



CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT TOWARDS FOOD SAFETY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN PALESTINE

Ensuring consumer protection and food safety and quality is essential to safeguarding the health and well-being of Palestinian people; as well as to accessing domestic, regional and international markets. However, constant threats from animal diseases and plant pests and diseases put the food safety of Palestinian consumers at risk. These problems are compounded by the limited capacity of local authorities in monitoring, inspecting and controlling the food value chain, and in regulating and providing Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) services in the framework of a sustainable national SPS system. In addition, small-scale herders, particularly in Gaza Strip, are adversely affected by a lack of resources and essential services, as well as having limited access to animal health services, which are indispensable for protecting livestock from disease outbreaks. The project aimed to enhance the design and implementation of better policies and regulatory frameworks for public sector institutions, and to improve the provision of public services related to plant protection, food safety and quality, as well as animal health.



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WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The activities carried out during the project included the identification of national food safety priorities, and the development and endorsement of the first-ever National Strategy for Food Safety. In addition, a National Food Safety Control Plan was developed and endorsed to improve the consistency and effectiveness of official controls and provide safeguards for consumers. The first draft of a food safety law was developed, which will contribute to improving food safety control measures, increasing consumer confidence, and enhancing domestic and international trading. A National Codex Committee was established, to increase interaction with the Codex Alimentarius, especially on the development of food standards complying with international and regional standards. The project provided a variety of specialized training sessions, and tailored inputs and equipment for plant health surveillance, food safety inspection, and animal health. Related ministry staff are now more capable of independently carrying out plant pest and disease surveillance and diagnosis, undertaking field inspection and food safety control measures, and developing strategic plans. The project also provided humanitarian support to protect the endangered livelihoods of vulnerable female and male livestock herders in Gaza Strip, through the provision of animal health supplements and biosecurity materials.

KEY FACTS

Contribution
USD 3 329 999

Duration
December 2015 – December 2019

Resource Partners
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Partners
Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of National Economy (MoNE), and Palestine Standards Institute (PSI)

Beneficiaries
Plant protection and inspection services within MoA at headquarters and field level; relevant units and services of MoA, MoH, MoNE, PSI and other related institutions

IMPACT

The project contributed significantly to the establishment of a robust and functioning SPS system in Palestine, and improved related capacities through the provision of effective and evidence-based tools, which will facilitate smoother and more stable trade with Israel and other international markets, as well as between and within the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Activities implemented during this project have undoubtedly contributed to food safety and quality, as a critical step to safeguarding the health and well-being of people living in Palestine.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- National Pest Diagnosis Strategic Action Plan 2018-2022 developed, in line with National Phytosanitary Action Plan.
- Animal Health Law drafted and ready for submission to Cabinet for endorsement.
- Capacities of over 300 staff members within 16 technical and operational units (plant health laboratories, veterinary public health/food safety units, among others) improved in SPS and delivery of SPS services.
- Nine laboratories (food safety, plant health, animal health) capacitated to implement successful risk-based sampling/inspection plans.
- Two food safety laboratories in Gaza Strip supported for preparation to acquire International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 17025 accreditation.
- 120 governmental and non-governmental professionals and officials trained, and basic equipment provided for improvement of design and implementation of National Phytosanitary Action Plan.
- 520 professionals and officials trained, and equipment provided for effective implementation of National Strategy for Food Safety.
- Training provided on food safety chemical residue analysis for 10 laboratory technicians in the West Bank, and 11 laboratory technicians in Gaza Strip.
- Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) study among food consumers in Palestine conducted, and based on recommendations produced, consumer awareness campaign organized and consumer protection portal at Ministry of National Economy established.

Project Code

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Project Title

Capacity building programme in support of the Palestinian National Authority – Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS