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MAINSTREAMING NUTRITION IN NATIONAL AND REGIONAL TRADE LAWS AND REGULATIONS OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS) AND PROMOTING LOCAL FOOD VALUE CHAINS FOR INTRA-SIDS TRADE

January 2021

SDGs:	
Countries:	Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Atlantic Ocean (Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe) and Indian Ocean (Madagascar ¹ , Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles)
Project Codes:	TCP/RAF/3707
FAO Contribution	USD 352 000
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¹ Madagascar is an indirect beneficiary through the PRESAN initiative. Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Mauritius and Guinea-Bissau are the key anchor countries.

Implementing Partners

Relevant ministries from SIDS in the Atlantic Ocean (Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe) and Indian Ocean (Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles).

Beneficiaries

Trade division officials, customs staff, food regulatory bodies and food standards authorities, food and nutrition security and agro-food value chain officials, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), consumer associations and parliamentarians.

Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

International Conference of Nutrition 2 Framework for Action, SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway, Regional Programme for Food Security and Nutrition (RPFSN/PRESAN) and CPF, Malabo Declarations. Comoros CPF: Priority 1: Improving institutional and structural governance in the agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors for the benefit of family farmers; Priority 2: Promotion of family farming through the increase and diversification of production and the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures to supply local markets and job creation.

Guinea-Bissau CPF: Priority 2: Improving food and nutritional security through better management of natural resources and a value chain approach as well as the promotion of decent jobs for young people including women.

Mauritius CPF: Implementation of adapted tools, policies and incentives that will promote a conducive environment for selected strategic value chain for effective import substitution.

Sao Tome and Principe CPF: Priority 2: *Amélioration des productions et développement des chaînes de valeurs dans l'agriculture, l'élevage, la forêt et la pêche*; Priority 3 : *Réduction de la faim, de la malnutrition et amélioration de la résilience des populations.*

Seychelles CPF: Priority 1: Support to the governance and the development of legislative frameworks and institutional capacity in agriculture, fisheries and natural resources sectors for an improved food and nutrition security; Priority 2: Enhancement of agriculture and fisheries value chains.



BACKGROUND

SIDS suffer from the effects of climate change shocks. Cyclones, hurricanes and more erratic rainfall leading to drought, flooding, rising sea levels and eroding coastlines exacerbate already fragile natural environments, making it more difficult to produce sufficient food to meet their needs. Given their geographic and economic isolation, many SIDS rely heavily on remote markets for their food supplies, leading to undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and obesity, the 'triple burden' of malnutrition. Diabetes and other non-communicable chronic diseases are at excessive levels in a growing number of SIDS, largely as a result of a diet of processed imported foods that are high in sugar, salt and fats, aggravated by unchecked trade liberalization policies. Although undernutrition has fallen over the past three decades, levels of stunting still exceed 20 percent in children in the poorest SIDS. At the same time, levels of obesity, particularly among women, have increased sharply in many SIDS, including those in Africa.

Food imports are an increasingly important source of food availability in most SIDS, despite the poor nutritional quality of many imported foods. Foreign investment in domestic food processing sectors in some SIDS has also contributed to the increased availability, and lower prices, of highly processed foods. The result has been a shift away from traditional, domestic staples, such as fruit and vegetables, towards diets high in processed and animal source foods, sugar, fat and salt. This shift has been identified as a leading driver behind the sharp rise in obesity and micronutrient deficiency in SIDS.



There is a need to review trade policies in SIDS to determine how these can be amended to promote the availability of more nutritious and safe food. Intra-SIDS trade in local nutritious food commodities needs to be promoted and consumer association networks strengthened. Imports may also impede the growth of nutritious local food industries and value chains, while unregulated trade and a lack of capacity to control the importation and distribution of nutritious and safe foods may be fuelling the triple burden of malnutrition in SIDS.

To tackle these problems, a Regional Workshop on Trade and Nutrition for Atlantic and Indian Ocean SIDS was held from 9 to 10 October 2017 in Madagascar, with participants from each of the Small Island Economies in the Atlantic Ocean (Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and Sao Tome and Principe) and the Indian Ocean (Comoros, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles and Zanzibar). A key outcome of the workshop was the need to sensitize ministerial departments to the integration of nutrition in their activities by improving countries' understanding of the relationship between trade and nutrition in the context of food system developments as a whole, by assessing the opportunities provided by, and the constraints to, increased intraregional trade, and by identifying key follow-up actions to improve the contribution of trade to food security and nutrition in SIDS. The objective of the project was to build on these initiatives, under RPFNS/PRESAN.

