



Improving phytosanitary controls to boost flower exports

This project aims to strengthen the technical and organizational capacity of core phytosanitary competencies related to flower exports in Uganda and establish an institutional arrangement to enable the private sector to comply with international phytosanitary standards in order to improve market access to the European Union and other high-end markets.

A result story on the project is available [here](#).

STDF/PG/335

Status

Completed

Start Date

01/10/2012

End Date

31/03/2015

Project Value (US\$)

\$427,017

STDF Contribution (US\$)

\$383,495

Beneficiaries

Uganda

Implementing Entities

CAB International (CABI)

Department of Crop Protection (DCP), Uganda

Partners

Floriculture Industry in Uganda

International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat

Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS)

Makerere University, Uganda

Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority

Uganda Flower Exporters Association (UFEA)

Background

Uganda has experienced cases of EU interceptions of its cut flower exports in recent years. Proper inspections and implementation of phytosanitary measures along the flower chain have been constrained by insufficient staff capacity, both in number and relevant knowledge/skills; limitations of administrative facilities; and insufficient supportive infrastructure

(facilities/laboratories), procedures, documentation and resources.

The Department of Crop Protection (DCP), which is the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) for Uganda, requested assistance from the STDF to develop its technical and organizational capacity for core phytosanitary competencies related to flower export and to establish a mechanism for the private sector to achieve compliance with international phytosanitary standards specific for exporting flowers to the EU. Viability of Ugandan flower exports and international market access will secure the livelihoods of approximately 6,000 workers (and their 36,000 dependents) that rely on earnings from Uganda's floriculture sector as well as boost the national economy.

Results

Enhance capacity of the Department of Crop Protection's (DCP) to implement phytosanitary measures

The first result area was to develop DCP's capacity to implement phytosanitary inspections and certification of flower export consignments in line with international standards of export certification systems and requirements of the EU market. This was done through hands-on practical training for inspectors, study tours for staff from private and public sectors, deployment of DCP staff to enhance efficiency of inspections and certification at the main exit point, production of reference materials, development of documentation and operating procedures and putting in place a computer based format for the export certification system. By the end of the project, phytosanitary measures were being carried out with guidance from an operations manual comprised of twelve new standard operating procedures (SOP). Furthermore, DCP's operations were reviewed in line with the newly adopted Plant Protection and Health Act 2015 and compiled into a quality management systems (QMS) manual for ease of reference.

Design and adopt a streamlined inspection and export certification system

Under this result the project aimed to promote cooperation between the government and the flower industry which had been found to be essential for effective implementation of phytosanitary measures in other countries. Mechanisms for cooperation between DCP and the Uganda Flower Exporters Association (UFEA) were fostered through joint trainings and dialogue meetings which led to these stakeholders entering into a partnership agreement. The agreement defined roles and responsibilities of each party, and how they would communicate and sustain collaboration. They also instituted and began to implement a traceability system and a self-regulating process for the flower farms that included disincentives for non-compliance. This traceability process helped exporters know from what farm the product for which a notification had been issued had originated. The notified farm was thereafter closely monitored by a joint technical task team (TTT) for compliance to agreed mitigation measures and penalties instituted through UFEA for non-compliance. The TTT was comprised of DCP inspectors and farm scouts. The team carried out joint activities such as auditing implementation of agreed measures. This proved to be an effective self-regulation mechanism.

Operationalize a phytosanitary survey and monitoring system

Prior to the project, data on pest distribution and abundance which is a key component of an effective phytosanitary system, did not exist nor was there a systematic and consistent way for monitoring. The third result was therefore to develop a specific phytosanitary survey and monitoring system for the export-oriented floriculture sector not only for the most important quarantine pest in export floriculture, *Spodoptera* sp., but also for the detection of other potential quarantine pests. A survey and monitoring system was designed, a survey team identified and trained, and some survey equipment and tools provided. Great emphasis was placed on fostering collaboration, data sharing and communication between the private and public sectors. As a result, some flower companies enhanced their investment in surveillance and committed to share with DCP data they generated from scouting activities as a way of enhancing their private-public partnership and contributing to surveillance.

Improve national awareness on the importance of a well-functioning plant health system

The fourth result was to improve awareness at national levels on the importance of having functional phytosanitary systems. Awareness was raised amongst national decision-makers and stakeholders on the inspection and certification systems developed through the project. The benefits and importance of having a well-functioning plant health system was demonstrated to these players as well as politicians, during a final project seminar, in order to garner their support in putting in place necessary policies and resources. All partners committed to support the established system for the betterment of Uganda's income and livelihoods of its citizens. Recommendations were made on how the results could be replicated to other horticulture sub-sectors.

Recommendations

Strong collaboration between the public and private sector necessary for results

Lessons learned, particularly on how to build private-public sector partnerships, could benefit other countries, hence the important to share these at relevant fora. Without the strong collaboration between DCP (public sector) and UFEA (private sector), the project would not have achieved its objectives. Over the project period, DCP and UFEA met regularly, deliberated and agreed on measures they needed to take as a team to meet Council Directive 2000/29/EC requirements. As a result of this dialogue and joint planning both institutions gained a common understanding of challenges in the industry, what needed to be done to address them, how and by whom, as well as opportunities for co-funding. Their joint technical task team undertook regular audits for compliance at the farms which generated a process for monitoring and learning. Both sectors acknowledged that strong cooperation between the public and private sector was necessary for best results.

In terms of project design and implementation, the model of having an advisory team comprised of key stakeholders is necessary to ensure ownership of project results as demonstrated in this project. DCP instituted a Project Management Team (PMT) which brought stakeholders together twice a year to give guidance, monitor implementation and solve issues.

Strengthen institutional structures and provide adequate resources

During the final project seminar held in March 2015, participants made recommendations on how project achievements would be sustained and improved after the project ended. These constituted changes in institutional structures and increased investments in staff and resources by both the public and private sectors. The government needed to provide a legal framework for the DCP to operate fully as an NPPO in line with IPPC requirements. This would give DCP the necessary autonomy it required to carry out its functions, including addressing management, staffing and resource mobilization.

The horticulture sector recognized that the flower industry had made progress as a result of having an association - UFEA. They agreed to form such a body to enable easier communication and collaboration amongst its stakeholders as well as the regulation of its farmers.