Application of the Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis Framework in Belize

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Application of MCDA in Belize

- Background
- Introduction
- Application of previous tools
- Experiences in the application of the MCDA
  - Challenges
  - Lessons Learnt
  - Benefits
Background

- Belize - only English speaking nation in Central America
- Population of about 300,000 (2007)
- Agricultural based economy with fisheries being very important along with the growing and vibrant tourism sector
Introduction

- Belize established the Belize Agricultural Health Authority in April 2000
- Organization responsible for agricultural health and food safety
- Quasi-government
- Financed by Government and revenue generated from cost recovery scheme (we charge for our services)
Application of other Tools

- Performance of Veterinary Services (OIE) applied in Jan 2008; May 2009
- PVS GAP Analysis – applied in April 2010
- Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) Performance, Vision, Strategy (PVS) Tools – Food Safety, Plant Health and Quarantine and SPS applied in 2008;
Approaches Taken

- Questionnaires were completed
- Consultations held with stakeholders – associations, farmers, producers, regulatory agencies, personnel within the competent authority
- Deficiencies identified
- Only the PVS GAP had estimates for each of the capacity building options identified
EVALUATION RESULTS

• Application of the tools resulted in a plethora of areas that needed strengthening

• Single Entity – the Authority has responsibility for all four Departments (Animal Health, Plant Health, Food Safety and Quarantine

• Areas for capacity building cut across all four disciplines and thereby rely on the same pool of resources

• Which areas should be prioritized?
Application of the MCDA in Belize

- Received information on MCDA tool being pilot tested
- Application submitted to STDF
- Received approval in October 2011
- Project applied from January to October 2012
- The Belize Agricultural Health Authority – entity responsible for implementation
Application of the MCDA in Belize

- Hired International Consultant
- Compilation of the information dossier
- Submission of dossier to all stakeholders (including consultant)
- 21 capacity building options identified of which 13 judged not to be substantial SPS issues
Application of the MCDA in Belize

- Animal health controls for live cattle exports,
- animal health and hygiene controls for beef exports;
- animal health and hygiene controls for chicken exports;
- plant health controls for pitahaya exports;
- food safety controls for papaya exports;
- laboratory testing for pesticide residues and veterinary drugs and veterinary pesticide residues;
- laboratory testing capacity for heavy metals and
- plant health controls for citrus pulp exports.
Application of the MCDA in Belize

- Compilation of information cards for 8 remaining options
- Preliminary report with results circulated for comments
- Final Workshop – validation of results
Challenges

- Stakeholders  Representation & Participation - User groups (letters, press release/phone calls) – knowledge of issues
- Determining SPS capacity building options
  - Role of the competent authority very significant
  - Experts – knowledgeable of the country situation (distinguish between production/market/phytosanitary or sanitary issues)
- Completing the information cards
  - Information from both private and public sector
  - Standardization of format
  - Accuracy of the information
Lessons learnt

- Application of previous frameworks essential
  - identifying critical SPS areas that needed strengthening (e.g. Surveillance, diagnostic capability)
  - Bench mark for level of compliance (competent authorities and systems)
- MCDA –
  - Tool for prioritization
  - “Simple” approach to identifying SPS implementation issues as they relate to market access
lessons learnt

• Good stakeholder representation essential
• Provides potential trade impact at a glance
• May require previous knowledge of trading partners trade requirements
• Preferable if applied by a team of SPS experts (identification of non-SPS issues)
Lessons learnt

- Heavily dependent on stakeholder participation – sustainable/ownership
- Stakeholder engagement allows for greater appreciation of work of competent authorities
- Sources of Funds for Capacity Building identified
  - (validation workshop – Foreign Trade, BELTRAIDE & Foreign Affairs)
Lessons learnt

- Tool is trade oriented – application of weights to capture domestic issues
- Flexibility of being reapplied – new data
  - (live cattle vs beef – real costs)
- Quality of information
- Information cards (investment)
  - Capacity of industry
  - Competent authority
Benefits

- Tool for Prioritization of Capacity building options
  - Results of prior application of OIE, IPPC, IICA tools make the application of MCDA easier
  - Shortens the time for completion of information cards
  - Information cards likely to be more accurate
- Results provide evidence to convince policy makers
  - More than three years – political support - pitahaya (*Hylocerus* spp) should be exported to USA
  - Application of MCDA – appreciation of what needs to be in place for that to happen – costs that such translates to
  - Exports of live cattle – MCDA results highlighted a huge oversight (additional costs not budgeted for/ongoing costs not previously considered)
- Advocacy group – support the work of the Authority
Benefits

- Visibility of Competent Authority – Services - Strong Support
- Versatile tool
  - Application to individual departments/systems (plant health, food safety etc.)
- Application by other agencies
  - Belize Bureau of Standards
    - Standard setting
  - Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE)
    - Micro, small and medium size enterprises
  - Ministry of Agriculture
    - Food and Nutrition Security and Foreign Exchange Earnings