

**TA-8386 Reg: Promoting Cooperation in
SPS Measures for Central Asia Regional
Economic Cooperation (CAREC)**

Project funded by the Asian Development Bank

**CAREC Learning Opportunity: Modernizing Sanitary
and Phytosanitary Measures to Expand Trade and
Ensure Food Safety—Sharing the Baltic Experience**

Richard Moody

STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION

1. Objectives
2. Method of data collection
3. Outputs/deliverables
4. Current status and next steps
5. Preliminary findings and conclusions

Overall Objective of the Assignment

Looking beyond the WTO SPS Agreement into wider aspects of Trade Facilitation:

- For both intra-CAREC trade and trade between CAREC and other markets:
 - Identify non-tariff barriers (NTBs) to agri-food trade
 - Identify means of addressing SPS NTBs wherever feasible on a regional basis

- Specific recommendations for:
 - Legislative amendments and institutional adjustment
 - Improved laboratory testing infrastructure and capacity
 - Enhanced efficiency of border agri-food trade processing operations

APPROACH AND METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND OUTPUTS / DELIVERABLES

Approach and methods of data collection

- ▶ Detailed questionnaires on legislation
- ▶ Checklists on laboratory testing capacity
- ▶ Questionnaire on border operations and private sector

Outputs / deliverables

- Legislative assessment with recommendations
- Laboratory investment plan
- Input into coordinated border management policy document

CURRENT STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

- ▶ Primary data collection through questionnaires and checklists piloted in Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan – April to August
- ▶ First team field mission to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic – June
- ▶ Second team field mission to Tajikistan – September
- ▶ Third field mission to Turkmenistan & Mongolia – October
- ▶ Fourth team mission China – October / November
- ▶ Pakistan and Afghanistan data collection ongoing
- ▶ Final presentation of results/workshop January 2015

INITIAL FINDINGS 1

- ▶ Trade Facilitation efforts often focused on Customs and SPS measures often perceived as a barrier to trade per se rather than recognised as legitimate systems for the protection of human, animal and plant health and economic resources.
- ▶ Whilst some progress has been made in adapting agri-food requirements to international standards in the region, many unrevised GOST standards still remain in force.
- ▶ The “Single window” concept is often misinterpreted to mean single border service rather than efficient business-friendly interface with various border services.

INITIAL FINDINGS 2

- ▶ Lack of coordinated, strategic and systemic approach by the international community and by regional and national authorities has resulted in reactive ad hoc interventions reducing their effectiveness and efficiency. Sectoral interventions are only effective when based on approved national strategies.
- ▶ Many CAREC SPS services in the region are not yet or only partially reformed, are under-resourced (including laboratory testing and border infrastructure), and are consequently often not effective in providing an adequate level of protection (regionally and nationally) as evidenced by the current regional plant and animal health situation.

INITIAL FINDINGS 3

- ▶ Agri–food business and trade (CAREC regional and with global markets) are suffering from the above challenging animal and plant health situation particularly when it is necessary to introduce genuine protective SPS measures (e.g. meat and milk import bans). The deterioration of plant and/or animal health situations with the emergence and/or re–emergence of trans–boundary pests and diseases is preventing sustainable agri–food sector growth and exports.
- ▶ The system of conformity assessment in some CAREC countries whilst using some of the terminology of EU regulation (taken erroneously from non–food products) in effect still retains the character of mandatory certification of food and is a burden for business and a barrier to trade.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

- ▶ Appreciation of the importance of SPS measures as an essential legitimate system of protection is low and its perception as a barrier to trade per se needs to be addressed, it's status raised and appropriate funding allocated.
- ▶ Strategically modernised SPS systems (at border/behind border) (including testing and inspection infrastructure) to be more efficient and effective though improved inter-service coordination, resource sharing and transparency (including the “single window concept”) will address many of the current obstacles to effective regional agri-food trade development
- ▶ Measures (policy, legislation and procedure) which are risk-based and aligned with international standards together with systems which are transparent and well coordinated ensure the needed protection without obstructing trade. Regional trade would benefit from harmonisation of approaches and systems on a regional (CAREC) basis.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

TA team
Richard Moody – Trade Facilitation and SPS lead expert
Robert Black – SPS Plant Health Expert
Grigor Grigorian – SPS Animal Health Expert
Cornelis Sonneveld – SPS Food Safety Expert
Umida Khanknazar – National Expert
Suliddin Mammadov – National Expert