Developing a network of PCE facilitators

The overall purpose of the project was to enhance developing countries' capacity to evaluate their phytosanitary capacities. The project aimed to improve national-level coordination and coherence of plant protection programmes through improved needs assessment and action planning. The project contributed to this objective by developing a pool of qualified experts to serve as facilitators of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) tool, so that, in future, they can act as facilitators of phytosanitary needs assessments and action planning processes in developing countries. It is expected that improved performance and better plant health status will, as a result, boost safe trade and improve market access for SPS-sensitive products from developing countries.

Watch a short film on the project here.

STDF/PG/401

Status
Completed

Start Date
01/04/2014

End Date
31/12/2017

Project Value (US$)
$1,194,404

STDF Contribution (US$)
$734,088

Beneficiaries
Developing countries

Implementing Entities
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Partners
Centre of Phytosanitary Excellence

Background
A pool of individuals was trained to facilitate phytosanitary needs assessment and action planning processes using the PCE tool. The PCE is a management tool designed by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat.

PCE is a crucial element to strategic planning, which can assist national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) to prioritize their activities and develop appropriate national phytosanitary action plans. Although the PCE is designed in principle as a self-assessment tool, effective application may require the support of competent facilitators. Among other qualities, facilitators must

display a thorough understanding of plant health, stakeholder management skills, knowledge of national and international phytosanitary control systems, familiarity with the IPPC, the specific obligations of its contracting parties and the relevant international standards. Most countries are currently constrained by the lack of a suitable facilitator that can lead the PCE process, leading to numerous requests to the IPPC (directly or channelled through the FAO) to facilitate application of the tool. It is clear, therefore, that there is considerable and increasing demand for qualified individuals to provide this service.

Results

Pool of selected and trained experts on the PCE

Over 160 applications were received in response to participate in the PCE facilitator training programme. The selection criteria was applied to select 66 candidates. Training material included pre-learning exercises, tests, a case study, a manual, methods for assessing the participants and the training and e-learning. All training material developed integrated adult learning concepts. Five global training workshops were conducted, 40 phytosanitary experts from 36 countries and 20 lawyers from 13 countries were trained in addition to FAO staff. Master trainers trained on (i) the Logical Framework Approach, (ii) facilitation techniques and (iii) the assessment of candidates, conducted the training workshops. Out of the 40 phytosanitary experts, 4 trainees were selected during the training workshops on the basis of their performance, their language skills and their availability to conduct a PCE.

Developed pool of validated PCE facilitators

The selected four candidates applied PCE throughout three missions conducted in Barbados, Guinea, Kenya and Madagascar, under the supervision of an IPPC staff or representative. The 4 PCEs were conducted under a co-financing with existing FAO projects or with the countries. Each trainee was assessed according to a grid with criteria developed to assess their performance. The trainees were validated as PCE facilitators and flagged as such in the IPPC roster of experts. It is foreseen that PCE facilitators could themselves become trainers for other PCE facilitators, thus future expansion of the PCE facilitators' pool will follow. A pool of 9 trainers is available to deliver the training again, when resources allow it. The IPPC Secretariat will ensure that six other PCE facilitators will be validated, this number can increase in case there will be additional resources.

Enhanced capacity to evaluate national phytosanitary capacities

Four phytosanitary capacity development strategies were elaborated as a result of the PCEs in Barbados, Guinea, Kenya and Madagascar.

Improved and disseminated training package

The training programs were reviewed and training materials were improved based on workshop evaluation reports. The pedagogic methodologies used during the training, the content and flow of the course proved to work very efficiently. The design of this course and its content are now available for further use and trainings.

Outcomes from the project were promoted to advocate for the implementation of the PCE and to make known the current or completed PCE projects through highlight news, presentations during IPPC regional workshops and a video, available on the IPPC website.

As an additional output, the manual "Preparing a national phytosanitary capacity development strategy" which was part of the training package is published and now available on the Phytosanitary Resources webpage in English, French and Spanish. This represents a comprehensive summary explaining the PCE methodology.

Recommendations

Continuing efforts to promote the project outcomes

The IPPC Secretariat will ensure that the project results are rendered sustainable through:

- Continued promotion of the PCE in the IPPC networks
- Continued strengthening of the PCE facilitators network
- Finding opportunities to conduct again the 2 weeks intensive training
- Training of further PCE facilitators through the conduct of a PCE.

Improving financial mechanism to ensure wider participation

The criteria for funding the participation of trainees followed the level of income of the trainee’s country. Therefore participants from developed countries were often unable to attend if their own institution was not funding them. This financing mechanism limited the participation of a few good candidates. This condition may be revised and made more flexible for future training

projects.

Continuing capacity building

Further training courses is essential to refresh the knowledge of the trainers and validated facilitators, to train as trainers PCE facilitators or to train new PCE facilitator candidates. Donors involved or with an interest in phytosanitary capacity building should be encouraged to promote the organization of regional or global PCE facilitators training courses.

Promoting the implementation of PCEs through projects and grant proposals

This project allowed building the first pool of PCE facilitators. The PCE significantly develops the phytosanitary capacities of countries and facilitates their access to markets. The STDF and other donors should be encouraged to pursue efforts in this sense and support and promote the implementation of PCEs in development projects and grant proposals.