

Harmonization in COMESA

OVERVIEW

1. Harmonization in COMESA
2. Harmonization of SPS/TBT regulatory frameworks
3. SPS/TBT issues in the Common Market
4. Examples of initiatives, interventions
5. Next steps to deepen collaboration on AH priorities

1. Harmonization in COMESA

The Treaty – agreement to establish the common market through common policies and programmes aimed at achieving sustainable growth and development, specifically in the field of:

- (i) Trade liberalization and customs cooperation
- (ii) Transport and communications
- (iii) Industry and energy
- (iv) Monetary affairs and finance
- (v) Agriculture

Organs of the Common Market

- The Authority/Heads of State – meets once a year
- The Council/ministers – monitors the devt/ functioning of the common market, makes regulations, issues directives , takes decisions
- The Intergovernmental Committee - PSs
- The Technical Committees, e.g. committee on agriculture
- The Secretariat

2. The framework for harmonization of SPS/TBT measures

WTO SPS/TBT Agreements

- Use of international standards and guidelines
- Use of equivalence – accept alternative measures that have same health outcome
- Apply measure that is least trade restrictive
- Risk assessment – assess the risk, factors you took into consideration, assessment methodology used, the level of protection
- Transparency - notifications

The Treaty/SPS Regns/SQAM Policy/Tripartite FTAA

- Use of ARSO standards and international standards
- Mutual recognition arrangements
- Specific provisions of the COMESA SPS Regulations

Recommended actions

- Harmonize with OIE guidelines
- Identify areas where regional guidelines/standards are necessary

3. SPS/TBT issues – analytical work

SPS/TBT issues

- Different standards and regulations
- Repeat testing -non recognition of certificates of analysis
- Unpredictable border controls/ procedures
- Zero risk ?
- Certification of products
- Capacity challenges

Trade impact

- trade barriers e.g. grains, milk and milk products
- High costs of trading
- Informal trade
- Trade is not facilitated
- Market access constraints

4. Examples of ongoing initiatives

- (i) Madagascar Litchi exports to RSA - **COMESA**
- (ii) Zimbabwe stone fruit and citrus exports to the EU and RSA – **COMESA**
- (iii) Pest listing, regional quarantine pest lists, mitigation options
- (iv) Kenya and Uganda review of milk, fish and fishery products border controls - **STDF**
- (v) Sudan and Egypt review of procedures for beef and citrus - **STDF**
- (vi) QI in Djibouti, Comoros fisheries exports - **COMESA**
- (vii) Risk based approaches for harmonized food safety regulations, e.g.regulatory limits for aflatoxins in maize, groundnuts and animal feed
- (viii) Mutual recognition framework for maize trade - **COMESA**
- (ix) SPS and Trade Facilitation – **AFDB, STDF**
- (x) Guidelines to the SPS Regulations - Legal review of the Green Pass Certification Scheme – **STDF Partners (OIE, WHO, FAO, WTO, Wbank)**
- (xi) Economic analysis to inform investments in SPS capacity

Planned Initiatives

1. Upgrading of Standards, Quality Assurance and Metrology (SQAM)
2. Strengthening the regional reference/national laboratory network, coordinated with border management
 - (i) Proficiency testing schemes in key parameters significant in regional and international trade
 - (ii) Monitoring systems for priority hazards
3. Strengthening SPS compliance across value chains and in cross border trade
4. Risk based approaches
5. Digital FTA – Regional Single Window System

5. Next steps to deepen collaboration on AH priorities

1. Harmonization of AH Legislation and Regulations

- (i) Diagnostics and monitoring/surveillance systems
- (ii) VMD Registration frameworks

2. MOU with OIE – should be specific on areas of collaboration, and partners roles; the secretariat, the OIE and MS

3. MS formal requests for OIE support

4. MOU with SADC on AH diagnostics, VMD registration and other areas