

Integrating Developing Country Producers into the Value Chain

TSPN CHARTER

April 2010

1. BACKGROUND

Developing country governments, producers, industry actors, and other stakeholders are increasingly seeking assistance to better enable them to respond to the challenges and opportunities associated with emerging standards so that they do not translate into non tariff barriers to trade. Donors, development agencies/institutions, and commercial operators, on the other hand, are facing the enormous challenge of identifying effective ways to promote changes and assist developing country actors in achieving this—on a sustainable basis.

As experience accumulates, the effectiveness of the assistance in the standards field is expected to improve as ‘good practices’ are identified and replicated, and therefore, past mistakes avoided. This assumes that interventions are properly monitored and evaluated and that there are ample fora for finding a common ground in terms of effective strategies and approaches to development assistance, and for sharing experiences and lessons learned. Yet, there have thus far been very few attempts to share experiences (by international agencies and/or the private sector) in facilitating capacity building for standards adoption and management in developing countries. Similarly, the sharing of information and experiences across different technical communities has also been very limited. That is, technical specialists working in the fields of social accountability, environmental standards, and food safety frequently operate and communicate within particular ‘silos’ with little cross-fertilization of ideas and experiences. This is becoming untenable in an era in which social, environmental, and food safety standards are increasingly being packaged together, especially in the specifications of major processing, manufacturing, retailing and service companies.

Thus, the TSPN has emerged to fulfill the need for a platform for dialogue, experience-sharing and identification of best practice -- in the nexus of social accountability, environmental sustainability, and food safety risk management -- in an attempt to identify effective strategies and approaches to improve the outcomes of public and private interventions in this field. The TSPN will improve this landscape through a more rigorous and systematic examination of implementation experiences while critically reviewing “what works and what does not”. The TSPN sectoral coverage primarily focuses on issues related to rural development that includes food, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and rural-based tourism.

2. TSPN: MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

a. The Trade Standards Practitioners Network (TSPN) is a community of practitioners that helps developing countries address the trade and development challenges and opportunities presented by emerging social, environmental, and food safety standards. The TSPN provides for the exchange of information between its members, developing country counterparts, and all other interested stakeholders.

b. The mission of the TSPN is as follows:

Mission: *Improve the effectiveness of initiatives that support developing country capacity and participation in the development and implementation of trade-related social, environmental, and food safety standards. We achieve this by means of policy research, knowledge management and exchange, and the dissemination of capacity building best practices. In doing so, the Network seeks to foster more sustainable, competitive, and equitable participation of developing countries in global value chains.*

c. The main objectives of the TSPN are, *inter alia*,

- Improve the effectiveness of technical assistance and related measures to strengthen developing country capacities by drawing lessons from implementation experiences and identifying 'good and innovative practices';
- Translate those findings into strategic and practical guidelines;
- Encourage the development of public private partnerships for developing countries to effectively respond to trade related standards;
- Assist developing country stakeholders to make informed decisions in relation to trade related standards and regulations;
- Undertake joint research and development of assessment tools;
- Provide a platform for knowledge management and exchange; and
- Develop and deepen collaboration among members in various analytical and field activities.

3. TSPN AFFILIATION

3.1. Affiliation Criteria

Applications for affiliation with the TSPN shall be submitted directly to the Secretariat who will assess the institution based upon the following criteria. Final approvals of the applications will be conducted by the SC. The criteria are as follows:

- (i) Commitment to the mission of the TSPN;
- (ii) Commitment to designating one or more individuals to become actively engaged with the TSPN;
- (iii) Ability and willingness to contribute to attaining TSPN objectives through sharing institutional knowledge, implementation experiences, and participation in TSPN sponsored projects and activities;
- (iv) Contribution of content to TradeStandards.org; and
- (v) Willingness to make financial and/or in-kind contributions to the TSPN.

The TSPN has four categories of affiliation.

- **Core Members:** Core membership is open only to non-profit organizations that contribute financially and/or technically to support TSPN activities. Only Core members can be part of the SC governance structures established for the TSPN, except for regional and/or national organizations representing developing countries.

