



## National Consultation on the SASEC Sanitary/Phytosanitary and Technical Barriers to Trade Diagnostic Study

28 September 2016

Dhaka, Bangladesh

### Summary of Proceedings

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1. A National Consultation Meeting on the SASEC SPS/TBT Diagnostic Study, jointly organized by the Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), was held in Dhaka on 28 September 2016. The initiative was funded through ADB's Technical Assistance Special Fund. The list of the participants is in **Annex 1**.
2. Mr. Monoj Kumar Roy, Additional Secretary (FTA), Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh as co-chair of the meeting, welcomed all the participants representing different government agencies, private sector organizations, and ADB officials and consultants. In his welcome remarks, he highlighted the obligation of the relevant agencies and the private sector to develop capacity in order to ensure compliance with SPS- and TBT-related standards for the well-being of people and business. Other countries are not always the origin of SPS/TBT requirements: national interests could also promote barriers. Mr. Roy noted the role of government agencies in ensuring effective measures to assist the private sector in carrying out trade smoothly. He emphasized the importance and necessity of consultations with the relevant agencies and representatives of the private sector in order to resolve SPS-TBT-related obstacles, which cause hindrance to the smooth flow of import-export operations. He also mentioned the need to raise awareness on this subject among private sector stakeholders. He stated that the SASEC SPS/TBT Diagnostic Study would build a clear robust understanding of the specific needs of the individual SASEC countries, in particular as it has brought together the relevant agencies in Bangladesh.
3. In her opening remarks, co-chair Ms. Rose McKenzie, Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, South Asia Regional Department, ADB, thanked the participants for attending. She congratulated Bangladesh on holding the SPS/TBT Consultation Meeting as a vital step before launching the national diagnostic study, led by Ministry of Commerce, and hoped that the Consultation Meeting would further clarify the rationale and modalities of carrying out the diagnostics study.
4. In Session One, Ms. McKenzie outlined the SASEC trade facilitation strategic framework and provided the context of where the SPS/TBT agenda fits under the SASEC overall trade facilitation program.
5. In Session Two, Mr. Nesar Ahmed, Director (Joint Secretary), WTO Cell, Ministry of Commerce, made a presentation on the status of Bangladesh's initiatives in SPS measures. He focused on SPS measures, various aspects of the SPS Agreement of the WTO, related existing Laws and the Rules being framed thereunder, and the private sector's involvement in this area. He also mentioned the attached departments of the government working as regulators, and highlighted the necessity of ensuring compliance with SPS requirements throughout the whole supply chain, indicating the necessary steps to be taken to overcome the challenges.

6. Mr. Shaquib Quoreshi, Secretary, Metropolitan Chambers of Commerce and Industry gave a presentation on the status of initiatives in TBT measures. He provided a detailed definition of TBT, with reference to the World Trade Organization TBT Agreement, and discussed various forms of non-tariff measures. Mr. Quoreshi also provided examples of TBTs in all six SASEC countries. Outlining the important aspects of the TBT including technical components such as requirements for marking, labelling, packaging, product dates, expiry, size et al. He also explained the classification of NTMs, and provided examples of products including household products, processed food items, and others that require standards compliance within the SASEC countries.

7. In Session Three, Dr. Selim Raihan, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh and Executive Director, South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) presented the terms of reference (TOR) for the Bangladesh national diagnostic study. Reiterating the need for consistency of methodological approach throughout all six SASEC national diagnostic studies, he provided information on the objectives of the study, and explained the detailed tasks to be carried out and the methodology.

8. The presentation was followed by open discussion where the participants provided constructive feedback on the TOR. The major points included (i) the need to create awareness among different stakeholders; (ii) capacity building of exporters and their associations; (iii) coordination between different government agencies, the private sector, and others; and (iv) introducing relevant curriculum in educational institutions on SPS/TBT issues. The TOR was improved and adjusted based on participants' suggestions.

9. The meeting agreed on the TOR for the national SASEC SPS/TBT diagnostic study and the tentative schedule of the study, as given in **Annex 2**.

### **Closing of the Meeting**

10. In closing the Meeting, Mr. Monoj Kumar Roy, as co-chair, thanked all participants and ADB for their support and active participation.