

Public investment in strengthening Veterinary Services and other food safety authorities: issues affecting developed and developing countries

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Summary

During the negotiation of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the SPS Agreement), there was clear recognition of the problems that developing countries would face in complying with the SPS Agreement. The agreement included provisions related to technical assistance and special differential treatment for developing countries. Both topics are discussed in the SPS Committee as a regular agenda item and have been subject to substantive consideration during both reviews of the SPS Agreement, in 1999 and latterly in 2005. The SPS Committee is currently considering proposals to make these provisions more precise, effective and operational.

The Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) was formally established in mid-2002 by the Food and Agriculture Organization, World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), World Bank, World Health Organization and World Trade Organization as a financing and coordinating mechanism. The STDF maintains a database which provides information on SPS-related technical assistance and capacity-building projects. From the limited data gathered, it would appear that the focus of the technical assistance provided so far has been knowledge transfer. Only a small minority of the projects reported deal with the strengthening of hard infrastructure such as laboratory facilities. It is also clear that in terms of the overall number and value of projects, animal health lags well behind the food safety sector. The World Bank estimates that annual expenditure by donor agencies on trade-related SPS programmes has been running at some US\$ 65 million to US\$ 70 million annually. However, there is under-reporting of technical cooperation activities in the STDF database.

Keywords

Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures – Animal health – Consumer protection – Food inspection systems – Food safety – Standards and Trade Development Facility – Technical assistance.

Introduction

Demand in developing countries for assistance related to sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures is on the rise. Requirements for ever-higher levels of consumer protection, coupled with technological progress (for

example in new testing equipment that can detect ever-lower concentrations of contaminants and pathogens), is leading to stricter agricultural and food inspection systems in markets in developed countries. This reinforcement of inspection and testing systems is raising the costs of entry for countries seeking to diversify away from their

traditional raw-commodity export base into higher-value products such as processed fish, meat and horticultural products; stricter controls are raising the risk of rejection for all market players. Furthermore, much of the dynamic of this process is being generated by large commercial buyers in developed markets where food safety and plant and animal protection have become significant factors in supermarket or brand differentiation. The range and breadth of commercial SPS requirements, and the concomitant demand for public regulation, are having ever-greater impacts on market relations and on the competitiveness of suppliers in both developed and developing countries. Finally, South-South trade in SPS-sensitive products is growing rapidly, offering new commercial opportunities, but also posing greater challenges in managing SPS requirements.

The Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and technical assistance

The World Trade Organization (WTO) celebrated its tenth anniversary on 1 January 2005. Among the body of texts that form the legal basis for the multilateral trading system enshrined in the WTO is the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the SPS Agreement) (2). Although a decade has passed since the Marrakech Agreement was signed and brought the WTO into legal force, the SPS Agreement is a relative newcomer, and Members are still in the process of adjusting to the expanded disciplines it has established.

During the negotiation of the SPS Agreement there was clear recognition of the problems that developing countries would face in complying with it. This recognition figured in the preamble to the agreement in which the signatories, who now number 149, recognised that: 'developing country Members may encounter special difficulties in complying with the sanitary or phytosanitary measures of importing Members, and as a consequence in access to markets, and also in the formulation and application of sanitary or phytosanitary measures in their own territories.'

The SPS Agreement also stated the desire of the Members to assist developing countries in their endeavours in this regard.

One response to the implementation problems of developing countries was to delay the SPS Agreement's entry into force for these Members. Thus for developing country Members, most of the provisions of the agreement became applicable only as of January 1997; for the least-

developed countries (LDCs), the date of application was January 2000.

The agreement also included provisions related to technical assistance and special and differential treatment for developing countries. Articles 9 and 10 of the SPS Agreement are given below.

Article 9: technical assistance

1. Members agree to facilitate the provision of technical assistance to other Members, especially developing country Members, either bilaterally or through the appropriate international organisations. Such assistance may be, *inter alia*, in the areas of processing technologies, research and infrastructure, including in the establishment of national regulatory bodies, and may take the form of advice, credits, donations and grants, including for the purpose of seeking technical expertise, training and equipment to allow such countries to adjust to, and comply with, sanitary or phytosanitary measures necessary to achieve the appropriate level of sanitary or phytosanitary protection in their export markets.

