

STDF TAJIKISTAN PROJECT GRANT APPLICATION FORM

THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

ENABLING MARKET ACCESS FOR TAJIK AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTS THROUGH IMPROVED FOOD SAFETY SYSTEM

REQUESTED BY

*THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE OF TAJIKISTAN AND THE MINISTRY
OF AGRICULTURE OF TAJIKISTAN*

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STDF PROJECT GRANT APPLICATION FORM

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Title	Enabling Market Access for Tajik Agricultural Products Through Improved Food Safety System
Objective	Improved food safety and export competitiveness of Tajik SMEs through better use of agri-chemical and veterinary medicines
Beneficiary country	Republic of Tajikistan
Project budget	786,121 USD (STDF funding) 189,700 USD (in-kind contribution from Tajikistan) 77,375: ITC estimated in-kind contribution Total: 1,053,196 USD
Project duration	3 years
Project start date	1 June 2017
Project end date	30 May 2019
Full name and contact details of the requesting organization(s)	The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan 734002, Republic of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, Bokhtar str.37 Ministry of Agriculture 734025, Republic of Tajikistan, Dushanbe 44 Rudaki Ave.
Supporting organizations in Republic of Tajikistan	Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of Republic of Tajikistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tajikistan Agency on Standardization, Metrology, Certification and Trade Inspection of Government of Tajikistan - "Tajikistandard" Dehkan Farm Association of the Apricot Growers of Asht District of Tajikistan National Association of Small and Medium Business - Republic of Tajikistan

Proposed Implementing Agency	International Trade Centre (ITC)
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Project Outputs	<p><u>Output 1:</u> Regulatory and control system for use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines established and operational</p> <p><u>Output 2:</u> Strengthened capacity of the project beneficiaries on the safe usage of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines</p> <p><u>Output 3:</u> Access to finance enhanced for SMEs in compliance with SPS measures</p> <p><u>Output 4:</u> Increased linkages along the sector value chain and export markets</p>

ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFT	Aid for Trade
AVDCS	Agri-chemicals and veterinary medicine drugs control systems
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
ECTAP	Enhanced Competitiveness of Tajik Agribusiness
EIF	Enhanced Integrated Framework
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBD	Foodborne diseases
FSCI	Foundation to support civil initiatives
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GDP	Gross domestic product
GHP	Good Hygiene Practices
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
IAEA	Atomic Energy Agency
IEC	Information, education and communication
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
ISTC	International Science and Technology Centre
ITC	International Trade Centre
MEDT	Ministry of Economic Development & Trade
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoHSPP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population
MRL	Maximum Residue Levels
NASMBT	National Association of Small and Medium Business of Tajikistan
NFSS	National Food Safety Strategy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
RBM	Result-based Management
RT	Republic of Tajikistan
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SECO	Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SOPPAC	State Organization on Plant Protection and Agriculture Chemicalization
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary (Measures)

SSESS	State Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance Service
SSPIPQ	State Service of Phytosanitary Inspection and Plant Quarantine
STDF	Standards and Trade Development Facility
SVIS	State Veterinary Inspection Service
TA	Technical Assistance
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
TMTD	Tetramethylthiuram disulfide
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZD	Zoonotic diseases

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I. BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

1. Relevance for the STDF

Tajikistan is a Central Asian country that became independent in 1991 after division of the former Soviet Union. It is a landlocked country with a total land area of 143,100 sq km, surrounded by Uzbekistan to the west, Kyrgyzstan to the north, China to the east and Afghanistan to the south. The administrative structure of the country is divided into three regions (viloyats), namely: Sughd, Khatlon, Badakhshan and districts of direct subordination which include 13 districts that are under direct administration of the central government, with the capital of the country Dushanbe. The population is about 8 million, while about three-quarters of them are living in rural areas.

The data from the World Bank¹ indicates that the Agricultural sector employs around 64% of the country's population. According to the a study by Global Economy, the data² from 2013 reported from the World Bank on the value added in the agricultural sector as percent per GDP share amounts to around 28% placing the agricultural sector in a leading position for the country's economic growth and poverty reduction factor. The importance of the agricultural sector on employment and nutrition is also highlighted in the FAO's country report on Food Losses and Waste in Tajikistan³, Agriculture in Tajikistan is mainly represented by crop farming (68%) and animal husbandry (32%).

The tendency over the past 10 years is growth in the production of fruits and vegetables sector, as the government has also started stimulating the sector growth. This remains as the major promising sector with export potential. The main export markets⁴ for food and agricultural products are the Russian Federation (32%), Turkey (16%), Kazakhstan (15%), EU (10%), Belarus (10%).

The country's climatic diversity, fertile soil and favourable water conditions enable the production of a variety of fruits and vegetables known for their special flavour and vitamins. Long growing periods with long and numerous sunny days result in fruit with high sugar content, especially in some parts of the country (e.g. Sughd in the north and Khatlon in the south). Besides cotton and fruits (cherries, apricots, apples, peaches and lemons) the country also produces onions and nuts such as pistachios and almonds.

Despite the favourable climatic conditions for production and the number of projects implemented in the country, the agricultural sector still faces market access barriers related to food safety issues, as an example, OECD flags the lack of compliance with International SPS Standards.

The private sector-survey carried out in Tajikistan by OECD in 2014 highlights the difficulty of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) to gain international certification, especially in agribusiness as the third most challenging problem. It outlines that whilst the basic legal framework for technical and sanitary standards is in place, due to lack of funds, capacity and organisation, Tajikistan's agricultural products are often not in compliance with international standards. This is a major barrier to exporting through formal channels. Indeed, 43% of firms cite products not complying with international standards as an important or very important export barrier. The issue with certifications, masks underlying

¹ Tajikistan Strategy, World Bank, available at <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tajikistan/overview#2>

² Tajikistan: GDP share of agriculture: The Global Economy, available at http://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Tajikistan/Share_of_agriculture/

³ Food Losses and Waste in Tajikistan - Country Report, Umeda Nabieva, 2014, available at http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Europe/documents/Publications/FLW/FLW_assessment_Tajikistan.pdf

⁴ "National Food Safety Strategy", Government of the Republic of Tajikistan

quality and safety issues with at least part of Tajikistan's agribusiness production that needs to be addressed. This occurs due to the fragmentation of agricultural production and the shortage of large processors that could impose quality and safety standards on their suppliers. Issues with standards are likely to gain importance if they are not properly addressed. It will be difficult for Tajikistan to diversify its exports into EU markets, Turkey, Iran and other high value markets due to their quality and safety requirements. Similarly, as part of the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union, Russia is expected to update its standards and to make their implementation even more systematic. This could further reduce the market for products from Tajikistan.

This problem also leads to challenges of getting "trusted trader" status for Tajikistan which can contribute in simplification of SPS procedures, as well as recognition of the certificates issued and/or granted by Tajikistan's regulatory bodies. According to the survey outcomes, more than 75% of agribusiness companies consider the need for incentives to demonstrate compliance with SPS measures as an important or a very important policy to support exports. They acknowledge that the government should develop a structured strategy, including support or incentive mechanisms (e.g. tax incentives, credit or consulting) to help SMEs and exporters access services and certificates that demonstrate compliance of their production with international requirements.

Although Tajikistan accessed the WTO in March 2013 still many changes are required on the modernization of the national food safety system. Several assessments on the food safety system in Tajikistan were carried out by a number of international organizations, including FAO, ITC, OSCE, WB, WHO. Based on the research work by various partners, ITC supported the establishment of an inter-ministry working group that developed the National Food Safety Strategy (NFSS).

In this context, in March 2015 during the STDF Working Group meeting, the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) to assist the country in developing a project to implement the NFSS was approved. As a result, ITC through its advisers, national and international experts carried out an extensive research supported by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) and Ministry of Agriculture of Tajikistan (MoA) and relevant stakeholders to build this project proposal to enable market access for Tajik agricultural products through improved food safety systems.

This proposal is based on the needs and gaps identified as interventions prioritised in two key strategic documents. The first is the National Food Safety strategy (NFSS), developed by the Republic of Tajikistan in close cooperation with ITC and Swiss State Secretariat for Economic affairs (SECO), and the second document being the Road Map on improvement of veterinary, sanitary and phytosanitary safety in Tajikistan. The Road Map concluded that the country is facing a need to establish "Operational Food Contaminant and Residue Monitoring System" and the NFSS – to strengthen the good practices in SPS-related technical cooperation within the fruits and vegetables sector. The establishment of such a system will allow effective and efficient food control mechanism with adequate food safety and open further export opportunities.

The approach of the project proposal embodies the principle of replicating the positive experiences of multiple pilot projects undertaken in Tajikistan, in the area of value chain development and it incorporates the regional and international best practices on sustainable and effective use of agri-chemicals⁵ and veterinary medicines leading to improved quality and safety of the produce.

The project will have a holistic impact as the systems to control and monitor agri-chemicals and veterinary pharmaceuticals encompass all foods suspected to contain residues or

⁵ Agro-chemicals include pesticides, as per the law of Republic of Tajikistan on production and safe management of pesticides and agrochemicals

veterinary medicines regardless of origin. While more specifically it will focus in the sectors with potential export growth, such as fruits and vegetables and in particular apricots and products of animal origin such as honey production.

As core issues of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines use and control will be addressed, the project aims to remove technical and market infrastructure barriers for small scale producers and processors and assist them to reach higher value markets. This will result in supporting poverty reduction in the most remote areas of Tajikistan, due to the concentration of agricultural production in these areas. In addition to that, the project aims to introduce sustainable agri-chemical use that will have positive impact on the environment and contribute to the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁶.

The project will also contribute to the harmonisation and adoption of international standards, in particular the Maximum Residue Levels (MRL). Thus the process will facilitate interaction with neighbouring countries and regional trading partners towards regional harmonisation for the purpose of trade facilitation is aimed.

In addition to the above-mentioned issues, the project will address the problem with limited access to finance that hampers compliance with SPS measures. There have been various analyses undertaken to address the issue of access to finance in Tajikistan. Most recently, the OECD have undertaken several assessments and have produced amongst others Private Sector Development Policy Handbook Enhancing Access to Finance for SME Development in Tajikistan (2015). The same paper describes the barriers SMEs face in accessing affordable finance and the weaknesses of the banks, resulting in lack of microfinancing. Another useful report to define the challenges in the sector is the Policy Handbook on Increasing exports in Tajikistan (2015), where the non-existent long-term financing and few solutions specifically geared towards the agribusiness sector are underlined.

More specifically access to finance undermines investment by SMEs, especially in agribusiness. The limited access to finance places Tajik business in a weaker position, as some of the credit figures do not exceed 18%, which is insufficient for the sector, despite the high number of banks, microfinance institutions, leasing companies and insurance companies.

Whilst access to finance policy and structural issues are being addressed by IFC and World Bank, several donors and IFI's are making microfinancing available to the agri-food sector through individual schemes at project level including GIZ, UNDP and most recently EU through the Enhanced Competitiveness of Tajik Agribusiness Project (ECTAP project). The ECTAP project is working together with EBRD to provide smaller concessional loans and grants for agri-production and processing equipment and larger ones for infrastructure.

The project targets the proposed access to finance component towards a sub-sector specific policy conformity incentivising scheme i.e. eligibility criteria focussed on responsible agri-chemical and veterinary medicine use and producer/ consumer groupings in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of such policy instruments to the Government for replication in future national programmes.

⁶ See chapter "8. Sustainability" of the project document regarding the project contribution to the specific SDGs

2. SPS context and specific issue/problem to be addressed

General SPS context

The NFSS concludes that “the current roles and responsibilities of all the SPS agencies show significant duplication of the regulatory activity, fragmented surveillance and lack of coordination. There is a need to strengthen expertise and resources amongst different agencies. It is also observed that the responsibility for protecting public health conflicts with obligations to facilitate trade or develop the food industry and its sectors.”

The Road Map highlights that, the assessment conducted by ITC and OSCE over the period 2010- 2014 found out that the mechanism of official SPS controls in Tajikistan is not complete, but rather fragmented, not covering the entire food chain. A number of deficiencies on its operationalization have been noted down, including incorrect distribution of responsibilities for official controls that results in hindering the efficiency of SPS procedures by overlapping inspections and duplicating laboratory checks.

An example of duplication of control of safety of food products is the one reported in the NFSS between the authorized state body for Healthcare (SSSES) and the authorized state body for Standardization, Metrology, Certification and Trade Inspection (Tajikstandart). This is because Tajikstandart carries out state control of technical regulations, which include SPS measures. The table below summarizes the responsibilities of key SPS-related institutions in Tajikistan taken by the NFSS⁷.

