



## Round table 1:

# Enhancing export competitiveness of the agricultural sector by improving compliances with technical requirements, quality standards and conformity assessment.

### Background:

The NTM Business survey aims at giving MSMEs a voice and shedding light to the often invisible non-tariff obstacles to trade exporters face. Insights on the trade related hurdles of the private sector were drawn from interviews with over 600 companies in Tanzania.

In this context, close to 80% of the interviews ITC conducted were with exporters of agriculture sector – highlighting the importance of the sector in the country. Among them, 76% of exporters experienced difficulties complying with various trade regulations – either domestic or foreign.

Technical measures, which include both technical requirements and related conformity assessment measures account for 47% of the difficult NTMs cases. In fact, conformity assessment are a bigger concern for Tanzanian exporters compared to the technical requirements themselves.

Technical requirements cover product specifications related to quality standards, safety, production processes and sanitary requirements. They are usually implemented to protect consumers, animal health or the environment, or for national security. Likewise, conformity assessment are requirements such as certification and testing that prove compliance with underlying technical requirements.

Some of the key issues that exporters find difficult include:

- Compliance to quality standards such as Global G.A.P and C.A.F.E
- Domestic quality certification not being recognized abroad, including some instances in the EAC regional market.
- Lack of reliable local accredited testing laboratories.
- Some Tanzanian quality standards not in line with international or EAC standards (eg in cases of Tea and spices)
- Impact on quality due to limited storage and post-harvesting facilities.
- Sourcing of packaging materials that meet the minimum requirement for exports.
- Unable to export pigeon peas to India due to import restriction
- Difficulties obtaining Halal certification to export meat to the middle-eastern countries.
- Dairy and meat exports to EU has largely remained unsuccessful due to companies unable to meet the minimum processing standards, lack of traceability,

The underlying factor behind these issues are in most case company's inability to meet the requirements, high associated costs or charges, inadequate information, and limited or inappropriate facilities.



## Objective

- To hear from business association representatives the most pressing hurdles related to technical measures faced by their members, and from public sector agencies in their role in helping SMEs.
- To help define a set of recommendation / action plan aimed at alleviating the difficulties of Tanzanian exporters.

## Key Questions

- Lack of a National Accreditation Body (NAB) and accredited laboratories in Tanzania is one of the factor hindering exports. Is it worthwhile setting up a NAB or should the laboratories rely on other accreditation services such as South African Development Accreditation System (SADCAS) and Kenya Accreditation Services (KAS)?
- Obtaining quality certification from TBS is usually the most economical and fastest way for exporters but it is not always recognized by foreign buyers. How can recognition of TBS certification be improved? How far will development and promotion of quality brand / labels for agro products go to encourage larger acceptance of Tanzanian products (eg: in the Spices sector)?
- Are national product standards and testing measures in line with best international practices? Do they need to be updated?
- How can the issue of lack of facilities and company capacity for post-harvesting techniques (quality management skills) be addressed?
- Is bulk buying of good quality packaging materials an option to address some of the difficulties associated with packaging for exports?
- How can compliance to Global GAP and other voluntary standards be improved among exporters? Being certified to these standards require improvement in farming techniques, traceability and high costs. Furthermore, certification services usually have to be imported from abroad.
- What can be done to address the challenges related to the implementation of SQMT Act among EAC partners?
- How can Tanzanian business be made aware and prepared for changes in the SPS / TBT regulations in the international market? How can WTO's SPS and TBT notification system be used to enhance dialogue between the public and private sector?
- How relevant is the radioactive analysis certificate to ensure quality of exported products?

*The round table will begin with interventions from representative of the public and private sector entities on technical regulatory hurdles (product quality, standards, certification, testing, packaging requirement etc) and bring forward the needs of the sectors. This will be followed by consultations with participants on necessary follow up actions to alleviate these hurdles.*