- **Associate Members:** Organizations and/or individuals that contribute financially and/or technically to support TSPN activities.
- **Individual Members:** Persons working at the operational level in institutions engaged in the standards field, whose institutions are not a member or partner of the TSPN.
- **Partners:** Institutions which are in their status - e.g. governmental bodies or networks - unable to become a member under another network's umbrella. They liaise continually with TSPN.

3.2. Membership/ Partners Roles

TSPN members/ partners may:

- (i) Propose activities and products to the TSPN
- (ii) Implement activities approved in the TSPN work plan
- (iii) Raise funds for the TSPN
- (iv) Represent TSPN at external events in coordination with the Secretariat
- (v) Contribute content to TradeStandards.org
- (vi) Participate and lead Technical Groups

4. ANNUAL TSPN MEETINGS

- (i) TSPN members meet annually at a time and place determined by the TSPN Steering Committee (SC). The annual in-person SC meeting is normally held at the same venue prior or following the closure of the TSPN meeting. Similarly, TSPN member's meeting take place in parallel to content/thematic sessions.
- (ii) The TSPN Secretariat acts as the coordinating secretariat for the annual meeting.
- (iii) The Participants at the annual meeting include associate, affiliate, and individual members, and other invited guests.
- (iv) The topics to be discussed include areas of TSPN work, results of the thematic sessions, planning activities, reporting on past activities, etc.
- (v) The Secretariat prepares final reports of the annual meetings to be distributed among TSPN members.

5. GOVERNANCE/ORGANIZATION

The TSPN SC operates as the decision making body for the TSPN and in that capacity defines and directs the fund allocation strategy in accordance with the terms and procedures set out below. The Secretariat coordinates the day to day operations of the TSPN in accordance with the terms described below.

5.1. SC Membership: the membership of the SC is as follows:

The SC is comprised of at least one member from each of the following types of organizations with total membership by each type of organization not to exceed the number of organizations listed below.

- (i) Representatives from relevant multilateral technical/development organizations

- (ii) Representatives from relevant bilateral donors
- (iii) Up to three representatives from regional and/ or national organizations representing developing countries as selected and approved in accordance with Section 5.2 below; and
- (iv) Up to three representatives from international non-governmental organizations actively working in the area of standards and elected and approved in accordance with Section 5.3 below.

5.2. Every two years any member of the TSPN may propose **regional and/or national organizations** representing developing countries to be represented as members of the SC. Approval of up to three regional organizations to be represented for the maximum of two years and any selections to fill early terminations shall come from consensus from SC members from categories (i), (ii) and (iv). Candidate regional organizations must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- (i) The organization must carry out activities in line with TSPN objectives; and
- (ii) The organization must be capable of providing a high level entry point for regional or national initiatives related to emerging standards.

5.3. Every two years any member of the TSPN may propose **international non- governmental organizations** active in this field to be represented as members of the TSPN SC. Approval of up to three international non-government organizations (e.g. practitioners, research organizations, etc.) to be represented for the following two years and any selections to fill early terminations shall come from consensus of SC members from categories (i), (ii) and (iii). Candidate non-government stakeholder organizations must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- (i) The organization must carry out activities in line with TSPN objectives;
- (ii) The organization must have a proven track record of excellence in the field of trade standards;
- (iii) The organization must have strong ability to make a significant contribution to TSPN policies, and programs, and, preferably
- (iv) The organization should have experience in the delivery of technical assistance and/or training related to standards capacity building.

5.4. SC Meetings

5.4.1. Meetings. The SC meets at least twice a year. At least one meeting is in person (the Annual Meeting). The second meeting, and any additional meetings, may be in person or by telephone/video conference. It is a requirement for SC membership to be present in person at least at one SC meeting annually, or to send an alternate.

5.4.2. Chair. The chair of the SC (the Chair) is one of the representatives under Section 5.1 (i) (ii) or (iii) above, and appointed by the SC members. The Chair rotates every two years. Candidate proposals for the Chair may be made any SC member and shall be elected by a simple majority.

The primary responsibilities of the Chair are to ensure that the roles of the SC as designated in section 5.5.1 are fulfilled adequately and the agenda setting and management of SC meetings. The Chair is also responsible for the mediation of conflicts that may arise in relation to appointment of new members to the TSPN, designation of SC members, and/or any other issue requiring mediation at the request of the Secretariat.