2. Where substantial investments are required in order for an exporting developing country Member to fulfil the sanitary or phytosanitary requirements of an importing Member, the latter shall consider providing such technical assistance as will permit the developing country Member to maintain and expand its market access opportunities for the product involved.

Article 10: special and differential treatment

1. In the preparation and application of sanitary or phytosanitary measures, Members shall take account of the special needs of developing country Members, and in particular of the least-developed country Members.

2. Where the appropriate level of sanitary or phytosanitary protection allows scope for the phased introduction of new sanitary or phytosanitary measures, longer time-frames for compliance should be accorded on products of interest to developing country Members so as to maintain opportunities for their exports.

3. With a view to ensuring that developing country Members are able to comply with the provisions of this Agreement, the Committee is enabled to grant to such countries, upon request, specified, time-limited exceptions in whole or in part from obligations under this Agreement, taking into account their financial, trade and development needs.

4. Members should encourage and facilitate the active participation of developing country Members in the relevant international organisations.

Technical assistance and the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee

In the SPS Committee, technical assistance is discussed as a regular agenda item. Under this agenda item, Members are invited to identify any specific technical assistance needs which they may have, and/or to report on any SPS-related capacity building activities in which they are involved. The WTO Secretariat and observer organisations report on their assistance activities.

Two questionnaires have been circulated to Members, seeking information on technical assistance provided and on technical assistance needs. Most replies to the first questionnaire circulated in July 1999 reported on assistance provided. A summary of the replies to this questionnaire (3) are contained in WTO document G/SPS/GEN/143/Rev.1 (5) and its addenda. Replies to the same questionnaire have also been provided separately by Australia (16); the United States of America (USA) (6, 9, 13, 15, 17); and New Zealand (12, 19). Information has also been provided by the European Commission (8). The second questionnaire, focusing on technical assistance needs, was circulated to WTO Members in July 2001 and has been used as a basis for technical assistance discussions (7). By June 2005, 33 Members had submitted responses to the questionnaire about their technical assistance needs (these responses are circulated as addenda to document G/SPS/GEN/295 (14)).

The WTO's technical assistance activities in the SPS area help strengthen the capacities of developing countries to meet standards for market access of food and other agricultural commodities. The activities increase the awareness of participants about rights and obligations under the SPS Agreement, and about its implications at the national level. The programmes of national/regional activities include presentations on the work undertaken by the three standard-setting organisations referenced in the SPS Agreement (the Codex Alimentarius Commission [Codex], World Organisation for Animal Health [OIE] and International Plant Protection Convention [IPPC]).

Since 1999, SPS technical assistance activities organised by the Secretariat have included 36 regional (or sub-regional) and 34 national workshops. Table I provides information about the number of regional/sub-regional and national activities per year between 1999 and 2004. Table II shows the number of Secretariat activities per region in that period.

Since the First Review of the SPS Agreement, the international standard-setting bodies have consistently

provided updates about technical assistance activities in their respective areas of work. The OIE and IPPC have developed training programmes, including conferences, seminars and workshops, to enhance national capacities on WTO matters. The IPPC developed a diagnostic tool, the phytosanitary capacity evaluation, to help countries address their current capacity and identify needs for assistance. Similar diagnostic tools have been developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)/World Health Organization (WHO) to enhance food safety, and recently by the OIE.