Government Agency	Responsibilities
State Service of Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance (SSSES)	<p>SSSES is the authorized state body responsible for sanitary and epidemiological safety of population under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population which has three major departments namely, Sanitary Department, Epidemiology Department and Department of Highly Infectious Diseases. The Sanitary Department has two units, the Labor Hygiene and Food Hygiene units. The Division on Certification and Accreditation and the Food Hygiene unit of the Sanitary Department have specific mandate to control food safety in Tajikistan. The Epidemiology Department is responsible for data collection and surveillance of foodborne and waterborne diseases.</p> <p>SSSES has the mandate to conduct border control of food intended for import into Tajikistan to ensure compliance with the sanitary and epidemiological criteria for listed products subject to sanitary control.</p> <p>SSSES has the mandate for the official control and inspection of the safety of food being exported (for all products excluding raw products of animal origin).</p> <p>SSSES has a network of laboratories – Microbiological (Bacteriological, Mycological and Virology) and Chemical. Samples of imported food products are</p>

⁷ Source: NFSS, ITC, available at: <https://itctj.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/nfss-final-eng.pdf>

	<p>taken at the border checkpoints and sent to the nearest laboratory for analysis. SSSES has about 80 sanitary doctors (physicians) with a university degree and about 100 assistants engaged in food safety activity.</p> <p>It is the technical representative of Tajikistan's membership of CAC.</p>
State Veterinary Inspection Service (SVIS)	<p>SVIS is the authorized state body on animal health under the Ministry of Agriculture and is comprised of national, regional and district entities. At national level it is represented by Headquarters, the Republican Centre of Epizootics (RCE), National Centre of Veterinary Diagnoses (NCVD), Centre of State 11 Veterinary Drug Control (CSVDC), Department of the State Veterinary Surveillance at the Borders and Transport (DSVSBT).</p> <p>The laboratory network includes 22 Veterinary Diagnostic Centres under the National Centre of Veterinary Diagnoses (NCVD) and 74 laboratories of veterinary and sanitary expertise in fresh markets countrywide. SVIS has about 2200 veterinarians involved in animal disease control, with a bachelor's degree, some having a master's degree.</p> <p>It is the technical representative of Tajikistan's membership of OIE.</p>
State Service on Phytosanitary and Plant Inspection and Quarantine (SSPIPQ)	<p>Under the Ministry of Agriculture, SSPIPQ is an authorized state body for phytosanitary inspection and plant quarantine. Its organizational structure consists of Headquarters in Dushanbe, with a phytosanitary laboratory and a fumigation team at the national level.</p> <p>SSPIPQ is responsible for inspection of plants (including fruits, vegetables, cereals, berries, etc.) and also planting material like seeds and seedlings for infestation by notified pests, plant diseases and weeds. Inspection is done only for items listed in the goods subject to phytosanitary control, some of which may not be relevant for food safety. SSPIPQ has more than 280 specialists.</p> <p>It is the technical representative of Tajikistan's membership of IPPC.</p>
Agency on Standardization, Metrology, Certification and Trade Inspection (Tajikstandart)	<p>The Agency on Standardization, Metrology, Certification and Trade Inspection is an agency under the Government of Tajikistan and is the authorized state body responsible for technical regulating, conformity assessment, accreditation, standardization, metrology and trade inspection. Tajikstandart has its headquarters in Dushanbe. It has the following departments, which are involved in food safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department on Technical Regulation, which controls implementation of technical regulations; • Department of Metrological Assurance of Measurement and Accreditation; • Trade Inspection, which controls trade, catering trade rules, quality and safety of products and

	<p>ensuring consumer rights;</p> <p>Tajikstandart has the mandate for official control and inspection of the safety of food being exported (for all products including products of animal origin).</p> <p>Tajikstandart controls quality and safety of food products (unprocessed and processed foodstuffs which are pre-packed and beverages) intended for import for compliance with technical regulations and for products subject to mandatory certification. There are 150 employees involved in the control of food products and about 90 in the testing of food products.</p> <p>Tajikstandart conducts regular training on food safety for enterprises (i.e. on HACCP).</p>
State Organization for Plant Protection and Agriculture Chemicalization (SOPPAC)	<p>SOPPAC is the authorized/competent agency on the management of agrochemicals under the Ministry of Agriculture. The organizational structure at national level is represented by departments of plant protection, prognosis and notification and a toxicological laboratory. There are about 30 specialists involved in the management of chemicals used for agriculture at the national level and about 80 persons at the regional level. The toxicological laboratories are equipped with obsolete equipment from the Soviet time, which are unable to meet modern testing requirements, as a result no tests are conducted presently.</p>
Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT)	<p>MEDT is responsible for all the trade-related issues on national and international level, including the representation of the WTO focal points. In this regard, all the SPS and TBT related issues and amendments have been notified through the WTO notification system in place. In addition, MEDT is coordinating sector development technical assistance programmers with the international organizations and NGOs.</p>

The main law to provide safety of food products in Tajikistan is the Law on Food Safety 2012 adopted on 29 June 2012 and effective from January 2013. There are other supportive laws, which also have food safety implications such as on Providing Sanitary and Epidemiological Safety of Population 2003, on Veterinary 2010, on Plant Protection 2012, on Production and Safe Handling of Pesticides and Agrochemicals 2003, on Technical Regulating 2009, on Conformity Assessment 2011, on Inspection of Business Entities 2006, on Protection of Consumer Rights 2004. All these laws are supported by a set of regulations.

Objective-specific context

During the analyses, a number of studies outlined problems in the agricultural sector related to the application of pesticides, the quality of the pesticides in the Tajik market and the consequent food safety issues on various products within the sector.

A study carried out by the Tajik Research Institute of preventive medicine of the Ministry of Health of Tajikistan published⁸ information on pesticides confirming the following: "Tajikistan was one of the republics of former USSR with highest level of pesticide usage per hectare of the land, in average 15500 ton per year". The study highlights the significance of food, air and water contamination in areas of intensive pesticide application. According to the study results, the degree of exceeding the acceptable daily intake of pesticides ranged from 0 to 20% of samples. Above applicable action level reached 30.8% in the air, 43.4% in the water, 48% in soil samples, samples of products of plant origin - 45.7% and products of animal origin - up to 6% accordingly. The study has shown residues not only of pesticides, but also persistent organic pollutants such as DDT, Hexachlorocyclohexane, B-58, phosalone, thiodan, nitrofen, antio, butifos, chlorophos.

Analysis of the morbidity of adult population in Sughd and Khatlon regions of Tajikistan has shown the presence of correlation between the area specific pesticide load and rheumatism, respiratory diseases, gastric and duodenal ulcers, nephritis, malignant tumours of the gastrointestinal tract, schizophrenia, neurosis psychopathy and tuberculosis. A direct correlation was found between the level of pesticide use and child mortality in the two research regions of Tajikistan. The data below allows us to conclude that in the regions with intensive use of pesticides, there is a real danger on public health.

Crop	Size of land treated (hectare)	of Seed protectants	Insecticides and acaricides	Fungicides	Herbicides
Cotton	111993	78,0	94,2	-	28,0
Cereals	101931	189,4	37,3	95,6	48,6
Potato	14474	-	3.8	6,1	8.6
Vegetables	21660	-	3.3	15.4	11,3
Melons and gourds	14475	-	2.1	2.8	17,5
Orchards and vineyards	69700	-	152,1	186,4	28,2
Feed Fodder Crops	- 26689	16,7	24,6	15,1	23.9
Pasture	110000	-	25,0	-	-
Total	-	284,1	342,4	321,4	166,1

Figure 1: Level of pesticide usage for crop protection in Tajikistan in 2011 (in tons)⁹

The table above shows the excessive amount of pesticides usage for plant protection purposes. This inevitably leads to contamination of the agricultural products in the initial link of the food production chain which is one of the causes of exceeding Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) in the final products.

⁸ Available at <http://www.health.tj/ru/nekotorye-gigienicheskie-aspekty-obespecheniya-bezopasnosti-prodovolstvennogo-syrya-produktov-pitani>

⁹ According to a research and presentation by the Ecological organization «Foundation to support civil initiatives» (FSCI, Dastgirie-Center), the figure above represents the usage the figures corresponding numbers on current usage of pesticides for plant protection chemicals available at https://www.google.com/tj/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjap7K_qu_QAhXICoKHaYvDjkQFggrMAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ecoaccord.org%2Fpop%2Fwebinar%2F2014%2FTajikistan%2520presentation%2520pesticides.ppt&usg=AFQjCNHFgj9gQcw0vtlDJKYeRovafbqdag

Recent analysis of pesticide use presented by a Pesticide project implemented with the support of FSCI IPEN and Swiss Federal Office by the Republic of Tajikistan highlighted the following challenges:

- Lack of functioning system of registration of pesticides;
- Lack of developed system of indicators of the quality standards of pesticides used;
- Lack of appropriate normative and technical documentation on pesticides;
- Lack of toxicological laboratory to perform tests to determine the residual quantity of pesticides, particularly with the properties of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). in the environment and agricultural production, as well as to monitor the quality of imported pesticides ; and
- Lack of monitoring and control systems over the imports and usage of pesticides.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture of Tajikistan, in June 2014 export of 10 tons of dried apricots was rejected at the Japanese border due to excessive level of sulphur dioxide. During the border control, it was found 2,93g in 1 kilo which is equivalent to 2930mg/kg in the dried apricots dispatched from Tajikistan. The Codex standard on maximum sulphur dioxide levels for dried apricots is 2000 mg/kg. A similar case was registered in July 2014, where Italy rejected apricot kernels from Tajikistan shipped through Turkey, because of exceeding aflatoxins levels (B1 = 21.7; Tot. = 24.9 µg/kg ppb). In August 2009, a shipment of pistachios from Tajikistan was rejected at the EU border, due to inadequacy of the accompanied health certificate.

The problem highlighted also has a local public health implication, reflected in growing incidents of intoxication and fatal cases due to the consumption of pesticides contaminated food and water. According to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, in the recent years about 30 cases of intoxication by TMTD, Thiodan, Hexachlorocyclohexane (currently not authorised for usage) were registered in Tajikistan, some of them resulting in lethal cases.

The analysis on "Modernization of the food safety and control system in the republic of Tajikistan" prepared by Dr. Aivars Bērziņš, as part of the USAID Regional Economic Cooperation Project, concluded that the laboratories lack national control/surveillance programs in the area of food safety, for example on veterinary drug residues, pesticides, mycotoxins, other chemical and biological. Most of the laboratories visited under the project did not have modern equipment, such as GC, LC, MS or ICP-MS for testing common food contaminants and veterinary drug residues.

Currently, there is very little data on the residues of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines in the food and feed products, resulting in limited information on the quality and safety of the pesticides and veterinary medicines applied and lack of monitoring system. Even if there is a system in place, there is no testing capacity of the laboratories, that makes the monitoring process very difficult. All these problems disable the identification of the food safety issues in various commodities for exports. As mentioned above, many of the leading agricultural products are rejected by trading partners resulting in financial losses and unrealized export potential.

In order to meet the needs of the country, this project proposes to enhance the weak regulatory system on the usage of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines. In addition, the farmers lack essential knowledge on norms and dosage on agri-chemicals set by other countries, therefore this project aims also providing substantive training on this topic to allow their products reach high value international markets.

While there are many interventions needed in the food safety area, the national strategic documents backed up by independent analysis and extended consultation with stakeholders confirm that the area of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicine and the system to monitor

their safe use and address SPS non-compliance is both a priority for domestic consumer safety as well as for access to high value agri-food markets.

Focus products

Dried fruits seem to be playing a major role in the exports of Tajik products, as it can be also seen from the Figure 2, the sector of dried apricots is between the leading sectors in terms of exports. According to a research on agriculture value chains in Tajikistan carried out by ICCO¹⁰, during the Soviet era Tajikistan has developed a big plantation of apricots. As a result of this, the tendency in the gross production of apricots in Tajikistan since then has been growing tremendously reaching 120 000 tons per year in 2011. This numbers show that the apricots value chain has high potential for further development, as Tajikistan ranks within top 5 producers and exporters in the world, right after the leaders namely Turkey, Iran and Uzbekistan.

According to ITC Trade map tool on trade statistics for international business development¹¹, it can be seen that the fruits and vegetables are between top five sectors with high export value. This information underlines the potential for increased revenues in the coming years and Tajikistan`s strategic position in the field.

Code	Product label	Exported value (in USD thousand)					Annual growth of world imports between 2011-2015 (% p.a.)
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
'76	Aluminium and articles thereof	586511	663349	458595	239781	265631	0
'26	Ores, slag and ash	76326	119917	94921	177223	168517	-10
'71	Pearls, precious stones, metals, coins, etc	1539	59400	51875	123094	142594	-1
'52	Cotton	155697	150411	121018	69430	96774	-6
'08	Edible fruit, nuts, peel of citrus fruit, melons	48022	38606	40377	37509	25447	5

Figure 2: Top 5 sectors with high export value in Tajikistan

According to the OECD report on Tajikistan`s Agribusiness¹², Tajikistan could increase its exports and diversify its markets, as the population is expected to rise, as well as the income of key neighbouring markets, such as China, Turkey, India. That will be a new opportunity for Tajikistan to increase its trade flows.

¹⁰ Research on agricultural value chains in Tajikistan, ICCO, 2011, available at <http://mfc.org.pl/mfcwp/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Value-Chains-research-report-Tajikistan-final.pdf>

¹¹ <http://trademap.org/Index.aspx>

¹² Increasing exports in Tajikistan – Policy handbook, OECD, January 2015 Available at http://www.oecd.org/globalrelations/IncreasingExportsinTajikistan_Agribusiness.pdf

However, due to the previously mentioned SPS problems, the potential remains unrealized and not fully explored. The export barriers related to compliance issues are lack of certificates, lack of proper monitoring and traceability system, in addition to excessive MRLs on pesticides and veterinary medicines in the final products that hinder access to high value markets, such as the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council. The EU and GCC are very attractive markets for apricots and honey, - focus products of this project proposal- as the purchase price for them remains high in comparison to other markets.

In the same OECD report, it has been mentioned that the companies report lack of information on potential export possibilities and export requirements on quality standards that limit the value to access to abovementioned markets. On government level, the report flags the issue with implementation of the strategies due to capacity and coordination. Another aspect of the market access barriers for SMEs in the agribusiness sector is the lack of favourable business environment, such as financial investments in the sector. The research underlines the inefficient tax system in Tajikistan, requiring numerous payments increasing the cost for stakeholders along the value chain.

The overall target value chain for the project is agro-food; but based on the ITC literature review, and the analysis to assess the current status of compliance with SPS measures and the export potential of agro-food value chains in Tajikistan, the project recommends to focus on sub-sectors as pilot. These are the ones with highest impact on Tajikistan economy and consumer's health such as dry apricots, as the plant origin products, and honey, as a product of animal origin.

The UNICE study on Dried Apricots¹³, where the evaluation of the procedural and regulatory barriers by traders was done, concluded that according to the potential value chain and the relevance for the country, apricots are taking the leading position. In the ICCO report, it is also mentioned that a large scale of production is concentrated in Northern Tajikistan, more specifically in Sughd region. In that region, apricot is the main crop that supports household farming, particularly in Kanibadam and Isfara, Asht districts where this business is integrated in vertical chains, linking players from farmers to consumers in export markets. This extensive network requires regular supply of high quality products to be able to compete with other producers and processors.

In addition to that, the annual growth of world imports according to the data in the Figure 2 between 2011-2015 (% p.a.) for dried apricots, prunes, apples has grown with 4%. As a conclusion of this figure, it can be said that imports around the world of dried fruits have increased for the past 4 years; therefore the chance of Tajikistan on the world market of dried fruits is higher, if the desired market compliance is reached.

Code	Product label	Trade Indicators				
		Exported value 2015 (USD thousand)	Trade balance 2015 (USD thousand)	Annual growth of world imports between 2011-2015 (% p.a.)	Share in world exports (%)	Ranking in world exports
'TOTAL	All products	911747	-2689853	-2	0	155
'0813	Dried apricots, prunes, apples, peaches, pears, papaws "papayas", tamarinds and other	19018	18761	4	0.8	19

¹³ Business Process Analysis Export of dried apricot TAJIKISTAN, UNECE, 2015

	edible ...					
'0806	Grapes, fresh or dried	2785	2757	2	0	51
'0802	Other nuts, fresh or dried, whether or not shelled or peeled (excluding coconuts, Brazil nuts ...	2691	2419	12	0	75
'0809	Apricots, cherries, peaches incl. nectarines, plums and sloes, fresh	1777	1675	4	0	54
'0810	Fresh strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, back, white or red currants, gooseberries and ...	1525	1199	8	0	78
'0805	Citrus fruit, fresh or dried	230	-290	2	0	102

Figure 3 Break down of the data on products within the Edible fruits group indicated in Figure 2 by ITC Trade Map tool (mirror data)¹⁴

The biggest current importers/ trading partners of Tajikistan on dried fruits are Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Ukraine and US, as illustrated in the figure below. In the recent years, after the establishment of the Customs Union in 2010, products intended for the Russian Federation have been increasingly exported to Kazakhstan (as it is geographically the closest member of the Customs Union) and then, on condition of crossing the internal borders of the Customs Union, imported into the territory of Russia. This explains the apparent decline in exports to Russia.

