

# RETOOLING

AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY  
FOR IMPROVED FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY,  
INVESTMENT AND TRADE

10th EDF SPS Project



# BACKGROUND

The 10th Economic Development Fund (EDF) Project “*Support to the Caribbean Forum of ACP States in the Implementation of Commitments Undertaken under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA): Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)*” sought to support the beneficial integration of CARIFORUM States into the world economy by facilitating entry and improved market access into the European Union through compliance with their SPS measures. The SPS Project aimed to strengthen the capacity of CARIFORUM States in critical areas with regard to institutional and technical support in SPS measures and assist CARIFORUM States to develop regionally harmonized SPS measures.

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

To increase production and trade in agriculture and fisheries which meet international standards while protecting plant, animal and human health and the environment.

The Project has assisted in strengthening regional and national SPS systems through a systematic focus on alleviating constraints in the areas of legislation, coordination and capacity building. Specifically,

1. fragmented and outdated legislation,
2. limited national and regional coordination amongst institutions and groups addressing AHFS matters and
3. limited human resources to implement the SPS regime.

## LEGISLATION

Establishment of a sound and comprehensive National and Regional legislative framework for plant and animal health, fisheries and food safety.

## COORDINATION

Development and organization of an efficient responsive institutional framework and mechanism for coordination of SPS issues at both the National and Regional level including, the development of programmes and information systems to aid the coordination process.

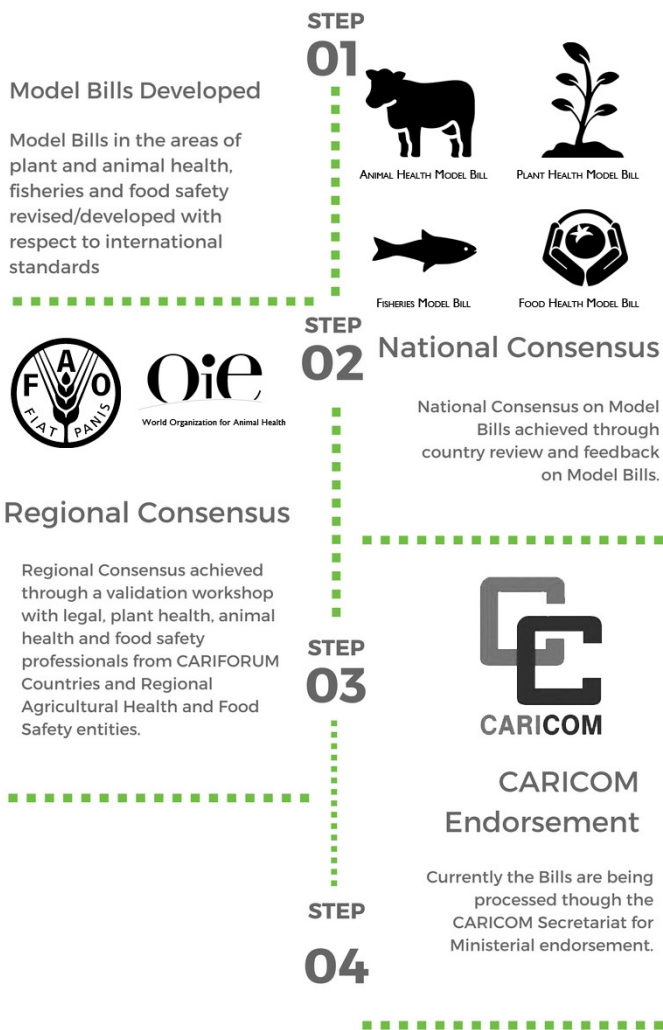
## CAPACITY BUILDING

Strengthening of public and private sector stakeholders to support the SPS regime. This also includes the strengthening of laboratory systems and development of environmental and residue monitoring systems.

Actions have been conducted in collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat, Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and the SPS Committee of the Dominican Republic (Comite´ Nacional para la Aplicación de Medidas Sanitarias y Fitosanitarias (CNMSF).

# LEGISLATION

## Legislation Design Process



Towards the upgrade and harmonization of the existing legislative framework in the Region this project aimed to revise/develop model bills, protocols, measures and guidelines in the areas of plant and animal health, food safety and fisheries. These instruments will be made available to all CARIFORUM States for incorporation into national legislation. The availability of these models will assist countries to be consistent with international standards and bring a degree of harmonization to the SPS legislation across the Region.

Model Bills developed have “helped us update our current Animal Health Laws and Regulations and have upgraded the vision of the Veterinary Services in the Bahamas”

----The Bahamas 2016



“Model Bills... can assist countries in regulating and monitoring Plant Health, Animal Health and Food safety issues to protect the food industries throughout the value chain...”

- Trinidad & Tobago, 2016



The activities “enabled sharing of ideas and information that resulted in better legislation at national levels”

- St Vincent & The Grenadines, 2016



### COUNTRIES STRENGTHENING LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK THROUGH PROJECT SUPPORT

Actions supported included policy development, drafting of Acts and amendments to existing regulations, will assist countries to be aligned with international requirements.



