



Annual Planning Workshop March 9-10, 2009

Minutes

Participants: Steve Jaffee (the World Bank), Ulrich Hoffmann (UNCTAD), Jason Potts (IISD), Deborah Schmiediger (SECO), Sasha Courville (ISEAL), Spencer Henson (University of Guelph), Thomas Michel (GTZ), Doris Günther (GTZ), Carsten Schmitz-Hoffmann (GTZ), Maria Backhouse (GTZ), Nadja Kabierski (TSPN secretariat), [Matthew Edwardsen (United States Forest Service), Luz Diaz Rios (the World Bank) - both partly via video conference, Anne- Sophie Poisot (FAO) - partly via telephone conference]

Moderator: Thomas Rieger

Minutes: Maria Backhouse, Nadja Kabierski, Thomas Rieger

Background:

With the official launch of the TSPN secretariat in January 2009 a revision of the existing work plan and an agreement on the most urgent topics and activities to be covered within the running year became necessary.

Therefore, the secretariat invited the Steering Committee members to the GTZ headquarters in Eschborn/ Germany for a planning workshop on March 9-10, 2009.

1. Report from the Secretariat:

The secretariat gave a presentation on its activities of the last months and current developments regarding the selection process of the Network coordinator, further developments of the web page, etc. A short report can be found in the Annex1.

2. TSPN's Role and Level of Work:

To sharpen the profile of TSPN and begin to flesh out a work program for the coming year, the Secretariat provided a framework (see annex2) for guiding discussions about core functions, primary clients, thematic areas of work, and specific activities. Three broad objectives were put forth in this framework, namely: (i) improving the standards-related awareness and strategic responses by key developing country decision-makers (private and public), (ii) improving the effectiveness and sustainable impact of technical assistance (and other capacity-building interventions) in this field, and (iii) improving standards systems themselves.

The ensuing discussion led to agreement that TSPN would not, at least initially, be directly active in the 'improving standards systems' realm, although several members of TSPN will remain closely involved in on-going initiatives in this area.

Thus the work of the TSPN will focus around the needs of two stakeholder groups: decision makers in developing countries (i.e. from governments, the private sector, certifiers and standard setters) and the organizations involved in Technical Assistance in the standards field.

With regard to objective (i) there was consensus that there are many gaps in knowledge and relatively few vehicles for broad-based dialogue on both controversial and more mundane technical subjects related to standards and trade, public and private sector roles, the future trajectory of standards, and related topics. TSPN will seek to provide an information



clearinghouse and a platform for dialogue, ensuring systematic involvement of developing country decision-makers and opinion-makers (e.g. journalists) in the latter. For some selected topics, TSPN will seek to play a leadership role in knowledge generation and stakeholder dialogue. For most topics, however, TSPN will partner with other organizations and networks.

With regard to objective (ii) the aim is to gather, aggregate, assess, and share lessons that are emerging from on-going development assistance interventions in this field and highlight aspects of 'good practice' throughout project/program life cycles. Perspectives on this will be gleaned from donors, technical implementing organizations, and developing country counterparts and beneficiaries. TSPN can play a leadership role in this area, while working closely with networks such as the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) to address complimentary topics.

TSPN will not seek to harmonize the activities and methods of its members. This is unrealistic given TSPN's diverse membership (now and in the future). Rather, the network will seek to intensify a process of shared learning amongst its members and promote, where possible, increased levels of coordination and/or direct collaboration between members in research, technical assistance, and other work.

3. Identification of Topics and Specific Activities:

Following this discussion on broad objectives, the SC members then focused on some specific thematic areas and considered the possible contributions which TSPN could make, prospective audiences/clients, and possible modes and activities of work. The preliminary discussion addressed the following questions:

- What initiatives are already being implemented in this area? What is the (perceived) scope of those efforts?
- Why does TSPN want to be active in this area? What comparative advantage might we have to contribute? Are there some unique/distinctive dimensions/perspectives that TSPN could bring to this topic? What value addition could TSPN make to on-going initiatives?
- Who are our target groups and what are their needs? How should the products and/ or results look like? Who will use it?
- What specific activities could be implemented? Through what means? Over what time frame?
- Who could be responsible for pursuing this line of activity? What partnerships could be anticipated?

