

**JOINT COMSEC/ITC PROJECT ON CASE STUDIES TO DETERMINE TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE NEEDS IN THE AREAS OF TBT AND SPS**

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This document was extracted from a Power Point slide presentation.

Background

- Problems faced by developing countries
 - participating in international standards activities
 - meeting technical regulations, standards and SPS measures in export markets
- Wide differences in development of standardisation and conformity assessment infrastructure
- Assessment of the needs for technical assistance in standardization and conformity assessment with respect to TBT and SPS

Modalities

- Background paper prior to actual case studies:
 - describing the procedures/practices followed for the elaboration of international standards
 - the elements to be covered in the case studies
- Case studies by six consultants, three for TBT and three for SPS in September/October 2001
- Countries covered: Kenya, Mauritius, Uganda, Namibia, Jamaica and Malaysia

Observations concerning implementation of SPS obligations/rights




- Difficulties for developing countries
 - limited human and financial resources to meet obligations and take advantage of rights
 - limited ability for effective participation in international standardization
 - propensity for some developed countries to set conditions above international standards for market access

- Wide use of CODEX and OIE Standards
 - Difficulty to follow the international norm on pest risk analysis
 - Effective SPS regimes maintained for key health risks
 - SPS barriers encountered by all countries for export
 - Basic institutions for transparency obligations mostly in place
 - Ineffective structures/practices to disseminate information from enquiry points to stakeholders
 - Administrative structures for identification of problems faced by exporters generally lacking/bureaucratic
 - Sporadic attendance at SPS Committee meetings
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General considerations concerning needs for technical assistance (TA)

- TA needs specific to each country, not to bridge the gap between developed and developing countries
 - Amount of TA available < Aggregate value of worthwhile projects
 - Available TA targeted to most cost effective uses, reducing/avoiding waste
 - Apparent fragmentation of previous TA
 - Need to plan and prioritise TA
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Examples of appropriate technical assistance (TA)

- Specific Product TA
 - Development of an export market access strategy, identification of SPS barriers and TA to overcome them
- Capacity Building TA
 - Development of an SPS capacity database
 - Developing a framework to assist in setting TA priorities
 - Tertiary education related
 - Establishment/strengthening of SPS Enquiry Points
 - Encouraging the provision of tangible TA under Article 9 of the SPS Agreement
 - Reviewing the modus operandi of international standards organisations
 - Strengthening regional capacity for:
 -  non routine (i.e. reference) testing
 -  record keeping activities
 -  challenging specific measures applied over/above international standards by some importing countries

- Mentoring and training of trainers in WTO SPS issues and in technical areas such as HACCP and pest risk analysis
 - Increasing transparency under the SPS Agreement
 - Establishment of a trust fund
 - Dispute settlement mechanisms
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Outputs

Preparation by COMSEC and ITC

- For focussed technical assistance for capacity building at national level
 - Publication of a joint COMSEC/ITC publication on TBT and SPS
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