



Safeguarding the health and well-being of consumers and producers and increasing market access for Palestinian food products through a sustainable sanitary and phytosanitary system in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

OSRO/GAZ/110/SPA

Working for: Palestinian consumers, farmers, herders, the public and private sectors in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Working to: Update and efficiently utilized the National Food Safety Control Plan (NFSCP) considering COVID-19 and similar crises

Total investment: USD 225 225

Project duration: December 2021–June 2023

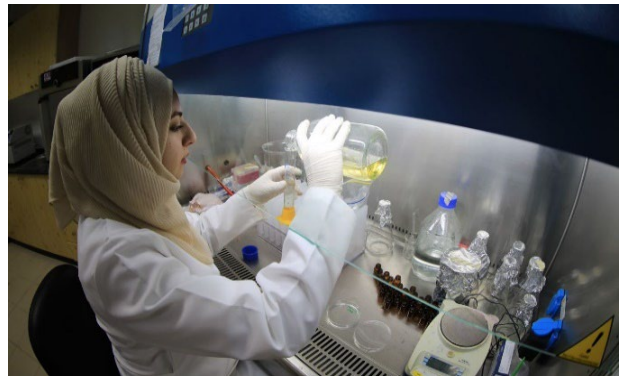
In 2019, COVID-19 induced dramatic changes to the food value chain, from farm to fork. Consequently, food chain operators needed to effectively adapt. Supporting this adaptation requires a wide range of essential short and long-term interventions to sustain safe production and consumption of food without compromising the health of producers, processors, traders as well as consumers.

The agri-food sector remains one of the most critical not only to sustaining the livelihoods of producers but also to ensuring food and nutrition security for the general population. The risk management measures related to COVID-19 have caused a shift in food safety services for producers and consumers, requiring timely action to ensure that service providers and control authorities can handle the evolving risks.

A robust sanitary and phytosanitary system (SPS), including inspection services, to ensure food safety play a crucial role in the delivery of high-quality food to consumers. On the other hand, indiscriminate use of food additives is a serious concern for both consumers and food safety inspectors. Hence, close monitoring of food producers, processors and handlers becomes crucial and a technical committee to assess and prepare the foundations for the establishment of the Palestinian Council for Food and Drug Safety are highly needed.

In light of the above, this project ensures the continuity of technical support to Palestinians towards a more enhanced SPS system through supporting the implementation of targeted and periodic activities:

- Review and update the inspection section of the NFSCP and its related standard operating procedures to include COVID-19 management measures and food safety risks
- Preliminary qualitative investigation of the indiscriminate use of food additives
- Provide technical advisory support to the technical committee for establishing the Palestinian Council for Food and Drug Safety



Lab technician testing the microbiology of a food sample, Ramallah, West Bank ©FAO/2019

The project is an integral part of a [programme on food safety, animal health and plant health that was developed in 2012. It will serve as a bridging phase connecting the policies and strategies in phase I with future interventions, aiming to enforce and modernized adopted policies and strategies towards compliance with international standards to ensure the competitiveness of Palestinian food at national, regional, and local levels.

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