Table I
Number of sanitary and phytosanitary technical assistance activities undertaken by the World Trade Organization Secretariat, 1999 to 2004

Year	Sanitary and phytosanitary technical assistance activity			Total
	National seminar	Regional/sub-regional workshop	Other*	
1999	3	2	1	6
2000	6	3	6	15
2001	4	3	1	8
2002	8	11	3	22
2003	7	10	4	21
2004	6	7	4	17
Total	34	36	19	89

* other activities include technical assistance activities not organised by the World Trade Organization Secretariat but in which the Secretariat participated

Table II
Sanitary and phytosanitary technical assistance activities per region undertaken by the World Trade Organization Secretariat, 1999 to 2004

Region	Sanitary and phytosanitary technical assistance activity			Total
	National seminar	Regional/sub-regional workshop	Other*	
Africa	7	12	4	23
Arab and Middle East Countries	8	3	1	12
Asia and the Pacific	8	5	8	21
Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia	4	4		8
Europe	1	1	3	5
Latin America and the Caribbean	6	11	2	19
North America			1	1
Total	34	36	19	89

Discussion of technical assistance in the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee

In the report of the First Review of the SPS Agreement, the Committee 'stressed the need for enhanced technical assistance and cooperation to developing countries, in particular with regard to human resource development, national capacity building and the transfer of technology and information, particularly by way of concrete, "hands-on" assistance' (4).

During the preparations for the WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha in November 2001, Members also discussed the issue of technical assistance to help developing countries comply with the SPS Agreement. The focus here was twofold: first, on helping developing countries to participate in the standard-setting processes of the Codex, IPPC and OIE, and second, on providing technical assistance to the LDCs. The decision on implementation thus, in Article 3.6:

'i) urges Members to provide, to the extent possible, the financial and technical assistance necessary to enable least-developed countries to respond adequately to the introduction of any new SPS measures which may have significant negative effects on their trade; and

ii) urges Members to ensure that technical assistance is provided to least-developed countries with a view to responding to the special problems faced by them in implementing the [SPS] Agreement.'

On the issue of participation in standard setting, the FAO/WHO (for Codex) and the IPPC have established trust funds to enhance the participation of developing countries in standard-setting meetings and activities, training programmes and regional technical consultations on standards and their implementation. The OIE is establishing a similar trust fund and continues to provide financial support for the participation of Chief Veterinary Officers of its Member Countries in standard-setting activities.

Recent discussions on technical assistance have been focused around five proposals which were referred to the SPS Committee in May 2003 by the Chairman of the General Council (11). These proposals, primarily relating to Articles 9, 10.1 and 10.4 of the SPS Agreement, had originally been put forward in the context of the Doha mandate to review all special and differential treatment provisions with a view to strengthening them and making them more precise, effective and operational.

Proposals to make technical assistance more effective and operational

To make technical assistance more effective and operational, a number of WTO Members proposed to change the clause in Article 9.2 of the SPS Agreement (quoted earlier) from 'shall consider providing' to 'shall provide' technical assistance (11). This group of Members also recommended that: 'if an exporting developing country Member identifies specific problems of inadequate technology and infrastructure in fulfilling the sanitary or phytosanitary requirements of an importing developed country Member, the latter shall provide the former with relevant technology and technical facilities on preferential and non-commercial terms, preferably free of cost, keeping in view the development, financial and trade needs of the exporting developing country' (10) (tabled by Cuba, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mauritius, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Zimbabwe).

In the proponents' view, technical assistance should be fully funded and should not entail financial obligations for the exporting developing or least-developed country Members. Furthermore, this group argued that where an importing Member did not actually provide such technical assistance, that Member should withdraw the proposed measures immediately and unconditionally. If not, the importing Member should compensate the exporting developing country Members for loss resulting directly or indirectly from the measures (the actual language of the proposals is 'shall' not 'should'; 'shall' implies a legal obligation in contrast to the best endeavour language of should).

Another proposal was that the WTO should recommend that impact assessments be conducted to determine the likely effect of any proposed standards on the trade of developing and least-developed country Members before such standards were adopted. If the interests of such countries were threatened, the standards would not be applicable until the developing and least-developed country Members that would be affected had acquired the capacity to beneficially comply with them (10). It was also proposed, among other measures, that Members should establish a facility within the WTO's Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund to ensure that:

- developing and least-developed country Members have the financial and technical capacity to meet the requirements under the agreement
- delegations from developing and least-developed country Members attend and effectively participate in

meetings of the Committee and relevant international standard-setting organisations

- developing and least-developed country Members effectively utilise the flexibility provided by the agreement
- measures adopted under the agreement do not contravene the rights of developing and least-developed country Members (10).

