



West Africa Trade Hub/Accra

Co-ordination & resource allocation
for improved regional SPS capacity



OECD regional forum:
maximising the developmental benefits of trade facilitation
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SPS

Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) services define and enforce standards for:

- animal health (zoo-sanitary)
- crop protection & plant health (phyto-sanitary)
- food safety

A need for improved West African phyto-sanitary capacity

- Widespread agreement among:
 - West African private sector
 - governmental organisations:
 - national
 - regional
 - donors (especially USAID and EC)that national SPS services monitoring and standards enforcement should be improved.
- Key question: how?

Initial objectives

- Harmonisation of regional policies to:
 - protect national production from disease & pests in neighbouring countries
 - ensure that exports meet global standards.
- Planning for policy implementation:
 - more training
 - improved laboratory facilities
 - better information flows (IT) and logistics

Initial regionally co-ordinated approach

- Reinforce UEMOA to harmonise SPS policy across its eight member states.
- Support ECOWAS to broaden this process to include seven non-UEMOA countries:
 - SPS capacity studies in seven countries
 - national SPS workshops
 - non-UEMOA harmonisation
 - UEMOA/non-UEMOA harmonisation

Results of initial approach

- 7 SPS capacity studies in non-UEMOA countries
 - Moving towards non-UEMOA harmonisation
- ...but...

- Mutual realisation that ECOWAS lacked manpower to commit resources to harmonisation, given other responsibilities

Therefore...

- Agree with ECOWAS to work on a national basis now – and continue regional harmonisation later.

Reassessment of approach

Research to broaden co-ordination:

- Private-sector ownership – asking business owners what they need to compete more effectively in the world market.
- Consultations with industry experts – those who regularly assist the private sector as it seeks to export.
- Consultations with the scientific community – a further perspective on pests, risks, and mitigation.

Reconsideration of objectives in light of findings.

Key findings

- Opportunities for West African exports mostly limited to plant products/commodities, particularly horticulture.
- West Africa has few natural barriers to the movement of insect pests.
 - cross-border phyto-sanitary control problematic.
- Most plant diseases and pests found in one area are already present in others due to:
 - centuries without borders
 - decades of porous borders.
- West African agribusiness finds that the rest of the world does not trust documentation produced by SPS services
 - so many West African shipments are physically inspected or banned altogether.

Phyto-sanitary control: government roles at different levels

- National government
 - Responding to needs expressed by national private sector to increase exports
- Regional government
 - Harmonisation for:
 - investment in laboratories information systems
 - training
 - dealing with common pests
 - doing pest risk assessments
 - Development and protection of a regional “brand” that tells international buyers that West African products are of excellent quality and safe to import.

Conclusions and reformulated objectives

Conclusions:

- Regional SPS policy harmonisation, though desirable, is not the only objective.
- For global trade, phyto-sanitary services are most important.

Reformulated objectives:

- Strengthen the capacity of national SPS services,
 - e.g., to produce better documentation that can withstand scrutiny by international auditors to facilitate exports.
- Draw on the recommendations of four national SPS studies to identify:
 - national SPS priorities
 - needs to be taken into account later for regional harmonisation.