BORDER AGENCY COOPERATION PILOT WORKSHOP
CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA. 14-16 NOVEMBER 2018.

Description
On the basis of long-running feedback from Members that border-agency cooperation was proving a challenging element of TFA implementation and to counter older messages that TFA implementation runs counter to robust SPS protections, this workshop was organized by WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF), Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF), the World Bank Group and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

Participants representing the main border agencies (including trade, customs and SPS agencies) were invited from 13 Southern African countries; Angola, Botswana Ethiopia, Kingdom of Eswatini, Kingdom of Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In addition to the organizing agencies above, speakers also attended from the WTO SPS Committee, the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Land-locked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the International Food Standards (CODEX), both of which sit at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Standards Organization (ISO).

The programme of the workshops is available at the following link.

All presentations delivered by speakers can be found at the following link.

Summary of outcomes

Day one
Countries identified the key points from their participation in day one and produced some collective recommendations for next steps:
• Interactive training on WTO Agreements is valuable for practitioners and others alike.
• Joint inspections are a necessary tool to mitigate barriers to trade
• Implementation of a single window is the ultimate barrier to trade
• Processing of permits on e-Government save time and money and improve efficiency and effectiveness.
• SPS and TFA measures overlap and can complement each other.
• Identify champions in similar circumstances to share experiences with
• The LLDCS and transit countries to implement the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) and transit guidelines
• Better information sharing with regard to initiatives at the regional level – interesting things are happening that we don’t hear about – establish a mechanism to share
• Joint operational exercises – single window establishment is a slow process – periodical joint operational exercises, can help to make baby steps of progress to a target
• There is a need to further sensitize people on the impact of SPS regulations
• Want to resuscitate the SPS committee and do so with input from the NTFC
• Carry out a training session for officers at borders and members of NTFC which can then be cascaded down to respective institutes for implementation and to implement the roadmap
• Lack of risk management implementation among border agencies – this needs to be implemented, through service level agreements for example
• Collaboration among international orgs can produce consolidated guides, e.g. for border agents to facilitate trade
• Joint border committee, especially for regional cooperation backed with laws and responsibility.
• We should discuss the existence of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as a tool for SPS, customs,
• A trade portal for sharing information among various government agencies
• Creating a collaborative platform for NTFCs at a regional level

Day Two

Responding to the following questions, countries produced 3 slides to present their national situation:

1. Current situation on cooperation between National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) and SPS agencies
2. Best practices on border agency cooperation
3. Next steps

All country presentations can be found at the following link.

Participants worked in groups, to also consider the regional situation and identified:

1. Cross-border issues which could be addressed at the regional-level:
   a. Lack of streamlined procedures
   b. Limited infrastructure
   c. Lack of capacity
   d. Transit issues
   e. Cost of insurance
   f. A regional quota on cross-border requirements
   g. Porous borders
   h. Alignment of working hours
   i. ITC connectivity
   j. Secure data exchange
   k. Rejected in-transit consignments
   l. Congestion at borders
   m. Good agreements are negotiated, but there can be a lack of implementation at regional level

2. Two examples of data-sharing that could improve risk-management:
   a. Regional feedback loop to all agencies on the outcome of risk assessments
   b. Data-sharing meetings at regional level using harmonized templates
c. Take single-window data-sharing principles to regional level  
d. Sharing of compliance records between customs and SPS agencies across borders

3. Potential cross-border initiatives:  
a. Regional single window  
b. Harmonization of requirements  
c. Regional cooperation on customs interface  
d. One-stop border post  
e. Capacity building on benchmarking visits, post-clearance audit with an emphasis on cross-border cooperation for small traders  
f. In Central America, STDF has provided training to Food Safety inspectors at the regional level.

Day Three

Following presentations and an evaluation session, participants worked in groups to identify the following main ‘takeaway’ points from the whole workshop:

- Spearhead the implementation of the agreements and at the same time to coordinate between the implementing agencies through the NTFCs!  
- NTFC members should take a whole of government approach  
- Importance of donor agencies and international organizations to support the implementation  
- Create more opportunities for participants from different countries to share their experiences – mix up the tables!  
- Carry out introductory sessions to break down silos.  
- Customs: can sometimes act as a break to initiatives from other ministries and agencies, but with better understanding, this could better inform the decisions taken at the border – an introductory course for border agents on agreements and commitments that apply would be valuable.  
- National coordination is vital, but the International Organizations could also coordinate their work better – this doesn’t stop at joint meetings and workshops, but also coordinating and aligning work and standards.  
- Training or a manual for traders such as on transit and other relevant agreements and provisions would be very important  
- Risk management on “3 sisters” issues is similar, but on customs can be quite different. Sharing information and training on this can be very important, also for timing issues  
- VPoA is very relevant especially on transit issues.  
- Regional cooperation is important as well as harmonization at the national level.

Summary of feedback based on an evaluation form completed by the participants:

65 of 77 participants completed feedback from (84%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>To what extent were overall expectations met?</th>
<th>94% of participants felt their needs were either met (36%) or exceeded (57%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1 Opening</td>
<td>95% of participants felt their needs were either met (26%) or exceeded (68%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 2a TFA for SPS Authorities</td>
<td>97% of participants felt their needs were either met (33%) or exceeded (63%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 2b SPS Agreement for Customs Authorities</td>
<td>95% of participants felt their needs were either met (39%) or exceeded (56%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 3 SPS border controls…</td>
<td>92% of participants felt their needs were either met (35%) or exceeded (63%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 4 International standards for food…</td>
<td>92% of participants felt their needs were either met (34%) or exceeded (58%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 5 Border agency cooperation at the national level</td>
<td>90% of participants felt their needs were either met (26%) or exceeded (69%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 6 Border agency cooperation at the regional level</td>
<td>90% of participants felt their needs were either met (42%) or exceeded (49%)</td>
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<td>Session 7</td>
<td>Technical assistance: preparing TFA notifications</td>
<td>94% of participants felt their needs were either met (32%) or exceeded (62%)</td>
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<td>Session 8</td>
<td>Preparing action plans and funding requests</td>
<td>94% of participants felt their needs were either met (38%) or exceeded (58%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Would you recommend these workshops to WTO Members?</td>
<td>95% of participants would recommend this workshop to their colleagues</td>
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Photographs from the workshop can be found at the following [link](#).