The SPS Committee has to date been unable to develop any clear recommendations for a decision on these proposals. In the discussion of these proposals, concerns have been raised by Members about changing the balance of rights and obligations in the agreement by making Article 9.2 a mandatory obligation, and about the requirement to provide technical assistance cost-free to beneficiaries. Another concern has been the justification for removing SPS measures simply because some Members might have difficulty complying with them. Further discussion of these proposals is expected, and also on further work to assist the Committee to address the concerns identified by Members that underlie the proposals (see WTO document G/SPS/36 for initial elements for this discussion [18]).

The Standards and Trade Development Facility

The Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) grew out of a joint communiqué issued by the Heads of the FAO, OIE, World Bank, WHO and WTO at the Doha Ministerial Conference in November 2001. In the communiqué, the five organisations agreed to jointly explore new technical and financial mechanisms for coordination and resource mobilisation, 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.

The STDF was formally established in mid-2002 as a partnership and a trust fund with three years of start-up financing from the World Bank and WTO. It brings together five partner organisations, each with specific expertise in the domain of SPS standards and trade: the FAO, OIE, World Bank, WHO and WTO.

The STDF is both a financing and a coordinating mechanism. Grant financing is available for private and public organisations in developing countries that are seeking to comply with international SPS standards and hence gain or maintain market access. Applications are particularly encouraged from stakeholders in LDCs.

The STDF maintains a database which provides information on SPS-related technical assistance and capacity-building projects (available online at: <http://stdfdb.wto.org>). The STDF database covers national as well as regional projects. It is an ongoing activity and at present the period of coverage is 2001 to 2003 – although data for 2003 is not at present full-year data. Data are reported from the five partner institutions, multilateral agencies, and regional and bilateral donors, and are taken from the existing WTO/Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building database.

In the animal health area, there are a total of 27 entries listed for the period 2001 to 2003. The data are reported to the OECD Development assistance Committee and entered into the joint WTO/OECD technical assistance database. Data are subsequently transposed to the STDF database and classified into categories, one of which covers animal health. Table III gives an overview of the entries for animal health.

Table III
Sanitary and phytosanitary technical assistance activities in the animal health sector by donor and recipient undertaken by the World Trade Organization Secretariat, 2001 to 2003

Donor	Number of projects	Beneficiaries
Canada	5	Morocco, the People's Republic of China, South Africa, Caribbean (2)
European Commission	11	Albania, Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia, Cyprus, Slovenia, Latvia, Czech Republic, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos and developing countries generally
Food and Agriculture Organization	1	Least developed countries
France	5	Morocco, Iran, Russia and Ukraine
Spain	2	Brazil and Uruguay
Switzerland	1	South Africa
United States of America	1	Sub-Saharan Africa

Looking in more detail at the individual entries, one discovers that:

- for Canada, it is the technical assistance activities of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency which have been reported. Assistance has been in the form of study tours for Chinese and South African officials and the supply of veterinary experts in Morocco and the Caribbean. The total value of assistance offered cannot be calculated as the monetary value of some projects was not reported;
- in the case of the European Commission, four of the eleven entries deal specifically with animal health (improvement of border veterinary controls in the Czech Republic, and strengthening of veterinary services in Bhutan, Cambodia and Laos). The other entries deal with improving laboratory facilities for all SPS inspections (including for veterinary health as in the cases of projects in Albania, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Latvia and Cyprus) or concern safe trade in animal by-products (Slovenia) or participation in standard setting by developing countries. The total value of assistance reported was US\$ 30.8 million;
- the FAO reported one project in the livestock area for the period 2001 to 2003. This concerned strategies for technology transfer in the delivery of veterinary and livestock services. The project benefited LDCs and was valued at US\$ 68,000;
- technical assistance offered by France was similar to that offered by Canada, taking the form of specific training for veterinary officials in Russia, funding of seminars on bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in Iran and Morocco, provision of expertise on foot and mouth disease (FMD) in Iran, and a study tour by Ukrainian officials. The total value of assistance reported was US\$ 21,000;
- technical assistance reported by Spain was valued at US\$ 120,000 and centred on the creation of a centre of excellence in meat technology in Brazil and testing of meat and food products in Uruguay;
- like France, Swiss technical cooperation activities covered the issue of BSE, with a pilot project on BSE surveillance techniques being funded to a value of US\$ 730,000;
- the entry reported by the USA concerns risk-analysis training offered by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to sub-Saharan African countries. The value of the project was US\$ 0.5 million.

