



SPS Capacity Building

The project aimed to strengthen the capacity of government officials responsible for food safety, animal and plant health, and agricultural trade to effectively implement SPS measures. More specifically, it focused on improving technical capacity for testing, inspection, certification and approval procedures, and quarantine treatments; enhancing scientific knowledge to perform risk assessment, determine appropriate levels of protection, and monitoring and surveillance; and improving effectiveness of SPS enquiry point and notification authority.

STDF/PG/170

Status

Completed

Start Date

01/04/2008

End Date

31/07/2010

Project Value (US\$)

\$424,698

STDF Contribution (US\$)

\$389,648

Beneficiaries

Nepal

Implementing Entities

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Partners

Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Nepal

Background

Agricultural production provides a livelihood for over 74% of the population of Nepal and accounts for 32% of its GDP. Agricultural development initiatives not only encourage economic growth but also contribute to poverty reduction. There is potential to expand exports of food and agricultural products through the transformation of subsistence agriculture into commercial agriculture. However, these opportunities are restricted by the country's weak Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) system. The capacity of the SPS control regime in Nepal to develop and implement SPS measures has been evaluated inadequate and has the potential to affect the domestic economy, as well as human health and animal and plant health.

Developed through an STDF project preparation grant, this project addressed capacity needs identified through the Enhanced Integrated Framework's Diagnostic Trade Integration Study for Nepal (2010), which are essential to facilitate exports of high-value agricultural food products, enhance the safety and quality of food in the domestic market and promote agricultural

productivity. The project focused on the development and delivery of an SPS training programme targeting government staff at the national and sub-national level.

Results

Increased SPS awareness and knowledge among government officials

Over 600 mid-level and field technicians from the Government of Nepal attended workshops and improved their knowledge and skills related to SPS management. Beneficiaries included food inspectors, veterinary inspectors and quality control officers, animal quarantine officers, plant protection and quarantine officers, as well as staff of the SPS Enquiry Point and Notification Authority. Participants will continue to serve as trainers in the future, thereby ensuring the sustainability of project benefits. Participants were educated in the areas of food safety, plant/animal health to deliver further SPS related trainings in risk assessment, determining appropriate levels of protection, product recall and appeal, setting and monitoring pesticide residue, etc.

Improved technical skills for monitoring and enforcing national SPS measures

SPS training materials and curriculum focused on good agricultural practices were developed for mid-level and junior officers responsible for monitoring and enforcing SPS measures. Course content and materials were produced by international consultants in food safety and animal and plant health for the Training of Trainers (ToT) programme and trainings in SPS sectors. A total of 51 master trainers received hands-on, result-oriented training, including essential introductory, specialized and refresher training modules. More than 75% of participants reported that they observed positive changes in on-the-job performance, while over 40% confirmed that they had delivered trainings to others. Thanks to this comprehensive package of SPS training materials, user guidelines and manuals, future trainings in Nepal can be conducted by the participants of this project and the materials can be used for on-the-job guidance and reference.

Enhanced coordination among SPS implementing organizations in Nepal

This project contributed to increase the degree of coordination among departments under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative (currently the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development), the SPS enquiry point and the SPS Coordinating Committee. Representatives from various sectors, responsible for implementing the SPS Agreement in Nepal, attended the training sessions on how to improve their coordination for the implementation of SPS measures and to proactively and effectively carry out their respective roles and responsibilities. During the final workshop, overall progresses and future activities were identified for the continued application of SPS Measures and trade obligations.

Recommendations

Future SPS capacity building

This project highlighted the importance of conducting refresher trainings to update officers and technicians with the latest developments in the related fields. Based on findings from a post training evaluation, a refresher training programme was designed and implemented for 15 master trainers. Future trainings can maintain engagement and relevance of the project.

Consolidating a core group of SPS experts

The transfer of trained staff to new posts where knowledge gained may not be relevant can reduce the effectiveness of the project. Working with high level decision makers to increase awareness about the impact of having a core, permanent group of SPS experts, and finding ways to retain trained staff through incentives, is necessary to ensure project success and sustainability.

Strengthening the capacity along the value chain

Improving SPS capacity must be a priority of the public and private sector to ensure safety of agricultural products for export. Although capacity building within the private sector was not covered by this project, it plays a critical role in enabling and facilitating the implementation of adequate SPS measures. Strengthening capacity of value chain actors across production was recommended as an objective for future projects related to SPS enhancement.