5.4.3. Vice-Chair. The SC will also designate a Vice-Chair to assume the responsibilities of the Chair for instances when the Chair is unavailable to fulfill his/her responsibilities. The Vice-Chair will be proposed by the SC and elected by a simple majority.

5.4.4. Participation. In addition to the SC members under Section 5.1 above, participants from the TSPN Annual Meeting/Forum may attend open sessions of the SC in an observer capacity, although the Chair of the SC may declare certain sessions of the SC closed to observers.

5.4.5. Materials. Agendas and materials to be considered at SC meetings are provided by the Secretariat or the Chair at least 15 days in advance of such meetings.

5.4.6. Decisions. A quorum by the SC includes at least one member of each category of the SC or at least a majority of all SC members. Under normal circumstances the SC is a non-voting body that works by consensus. In the event that the SC is unable to achieve consensus on a matter, SC approval will be given if at least half plus one of the SC members all agree.

5.5. TSPN SC Functions

5.5.1. Role: The SC:

- (i) Defines the policy and strategy for TSPN;
- (ii) Approves the annual TSPN work program and financial plan for activities;
- (iii) Takes note of parallel activities contributing to TSPN objectives, considers means of enhancing the alignment of these activities with the TSPN work program, and defines their status and relationship within or to the overall TSPN program;
- (iv) Defines selection criteria for activities included in the approved work program;
- (v) Monitors and evaluates program progress, as reported in six month progress reports prepared by the Secretariat and through such other means as the SC determines;
- (vi) Contributes to the fund raising activities as much as possible; and
- (vii) Review and approval of selected projects from the TSPN membership that significantly impact the annual TSPN work program.

5.5.2. Reporting. As appropriate to the annual meeting/forum, the Chair or the Vice Chair reports on the progress and quality of the TSPN program to the annual stakeholder meetings. As agreed by the SC, the Chair or his/her designee seeks to report six month TSPN progress.

5.6. TSPN Work Program

5.6.1. The TSPN will operate within the frame of a three-year strategy and specific annual activity plans. The three-year strategic plan and annual work programs are prepared by the

Secretariat in close consultation with SC members, other TSPN members, and TSPN working groups (when applicable).

5.6.2. At least 15 days in advance of the SC Annual Meeting, the Secretariat distributes the draft TSPN work program and accompanying agenda to the SC members.

5.6.3. The draft TSPN work program includes, *inter alia*:

- (i) Status report on the on-going activities and their respective costs and achievements;
- (ii) Description and justification of proposed new activities and their respective costs and projected outputs;
- (iii) Financial report;
- (iv) Budget for upcoming year;
- (v) Schedule of major meetings, or events in which TSPN would be active; and
- (vi) Summary business plan for TSPN and related or parallel activities.

5.6.4. The SC discusses and approves an annual TSPN work program at its Annual Meeting.

5.6.5. "Major changes" to the three-year strategy or annual work program of activities and financial plan merits SC approval. SC members are advised by the Secretariat in a timely manner of any changes or modifications to the annual work program that might be required.

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 strategic 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 midterm 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;

5.8. Technical Groups

The Secretariat in coordination with the SC will set up, when appropriate, Technical Groups to provide advice or support the planning and implementation of specific TSPN activities, for example: thematic workshops and conferences, etc.

Technical Groups may be comprised of Core, Associate and Individual Members as well as Partners. Each Technical Group will be required to appoint a chair who will, in case the Secretariat is not facilitating the Working Group activities itself, report directly to the Secretariat on the activities of the Technical Group in accordance with a pre-approved work plan for the Technical Group. Work plans for Technical Groups will be established in coordination with the Secretariat and the Chair of the SC within 60 days of the establishment of such a group. In all instances each Technical Group will be required to provide an update on the progress of their activities at each TSPN Annual Meeting.

6. AMENDMENTS

6.1. Amendments to the Governance Arrangements for TSPN may be made by affirmative agreement by all SC. Such affirmative agreement may not arise from a mere lapse of a no objection period, whereas affirmative agreement by all members present at a SC meeting shall be sufficient. The Secretariat shall maintain and distribute clear records of any such amendments.