The data set out above present only a partial picture. For example, projects reported by Canada cover only assistance provided by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency; there are no entries reported for projects funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The same is true of the USA, for which the sole

entry covers training offered by APHIS. No entries are reported for projects funded by USAid. Annual overviews of technical assistance circulated by the USA to the SPS Committee also show that there is under-reporting of US technical assistance activities in the database. These overviews reveal a further 39 entries (13, 15, 17) (similar documents have been tabled by New Zealand and Australia):

- in 2001 to 2002, there were nine animal health projects: beef cattle management in Tunisia; US meat and poultry inspection procedures for Colombian officials; tuberculosis eradication in Mexico; animal disease mitigation in former Yugoslavia; FMD training for Turkish officials; training for former Yugoslav officials on meat and poultry inspection and animal quarantine; assessment of brucellosis in Mexico; and assessment of BSE in Vietnam;
- in 2002 to 2003, there were 12 projects in the animal health area. Beneficiaries and training included: veterinary health training in former Yugoslavia; funding for a veterinary quarantine station and epidemiology in Bosnia Herzegovina; an animal epidemiology course in Serbia and Montenegro; training for meat inspectors in Romania; transgenic livestock training for Uzbek officials; two training courses on the SPS laws of the USA for Latin American officials: funding for developing country officials to attend a joint WHO/FAO consultation on campylobacter; and training for Chinese officials in meat inspection and hazard analysis critical control points (HACCP);
- in 2002 to 2003, 18 animal health projects were undertaken. Beneficiaries and training included: meat safety training for Central American countries; HACCP training in meat plants and risk management for the Ministry of Agriculture in Serbia; hands-on training for meat inspectors in Romania; laboratory testing training for meat and poultry inspectors in both Egypt and the USA; training in poultry management and diseases for Nigerian producers; poultry management training in Turkmenistan; meat and poultry inspection training for Central and Latin American officials; beef breeding techniques for Hungarian officials; disease prevention for Polish officials; training in animal inspection and quarantine for Chinese officials; surveillance techniques for veterinary officials in El Salvador; training for veterinarians in Kenya and Uganda; surveillance techniques in Guatemala; poultry processing in Jamaica; meat inspection for Nigerian, Ghanaian and Ugandan officials; US animal health requirements for Thai officials; meat inspection for Korean officials; and risk analysis and epidemiology for Central American officials.

The information in the database and the additional entries listed in the documentation from the USA show that the focus of the technical assistance reported is on the transfer

of knowledge. Of the projects reported, only a small minority deal with the strengthening of hard infrastructure such as laboratory facilities. Most of the reported assistance concerns the transfer of knowledge either about a specific disease or measure, or ways to comply with national requirements in importing markets.

Two issues become clear from the discussion thus far:

– first, there is under-reporting of technical cooperation activities in the STDF database in the animal health area. Not only are actions by technical agencies such as APHIS only partially reported, but there are no entries for major bilateral aid programmes such as those of USAid, the CIDA or any of the bilateral programmes of European Union Member States;

– second, the focus of technical cooperation is on the transfer of knowledge about either specific diseases such as BSE and FMD, or specific market entry requirements or general techniques such as risk assessment. Little in the way of the technical cooperation reported is going into the development of new hard infrastructure.