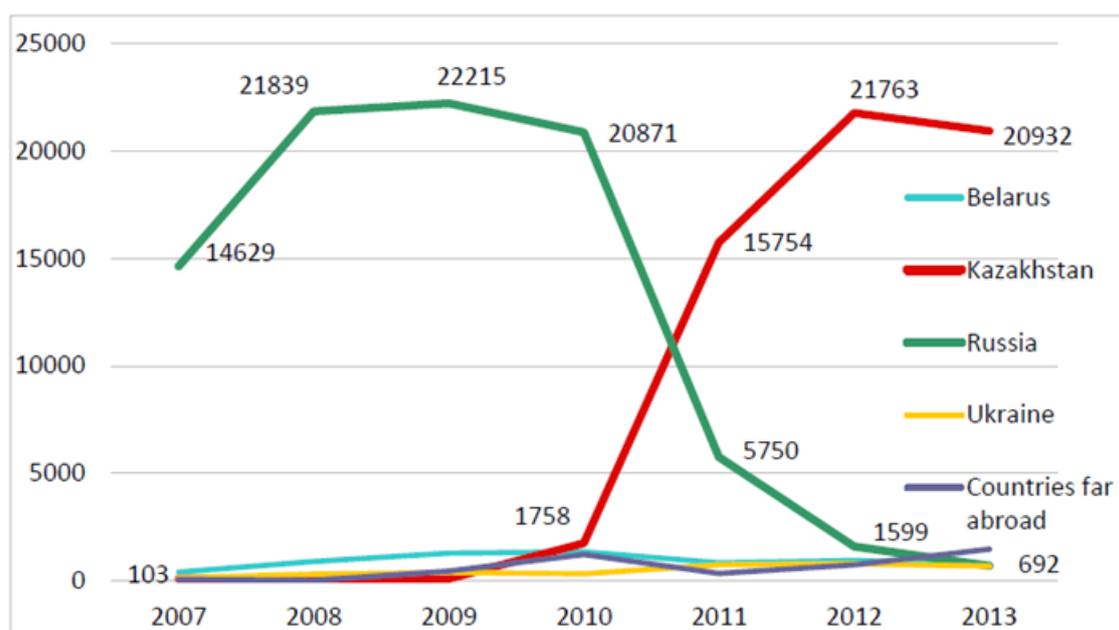


Figure 4 Dynamic of export of dried fruits from RT (in thousands dollars)

Tajikistan also exports to some EU countries (such as Czech Republic, Germany and Baltic countries), but the EU exports are carried out as small-scale trials with the aid of international support agencies.

Since 2010, Tajik entrepreneurs are also actively exploring to new markets such as the Middle East markets and sell Tajik dried fruits to e.g. Iran, Iraq, Israel and United Arab Emirates (Dubai), as these are quite profitable and attractive markets due the low tariffs.

¹⁴ Mirror data- the data is based on partner countries

Based on the information the Trade Map tool, further analysis on the selected target markets is done.

Target Market characteristics	World	Target Market 1	Target Market 2
		US	France (EU)
Market size and trade balance	414, 5 (mil)	51, 5 (mil)	34,1 (mil)
Market trend in value (5 years growth)	-1	-3	4
Unit value	3,711 USD/Ton	4,377USD/Ton	5,631USD/Ton
Unit value growth	Decreasing	Decreasing	Increasing
Market share trend	-	Stable 12.4	Increasing 8.2
Tajikistan's market share trend in target market	-	Increasing	Increasing
Concentration of the target market	0.62	Concentrated (0.88) Oligopoly ¹⁵	Concentrated (0.87) Oligopoly
Other considerations: please specify	-	Distance Above average, companies from various countries supply (9,725 km)	Distance average (companies close to EU supply)
Average Tariff	-	Low (0.2 %)	Low (1.6)

Figure 5 Market access analysis for apricots in the EU and USA

The data in Figure 5 show that the EU is one of the favourable ones. The information presented in the table below demonstrates that, while the world market of dried apricots between 2011 and 2015 have been slightly shrinking, the EU market is slowly growing. This leads to the conclusion that the need of imports of dried apricots is growing. In addition to that, the unit value is also increasing in comparison to the average world price, so Tajik apricots can be traded on a higher price than what is currently offered by Kazakhstan (their major importer). All this makes EU an attractive market, adding to it the low tariffs applied by the EU, as Tajikistan is a beneficiary of the EU's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP)¹⁶ offering reduced tariffs for certain goods when entering the EU market.

¹⁵ Oligopoly is a market form in which a market or industry is dominated by a small number of sellers (oligopolists). Oligopolies can result from various forms of collusion which reduce competition and lead to higher prices for consumers.

¹⁶ The duties for dried fruits vary from product to product and also according to the season in some cases and can be found on the EU export help desk at the below website: (http://www.exporthelp.europa.eu/thdapp/display.htm?page=form/form_MyExport.html&docType=main&languageId=EN).

The other product that came forth from the research as a beneficial Tajik product with export potential and high demand in the world is the honey. As per the report on "Research on Agriculture Value Chains in Tajikistan", the demand on honey in the international markets has been growing for the past few years, while only a small part of honey produced in Tajikistan is exported due to compliance issues.

ITC carried out a research on the current imports in the world reflecting the trade figures on honey. The annual growth in value and growth in quantity between 2011 and 2015 has grown with respectively 9% and 7%, which demonstrates the demand on honey around the globe and the growing potential of the sector. This indicates favourable export market opportunity for honey and potential growth for Tajik honey produce to expand and be exported internationally to other high value markets.

In Tajikistan`s history, honey and beekeeping stems from the Soviet times, during which one of the sectors supported by the state¹⁷ was this sector, but later the support had been interrupted. However, currently the sector is in the agenda of the government and special attention has been paid to it in terms of development.

Tajikistan is a country of high mountains, very favourable for beekeeping. Its original nature is full of striking contrasts. Complex and dissected landscape, vertical zones of climate and other geographical and climatic factors contribute to the rich and unique flora of more than four thousand species of flowering plants and more than 200 mellifluous species. Mountains cover about 93 % of the territory, and despite this, the area of farmland and forests is 4.4 million hectares, the honey supply is estimated at 132 thousand tons as a minimum, which allows increasing the number of bee colonies to 480-500 thousand. However, the current level of honey stock use is not more than 6-10%.

According to the State Statistic Agency of Tajikistan, the beekeeping and production has increased in the past years. Some of the regions, due to its favourable climate and terrain, honey production has been increasing.

	1991	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Tajikistan	595	1520	1686	1975	2060	2704,2	2968,6
Dushanbe	27	---					
GBAO	45	63	69	78	101	110,3	112,7
Sughd region	151	956	967	1055	1059	1063,2	1158,1
Khatlon Region	189	118	256	320	383	481,5	521,5
DNJ	183	383	394	522	517	1049,2	1176,3

Sources: State Statistic Agency Tajikistan.

Figure 6 Annual honey production in Tajikistan in tones

According to the ICCO report, currently more than 4000 honey producers from five different regions are operating in Tajikistan. Bee-farming has the great potential for development in Tajikistan. Until the recent past, the number of bee-families was 150-160 thousand. There are huge fodder supplies in Tajikistan for the development of this sector. Mellifluous agriculture lands make up around 5 million hectares, which enables to bring up the production of honey to 30-40 thousand tons.

According to MEDT, in 2015 the majority of Tajikistan`s honey was exported to South Africa. However, a better traceability system on the honey value chain and its target markets is needed.

¹⁷ Research on agricultural value chains in Tajikistan, MCF (project funded by ICCO), 2011 , page 104

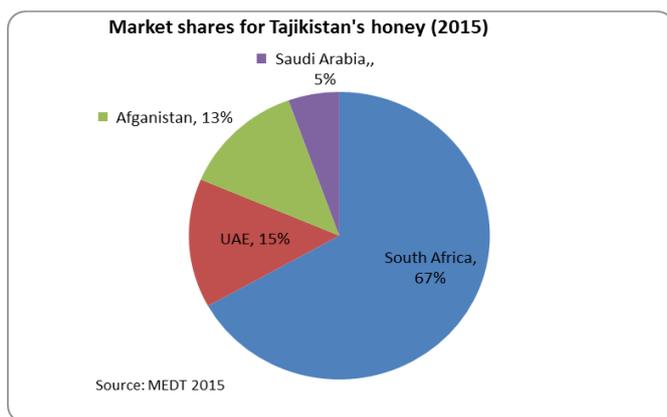


Figure 7 Export markets for Tajik honey

Honey production is a multiple-step process with a few critical points during the production process. Typically the production process presents hives with bee families that collect nectars by visiting various plant species. The beekeeper shall regularly examine the condition of the apiaries, check for food stores; look for signs of disease and pests, and to perform various hive maintenance tasks.¹⁸

Like other animals, bees also suffer from various diseases that may appear on apiaries. Due to these diseases, beekeepers shall use veterinary drugs and ensure stable health status of the bees, especially in the recent years when the decline in the bee population is increasing.

From risk perspective, honey is one of the potentially high-risk Tajik products for easy contaminant transmission. Contaminants that can be found are heavy metals, dioxins and residues from acaricides, organic acids, insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, and bactericides used, as well as pesticides. The contamination stems from sources of nectar for honey production, such as various flowers that are grown in already contaminated soil. Another reason for contamination occurrence might be the inadequate application of veterinary medicines (antibiotics) and fumigation.

An example for environmental pollution was given by the results of an inspection carried out by US authorized body in 2010, in Tajikistan. The overall findings flagged that contamination by dioxins and exceeding MRLs of fumigants in the honey produced was found. This was one of the major reasons for decreased exports volume of honey to the US as referred at the NFSS document. But this is not the only problem related to honey.

The European Medicines agency flagged that serious concern is the lack of adequate veterinary medicines that treat bee diseases¹⁹. In addition several other aspects give rise to concerns such as the use of unauthorised products or the potential incorrect use of products/chemical substances as raw materials, the absence of knowledge on their efficacy, the safety of the bee keeper in applying the product and the potential environmental impact. This consequently leads to exceeded maximum residue levels in honey, due to the inadequate usage of antibiotics, which is frequently found in the final product to be imported to the EU. The whole situation results in border rejections of honey and very little honey exported to neighbouring countries, as Kyrgyzstan and Russia. Therefore further work on strengthening the value chain starting from the producers and reaching to the exporters is necessary.

¹⁸ Beekeeping and Honey Production, Cheryl Kaiser and Matt Ernst

¹⁹ European Medicines Agency, Workshop on medicines for bees - What the Agency can do to increase availability, 2009, available at https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/la_bees_vet-issues_ema_conclusions.pdf

In addition to that, beekeeping is still operating in old traditional ways. Low productivity and poor quality of bee products are the major economic impediments for rural beekeepers, however, they face another primary economic concern; i.e. lack of skill to manage their bees and bee products. Most of the rural beekeepers cannot afford to invest in modern beekeeping inputs, processing, packaging, and transport their products to market to maximize profit. They produce a low quality product that they are forced to sell locally to wholesale buyers at prices much lower than in domestic commercial markets. The major constraints that hinder beekeeping development in Tajikistan can be stringent rules and conditions set by honey importing countries, very limited domestic market, only basic knowledge of honey production and limited access to market information and technologies, unreliable transport, poor storage of products, lack of quality monitoring and control plan in place and inadequate laboratory facilities and poor institutional set-up for assuring quality.

Market access requirements

The project will enable compliance with market access requirements and make massive sensitisation on the mandatory Vs the voluntary requirements. It will start with an inception phase to review the national legislations related to pesticides, veterinary medicines and the degree of its operationalization and enforcement by the related institutions. As a result of this, the capacity-building plan will be fine-tuned to assist the government, various stakeholders along the value chains and the apricot and honey producers and exporters to develop and apply a system that enables compliance with target markets' requirements.

One of the major reasons for the absence of updated and accurate data on agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines residues in feed and food is that currently there is a lack of monitoring system and testing capacity. Tajikistan will be assisted to have an approved residue monitoring system in place and be included in the list of the EU honey importers. As for the apricots, the project will aim full compliance with the Codex and EU MRLs.

In the monitoring and control system of Tajikistan to be developed under the project attention the EU and GCC requirements will be addressed.

Dry apricots:

With regard to EU, the key requirements to focus are i) Suppliers must demonstrate on demand that they comply with the EU hygiene criteria for foods of non-animal origin; ii) Pesticides banned in the EU must not be used or allowed to contaminate the food; iii) Contamination with pesticides, lead and cadmium must not exceed the maximum levels permitted under EU law; iv) Dried fruit do not need to be accompanied by a 'Phytosanitary Certificate' (PC).

In addition attention will be given to the UNECE standards for dry apricots with regard to classifications. Buyers requirements will also be collected as the project aims at enabling buyers linkages.

For the GCC market, the project will sensitise on the compliance with the individual product standard for dried apricots - GSO 789:1997 (dried apricot), that can be found here: <https://www.gso.org.sa/store/gso/standards/GSO:485693/GSO%20789:1997>.

Honey:

Based on the ITC research and analysis, and according to a study carried out by FAO²⁰, the most attractive and geographically closest to Tajikistan markets, besides Russia, Kyrgyzstan

²⁰ Under the Regional Initiative on Agri-Food Trade and Regional Integration in Europe and Central Asia: "An overview of the requirements for honey and dried fruit from Tajikistan to enter the markets of the EU and GCC and the necessary steps to be able to meet them", December 2015

and China, are the European Union and the GCC countries. The requirements for honey that the project will aim to address compliance for export consignments are: i) Come from a country approved to export this type of product to the European Union (submitted and approved residue monitoring plan for honey from the EU);ii) Come from an establishment registered by the competent authority of the exporting country; iii) Be accompanied by a health certificate (issued by an exporting Competent Authority).

For Tajikistan to be approved by the EU and included in the list of third countries for exports of honey to the EU, the country shall have well established residue monitoring plan, including coordination and implementation of inspections, as well as official laboratory testing. In addition, the veterinary medicinal products for use in honeybees shall be authorised in Tajikistan and must contain pharmacologically active substances in line with those permitted under the EU law. The basic requirements in respect to pesticides and substances approved to be used can be found on <http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/eu-pesticides-database/>.

