



Secure Fisheries
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AGROPROCESSING PILOT PROJECT IN RODRIGUES AS A MEANS FOR ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN SEMPA



INDIAN OCEAN
COMMISSION



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Agroprocessing pilot project in Rodrigues as a
means for alternative economic
activities in SEMPA

Rodrigues

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Executive Summary

Within the framework of SmartFish Result 5, (output 5M3.2 'support livelihood diversification and resilience in selected fishing communities', and activity 5M3.2.1 'selected projects are supported by the country project on diversification initiatives and improved resilience in fishing communities'), the aim of the project is to carry out a livelihood diversification pilot project on the island of Rodrigues. The main aims of this project include:

Section 1 – Situational analysis of the proposed pilot project

- Assess key products available in the market, supply capacity and current quality standards (sample collections);
- Potential for expansion of key products and for improvements in quality;
- Feasibility of geographical identification and/or organic labelling, as well as traceability and food safety aspects;
- Implementation of capacity and accountability of the two operating partners proposed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for project implementation;
- The specific involvement, roles and responsibilities of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and of the Rodrigues Marketing Company Limited in planned interventions;
- Level of motivation and knowledge base of the proposed target beneficiaries.

Section 2 – Market identification study for Mauritius

- Identify both quality and quantity requirements of Rodriguan agro-processed products for the Mauritius market or for re-export;
- Provide a list of potential buyers and/or exporters interested in potential export niche markets, with contact details, respective quality and quantity requirements (including packaging preferences) and purchasing prices;
- Assess potential expansion of the market through an investor potentially interested in larger quantities/productions;
- Assess the possibility of an increase in the purchase price for selected products with respect to an increase in quality standards and certifications provided, providing a cost-benefit analysis.

Section 3 - Contribute to the finalization of the proposal for financing with the service provider or target groups in accordance with the findings of the market study.

The assignment contributed to the following four outcomes of the pilot project:

- Output 1: Redundant fisherwomen cooperative networks of SEMPA established, empowered and fully operational;

Output 2: Quality standards for five selected exotic Rodriguan agro-products raised and standardized to be in line with market requisites;

Output 3: Awareness created on food safety and good hygiene practices;

Output 4: Market development enhanced for the five selected key Rodriguan agro-products.

in August 2012, following this assignment, a Letter of Agreement was signed between SmartFish/FAO and the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, for the implementation of an "Agro-processing as a Sustainable Alternative Livelihoods in SEMPA – Pilot Project" with a total cost of US \$40,000. The assignment has resulted in the set up of three permanent selling outlets at prime commercial locations in Mauritius for selected exotic agro-products from Rodrigues through a cooperative collaboration with the Mauritius Fishermen Cooperatives Federation and the Mauritius Consumers Cooperatives Federation. The Mauritius Marketing Board, the national leader in marketing and distribution of farm and agro-processed products in Mauritius, is willing to collaborate with wholesale suppliers in Rodrigues on mutually sustainable and flexible commercial terms. Networking with other public, private and civil society stakeholders will also have a positive impact on project outcomes.

Résumé exécutif

Dans le cadre du Résultat 5 du programme SmartFish, à l’item 5M3.2 – Soutenir la diversification des moyens de subsistance et la faculté de reprise des communautés de pêcheurs sélectionnées – et à l’activité 5M3.2.1 – Projets sélectionnés pour appuyer les projets dans les pays sur les initiatives de diversification et l’amélioration de la faculté de reprise des communautés de pêcheurs – le programme a l'intention de mettre en œuvre un projet pilote de la valorisation et la transformation des agro-alimentaires dans l’île Rodrigues. Les principaux objectifs de cette mission incluent:

Section 1 – Etat des lieux du projet pilote proposé:

- Evaluer les principaux produits disponibles sur le marché, la capacité d’approvisionnement et les normes de qualité actuelles (acquisition d’échantillons) ;
- Le potentiel pour l'expansion des produits clés et d'améliorer la qualité ;
- La possibilité d'une certification géographique/écologique et/ou d'un label ainsi que d'une procédure de traçabilité et des normes de sécurité alimentaire ;
- La mise en œuvre de la capacité et la responsabilité des deux partenaires opérationnels proposés par l'Assemblée régionale de Rodrigues pour la mise en œuvre du projet ;
- L’implication spécifique, les rôles et responsabilités de l’Assemblée régionale de Rodrigues et du Rodrigues Marketing Company Limited dans les interventions planifiées ;
- Le niveau de motivation et de savoir-faire des bénéficiaires cibles proposés.

Section 2 – Etude d'identification du marché pour Maurice

- Recenser les exigences de qualité et de quantité des produits agro-alimentaires rodriguais transformés sur le marché de l’île Maurice ou la réexportation ;
- Fournir une liste d’acheteurs potentiels et/ou exportateurs intéressés à d’éventuels marchés d’exportation spécialisés avec les coordonnées, et l’exigence de qualité et de quantité (y compris les préférences sur l’emballage) et les prix d’achat ;
- Evaluer la possibilité d’expansion du marché par un investisseur qui serait éventuellement intéressé dans des plus grandes quantités ou productions ;
- Evaluer la possibilité d’une majoration des prix d’achat par produits sélectionnés par rapport à une hausse du niveau de la qualité et des certifications fournies; une sorte d'analyse coûts-avantages.

Section 3 – Contribuer à la mise au point définitive de la proposition de financement avec le prestataire ou groupes cibles suivant les conclusions de l'étude de marché.

La mission a contribué à l'élaboration de ces quatre résultats du projet pilote:

Résultat 1 : L'organisation des coopératives des femmes-pêcheuses converties en transformatrices des produits agro-alimentaires à SEMPA et de s'assurer que ces entités soient opérationnelles.

Résultat 2 : La qualité des cinq produits agro-alimentaires rodriguais sélectionnés est améliorée et adaptée aux normes sanitaires du marché.

Résultat 3 : La sensibilisation sur la salubrité des aliments et les bonnes pratiques d'hygiène.

Résultat 4 : Le développement des marchés pour les cinq principaux produits sélectionnés renforcé.

Suite à cette mission, une Convention de financement a été signée entre SmartFish-FAO et le bureau de l'Adjoint du Chef Commissaire de l'Assemblée régionale de Rodrigues au mois d'août 2012 pour la mise en œuvre du projet pilote de « Moyens de subsistance alternatifs durable à SEMPA » au coût total de 40 000 dollars EU. La mission a pu conclure un accord de principe avec la Fédération des Coopératives de Pêcheurs de Maurice et la Fédération des Coopératives de Consommateurs de Maurice pour la mise en place de trois points de vente permanents des produits transformés rodriguais dans des établissements commerciaux de premier ordre à Maurice. Par ailleurs, l'Office des Marchés de Maurice, le leader national en commercialisation et la distribution des produits agricoles et agro-industriels, est intéressé à conclure un accord non-exclusif pour la commercialisation et la distribution des produits agro-alimentaires émanant du projet pilote en question sous des conditions adaptées. La réussite du projet dépend de son appropriation par les intervenants institutionnels, privés et la société civile.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

| | |
|---------------|---|
| AHRIM | Association of Hoteliers and Restaurants In Mauritius |
| AMB | Agricultural Marketing Board (Mauritius) |
| CoA | Commission of Agriculture |
| DCP | Decentralised Cooperation Programme |
| EPMU | Economic Planning and Monitoring Unit (EPMU) of the Chief Commissioner's Office |
| ESA-IO | Eastern and Southern Africa – Indian Ocean |
| EU | European Union |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| FFER | Forum des Femmes Entrepreneurs de Rodrigues |
| FTL | Food and Technology Laboratory (Mauritius) |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GHP | Good Hygiene Practice |
| IOC | Indian Ocean Commission |
| LoA | Letter of Agreement |
| MSB | Mauritius Standards Bureau |
| RRA | Rodrigues Regional Assembly |
| RTMC | Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Company Limited |
| SEMPA | South East Marine Protected Areas |
| SGW | Small Grant Window |
| SMEDA | Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority |
| STC | State Trading Corporation |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| WCN | Women's Cooperative Network |

1. Background

The SmartFish programme aims to contribute to an increased level of social, economic and environmental development and deeper regional integration in the Eastern and Southern Africa – Indian Ocean (ESA-IO) Region through improved capacities for the sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources.

Overexploitation of fish resources and degradation of the marine ecosystems represent a serious problem in the lagoon of Rodrigues Island mainly due to the lack of alternative livelihoods/income generating activities for the dependent fishing communities. This problem has led the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) to establish a Marine Protected Area in the southeast region of the island.

As an accompanying measure for the establishment of the South East Marine Protected Area (SEMPA), the RRA has developed an Action Plan based on a Livelihood Assessment Study carried out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This report highlights the context of the local population's vulnerability and also underlines the opportunities for sustainable local economic development. With the creation of SEMPA, approximately 800 fishermen and fisherwomen have willingly relinquished their fishing permits and have chosen to undertake agro-forestry, farming and agro-processing activities as preferred sustainable alternative livelihoods.

The inland areas covered by SEMPA produce the majority of the island's agricultural produce such as lemon and chilli. The expansion of agro-processing activities nevertheless remains a challenge because of inefficient traditional production and marketing practices.

In the agro-processing sector, these activities, whether they be at the household or small industry level, are critically important for the diversification and expansion of the agricultural sector and for the sustainable socio-economic development of Rodrigues. Currently, the agro-processing sector remains rudimentary and underdeveloped, and institutionally, technically and financially, it is without an adequate enabling environment.

Now is an opportune time to accelerate the process of transforming the scattered traditional agro-processing activities into a vibrant and resilient, high-end, market-oriented sector.

The newly elected RRA is determined to address the aforementioned weaknesses through a systemic and integrated approach in order to promote the development of the agro-processing industry as a driving force of the agrarian economy.

In order to provide viable sources of alternative incomes to the lagoon fisheries people through a gender-based market-oriented initiative, the SmartFish/FAO programme (Result 5 on Food Security) has launched a livelihood diversification pilot project in Rodrigues. This project aims to support agro-processing and create added value to Rodrigues' agricultural products for the Mauritian and export markets.

