

STANDARDS MAP

ITC AND SWISSCONTACT EMPOWERING COCOA PRODUCERS TO PARTICIPATE IN SUSTAINABLE TRADE



ITC Standards Map team and Swisscontact initiated a joint programme in March 2015 to empower cocoa producers in Colombia and to raise awareness around sustainability issues mostly required by certifications such as Fairtrade, UTZ and Rainforest Alliance. The goal of the partnership is to bring cocoa producers step-by-step up, to speed with different sustainability issues. Doing so, producers will be able to perform self-assessments to diagnose areas in

which they need to improve before starting an official certification process. The self-assessment of the cocoa farmers - and of the cocoa organizations – against the “*Basic Criteria for a Sustainable Cocoa*” (Lineamientos Basicos para un Cacao Sostenible – LBCS) can be done automatically online in a customized portal that is leveraging the ITC Standards Map tool but for specifically the cocoa sector: www.standardsmap.org/lbcs

A unique feature of the self-assessment portal is that any profile of a cocoa farmer or an organization can be automatically linked to not only the basic requirements of self-assessment for sustainable cocoa, LBCS (acronym in Spanish), but also to any standard such as UTZ, Rainforest Alliance, etc. The market access potential for the farmers is powerful: self-assessment greatly helps them to be better prepared for certification and increases their ability to communicate with local and international buyers about their sustainability progress, using the sustainability diagnostic reports generated by the portal.

Partnerships have been established between ITC and SwissContact, the cocoa organizations (such as APROCASUR in Santa Rosa de Bolivar, Colombia), and the technical experts working in these organizations that are closely connected to the cocoa farmers themselves. The technical assistance offered by Swisscontact is financed by their donors (namely SECO in Switzerland) and complemented by the technical agents and agronomists from the cocoa organizations.

In March, ITC and Swisscontact staffs visited the cocoa producers to raise awareness about the LBCS tool and to test the applicability of the tool in the field. The organization of producers “APROCASUR” together with Swisscontact arranged the visits, which not only allowed the group to collect the feedback from the producers, but also to coordinate the different roles each stakeholder should take in the final phase of development of the tool and its implementation.

The ultimate objective is to empower the cocoa producers' organizations to take total ownership of the LBCS tool, allowing them to progressively make steps towards better and more sustainable practices in production while increasing access and competitiveness in international markets.

ITC STANDARDS MAP TEAM DELIVERS WORKSHOPS ON “EXPORT PROMOTION & PRODUCT CERTIFICATION & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT” IN PANAMA AND HONDURAS

During the first quarter of 2015, the ITC Standards Map team developed training programmes in Spanish around “Export Promotion & Product Certification & Sustainable Development”. During the month of March, these training programmes were implemented in two workshops in Panama and Honduras. The workshops promoted the use of Standards Map and its newly developed self-assessment tool, which allows producers and exporters to assess their level of compliance vis-a-vis a selection of voluntary standards, understand strengths, weaknesses and “compliance gaps”.

The workshops aimed to improve the participants' market analysis capability through the use of two ITC Market Analysis tools, Standards Map and Trade Map, improving their access to, and enhancing their competitiveness in international market access.



More than 40 participants attended the three days-workshops in Panama City, Panama and San Pedro Sula, Honduras, received an introduction to trade-related voluntary standards, codes of conduct and audit protocols, the role they play in international trade, the potential impact of standards, a full presentation of the self-assessment tool, as well as training on the use of the Trade Map.

At the end of the workshops, ITC trainers developed a work plan for each company by collecting all the requests and inputs voiced during the interactive discussions. In these upcoming months, E-learning sessions for all training participants will be carried out online, including a follow-up webinar with questions and exercises. Moreover, a follow-up workshop will be held three months from now in order to connect the companies with the Standards Setting Organizations or Certification Agencies related to the norms/standards in which participants would like to certify. ■

ITC SERIES ON NON-TARIFF MEASURES



2015 comes with new challenges for ITC's NTM programme. With an aim of better understanding the non-tariff obstacles to trade faced by enterprises the NTM team is targeting to launch large scale business surveys in 10 additional countries.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

COLOMBIA: On 5 March 2015, ITC, together with its partners presented the results of a large scale survey of Colombian exporters and importers in Bogotá. The forum, 'Challenges posed by non-tariff measures (NTMs) and trade barriers in Colombia, was organized with a view to promote joint action among the public and private sectors, together with academia, to find solutions to the problems identified. Arancha González, ITC's Executive Director, attended the meeting together with officials from various ministries as well as representatives of trade support institutions and other stakeholders from the private and public sectors.