Some considerable progress was made at the meeting, yet the detailed formation of work plans will have to be undertaken by the Secretariat and by Working Groups that will be formed. All TSPN members are invited to join one or more such working groups as well as the broader planning process of the TSPN activities in the upcoming years. The secretariat will send out an official registration email as soon as the ToR for the working groups will have been refined:

On the thematic area of "**Improving informed Decision Making in Developing Countries**", various topics were identified for which the TSPN could commission research, organize dialogues/debates,



provide training and undertake other knowledge management activities. A working group will be set up to flesh out initial proposals in this area.

In this context, two documents were distributed and discussed. Ulrich (UNCTAD) presented a proposal of turning the existing Capacity-building Task Force (CTF) on Environmental Requirements and Market Access for Developing Countries into a Sustainability Standards Intergovernmental Forum (SSIF). The idea is to address information gaps and facilitate an informed dialogue between political representatives of developing countries, also with the involvement of other key stakeholders in the standard setting, implementation, and conformity assessment areas (the proposal is contained in annex 3). The specific role that TSPN could play in such an initiative would need to be further considered. Steve (World Bank) distributed a note proposing future work by the TSPN involving e-learning events and e-debates on emerging 'hot' political economy topics in this field (see Annex 4).

Annex 5a provides a short summary of the of the related SC brainstorming on crucial issues and next steps to further elaborate on this topic. The issues flagged in the brainstorming will form the basis for the ToR and the activities of the concerned working group.

For the thematic area of **"Improving Technical Assistance"**, the brainstorming addressed the unique or peculiar aspects of development assistance in standards management, the complexity (and likely different perceptions) of the stakeholders, and what could be interesting and valuable entry points for TSPN to emerge itself in this topic. The brainstorming considered possible connections between near-term meetings/documentation and more medium-term development of guidelines/tool kits etc. Several specific areas of development assistance were noted (i.e. interventions to ensure smallholder market integration; interventions to enhance conformity assessment systems, etc) for which TSPN could devote focused activities on. However, another approach would be to address lessons/good practices at different stages of the 'project cycle' (i.e. beneficiary targeting; monitoring and evaluation) or in relation to certain institutional issues (i.e. public vs. private service delivery; (co-)financing arrangements), cutting across different types of interventions. A working group will be formed to prepare some specific proposals. Annex 5b provides a short summary of the brainstorming on this topic.

A third thematic area for TSPN work would relate to **"Improving Understanding of the Impact of Standards in a Development Context"**. Many initiatives have been started to better gauge the impacts of standards, both in industrialized and developing countries and in relation to international trade. Improved understanding of such impacts is essential, not only for key developing country decision-makers, but also for the donor and broader development assistance community. For the former, strategic decisions and public policies need to be guided increasingly by facts, rather than by anecdotes and claims. For the latter, improved impact assessment can assist in revising priorities, refining targeting strategies, and considering the need for complimentary interventions.

In the very near term TSPN can make a contribution to a workshop being planned by the STDF related to the costs and benefits of interventions in SPS capacity building. Perhaps this topic could be broadened to cover some other lines of standards-related interventions. The existing draft workshop concept paper of the STDF will be sent to all TSPN members for comments. Doris will make a synthesis to be shared with the STDF secretariat. In the medium term, TSPN could collaborate with COSA on an expanded program of farm, community, and supply chain impact assessments. The development of the ISEAL impacts Code and related processes should also be considered in terms of linkages with TSPN work.



4. Charter:

Slight changes to the charter were made. The SC agreed to include paragraph 5.7.2.(ii). Please find enclosed (annex 5) the new version which is also published at the webpage. The secretariat will also distribute the charter via newsletter to the TSPN members requesting comments.

5. Nomination of Developing Country Representatives to the SC/ Member Basis

The SC agreed to promote the nomination of developing country representatives to the Steering Committee as required in the Charter. The secretariat will call for proposals from the membership including a CV and a letter of intent, etc. **Additionally, the SC agreed to jointly find ways of funding the travel costs of these members, in case they or their institutions won't be able to provide compensation for travel expenses.**

An initiative will also be taken to identify a range of developing country-based institutions to become members of the TSPN. With regard to the objective of increasing the number of members it was agreed that especially organizations active in standards-related technical assistance and decision makers of developing countries shall be directly approached and encouraged to become SC members.

6. Communications Plan

Last but not least a draft plan for modes of communication was prepared by the secretariat. It covers questions like broadening the member basis, formalizing the membership newsletter format, corporate design, e-discussion, etc.

This plan will be sent to the SC members, who are now invited to comment. Definite feedback and approval on the following topics is needed from each SC member as the basis for the further implementation by the secretariat: 1. "Format of E-discussions", 2. "Formalizing the Membership" and 3. "Content of the newsletter".