The main objective of the project is to “contribute to conservation of the marine resources within SEMPA and the lagoon of Rodrigues Island, reducing the pressure on the lagoon fisheries through livelihood diversification activities”.

The four outputs of the project are as follows:

Output 1: Ex-fisherwomen Cooperative Network of SEMPA established, empowered and fully operational;

Output 2: Quality standards for the five selected key Rodriguan agro-products raised and standardized in line with market requisites;

Output 3: Awareness created on food safety and good hygiene practices;

Output 4: Market development for selected key Rodriguan agro-products enhanced.

As a preliminary step, and in order to ensure long term viability and a sustainable exit strategy of the pilot project through viable marketing and self-sustained trade, the project will first undertake a market study to identify both the quality and quantity requirements of key competitive Rodriguan agro-processed products in the Mauritian and export markets.

In light of the above objectives, the aim of this assignment is to review and validate a project concept presented by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) to SmartFish/FAO for the provision of a comprehensive and integrated capacity-building package to leverage agro-processing activities as sustainable alternative livelihoods in the South East Marine Protected Area (SEMPA) of Rodrigues Island. The main development challenge is to put a stop to the depletion of fish resources and the degradation of marine ecosystems in SEMPA by empowering some 150 redundant fisherwomen who have voluntarily relinquished their fishing permits in order to undertake crop farming and agro-processing in selected Rodriguan agro-food value chains. Even though the inland area covered by SEMPA is a major producer of exotic crops such as lemon and chilli, the productivity/competitiveness of the farming and agro-processing systems is poor due to outdated, unsafe and unhygienic production practices and a lack of proper marketing practices. This assignment comprises three sections:

Section 1: Situational analysis of the proposed pilot project;

Section 2: Market identification study for Mauritius;

Section 3: Inputs for the finalization of the Letter of Agreement.

A copy of the Terms of Reference can be found in Annex 1.

2. Activities undertaken and key achievements

Section 1 – Situational analysis of the proposed pilot project

A rapid situational analysis was carried out over a four-day visit to Rodrigues. The consultant met with informed institutional, private and civil society stakeholders, as well as potential beneficiaries in SEMPA. Several field visits were made to assess the overall enabling environment of the domestic farming and agro-industry and the capabilities of implementing agencies of the proposed pilot project. Documentary analysis was based on selected strategic development plans and recent study reports.

SEMPA actually covers the major crop-farming region of Rodrigues Island with its lemon villages at Gravier and Grand Baie, and chilli village at Baladirou. The local population of the southeast region has broadly diversified economic activities comprising of backyard gardening, animal husbandry, fisheries and kitchen agro-processing activities. With the establishment of the protected marine parks, approximately 400 fisherwomen, in particular the octopus hunters (locally known as "Piqueuse d'ourites") have been encouraged to move to alternative economic activities. Most of these redundant fisherwomen have opted for crop-farming and agro-processing as viable alternative livelihoods.

Micro and small-scale industries are critically important for the sustainable socio-economic development of the island. Development of vibrant agro-processing enterprises can significantly increase market demands and revenue flow, and reduce post-harvest loss of farm crops. However, the main obstacles to the development of the agro-industry are notably:

- irregular and insufficient supply of raw materials;
- poor quality of raw materials and high post-harvest losses;
- outdated/traditional agro-processing and marketing practices;
- inadequate enabling conditions including food safety and good hygiene practices;
- lack of effective dialogue and consultation between public and private stakeholders;
- underutilization of existing human, technical and financial resources;
- absence of climate change resilience strategies.

There appears to be political will, on the part of the newly elected RRA, to promote development of the primary sectors, namely agriculture, tourism and industry, as well as promoting strong linkages between them. It is thought this would be seen as a quick win to sustain its development goals in terms of poverty reduction, food security, employment creation, climate change resilience and social stability.

Since 2005, the National Food Security Fund, Decentralised Cooperation Programmes (DCP) and the Small Grants Window (SGW) funded by the European Union, UNDP/GEF and other multilateral agencies in Rodrigues have funded several development projects with varied levels of success. Significant progress has been made in capacity development in various areas. However these achievements have not paid off because they were mostly misconceived, isolated and politically tainted. During this assignment, an attempt is made to mobilize existing institutional, technical and human capacities to transform the scattered, informal and traditional farming and agro-processing linkages into a resilient high-end market-oriented sector.

The limiting factors, which continue to affect the competitiveness of economic activities, are notably the weak macroeconomic and fiscal policies, technical and infrastructural networks, private sector development programme and absence of a multi-stakeholder participatory mechanism, and information flow.

Key products available in the market, supply capacity and current quality standards (collecting samples)

Mauritius and Mauritian visitors to Rodrigues are the main markets for Rodriguan agro-processed products. A large variety of traditionally processed food items are available in Rodrigues but only a few of them have significant market potential. Over time, typical Rodriguan products, such as lemons and small chilli, combined with indigenous culinary recipes have developed into unique Rodriguan trademark brands of agro-processed products or 'produits de terroir'. Five key lemon and chilli based agro-processed products, notably 'Piment Limon', 'Achard Limon', 'Limon Aigre-doux', 'Piment Ourites' and 'Piment Confit', were identified in this project to drive market development initiatives for the local agro-industry.

There are currently approximately 300 female agro-processors in Rodrigues although only 220 are registered with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA). Annual production is estimated at 500,000 jars, which generates a revenue flow of approximately MUR 37.5 million per year. The production cost of one jar is approximately MUR 20. Most of the female processors are directly involved in the retail sales of their products in both Rodrigues and Mauritius. Their business knowledge however, is still weak as they are unfamiliar with the concepts of production costs, wholesale and retail pricing, or marketing costs.

The traditional processing and marketing practices limit the capacity of supply and hinder market development. The production pattern is concurrent with the arrival of foreign visitors to the island: April, July–August and October–December. Registered agro-processors are supported by SMEDA and the RRA to travel to Mauritius and participate in trade fairs and promotional sales across the country and recently an agreement was made with AHRIM to facilitate the sale and marketing of Rodriguan products, including processed food and spices, to hotels chains in Mauritius.

Currently, the indigenous processors process only 20 percent of lemon and chilli produced in Rodrigues. Due to the absence of pre-processing and storage facilities the remaining 80 percent is wasted. The total output of the selected exotic agro-processed products is estimated at 500 000 jars per year¹. Based on this situation, it can be assumed that the production of these agro-processed products can be technically built up to attain 2.5 million jars per year over the next five years. This would lead to an increase in the annual revenue flow from the industry to approximately MUR 150 million based on an average wholesale price of MUR 60 per jar, not including any potential further multiplier effects on income and employment creation. With the appropriate arable land and water management reform, the agriculture-industry-tourism linkages could create a new dynamism towards sustainable coastal and marine resources development.

A major challenge for market development of the Rodriguan agro-foods is the absence of recognized or formal quality standards and good hygiene practices. The notion of quality in terms of content, texture, consistency, labelling and shelf life is subjective, as each processor interprets and understands these in their own way. Moreover, the Food Act 1998 is currently not enforced in Rodrigues and most agro-processing is performed in domestic kitchens, which operate without any formal permission. Quality development and assurance is therefore the first milestone on the journey to product and market development, and geographical certification.

Potential for expansion of key products and quality improvement

The potential for expansion of key products is significant but is currently limited due to the existing processing capacities and market opportunities. In the first instance, a regular supply of quality raw materials (lemons and chilli) must be secured at the farm level. Over 75 percent of the production of lemons and chilli are not harvested and are therefore wasted during peak seasons whilst there is a shortage of the same during the low seasons. The pilot project will strengthen the harvesting and pre-processing mechanisms of the agro-product value chains. It is recommended that a lemon pre-processing and storage facility for lemons be constructed at Gravier and a similar structure for small chillies at Baladirou.

The market for spiced agro-food in Mauritius is expanding exponentially but is highly competitive. A wide variety of close substitutes are either produced locally or imported from India and South East Asian countries. The Rodriguan products will have to gain market share in Mauritius through appropriate marketing strategies before aiming to capture any other regional or international niche markets.

¹ This information was obtained through interviews with the officers-in-charge of Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Company Ltd, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority, regional office in Rodrigues and the Forum des Femmes Entrepreneurs de Rodrigues. Private stakeholders also confirmed this during field visits to several SEMPA villages.

The starting point for quality standards and protocols in the agro-processing sector is the enforcement of the Food Act 1998 and related good hygiene and manufacturing practices. The main obstacle in the implementation of basic quality standards in this sector is traditional domestic kitchen practices, which are technically illegal. The way forward would be to support the female processors in organizing themselves in cooperatives and establishing a community kitchen within their neighbourhood that can meet the required standards. Quality protocols and procedures for the selected products will have to be designed and implemented with the direct involvement of all relevant stakeholders. The two existing facilities on the island, the community kitchen, "Limon d'Or" and the SMEDA Mini Food Testing Laboratory can contribute significantly to improving the quality standards of agro-processed products in Rodrigues.

Prospects for geographic identification and/or organic labelling, as well as food safety aspects

Food safety and good hygiene practices (GHP) are mandatory and represent the benchmark for attempting Rodriguan brand/quality labels, geographical and ecological certification etc. The first steps to achieve this would be the set up and operationalization of the above-mentioned biochemistry laboratory and enforcement of existing legislations.

Implementation capacity and accountability of implementing project partners proposed by the RRA

The RRA has put forward two implementing partners for the pilot project, the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Company Limited (RTMC) and the 'Forum des Femmes Entrepreneurs de Rodrigues' (FFER). However, neither of these suggested implementing partners is eligible according to FAO procedures.