The results of the study revealed that the majority of Colombian exporters and importers find NTM-related procedures to be a greater obstacle than the regulations

The team will continue with its activities of analysis of survey results, discussions with stakeholders in the country, and development of projects to counter the difficulties faced by exporters and importers.

themselves. Among the challenges highlighted by business owners were inadequate storage facilities for products during customs procedures, delays in quality testing, complications with certification and a lack of access to information regarding regulations.

The survey was conducted in collaboration with Universidad del Rosario's Centre for the Development of Competitive Strategies (CEPEC) between February and May 2014. A total of 731 companies were interviewed on their experience with NTMs when exporting or importing. The final report presenting the survey results and summarizing the insights from the stakeholder meeting will be published in the course of 2015.

For more information: <http://www.intracen.org/ntm/colombia/>

SURVEY LAUNCHES

Preparations are underway for new survey launches in Jordan, Mali, Uganda and Kyrgyzstan. Approximately 1,800 companies are expected to be interviewed in the 4 countries combined. These surveys are implemented in close collaboration with national authorities.

Furthermore, ITC, in collaboration with the European Commission (EC), will also carry out a survey on NTMs experienced by exporters and importers in the EU. In addition

to identifying difficulties faced by EU exporters, the survey will also allow for better understanding of the EU companies' perspectives on sourcing from and exporting to developing countries. Overall, 7,000 companies will be interviewed by the end of 2015 across the 28 EU countries.

UPCOMING PUBLICATIONS

A new report, “**Guinea: Company Perspectives**”, will be published in Q2-2015 joining 20 other reports from the ITC publication series on NTMs. When published, this report will be accessible free of charge at www.intracen.org/publications/ntm.

The country report on Guinea highlights that a large majority of Guinean enterprises are affected by non-tariff measures (NTMs). The study which is based on a survey of more than 300 companies in Guinea reveals that 95% of them face

NTM-related obstacles when exporting or importing their goods. The barriers are mainly encountered in the European Union and the regional ECOWAS markets. Companies face difficulties with stringency and complexity of European technical and compliance requirements in addition to lack of efficiency and transparency of inspection and taxation procedures at the national and regional level. The study finds that many of these problems can be addressed by simplifying the national administrative procedures and increased transparency.

TRADE OBSTACLES ALERT

The demo version of ITC's Trade Obstacle Alert (TOA) is now available in Spanish, English and French. The demo versions allow interested countries to try all functionalities and features of the site from the user and the administrator perspective. The TOA mechanism was launched in 2014 with an aim of strengthening the public-private dialogue triggered by the ITC NTM surveys to facilitate the identification and elimination of trade barriers. The TOA mechanism consists of an online reporting system, which connects companies and

relevant agencies, and an institutional framework, which ensures the cooperation of the different actors involved in the resolution of trade problems. The TOA allows trade operators to instantaneously alert public authorities of obstacles they face when exporting or importing their products. Responsible agencies can report back to them on the action taken. The TOA has been successfully launched in Côte d'Ivoire and is currently being implemented in Mauritius. ■

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For your information, the top 5 websites of referral traffic to ITC Market Analysis Tools for February 2015 are shown in the box below.

ITC's Market Analysis tools

Top 5 websites of referral traffic for February 2015

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2. Facebook www.facebook.com	
3. Wikipedia en.wikipedia.org	
4. Trade Doctor Korea tradedoctor.kotra.or.kr	
5. Pro Mexico www.promexico.gob.mx	

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