IMPACT

The interventions of the project will contribute to a reduction in the level of malnutrition, mainly obesity, by reducing the importation and distribution of unhealthy (high sugar, high fat, or substandard and poorly labelled) food products and by improving intra-SIDS trade in nutritious food.



ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The project outcome - to reduce the importation and distribution of unhealthy food products and improve intra-SIDS trade in nutritious food - was achieved. The first output regarded the review of trade policies in SIDS to determine how these might be amended to mainstream nutrition and ensure harmonization with national food laws and standards, and nutrition security policies. The reviewed concerned elements such as the linkages with national food dietary guidelines, packing labelling and nutritional value requirements, awareness-raising and education of consumers, the impulses behind food demand and consumer choices, the alignment of trade policies and regulations to national food and nutrition security policies, strategies, regulations and standards. Other aspects involved the design of recommendations on how trade policies might be amended to promote local food value chains development and intra-SIDS market access, and the level at which policies and regulations are perceived and known by the public and the user sector (importers, retailers, distributors, consumers).



The second output was concerned with developing the capacity of trade and customs officials with regard to trade in nutritious food commodities and food standard regulations, and with strengthening consumer association networks. Through this output, the project built the capacity of stakeholders on such topics as the importance, role and impacts of trade policies, strategies, frameworks, food laws, food safety and quality regulations in improving nutrition, as well as strategies to promote behaviour change and the creation of enabling environments (related to food distribution) in order to promote healthy diets. Capacities were also developed in other areas, including consumer protection and consumer rights, strategies to make food value chains nutrition-sensitive, approaches to promoting local and indigenous food, and the potential of SMEs in the provision of nutritious and safe food.

IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

Despite a series of delays, all project activities were implemented within the scheduled duration and the original budget. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent travel restrictions, the original plan to conduct training at national level for each of the target regions was replaced by joint and virtual training bringing together all stakeholders from the six SIDS and Madagascar, which was led by FAO colleagues and staff. The contents of the training were fine-tuned jointly and a suitable period for its delivery was decided in collaboration with all participating countries.

Delays occurred during the recruitment of an international expert in trade and food safety, the start of activities in the Indian Ocean and the organization of the training workshop, as mentioned above. These issues were all resolved.

FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

The project aimed to update trade policies and legislation to improve the importation of healthy and nutritious food and to allow for the strengthening of trade in local healthy food value chains among SIDS. It also aimed to provide consumers with greater choice and awareness. However, the implementation of this activity could not take place within the project timeframe. It is recommended that the governments of the participating SIDS consider this activity in the context of a future project.

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

The project built capacity through a three-day workshop for relevant stakeholders (trade division officials and customs staff, food regulatory bodies and food standards authorities, food and nutrition security and agro-food value chain officials, SMEs, consumer associations and parliamentarians). Participants are now able to link trade and food systems regulations to create an enabling environment for healthy diet and improved nutrition outcomes, and are aware of the strategies and approaches needed to make a value chain nutrition-sensitive and to promote local food value chains. Networks have been strengthened among food systems stakeholders (trade, agriculture, health and consumer association authorities) to reduce unhealthy food distribution, reinforce food quality standards and build consumer awareness. Participants also shared experiences on the strategic and functional skills needed to support nutrition-related changes and investment in local value chain development, and to foster free trade between SIDS.

The project is embedded in organizational structures that will allow its work to survive beyond the project. The capacity-building activities have contributed to strengthening networks and dialogues between stakeholders and countries. The project was also implemented in partnership with RPFNS/PRESAN, which aims to promote agricultural products of common interest in the region, increasing productivity, output, competitiveness and trade between the islands, and improving food and nutrition security in the Indian Ocean States.

The advocacy and learning curriculum content developed by the project are global public goods, available for all to use. The project's capacity assessment process can identify as implementation partners those institutions with a mandate and resources to continue to advocate for or provide training in responsible agricultural trade and investment after the completion of the project.