# COORDINATION

CARIFORUM States have recognized that the establishment of effective national and regional coordination mechanisms is necessary for complying with national, regional and international SPS requirements and also for facilitating meaningful participation in the international SPS standard setting process. In most CARIFORUM countries, effective SPS measures are undermined by the existence of fragmented legislation, multiple jurisdictions, inadequate enforcement, and chronic underfunding. The SPS project actions aimed to provide an effective AHFS coordination system that transition countries from operating sectorally in which animal health, plant health, fisheries and food safety to a more integrated and comprehensive manner. Coordination of the SPS functions of the various competent authorities at the national and regional levels will serve to more efficiently and coherently coordinate AHFS systems, and allow meaningful and active participation and influence in the international arena.



Support to the CAHFSA, a key body responsible for coordinating AHFS matters in the Region, has also resulted in the advancement of coordination of SPS matters. Outcomes have included

1. Improved visibility and communication,
2. Strengthened capacity of technical staff,
3. Recognition of the Agency through support for participation in regional and international meetings
4. Development of data management systems and strengthened governance mechanism through funding provided to host Board meetings.

Towards the development of a sustainable coordination framework, three main actions were conducted at the national and regional levels.

1

## DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

National Coordination mechanisms have been developed for 10 countries and 1 regional mechanism for AHFS entities. Mechanisms proposed take a task-based problem-based approach rather than an institutional approach.

2

## STRENGTHENING OF THE EXISTING REGIONAL AHFS FRAMEWORK

Several interventions were made to strengthen Regional AHFS Groups which play a critical role in improving the capacity of the Region in SPS matters.

3

## STRENGTHENING THE REPRESENTATION OF CARIFORUM NATIONALS AT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

The understanding of the international standard setting process as well as advocating for SPS issues impacting trade and economic development in the Caribbean are crucial and necessary aspects of managing and coordinating national and regional SPS systems. Support was provided for CARIFORUM nationals to attend international SPS meetings (IPPC, OIE, CODEX, SPS).

There has been a

**60% INCREASE**

in the representation of the Caribbean at these meetings.

Increased representation has resulted in an increased awareness within the Region of emerging issues related to international food trade as well as an increased understanding by countries of their rights and obligations under the various international SPS agreements, conventions and protocols. It has also increased the opportunity for Caribbean nationals to serve on several international committees and working groups.

# CAPACITY BUILDING

An effective and efficient regime for agricultural and fisheries health and food safety is dependent on having a strong cadre of well-trained technical personnel which is supported by strong infrastructural capacity. Actions included: capacity building of public and private sector professionals; strengthening of laboratory systems; and the development of environmental and residue monitoring programmes for the fisheries sub-sector.

## CAPACITY BUILDING OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR STAKEHOLDERS

27

Private Sector entities in the rum, condiments and fresh produce industries received direct technical assistance in Food Safety Management and Traceability.

2000+

Regulatory Personnel and Private Sector stakeholders trained/sensitized in important SPS areas such as diagnostics, surveillance, inspection, HACCP, traceability, risk analysis, Anti-Microbial Resistance, One-Health

50+

Knowledge products developed on key AHFS topics (videos, manuals, bulletins, posters).

## STRENGTHENING OF LABORATORY SYSTEMS



Strengthening the Region's laboratory systems is critical for capitalizing on international market opportunities. Actions under the project aimed at assisting national laboratories to meet the requirements of accreditation and forming a laboratory testing network.

Assistance has been provided to the Microbiology Laboratory at the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) to meet the requirements for accreditation. Additionally, a working group has been established to develop the framework for an AHFS Laboratory Testing Network.

## STRENGTHENING OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESIDUE MONITORING PROGRAMMES FOR FISHERIES SUB SECTOR

In response to a study of national and regional environmental monitoring programmes on SPS for fisheries and aquaculture products in CARIFORUM states the technical capacity of fisheries personnel has been built in areas required for strengthening national and regional environmental monitoring programmes.

Fisheries professionals from 12 CARIFORUM countries attended the United Nations University- Fisheries Training Programme in Iceland.



Fisheries and SPS laboratory professionals were trained in fishery products laboratory testing manuals and their applications.

Fisheries and SPS laboratory professionals trained in Fishery sector operations manuals and their application

Fellowships awarded to public sector professionals from Suriname and Jamaica to participate in a 6-month training course in Quality Management of Fish Handling and Processing at UNU-FTP

Additionally, 2 manuals on laboratory testing of fishery products, 6 manuals on official controls and 32 training videos were developed to accompany the training.

## MARKET ACCESS STUDIES

Towards a greater understanding of the requirements for accessing international markets, studies were conducted to determine the impact of private standards on trade and cost-benefit of compliance and non-compliance with SPS measures. These

studies provide the basis for advocating for the sustained investment into strengthening AHFS systems in the Region and informing public and private stakeholders on essential factors for consideration when entering new markets.

The SPS Project is funded by the European Union under the 10th Economic Development Fund and is being implemented by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) with the following regional partners: the CARICOM Secretariat, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), El Comité Nacional para la Aplicación de Medidas Sanitarias y Fitosanitarias de la República Dominicana (CNMSF and CARIFORUM)



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