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Committee on Trade Facilitation

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**NOTIFICATION OF ARRANGEMENTS AND PROGRESS IN THE PROVISION
OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT
FOR CATEGORY C DESIGNATIONS**

COMMUNICATION FROM NICARAGUA

The following communication, dated 3 August 2020, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Nicaragua for Members' information.

Nicaragua hereby notifies information on the arrangements concluded and progress made in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support for the following category C designation, in accordance with Article 16 of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 1.3	Enquiry Points	C	22 February 2020	22 June 2023
Donors: To be determined				
<p>To date, Nicaragua has not received any technical assistance or capacity building support from donors to implement the provisions of Article 1.3. The notified requirements, with the exception of point 5, therefore still apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Administration of the Institute for Agricultural and Livestock Protection and Health (IPSA) website and support for updating the content of this website; website administrator. Creation of the IPSA outreach office; IPSA outreach office official. Technical assistance from computer and programming specialists to develop and improve website automation for the National Commission for the Control and Regulation of Toxic Substances (CNRCT), so as to meet the Commission's new requirements; and financial assistance to acquire computer equipment, software and licences. Technical and financial assistance for the creation and implementation of a TFA-consistent national information system for the Ministry of Health (MINSAL). Financial assistance for setting up an information system that provides immediate and relevant information on formality status and migration. <p><u>Additional technical assistance and capacity building:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a help desk (software) enabling users and officials to interact in real time and a glossary of frequently asked questions, with a view to improving the information and communication service provided by IPSA. Establishment of technological kiosks with the necessary equipment in Puerto Corinto and at the border posts of El Guasale, El Espino, Las Manos, San Pancho and Peña Blanca in order to provide land freight carriers with information and access to the procedure management services offered by the Directorate-General of Migration and Foreign Nationals (DGME). Capacity building for technical staff from the CNRCT to ensure sustainable implementation of the proposed measures. Assistance is also needed to establish a computer system to manage formalities and services for CNRCT users. <p>With regard to point 5, the above-mentioned requirements have been met using DGME funds. An information system for online processing of passports is being set up, as are interactive chats and a call centre for formality checks and follow-up. Forms for passport processing are available on the online platform.</p>				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 5.1	Notification for Enhanced Controls or Inspections	C	22 February 2020	22 December 2020
Donors: Resources from IPSA				
<p>Progress made in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</p> <p>In order to comply with Article 5.1 of the TFA ("Notifications for enhanced controls or inspections"), Nicaragua notified the need for: 1. Advice on completing notification procedures, 2. A section on the IPSA website where the country's sanitary and phytosanitary status can be published, together with International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and WTO information.</p> <p>In this regard, IPSA's own funds have been used to provide consulting on "Support for the review and preparation of procedural manuals for the substantive directorates and support areas" - a process through which agricultural quarantine procedures are being updated. Moreover, efforts are under way to develop detection procedures for entry points and a notification completion procedure for the Plant Quarantine Department of the Agricultural Quarantine Directorate and the Plant Health Directorate.</p> <p>The Plant Health Directorate has a phytosanitary alert procedure for notifying the presence of regulated pests. The same procedure is used to provide notification of international phytosanitary alerts issued through the IPPC website.</p> <p>The Animal Health Directorate immediately (within 24 hours) notifies the OIE World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) through the Nicaraguan delegate. A final report is sent to the OIE to remove the alert once the outbreak has been controlled or eradicated.</p> <p>In light of the above, Nicaragua will not require technical assistance or capacity building support from donors to implement the measure.</p>				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 5.3	Test Procedures	C	22 February 2022	22 June 2024
Donors: To be determined				
<p>Progress made in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</p> <p>Nicaragua has not yet received assistance or capacity building support from donors to implement the provisions of Article 5.3. The notified requirements therefore still apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building to improve phytosanitary diagnostic laboratories in the departments of Managua, Estelí, León and Rivas, and the national chemical and biological residues laboratory, through the acquisition of equipment, materials and reagents, the enhanced implementation of diagnostic methods, staff training, and the strengthening of regional laboratory infrastructure, with a view to better serving exporters and importers of products and by-products of plant origin. <p>Details of financial assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reagents, consumables and equipment for central and regional laboratories. Strengthening of the diagnostic and technical capacity of personnel (diploma-based training, workshops, specialized courses, post-graduate courses, internships, etc.). Remodelling and refitting of three regional phytosanitary diagnostic laboratories in the departments of Estelí, León and Rivas. <p><u>Additional assistance and capacity building:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance and capacity building support to improve diagnostic techniques through the validation and accreditation of test methods, as well as to implement a quality management system at the National Laboratory for Phytosanitary Diagnostics and Seed Quality and standardize the methodologies of regional laboratories as a prerequisite for accreditation in central laboratories under ISO/IEC 17025:2017. 				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 10.4	Single Window	C	22 February 2020	22 June 2022
Donors: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)				
Progress made in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:				
In order to comply with Article 10.4 of the TFA ("Single Window"), Nicaragua notified the need for:				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial support for acquiring equipment and licences and contracting specialized computer design and development services, with a view to the continued improvement of the VUCEN system. 2. Technical assistance to improve the system. 				
<u>Additional technical assistance and capacity building:</u>				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Implementation of the "foreign trade e-signature", with a view to effectively improving trade with partner countries and increasing competitiveness in international trade through a reliable system that will enable government bodies involved in procedures relating to the import and export of goods to generate electronically signed documents. 				
In this regard, it should be noted that points 1 and 2 are currently being implemented under Border Integration Programme 3484/BL-NI. The Single Window component of that programme, entitled "Efficient and effective border control procedures under the Border Integration Programme (BIP)", is funding operational aspects of the VUCEN system, including the functional expansion of VUCEN's IT system and the development of its technological platform.				
Regarding point 3, the requirement concerning the implementation of the "foreign trade e-signature" still applies.				
Nine foreign trade-related institutions will work with the VUCEN system to simplify procedures and reduce the time taken to obtain import and export permits.				