7. "To do list"

Remaining tasks	Who is responsible?	Until when?
confirming the minutes (esp. section5: "travel costs for SC members from development countries" needs to be approved by each SC member)	SC	The members of the SC are invited to share their comments and amendments via track changes in the document until April, 15
Finding a topic for the annual conference	SC and Sec	Until June
Writing ToR for working groups	Group1: Ulrich, Sasha, Sec Group2: Steve, Matthew, Jason, Sec Possibly Group 3: Who will set up a working group on impact assessment or is responsible for the inclusion of this topic in which other working group?	In April
Inviting members to sign up to working groups	Sec	Until May
Inviting members via newsletter to comment the charter	Sec	done
Commenting the draft concept for the STDF CBA Workshop in October, identifying options for TSPN to contribute	Doris, Spencer, Jason (following consultation of TSPN members)	Until May
Call for proposals to nominate SC members from developing countries	Sec	After April, 15
Commenting communications strategy	SC	Until End of April
Publishing membership procedure at homepage	SC	End of April
Organizing e-discussions, e-learning courses	Steve, Sec ...	Starting End of April

8. Annex:

1. Interim activities report of the secretariat
2. TSPN framework including activities, level of work, and aspects of the major goal
3. Ulrich Hoffmann's proposal of setting up SSIF
4. Steve Jaffee's proposal on e-learning events and e-debates
5. Summary of thoughts on working groups activities:
 - a. Group 1
 - b. Group 2
6. Charter



Annex 1

Interim activities report of the secretariat

1. Background:

On January 1st, 2009 the secretariat of the Trade Standard Practitioners Network officially started its work. This was preceded by the disbursement of a grant from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the Bank) which the GTZ received on January the 23rd, 2008.

The basis of this grant fund is an agreement on the co- funding of the TSPN secretariat between the Bank and the GTZ sector project agricultural trade, which was signed in December 2008.

2. Personnel

The selection process for the network coordinator and the knowledge management coordinator started in July 2008. Two candidates were selected.

As the knowledge management coordinator Nadja Kabierski was contracted on October 15th, 2008. She was hired by the GTZ sector project in advance of the disbursement to ensure the organization of the annual conference, TSPN member meeting and Steering Committee Meeting in Berlin on December 8-10, 2008. She gained working experience in public relations, event management and project administration at a non governmental donor organization.

On January 1st, 2009 Lucie Bosotti was contracted part time (fifty per cent) for supporting the secretariat in administrative questions. She brings in the necessary knowledge on the GTZ administrative procedures and requirements.

Recently on March 1st, 2009 Johanna Zimmermann was contracted as student assistant for a minimum of three months, to support the secretariat.

Due to the deferment in finalizing the agreement by the contract departments of the Bank and GTZ, the candidate who was initially selected for the position of the network coordinator in August 2008 was not available any more.

Therefore the recruitment process was started again. The job announcement was published via various channels on January 15th. Applications were accepted until February 15th. Thereafter the selection process continued with interviews with the most promising candidates. The definite decision will be made within the next weeks, after consulting the Bank and considering their appraisal of the candidate via telephone or video conference.

3. Administration

With the receipt of the grant an internal accounting system was established in January 2009 in accordance with the book keeping requirements of GTZ.



4. Homepage

After the accounting system was in place the secretariat could start the process of contracting Caudill Web, Inc., which is hosting the homepage of TSPN www.tradestandards.org and whose contract with the World Bank expired in December 2008.

This process is still in progress. Formally correct proposal have been submitted by February 16th, 2009. Currently the GTZ department responsible for contracting is checking the requirements. The contract shall be signed by End of March, 2009.

Further technical developments like changes to the newsletter function, further development of the automated guide function and probably the development of an e-discussion forum shall be started thereafter.

With March 2nd, 2009 the revision of the content of the webpage was started. This includes the clarification of responsibilities for partner pages, updating of content and project links. Content revision of the sector pages in cooperation with partners, clarification of content contribution and contact persons for sector standards related requests to the secretariat. This process will take several weeks.

5. Conferences

In the last year the TSPN organized or co-organized several events through members of the steering committee and through the secretariat after and in advance of the fund disbursement:

5.1. ISEAL Conference “Governmental Use of Voluntary Standards”

The TSPN- member ISEAL organized in collaboration with TSPN the international conference on “Governmental Use of Voluntary Standards”. In case studies the experiences of various pilot projects, which were conducted all over the world were presented.

