

REGION (EAC)
OUTSTANDING PRIORITY SPS ACTION AREAS

Title of action	Background	Specific details to be covered	Timeline
Further harmonize standards in selected product areas	Most "harmonized" standards relate to product specifications. Only limited number cover sampling and testing methods, labeling or other matters that might truly affect trade. Only few "harmonized" standards have been formally adopted as national standards. In selected product areas, further harmonization might be beneficial to trade (examples are standards being developed within COMESA for maize and dairy products). Private sector is best positioned to identify these areas and it is thus critical that a stronger demand-driven element be introduced in the ongoing process of harmonization.		
Streamline regulations and create a system of mutual recognition of conformity assessments in EAC member countries.	Complementary to the harmonization process is the need to establish systems of mutual recognition on the implementation side. Systems need not feature equivalent capacities, yet over a broad range of areas there is scope to introduce common - standard-operating - procedures, record-keeping, auditing, etc. In addition, unnecessary regulations should be eliminated as much as possible. The possibility of developing "model" legislation (e.g. a basic model food safety law) should also be further examined.		

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<p>Create economies of scale and cooperation through establishment of centers of excellence and a regional accreditation body</p>	<p>Different institutions and countries are currently duplicating analytical, testing and other capacities. There is evidently much to be gained from establishing single "centers of excellence" in specialized areas (training, testing of pesticides, regional PRAs, etc.), leading to more effective use of research capacity, equipment and staff. This also applies to the creation of a regional accreditation body (in accordance with the EAC SQMT Protocol). There is also scope for joint programs in a number of fields such as applied research, pilot programs (e.g. food safety and backward linkages in tourism sector), stakeholder training etc</p>		
<p>Increase collaboration in the management of transboundary risks, notably the movement of plant pests and animal diseases</p>	<p>National bureaus of standards seem to have put more efforts in the regionalization process than other government agencies, research institutes, etc. If collaboration occurs, it is often forced by an event or a crisis, notably outbreaks of diseases or infestation by pests. There is scope to develop a variety of regional surveillance and contingency planning initiatives to better manage selected priority risks. Regional information alert systems and joint planning and monitoring would help to prevent the spread of pests and diseases through largely uncontrolled borders.</p>		

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Finalize the development of the EAC SPS Protocol and establish joint SPS management mechanisms	The EAC (and COMESA and SADC) trade agreement calls upon its members to harmonize SPS measures with international standards and to seek synergies in building up regional capacities in SPS management. Within the EAC, progress on SPS has been modest to date - apart from interlinked developments in SQMT (Protocol adopted 2001). The planned SPS Protocol should be finalized and further thought should be given to establishing joint management mechanisms and developing regional positions (e.g. coordination of EAC delegations in Codex, OIE and IPPC sub-committee meetings, etc.).		