The GCC specific requirements on honey:

The market access requirements to the GCC are slightly different than the EU. Requirements are defined by Technical Regulations and by Standards which are drafted adopted and published by the Standardization Organization for the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GSO) <http://www.gso.org.sa/gso-website/gso-website/about-gso>. However, honey must meet the requirements set out in GSO standard 147:2008 (Honey) and GSO 2290:2013 (Honey for Food Industrial Purposes). The production and preparation of honey should also meet the requirements of GSO 21:1984. It should be free from any foreign matter and the natural acidity of honey must not be artificially changed.

If these requirements are met by Tajik honey producers with the involvement and cooperation of the Tajik competent authorities, the safety and quality of the Tajik honey will increase and lead to easier export opportunities to more beneficial markets. For this purpose, it is essential to build and ensure the operationalization of the legal basis for veterinary medicines used in the sector, as well as the monitoring of the MRLs in the final product. To achieve this result, the current proposal suggests a number of activities on government and private sector level that are described further.

In order to meet the needs of the country, this project proposes to enhance the weak regulatory system on the usage of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines. In addition, the farmers lack essential knowledge on norms and dosage on agri-chemicals set by other countries, therefore this project aims also providing substantive training on this topic to allow their products reach high value international markets.

- **Interventions aimed at the monitoring of veterinary medicines system and pesticides residues for apricots and honey production**

Veterinary medicines and pesticides are routinely used during the production of products. The excessive amounts of pesticides (for apricots) and veterinary drugs (honey) applied, lead to high levels of residues in the final products that exceed the maximum levels set. In addition to that, very often products that are not approved may enter the chain. As explained before, if the residue levels in the final products are higher than the requirements in the importing country (for example in the EU), then the product will be rejected. In order to avoid that, the proposed project aims to introduce a monitoring and control system with a special focus on these products that will strengthen the whole value chain of apricots and honey.

As of the preliminary research done in Tajikistan by the International and National consultant during the project development period, it has been found that the monitoring system for those products is not functional due to various reasons. Therefore, the proposal

aims at introducing a stable SPS control systems that is integrated and comprehensive covering the entire chain to ensure successful operationalization.

For this purpose, the authorisation system on veterinary medicines in place shall be aligned with the main target markets; more specifically the interventions will aim:

- Improvement of import controls and monitoring of the veterinary medicines;
- Introduction of retail control within the country;
- Maximum residues limits aligned with the main target markets;
- Complex residue monitoring system in place (plan, checks);
- Training on awareness for all relevant stakeholders.

For the agri-chemicals, particularly pesticides, the project aims at improvement the following points:

- Import controls and monitoring of the pesticides;
- Introduction of retail control within the country;
- Maximum residues limits aligned with target markets;
- Complex residue monitoring system in place (plan, checks);
- Training on awareness for all relevant stakeholders.

A preliminary work on these systems has been already initiated by FAO and other international organizations, therefore this project proposal will build strong synergies with the partners in the field and Tajik public sector to enhance the achievements and collaborate whenever necessary.

The authorisation of active substances and registration of products in line with target markets is essential as part of the monitoring system. In order to ensure the full functionality of this system, the authorisation process shall be regulated and closely monitored. However, during the offline consultation with FAO for the design of this project FAO requested not to cover this aspect as already covered by FAO. In the inception phase of the project, it is recommended to reconfirm with the stakeholders and FAO that there is no need to address the registration of the pesticides.

3. Links with national/regional development plans, policies, strategies, etc.

The proposed project uses a functional approach to develop and improve inter-disciplinary coordination system and mechanisms. Focusing on a defined area of interventions (the usage of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines), the project will address these issues along the agri-food chain in close collaboration with all involved agencies and ministries as well as non-state stakeholders. In this manner, the proposal aims to improve the linkages between human, animal and plant health, and improve trade systems and collaboration of actors involved in the sector development. Throughout its implementation, it also aims to build strong linkages between various government organizations and its development plans, as mentioned previously.

While there are many needed interventions in the food safety area, the national strategic documents backed up by independent analysis and extended consultation with stakeholders confirm that the area of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicine and the system to monitor their safe use and address SPS non-compliance is both a priority for domestic consumer safety as well as for access to high value agri-food markets.

- National Food Safety Strategy

The National Food Safety Strategy (NFSS) provides a detailed problem analysis on key food chain challenges and the resulting obstacles while accessing the high value markets. In 2015, it has been finalized and submitted to the government for further adoption

procedure. Due to the restructuring of the National Development Strategy, the adoption of the NFSS is delayed.

One of the highlighted issues in the strategy is the over usage of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines and the lack of monitoring and control systems. This directly impacts the safety of domestically consumed food and the competitiveness of Tajik agri-food exports in the targeted export markets.

As mentioned earlier, the strategy flags the information on excessive application of pesticides and the low quality of the pesticides and fertilizers used per hectare in Central Asia, resulting in high concentrations of chemical substances in arable lands. After the independence from former USSR, the use of agrochemicals declined inter alia due to their high price, being replaced by organic fertilizers and biological methods of crop protection. However, the majority of farmers still use chemicals (fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides) and veterinary drugs (antibiotics and hormones) in crop cultivation and livestock husbandry, but the monitoring of residue levels in agricultural food is not properly done. Furthermore the NFSS flags that MRL for pesticides are not included in the SPS requirements as food safety aspects nor the country is testing MRL and is unable to carry out regular monitoring of chemicals like pesticides residues.

- The Road Map on improvement of veterinary, sanitary and phytosanitary safety in Tajikistan

Another key document related to the SPS issues in the country is the report on the Improvement of Veterinary, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Safety in Tajikistan (known as the Road Map). The guidance document was published in October 2015 within the UNDP's Aid for Trade Project. This document also identified as one of the priority targets for intervention the monitoring process of residues of veterinary drugs in raw materials of animal origin and contaminants and monitoring of residues in semi-finished food products.

4. Past, ongoing or planned programmes and projects

Within the past decade there were many attempts to improve food safety under the framework of the national programmes and donor funded projects which mainly covered the assessment of SPS systems including the food safety system in Tajikistan. Most interventions were directed to fulfil Tajikistan's obligations under the WTO Agreements and underlined targets for priority interventions specified by the "Program of Adjustment of the Economy of the Republic of Tajikistan Related to the Membership in the World Trade Organization" approved by the Government of Tajikistan in April 2012.

Amongst all development partners, substantial and effective interventions in the SPS area have been implemented by longstanding development partners of Tajikistan in trade facilitation activities, such as the International Trade Centre (ITC), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Union (EU), World Health Organization (WHO), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nation Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in cooperation with key national stakeholders such as MEDT, MoA, MoHSPP, Agency "Tajikstandart", Chamber of Commerce and Industry, National Association of Small and Medium Business of the Republic of Tajikistan (NASMB), Cooperative of Agronomists "Sarob", Different Consulting Companies (i.e. "Kamolot 1").

- SPS (food safety) specific activities

ITC - within the project framework implemented under the SECO's Trade Cooperation Programme in Tajikistan- provided technical assistance to contribute to the implementation of complex domestic reforms of Tajikistan to become a full member of the WTO. It was

based on an integrated approach, and responded to the recommendations made by various evaluations and assessments. The project was requested by MEDT, with regard to the WTO accession process. One of the main expected outcomes of the project was on regulatory infrastructure: Improved capacity of Standards, Quality, Accreditation, Metrology (SQAM), SPS and TBT bodies. As a result, the National Food Safety Strategy of Tajikistan (NFSS) and its Action Plan were developed and released in 2015. Furthermore this project is generated by the Project Preparation Grant for the development of the Project Proposal to address food safety needs focusing on the National Food Safety Strategy in Tajikistan funded by the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) and implemented by ITC in collaboration with MEDT.

OSCE – In 2013, MEDT requested OSCE to provide technical assistance for identifying the priority interventions in the SPS area. This resulted in a detailed report which along with other activities established the basis for development of the NFSS.

UNDP - Mid 2015, UNDP implemented the regional project “Wider Europe: Aid for Trade for Central Asia, South Caucasus and Western CIS”. This project is a part of global Aid for Trade (AFT) initiative, which is aimed at strengthening the capacity of countries to participate in and benefit from international trade. One of the activities of the project was focussed on providing TA to the inter-ministry working group in development of the Road Map on improvement of veterinary, sanitary and phytosanitary safety in Tajikistan. The assessment was completed in the late 2015 with Road Map on improving veterinary, sanitary and phytosanitary safety in Tajikistan.

ADB - Activities on the modernization of SPS infrastructures in Tajikistan is part of the ADB ongoing regional project on “Promoting Cooperation in SPS Measures for CAREC”. The project is implemented under the CAREC Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy 2020 and aimed at improving SPS control in countries of the CAREC for facilitation of regional trade. In 2014, ADB conducted assessment of regulatory framework, laboratory capacities and border management capabilities for the official SPS controls in Tajikistan and identified a number of areas for support. These findings are reflected in the “CAREC Common Agenda for Modernization of SPS Measures for Trade Facilitation”, which was submitted by ADB for consideration to the Government of Tajikistan in August 2015. During a meeting with ADB representatives, it was concluded that ADB is keen in cooperating with this project, in particular in supporting the laboratory rationalization strategy with funding for equipment and infrastructure.

- Complementary activities

In addition to the above mentioned development partners, technical assistance and financial support in the development of various elements of the national food safety system were provided also by World Food Program (WFP), Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and other international organizations and agencies. Catalogue of Development Partners Profile for 2015 suggests that this list could be expanded.

Development partners and implementing agencies were contacted during the design phase of this project to seek confirmation of the needs and complementarities to address under this project proposal. Partners attended bilateral field meetings with ITC experts and the roundtable of stakeholders in April 2016. Those that expressed their interest in the participation in some of the activities foreseen by this project are listed below. The areas of cooperation were identified at high level and are subject to fine-tuning pending the approval and timeframe of the STDF project.

EU: the EU-funded project “Enhanced Competitiveness of Tajik Agribusiness” (ECTAP) (November 2014-May 2019) supports development of agricultural sectors in Tajikistan. The

project focuses on the development of agricultural food production, processing and marketing. It targets value chains of meat, milk, honey, fruit, vegetable and various crop (e.g. fodder, oil seed, potatoes, etc.) productions. To implement this, the ECTAP will cooperate with stakeholders of selected value chains through six result-oriented activities: 1) development of higher quality levels of targeted agricultural food/fodder production; 2) delivery of technologies and technical services (i.e. processing, storage, packaging, quality control, trading, etc.); 3) development of marketing of high quality products; 4) establishment of a grant system to enhance access of farmers to credits; 5) development of food quality control system 6) development of certification systems according to international standards. In particular it is expected to build synergies between the EU and this project under activities 5 and 6.

GIZ: GIZ is working in the direction of Trade Facilitation in Central Asia and its project has three components: Risk management in the customs system, Transport and Transit, Trade with the needs of the private sector. Under its "Framework and Finance for Private Sector Development" project (2011-2020), the GIZ supports private sector in raising economic growth in rural areas and developing sustainable and profitable businesses. The aim of this project is to strengthen value chains for production of agricultural and non-agricultural products. The current focus of the project is on facilitating the introduction of private, low-cost, agricultural advisory services to provide farmers with information on locally appropriate crop cultivation methods, as well as to supporting capacity development for associations of farmers and enterprises. The Technical Advisory Groups had established a cooperative, as non-state organizations that provide professional development services and facilitate access to modern agricultural machinery.

The GIZ project also promotes cross-border dialogue between authorities, entrepreneurs and traders of Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan. In this regards, the project established centres for small-scale cross-border trade that provide advice on legal and commercial issues related to foreign trade, and organize meetings for traders and entrepreneurs on both sides of the border. It is expected that the GIZ will support the implementation of preparatory activities of this project related to legislative changes and provide legal advice on the benefit of the provisions of the Trade Facilitation Agreement and support preparation of technical documents on food safety.

IFC: the support provided by the IFC in SPS area covers access to finance, but does not cover micro funding for small producers, which is a crucial element for agro-producers. The past IFC activities encompassed technical assistance in policy development area, particularly in revision of the law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On inspection of business entities" which raised different concerns on establishing risk based inspection services. The support from IFC could be expected in area of food safety, most notably in revision of the above mentioned law.

WHO: the support from the WHO on the implementation of this project is highly desirable and very important. The goals to strengthen the capacity of the laboratories is in line with their project under initiative Better lab for Better Health (BLBH) on strengthening the laboratory system. Within the framework of this initiative WHO in Tajikistan established an inter- sectoral working group (WG) for coordination and management of laboratories, which includes number of national and international partners, stakeholders and donors. The scope of the WG objectives includes following:

- perform a gap-analysis of the country's laboratory services;
- develop a national policy for laboratory strengthening, as well as sectoral plans;
- support the implementations of these plans with focus on resource allocation.

The working group has developed a concept paper for national policy document on development of the laboratory system. The WHO and WG intend to finalize the policy document by the October-November 2016.

Also through its food safety programme in Tajikistan, WHO implements activities on improving capabilities of national veterinary and sanitary specialists in detection and identification of causative agents of foodborne diseases (FBDs) and zoonotic diseases (ZDs) in ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat food products. Apart from these activities, the WHO in Tajikistan is working on areas of integrative health risk management, including hygiene of nutrition, water sanitation, food security, environmental health and disaster preparedness.. Strong partnership will be aimed during the implementation stage of the project, to build upon a complementary mechanism. WHO confirmed interest in cooperating with the project in the area of food safety and particularly on microbiological criteria and other non-agricultural and veterinary medicines contaminants in food.

FAO: the support provided by FAO in Tajikistan covers a various areas ranging from agricultural reform for enhancing productivity, improving the access to high-quality seeds to reinforcing market linkages for livestock traders to strengthening veterinary services. With the support of IFAD, FAO implemented a project on technology validation on farms. The latest project "Capacity development in food safety risk management of food processing enterprises and national authorities in Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Tajikistan" aimed at improving food safety management systems through introduction of HACCP in food production establishments of Tajikistan. This FAO project also provides a good basis for dissemination of information about GHP throughout the country. Working groups had been established on the development of National Guides on introduction of GHP in production of raw milk and dairy products, home canning, production of pastry products and food services (catering). FAO has trained farmers and developed curricula for farmers on Integrated Pest Management (IPM). FAO informed that is currently implementing a project on pesticide registration, with focus on updating the national pesticide register.

FAO is also implementing a new project preparation grant with the Ministry of Agriculture "Strengthening phytosanitary inspection and diagnostic capacity in Tajikistan" (STDF/PPG/561) approved in March 2016. FAO is aware of the selected priority value chains of this STDF project proposal and was encouraged to address the same in their work and build synergies.