The RTMC is a public body, jointly owned by the RRA and State Trading Corporation (STC) of Mauritius, and is mandated by the Commission of Agriculture to provide commercial logistic and marketing services for agricultural commodities. It has a non-exclusive trading agreement with the STC and the Mauritius Marketing Board. In reality, the RTMC does not have a strong background in trading cash crops such as lemons and chillies or other agro-processed products. The business relationship between the RTMC and local farmers and agro-processors has degenerated due to previous problems with payments and profit sharing between the two parties; there is still a lack of trust on the agro-processors' side towards the RTMC. Therefore, it would not be wise to entrust the RTMC with the responsibility of being an implementing partner of the pilot project. In addition, FAO procedures, in terms of the Letter of Agreement, do not allow private companies to be eligible entities.

The RTMC has tried to penetrate the domestic agro-processing sector by promoting the community kitchen, 'Limon d'Or', at Maréchal. This project cost MUR 5.5 million and was 80 percent funded by the Decentralised Cooperation Programme (DCP). It is a state-of-the-art, multifunctional agro-processing entity with limited production capacity. However, the facility has not taken off commercially since its construction and is currently closed. Local processors have not shown any interest in hiring the facility because of the relatively high fixed overhead costs valued at MUR 2,400 per day. Nevertheless, this facility would be an excellent tool for training purposes, product development, testing and quality enhancement.

The RTMC will have to review its management structure to provide customer oriented services to the farming and agro-processing sectors. The consultant suggests creating a separate unit for its agro-processing portfolio, managed by a marketing specialist and overseen by a multi-stakeholder management committee. A participatory management style will ensure transparency and accountability, which is an imperative for positive relationships and building trust amongst stakeholders.

The FFER is a national network of women entrepreneurs in Mauritius. It comprises four regional antennae: South, East, North and West. Each regional network comprises several women's clubs/cooperatives that are involved in various social and economic activities that include farming and agro-processing. In SEMPA, four informal women's clubs of redundant fisherwomen and part-time farmers and agro-processors have been identified. They are seen as potential beneficiaries of the pilot project and it is proposed to organize them into four local women's cooperatives and a regional cooperative network at the SEMPA level. The registration of such cooperative structures will have to be fast tracked to avoid any unnecessary delays in the implementation of the pilot project.

Specific involvement, roles and responsibilities in the planned intervention of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the Rodrigues Trade and Marketing Company

The consultant proposes to nominate the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office and Commission for Women, Entrepreneurship, Cooperative and Industry as the pilot project's implementing agency. The RRA, through the EPMU, will oversee the implementation, monitoring and evaluation. A Project Management Unit (PMU) will have to be established and will include two members of the women's cooperative, one representative from SmartFish/FAO, one representative from the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office and one representative from the RRA. The pilot project will be implemented in accordance with provisions in the Letter of Agreement to be drawn up between SmartFish/FAO and the designated implementing agency. The roles and responsibilities of both parties will be given in detail in the LOA.

Motivation and level of know-how of the proposed target beneficiary group

The pilot project will target about 200 redundant fisherwomen cum part-time farmers and agro-processors who are willing to undertake farming activities and the processing of lemons and chillies (pre-processing, storage of high quality raw materials, agro-processing), as alternative income earning activities. Most of these women are acquainted, to some extent, with the proposed economic activities. During focus group discussions, they expressed a keen interest in the pilot project.

Section 2 – Market identification study in Mauritius

Section 2 of this assignment deals with a market survey for selected Rodriguan agro-products namely: 'Achard Limon', 'Limon Aigre-Doux', 'Piment Limon', 'Piment Ourites' and 'Piment Confit'. Key stakeholders were interviewed about the marketing and distribution of these products in different sectors of Mauritian markets.

Identification of both quality and quantity requirements of Rodriguan agro-processed products for the Mauritian market or for re-export

A market survey was carried out by interviewing potential marketing and distribution operators of agro-processed products, namely: Master Food Ltd, Winners, Shoprite, Fair Price and the Mauritius Marketing Board.

Mauritius is a major market for the selected Rodriguan agro-products. The country imports 75 percent of all agro-foods annually and this sector is growing exponentially. With rapid changes in lifestyle and a growing number of super- and hypermarkets in Mauritius², consumers have become price and quality sensitive. The selected agro-products from Rodrigues have close substitutes, which are produced locally and are also imported from India, Pakistan and other Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. Moreover, the Rodriguan products have not found their way onto the shelves of Mauritian supermarkets yet. There are several reasons for this and they will be discussed later in this report.

Traditional marketing practices that mainly concentrate on retail and direct sales to end-consumers are outdated in Mauritius. Rodriguan agro-products are only sold in a few places, mainly public markets in cities and towns, at the side of the road and outside supermarkets. They can also be found at trade fairs organized regularly by SMEDA, however, these products remain unknown to retail outlet networks across Mauritius.

² According to a National Consumers Survey of Statistics Mauritius in 2010, 80 percent of Mauritian households regularly shop in super and hypermarkets. Additionally, the total annual import of agro-based products for the same year is estimated at MUR 1 billion and has increased by 7 percent over the past 3 years.

There are no specific quality standards statutorily imposed in the Mauritian market; however, all processed agro-foods have to comply with the provisions of the Food Act 1998 and associated good hygiene practices. However, hotel and restaurant chains have adopted international quality norms such as compliance to Codex Alimentarius, HACCP and EU sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards and other commercial terms and conditions that have to be met to enter these niche markets.

In line with the above, it can safely be said that the Mauritian market could potentially absorb increased supplies of the selected agro-processed products from Rodrigues provided that these products adhere to the specific market requirements³.

It is imperative that the Rodriguan agro-processors review their production and marketing strategies if they are to capture a major share of the Mauritian market.

Provide a list of interested buyers and/or exporters interested in potential export niche markets, with contact details, respective quality and quantity requirements (including packaging preferences) and purchasing prices

A variety of lemon- and chilli-based pickles are sold in Mauritius through different marketing channels. They are manufactured locally by small industries such as Sarjua and Food Cannery Ltd under different brand names or imported from countries such as India, Thailand and Malaysia. Despite the tough competition among the close substitutes, the selected Rodriguan agro-foods have successfully created a name for themselves on local retail markets. Mauritian consumers pay a relatively higher price for these products because of their different blends and tastes. However, the Rodriguan products have not yet reached supermarket shelves but are sold on open market stalls outside supermarkets such as Winners, Ways, Shoprite amongst others.

Purchasing Managers of several supermarkets were interviewed (see Annex 2, List of persons/organizations contacted) concerning the potential for selling selected Rodriguan agro-products in their stores. The following list summarizes the main prerequisites if products are to be sold in supermarkets:

- the critical quantity to reduce marketing and promotion costs is estimated at 5,000 jars per month;
- regular dispatch from the warehouse and timely delivery;
- consistent labelling and quality of products;
- bar coding;
- competitive price;
- deferred payments.

³ Marketing specialists that visited Mauritius during the marketing survey stated that all the exotic agro-products from Rodrigues are hot and spicy. These products should therefore be further differentiated into hot, medium and mild to attract a larger number of consumers.

| Products | Potential marketing & distribution operators | Indicated quantities/ requirements | Quality requirements | Problems anticipated by operators | Recommendations |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|---|
| Five selected products | Fair Price, Mauritius Consumer Cooperatives Federation (MCCF) | 1,000 – 3,000 jars/month | Consistent quality and texture Sealed caps Proper labeling Assorted flavours (hot, medium or mild) | Inconsistent quality Wholesale price too high Irregularity of supply and quantity Payment terms | Implement a minimum quality protocol Sales contract Quality control on delivery |
| All processed agro-products | Mauritius Marketing Board | 5,000+ jars per month | As above | Wholesale price not competitive Small and inconsistent quantities | Non-exclusive marketing contract with Supplier Terms and conditions negotiable |
| Five selected products | Shoprite, Winners, Ways Jumbo | Subject to standard marketing and sales agreement Entry fees negotiable Goods have to be delivered to warehouse Negotiable sales commission and special end of year discounts Quarterly settlement Deal directly with local suppliers or local supplier representative | | | |

Within the actual context of the agro-processing sector in Rodrigues, it is not economically viable to implement mass marketing strategies as the costs would be prohibitive. The management of Winners and Way (Intermart) are interested in supporting Rodriguan agro-products marketing cooperatives by offering annexed mini retail outlets/satellites at a nominal rental fee.

Alternative cost-effective marketing strategies to enhance market penetrations are as follows:

- The consultant approached the Mauritius Fishermen Cooperative Federation Ltd. to establish two regular, long-term selling points for Rodriguan agro-products at strategic locations in Mauritius. This request was accepted on the basis of cooperative collaboration and will be formalized with the Women's Cooperative Network (WCN) in due course;

- To further strengthen the marketing capabilities of the WCN, the consultant has negotiated with the Agricultural Marketing Board of Mauritius (AMB), which has a significant marketing network that includes retail outlets across the island, to establish a memorandum of understanding with WCN for the marketing of Rodriguan produce on a regular basis. AMB has excess capacity and therefore marketing costs will be minimal. A non-exclusive marketing agreement can be negotiated between the relevant parties when the time comes;
- Negotiations are underway with the Mauritius Consumers Cooperative Federation, the owner of Fair Price supermarkets across the island, for the distribution and marketing of the Rodriguan agro-foods.

At the outset of the above marketing arrangements, an additional output of 60,000 jars of selected agro-production (5,000 jars per month) will be required during the first year. In order to boost supply, a business plan for the operationalization of the community kitchen, "Limon d'Or", should be developed.

Assess potential expansion of the market through an investor potentially interested in larger quantities/productions

During the assignment, no investor showed any interest in investing in the Rodriguan agro-processing industry and its related supply chains. This is mainly due to the declining socio-economic status of the island. A brief overview of private sector development in the agro-processing industry of Rodrigues can be found in the visual illustration in Annex 11.

Assess the possibility of an increase in the purchase price for selected products with respect to an increase in quality standards and certification, and provide a cost-benefit analysis

The retail price of the selected agro-processed products is already relatively high on the Mauritian market and as a result of poor information flow producers are reaping significant profits. For instance, production costs for one 200gr jar is an estimated MUR 25, which includes MUR 8 for packaging and labelling, while the retail price for the same is MUR 90 to 100: "Small business (especially informal) = big profit". This is one of the reasons that traditional agro-processors are resistant to change. However, a change in attitude has been observed amongst female agro-processors who have received entrepreneurial training.

