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INTERNATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

Food Safety Quality Infrastructure for Market Access for Developing Countries

ORGANIZED BY MEKONG INSTITUTE (MI)
IN COLLABORATION WITH
THAILAND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
AGENCY (TICA)

Many developing countries however are ill equipped to take advantage of the opportunities provided by trade. Weak infrastructure, lack of capacity to meet technical product / process specifications and increasingly strict requirements in terms of quality, safety, health and environment presents significant obstacles for their integration into global trade. Studies have summarized the challenges faced by developing countries in complying with SPS and TBT measures as follows:

- High cost of compliance - the costs of establishing the technical infrastructure for complying with standards and technical regulations constitute a major obstacle to building productive capacity in developing countries.
- Lack of institutions, infrastructure and human resources for providing conformity assessment - the certification and testing capacities are non-existent or weak. They face difficulties demonstrating that the national certification and testing schemes meet international best practice standards. Lack of harmonized local certifications/ conformity assessment procedures that are mutually/multilaterally recognized; Lack standardized set of practices and procedures aligned to international market requirements to ensure compliance with international standards.
- Transparency - Lack transparent inspection and certification systems which undermines international recognition (such as those referred or managed by, IAF, ILAC, BPIM, APLAC²).
- International trade environment - the multitude of often contradictory standards ranging from national, international, private, product and process-related standards, leading to the question of which standards developing countries have the capacity to comply with.

UNIDO's³ border rejection analysis report and capacity building needs study suggest a strong and robust national quality infrastructure (NQI) for food safety will ensure that developing countries adapt well to evolving international agri-food trade environment.

Mekong Institute's 2017 training needs analysis (TNA) in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam supports UNIDO's study. The TNA showed that government and regulators in these countries need to strengthen human resources in NQI especially in laboratory management system and border inspection.

2. ROLE OF NATIONAL QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Two WTO agreements - Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) - define the rules under which standards and technical regulations are formulated. They also provide rules on how trade disputes are resolved.

Developing countries have significant gaps in national quality infrastructure to support implementation on SPS measures and TBT agreement. Studies of WTO and trade standards

² IAF - International Accreditation Forum, ILAC - International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation, APLAC - Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation. BIPM - international organization established, through which Member States act on matters related to measurement science and measurement standards - Bureau Internationale des Poids et Mesures.

³ United Nations Industrial Development Organization

5. EXPECTED RESULTS:

Participants will gain understanding on implementing sound national quality system to support food safety and facilitate agri-food trade through:

1. Improved food safety standards development and regulations
2. Improved conformity assessment system: certification, testing and accreditation
3. Improved support for agri-food sector in understanding and complying with SPS and TBT measures related to trade in agri-food (for example border inspection and quarantine procedures and information on importing country requirements)

6. TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- International trade based on the WTO SPS (sanitary and phytosanitary) and TBT (Technical Barriers to Trade) Agreement; relationship between the WTO TBT and SPS Agreements
- International best practices in food legislation and inspection, principles for food safety, animal health, plant health, additives and residues in contact with food and feed, risk analyses etc.
- National quality infrastructure: system and structures for food safety and trade in food and agricultural products, as well as conformity assessment, accreditation, inspection systems and structures, laboratory testing and certification, reference laboratories.
- International standards bodies within the food sector (Codex Alimentarius, International Animal Health Organization, International Plant Protection Convention, ISO)

Prior to the course, participants will be given assignments among which will include:

1. Status of NQI for food safety in their country based on the key elements of NQI, issues and challenges, current support and technical assistance in this area, SPS / TBT issues they face
2. Project plan after the course

8. COURSE EVALUATION

1. Pre and post- test /understanding
2. Assignments and workshops during the course
3. Gender balance
4. Course feedback /survey