In total about 80 persons participated. The conference report and the case studies are available at:

<http://www.isealliance.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.ViewPage&PageID=1014>

5.2. “Assessing Costs, Benefits and Impacts of Compliance with Agricultural, Forestry and Food related Standards.”

For December 9th to 10th an international conference on “Assessing Costs, Benefits and Impacts of Compliance with Agricultural, Forestry and Food related Standards” was organized by GTZ at their office in Berlin.

About 50 representatives of various international institutions engaged in standards systems and their development joined the meeting. Objective was to give an overview of existing approaches to measure impacts of standard systems and finding a common understanding how TSPN could deal with this plethora of approaches.

A summary of the most interesting thoughts was developed and published at the TSPN homepage.



6. Member Meeting and SC Meeting 2008

GTZ organized and hosted the first Steering Committee Meeting of TSPN on December 8th, 2008 at their office in Berlin. Initially the following persons constitute the TSPN SC:

Steve Jaffee (the World Bank), Ulrich Hoffmann (UNCTAD), Deborah Schmiediger (SECO), Jason Potts (IISD), Thomas Michel/ alternate Doris Günther (GTZ), Matthew Edwardsen (United States Forest Service) and Pascal Liu/ alternate Anne-Sophie Poisot (FAO).

In Berlin the SC developed a draft Charter for the Network. The document was then presented at the member meeting, which took place on December 10th at the same venue. Furthermore the charter was published at the homepage and all members were invited to send their comments to the secretariat. This call for comments was sent out additionally with the newsletter function of the homepage. A template for comments was provided.