Quality improvement and certification are integral parts of value addition and market development strategies for the agro-processed industry. However, it is a seemingly endless journey that starts with compliance to food safety regulations and good hygiene practices.

It should be noted that the Food Act 1998 is not enforced in the Republic of Mauritius. Agro-processing industries however, voluntarily implement MS 133 and 167, which are the national standards for food safety and good hygiene practices.

Section 3 – Contribute to the finalization of the proposed Letter of Agreement with the selected service provider/target groups in line with the findings of the market study

The consultant has modified the initial project concept into a feasible agro-processing project with realistic objectives (activities and outcomes within the budgetary provision of SmartFish/FAO). An initial draft of the terms of agreement for the LoA was prepared and finalized in consultation with the SmartFish Key Expert for Result 5. The LoA was finalized by SmartFish after further discussions by both parties in early August 2012.

3. Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion, there are tremendous opportunities for the successful establishment of potentially profitable agro-processing activities in Rodrigues. However, this will require stronger collaboration between the farming community, the agro-processing sector, and institutional and financial stakeholders. It is crucial to organize The agro-products supply chain must be well-organized with sufficient emphasis on logistics and marketing services. A regional and well-coordinated government-led policy framework and related mechanisms are imperative to ensure the sustainable development of farming and agro-processing collaboration.

The success of the agro-food or agro-processing industry will depend on:

- Assurances of acceptable quality of raw or primary material and adequate quantities; and the pre-processed form required by the processors. Access to capital, technology, effective management and support services such as credit, marketing, research and extension services;
- Assistance from trained professionals in food science and technology, and their associated skills;
- Careful analysis of the domestic, national, regional and international markets as a baseline for project development and future investments in farming and agro-processing;
- Emphasis on product specialization and product quality with the specific objective of securing niches in the domestic, regional and international markets. The potential exists to stimulate market demand based on the novelty of unique, high-quality Rodriguan exotic products.

Private sector development is necessary to promote the development of the agro-processing sector, not only through possible direct investment but for the marketing of processed commodities and logistical services. The SmartFish pilot project aims to lay the foundations for initiating a process of change that will hopefully trigger other interests and initiatives to address all of the above-mentioned issues.

Annex 1. Terms of reference for the Consultant

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Terms of Reference for Consultant/PSA

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
| Name: Soobaschand Sweenarain | | |
| Job Title: Consultant – Marketing study and Business training | | |
| Division/Department: Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Economic Division, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department | | |
| Programme/Project Number: SmartFish GCP/RAF/466/EC Baby project Result 5 | | |
| Location: Mauritius with one mission to Rodrigues Island | | |
| Expected Start Date of Assignment: | 9 July 2012 | Duration: 20 days from 9 July to 28 July 2012 |
| Reports to: | Name: Bodiguel, Clotilde | Title: CTA |

1. General Description of task(s) and objectives to be achieved

Background

The SmartFish Programme aims at contributing to an increased level of social, economic and environmental development and deeper regional integration in the Eastern and Southern Africa – Indian Ocean Region (ESA-IO) through improved capacities for the sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources.

Within the framework of SmartFish Result 5, Output 5M3.2 *Support livelihoods diversification and resilience in selected fishing communities*; Activity 5M3.2.1 *Selected projects supported country project on diversification initiatives and improved resilience in fishing communities*, the project is planning to carry out a livelihood diversification pilot project in Rodrigues Island in order to provide and viable sources of income alternative to the lagoon fisheries through a gender based market oriented initiative aimed to support agro-processing and value addition to Rodrigues agricultural products for the Mauritius and export market.

As preliminary step, in order to ensure a sustainable exit strategy of the project though viable marketing and self-sustained trade, the project will undertake a first Market Study to identify both quality and quantity requirements for key competitive Rodrigues' agro-processed products, in the Mauritius market and potential investors and buyers, also interested to eventual export niches markets.

Task Description

Under the overall supervision of the SmartFish CTA, Clotilde Bodiguel and the direct supervision of Davide Signa, SmartFish Project Officer, and in close collaboration with the relevant FAO departments, the consultant will:

1. Carry out a feasibility/assessment mission to Rodrigues to assess the following:
 - Key products available in the market, supplying capacity and current quality standards (collecting samples of key products).
 - Potential for expansion of key products and for quality improvements.
 - Feasibility of a Geographic Identification and/or Organic labeling eventually as well as traceability and food safety aspects.
 - Implementing capacity and accountability of the two implementing partners proposed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the project implementation.
 - Specific involvement and roles and responsibilities in the planned intervention of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and of the Rodrigues Marketing and Trade Company.
 - Motivation and level of know-how of the target beneficiary groups proposed. (total 5 days from 9 to 13 July)
2. Carry out a market identification study in Mauritius with the aim of:
 - Identify both quality and quantity requirements for key selected Rodrigues' agro-processed

products in the Mauritius market.

- Provide a list of interested buyers and exporters also interested to eventual export niches markets with contacts and respective quality and quality requirements (including packaging preferences) and buying prices.
 - Assess potential expansion of the market through investor eventually interested in larger quantities/productions.
 - Assess the increase of the buying prices of each of the key products selected in case of quality upgrades and certifications providing a sort of cost-benefit analysis. (total of 10 days from 14 to 23 July)
3. Contribute to the finalization of the proposal, Letter of Agreement with the selected service provider/target groups in line with the findings of the market study. (total of 2 days from 24 to 25 July).
 4. Prepare and submit a final report detailing all activities carried out and a final set of recommendations and lesson learned with the key findings from of points 1 and 2 for immediate use of SmartFish and stakeholders involved (total of 3 days from 26 to 28 July).

Annex 2. List of persons/organizations contacted

| Name | Position | Organization |
|-------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Dr Henri Agathe | Officer in Charge | Chief Commissioner Office (EPMU) |
| Dr Nardeosingh | Senior Economist | Ministry of Cooperatives & Small Enterprises |
| Ms Brenda Félicité | Adviser | Ministry of Cooperatives & Small Enterprises |
| Mr B. Ramcharam | Marketing Officer | Mauritius Marketing Board / Moka |
| Mr Banji | Director | SMEDA / Mauritius |
| Mr C. Francis | Sales Representative | Robert Le Maire Ltée / Agro-processing Eqt. |
| Mr Christophe Leopold | Food Technologist | Commission of Agriculture / Mini Food Lab |
| Mr D. Panchoo | Director | Ministry of Agro-Industry |
| Mr Hemraj Ghina | Managing Director | Master Foods Limited / Distributor |
| Mr J. C. Pierre Louis | Departmental Head | Commission of Agriculture |
| Mr J. Ramparsad | Marketing Officer | Jumbo Supermarket / Phoenix |
| Mr Jim Seetaram | Minister | Cooperatives and Small Enterprises |
| Mr Laval Spéville | Manager | RTMC + Community Kitchen, Limon d'Or |
| Mr Léoville | Statistician | RTMC + Community Kitchen, Limon d'Or |
| Mr Marlo Bottessard | Departmental Head | RTMC + Community Kitchen, Limon d'Or |
| Mr Patrick Fortuno | Coordinator | Mauritius Fishermen Cooperative Federation |
| Mr P. Kanaksabee | Training Manager | Mauritius Standards Bureau |
| Mr Reshad Jhangeer-Khan | Scientific Officer | SEMPA |
| Mr R. Seetohul | Marketing Manager | Winners Supermarket Chain |
| Mr Ram | Auditor | Fair Price Supermarket / Pointe Lascar |
| Mr Robert Sik Yuen | General Manager | Way Supermarket / Ebène |
| Mr S. Bundhoo | Chairman | Fair Price Supermarket Chain |
| Mr Y. Bernard | Procurement Manager | Shoprite Supermarket / Saint Jean |

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Mrs C. Failkoo- | Extension officer | SMEDA / Rodrigues |
| Mrs I. Seebun | Managing Director | SMEDA / Mauritius |
| Mrs L. Pierre Louis | President | Women Lemon Planters Cooperative of Gravier |
| Mrs Marie L. Roussety | President / FFER | Forum des Femmes Entrepreneurs de Rodrigues |
| Mrs Maryline Legoff | Director | West AgroProcessing Rodrigues Co. Ltd |
| Mrs Chan-Sun | Technical Assistant | Commission of Agriculture |
| Mrs Doloresse Legentil | Agro-processor | Dans Coco, Retail Outlet at Caverne Patate |
| Mrs Franchette Gaspard | Deputy Chief Commissioner | Commission for Women, Entrepreneurship, Cooperatives and Industry |
| Mrs Marie Claire Rabais | President | FFER (South) |
| Ms Lucienne | Assistant Manager | FFER (South) |
| Ms V. Wong Chun Yin | Sale Person | Women's Marketing Cooperative / La Ferme |
| Ms Stenie Emilien | Economist | Women's Marketing Cooperative / La Ferme |
| Mrs Sooprayen Kwet On | Project Manager | Decentralized Cooperation Programme |

Annex 3. Pilot project description and framework

Development of agro-processing as sustainable alternative livelihoods for the benefit of redundant fisherwomen in the South East Marine Protected Area of Rodrigues Island

1. Background

Overexploitation of fish resources and degradation of the marine ecosystems represent a serious threat to the lagoons of Rodrigues Island mainly due to a lack of alternative livelihood opportunities for the dependent fishing communities. This problem has led the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) to establish a Marine Protected Area in the southeast region of the island.

To date, some 400 fisherwomen have willingly relinquished their fishing permits and are determined to divest in farming and agro-processing as major income generating activities. The inland areas (approximately 50km²) are, in fact, a major source of exotic agricultural produce such as lemon and chilli. The actual turnover of the agro-processing sector is an estimated MUR 35 million per annum. However, this could be further enhanced since the demand for agro-foods in Mauritius, (the direct market for selected Rodriguan agro-processed products such as 'Limon Achard', 'Limon Aigre-Doux', 'Piment-Limon', 'Piment Confit' and 'Piment Ourites') is growing exponentially. It is therefore evident that agro-processing should be promoted as a driving force for the sustainable and integrated development of Rodrigues Island.