During the development of this STDF project proposal extensive discussion and exchange took place with FAO (national and regional level), starting with FAO's participation in the field at the bilateral meetings and stakeholders' roundtable in April 2016. There are several linkages with FAO's work in Tajikistan which confirmed the need in building synergies in the food safety area.

In particular FAO's participation (either national or regional as it would be deemed appropriate by FAO) as member of the STDF Project Steering Committee meeting and as resource persons to some training will be critical to ensure synergies, access FAO' expertise and integrate assistance in establishing an overall system from the registration of pesticides and monitoring of pesticides residues in products. During the inception phase and baseline data collection at the beginning of the project, some activities would be considered to be implemented by FAO in order to build actual bridges between FAO's projects and this STDF project and to make economies of scale. The extent and type of activities (training to farmers on establishment of Farmers Field Schools; implementation of GAP and IPM) will have to be decided after the start of the project and based on the effectiveness of the implementation agreement.

Hilfswerk Austria International: Under the EU funded project on "Integrated approach towards promoting Central Asia nuts, dried fruits and honey processing SMEs" an assessment of the sector was done. This project proposal builds up on the baseline and on

the target products identified for the market access component (e.g. honey and dry apricots). In the inception phase of this project Hilfswerk would be also considered as possible partner in the implementation of Farmers Field Schools approach together with FAO.

ISTC: the cooperation of ISTC with the national institutions and agencies of Tajikistan is narrowed to small and target-oriented projects, aimed at improving technologies in different sectors (e.g. health, energy, biotechnology, seismology etc.). Currently, the ISTC has 11 food safety related projects in Tajikistan, approved for the implementation. Along these projects, ISTC also conducts theoretical and practical training courses on biosecurity and biosafety, which cover principles of bio risks reduction, risk assessment and laboratory quality control, disinfection and decontamination.

British Expertise (UK) – implemented a project on “Development of the Fruit and Vegetable Processing Sectors in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan” in partnership with Association of Food Industry Enterprises (Kyrgyzstan) and National Association of Small and Medium Businesses (Tajikistan). The project was a follow up on the previous project implemented in the framework of Central Asia Invest II by British Expertise in partnership with BIG (NGO “Business Intellect Group”, Kyrgyzstan) in 2011 and it aimed transferring the experience from Kyrgyzstan to the South of Tajikistan. The STDF/ITC project will further build upon the achievements and enhance the market access for the fruits and vegetables sector.

UNECE: The project on supporting the apricots sector titled: “Strengthening the capacity of transition and developing economies to participate in cross-border agricultural food supply chains”, is progressing well. In this context UNECE has developed a quality standard for dried apricots at production/farmer level, which will need further support by the government and other international organizations for its implementation. Furthermore a new project in the area of food safety was recently launched aiming at education and including food safety in curricula, such as introducing HACCP and Global GAP courses in 4 higher education institutions here in the region (2 universities in Tajikistan, and 2 in Kyrgyzstan). This was requested by regional dried apricots exporters. The STDF project will further build on the collaboration with UNECE to compile training methodology and curricula for the sector in food safety.

After all field visits and meetings with national and international stakeholders and gathering the existing information and feedback from the participants of the Round Table on « Discussion of a project proposal to address food safety needs in Tajikistan » held in April 2016, it can be concluded that the problem of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines management is an unaddressed area in Tajikistan. All the stakeholders consulted during the development of this project proposal endorsed the need to address this problem. This project will provide a good opportunity to enhance the above-mentioned problematic areas and build solid synergies with the other actors in the field and to reach the target beneficiaries.

5. Public-public or public-private cooperation

To set and meet agri-chemical and veterinary medicine requirements on international level, an active interaction between the private sector actors, the users and the control bodies is necessarily required. Via this project, that partnership will take place in the form of consultations and meetings. This will take place at the stage to define the requirements to establish regulatory and monitoring mechanism (e.g. record keeping, MRLs and most appropriate standards), at the stage of implementation when the control bodies will need to engage with the users (i.e. farmers, importers, distributors) in an advisory capacity in the initial transition phase.

In addition to that, the enforcement of the requirements will require coordination and cooperation between all the public bodies involved in the official control of the food chain. The project aims to establish strong partnership between the organisations in the country that are closely related to the implementation of SPS-related activities. The government organizations supporting the project and committed on public-public and public-private partnerships are:

- The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of Tajikistan
- Agency on Standardization, Metrology, Certification and Trade Inspection of Government of Tajikistan- "Tajikistandard"

A number of public and private sector representatives closely related to the project-focussed sector and SPS capacity building programmes will be engaged. These representations are

- Dehkan Farm Association of the Apricot Growers of Asht District of Tajikistan
- National Association of Small and Medium Business – Republic of Tajikistan
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tajikistan
- Different consulting companies well established in the country

During the inception and implementation phase links with the chemical industry such as Croplife and others will be further persuaded to involve them such as in training on safe pesticide use and on the regulatory and control system.

6. Ownership and stakeholder commitment

During the interviews and the Round Table discussion conducted during the development of this proposal, all the State, non-State, private stakeholders fully supported the proposed scope and interventions planned. These representatives include the following:

- State institutions
 - Ministry of Economic Development & Trade,
 - Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), MoA- State Service of Phytosanitary Inspection and Plant Quarantine (SSPIPQ), MoA- State Organization on Plant Protection and Agriculture Chemicalization (SOPPAC), MoA- Central Laboratory of Veterinary Diagnosis of SVIS
 - Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population (MoHSPP),
 - Academy of Science,
 - State Veterinary Inspection Service (SVIS),
 - State Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance Service (SSESS),
 - Agency "Tojikstandart",
 - Tajik Research and Scientific Institute of Food,
 - State Enterprise "Khurokvori",
 - National Centre for Legislation under the President of Tajikistan,
 - State Committee on Investments and State Property Management of the Republic of Tajikistan

- Private sector

Dehkan Farm "Yodgor" in Asht district, Dehkan Farm Association of Apricot Growers in Asht district, Consulting company such as "Kamolot 1" or others, French Supermarket chain "Auchan", pesticides industry such as Croplife or others

- Non-state sector actors

Union of Consumers of Tajikistan, National Association of Small and Medium Business of Tajikistan (NASMBT), Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tajikistan, Limited Liability Cooperative "Sarob" (Advisory services)

- Other organizations, donors and projects in Tajikistan

EU Commission Delegation to Tajikistan, SECO, UNDP, UNIDO, FAO, IFC, CCI, ADB, GIZ, WHO, Hilfswerk Austria International, USAID project "Business women" in Kurgantube, EU Rural Development Programme, EU ECTAP project and EU Post WTO Support project

The private sector and non-state stakeholders would be engaged in and supporting the project through the following activities:

- Supporting awareness, training and information campaign on agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines amongst importers, producers, distributors and end-users.
- Support producers and processors in the development and replication of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines residue self-control systems
- Support in access to microfinance for agri-food producers applying properly approved agri-chemical and veterinary medicines practices
- Support in identification and working with EU importers to ensure compliance with the international market requirements
- The State institutions would be engaged in and supporting the project through the following activities:
 - Support in designing and advocating adoption risk-based residue monitoring system for agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines
 - Support in designing, drafting and advocating for adoption regulatory and control system for traceability of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines
 - Support in designing, drafting and advocating for adoption of harmonised agri-chemical and veterinary medicines standards and MRLs
 - Support in implementation of the country policy document on development of the laboratory system via laboratory monitoring and testing agrochemicals MRLs and veterinary pharmaceuticals
 - Release staff to be trained and train different stakeholders along the value chains
 - Support in consolidating national training curricula, methodology in the area of food safety based on inputs of different projects (i.e. on GAP, GHP, IMP, HACCP)
 - Support in the application for inclusion in the EU list of third countries with approved residue monitoring plans

- The donors and International Financial Institutions would in particular be engaged for parallel (e.g. microbiological criteria control) and follow-up (e.g. laboratory equipment and infrastructure investment) activities.

The following institutions submitted support letters to the project and are attached. Given the scope of the project (agriculture, food safety and market access) all these parties are critical to be engaged in the project:

- The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan and the Ministry of Agriculture. They submitted a joint request to complement the need to address the trade needs and market linkages and the technical inputs for the Agriculture sectors and SPS compliance
- Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of Tajikistan
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tajikistan
- Agency on Standardization, Metrology, Certification and Trade Inspection under Government of Tajikistan- "Tajikistandard"
- Dehkan Farm Association of the Apricot Growers of Asht District of Tajikistan
- National Association of Small and Medium Business of Tajikistan

Finally

II. PROJECT GOAL, OBJECTIVE, OUTPUTS & ACTIVITIES (LOGICAL FRAMEWORK)

7. Project Goal / Impact

The project goal is to improve the export competitiveness of Tajik Small and Medium-Sized enterprises and food safety through better use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines with focus on apricots and honey sector.

It will enhance high value market access for Tajik agri-food producers and processors and to increase the level of safety of Tajik domestic food by reducing the risk of contamination and improving the systems of control and monitoring of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines.

In the long run the project will contribute to increase sustainable agriculture and responsible consumption and production.

8. Target Beneficiaries

The project aims at addressing the issues related to agro-chemical use and veterinary medicines at national level that apply to all agri-food products of animal and plant origin and for domestic production as well as exports and imports with particular focus on dry apricots and honey. The final target beneficiaries will be the Tajik small farmers, producers, processors and exporters of agri-food products as well as the consumers of their products.

Through the project, activities will:

- Improve understanding and management (procurement, storage, traceability, use and monitoring) of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines.
- Reduce the risk of contamination of the produced food and thereby increase its safety and quality.
- Improve trust in the products, attractiveness and thereby the demand and price and accordingly their income.
- As the value added is increased and more processing is done at the producer level, the inclusion of more female participants (traditionally involved in processing) will increase.
- Improve access to microfinance for small and medium sized agri-food producers friendly applying properly and more user-friendly agrochemicals and veterinary pharmaceuticals
- Upgrade linkages along the sector value chain and with buyers (national, regional and international) to increase export opportunities
- The consumers will have access to safe and reasonably priced locally produced food

One of the outputs of the project is to strengthen regulatory and control system for agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines usage. A **minimum of 10 government officials** at national level and **approx 100 government officials from pilot regions** (from the State food control body) will be trained on the implementation of the mechanism and risk based monitoring system.

The project will build a pool of **30 local trainers/advisers** to advise operators to comply with the regulatory framework.

At least **800 stakeholders** sensitised on the need to comply with SPS measures, in particular on the usage of agro-chemicals and veterinary medicines for international trade.

Three hundred **farmers/producers** including processors, exporters of agri-food products, including agro-chemicals sellers, will be trained from different regions in Tajikistan. The main focus regions of this project for this capacity building will be Sughd region in north Tajikistan, where apricots production is concentrated and other regions to be identified in the baseline study.

As it is expected the added value will increase and more processing will be done at the producer level, the inclusion of more **female participants** that are traditionally involved in processing stage will also increase. The project will also ensure that female beneficiaries participate in all trainings and take part in the project-related decision-making process.

As a result, the project will enhance the SPS compliance of the products and create broader awareness on food safety. This will definitely be beneficial for the **final consumers** (domestic and foreign markets) who will have access to safer local products.

9. Project objective, outputs and activities (including logical framework and work plan)

Outcome/Immediate Objective

The project goal is to improve access for Tajik small and medium sized agri-food producers and processors to higher value markets and to increase the level of safety of Tajik domestic food by reducing the risk of contamination and improving the systems of control of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines.

The project interventions will be prioritized to achieve the following outputs:

Output 1: Regulatory system for control of use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines established and operational

Output 2: Strengthened capacity of the project beneficiaries on the safe usage of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines

Output 3: Access to finance enhanced for SMEs in compliance with SPS measures

Output 4: Increased linkages along the sector value chain and export markets

The lack of the control system and monitoring of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines usage will be addressed as a cross-cutting issue under the project.

For this purpose a legal framework for controlling the use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines will be proposed and modernized. A series of training activities, both for the public sector representatives and private stakeholders will be held. The training for the public officials will help them implement the control system proposed while those for private stakeholders aim to improve the safe use of the agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines.

In addition to that, support on access to finance tools will be given to enhance the financial capacity of the producers to accede to the right inputs for safer production and to the processors to accede to the right inputs and technology for safer processing and compliance with international requirements. Last, but not least, the project will ensure that linkages along the sector value chain and with buyers are improved to increase export opportunities. A national information, education and communication campaign on the safe use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines will be implemented in the project.

Output 1: Regulatory and control system for use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines established and operational

Activity 1.1: Conduct the baseline study on the current import distribution, storage, use, sales and the controls of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines (inception phase)

The relevant SPS compliance issues will be addressed via various activities implemented at different stages of the agriculture value chains. The project will commence with baseline study along the value chains of agri-food products of both animal and non-animal origin and in particular for apricots and honey. The analysis will build on previous data collected by FAO and during the design of this project proposal. It will allow obtaining accurate and specific data on the imports, distribution, storage, sale, and usage of agro-chemicals and veterinary medicines (traceability), as well as the identification of specific problems. Extensive information on dosage, frequency of application, as well as the origin of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines will be collected.

The study will also collect information on the supply side to develop fact sheets on the exporters of apricots and honey indicating volumes, quality characteristics, available certifications. This will be used as inputs to facilitate links with buyers and collect samples of finished products for exports (activity 4.3).

In addition, laboratory tests will be done on key agricultural products (including apricots and honey) to determine the level of residues in the products. The data will assist in defining the problematic focus areas. Data collection will also include meetings with the competent authorities, expected to be involved in the regulatory control system to better understand the current situation and their particular needs. It will deliver data on international standards used, and other control systems and monitoring processes in place. The data will be entered and analysed by enumerators from universities to enhance the efficiency and use local capacity of the country.

More extensive research and a number of meetings will be held with state representatives involved in monitoring and laboratory testing and providing advisory services. The project will build on already existing mechanisms and strategies in place and assist in its application via its activities.

The results of the baseline will be presented via a validation workshop to all relevant project stakeholders. This workshop will be an opportunity to fine tune the activities of the project and define roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in "working together" towards the establishment of the overall system, such as FAO, EU, GIZ, ADB, which would be involved in the project implementation and/or in complementary activities.

The study will be used during the inception phase of the project. The baseline data collection will provide information on resource and needs of the relevant institutions. Quantification of indicators of success will be defined in the inception phase as the detailed activities are planned and agreed with the beneficiaries.

Activity 1.2: Support in designing and drafting the regulatory and control system for use and traceability of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines

As mentioned above, the baseline report will give extensive information and analysis on the current situation, traceability and control system of pesticides and veterinary medicines from import to use in the field. This will be the basis for drafting the regulatory and control system in Tajikistan. The elaboration of the system will be done in close consultation with both public and private stakeholders that will take place as roundtable meetings. To expedite the process and involve local capacity, the project will seek the assistance of the competent authorities and a national legal expert. Due to the short timeline of the project (3 years), this activity will commence in the 1st year in order to allow support in advocating the implementation of the system.

