

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

THE STANDARDS AND TRADE DEVELOPMENT FACILITY

Note by the Secretariat¹

1. A key objective of the Doha Development Agenda is to further integrate developing countries into the international trading system, including through capacity building. With a view to help meeting this goal, the Heads of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank and WTO issued a joint communiqué at Doha committing the institutions to explore new modes of collaboration². This relates specifically to food safety, plant, and animal health, and to the standards developed by the FAO/WHO Joint Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex), the FAO International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), and the OIE.

2. In the joint communiqué, the Heads of the five institutions reaffirmed their commitment to work together on the basis of their respective mandates and to further exploit the synergies between their organizations, standard-setting bodies and other agencies. They also agreed to jointly explore new technical and financial mechanisms for coordination and resource mobilization and to build alliances between standard-setting bodies and the implementing and financing agencies so as to ensure the most effective use of technical and financial resources.

3. Building on this commitment, on work already underway in the five institutions and on developing country demands for enhanced capacity-building programmes in the areas of food safety, plant and animal health, FAO, OIE, WHO, World Bank and WTO established on September 2002 a Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) to facilitate the collaboration in enhancing the capacity of developing countries in meeting SPS standards. The WTO accepted to serve as the executing institution to administer the STDF.

Objectives

4. The overall objective of the STDF is to strengthen the capacity of developing countries in meeting international standards for food and other agricultural commodities. To this effect the participating organizations have committed to enhancing their collaboration, and the cooperation with other relevant institutions, with respect to SPS-related activities. The STDF will facilitate:

- (a) Coordination of the delivery of development assistance in SPS standards-related areas by the partner institutions so as to make the most efficient use of their respective expertise and resources.
- (b) Capacity enhancement of developing countries to better enable them to effectively participate in the development of relevant international standards.

¹ This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or to their rights or obligations under the WTO.

² WT/MIN(01)/ST/97

- (c) Capacity enhancement of developing countries (public and private sectors) to better enable them to benefit from international trade by meeting international standards, such as those referenced in the SPS Agreement.
- (d) Capacity enhancement of developing country officials and scientists in the specific areas of expertise with regard to implementing the obligations and taking advantage of the rights arising from the SPS Agreement.

5. Specifically, the STDF will facilitate or support: (i) information exchange, development of databases, tool kits and learning materials on trade-related SPS issues and consultations to better coordinate FAO, OIE, WHO, World Bank and WTO capacity-building projects, as well as those of other relevant organizations; and (ii) funding of projects in capacity building in individual countries or through regional initiatives, including activities involving both public and private sectors.

6. The STDF will support other activities of the FAO, OIE, World Bank, WHO and WTO in specific areas of their expertise and mandates. The STDF may also support projects to facilitate developing country participation in standard setting. The specific projects supported with funding by the Facility will be identified by partner institutions in consultation with the developing countries concerned.

Membership

7. The FAO (including participation of Codex and IPPC), OIE, World Bank, WHO and WTO are the partner institutions in the STDF. Other partner institutions may be admitted, as decided by the Policy Committee of the STDF.

Funding

8. The World Bank has supported the creation of the STDF with a grant of US\$300,000 for FY03 (July 2002-June 2003), with possible extension in FY04 and FY05. The WTO Secretariat contributed CHF100,000 to the STDF to complement the World Bank contribution. The STDF will seek to raise funds from other donors to further its objectives.

Governance structure

9. A Policy Committee comprised of high level representatives of the FAO, OIE, World Bank, WHO, and WTO will (i) set policy guidelines and provide policy oversight; (ii) provide guidance on programmes and the Facility's work agenda; and (iii) evaluate reports on progress of the Facility. The Policy Committee may also seek to develop a broader financial basis for the Facility through outreach to other donors.

10. A technical-level Working Group of representatives of the partner institutions, including Codex and IPPC, will be responsible for the practical implementation of the Facility. The Working Group will report to the Policy Committee. The WTO Secretariat will provide administrative assistance to the Policy Committee and the Working Group. In particular, it will establish a consultative mechanism including, *inter alia*, developing country representatives, other relevant international organizations, regional organizations, bilateral donors, and private sector donors.

11. Partner institutions of the STDF may implement projects approved by the Working Group. These may also be managed directly by other international, regional, national or private donors, or as preferred, through joint projects.

Current status

12. For the first year of the STDF, partner institutions agreed (i) to exchange among themselves regular information on the type, objective, and funding available for current and planned capacity-building projects by each institution; (ii) to establish an information mechanism to enhance coordination and exchange of information; and (iii) to identify, select and plan pilot projects to be funded from first-year grants from the STDF for initiatives to be implemented by both public and private sectors.

13. Exploratory work in these three areas has been initiated and an adviser is currently being hired to assist the WTO Secretariat in fully establishing the STDF. Working closely with a project manager in the Agriculture and Commodities Division, the consultant will (i) collect information on partner institutions' capacity-building programmes; (ii) coordinate capacity-building activities and training materials; (iii) establish a web site for the STDF; and (iv) identify pilot projects for consideration by the partner institutions.

14. Members will be kept informed of STDF-related activities through the Facility web site, as well as Secretariat reports to the SPS Committee.