The production and marketing systems of the Rodriguan agro-processing industry is primarily traditional and fragmented. The main constraints plaguing the sector are namely:

- irregular and insufficient supply of raw materials;
 - poor quality of raw materials and high post-harvest losses;
 - outdated/traditional agro-processing and marketing practices;
 - poor enabling conditions including hard and soft infrastructure as well as logistical, human, technical and financial resources;
 - absence of food safety, good hygiene practices and quality standard;
- absence of effective dialogue and consultative mechanism between public and private stakeholders.

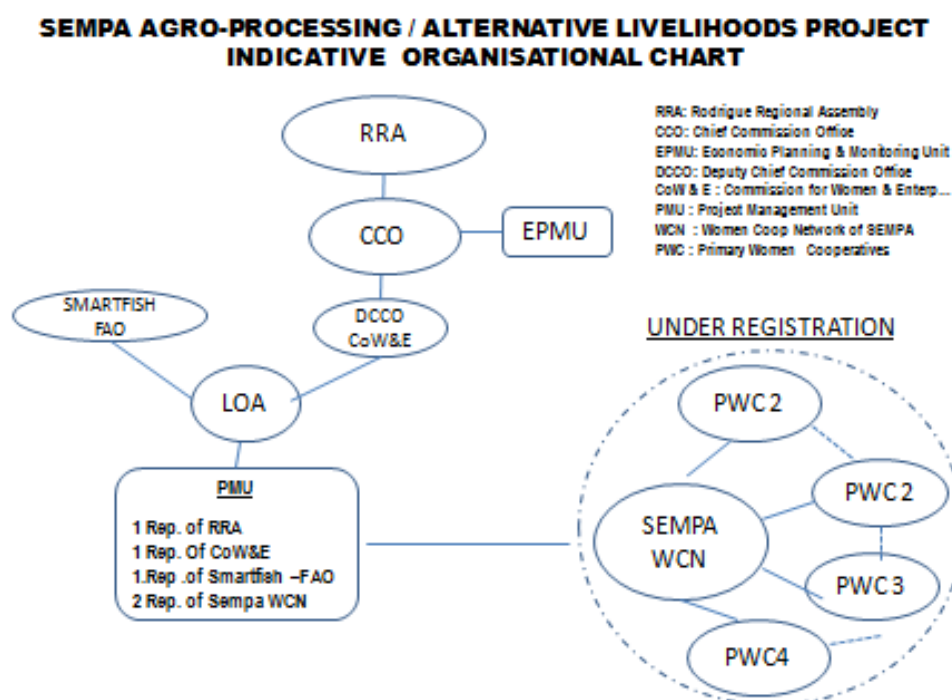
2. Objectives

The main objectives of this project are to arrest depletion of fish resources and degradation of lagoon ecosystems by encouraging fisherwomen to relinquish their fishing permits and divest into farming and agro-processing as alternative sustainable livelihoods.

This approach is instrumental in promoting sustainable local economic development in rural areas as an efficient means to reduce poverty, improving food security and ensuring the socio-economic development of local populations.

Smartfish/FAO proposed to implement a small pilot project under the framework of its Sustainable Alternative Livelihoods Programme to provide a comprehensive capacity development package to some 150 ex-fisherwomen and aspiring agro-processors in SEMPA communities to help them set up vibrant micro and small-scale enterprises of Rodriguan agro-products.

The project will run for nine months from August 2012 at a total cost of US \$40,000⁴. The project will be managed by the Commission of Women and Entrepreneurship. Target beneficiaries of the project will be organized by primary women's cooperatives (PWC) and will be grouped under a Women's Cooperative Network (WCN) at the SEMPA level. An indicative organizational chart of the project is given below:



⁴ This excludes indirect contributions from the FAO, SmartFish, the RRA and the Republic of Mauritius, which are in the form of shared use of premises, logistical services and local and international expertise.

The project proposes to collaborate with various public, parastatal and private development agencies and facilitators such as SMEDA⁵, the Food Testing Laboratory⁶ (FTL), the Mauritius Standards Bureau⁷ (MSB), the Agricultural Marketing Board⁸, the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry⁹ and the Mauritius Fishermen Cooperatives Federation Ltd¹⁰ amongst others. The log frame for the project is summarised below.

2.1 Expected Outcomes

The anticipated outputs of this project¹¹ are:

- Output 1: Fisherwomen Primary Women Cooperatives (PWC) and Women Cooperatives Network (WCN) of SEMPA established, empowered and operational.
- Output 2: Quality standards of selected key agro-processed products, improved and standardized in line with market requisites.
- Output 3: Awareness created on food safety, good hygiene practice and quality standard.
- Output 4: Marketing of selected key agro-processed products enhanced.

⁵ SMEDA provides comprehensive capacity building packages and support including training, business counselling, mentoring, market development and quality improvement to small and medium enterprises in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

⁶ Close technical collaboration between FTL Mauritius and Rodrigues is essential in order to expedite the operationalization of FTL/Rodrigues.

⁷ MSB is a parastatal body and is the apex organization for quality standards in Mauritius. Its free services can be used to create awareness of quality standards amongst the target women agro-processors, with special emphasis on MS 167 – Good Hygiene Practices and MS 133 – Food Safety.

⁸ AMB-Mauritius has strong marketing and logistical services that could be used to help the SEMPA agro-processors distribute/sell their products across Mauritius in a cost-effective manner. It is proposed to establish a specific MOU between SEMPA (Women's Cooperatives Network) and AMB (Mauritius) for the distribution and sale of their agro-products.

⁹ MCCI is a national NGO responsible for GS 1 Mauritius. It offers global standards for the bar coding of products to enable efficient circulation throughout the supply and demand chain.

¹⁰ MFCCF is the zenith organization for fishers' cooperatives in Mauritius. It has several premises at strategic commercial centres in Mauritius. Two permanent selling points for agro-products of the target groups in Mauritius through cooperative collaboration could be set up.

¹¹ Activities carried out within the scope of the project will contribute to the following: SmartFish Result 5, Output 5M3.2 'support livelihood diversification and resilience in selected fishing communities' and Activity 5M3.2.1 'selected projects are supported by the country project on diversification initiatives and improved resilience in fishing communities'.

2.2 Projected activities

The following activities/services will be provided under each of the aforementioned outputs:

Output 1: Fisherwomen Primary Women Cooperatives (PWC) and Women Cooperatives Network (WCN) of SEMPA established, empowered and operational

| Activity 1.1 | Support for the establishment of legal status and functional structure of beneficiary groups (PWC and WCN) |
|---------------------|--|
| Indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PWC (4) and WCN (1) at SEMPA level established legally. • Executive Committee elected and activated (minutes of proceedings). • Regular statutory meetings. • Bank account opened with two signatories. |
| Inputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal and administrative support from RRA / CoW & E. • Part-time assistance from SmartFish focal point in Rodrigues and Mauritius. • Training costs. |
| Modalities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good governance principles and best practices incorporated in the organization and management of the PWC and WCN. • Fast track procedures recommended to establish the beneficiary group at the end of month 1. |

| Activity 1.2 | Capacity development in entrepreneurship and basic business management skills for existing and aspiring female agro-processors |
|---------------------|--|
| Indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two groups of 20 kitchen processors trained by end of month 2 in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - entrepreneurial skills - bookkeeping and basic cost accounting - basics of business management including budgeting and cash flow management - introduction to the value chain approach - marketing and communication tools • Two trainers trained (ToT) • Five groups of 15-25 indigenous/aspiring agro-processors trained by the end of the month 3. |
| Inputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs related to training package and logistics preparation. • Equipment, materials and consumables for the training sessions. • Honorarium for trainers and facilitators. |
| Modalities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-day training sessions made up of both theoretical and practical sessions. |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each session should have a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 25 trainees. • The trainer will be responsible for collecting and submitting the attendance list for each training session to SmartFish/FAO. |
|--|---|

Output 2: Quality standards of selected key agro-processed products improved and standardized in line with market requisites

| Activity 2.1 | Participatory designing of two quality protocols for pre-processing, storage and agro-processing. |
|---------------------|---|
| Indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two quality protocols designed in a participatory manner and validated by future processors by the end of month 3. • Quality protocol appropriated by the beneficiary groups and monitored by the Food Technologist and the PMU by the end of month 3. • Quality protocols fully operational by the <u>end of month 4.</u> |
| Inputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honorarium for one part-time Food Technologist. • Allowances for community mobilizers. • Transport allowances and refreshment costs. • Equipment, materials and consumables. |
| Modalities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An International Consultant to validate the proposed quality protocols. • The Food Technologist will be responsible for running the quality workshop and will submit a list of participants and a brief report on the activities/achievements of each workshop to Smartfish/FAO. • SmartFish focal point in Rodrigues will assist in the implementation and follow-up of the quality workshops. • Backstopping and follow-up to be systematically ensured by the International Consultant (part-time). |

| Activity 2.2 | Training completed for the implementation of the two quality protocols |
|---------------------|--|
| Indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two training sessions carried out with two groups/cooperatives of ten women on pre-processing and storage quality protocol (lemon and chili products) by the end of month 4. • Basic equipment and tools for pre-processing and storage of lemon provided to selected trainees by end of month 3. • Three training sessions carried out with three groups/cooperatives of ten women on quality assurance on agro-processing protocol for selected five key agro-processed products by end of month 4. • Basic equipment and tools for quality agro-processing and storage of lemon provided to selected trainees by end of month 4. |

