



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

EIGHTH TRIENNIAL REVIEW

Submission from the Philippines, Mauritius and Uganda

Revision

The following submission, dated 8 June 2018, is being circulated at the request of the delegations of the Philippines, Mauritius, and Uganda.

The Philippines, Mauritius, and Uganda welcome the opportunity to participate in the Eighth Triennial Review of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT).

1 BACKGROUND

1.1. The Sanitary and Phytosanitary area has greatly benefitted from the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) since it began operating in 2004. Launched with just over US\$500,000 in seed-funding from the World Bank and WTO, the STDF has come a long way. The STDF was established as a global partnership to help developing countries gain and maintain access to markets by tackling sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) gaps, and promoting food safety, and animal and plant health. The STDF has so far delivered over 180 projects that helped developing countries improve their SPS capacity and enhance trade in food and agricultural products. It also provides significant support to the most vulnerable, with around 60% of project resources being dedicated to LDCs. The STDF also promotes the exchange of information and good practice in SPS capacity building. The success of STDF is well-recognised for its technical and financial mechanisms for coordination and resource mobilisation that ensures the most effective use of technical and financial resources.

1.2. In a TBT thematic session on conformity assessment procedures and technical assistance and special and differential treatment held in 2014, the STDF was invited to provide an overview of its coordination and funding role in SPS-related technical assistance. At this thematic session, some Members inquired whether TBT issues could be incorporated into STDF's work. The STDF representative informed Members that while there was scope for benefitting from synergies like in the areas of laboratory infrastructure, the mandate of the STDF was limited to SPS issues.

2 PROPOSAL

2.1. Based on the Decisions and Recommendation adopted by the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade since 1 January 1995 ([G/TBT/1/Rev.13](#)), technical assistance (TA) has been considered as an area of priority work for the Committee. It was also decided that technical assistance would remain as an item of the agenda of the Committee on a permanent basis.

2.2. Considering the importance of technical assistance in the implementation of the TBT Agreement, the TBT Committee, during its Second Triennial Review, agreed on the development of a demand driven technical cooperation programme ([G/TBT/W/178](#)). Prior to the development of

this programme, a survey was conducted and responded to by 50 developing country Members ([G/TBT/W/193](#)) in February 2003.

2.3. Since 1995, the TBT Committee has made several decisions on Technical Assistance. In 2015, the TBT Committee agreed on furthering its work on technical assistance, among others:

- a. To reaffirm the need to review the effectiveness of technical assistance and capacity building activities among Members in the TBT area, and encourage Members to continue to exchange experiences on this area;
- b. To hold a thematic session in November 2016 on Technical Assistance, including the discussion of:
 - i. the feasibility and desirability of establishing a coordination facility for TBT-related technical assistance and capacity building.

2.4. It may be recalled that in 2015 Mauritius proposed that a TBT facility with adequate resources be established to provide technical assistance and address capacity building needs of the Members in a timely and effective manner ([JOB/TBT/143](#)).

2.5. Uganda supported Mauritius' views and strongly believes that there is a need to establish a TBT-related technical assistance and capacity building funding facility like the STDF. Furthermore, such a facility would go a long way in coordinating the mobilisation of resources to support the developing and least developed WTO Members in building their capacity to implement and comply with the provisions of the TBT Agreement as well as to gain and maintain access to international markets. ([JOB/TBT/150](#)).

2.6. Thus, during the thematic session on Technical Assistance in November 2016, the Philippines indicated its interest in exploring a discussion on the establishment of a similar mechanism like the STDF in TBT ([G/TBT/GEN/204](#)). The Philippines further reiterated its suggestion in its presentation in the TBT thematic session held in March 2017 ([G/TBT/GEN/214](#)). However, there was no concrete follow-up.

2.7. Finally, during the TBT Side Event on International Regulatory Co-operation, WTO Deputy Director General Alan Wm. Wolff posed some ideas for reflection of Members. In particular, he asked whether there is benefit in incorporating quality or other standards in STDF or creating a parallel TBT mechanism.¹

2.8. In view of the foregoing, the Philippines, Mauritius, and Uganda believe that there is merit for Members to revisit this important aspect of the Agreement.

2.9. To facilitate discussion of Members, the Philippines, Mauritius, and Uganda suggest inviting the Secretariat to provide a presentation on the feasibility, including challenges and options, of expanding the present STDF to encompass measures covered by the TBT Agreement, or setting up a separate and dedicated TBT development facility.

¹ https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news18_e/ddgra_19mar18_e.htm.