Finally, it is also clear that in terms of the overall number and value of projects, animal health projects lag well behind the food safety sector. Taking the STDF database figures, a total of 27 animal health projects were reported in the period 2001 to 2003 as compared with 93 in the food safety area. Table IV shows reported projects for food safety. It is also worth noting that, as in the animal health area, reporting is incomplete – particularly vis-à-vis technical cooperation activities of the USA (Table V).

Table IV
Technical assistance in the animal health area by category of assistance and donor

Type of assistance	Number of projects
Seminars/study tours	Canada (2), France (1)
Training on a specific disease or measure	France (3), Switzerland (1), USA (6)
Training on how to comply with national sanitary and phytosanitary procedures	USA (6)
Visit by veterinary health expert	Canada (1), France (1)
Risk assessment training	USA (2)
Strengthening laboratory facilities	European Commission (5), USA (1)
Strengthening veterinary services generally	European Commission (3), France (1)

USA: United States of America

Table V
Sanitary and phytosanitary technical assistance activities in the animal health sector by donor and recipient, 2001 to 2003

Donor	Number of projects	Beneficiaries
Australia	2	Indonesia (2)
Canada	19	Cameroon, Morocco (2), Slovakia, Honduras, Chile, Caribbean (2), Thailand, Mexico (2), People's Republic of China (2), Guyana (2), developing countries (2), Korea, Serbia
European Commission	13	Lithuania, Slovenia, Poland (2), Slovenia, least developed countries (2), sub-Saharan Africa (2), People's Republic of China, Latin America, Thailand, Iran
Food and Agriculture Organization	8	Developing countries (3), Maldives, Pakistan, Oceania, Thailand, Turkey
France	7	Morocco, Iran, Argentina (2), Turkey, South Africa, Thailand
International Atomic Energy Agency	9	Malaysia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sri Lanka, developing countries (5)
Italy	2	Lebanon, Tunisia
Netherlands	1	Developing countries
Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development	1	Developing countries
Spain	1	Guatemala
Sweden	2	Developing countries (unallocated)
UNIDO	5	Angola, Ethiopia, Guinea, Lebanon, Ukraine
United States of America	17	Mexico (6), developing countries (5), Uruguay, South America (4), People's Republic of China

USA: United States of America

UNIDO: United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Conclusions

The entry into force of the WTO SPS Agreement in 1995 brought to light the need for assistance to developing countries. The SPS Agreement itself has also created new challenges and opportunities for developing countries. One particular task is to harmonise SPS measures on as wide a basis as possible with the standards, guidelines and recommendations developed by the Codex, the OIE and the IPPC. Given the institutional and resource constraints on developing countries, this is a tough challenge. Demand in developing countries for SPS-related assistance is also on the rise due to ever-increasing expectations of higher levels of consumer protection coupled with technological progress.

US\$ 70 million annually. For the reasons set out above, this is likely to be an underestimate of the total amount offered annually. One easily reached conclusion is that improvements need to be made to the STDF database to ensure adequate reporting by donors. However, even with the partial data available, it would appear that technical assistance in the animal health sector is running at a level quite some way behind the food safety sectors in terms of the amount of technical assistance offered. Initiatives such as the STDF and the African Livestock Programme (ALive) thus clearly have a role to play.

Veterinary services are a public good, not just at national level but also, as the current concerns about avian influenza have underscored, at global level. Public

