STDF Project 246 – Creating an SPS Action Plan for Cambodia
Taskforce Meeting III
FAO Cambodia, 27 July 2009

Summary of Discussion

- SPS Capacities for Export and Import are Synergetic

  Concern was raised that the STDF Project 246 emphasises export, and that import is not considered sufficiently, in the light of the risks associated with imported plant products (introduction of alien species, etc).

  It was clarified that the capacities needed for improved export certification and control are closely related to those necessary for enhanced import inspection. Hence, as capacity is built in the area of SPS for enhanced export trade – the primary goal of the SPS Action Plan – it will naturally also build capacity needed for ensuring the safety of imports.

  An example of shared disciplines for export and import control is that of pest risk analysis, and the capacity for managing such risks. Once this capacity is developed for a particular crop, for instance, the exercise can be extended to different crops. While recommendations come out of STDF 246 based on sector studies for the particular crops highlighted in 2007 Diagnostic Trade Integration Study, the capacities to be acquired will be transferable to other crops and other scenarios.

- Overlaps with other SPS Projects – STDF 246 a Planning, not Capacity Building Project

  Another concern was that of possible overlaps of the scope of FAO's work on SPS issues and that of other UN agencies and international organizations. An example cited was a planned WHO project on pesticide residues (which is understood to be carried out with the Ministry of Commerce).

  It was reiterated that STDF Project 246 was initiated in response to a request for a roadmap that would make recommendations as to how capacity can be raised in the area of SPS in Cambodia coherently and without unnecessary duplication of efforts. As such, the objective of the Project is not capacity building, but the formulation of an action plan ***identifying strategies for SPS capacity building***. The Project therefore does not overlap with ongoing capacity building efforts, such as the one mentioned above.

  In this context, all participating representatives from the various line ministries were requested to share with the STDF 246 national project coordinator any relevant information regarding other SPS related projects they may be involved in. At the same time the World Bank (Mr Julian Clarke) is putting together a mapping of all current ongoing activities from the donor perspective. This will facilitate overall coordination and ensure that efforts are mutually reinforcing and complementary.

- STDF 246 Includes Production and Handling, not only Laboratory Testing

  The point was raised that infrastructure has to be considered as well as the overall environment for export promotion, and not just SPS issues, which is the focus of STDF 246.

  The importance was pointed out of looking at the processes of production, post harvest treatment and handling, in addition to laboratory testing (which tends to be of prime concern in infrastructure assessments). Simply to produce good quality (accurate, repeatable, timely) test results does not really help export promotion if they show up persistent non compliance due to systemic weaknesses in the production and distribution chain.

- Phytosanitation in Cambodian Rice

  An example of SPS constraints in Cambodian agricultural commodities was mentioned, namely that of pest-related export restrictions of rice. There seemed to be a certain level of confusion as to the recognition of Cambodian phytosanitary certificates in the region.

  It was clarified that in this particular scenario it is important to differentiate between the particular commodities in question. Most rice is exported processed/polished, in which case phytosanitary restrictions with respect to field pests would not apply (though an export concern could be regarding post-harvest pests). A certain proportion of rice exports, however, is in the form of paddy rice or brown rice, in which case infestation with field pests could in theory pose a phytosanitary risk to importers and has been scrutinised by importing countries.