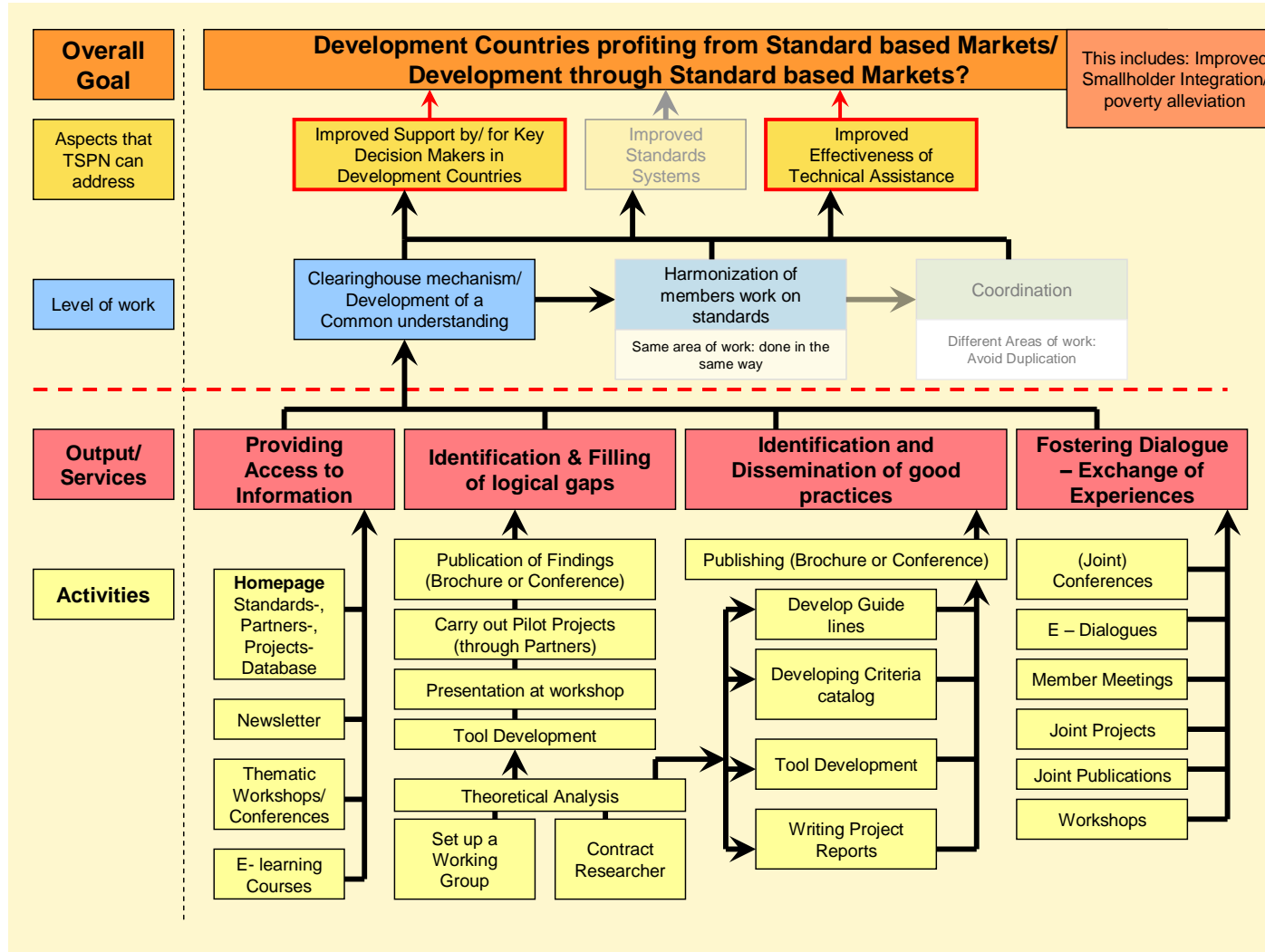
7. Planning workshop

For March 9-10, 2009 GTZ and the TSPN secretariat invited the members of the Steering Committee to Eschborn to attend a strategic planning workshop. Objective of the meeting was the revision of the existing work plan, agreements on topics and precise activities determining the further work of the secretariat, definition of the different roles of SC and secretariat, discussion of the constitution of the SC (e.g. nominating further members from development countries) and broadening the member basis, etc.

8. Draft Paper on Modes of Communications

A draft paper on suggested modes of communications was developed by March 8th, 2009. This draft includes questions like broadening the member basis, formalizing the membership, newsletter format, corporate design, e- discussion activities, etc. It was shortly presented at the planning workshop in Eschborn on March 9-10, 2009 and Steve Jaffee gave his comments and suggestions. These comments were included. The further development of the paper will be done through e-mail conversations with the SC members.

TSPN framework including activities, level of work, and aspects of the major goal





Annex 5

“Summary of thoughts on working groups activities”:

Annex 5 a

“Improve informed Decision Making in Developing Countries”:

- a. What is going on out there? (Or: What are others doing already?)
 - b. How can we contribute? What is the additional value of the TSPN in this field?
 - c. What should the product look like? Who will use it?
 - d. What are the next steps? Who is doing what, when, and how?
- ad a) Brainstorming results concerning the existing initiatives and processes in the field: Overlaps between the STDF and the TSPN, Marrakech Task Force Sustainable Public Procurement; OECD Guidelines; MOFCOM and IISD; case studies of the World Bank; SPS Action Plans done under trade studies and also supported by STDF; EU Standards Roundtable; Sustainable Trade Initiative of the Dutch Government and GlobalGAP Africa Server.
- Ad b) the objective is to improve informed decision-making by key decision makers in developing countries with respect to the interface with voluntary standards (including government representatives but also industry champions and journalists). The additional value of the TSPN could be: participation in standards development and implementation; facilitate sharing of best practices for strategic promotion of standards among developing countries via intergovernmental forums and thematic workshops; online platform; web-based forum concerning the implementation of private standards in developing countries; training and information for developing countries’ journalists to raise the public awareness about trade standards; identify systemic research opportunities which analyze the developing countries’ experiences as well as research with regard to public procurement; generate info/tools to enable informed discussion; North advocacy group vs. developing countries’ mistrust against trade standards.
- Ad c and d) The TSPN work should build collective wisdom on the interface, influencing and supporting other lead forums for dialogue including the Sustainability Standards Intergovernmental Forum, proposed by UNCTAD and the more technical forum between governments and voluntary standards as suggested by ISEAL, among others. It is clear that there are a number of possible topics that could be addressed by the TSPN under this theme (ranging from south-south trade, food security, food safety, north advocacy vs. developing countries’ mistrust of trade standards, development and trade impacts of standards, etc.). A mapping and prioritization of key issues would be a necessary initial step.

The following steps were suggested to move forward with this forum: (i) establish a working group to oversee this stream of work. This would include a representative from UNCTAD and from ISEAL as well as from the FAO among others; (ii) undertake a mapping exercise of key issues to be addressed over the next 3 years; (iii) develop an online tool box that would support key decision-makers in improving decision making around the use of voluntary standards (the advantage of a tool box is that it recognizes that there may not be one appropriate response or tool to a particular situation but the provision of a range of options with analysis that would be useful to decision makers to review); (iv) develop a webinars series that would stimulate learning and exchange among TSPN members and build awareness and interest in the tool box (this would also be a useful way to entice new members to join); (v) host occasional regional issue-focused workshops targeting developing country decision makers (in years 2 and 3).