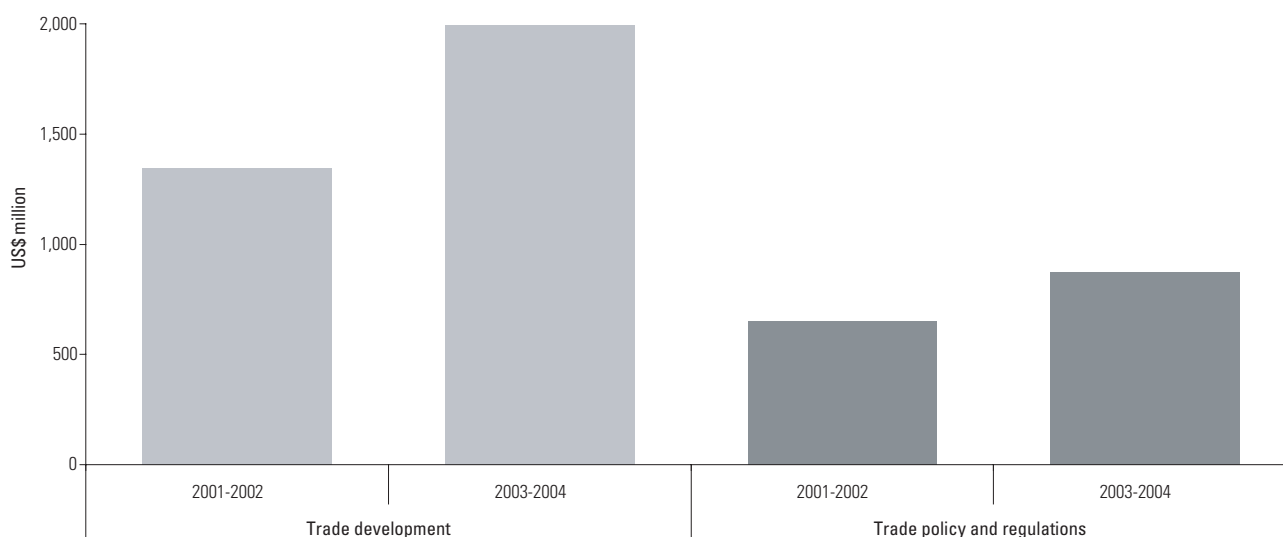


Fig. 1
Donor assistance to trade-capacity building in developing countries (commitments, two-year average, US\$ million) (1)

This growing demand for SPS-related technical assistance has been manifested in the SPS Committee in proposals from developing countries to toughen the agreement's requirements for the provision of technical assistance to developing countries. While there is no consensus on these proposals, it is clear that developed countries are more cognizant of the demand from developing countries for trade-related technical assistance. Looking at trade-related technical assistance as a whole, a recent joint study by the WTO and OECD concluded that donor assistance to trade-capacity building in developing countries has increased by 50% between 2001/2002 and 2003/2004 – as illustrated in Figure 1.

Technical assistance in the SPS area is a small slice of this larger cake. The World Bank estimates that annual expenditure by donor agencies on trade-related SPS programmes has been running at some US\$ 65 million to

investment in veterinary services thus serves not just the direct beneficiary or the donor but all trading partners: trade becomes safer for all. Furthermore, the technical assistance reported here pales in comparison with the economic losses and dislocation which can be caused by animal health emergencies. One pertinent ongoing example of this is the outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in several Southeast Asian countries that began in late 2003 and early 2004 and which have caused estimated losses in the Asian poultry sector of around US\$ 10 billion. Standard cost-benefit analysis may not necessarily consider the potential gain from avoiding such a situation when decisions are made about allocating government revenues for investment in services. Placing values on such events may be methodologically difficult. However, without consideration of such values, there is a danger that the true value of the public good which is veterinary services may be consistently undervalued. ■

Investissements publics visant à renforcer les Services vétérinaires et les autres instances chargées de la sécurité sanitaires des aliments : problèmes affectant respectivement les pays développés et ceux en développement

M. Roberts

Résumé

Lors des négociations de l'Accord sur l'application des mesures sanitaires et phytosanitaires (Accord SPS) de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce (OMC), les parties prenantes ont pris clairement conscience des difficultés auxquelles les pays en développement seraient inévitablement confrontés avant de pouvoir respecter toutes les exigences de cet Accord. Un certain nombre de clauses ont donc été introduites en bénéfice des pays en développement, relatives à l'assistance technique et au traitement spécial différentiel. Ces deux questions font partie des thèmes régulièrement examinés par le Comité SPS et ont été étudiées avec une grande attention en 1999 et en 2005, lors des deux révisions de l'Accord SPS. De nouvelles propositions visant à mieux définir ces mesures et à les rendre plus efficaces et fonctionnelles sont actuellement en cours d'examen par le Comité SPS.

