Strengthening SPS system

The project aimed to develop a strategy to strengthen the national SPS system. This strategy should be able to support and accompany strategies that seek to develop the country's agricultural exports.

**STDF/PG/242**

**Status**
Completed

**Start Date**
17/09/2012

**End Date**
30/06/2018

**Project Value (US$)**
$1,321,075

**STDF Contribution (US$)**
$1,106,030

**Beneficiaries**
Comoros

**Implementing Entities**
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

**Partners**
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
International Trade Centre (ITC)
Ministère de l'agriculture de la pêche de l'industrie et de la protection de l'environnement, Union des Comores
Ministère de la santé, Union des Comores
Ministère du commerce, Union des Comores
World Health Organization (WHO)

**Background**

Comoros has a rudimentary SPS system. The country suffers from a lack of technical capacity in both material and human terms. The momentum created in the country following the Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS) and the adoption of the 2011-2014 action plan for the implementation of the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) re-emphasized the need to restructure the SPS system thus to ensure the success of agricultural export diversification initiatives.

The Union of the Comoros seeks to promote its agricultural exports to niche markets identified at regional level, but can only achieve this if its SPS system is able to ensure the quality of the products placed on the market. To this end, the project seeks
to develop a national SPS strategy accompanied by operational action plans in its key sub sectors, which are:

- Food safety, because of its cross cutting nature affecting all the products concerned (cash crops, fishery products, food products).
- Plant protection, because of its importance from the production right through to the exportation of cash crops and food products.
- Fishery product safety, given the importance of strengthening the capacity of the fisheries authority.

**Expected Results**

**Sub sectoral institutional capacities and capacity building needs will be clearly identified**

Detailed diagnostic studies will be conducted using tools developed by the relevant international organizations. These studies will most notably involve the assessment of: (i) phytosanitary capacities; (ii) institutional arrangements regarding food safety; (iii) institutional arrangements for the fisheries sector; and (iv) laboratory analysis facilities. They will formulate specific capacity building recommendations, which will be taken into account when establishing sub sectoral action plans.

**Operational action plans will be adopted and priorities will be established with regard to ongoing agricultural export promotion programmes**

In each of the sub sectors examined (plants, food, fisheries), an operational action plan will be prepared based on the results of the analyses carried out during the sub sectoral diagnostic studies. A precise inventory of ongoing or planned technical assistance programmes will also be drawn up for each of the sub sectors, so that the priorities established reflect complementarity and identify areas in which additional support is necessary. This exercise will be accompanied by lobbying activities to mobilise national and international funds with a view to developing operational and costed action plans.

**More favourable conditions for the development, adoption and implementation of national SPS strategies**

In order to ensure the key skills required for the development and, above all, future implementation of the national SPS strategy, it is vital to familiarise officials and bridge structures with the basic principles of a functional SPS system that is consistent with international standards. In order to ensure optimal conditions, training sessions and awareness raising activities will be carried out for all stakeholders, at every level (from operational levels through to the decision making level) and at every stage.

**A national strategy for the implementation of SPS measures in Comoros will be adopted by the Government and applauded by all public and private stakeholders**

This strategy will benefit lobbying and awareness raising activities with a view to becoming a reference document for SPS investment and technical assistance. The strategy will serve as a master plan for the Government in respect of SPS decision making and will be accompanied by action plans in each of the key sectors identifying priority actions for achieving GPRS objectives.