Annex 5 b

“Improved Technical Assistance”:

- e. What is going on out there? (Or: What are others doing already?)
 - f. How can we contribute? What is the additional value of the TSPN in this field?
 - g. What should the product look like? Who will use it?
 - h. What are the next steps? Who is doing what, when, and how?
- a) The brainstorming results are: value chain mapping; capacity for local certification infrastructure; review of the own work of different institutions with the objective to improve strategy and effectiveness; rather little sharing of experiences other than best cases; some efforts by STDF or highlight different approaches; separate methods to identify needs; attempts at transparency; SCI and SCAN; could utilize generic AID effectiveness criteria.
- b) TSPN can catalyze a more intensive process of experience sharing, among its members, other developing country stakeholders, and elements of the private sector. TSPN can help to refine criteria for ‘good practice’ in standards-related development assistance. It can also examine and seek to improve the approaches taken by developing country governments in managing technical assistance in this area. TSPN can better associate standards-related development assistance and underlying poverty reduction objectives.
- c) The brainstorming (tentatively) identified two activities that TSPN could lead in the coming year. One would be a collective learning process, involving case study preparation and a small conference on the theme of ‘Best Lessons from Unsuccessful Projects’. Powerful lessons can be drawn from projects/programs whose trajectory didn’t follow original plans. Some projects do fail, yet important lessons are learned. Other projects make mid-course adjustments, again with important lessons being learned along the way. TSPN members, private companies, and developing country governments/others practitioners would contribute material and exchange perspectives.
- d) A second initiative would focus on the current ‘state of the art’ in the monitoring and evaluation of development assistance interventions in this field. This would highlight different approaches, apparent good practices, and the (technical, financial, other) difficulties in actually applying such practices.

In the medium-term, TSPN could organize learning processes around more specific types of interventions (e.g. conformity assessment; smallholder linkages)

The outputs from these learning processes would be made available to larger audiences through e-learning events, web-posting pertinent documentation, and developing short guidance notes.



Annex 6

Extract of Charter indicating Changes in Section 5.7.

5.7. SECRETARIAT

5.7.1. The Secretariat is housed and supervised by a Core Member organization of the TSPN.

5.7.2. The responsibilities of the Secretariat include but are not limited to the following:

- (i) Coordinates the preparation and implementation of the three-years work plan and annual work programs;
- (ii) Prepares an annual action plan which needs to be approved by the Steering Committee. The Secretariat is fully responsible for the coordination of the implementation. The Secretariat provides a mid term review on the current state of implementation after half a year. A final report about the completed annual planning phase will be presented for its approval at the annual SC meeting;**
- (iii) Manages the TSPN on a day-to-day basis, and monitors and assures progress in the implementation of specific activities;
- (iv) Recruits and manages research/knowledge sharing consistent with work plan objectives;
- (v) Contributes to fundraising of TSPN research, workshops, and other products;
- (vi) Manages TSPN finances in accordance with the financial management systems of the institution housing the Secretariat;
- (vii) Develops (and with SC approval) implements plan for securing the longer-term sustainability of the TSPN through the receipt of core funding;
- (viii) Leads effort to identify, capture, use, and showcase innovations and best practices by TSPN members and others with potential for broad dissemination;
- (ix) Further develops and manages the content of www.tradestandards.org;
- (x) Generates/ disseminates regular newsletters;
- (xi) Liaises with other networks and institutions to maintain up-to-date information on parallel and complementary analytical and policy/stakeholder dialogue initiatives;
- (xii) Provides SC members with regular reports on the status of TSPN activities;
- (xiii) Distributes to SC members an agenda for each SC meeting based on views and proposals solicited from SC members;
- (xiv) Circulates the records of the deliberations of the SC to SC members;
- (xv) Provides TSPN members with assistance in the development of proposals for activities; and
- (xvi) Receives and evaluates proposals from TSPN members.

5.7.3. Any proposals made to the SC are directed through the Secretariat prior to consideration by the SC. The Secretariat has responsibility for indicating to the SC that a proposed activity may be inconsistent with TSPN objectives/policies and such may not be implemented;