| | |
|------------|--|
| Inputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One food technician, honorarium for one month (training preparation and delivery). • Transport allowances and lunches provided to trainees. • All logistic resources. • Training equipment, materials and consumables. |
| Modalities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two full day trainings will be implemented in a participatory manner to ensure that the quality protocol is appropriated by the producers/trainees and will be composed of practical sessions and simulations to ensure correct implementation of the protocols. • Training programme and training materials prepared by the Food Technologist and approved by SF International Consultant. • Inputs and equipment to be provided to participants simultaneously with the training. • All tools and equipment have to be supplied by the RRA in compliance to the technical specification provided by the food technologist and cleared by SmartFish International Consultant. • Regular backstopping, supervision and follow-up of Food Technologist and SmartFish focal person in Rodrigues after training. • The Commission for Health and Commission for Agriculture to be systematically implicated in the activities. • Backstopping, supervision and follow-up to be ensured by SmartFish International Consultant. |

| Activity 2.3 Rehabilitation of an existing premises into a Model Community Lemon Pre-processing and Storage facility with SEMPA | |
|--|--|
| Indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Model Community Lemon Pre-processing and Storage facility established and operational in SEMPA with the participation of the PWC by end of month 6. • Facility appropriated by the PWC for the lemon pre-processing and storage for the community and operated as an autonomous business enterprise by the end of month 9 |
| Inputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food technologist monitoring and overseeing the activity on a part time basis. • Supervision and follow-up to be ensured by SmartFish focal person in Rodrigues. • Provision for rehabilitation and refurbishment works (to be contracted). • Contribution in kind of direct beneficiaries. |
| Modalities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of inputs with technical specifications provided by the food technologist and revised/cleared by International Consultant. • Adequate supply of potable water to be a major criterion in |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>selection of site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food safety, good hygiene practices to be scrupulously followed. • Supervision and follow-up to be ensured by SmartFish focal person in Rodrigues. • Health permits to be obtained prior to operationalization of the facility. |
|--|---|

| Activity 2.4 Rehabilitation of the existing premises into a model community agro-processing facility for selected key products within SEMPA | |
|--|--|
| Indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Model Community Lemon Pre-processing and Storage facility established and operational in SEMPA with the participation of the PWC by <u>end of month 6</u>. • Facility appropriated by the PWC for the lemon pre-processing and storage for the community and operated as an autonomous business enterprise by the <u>end of month 9</u>. |
| Inputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food technologist monitoring and overseeing the activity on a part time basis. • Supervision and follow-up to be ensured by SmartFish focal person in Rodrigues. • Provision for rehabilitation and refurbishment works (to be contracted). • Contribution in kind of direct beneficiaries. |
| Modalities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of inputs with technical specifications provided by the food technologist and revised/cleared by International Consultant. • Adequate supply of potable water to be a major criterion in selection of site. • Food safety, good hygiene practices to be scrupulously followed. • Supervision and follow-up to be ensured by SmartFish focal person in Rodrigues. • Health permits to be obtained prior to operationalization of the facility. |

| Output 3.1 Awareness created on food safety, good hygiene practices and quality | |
|--|---|
| Indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three thematic posters designed by end of month 2. • A hundred posters and 1 000 fliers distributed at community level. |
| Inputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food technologist honorarium (5 working days) for the content development. • Production and distribution costs to target groups. |
| Modalities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The format to be simple, targeting low literacy groups. |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final artwork of the poster and fliers will be agreed in advance and will follow the FAO and SmartFish visibility guidelines. • The Commission of Health (CoH) to be systematically implicated in the activity. • Close collaboration with SMEDA, MSB, CoA and CoH to be established. |
|--|---|

| Activity 3.2 | Organization of outreach events and media communication initiatives |
|---------------------|---|
| Indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least two public occasions where the posters and fliers will be distributed. • Thematic posters designed by end of month 2. • At least ten radio talks aired by end month 4. • At least two features on food safety, good hygiene practices and quality standards publicized by end month 6. |
| Inputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and production cost of the adverts with Communication resource person. • Eventual media facilitation allowances. • Air-time costs to radio and TV. |
| Modalities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple format targeting low literacy groups. • The final content of the radio and TV talks will be agreed in advance and will follow the SmartFish-FAO visibility guidelines. • RRA to ensure maximum visibility of both FAO and the donor during TV and radio sessions. • RRA to ensure media coverage for distribution of awareness events and will provide copies of the media records to SmartFish-FAO. • Activities to be overseen by SmartFish focal person in Rodrigues. |

| Activity 4.1 | Creating of a regular sale points in Mauritius through Cooperative collaborations with MFCF |
|---------------------|---|
| Indicators | At least one regular sale point created and operationalized by end of month 9. |
| Inputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental • Refurbishment and decoration costs • Initial marketing support costs |
| Modalities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on Cooperative collaborations between WCN of SEMPA and MFCF. • Operating agreement to be discussed and finalized in due time and with long term duration. |

| Activity 4.2 | Support participation to trade fairs in Mauritius |
|---------------------|--|
| Indicators | Minimum two trade fairs events attended by different beneficiary groups. |
| Inputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travels costs to participants. • Decoration cost of the stands. • Initial marketing support costs and advert materials. |
| Modalities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration between SEMPA Women Cooperative Network and SMEDA. • Selection of trade fair events to be done in consultation with the international consultant. |

3. Budget allocation

| Project Breakdown | % | Total Cost (SmartFish IOC- EU) | FAO – Direct Contributions | RRA – Direct Contributions |
|-----------------------------------|------------|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| PMU Personnel | 2 | 700 | 1,600 | 1,400 |
| Logistic Supports | 23 | 9,090 | 0 | 2,100 |
| Resource persons | 8 | 3,350 | 3,760 | 0 |
| General operating expenses | 3 | 1,250 | 1,595 | 3,500 |
| Training equipment & materials | 51 | 20,210 | 0 | 2,800 |
| Communication & awareness raising | 13 | 5,400 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 40,000 | 6,955 | 9,800 |

4. Work plan with time frame and indicative dates for each activity

| Milestones | | Timeframe and indicative dates for each activity | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|--|-------------------------|----------------|------|------|-----------|
| | | July 2012 | August | Sept. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | Jan. 2013 |
| Project prepared & finalized | | XXXX | | | | | | |
| FAO/RRA – LOA signed | | | 01 | | | | | |
| Project Management Unit created | | | 5–10 | | | | | |
| 1.1 | Operationalization of primary & Regional Network of Women's Cooperatives in SEMPA: - Formation of PWC (4) - Formation of WCN (1) - Opening of bank account - Setting up of small office | | Fast track 02–15 16–29 30–31 15–31 | | | | | |
| 1.2 | Design of five capacity development modules (International Consultant) | | 23–31 | | | | | |
| | Training of two groups of 20 female kitchen agro-processors and two trainers | | | 03–05 06–08 | | | | |
| 1.3 | Replication of training for five groups of 20 aspiring female agro-processors from the SEMPA community | | | 10–12 16–18 23–25 | 01–03 08–10 | | | |
| 2.1 | Workshop to design quality protocol for pre-processing and storage of lemon and chili, and processing of selected key agro-products | | | | 15–16 | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|--|---------|---------|----------------------------------|--------|--|--|
| 2.2 | Training workshop on quality protocol for five selected agro-processed products | | | | 29-30 | | | |
| 2.3 | Set-up and operationalization of a model community lemon pre-processing and storage facility in SEMPA with the participation of beneficiary PWCs. | | | ←—————→ | | | | |
| 2.4 | Set up and operationalization of a model community agro-processing facility in SEMPA for selected agro-processed products with the participation of beneficiary PWCs. | | | ←—————→ | | | | |
| 3.1 | Food safety, good hygiene & quality awareness campaign | | | | | ←————→ | | |
| 3.2 | Organization of outreach events and media communication initiatives | | ←—————→ | | | | | |
| 4.1 | Set up and operationalization of two distribution points for selected key agro-processed products from SEMPA in Mauritius | | | ←—————→ | | | | |
| 4.2 | Participation in at least two trade fairs in Mauritius | | | | ← To be coordinated with SMEDA → | | | |

Annex 4. Brief on the community kitchen – Limon d’Or, Marechal

Background

Limon d’Or belongs to the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Company Limited, the major shareholders of which are Rodrigues Regional Assembly (60 percent) and the State Trading Corporation (40 percent). It was created in 2010 at a total capital investment cost of MUR 5.5 million that was financed by the Decentralised Cooperation Programme (75 percent) and RTMC (25 percent). Limon d’Or is a state-of-the-art, polyvalent agro-processing facility built in accordance with European health and safety standards.

Initial Objectives

- product research and development;
- advanced training in agro-processing;
- quality development and assurance;
- commercial operations;
- output to be marketed through RTMC.

Unfortunately, the facility failed to take off and was closed in 2011. The fixed operating costs, including depreciation of tangible assets, are an estimated MUR 52,000 per month. It was offered to potential agro-processors for a rental rate of MUR 2,400 per day, which obviously was not commercially viable. This project was developed without an in-depth situational analysis of the socio-economic factors relating to the farming and agro-processing sector, or a proper techno-economic feasibility study.

Main Weaknesses

- Absence of a business plan and financial projections;
- Unavailability of female labour in rural areas;
- Incorrect location: far from farms and poor transport system;
- Absence of professional staff such as food technologist and marketing specialist;
- Shortage of working capital;
- Strained relationship between RTMC and indigenous agro-processors;
- Political pressure to resume commercial activities;
- Cumulated losses.

Conclusion and recommendations

From an initial analysis of the objectives of the Limon d’Or project, it was found that the backbone of the project was not limited to its commercial viability.

It was conceived to play a catalytic role in the development of the Rodriguan agro-processing sector but unfortunately, there was no business plan nor adequate financial provision to pursue these laudable development objectives. Instead of dismantling or underutilizing the Limon d'Or plant, it is recommended to turn it into a centre of excellence for:

- high-value product development;
- advanced training of agro-processing professionals;
- the creation of quality protocols/standards for selected exotic and high-value agro-products;
- extension services to agro-processors for the promotion of food safety, good hygiene practices and quality improvement;
- moving progressively towards ecological labels and certifications.

It is obvious that the above objectives are not the main priorities of a commercial enterprise such as the RTMC. Therefore, it is recommended that stakeholders arrest the financial downturn of Limon d'Or by re-orienting its operationalization as soon as possible.