Activity 1.3: Support in advocating for adoption of the proposed regulatory and control system

Once the documentation for the proposed system is drafted, the project will provide support in advocating the system for adoption. For this purpose, there will be two workshops/meetings held with relevant stakeholders to comment on the draft and provide inputs. After taking into consideration the inputs, the project will provide advice to the Government for its final adoption.

Activity 1.4: Design operational risk-based residue monitoring system for agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines

At present, there is no residue monitoring system for agro-chemicals and veterinary medicines in Tajikistan. To implement the control system for use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines, an operational risk-based residue monitoring system would be essential. The project will provide international expertise to assist in the design of the system and its annual residue monitoring plan.

For pesticides FAO is working on this direction. This project will work with FAO to ensure common approach and complementarities.

Activity 1.5: Sensitise and train officials of the regulatory body on the risk-based monitoring system

For the effective implementation of the control and monitoring system, the project will provide technical support through a series of sensitization and training events. Tailor-made training materials on the regulatory and control system will be developed and at least 10 government officials at national level and approx 100 in the regions and other private

entities that provide advisory services will be trained. To encourage the participation of government representatives coming from provinces, the project will cover the participation costs (only travel and accommodation).

Activity 1.6: Harmonize and adopt agri-chemical and veterinary medicine MRLs with international standards (SPS Measures) and key export market requirements

MRLs are food safety requirements which are mandatory and should be made mandatory by law or subordinate legislation. The Codex standards for pesticides²¹ and for veterinary medicine²² will be the benchmark and starting point for Tajikistan in harmonising their Maximum Residue Limits. This will guarantee compliance with the WTO obligations for import requirements.

Based on the information collected under Activity 1.1, the project will support the Ministry of Agriculture to harmonise and adopt Codex or EU MRL level²³ applicable to the selected products or refer to those lists in legislation drafted by the Ministry. It is expected that at least 4 international standards are adopted and widely disseminated.

Furthermore the project will support the government and in particular its Codex Contact Point in formulating and submitting a project application to the New Codex Trust Fund. The application will aim at building a stronger national Codex system and engagement in Codex, including capacity to participate (and physical participation) in relevant technical committees such as on establishment of MRL.

Activity 1.7: Provide assistance in the development and rationalization of the laboratory network for testing MRLs and veterinary medicines

According to the preliminary research done for the project proposal, it has been found that there is a high number (more than a hundred) of laboratories in the country. Despite this high number, none of these laboratories is equipped and has the capacity of testing and providing reliable data on residue levels. The project will assist in the implementation of the rationalized strategy for testing agri-chemicals residues and veterinary medicines through advisory services ensuring better coordination among the laboratories in Tajikistan and an efficient and effective use of the limited resources. During the baseline study and the inception phase, the project will identify areas of expertise and mechanisms of providing advice and support. This will complement and not duplicate or undermine the services provided by companies and other actors active in the field and will discuss the most appropriate delivery mechanisms with the stakeholders during the inception phase. As WHO has been working on the development of a policy (conception) on development of the laboratory system, this project will collaborate and build on the achievements made. The implementation will take place towards the end of the project (3 year), as this will allow reaching consensus and clarity with other parties involved.

Activity 1.8: Support in the application for inclusion in the EU list of third countries with approved residue monitoring plans

When exporting honey to Europe, the products must comply with legally binding requirements. All European food legislation is based on the principles of traceability, risk analysis and precautionary measures. EU legislation prohibits importation of honey from countries outside the 'third country list'. In order to include Tajikistan in EU`s list of third countries with approved residue monitoring plans, the project will support the activity via an establishment of contact with DG SANCO, drafting application and assist with supporting documentation. This will be reached via assisting in the pre-market approval, which

²¹ <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/standards/pesticide-mrls/en/>

²² <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/standards/veterinary-drugs-mrls/en/>

²³ <http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/eu-pesticides-database/public/?event=homepage&language=EN>

includes residue monitoring plan, compliance with hygiene legislation and traceability systems.

Output 2: Strengthen capacity of the project beneficiaries on the usage of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines

Activity 2.1: Design and implement the IEC (information, education and communication) plan

To enhance the capacity of the beneficiaries, the project will develop an information, education and communication strategy. This will be achieved via development of various materials focussing on information dissemination, such as press release, TV and radio programmes, where the right usage of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines will be explained. At least five sensitization materials, such as posters, brochures on good practices will be developed and distributed.

Activity 2.2: Upgrade the capacity of local trainers and advisors to provide training and advice to producers, processors and exporters in the use of agri-chemical and veterinary medicines

Capacity building programmes for farmers/producers, processors and exporters will be provided during project implementation to enhance the SPS capacity, in particular on the safe use of agri-chemical and veterinary medicines and compliance with food safety standards.

The capacity building programmes will be designed specifically to address the needs and cover the knowledge gaps for each group beneficiaries. To achieve this, a number of customized training materials will be developed with help of local representatives and international experts on the most relevant topics. The materials will be widely disseminated, not only between producers, processors, exporters and government officials from the relevant ministries, but also to institutions related to the relevant sectors.

To achieve this, the local capacity of a pool of 30 trainers/advisers will be strengthened via ten days training provided by international experts on topics as: Good Agriculture Practices (GAP), Integrated Pest management (IPM), Harvesting and post-harvesting methods, the new regulatory system, Good Hygiene Practices (GHP), and Processing technology.

Participants will be selected mainly from (but not limited to) those public and private entities, who proactively operate in providing advisory and consultative services (e.g. NASMBT, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, SVIS, SOPAC, SPIPQS, SSES, Cooperative "Sarob", Consulting groups such as Kamolot 1 and others). Participants from private consultancies shall be selected if they meet selection criteria. In this case the consultancy company would participate in cost-sharing and bear the expenses of the participation of their staff.

The trained trainers/advisers will further replicate the training to the beneficiaries and ensure the spill-over effect of knowledge.

The project will use already existing mechanisms in the agri-food sector and complement ongoing advisory activity to enhance the knowledge, such as building on FAO's expertise and project in Tajikistan on IPM. The project will identify the areas of expertise and mechanisms from the baseline study and adjust the activity based on the findings during the inception phase of the project.

Activity 2.3 Coach farmers/producers and processors on acquisition and use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines

The capacity of at least 300 farmers/producers including processors will be enhanced via customized training sessions combining the theoretical and practical knowledge on the usage of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines conducted by the trainers/advisers, trained under Activity 2.2. If trainers/advisers are from private consultancy companies they will receive allowance to roll out the trainings to recover expenses but will not receive salary for their services.

The tentative number of sessions are 12 (with 25 participants) and each session to last 5 (non-consecutive) days, depending on the confirmation of the needs and availability of the participants. The training will be followed up by visits to the field and premises to monitor the implementation of the knowledge. The detailed programme and materials will be confirmed and validated during consultation meetings with the public and private stakeholders. Possible linkages to anchor the trainings and ensure broader information dissemination will be done with appropriate institutions.

The Farmer Field School Approach (FFS) would be recommended for the training to the farmers/producers. This would be discussed and agreed at the implementation phase with stakeholders and with FAO and NGOs (such as Hilfswerk) as possible implementing partner(s).

Activity 2.4: Support for producers and processors in the development and replication of agri-chemical and veterinary medicines residue self-control systems

The producers and processors will receive technical support by experts and government officials on agri-chemical and veterinary medicines residue self-control systems. This will enable them to conduct rapid monitoring on the site, before the produce goes to the exporter or the buyer for the local market. To serve this, at least 40 advisory visits to producers/processors will be held. Lead producers/processors will be identified and by the end of the project at least 10 of them will implement the self-monitoring system.

Output 3: Access to finance enhanced for MSMs in compliance with SPS measures

Activity 3.1: Identification of the gaps in the access to finance for financial institutions and project beneficiaries

The data/information will be collected in the form of survey and interviews among the farmers, processors, exporters of the selected products. Data will also be collected from microfinance institutions and banks in agriculture sector and among impact investors. This is to assess the financial needs and bottle-necks of the selected group.

In particular, farmers will be assessed regarding their financial management skills and financial needs. Processors and exporters will be assessed on their financial management processes and skills, as well as financial needs. The different groups will be assessed against the financial implications to comply with the regulated control system and other SPS measures (i.e. need to upgrade infrastructures, conduct laboratory analysis, obtain certifications) Microfinance and banking institutions will be assessed towards their ability of serving the selected group of companies with the intent of finding the exact needs of both parties that would allow the increase of lending.

Impact investors will be contacted to further explore their interest to structure a financial product/scheme, either directly or through partner MFIs, to meet the diverse needs of SMEs/farmers to access financing to comply with SPS standards. ITC has initiated contacts with some international impact investors to partner in Tajikistan and develop a pilot project to introduce the most suitable local financial institution that could finance small producers and producers organizations. The pilot could eventually be replicated in other countries.

The object of the activity will be to collect evidence of the barriers, obstacles, bottle-necks in the financing process within the selected value chain. The findings will be used to design the training packages for financial institutions, farmers and processors and exporters.

Activity 3.2: Train and support on the improvement of financial management capacity and access to finance

ITC will prepare a list of training activities based on the capacity building needs of beneficiaries resulted in the report issued under Activity 3.1. The trainings will be delivered by ITC Advisers and consultants to identify local financial management counselors, who can also further replicate the knowledge obtained. The financial management counselors will then be matched with a pool of beneficiaries. The counselors' role will be to advise, mentor, and coach the project's beneficiaries in line with the ITC's access to finance methodologies delivered during trainings. Final intent will be to make beneficiaries ready to apply for funding and ensure that they will be able to successfully manage the financial part of their business to upgrade their capacity to comply with SPS measures.

A workshop will be organized with pre-identified financial institutions to help them better assess credit worthiness of beneficiaries as well as understanding which financial products are more appropriate for producers and better meet the demand of the selected value chain. The project aims also to mobilize soft credit lines and/or credit guarantee schemes from international, regional, and national development financial institutions to facilitate the lending process and reduce collateral requirements.

The final object of the activity is to increase the loans from financial institutions to beneficiaries.

Output 4: Increased linkages along the sector value chain and export markets

Activity 4.1: Organize networking workshops

At the beginning of the project, a workshop will be held with the project partners, implementing agency, and key stakeholders to plan and operationalize the project activities, review roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, build synergies and complementarities with other initiatives and projects in the SPS and quality infrastructure areas. The official food control dimension will be discussed to fine-tune the modality of engagement of the national authorities in the project activities and to link it to the other ongoing programs.

The stakeholders will identify, give recommendations and agree on how to make available all the relevant trade information and market requirements, including sensitization and capacity building materials elaborated during the project.

In the course of the project at least three other networking workshops will be held to engage public and private stakeholders in the process of compliance with safe use of agro-chemicals and veterinary medicines and on SPS specific issues that may arise. These are opportunities to build a foundation for private public partnership to address SPS issues.

A workshop with the relevant stakeholders will be organized at the end of the project to disseminate results, share lessons learnt and compile recommendations for sustainability. The workshop will have media coverage to reach broader audience.

Activity 4.2: Train processors, exporters, buyers, officers of trade support institutions on export market requirements

At least 50 processors, exporters, domestic buyers and officers of trade support institutions will be trained on the international market requirements to better understand and implement the food safety standards. Via the trainings, it is expected that they will enhance

their knowledge on SPS requirements of different potential markets and understanding of the WTO SPS Agreement – a business perspective. The ITC/PTB²⁴ book on Export Quality Management: A guide for small and medium size enterprises available in Russian language will be used as a basis for the customization of the workshops in Tajikistan. The trainings will be provided by ITC Advisers and will take place as 2-day training for two groups consisting of 25 participants.

The project will also support the country to submit a request to WTO should a need for a national activity from WTO on basic provisions of the Agreement be needed.

Activity 4.3 Identify buyers in two key selected import markets and establish linkages

At the beginning of the project, a market survey (questionnaires and direct interaction) will be conducted to identify key export markets and a list of minimum 10 prospective buyers, interested in purchasing selected products from Tajikistan (dried apricots and honey). The survey will look into buyers' opportunities in the domestic and tourism (e.g. restaurants, hotels, airlines) markets in Tajikistan, as well as in the export markets such as Turkey, Russia, the European Union and China. The survey will identify buyers' priority requirements focusing on quality requirements, food safety, other SPS measures and required conformity assessment procedures. Collaboration with Trade Promotion Organisations, sector associations and Ministries of Economic Development in the target countries will be established to facilitate business scouting opportunities and B2B.

This survey will be conducted in parallel with the baseline survey and will use the exporters' factsheet developed under this activity as inputs to facilitate discussion with buyers (activity 1.1) and will complement its findings as inputs to develop the content of training and capacity building activities. Direct contacts will be established and follow-up conducted with the identified potential buyers during the course of the project.

Activity 4.4 Study tour to selected countries to familiarize with market requirements and to establish linkages

A study tour will be organised for 12 participants to enhance their knowledge on markets, buyers' and SPS requirements, good practices and their actual implementation along the value chain, know-how and technology availability. The destination country (s) will be confirmed by the project stakeholders jointly with ITC based on relevant trade opportunities. Farmers and exporters and regulatory inspectors will have the opportunity to join together this learning opportunity and establish linkages among themselves, that has been proven very successfully in other previous projects such as in STDF project in Sri Lanka for fruits and vegetables (farmers and exporters rarely interact and be out of their national context helps). The mission shall aim to initiate contacts with buyers to follow up on the actual transactions. As there will be a high number of beneficiaries trained, a selection process will take place to define the best performing ones and select 12. The selected participants will contribute to the costs of their participation (travel cost). The findings and lessons learnt from the study tours will be disseminated through the sector associations and the media and through a series of information sharing events when participants return from their study tour.

10. Environmental-related issues

The current project aims to overcome a number of environment-related issues. As the major tackled is the improper usage of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines, it is expected that the amounts applied to agricultural produce will be reduced. In addition, the

²⁴ PTB is the German Metrology Institute

beneficiaries will be trained on integrated pest management systems. As a result, the project should contribute positively to environment protection and reduction on impact on soil and water.

