



Participation of African Nations in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standard-setting Organisations

PAN-SPSO



AFRICAN UNION

INTERAFRICAN BUREAU FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANIMAL RESOURCES FOR AFRICA

About AU-IBAR

The African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) is a specialized technical office of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) of the African Union Commission (AUC). AU-IBAR's mandate is to support and coordinate the utilization of livestock, fisheries and wildlife as resources for both human wellbeing and economic development in the Member States of the African Union (AU). Facilitating trade and marketing of animals and animal products in compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards is one of the core missions of AU-IBAR.

Rationale

Globalisation incessantly expands the volume of international trade. It is the force behind the endless opening of new transport routes, including those for agricultural products. With it comes an increased risk of spreading diseases and pests. The pressing need for harmonisation of sanitary measures is demonstrated by the dramatic consequences of insufficient protection. For example in 2001, an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the UK brought economic losses of more than €10m. With this hindsight, the World Trade Organization (WTO) mandates the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) to establish SPS standards. However, the involvement of African institutions in the activities of these standard-setting organisations has been low. The majority cannot avail qualified



personnel and lack other capacities to contribute in a gainful way, exacerbated by an ineffectiveness to reach common positions on SPS issues. These circumstances have caused Africa to merely be on the receiving end with little influence over the formulation processes of emerging standards which impact immensely on her economy.

Main activity areas

Institutional support

Assisting Member States with the enhancement of the organisational set-up for more effective representation in international standard-setting organisations (ISSOs).

Regional and continental harmonisation

The programme facilitates communication among African institutions through workshops and electronic channels with the aim to identify common interests and policies.

Technical capacity building

National institutions receive training and technical assistance to

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strengthen their technical capacity and ability to effectively contribute to the process of standard setting.

Information collection and sharing

Latest SPS data and information on existing and emerging standards, research results and relevant scientific information are collected and disseminated.

Main achievements

- Sensitization of National authorities on SPS matters.
- 3 Regional Economic Communities (RECs) strengthened in coordinating SPS activities.
- Common positions on animal health, plant health and food safety reached.
- Signature of MoU and contract agreement with 7 RECs.
- Development of science-based arguments on standards in net progress.
- Increased number of RECs with observer status at ISSOs and WTO-SPS committee.
- 40 SPS experts and 53 national SPS trainers trained.

WTO SPS Agreement

The agreement on the application of SPS measures specifies the basic rules for food safety and animal and plant health standards.

It aims at:

- Protecting human and animal life from risks arising from additives, contaminants, toxins or disease-causing organisms in their food.

- Protecting human life from plant- or animal-borne diseases.
- Protecting animal or plant life from pests, diseases or disease-causing organisms.
- Preventing or limiting damage to a country from the entry, establishment or spread of pests.

Applying standards

Signatories to the agreement are encouraged to use international standards, guidelines and recommendations where they exist. They may apply higher standards justified by science or appropriate risk assessments provided that the approach is consistent and not arbitrary.

Changing standards

Consultations about the impact on trade or about implementation issues are conducted in the SPS Committee which is open to all WTO member states.

New standards and guidelines are developed by the three international organizations, recognized in the SPS agreement as standard-setting organizations. Standards are laid out in international codes such as the Code OIE, Codex Alimentarius and International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures. International standards are constantly redefined and improved by countries that are members of these organisations.



Goal To reduce poverty and enhance food security in Africa by promoting greater access for African agricultural products to international markets, including livestock and fisheries

Objective To facilitate effective participation of African countries in the activities of the OIE, IPPC and CAC during the formulation of international standards on animal (terrestrial and aquatic) and plant health, and food safety.

Main Expected Results

- African countries strengthened to empower SPS entities for effective participation in SPS standard-setting activities.
- Common positions on SPS standards at continental and regional levels reached by African nations.
- Technical capacity of African countries to draft standards and to develop science-based arguments strengthened.
- SPS-related data and information acquired and disseminated to African countries through established accessible information sharing platform.

47 African countries

Project geographical coverage, which includes all sub-Saharan nations with the exception of South Africa.

May 2008—December 2011

Project implementation period.

Beneficiaries

African agricultural, livestock and fisheries producers, market operators and agro-processors.

3.855 million euros

Amount in the Financing Agreement signed by AU-IBAR and the EU.

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