Rolling out phytosanitary measures to expand market access

The project focused on strengthening phytosanitary capacity among member countries of the Plant Protection Committee of the Southern Cone (COSAVE). This was intended to maintain and improve their phytosanitary status, facilitate trade in agricultural goods in the region and help maintain or improve access to foreign markets. To that end, the goal was to build up a regional phytosanitary information system, enhance the capacity for pest risk analysis, improve inspection and phytosanitary certification, and create tools to strengthen phytosanitary capacity and assess the impact of the implementation.

An independent evaluation team evaluated this project.Find out more about the evaluation and its findingshere.

STDF/PG/502

Status
Completed

Start Date
01/11/2015

End Date
30/04/2019

Project Value (US$)
$1,796,998

STDF Contribution (US$)
$1,084,270

Beneficiaries
Argentina
Bolivia
Brazil
Chile
Paraguay
Peru
Uruguay

Implementing Entities
Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

Partners
International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
National Plant Protection Organisations of all of the beneficiary countries
Southern Cone Plant Health Committee (COSAVE)

Background

The growth in trade in plants and products of plant origin over the past decade has led to a significant increase in the risk of introduction and spread of regulated pests. Countries face the challenge of facilitating the international movement of people, goods and services while ensuring that their phytosanitary status does not present risks exceeding levels prescribed by national plant protection organizations (NPPOs). This entails protecting plant resources on the basis of scientific knowledge without negatively affecting trade flows more than is strictly necessary. The challenge is considerable, particularly for the developing countries.

Participating countries are major producers, exporters and importers of plants and products of plant origin and have a significant share in intra and extra regional trade. The implementation of phytosanitary measures is therefore a major concern for them, as is trade facilitation and market access. Despite significant differences regarding implementing phytosanitary measures in each country, all of them recognized the need to improve their procedures.

The project aimed to create tools and build capacity for beneficiary countries to improve their phytosanitary measures on the basis of a regional and innovative approach. The capacity building and tools targeted specific concerns that were identified through collaborative work done at the regional level by technical panels and the COSAVE steering committee, as well as through the IICA's performance, vision and strategy tool.

Results

Strengthened phytosanitary surveillance (general and specific)

About 54 professional staff from the region's seven NPPOs improved their knowledge and skills in collecting and organizing information on pests and in designing and implementing specific procedures for general surveillance and specific surveys. The region now has support tools to implement the phytosanitary surveillance procedures indicated in ISPM 6, which take into account the specificities of each country. This process required strong region wide institutional coordination and collaboration, which resulted in strategic measures being jointly established for the region.

Strengthened capacities in pest risk analysis

The region's capacity to implement, design or assess pest risk analysis for transporting plant products nationally, regionally and globally improved. About 37 professional staff at member country NPPOs improved their knowledge and skills for implementing ISPM 11. They did so by strengthening their capacity to assess the economic, non trade and environmental impact of introducing pests. They also improved their skills in assessing the risk of introducing plants as pests (weeds). The countries in the region now have tools to help them implement the components of ISPM 11.

Strengthened inspection and phytosanitary certification capacities

The project bolstered the virtual regional phytosanitary inspection school, a tool providing comprehensive and systematic training on inspection and phytosanitary certification used by the seven COSAVE NPPOs. The school's international module, which covers topics common to all the countries, is now up and running. The module has been completed by 54 officials and a new group was set to start in 2020.

To supplement the international module, each country has designed a programme of study for a national module, which is already being implemented in some countries. The international module teaches participants how to conduct inspections according to the WTO's Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and is based on IPPC ISPMs. The virtual school model and experience from setting it up have been made available to other countries and regions of the world.

Impact assessment

A methodology to assess the impact of implementing phytosanitary measures has been created, developed and validated. At least 20 professional staff at NPPOs have acquired skills in using the methodology. Countries can now assess the costs, identify the benefits and desired – as well as undesired – effects of implementing specific phytosanitary measures, and identify the adjustments required to implement them and achieve the desired goals. The methodology serves as a tool to maintain and improve the phytosanitary situation, open up access to markets and facilitate trade.

Recommendations

Joint management and coordination arrangements

The arrangements used for managing the project, with coordination taking place at various levels among directors and high level officials from the NPPOs and COSAVE, allowed for proper followups and decision making. As such, desired results were achieved on time. Planned activities were also successfully carried out, thanks to constant communication and consultation between the NPPOs and the implementing agency (IICA), as well as the active, leading role played by the NPPOs and COSAVE.

Regional and participatory approach

The training and development of tools through a regional and participatory approach proved to be an effective strategy for strengthening the specialist network and improving cooperation among officials from countries in the region. This approach fostered the harmonization of concepts, criteria and common technical language, as well as processes, identification of common operational issues and finding joint solutions. It now can be assumed that the gap between the countries' implementation of phytosanitary measures, especially ISPM 6 and 11 and the ISPMs on inspection and certification processes, have been reduced. As such, negotiating capacities at the national and regional levels were improved.

Shared experience with other countries and regions

A good practice identified during the project was to replicate the experience gained during the implementation of the project, including the coordination management arrangements, in other interested countries and regions. All of the materials and tools developed during the project are available on the websites of the IICA, STDF and IPPC, so that they can be used across the world.

It is hoped that the tools and methodologies developed (case studies) will be replicated in beneficiary countries and that the experiences will be shared with other countries and regions. This positive experience will serve as a basis for the development of future projects that address regional priorities in the area of plant health, as well as other areas across the region and globally.