11. Risks

Risks identified	Risk reduction/Mitigation
Lack of supportive and stable policy framework and adequate financing by the government on building the official control systems, annual residue monitoring plan and testing mechanism	The project will work closely with the government on policy level and with relevant parliamentary committees and other key development partners such as FAO to advocate the need for adoption and incentivising of these systems and their value for economic and social development.
Development of changes in the SPS infrastructure due to reforms in the inspection system that may lead to unifying some services of regulatory bodies prior to the start of the project that may affect the division of responsibilities	At the inception phase the project will follow up on the latest changes and fine-tune the project activities based on latest changes (anticipated/expected changes) affecting the risk-based monitoring system
Inadequate access to mass media and other information distribution mechanisms for successful public information campaigns	The project will work on the policy level to advocate the need for such public information campaigns and will advocate for budget accordingly.
Appropriate measures are not taken in reaction to monitoring results	The project will work on the policy level to advocate the need for retaining testing results systematically, take measures in reaction, and allocate technical expertise willing to take responsibilities. The project will provide targeted education and training of users of agri-chemical and veterinary medicines. The project will encourage the private sector to take a lead role in building compliance and credibility in Tajikistan export.
Beneficiaries along the value chain lack sustainable support to reap the benefits from project capacity building and market linkages identified	Government and Sector associations will be key partners for project implementation. They will be involved in all project activities and in increasing awareness of local stakeholders on benefits from information and tools created under the project, and in outreaching stakeholders during and beyond the project duration.
Limited willingness and absorption capacity of project beneficiaries to actively participate in the project activities and consistently apply the knowledge acquired	Carefully identify project beneficiaries at the project outset based on established selection criteria and inputs from the baseline data collection. Government officials, support sector associations, exporters, chemicals companies, farmers, processors, SMEs willing to benefit from the project and which can operate as catalysts leading to higher levels of commitment to the project; utilise local resources previously involved in international projects to provide continuous advisory/coaching support to project

	beneficiaries.
Limited access to finance by stakeholders (farmers, processors) along the sector value chain to adapt to the established regulatory framework	The project will seek cooperation with impact investors, financing and micro-finance agencies, sector associations and service providers, and other development partners to facilitate access to finance for SPS compliance. This will be done by building on ITC's expertise and network in the field.
Business complementarities identified are not followed-up with concrete actions by companies and remain declarations of intentions only	Match exporters with buyers with corresponding import demand; prepare companies before business networking event and provide them with advisory support to follow-up on business contacts after the event

12. Sustainability

The institutional and legal sustainability will be ensured through formally adopted Government Decisions and legislation. The project activities will not only be targeted at provision of support in drafting such decisions and legislation but also in their advocacy and adoption.

As part of the advocacy activities, the project will explain the financing needs and the economic benefits of such systems in order to secure adequate budgetary support and to provide the framework for other sources of financing.

The proposed monitoring and control system by the project will apply to all agri-food products of non-animal and animal origin and for domestic as well as exports and imports. The focus of the capacity building activities on selected products such as dry apricots and honey sectors will enable to develop a pilot approach with a spill-over effect over other sectors and regions in the country. The model would also be applicable to other countries in the Central Asian Region and will be widely disseminated also with the help of STDF.

During the project implementation, a number of meetings with the project partners will be held. The discussions at these meetings will include the further sustainability of the project goals and its ownership beyond the STDF project.

The project implementation will be done in close collaboration with relevant institutions and associations of producers. The material and training manuals developed previously by other agencies and projects will be collected as the foundation for any required upgrading and new development (such as on GAP; IPM). This is subject to the availability of stakeholders to share.

All the materials developed during the project will be handed over to these institutions to replicate the efforts and maintain any acquis. Also, a pool of trainers/advisers trained during the project will help in sustaining the project's interventions.

The project will enhance the knowledge of the producers and processors, who stand at the onset of the value chain and lead to improvement of the products' safety and quality. As a result, the beneficiaries shall produce products with SPS and international market compliance. This shall lead to increased export revenues, growth in the sector, employment opportunities and poverty reduction in the region.

The project will contribute to SDGs. In particular to:

- GOAL 2: “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”, by contributing to increase the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, family farmers, including through secure other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment
- GOAL 3: “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”, by contributing to reducing the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination
- GOAL 12: “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”, by contributing to achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment

III. BUDGET

13. Estimated budget

See Appendix 3 for the detailed budget.

14. Cost-effectiveness

The project will employ techniques and mechanisms to ensure the costs effectiveness of the intervention. It will focus on a specific sphere of activity (agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines) and address the issue from policy level to implementation and all along the food chain. In this way the impact of the resources is maximised.

The project will use the outcomes of the PPG implementation, lessons learned from pilot and other small scale projects to make sure that only feasible and practical approaches are employed thus avoiding wastage and ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

Maximum use of National Consultants will be made in order to optimise the use of local knowledge and minimise the transportation and fees.

Training of trainers approach will be used where appropriate for maximum leverage and sustainability of the project.

The project will ensure maximized involvement of the government and other private stakeholders’ representatives in the decision-making process.

Even though the project will have specific sector focus, the information materials and knowledge transfer will be designed in a manner that will allow them to be distributed over other sectors. This will further contribute to the effectiveness of the project and promote SPS compliance in the country.

Regarding the study tour, participants will be asked to share part of the travel cost to ensure full engagement in the learning opportunity.

Finally, the project proposes to hire the National Project Manager and the Project Assistant of ITC-SECO (Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs) funded project on Trade Cooperation on a part time basis and share the ITC field office facilities. In this way the

impact on time and qualified resources are maximised given the difficulty to identify good local professionals with a sound understanding of international issues and a sufficient command of English. The project would be immediately operational and be supported by highly trained human resources on managing and administering internationally funded technical assistance projects.

IV. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION & MANAGEMENT

15. Implementing organization

The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan and the Ministry of Agriculture, as joint requesting organizations and project partners propose that the project be implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC).

ITC is the joint technical cooperation agency of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations (UN), for business aspects of trade development. ITC has more than 50 years' experience in providing trade-related technical assistance to developing countries, especially least-developed countries. It is the only development agency fully dedicated to the development of SMEs.

ITC is fully engaged into supporting the private sector and build private public partnerships to implement practical and viable solutions in response to growing global safety and food-security challenges.

ITC has the required expertise and experience of supervising and implementing STDF projects: "Improved capacity for ensuring the quality and safety of Yemeni seafood products", "Expanding Nigeria's export of sesame seeds and sheanut/butter through improved SPS capacity building for private and public sector", "Improving safety and quality of the Sri Lankan fruits and vegetables", "Improving food safety and compliance with SPS measures to increase export revenues in the oilseeds value chains in Myanmar", "Develop a Project Proposal to address food safety needs focusing on the Food Safety Strategy in Tajikistan" (PPG).

ITC has implemented several technical assistance and capacity building projects aiming at addressing SPS-related issues with the objective to achieve market access and enable market linkages. ITC has extended technical expertise in supporting the private sector and smallholders in understanding and complying with SPS measures along the agriculture value chains and link them to the buyers. ITC assists in strengthening the SPS-related official controls, inspection and certification agencies and build capacity of testing laboratories.

In Zimbabwe ITC is assisting to strengthen the country's national sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) framework. ITC assisted to establish a new, state-of-the-art testing laboratory for the food and agro-processing sector which tests food products for safety and quality (including tests for vitamins, aflatoxin and pesticide residues).

With ITC support, the Gambia Bureau of Standards has developed and published within a period of six months, its first ten national standards, based on Codex Alimentarius and ISO standards.

ITC assisted Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Yemen to address urgent SPS issues affecting trade. In Sri Lanka ITC mobilised high level expertise to review and strengthen the pesticides control system and plant health system with positive impact on market access as reported by the local and international stakeholders.

In the area of food safety systems- based on HACCP ITC has built capacity of a pool of local experts in Central Asia, Bangladesh, Fiji, Samoa, Malawi, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Peru.

ITC will leverage on its strength to link SMEs to markets and identify buyers and partners for development. Through its results based monitoring system (RBM), ITC will be able to monitor the actual transacted business for beneficiary SMEs as result of the ITC support.

ITC has a long standing cooperation in Tajikistan over the last 14 years. Since 2012 ITC partnered with the Government of Switzerland to promote trade and strengthen the sustainable expansion and diversification of SME exports from Tajikistan. ITC assisted to open doors to new markets for dozens of Tajik companies; established contacts with important international retailers; increased exports; organization of Tajik companies' participation at international trade fairs.

ITC under the WTO-related projects assisted the Government of Tajikistan in successful conducting and completion of bilateral and multilateral negotiations and becoming a full-fledged member of the WTO in March 2013. The ITC projects also provided assistance in establishing the National Notification Authority (NNA) and the National Enquiry Points (NEPs) for TBT and SPS, raised awareness and understanding of the public and private sectors on WTO Agreements, rules and provisions through conducting series of seminars, workshops, roundtables, TOTs, contributed in building capacities and awareness of public and private sectors to cope with the implications of WTO accession on different sectors of the economy, etc. After Tajikistan's accession to WTO, ITC continued providing technical assistance to the Government of Tajikistan in implementation of the WTO commitments, including establishment of the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC).

In 2014, ITC has been engaged in the strategy developing process on the draft National Food Safety Strategy of Tajikistan, requested by MEDT to provide technical assistance to the inter-ministry working group. The strategy serves as a Road Map for the Government of Tajikistan in meeting its international obligations, promoting the country's trade opportunities and contributing in protection of public health at both national and global scale. It is expected that this project will enhance the strategy developed and assist in its implementation.

ITC is a member of the Donors Coordination Council Regional Trade Facilitation Working Group (DCC RTF WG) since 2012 and regularly participate in the DCC RTF WG meetings. ITC also participated in the development of the National Export Promotion Program in Tajikistan (2016-2020) prepared under the UNDP Aid for Aid Project. ITC also is a member of the Working Group on coordination of activities of state agencies and international organizations on implementation of Tajikistan's WTO commitments.

The project would therefore build on ITC's experience, expertise and network in Tajikistan, in the Region and globally.

16. Project management

Policy / strategic direction – Project Steering Committee

The project will use existing structures where possible in order to avoid duplication and to optimise coordination. As per the resolution of the Government of Tajikistan N. 495 (2.11.2013) a National Coordination Council on Food Safety (NCCFS) has been established responsible for the coordination of the development and implementation of food control management and organization in different sectors and agencies such as health and agriculture. Accordingly it is proposed that the highest decision making body of the project, namely the Project Steering Committee, will be represented by some relevant members of

the NCCFS together with other public and private stakeholders in Tajikistan, closely working in the agriculture sector and in particular on products such as apricots and honey. The preliminary composition of the PSC is reported below and will be subject to final validation during the inception phase of the project.

Composition:

Proposed Members of the PSC will include:

- The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan
- Ministry of Agriculture (The State Veterinary Inspection Services - SVIS, The State Service on Phytosanitary Inspection and Plant Quarantine – SSPIPQ, The State Organization for Plant Protection and Agriculture Chemicalization - SOPPAC)
- Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of Republic of Tajikistan (State Service of Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance – SSSES)
- Agency on Standardization, Metrology, Certification and Trade Inspection of Government of Tajikistan- (Tajikistandard),
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tajikistan
- Committee on Environmental Protection under the Government of Tajikistan (Committee on Chemical Safety)
- Dehkan Farm Association of the Apricot Growers of Asht District of Tajikistan
- National Association of Small and Medium Business – Republic of Tajikistan
- Implementing Agency and National Management Team
- FAO (national or regional presence as deemed necessary by FAO).

The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan, the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health will chair the PSC meetings on a rotational basis.

After conducting the baseline study and the validation workshop, and during the implementation of the project other relevant parties might be identified and invited to become a member of the PSC or invited to contribute to particular meetings. For instance should any reform take place under the leadership of the Committee on investment and state property of Tajikistan affecting food safety, members would be invited to the relevant PSC meetings.

It may also involve other development partners that provide support to strengthen the SPS framework in Tajikistan. Special attention will be paid to the Non-state organizations that are involved in the advisory services and invited for information sharing.

The project aims to collaborate with private sector representatives and enable their involvement.

Terms of Reference:

“Strategic guidance for project implementation”

- Oversee planning, implementation and reporting (on Strategic level)
 - approve work plan;
 - review, monitor and evaluate project progress;
 - identify possible bottlenecks and risks;
 - propose mitigation actions;
 - identify issues to be addressed at policy level that are common to sub-agriculture sectors;
 - gather lessons learned;
 - develop a mechanism for sustainability after the project.
- Facilitate the coordination, collaboration and communication among all stakeholders
 - confirm and define how partners will work together for specific activities
 - define roles of country stakeholders and appoint resources in project implementation (who is best placed to do which activity)

- review the need for specialised working groups on selected areas/activities and recommend establishment of such groups
- Information sharing and collaboration
 - Recommend mechanism for information sharing process (e.g. information sharing meetings, report sharing)

Meeting schedule:

The PSC will have bi-annual meetings.

Management

A management structure will be established for the day to day running of the project.

ITC will assume the project management role and responsibilities. ITC will be responsible for monitoring project activities and progress towards the achievements of the expected project outputs and outcome, according to all the indicators and targets set in the project logframe, with a baseline established at the outset of the project.

A National Project Manager (NPM) will be hired on a part time basis (25%) and assisted by a part-time National Project Assistant (25%). The team will be the one of the ITC national project office as they have a good understanding of UN and international-funded procedures. Should the NPM not available at the time of the start of this project, the National Consultant on SPS (NCS) recruited at 80% will also take the management role in charge.

The NPM will be responsible for the effective and efficient management and monitoring of field-level activities according to the project work plan, support the organization of training, workshops, events and media, liaise and coordinate with country counterparts, facilitate hiring of national consultants, organize and prepare project steering committee meetings, help identify risks and propose mitigating strategies as needed, provide guidance and recommendations for activity implementation, collect regular feedback from beneficiaries and partners, provide inputs and data for preparing progress reports.

A National Consultant on SPS (NCS) will work in close coordination with ITC and local management team and hired at 80%. The NCS will be responsible for overall project coordination of the technical inputs and will delivery inputs to all project activities. The NCS will provide all technical inputs, guidance and recommendations to the planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting of project activities.

The NCS will be responsible for compiling relevant documentation (reports, studies, statistics), organize International Consultant's field visit and facilitate the smooth conduct of the missions, training, coaching and support with writing technical reports and provide inputs for communication purposes.

The NCS shall have relevant professional experience within the country's SPS institutions (Tajik State Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance Services, Tajik Research and Scientific Institute of Preventive Medicine), worked towards developing and implementing SPS measures focusing on Food Safety, provided technical assistance to the line ministries in the field of food safety in Tajikistan and good links with both the public and private stakeholders.

The project advises to contract the ITC-SECO field office staff, namely the NPM and project assistant as they are not fulltime contracted and in order to take advantage of their qualifications and experience in managing ITC projects. Regarding the selection of the NCS, the project advises to hire the same national consultant who has been involved in recent capacity building projects such as the elaboration of the National Food Safety Strategy and development of this project proposal under the STDF PPG and who has longstanding experience in the food safety area.

