLEAD works closely with the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), other EU DGs, EU delegations, Brussels Embassies and Trade Missions, donor programmes, and industry representatives, to establish bridges with the intended targets of the information service. The direct target partner beneficiaries are competent authorities, business associations, and farmer organizations in partner countries. The expectation is that these entities will act as relays to extract, adapt, and transfer information to the end users who need and must act upon it, in both public and private sectors.

8. AGRINFO activities and outputs include the following:

- a. Daily monitoring of EU policies, regulatory and non-regulatory measures and standards in agri-food and fisheries to identify new and upcoming changes that could have a potential impact on competitiveness, market access and trade dynamics in partner countries;
- b. Drafting of reports on all relevant changes, and incorporating these into an open access, searchable database: <http://www.agrinfo.eu/>. PDF versions of each report can be downloaded for printing or exporting for wider dissemination. Reports are written in English using accessible language targeted towards partner beneficiaries in partner countries; translation facilities are being introduced during 2024. Each report explains what changes are being introduced; why they are necessary; the timeline and expected entry into force; the likely implications for partner countries; and recommended actions. Links are provided to the associated legal texts and policy documents;
- c. Proactive communication, including via a regular newsletter, regulatory digests, guidance documents, and webinars. The newsletter is issued every two to three weeks highlighting the latest changes (including WTO notifications), with links to the full database reports. It emphasizes opportunities to feed into the policy or regulatory process, with links to ePing, EU [Have Your Say](#), or others. [Subscription](#) to the newsletter is open access and free;
- d. Hosting the [Ask AGRINFO](#) service, where partner-beneficiaries can submit questions via the database about the service, to seek clarification on a particular regulatory change, or to raise concerns about potential impacts. When appropriate, these questions are relayed to the European Commission services;
- e. Understanding and identifying risks and opportunities associated with evolving EU policies, regulatory and non-regulatory measures, and evaluating their potential impact on partner beneficiaries. AGRINFO has developed an innovative prioritization methodology that helps to identify countries and value chains that are particularly vulnerable to regulatory change that could disrupt their trade. This indicates where proactive communication is needed, where more in-depth market analyses or impact studies would be beneficial, and where there is potential need for accompanying measures.

9. AGRINFO is implemented by [COLEAD](#), a not-for-profit private sector association. The mission of COLEAD is to facilitate and implement all actions allowing, directly and/or indirectly, to increase the contribution of the agricultural sector, and horticulture in particular, to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. COLEAD manages and implements [development programmes](#) in the agriculture and food sector, funded by donors, amongst which the European Union is the most important.

10. The European Commission and COLEAD welcome the opportunity to share more information at the side event on 19 March 2024. The event will give an overview of AGRINFO, highlighting the services available, and welcoming feedback from participants on potential improvement that will ensure the programme meets the information needs of WTO Members.