- A separate and autonomous management structure needs to be created that would be manned by marketing and food technology specialists;
- The new management structure could be overseen by a Management Committee comprised of informed stakeholders from both the public and private sector to ensure a participatory approach, accountability and commitment from either side;
- A development strategy and programmes with accompanying performance-based budgetary provisions should be established.

Annex 5. Brief on the Mini Food Laboratory¹² project of the Commission of Agriculture

Proposed objectives

- To support the agro-processing community in qualifying the microbiological quality of their finished products to comply with the Food Act 1998, promulgated in 2000;
- To undertake quality research studies at a business level and propose ways towards good hygiene practices;
- To act as a supporting body to research quality improvement of existing products and new product development;
- To serve as a backup food testing laboratory in Rodrigues in collaboration with the Food Technology Laboratory (Mauritius), which is about to be accredited by an internationally recognized accreditation body.

Microbiological tests as per the Food Regulations 1998

Plant and animal based processed foods:

- *Salmonella*;
- *Campylobacter*;
- *E. coli* O157 and other Shiga toxin producing micro-organisms;
- *Staphylococcus aureus*;
- *Coliform*;
- *Clostridium*;
- *Bacillus cereus*;
- Total viable count.

Present Status

Major equipment already acquired includes:

- autoclave;
- laminar flow;
- microscope;
- incubator;

¹² Information obtained through an interview with Mr. Christophe Leopold, Scientific Officer, Agro-Processing Unit, Commission of Agriculture and a site visit to Citronelle. The Microbiological Laboratory Project has obtained financial support from the Decentralized Cooperation Project for the construction of the building and the Food Security Fund for the acquisition of equipment and materials. Additional financial needs will be borne by the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office.

- fridge;
- water bath.

Additional requirements:

- Two additional rooms for analysis purposes (estimated cost: MUR 200,000);
- Provision of culture media (estimated cost: MUR 125,000);
- Additional materials and apparatus to ensure security and safety (estimated cost: MUR 250,000);
- Recruitment of personnel/new posting of staff;
- Training of personnel.

The Food Microbiology Laboratory is forecast to be operational by end of 2012, assuming all procedures run smoothly, in particular with regard to the following;

- acquisition of materials (including culture media);
- adequate training of personnel;
- eight tests recommended by the Food Regulations can be conducted and then validated by an accredited laboratory (FTL or MSB).

Discussions

The investment and operational costs of an internationally accredited food testing laboratory is onerous for a small island like Rodrigues. For example, the Food Technology Laboratory in Mauritius is a state-owned facility that required a capital investment of approximately MUR 150 million for buildings and equipment. It is still in the process of acquiring its accreditation. Recurring/operational costs are also high. Although this facility has to be of a minimal/critical size, it will be underutilized due to the number of tests that will be carried out at the national level. On its own it would not be commercially viable and should be supported as a public infrastructure.

It is therefore more realistic for the Rodriguan agro-processing sector to utilize the services of FTL or MSB in Mauritius for food testing and certifications, and for the proposed mini-laboratory to be used as a local backup facility. With regards to the performance of the eight tests as recommended by the Food Regulations, the mini-lab could develop a working arrangement with the Health Commission, since these tests are usually carried out at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Mont Lubin. In other words, the mini-lab. could act as the local body for food testing, quality audits and as a mandated interface with external food laboratories such as FTL and MSB.

Recommendations

- Completion of project investment to ensure adequate operating capital.
- Working arrangement with FTL (Mauritius) for food testing and training of local staff.

- Collaboration with the community kitchen (Limon d'Or) to focus on the creation of quality standards/protocols and product development.
- Provision of extension services in quality standards and assurance to the agro-processing sector.
- Advocate the enforcement of Food Health and Safety Regulations by the relevant authorities.

Annex 6. Letter to SMEDA for a partnership in capacity development to empower SEMPA fisherwomen

Soobaschand Sweenarain PhD, CIPM

Smartfish-FAO Consultant
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30th July 2012

Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority

Industrial Estate

Coromandel

Attn: Mrs Indranee Seebun (GOSK) / Managing Director

Madam,

Following my fruitful meeting with Mr. Banji on Friday the 27th, I am sending a log frame of the proposed project to you in view to identify opportunities for an effective partnership between our two agencies.

Smartfish-FAO is a regional fisheries project executed by the IOC and funded by the EU. The project is about to embark on a capacity development programme to empower some 150 redundant fisherwomen of the South East Protected Marine Area (SEMPA) of Rodrigues to divest into farming and agro-processing of selected Rodriguan agro-products as sustainable alternative livelihoods. The project is in process of being finalized by the RRA.

I reckon that some of the activities are part of menu of SMEDA and therefore, I am very keen to leverage with our organisation in the implementation of the afore-mentioned project.

I look forward to discussing / concluding a productive collaboration with SMEDA on the proposed project at you earliest convenience.

With my best wishes,

Soobaschand Sweenarain

Attached: Project description and Log frame

Note:

SMEDA has already given instructions to SMEDA Rodrigues to carry out an assessment of existing technical and human capacities with regard to potential partnering with the proposed pilot project in the field of agro-processing and business skills training programmes, quality improvement and marketing support. The PMU of the pilot project will have to establish this collaboration at the outset.

Annex 7. Letter to MFCF for cooperative collaboration for the establishment of distribution points in Mauritius

Soobaschand SWEENARAIN, PhD, CIPM
Economist

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26th July 2012

The Chairman,
Mauritius Fishermen Cooperatives Federation Ltd
Diva Building, 26 Brabant Street
PORT LOUIS

Dear Mr. Martin,

I am writing on behalf of Smartfish-FAO Programme of EU-IOC and the SEMPA Community of Rodrigues to seek a cooperative collaboration with your Federation for securing two sale points for selected Rodriguan agro-processed products on your strategic commercial premises in Mauritius.

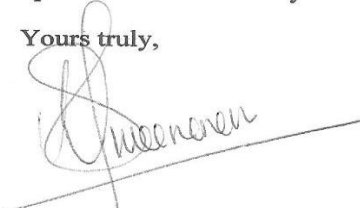
Smartfish-FAO is funding a project to support redundant fisherwomen of the South East Marine Protected Areas (SEMPA) to divest into the agro processing sector as sustainable alternative livelihoods. In this context, some 150 ex-fisherwomen who have voluntarily relinquished their fishing permits will be empowered through a comprehensive and integrated capacity development package to become professional agro-processors.

This project is aligned with the Millennium Development Goals that aim at poverty reduction, food security and sustainable livelihoods. These aspirant women agro-processors will be organized into primary women cooperatives (PWC) at community level and will be regrouped into a regional network at SEMPA level. Since the project is due to start next month, I hope to fast track the process of registration of these PWC as well as the WCN.

I look forward to obtaining a positive response from your end while the modalities of this collaboration could be finalized as soon as the WCN is duly registered and operative. Please note that the cost of any refurbishment and decorative works will be borne by the project beneficiaries.

Thanking you once again for our long standing collaboration in the best interest of co-operators of this country.

Yours truly,



cc – Mr. Davide Signa / Smartfish-FAO

Note:

The above application has been accepted and the letter of confirmation issued by the MFCF is hereby attached. The PMU will have to liaise with the MFCF for the operationalization of these retail outlets in collaboration with SMEDA and the agro-processor cooperative of Rodrigues.

**MAURITIUS FISHERMEN'S COOPERATIVE FEDERATION LTD.**

Registered No. 663

DIVA BUILDING, 26 BRABANT ST., PORT LOUIS - TEL: 208-4056 FAX: (230) 210-5987

Doctor Sunil Sweenarain

Fisheries Economist

Petit Verger

Saint Pierre.

20 /9/12.

Sir,

RE: Marketing facilities for products from Rodrigues.

Your request is referred.

The Mauritius Fishermen Cooperative Federation Ltd has no objection that marketing facilities be extended for products from Rodrigues at the following sales points;

- 1- Centre Cooperatif Argo-Alimentaire de Rose-Hill.
- 2- Maison des Pecheurs Cap-Malheureux.
- 3- Maison des Pecheurs Mahebourg.

Yours faithfully,

Nicholas Martin

Chairman.

Annex 8. Letter to MSB to raise awareness on quality improvement in SEMPA communities

Soobaschand SWEENARAIN. PhD, CIPM
Smartfish-FAO Consultant

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30th July 2012

Mauritius Standard Bureau
Moka – Mauritius
Attn: Mr. S. Pillay Kanaksabee /Training Manager

Dear Mr. Kanaksabee,

It has been a pleasure discussing the prospects for Quality Assurance in cottage and small scale agro-processing industry with you on the 27th at your Office.

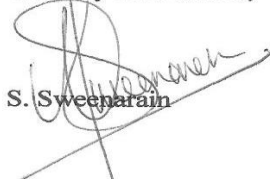
Smartfish-FAO is implementing an integrated capacity building programme to empower some 150 redundant fisherwomen of the South East Protected Marine Area (SEMPA) of Rodrigues Island to divest into agro-processing of selected key agro-products as sustainable alternative livelihoods. This project has dual objectives namely, to arrest the depletion of fish resources and degradation of marine ecosystems of the lagoon and to support sustainable local economic development.

Undoubtedly Quality Assurance is emerging as a key determinant in market development for agro-processed products in developed as well as developing economies. The journey towards international norms and standards starts with voluntary compliance to Food Safety and Good Hygiene Practices Regulations, which are more fully described in the Food Safety Management System 133 and 167 published by your Agency. The proposed project is focusing on quality standards for selected Rodriguan agro-processed products through an integrated capacity development programme and by implicating systematically the local agencies (MSB, FTL...)

Beside, consultancy services that can only be acquired on a commercial basis, MSB is also engaged in awareness building on Quality Assurance. It is likely that SMEDA would grant its support to upcoming project by bearing the additional cost of hiring the services the MSB for specific quality assurance assignments. While other inter-agencies discussions are in-process, we are actually interested to start a joint initiative with the MSB to raise awareness for Quality Assurance in the SEMPA community.