À la fin du premier semestre 2002, l'Organisation des Nations unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (FAO), l'Organisation mondiale de la santé animale (OIE), la Banque mondiale, l'Organisation mondiale de la santé et l'OMC ont officiellement institué le Mécanisme pour l'élaboration des normes et le développement du commerce (STDF), un nouvel instrument de financement et de coordination. Le mécanisme STDF alimente une base de données, destinée à fournir des informations sur les projets d'assistance technique et de renforcement des capacités dans le cadre des mesures SPS. Il ressort des données, encore assez limitées, recueillies jusqu'à présent que l'assistance technique est restée axée sur le transfert de connaissances. Une très faible proportion de projets portait sur le renforcement d'infrastructures lourdes telles que les installations de laboratoire. En termes de quantité et de montant des projets, il est clair également que le secteur de la santé animale se trouve loin derrière celui de la sécurité sanitaire des aliments. La Banque mondiale estime que les organisations donatrices consacrent chaque année aux programmes SPS relatifs au commerce des sommes allant de 65 à 70 millions de dollars américains. Il convient de noter, cependant, qu'une partie seulement des activités de coopération technique sont notifiées pour figurer dans la base de données STDF.

Mots-clés

Accord sur l'application des mesures sanitaires et phytosanitaires – Assistance technique – Mécanisme pour l'élaboration des normes et le développement du commerce – Protection du consommateur – Santé animale – Sécurité sanitaire des aliments – Système d'inspection des aliments.



Dificultades de los países desarrollados y en desarrollo en materia de inversiones públicas para reforzar los Servicios Veterinarios y demás autoridades responsables de la seguridad sanitaria de los alimentos

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Resumen

Ya en el curso de las negociaciones relativas al Acuerdo sobre la Aplicación de las Medidas Sanitarias y Fitosanitarias (el Acuerdo MSF) se determinaron claramente las dificultades que habrían de enfrentar los países en desarrollo para cumplir sus cláusulas. Por ello, en el Acuerdo se incluyeron disposiciones sobre asistencia técnica y se establecieron tratos especiales y diferenciados para esos países. Ambos temas figuran permanentemente en el orden del día de las reuniones del Comité MSF. Además, en las dos revisiones del Acuerdo MSF que se efectuaron en 1999 y, más recientemente, en 2005, se los consideró detenidamente. Actualmente, el Comité MSF está estudiando propuestas para mejorar la precisión, la eficiencia y la puesta en práctica de esas disposiciones. El Fondo para la Aplicación de Normas y el Fomento del Comercio (FANFC) fue creado oficialmente a mediados de 2002 por la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación, la Organización Mundial de Sanidad Animal (OIE), el Banco Mundial, la Organización Mundial de la Salud y la Organización Mundial del Comercio en calidad de mecanismo de financiación y coordinación. El FANFC cuenta con una base de datos sobre los proyectos de asistencia técnica y creación de capacidades en relación con el Acuerdo MSF. De los limitados datos reunidos se desprende que, hasta la fecha, la asistencia técnica se ha concentrado fundamentalmente en la transferencia de conocimientos. Sólo una pequeña minoría de los proyectos tenía por objeto reforzar infraestructuras pesadas, tales como laboratorios. Visto el número y montos totales de los proyectos, también queda claro que la seguridad sanitaria de los alimentos ha sido objeto de mucha más atención que la sanidad animal. El Banco Mundial estima que los fondos anuales otorgados por cada uno de los organismos donantes para programas comerciales relacionados con el Acuerdo MSF han oscilado entre 65 y 70 millones de dólares estadounidenses. Sin embargo, la base de datos del FANFC no contiene suficiente información sobre las actividades de cooperación técnica.

Palabras clave

Acuerdo sobre la Aplicación de las Medidas Sanitarias y Fitosanitarias – Asistencia técnica – Fondo para la Aplicación de Normas y el Fomento del Comercio – Protección de los consumidores – Sanidad animal – Seguridad sanitaria de los alimentos – Sistema de inspección de alimentos.



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