2. Gender equality

The project addressed gender equality through the production of global public goods (including the learning curriculum). The project also promoted gender by incorporating gender issues in the wide range of country-level initiatives, including awareness-raising, training and dialogue events.



3. Environmental sustainability

Strong coordination and the sharing of experiences among trade and local value chain actors and consumer associations allow an exchange of knowledge and increase the uptake of locally relevant and environmentally sustainable practices. To achieve the outcome of the project, many activities were conducted to build the capacity of stakeholders to promote the local food value chain; this will mitigate carbon footprints and reduce the post-harvest loss of local food, which has an impact on climate change.

4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

The capacity-building organized by the project for all SIDS addressed food law and mechanisms to mainstream nutrition in food law, consumer protection and consumer rights, food labelling and nutrition. With regard to decent work, the project also raised awareness regarding the development of agro-food processing SMEs, and the potential of SMEs in the promotion of local food value chains and the provision of nutritious food.



5. Technological sustainability

The project took a three-dimensional approach to capacity development focused on the enabling environment, and organizational and individual capacity to sustain change. The approach not only addressed technical capacities related to responsible trade and agricultural investment, but also the functions needed to sustain change. These include the capacity to share knowledge, create partnerships, lead advocacy activities, have inclusive policy processes, share information and good practices, and ensure that all stakeholders are empowered to participate in processes related to responsible agricultural trade and investment.

6. Economic sustainability

The findings of the project will assist RPFNS/PRESAN to promote agricultural products of common interest in the region and to increase productivity, output, competitiveness and trade between the islands, as well as improving food and nutrition security in the Indian Ocean States.

The review of trade policies/regulations/standards produced by the project is both available and affordable. It can be shared with countries that wish to sensitize key stakeholders in order to work on policy and governance to create a framework for nutrition-sensitive trade. The advocacy and learning curriculum content developed by the project is also available and affordable.



DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ Back-to-office report (BtoR). Exploration mission in Atlantic Ocean SIDS for sensitization on the project. May 2019.
- ❑ BtoR. Exploration mission in Indian Ocean SIDS for sensitization on the project. September 2019.
- ❑ BtoR. Inception workshop for Atlantic Ocean SIDS, 19-20 August 2019.
- ❑ BtoR. Inception workshop for Indian Ocean SIDS, 26-27 September 2019.
- ❑ Brief country profiles of the six SIDS regarding nutrition health, agriculture, trade.
- ❑ Progress report, March-December 2019.
- ❑ Report on FAO/World Health Organization workshop in Cabo Verde on Nutrition Trade and Nutrient Profiling.
- ❑ Consolidated report. Output 1: Review of the trade policies and regulations in the six SIDS and Madagascar and recommendations for promotion of local food value chain. March 2020.
- ❑ Training curricula trade, nutrition and food safety nexus. July 2020.
- ❑ Concept note and agenda for the training, September 2020.
- ❑ Training materials (PowerPoint training [PPT]) prepared and produced by different trainers (FAO officials). October 2020.
- ❑ Record of the Zoom virtual workshop, 20-22 October 2020.
- ❑ Synthesis of recommendations and evaluations post-workshop.
- ❑ Article on the project and workshops in FAO Webpage of the SIDS countries. <http://www.fao.org/cabo-verde/actualites/detail-events/en/c/1257868/> <http://www.fao.org/sao-tome-e-principe/noticias/detail-events/fr/c/1317416/>
- ❑ Communication and visibility materials for sensitization on the project and awareness-raising of consumers. August 2019.
- ❑ FAO supporting Small Island Developing States to improve trade in local nutritious food. <http://www.fao.org/africa/news/detail-news/en/c/1370245/>
- ❑ FAO is supporting Small Island Developing States to improve trading of local nutritious food. https://intranet.fao.org/fao_communications/country_stories/detail/c/88326/



ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	Reduction in the level of malnutrition, mainly obesity		
Outcome	Increased household consumption of healthy diets		
	Indicator	Percentage reduction in importation and distribution of unhealthy foodstuffs.	
	Baseline	0	
	End Target	Two percent reduction per country.	
	Comments and follow-up action to be taken	Following the training workshop, stakeholders from target institutions agreed on the principle and proposed specific strategies at national level to reduce the importation and distribution of unhealthy foodstuffs.	
Output 1	Trade policies/regulations/standards reviewed to mainstream nutrition and harmonized with national food laws, standards and nutrition security policies and strategies to promote intra-SIDS trade		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of trade policies/protocols and standards reviewed, updated and harmonized.	Six per country.	Partially
Baseline	0		
Comments	Following the inception mission, national consultants in the participating SIDS were asked to carry out this review by following the instructions below: 1. Identify nutrition plans/programmes/action policies implemented in the country. 2. Identify all existing laws, standards and trade regulations in the country relating to domestic trade (domestic distribution) and food imports. 3. Analyse how these trade regulations can influence (positively or negatively) the objectives and recommendations of national nutrition plans/programmes/policies.		
Activity 1.1	Hiring of an international bilingual consultant to drive project implementation		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Before initiating recruitment, the profiles of nutrition and food system consultants already on the FAO roster were checked. A candidate with considerable FAO experience and the correct profile was selected and the post assigned in mid-March 2019.	
Activity 1.2	Desktop study and mission to target countries' ministries for sensitization on the project		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The lead consultant conducted a literature review and collected all the information available in the SIDS on: - food production (available nutritious food and access). - food consumption (food patterns, changes in diet) and nutritional situations. - food supply chain and key actors (suppliers, processors, distributors). - food trade policy (laws and regulations) and actors. - national programme/policy nutrition-public health. The lead consultant conducted exploratory missions to all focus countries, as follows: - May 2019 : SIDS of Atlantic Ocean (Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe). - September 2019: SIDS Indian Ocean (Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles). The missions sensitized the different stakeholders on the project, assessed country-specific demands, and initiated the recruitment of the national consultant and the constitution of the task force. The start of activities in Indian Ocean SIDS was delayed as implementation was conducted in collaboration and synergy with RPFNS/PRESAN.	
Activity 1.3	Formation of project task force teams at national level; identification of key national stakeholders to work with; and recruitment of national consultants		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	SIDS of Atlantic Ocean: all consultants were recruited in May-June 2019 and the task force was formed in July 2019 (before Atlantic Ocean inception workshop). SIDS of Indian Ocean: all consultants were recruited in August 2019 and the task force was formed in October 2019 (after Indian Ocean inception workshop).	

Activity 1.4	Inception workshop	
	Achieved	Yes
Activity 1.5	Comments	<p>The workshop for the SIDS of the Atlantic Ocean (Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe) took place at the United Nations premises in Sao Tome and Principe, with about 30 participants.</p> <p>The workshop for the SIDS of the Indian Ocean (Comoros, Mauritius, and Seychelles) and Madagascar took place on 26 and 27 September 2019 at the Hotel Colbert in Madagascar, with about 40 participants.</p> <p>The institutions represented at both workshops were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relevant ministries: agriculture, health, trade-industry, finance (customs service) - civil society: consumer associations and non-governmental organizations involved in the promotion of healthy diets and of local food products - SMEs and research institutions involved in the promotion of healthy diets and of local food products. <p>The workshops were organized jointly with PRESAN. They provided a framework for facing the shared challenges caused by the distribution of unhealthy food products and nutrition-health issues. In addition, they enabled countries to reflect on a work plan and a specific roadmap to achieve the expected results of the project.</p>
	Review of relevant trade policies, legislations and their update (desktop study and face-to-face meeting with relevant stakeholders)	
Activity 1.6	Achieved	Partially
	Comments	<p>Following the inception mission, the national consultants in the participating SIDS were asked to produce a review of mainstream importation and distribution of food of nutritional value, the national enforcement measures in place to ensure the availability of nutritious food in national markets and the promotion of local indigenous nutritious food value chains, and how trade can be facilitated within the SIDS. The review document was designed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify nutrition plans/programmes/action policies implemented in the country. 2. Identify all existing laws, standards and trade regulations in the country relating to domestic trade (domestic distribution) and food imports. 3. Analyse how these trade regulations can influence (positively or negatively) the objectives and recommendations of national nutrition plans/programmes/policies. <p>The documents were submitted to the lead international consultant in January 2020. The national consultants were also asked to prepare and present a PPT providing baseline information.</p> <p>N.B: A thorough review of food import statistics by food types (scheduled for February 2020) was not made because of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the same reason, face-to-face meetings with relevant stakeholders to present the findings did not take place.</p>
Activity 1.6	Update and validation of reviewed documents (desktop and face-to-face meetings with relevant stakeholders)	
	Achieved	No
Activity 1.6	Comments	<p>The project planned to update the trade policies and legislations in a consultative process to improve the importation of healthy and nutritious food and to allow for the strengthening of local healthy food value chains, trade among the SIDS and consumer choice and awareness. However, it emerged during the inception workshop that, prior to such consultation, it would be necessary to conduct an assessment of the framework for trade and trade policy to address nutrition concerns. The implementation of this activity could not take place without delaying the project beyond its timeframe. Further impediments to this activity were the COVID-19 pandemic and an insufficient budget. All the SIDS were encouraged to consider this intervention for a future project.</p>

