

Strengthening Zambia's phytosanitary capacity for plant exports

The project aimed to improve Zambia's phytosanitary capacity and increase confidence among trading partners, especially Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States, by complying with their phytosanitary requirements. This will contribute to the growth of plant and plant-product exports as well as the strengthening of the phytosanitary regulatory system.

STDF/PG/481

Status

Completed

Start Date

01/11/2018

End Date

31/12/2022

Project Value (US\$)

\$629,697

STDF Contribution (US\$)

\$254,675

Beneficiaries

Zambia

Implementing Entities

EIF National Implementation Unit (NIU), Zambia

Partners

Plant Quarantine and Phytosanitary Service (PQPS), Ministry of Agriculture, Zambia

Southern African Development Community (SADC)

Industry associations

PhytoSolutions Consultancy

Background

Zambia's horticultural sector has faced significant challenges, making it difficult for local farmers to export their produce to the global food market. Limited resources affected the Plant Quarantines and Phytosanitary Services' ability to effectively carry out the functions of a National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO). Plant health inspectors and traders faced difficulties in accessing up-to-date information on SPS export and import requirements, resulting in the application of unjustified and arbitrary SPS measures to consignments and slow processing times.

To address these issues, part of the project entailed reviewing SADC's phytosanitary requirements. Based on the review, an action plan was developed to boost exports to the SADC region. The project also looked at regulations to identify and address shortcomings and define the roles and responsibilities of Zambia's NPPO. An action plan for legislative change was proposed at the end of the project.

Overall, the project enhanced Zambia's institutional and operational phytosanitary capacity facilitating enhanced trade in plants and plant products.

Results

Improved access to trading partners' phytosanitary requirements and understanding of risk-based approaches to managing trade in plant products

The project will identify opportunities for Zambia to export plants and plant products into the SADC region. Detailed information on import requirements applying to plants and plant products will be required by each member state. Then, it will identify relevant information sources and how they can be accessed for updates. The compiled information, hard and soft copy, will be made available to interested parties. The information will then be assessed to determine whether Zambian exports comply with other members' phytosanitary requirements, and if not, what additional measures need to be implemented by producers and/or Zambia's NPPO.

Political and operational changes to Zambia's phytosanitary regulatory system will be necessary to better manage plant health risks. This means that pests representing high risks must be prioritised for attention within PQPS operations and all risk management options must be examined to ensure that practical and cost-effective measures are adopted based on the associated level of risk.

Recommendations developed on potential opportunities for improving Zambians exports and to improve Zambia's phytosanitary regulatory system will be collated into an Action Plan. This plan will also establish priorities for making changes to Zambia's phytosanitary system and will consider a more risk-based approach. The Action Plan is a document that PQPS can use to develop its five-year Strategic Plan.

Formal recognition of the roles and responsibilities of Zambia's National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO)

Zambia's NPPO, the PQPS, operates under The Plant Pests and Diseases Act, which provides for the eradication and prevention of the spread of plant pests and diseases in Zambia. The Plant Pests and Diseases Act CAP 233 (of 1994) does not formally recognise the roles and responsibilities of Zambia's NPPO or the country's SPS obligations as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), as well as a signatory contracting party of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

The project will then review the Plant Pests and Diseases Act and associated Regulations to address shortcomings in Zambians legislation regarding the phytosanitary control system. This represents an opportunity to bring clarity to the NPPO's role in SPS coordination in Zambia.

The project also aims at approving the Bill, through the appropriate government processes. With support from the Ministry of Agriculture of Zambia (MOA), it will involve the formulation of an Action Plan to set out all the steps required for the Bill to be adopted.

Strategies developed for future operations of Zambia's NPPO and a Zambia-led regional plant quarantine pest surveillance programme

The project will carry out a workshop to develop a five-year Strategic Plan for Zambia's PQPS. It will be developed through a five-day session for ten senior PQPS staff from PQPS's head office. The workshop, facilitated by an external consultant, will provide the staff the chance to participate in a systematic process of envisioning the service in a five-year time framework, translating that vision into broadly defined goals/objectives, and lastly, using the Action Plan previously developed to define the steps required to achieve those objectives.

After developing the five-year strategic plan for PQPS, the staff will also build up an Annual Operational Plan to assist the PQPS in implementing its five-year Strategic Plan and to justify the annual operating budget. This activity will involve a two-day meeting of 10 PQPS staff to define what portion of the Strategic Plan will be put into operation each year and establish the activities PQPS will deliver and the resources required to deliver them.

Two other workshops will also be organized by the project. One to determine which quarantine pests along the

SADC region require surveillance and another one to draft a SADC policy on cost sharing/resourcing arrangements for regional SPS surveillance activities. If a SADC Member State confirms that one or more quarantined pests require regional surveillance, a final workshop will be organized to develop a Regional Plant Quarantine Pest Surveillance Programme.

NPPO staff trained in export phytosanitary regulatory systems

A six-day workshop for 10 PQPS staff about bilateral market access negotiations. The workshop will use relevant commodity examples to be exported to South Africa and/or another SADC Member State. It will also develop a high-quality market access submission (comprising of a Formal request, Pest list, Information on production practices in the production areas, and Proposed phytosanitary measures for any quarantine pests for the importing country) for two commodities (e.g. avocado and squash).

The 'expert' consultant will bring inside-knowledge of the market access processes and import risk analysis procedures followed by South Africa's NPPO and provide one-on-one guidance or mentoring to participants during a learning-by-doing workshop.