



Beneficiary

Public and private sector in Belize

Led by

BAHA

Time-frame

January – September 2012

STDF funding

US\$30,000

SUPPORTING SPS INVESTMENT PRIORITIES FOR BETTER MARKET ACCESS IN BELIZE

The safe trade gap

Belize, as is the case for many developing countries, faced multiple demands to make sure the country's food and agricultural products were able to access external markets. Figuring out where to allocate resources for SPS capacity building was far from straightforward. The list of needs was long, while available resources were limited. Hard choices needed to be made between competing investments, which would benefit the country's trade, agricultural productivity and health protection longer-term. The government needed to find a way to improve the economic efficiency of SPS investment decisions, and make funding decisions more transparent, accountable and inclusive.

Partnership approach

The Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) turned to STDF's framework on Prioritizing SPS Investments for Market Access (P-IMA) to inform and improve the SPS decision-making process. BAHA reached out to public and private sector stakeholders, building on strong relationships with government agencies, producers, processors, exporters, industry groups and academia. Stakeholder workshops helped to identify the range of SPS investment options in the country, as well as the decision criteria and weights to be used to set the priorities. The participatory process was both transparent and inclusive. All the data and information used was documented so the findings could be tracked, scrutinized and verified. At the same time, the initiative built on earlier efforts by STDF partners to evaluate veterinary and phytosanitary capacity building needs.

Results

P-IMA provided hard evidence to policy-makers on the trade-related impacts of investing in SPS capacity building.

- Government allocated new funding for a project to improve animal health controls and facilitate live cattle exports, leveraging co-financing from the private sector, regional organizations and donors.

- Based on data collection and analysis, previous cost estimates on SPS investments were updated so that resources could be used more efficiently.
- Dialogue and trust between the public and private sector was strengthened, leading to greater buy-in for SPS investment decisions and follow-up.
- P-IMA improved understanding around, and support for, BAHA's role as a regulatory agency to gain and maintain market access for the country's agri-food products.

Sustaining impact

- BAHA continues to use P-IMA to inform decision-making and mobilize resources, from strengthening a food microbiology laboratory to addressing capacity gaps in the poultry sector.
- BAHA is exploring how to use P-IMA in rolling out its strategic plan and organizational reform. The P-IMA experience has been shared with SPS stakeholders in the region and beyond, further scaling-up the approach.
- Other government institutions have successfully applied P-IMA. This includes the Belize Trade and Investment Development Service in prioritizing support for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture in prioritizing programmes on nutrition, food security and foreign exchange earnings.

"Using P-IMA demonstrated the expected returns on different SPS investments, providing useful evidence to convince policy-makers of the need for additional investments. P-IMA affirmed Government's decision and support for new investments to improve animal health controls for live cattle to facilitate exports to Mexico".

Delilah Cabb,
BAHA

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