



Strengthening the control of transboundary animal diseases

The general objective of the project was to reduce the impact of four transboundary animal diseases affecting the livestock sector that constitute significant obstacles to the development of animal production in the country, namely foot and mouth disease (FMD) in bovine animals, peste des petits ruminants (PPR) in goats and sheep, African swine fever (ASF) in swine, and Newcastle disease (ND) in traditionally raised poultry. The specific objective set in order to achieve that goal was to draft national strategic plans to combat and control those four diseases, including monitoring and contingency plans. Porous borders and weak monitoring systems make it difficult to control transboundary livestock movements, which puts the health of local livestock on both sides of the border at risk.

An [information session](#) on the results of the project was held in March 2019 at the WTO.

STDF/PG/336

Status

Completed

Start Date

01/06/2012

End Date

28/02/2015

Project Value (US\$)

\$1,342,344

STDF Contribution (US\$)

\$572,083

Beneficiaries

Cameroon

Implementing Entities

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Partners

Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries (MINEPIA), Cameroon

Background

Cameroon set down its goal of becoming a major exporter of livestock products in a Growth and Employment Strategy Paper, with its general trade development objective being to promote trade in sound competitive conditions while diversifying trade in high value added goods and services. This requires improving the quality of products placed on the market and reducing as

much as possible the risk of transboundary animal diseases spreading from one region to another or one country to another through trade in animals and their products – hence the importance of implementing programmes to combat and control the diseases prevalent in the country. Against this backdrop, the project's objective was to develop strategic plans to combat and control the four animal diseases that constitute significant obstacles to the development of animal production in the country. The project also aimed to get farmers involved in order to ensure the implementation of these plans in the long term.

Results

National strategic plans to combat and control the targeted diseases that take into account existing monitoring and contingency plans

The status of the four targeted diseases (FMD, PPR, AFS and ND) in each subsector of production concerned was made the subject of an assessment to be used as a baseline for estimating the progress expected from the implementation of the plans. This preliminary work took the form of epidemiological monitoring of the four diseases concerned, the setting up of monitoring protocols, and a number of epidemiological surveys on the diseases and the main associated risk factors. This was made possible through close collaboration with veterinary diagnostic laboratories, which had signed a specific agreement with the FAO (the agency responsible for implementing the project). This also improved the laboratories' capacities in terms of transportation of samples, improvements in field sample quality, and analysis. A workshop to review and validate the strategic plans was held at the end of the project.

Promotion of OIE standards and the WTO SPS Agreement

Forty three veterinary service officials and professionals from the animal production sector received training on the WTO SPS Agreement and the OIE's international standards. This training made sanitary control supervisors and stakeholders aware of the importance of international health standards, which may pose genuine obstacles to foreign trade.

Strengthening the capacity of veterinary services and other stakeholders to monitor and manage transboundary diseases

A number of training courses were provided to veterinary personnel and stakeholders involved in disease monitoring and management; for example, veterinary service personnel were trained in the use of epidemiological tools, Geographic Information System tools and the TAD Info software package. Epidemiological surveillance personnel received training on monitoring and survey procedures in the livestock sector, and leaders of support groups and supervisory personnel were trained in awareness raising and organizational techniques. This increased awareness among livestock stakeholders, including the public authorities, veterinary laboratory personnel and stock breeders' organizations and associations, of the effectiveness and efficiency of efforts to control the targeted transboundary diseases and the role of vaccination as a means of eradicating certain diseases, such as FMD and PPR.

Manuals on veterinary health inspection procedures and a guide to good hygiene practices for fishery products

This was an unscheduled outcome, as it was not initially planned for in the project. The Government asked the FAO and consultants to prepare these guides and manuals after the strategic management plans had been developed.

Recommendations

Transform the strategic management plans developed under the project into operational action plans for implementation

The great strength of this project is that it was conceived and built from the inside by government services and local Cameroonian stakeholders who clearly identified problems and possible solutions. The status assessment of the four diseases made it possible to prepare a national strategic plan tailored to each disease and to put monitoring protocols into place, in collaboration with the veterinary diagnostic laboratories. These strategic plans must quickly be converted into programmes, projects or operational action plans that take into account the necessary budget and implementation framework. These projects and programmes could be financed by the Government from its own resources or by potential donors.

The information obtained during the project, which is of great scientific value, should be disseminated to the international community through articles and other scientific publications.

Strengthen the capacity of all sector stakeholders on the ground to monitor and manage transboundary diseases

Many participants felt that the ongoing training provided through the workshops was of very high quality and that it should be continued and extended on the ground to the sector's upstream stakeholders, rather than being limited to those at the central level. Local veterinary services, laboratories, stock breeders, stock breeders' associations and all other parties involved at the local level should play a greater role in disease control. This requires greater dialogue and more harmonized action among

stakeholders and good communication with stock breeders, which could lead to changes in their behaviour and their increased involvement in the sanitary protection of animals. Such a change in behaviour is the best guarantee that the gains made in this and future projects will be sustained.

Continue promoting international SPS standards and disseminating inspection guides

The project made domestic stakeholders more aware of international SPS standards, but the training was far too short to be able to see a real impact on the ground locally or among stock breeders. It is imperative that outreach meetings be planned to pass along the information provided at the workshops and that procedural manuals and guides continue to be circulated to all stakeholders. Support measures necessary to implement the disease control plans and inspection procedure manuals that have been prepared should be put in place. In particular, veterinary laws should be strengthened by means of the implementing texts identified during the preparation of the procedural manuals.

Achieve complementarity of future and regional projects

It would be wise to incorporate a mid term assessment into such projects to identify strengths and weaknesses. Similarly, in the design phase, it is important to target objectives that are realistic and reflect in country conditions as much as possible, taking into account budget, staff, equipment and time constraints, and to allow for any necessary mid term adjustments. In the case of this project, it was ambitious to take on four diseases and it would have been better to concentrate on just one or two. Everything learned through this project should be reflected in the other development projects being planned with respect to the renovation of slaughterhouses and cold storage plants, as well as in domestic initiatives.

In addition, it would be ideal for results to be shared and similar projects to be set up in neighbouring countries so that efforts are complementary. Regional initiatives could lead to greater sustainability of the individual efforts undertaken in each country. Chad, the Central African Republic and Cameroon face similar sanitary problems with respect to transboundary movements of animals. Harmonized vaccination campaigns in the three countries could be considered for the future. Cameroon's neighbours are not always aware of all the efforts it undertakes, which then limits the effectiveness of those efforts given the significant movements of animals.

Plan a feasibility study for installing a database like TAD Info on the ground

By installing and using TAD Info, the country has in effect gained a data analysis tool cum mapping programme. It is recommended that it be installed in veterinary services offices and be used at the regional level.