V. REPORTING, MONITORING & EVALUATION

17. Project reporting

ITC will prepare bi-annual project progress reports, during the project implementation. They will consist of information on the status and accomplishments of the project, activities conducted, progress versus outputs and outcomes. A financial statement will be attached to each report to reflect the expenditure on the project activities. The reports will be shared with the PSC members and submitted to STDF. The information will include inputs from the project partners and beneficiaries and the local authorities regarding their monitoring and supervision of the project, as well as feedback from project beneficiaries, collected through mission reports and assessment forms completed after each project workshop, event and coaching activity.

At the end of the project, a final project report on its implementation will be prepared and submitted.

In addition a brief monthly progress report will be prepared by the NPM and the NTA and submitted to ITC and shared with project partners to monitor closely the progresses and challenges.

18. Monitoring and evaluation, including performance indicators

- Evaluation forms will be prepared, distributed and collected at the end of every workshop, event and coaching activity and the results summarized in the progress reports, and used in up-scaling other activities;
- Participation of female beneficiaries will be encouraged and monitored and reported;
- Discussions and comments from stakeholders at each workshop and event will be documented and used to improve project activities design;
- Performance indicators as per the project logical framework will be monitored and reported in each progress report;
- In-kind contribution by project partners will be monitored and reported for each event, workshop, training;
- The learning process and application of the knowledge by project beneficiaries will be monitored and reported in each progress report;
- Progress reports will be prepared every six months and reviewed by the project steering committee which will recommend mitigation actions if/as necessary; progress reports and minutes of the meetings will be submitted to STDF via ITC;
- Internal reporting of progress will be done on a monthly basis, on a brief page summaries of activities carried out, outputs, issued faces and reason for any possible delay and activities planned for the next month
- As the implementing agency, ITC will also monitor the project progress and results through its internal monitoring and result-based management (RBM) reporting systems.

An independent evaluation by STDF would be conducted at the end of the project as per the new STDF rule.

19. Dissemination of the projects results

- At each workshop and project activity, introduction to the project and its outputs, outcomes, project partners and STDF will be presented and explained to participants;

- Project progress, recommendations and visibility will be relayed at the national level through the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) of Tajikistan and Ministry of Agriculture.
 - ITC will disseminate all information and ensure project coordination with other development agencies, through different fora, including when relevant to the Donors Coordination Council Regional Trade Facilitation Working Group and the Working Group on coordination of activities of state agencies and international organizations on implementation of Tajikistan's WTO commitments.
 - Workshops and project activities will be given full media coverage. In particular, the media will be invited to participate in workshops as well as some of the training sessions to ensure better visibility. The project will also be given publicity through regular press releases and newsletters on the project progress and outcomes.
 - Project partners and ITC will disseminate information and promote the project through their internal resource materials and communication means.
 - Core and specific training material/manuals/leaflets, sensitisation and capacity building materials elaborated during the project, including relevant trade information and market requirements, will be made available in print form to all the stakeholders and institutional reference.
 - A website or another platform (social media) will be used to facilitate access to the information developed under the project.
 - A dissemination workshop with the relevant stakeholders will be organized at the end of the project that will have media coverage to reach broader audience.
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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: Logical framework

Appendix 2: Work Plan

Appendix 3: Project Budget

Appendix 4: Letters of support from organizations that support the project request

APPENDIX 1: Logical Framework²⁵

	Intervention Description	Measurable indicators / targets	Sources of verification	Assumptions and risks
Goal	Contribute to improve high value market access for Tajik agri-food exports and improve the level of safety of domestic products	5% Increased in access to markets and opportunities for agricultural producers 10% decrease in the number of food related safety incidents	Trade statistics of international organisations Food safety related health statistics from domestic and international sources	Assumptions: Market access conditions remain constant Baseline statistics established and monitored
Immediate objective (purpose)	Improved food safety and export competitiveness of Tajik SMEs through better use of agri-chemical and veterinary medicines	Access to at least 2 high value markets improved for selected Tajik agro-food products Number of incidents related to food safety residue levels reduced by 15% Number of border rejections of Tajik agri-products exports due to residues decreased by 20% Number of SMEs reported improved competitiveness Number of trade-related regulations improved with business sector input	Residue levels statistics (including resistance) related to health (including animal) Data on border rejections (EU, Regional Markets) EU official journal Beneficiaries/ITC reports; surveys conducted	Assumptions: Baseline statistics established and monitored State financing committed and provided for running costs Testing results systematically retained Appropriate measures taken in reaction to monitoring results including targeted education and training of users of agri-chemical and

²⁵ See the CIDT Handbook on Project Identification, Formulation and Design, available on the STDF website, for guidance on the preparation of logical frameworks.

	Intervention Description	Measurable indicators / targets	Sources of verification	Assumptions and risks
				veterinary medicine Risks: Lack of accurate data available for the baseline statistics Lengthy process of approval and adoption of the legal acts Shortage in the financing provided
Output 1	Regulatory and control system for use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines established and operational	Accurate database on agri-chemical and veterinary medicines imports, production, movements and usage established and available to the control bodies 1 piece of legislation developed 2 procedures on agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines developed Annual residue monitoring plans produced, adopted and operational N. of staff of Laboratory enabled to carry out laboratory monitoring of agro-chemicals and vet drugs residues Tajikistan added to the list of countries authorised for exports to high value markets (such as the EU)	Database and statistics of the competent authority and control bodies Official Gazette of Tajikistan Inclusion of the annual residue monitoring activities in the plans of the authorised bodies and competent authorities	Assumptions: Readiness of the government to cooperate in the establishment of legal acts Budget provided by the government to implement the system Availability of experts in providing the necessary support, with the right technical and language skills Risk:

	Intervention Description	Measurable indicators / targets	Sources of verification	Assumptions and risks
				Difficulties in the adoption mechanism
Activity 1.1	Conduct the baseline study on the current import distribution, storage, use, sales and the controls of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines (inception phase)	<p>1 List of currently used agro-chemicals and veterinary medicines developed</p> <p>1 List of potential institutions and competent authorities that will be involved in the control system released</p> <p>1 List of exporters of dried apricots and honey with factsheets compiled</p> <p>Baseline data collected</p> <p>Exporters' fact sheet compiled</p> <p>1 Validation workshop conducted</p>	<p>Report on the study</p> <p>Report on the workshop</p> <p>List of participants</p>	Assumptions: Enough data provided by the producers and authorities on the usage of agri-chemicals and the controls
Activity 1.2	Support in designing and drafting the regulatory and control system for use and traceability of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines	<p>Concept for the system drafted</p> <p>Legal instruments for setting up control system drafted</p>	<p>Competent authority and control bodies</p> <p>Report of the proposed system</p>	Assumptions: Commitment of counterpart staff Harmonized and solid cooperation between the private and public sector on the draft document.
Activity 1.3	Support in advocating for adoption of the proposed regulatory and control system	<p>3 workshops/meetings and sensitization meetings conducted</p> <p>At least 50 stakeholders sensitized</p> <p>Proposed regulatory and control system adopted</p>	<p>Project progress report</p> <p>Official gazette of Tajikistan</p>	Assumptions: Commitment of the government to adopt the legal instrument
Activity 1.4	Design operational risk-	1 Monitoring system designed	Competent authority and	Assumptions:

	Intervention Description	Measurable indicators / targets	Sources of verification	Assumptions and risks
	based residue monitoring system for agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines		official bodies	The monitoring plan adopted and implemented by the government
Activity 1.5	Sensitise and train officials of the regulatory body on the risk-based monitoring system	One set of Training materials developed 5 training workshops held 10 officials (including women) trained at national level and 100 at regional levels	Training materials produced ITC report List and profiles of project officials trained	Assumptions: Commitment of officials of regulatory bodies to participate in the trainings
Activity 1.6	Harmonize and adopt agri-chemical and veterinary medicine MRLs with international standards (SPS Measures) and key export market requirements	4 MRL standards harmonised/ adopted based on regional/international ones Project application submitted to the New Codex Trust Fund 4 regional/international meetings of Codex attended by stakeholders	Project report Competent Authority data Official gazette of Tajikistan	Assumptions: Cooperation among and commitment of stakeholders to develop the harmonised standards Risks: Resistance in the process of adoption of the standards
Activity 1.7	Providing assistance in the development and rationalization of the laboratory network for testing MRLs and veterinary medicines	1 advisory service provided for the enrolment of the rationalization strategy related to monitoring of agrichemicals and veterinary drugs 2 workshops on the laboratory monitoring of the agrichemicals and vet drugs residues conducted	Competent authority Workshops report	Assumptions: Adoption of the strategy by the competent authority and its implementation Risks: Resistance in the process of

	Intervention Description	Measurable indicators / targets	Sources of verification	Assumptions and risks
				adoption
Activity 1.8	Support in the application for inclusion in list of third countries with approved residue monitoring plans	Contact with DG SANCO and FVO established Drafted application and supporting documentation	Project progress reporting External progress monitoring	Assumptions: Project management structure suitable and effective in managing implementation High quality of technical and other expertise in project staff Adequate budget planning and management Availability and suitability of counterpart staff
Output 2	Strengthen capacity of the project beneficiaries on the usage of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines	300 producers/processors benefited from the capacity building interventions At least 100 producers have improved the use of agrichemicals and veterinary medicine At least 800 stakeholders have improved awareness on SPS and international trade	Lists of participants from the capacity building interventions Feedback from the participants	Risks: Limited participation and lack of follow up by the beneficiaries
Activity 2.1	Design and implement the IEC (information, education and communication) plan	Information Education and Communication strategy designed At least 5 sensitisation materials developed and distributed	Project progress reports Brochures, leaflets, newsletters, press release Video materials	

	Intervention Description	Measurable indicators / targets	Sources of verification	Assumptions and risks
		3 Press releases 1 radio programme 1 TV programme		
Activity 2.2	Upgrade the capacity of local trainers and advisors to provide training and advice to producers, processors and exporters in the use of agri-chemical and veterinary medicines	One set of training materials developed 30 trainers/advisors ToT on the master trainers. Topics: GAP, Integrated pest management control system, Harvesting post harvesting methods, the new regulatory control system.	List of trainers trained Feedback information from trainers	Assumptions: Commitment of trainers to follow the full training and coaching exercise
Activity 2.3	Coach farmers/producers and processors on acquisition and use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines	300 producers/processors trained 15 training sessions	List of producers and processors trained under the project	Assumption: Commitment of trainers, producers and processors
Activity 2.4	Support for producers and processors in the development and replication of agri-chemical and veterinary medicines residue self-control systems	50 advisory visits to producers/processors At least 10 producers/processors with operational self-monitoring system	Project progress reports and External progress monitoring	Risks: Lack of funding for follow up activities
Output 3	Access to finance enhanced for MSMs in compliance with SPS measures	2 empowered Financial institution to provide tailor-made access to finance solutions to export ready agricultural MSMEs 5 loans that have been released to MSMEs	Survey reports	Assumptions: Accurate information provided from financial institutions and beneficiaries

	Intervention Description	Measurable indicators / targets	Sources of verification	Assumptions and risks
				Risks: Financial institutions do not consider SPS sector investable
Activity 3.1	Identify the gaps in the access to finance for financial institutions and beneficiaries	Surveys questionnaires conducted with more than 50 respondents among farmers, processors, exporters, financial institutions Access to finance problems and possible solutions identified	Report on Access to finance	
Activity 3.2	Train and support on the improvement of financial management capacity and access to finance	5 financial management institutions trained 50 producers/processors trained	Report on Access to finance	
Output 4	Increased linkages along the sector value chain and export markets	10% increase in linkages	Export data from Customs	Assumptions: Willingness of the international buyers to share information and their business negotiations in short-term timeframe Risks: Not accurate data available Limited participation of buyers in business networking events

	Intervention Description	Measurable indicators / targets	Sources of verification	Assumptions and risks
Activity 4.1	Organize networking workshops	5 networking workshops	Workshop reports	Assumptions: Active participation of partnering organizations
Activity 4.2	Train processors, exporters, buyers, officers of trade support institutions on export market requirements	2 workshops conducted 50 beneficiaries trained (a minimum of 20 women)	List of participants Feedback of participants	
Activity 4.3	Identify buyers in two key selected import markets and establish linkages	10 potential buyers identified and linkages established	List of potential buyers Consignment shipments	
Activity 4.4	Study tour to selected countries to familiarize with market requirements and to establish linkages	2 Study tours conducted	Report on the study tour Newsletter Video	

APPENDIX 2: Work Plan²⁶

Activity	Responsibility	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 1	Regulatory and control system for use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines established and operational												
Activity 1.1	Conduct the baseline study on the current import distribution, storage, use, sales and the controls of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines (inception phase)												
Activity 1.2	Support in designing and drafting the regulatory and control system for use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines												
Activity 1.3	Support in advocating for adoption of the proposed regulatory and control system												
Activity 1.4	Design operational risk-based residue monitoring system for agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines												
Activity 1.5	Sensitise and train officials of the regulatory body on the												

²⁶ Please shade or otherwise indicate when the activity will take place.

	risk-based monitoring system												
Activity 1.6	Harmonize and adopt agri-chemical and veterinary medicine MRLs with international standards (SPS Measures) and key export market requirements												
Activity 1.7	Provide assistance in the development and rationalization of the laboratory network for testing MRLs and veterinary medicines												
Activity 1.8	Support in the application for inclusion in list of third countries with approved residue monitoring plans												
Output 2	Strengthen capacity of the project beneficiaries on the usage of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines												
Activity 2.1	Design and implement the IEC (information, education and communication) plan												
Activity 2.2	Upgrade the capacity of local trainers and advisors to provide training and advice to producers, processors and exporters in the use of agri-chemical and veterinary												

	medicines												
Activity 2.3	Coach farmers/producers and processors on acquisition and use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines												
Activity 2.4	Support for producers and processors in the development and replication of agri-chemical and veterinary medicines residue self-control systems												
Output 3	Access to finance enhanced for MSMs in compliance with SPS measures												
Activity 3.1	Identify the gaps in the access to finance for financial institutions and beneficiaries												
Activity 3.2	Train and support on the improvement of financial management capacity and access to finance												
Output 4	Increased linkages along the sector value chain and export markets												

Activity 4.1	Organize networking workshops	■			■		■		■				■
Activity 4.2	Train processors, exporters, buyers, officers of trade support institutions on export market requirements								■	■	■	■	
Activity 4.3	Identify buyers in two key selected import markets and establish linkages					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Activity 4.4	Study tour to selected countries to familiarize with market requirements and to establish linkages								■	■	■	■	

APPENDIX 3: Budget (US\$)²⁷

²⁷ Use the headings in the budget table above as a basis to prepare a budget table, preferably as an Excel chart.

Annex 1