

Information on SPS-related recent and forthcoming assistance and other activities from the International Trade Centre (ITC)

**STDF WG Meeting on 20-21 October 2016
(Period covered: March – October 2016)**

The International Trade Centre is continuing its efforts to assist enterprises to meet technical requirements. An update of the SPS-related projects of interest to the STDF WG is provided:

❖ **Projects:**

➤ **STDF/PG/354: “Improving Safety and Quality of Sri Lankan Fruits and Vegetables**

The project, implemented by ITC in close collaboration with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and the Department of Agriculture, reached its end on 30 June 2016. Over the last few months:

- additional 100 farmers were trained on GAP and pests controls and refreshment training on usage of pesticides safety kit conducted
- a study tour was organized to Thailand for the 12 best performing farmers and extension officers that enabled to understand good practices and market requirements
- an experience sharing workshop was organized 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 two expert missions were facilitated to review the pesticides control system and pesticide laboratory capacity and provide initial recommendations in preparation of the EU Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) audit planned in September
- 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 workshop 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 SL national GAP standard and linkages between trained farmers and exporters

Project information and links to project videos are available under www.spssrilanka.lk.

➤ **STDF 486 – Improving Food Safety and Compliance with SPS Measures to Increase Export Revenues in the Oilseeds Value Chain in Myanmar**

The three-year project implemented by ITC in close collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce, Department of Trade Promotion and Consumer Affairs, is ongoing. The baseline study along the value chain and the market surveys were completed. Findings were shared at the validation workshop on 6-7 June 2016 with 72 participants (17 women). The first meeting of Project Steering Committee was held on 7 June 2016 back to back with the validation workshop. Expression of interests has been 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. National Project Manager attended many meetings to synergise and complement with other development partners.

➤ **STDF PPG 447 – “Develop a project proposal to address food safety needs focusing on the National Food Safety Strategy in Tajikistan”**

ITC is implementing the PPG in close collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. An expert field visit was conducted from 4 – 14 April 2016 in order to undertake in-depth consultations with stakeholders and to identify the priority food safety capacity building needs, among those identified in the NFFS, to increase market access of specific products. The project proposal is under development.

➤ **Strengthening the national sanitary and phytosanitary institutional framework in Zimbabwe -**

The project is funded from the EU-COMESA Regional Integration Support Mechanism (RISM). The objectives of this project follow from the immediate needs and priority requirements in support of i-Economic Partnership Agreement (i-EPA) implementation identified by the government of Zimbabwe.

In particular this project seeks to improve the SPS infrastructure in order to facilitate exports to the EU and the neighbouring countries through:

- the strengthening of inspection bodies and testing laboratories involved in conformity assessment to SPS requirements in the targeted markets
- an improved knowledge of SMEs on EU import requirements and European Commission (EC) directives and on iEPA rules as well as the benefits of the relevant WTO Agreements (SPS and TBT);
- the development of a national standard on good agricultural practices and the support to farmers for compliance with this standard.

Under this project, three workshops have been conducted. A workshop on Rules of Origin was held for SMEs on 9 September 2016 in Harare to familiarise participants with both the methodological basis on which different RoO regimes are based, as well as associated concepts and provisions. The workshop was attended by more than 40 SMEs. A second workshop was held on Risk-Based Official Controls 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 on 11 and 12 October 2016 for 22 SMEs to clarify the main concepts related to standards and technical regulations (TBT/SPS), their importance, differences and relationship between these, and information resources.

➤ **Other ITC projects, publications or interventions of interest:**

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

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.

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/>.

❖ **Export Quality Management (EQM) publications and workshops**

ITC and the Germany's national metrology institute (PTB) continue to jointly roll out the implementation of the new concept of the Export Quality Management workshop with new training materials to target business support organizations (BSOs) and Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs).

Following the workshops conducted in Bangladesh, Jordan and Myanmar, another workshop was conducted in Palestine in March 2016 and in Kyrgyzstan in May 2016 that enhanced the knowledge and skills needed by organisations to support SMEs in an effective way to improve quality management and comply with the prevailing market access requirements.

❖ **Non-Tariff Measures (NTM) programme:**

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.

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

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: 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.

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**" (www.epingalert.org) will be officially launched on **8 November 2016** at the occasion of the TBT Committee meeting.

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.

Documenting SME experiences with NTMs: NTM Surveys

In 2015 and 2016, NTM Surveys were launched in more than 10 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.

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 www.ntmsurvey.org/ecowas2016.

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.

Upcoming events / dates to note:

- **8 November:** launch of ePing
- Upcoming stakeholder meetings on NTM survey results:
 - o **Uganda:** 26 October
 - o **Comoros:** 7 November – jointly with STDF event
 - o **Ecuador:** 9 November
 - o **Seychelles:** 3 November
 - o **Jordan:** 29 November
 - o **Kyrgyzstan:** 12 December (date tbc)
 - o **Ethiopia:** 12 December (date tbc)
- EU Survey results will for the first time be presented 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 EU and developing countries and a benchmark and point of comparison for survey results from other countries.

Further information:

NTM-related publications, including country-specific survey reports, can be accessed free of charge at www.intracen.org/publications/ntm. Survey results are available in a more interactive format via www.ntmsurvey.org. For more information about ITC’s NTM programme, please contact ntm@intracen.org.

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

The 2016 WEDF was co-organized by ITC and the Sri Lanka Export Development Board (EDB). The event, with contributions from 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, helped put Sri Lanka in the trade map. In plenary sessions and in B2B meetings, WEDF has provided an opportunity for Sri Lankan enterprises to demonstrate that they have the quality and skills needed take part in global trade. WEDF have been an intense exchange of ideas and views of how SMEs can connect and compete on the global stage. A new publication with Alibaba was launched, held over 1000 B2B meetings with close to 200 companies and welcomed almost 1000 participants. The 2017 WEDF will be held in Hungary.

For more information:

Ludovica Ghizzoni, ITC Adviser on Export Quality Management

Tel: +41 22 730 06 38 - Fax: +41 22 730 05 76 - E-mail: ghizzoni@intracen.org

Khemraj Ramful, ITC Senior Adviser on Export Quality Management

Tel: +41 22 730 04 87 - Fax: +41 22 730 05 76 - E-mail: ramful@intracen.org

Web address: <http://www.intracen.org/itc/exporters/quality-management/>

E-mail address: quality@intracen.org

Twitter: www.twitter.com/ITCstandards