Output 2	Capacity of trade and customs officials built on importance of trade in nutrition food commodities, and national food standards regulation and consumer association networks strengthened for improved intra-SIDS trade		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of customs officials, consumer associations and other stakeholders trained, and consumer associations developed/strengthened.	100 per country.	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	The project organized a virtual training workshop from 20-22 October 2020 that brought together all the SIDS to build capacity and raise awareness of their relevant institutions on the importance of mainstreaming nutrition in trade policies, food laws and regulations and promoting local food value chains for intra-SIDS trade. The meeting produced a series of common recommendations.		
Activity 2.1	Development of training curriculum		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>A capacity development needs assessment of the different stakeholders was conducted in all the SIDS in order to develop the training curriculum. The results were analysed and combined with findings from the first part of the project. The main topics/themes were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the importance, role and impacts of trade policies, strategies, frameworks, food laws, food safety and quality regulations in improving nutrition - strategies to promote behaviour change and the creation of an enabling environment (related to food distribution) in order to promote a healthy diet. - consumer protection and consumer rights within the context or environment exposed to unhealthy food products. - strategies to make food value chain nutrition-sensitive, approaches to promoting local and indigenous food, and the potential of SMEs in the provision of nutritious and healthy food. 	
Activity 2.2	Identification of stakeholders to be trained		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>A consultation was carried out with the national consultant and project task force to identify the stakeholders that would benefit from training, followed by an assessment with stakeholders and trainers to find the most convenient period in September to deliver the training. The recipient countries were the six participating SIDS and Madagascar. Each country provided around 15 participants, including trade division officials, customs staff, representatives of food regulatory bodies and food standards authorities, food and nutrition security and agro-food value chain officials, SMEs, consumer associations and parliamentarians.</p>	
Activity 2.3	Training workshops		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>A virtual meeting (on Zoom) entitled "Nutrition and Trade: Implication for Small Islands Developing States (SIDS)" was conducted from 20 to 22 October 2020, with trainers in their homes or duty stations and trainees in a meeting room (Sao Tome and Principe, Guinea-Bissau, Comoros, Seychelles, Mauritius) or in their homes or offices (Cabo Verde, Madagascar). The topics addressed concerned strategic ways to create an enabling environment for the promotion of healthy diets, social and behaviour change communication, a reduction in the importation and distribution of unhealthy food, the promotion of local food value chains sensitive to nutrition and a framework to assess whether, and how, trade and trade policies can be used to address nutrition concerns.</p>	
Activity 2.4	Formation/strengthening of food standards regulations and intra-SIDS consumer associations and trade networks		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	<p>As a result of the training, the capacity of food regulatory bodies and food standards authorities was built on such topics as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Codex Standards (principles and genesis): harmonization of national and regional food standards to promote trade of local food intra-SIDS. - Food labelling: general concept, requirements in terms of food labelling, food safety and quality information in labelling. <p>The capacity of consumer associations was built on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consumer protection and consumer rights (general objectives, principles): addressing challenges of consumer protection by strengthening consumer rights. <p>The workshop also enabled food regulatory bodies and food standards authorities, as well as consumer associations from SIDS and their networks, to reduce unhealthy food distribution, and to reinforce food quality standards and consumer awareness.</p>	

Partnerships and Outreach

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