In keeping with the above proposal, I look forward to fruit collaboration with your Agency in a very near future.

With my best wishes,



S. Sweenarain

Note:

The MSB is a parastatal body that operates on a commercial basis. However, it has budgetary provisions to raise awareness of quality standards and best practices across the national food industry. Rodrigues Island can also take advantage of this service through this initiative.

Annex 9. Letter to AMB for marketing and distribution collaboration

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30th July 2012

Mr. Beny Ramcharan
Trade & Marketing Officer
Agricultural Marketing Board
Moka

Dear Mr. Ramcharan,

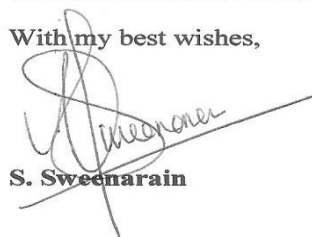
As stated at our meeting of the 27th at your Office, Smartfish-FAO is implementing an integrated capacity building programme to empower some 150 redundant fisherwomen of the South East Protected Marine Area (SEMPA) of Rodrigues Island to divest into agro-processing of selected key agro-products as sustainable alternative livelihoods. This project has dual objectives namely, to arrest the depletion of fish resources and degradation of marine ecosystems of the lagoon and to support sustainable local economic development.

The traditional marketing systems operating in the Rodriguan agro-processing sector is exhausted and therefore, a value chain market oriented strategy is necessary to tap the underutilized capacities. There is a reciprocal MOU in place between AMB and RTMC to boost trading and marketing of agro-products between the two islands but it has been ineffective mainly because of unrealistic pricing. This MOU is not exclusive and both agencies are dealing directly with other local trading/supplying partners.

The proposed project is interested in the AMB existing marketing network and logistics a) to market the agro-processed outputs and b) to procure inputs such packaging materials for the Women Cooperative Network (WCN) of SEMPA. This novel alliance is to promote judicious sharing of value added and regular flow of information between the producers and the marketing clusters. To explore further the prospects for a close collaboration between AMB and WCN, I would like to acquire some detailed information about your marketing logistics and operations as well as marketing proposals.

I look forward to pursuing this discussion to materialize a marketing alliance in the best commercial interest of both parties.

With my best wishes,



S. Sweenarain

Note:

AMB has extensive marketing and distribution logistics and approx. 20 permanent retail outlets throughout Mauritius. It has surplus marketing capacity that could be made available to Rodriguan agro-processing cooperatives or wholesale suppliers at marginal cost. This avenue should be investigated further to enhance the market development of Rodriguan agro-products.

Annex 10. Article: The sale of Rodriguan agro-products in hotels in Mauritius

Les PME's rodriguais pourront exposer dans les hôtels mauriciens



Thierry Laurent

Un Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) sera signé, dans un mois, entre le Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) et la Small Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA). Il donnera aux PME's rodriguais la possibilité d'exposer dans les hôtels à Maurice.

Offrir une meilleure visibilité des produits artisanaux rodriguais à Maurice. Le Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) qui sera signé entre la SMEDA et le RRA dans un mois permettra aux PME's rodriguais d'être davantage présentes dans les foires mauriciennes, ainsi que dans les hôtels.

« Grâce au MoU signé entre la SMEDA et l'AHRIM il y a un mois, nous ferons en sorte que les PME's rodriguais puissent exposer non seulement dans les foires mauriciennes, mais également dans les hôtels mauriciens et tout ça gratuitement », explique un haut cadre de la SMEDA.

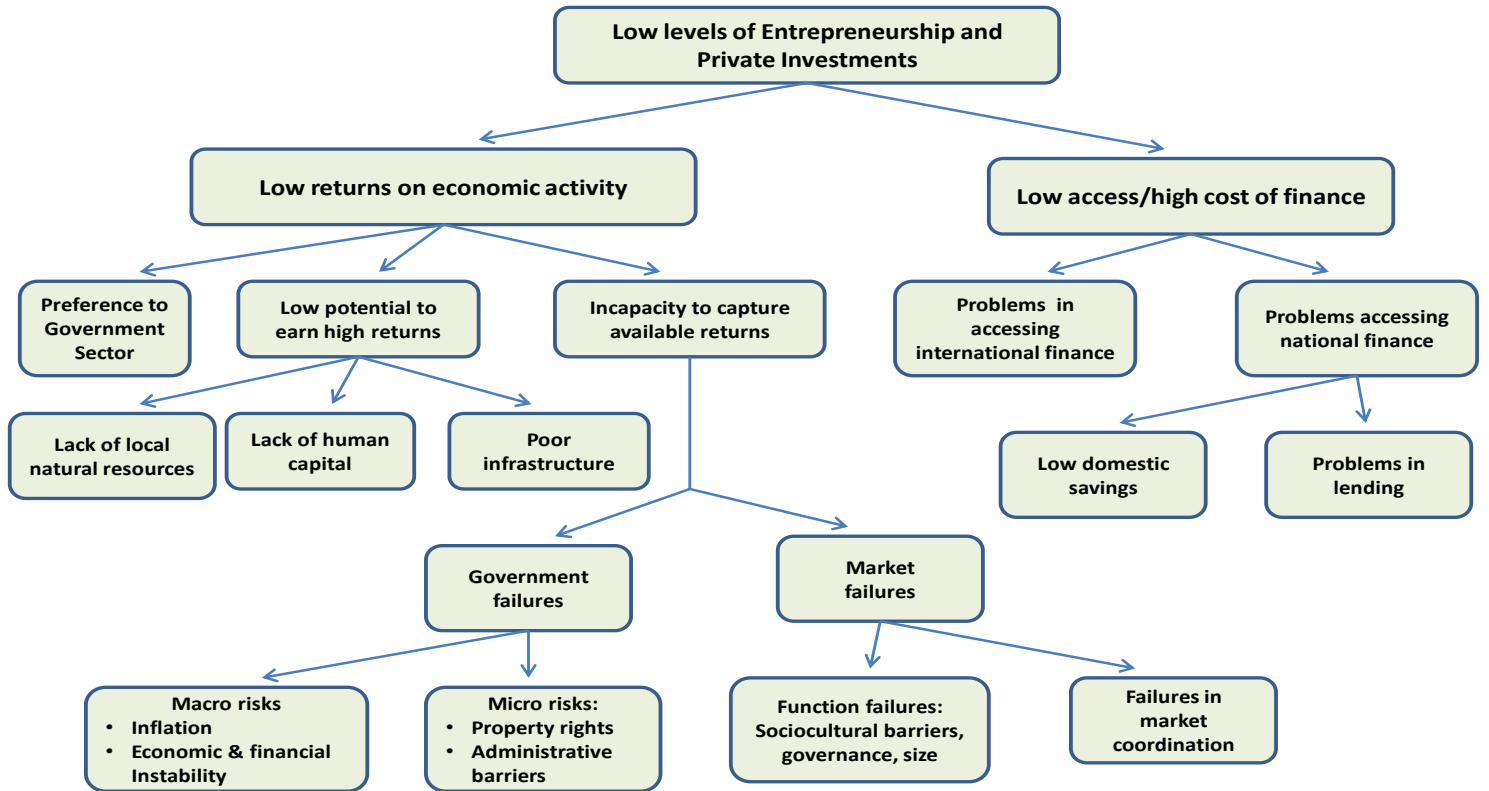
Les PME's pourront aussi bénéficier des subventions pour améliorer la qualité de leurs produits. Les hôteliers se réservent le droit de choisir les différents produits qui leur seront proposés par les artisans. « S'ils estiment qu'un produit ne correspond pas à leurs critères, ils auront le droit de ne pas les exposer dans leurs établissements », avance-t-il.

Les PME's rodriguais, pourront exposer dans 28 hôtels, parmi ceux des groupes Veranda, Naiade Resorts, Constance Hotel entre autres. Varen Andee, président du conseil d'administration de la SMEDA est d'avis que les produits artisanaux de Rodrigues correspondent parfaitement aux hôtels mauriciens car, selon lui, les touristes réclament les produits venant de Rodrigues.

Ce MOU, stipule que l'argent récolté sur la vente des produits des PME's devra être versé à la SMEDA immédiatement. « Nous nous occuperons par la suite de redistribuer l'argent aux artisans », soutient Varen Andee.

Source: www.lexpress.mu (8 October, 2011)

Annex 11. Analysis of low levels of entrepreneurship and private investments in Rodrigues



Annex 12. References and documents consulted

COI/SmartFish. Value Chain Analysis of Fisheries Sector for Rodrigues, 2012 REPORT/RAPPORT: SF/2012/18. June/Juin 2012. SmartFish Programme of the Indian Ocean Commission, funded by the European Union. 78 pages.

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Annex 13. Photos of the agro-processing sector in Rodrigues

Photo 1: Agro-processing training facility in Malabar, Rodrigues, July 2012.



Photo 3: Meeting with ex-fisherwomen and aspiring agro-processors at Baie Tortue Community Centre, Rodrigues, July 2102.



Photo 4: Lemon garden at Gravier, Rodrigues, July 2012.



Photo 5: Food Testing Laboratory (in progress) at the Commission of Agriculture, Citronelle, Rodrigues, July 2012.



SmartFish is a regional fisheries project managed by the Indian Ocean Commission, funded by the European Union and co-implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. SmartFish, which operates in 20 countries throughout the East and Southern Africa - Indian Ocean region, focuses on fisheries governance, management, monitoring, control and surveillance, trade, and food security.

Overexploitation of fish resources and degradation of marine ecosystems represent a serious problem in the lagoon of Rodrigues Island mainly due to the lack of alternative income generating activities for fishing dependent communities.

This report highlights the context of the local population's vulnerability and also underlines the opportunities for sustainable local economic development.

In an attempt to provide viable sources of alternative incomes to fishers through a gender-based market-oriented initiative, the SmartFish-FAO programme has launched a pilot project in Rodrigues to support agro-processing and created added value to agricultural products for Mauritian and export markets.



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