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Q1: Respondent details

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Q2: Country or Customs territory

YEMEN

Q3: Organization

Public sector

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Q4: Title of case story

Yemen Fish exports access European market

Q5: Case story focus

Trade Facilitation.

Q6: Case story abstract

The case story is about a project whose overall objective was to enable Yemeni Seafood Exporters Association to develop the capacity of its members to fully understand the non-tariff barriers governing entry into the key regional and overseas market so as to meet the commercial requirements of SPS measures and thereby improve the quality and safety of seafood products emerging from Yemen.

The components of the project included : Setting up a Risk Assessment Framework; Development of a Yemeni seafood quality mark; Develop a cross sector training strategy based on common Standards; Develop a sector-wide SPS strategy for key Yemeni seafood Markets; Yemen Seafood Exporters Association's capacity development; Develop an Association website

Although this project was not very large nor did it have a massive budget, it nevertheless had a big impact because it complemented efforts by bilateral agencies. Success in accessing global fish markets can serve as a show case to other sectors of the economy on how it is possible to adapt and adjust to meet export market regulations and thus be able to benefit from trade.

Q7: Who provided funding?

Other (please specify)
World Trade Organization Standards and Trade Development Facility

Q8: Project/Programme type

Single country

Q9: Your text case story

Yemen Fish exports access European market

Yemen has a coastline of 2350 Km and In addition, it possesses many islands in the Red Sea, in the Gulf of Aden and in the Arabian Sea. Fishing is the main occupation of about 60,000 to 70,000 active artisanal fishermen and an unknown relatively high number of people are also engaged in different aspects of fishery products processing and marketing.

The fisheries sector is considered a promising sector and one of Yemen's best opportunities for contributing to global trade. However, Yemen fishing is characterized by traditional methods of fishing. In the past the catch was consumed locally, quality control and health measures were implemented haphazardly by fishermen with little supervision over them.

In recent years, Yemen has intensified its efforts to integrate into the international trade system and to join the WTO. It has also recognized that in order to benefit from trade it has to focus on exports with an eye to access the lucrative international markets. However there are a number of non-tariff barriers to access the lucrative markets of the EU and USA, mainly stemming from ever more stringent product quality standards. With regards to the EU market, there are three main issues:

- EU standards for sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures;
- EU legislation on residue levels and heavy metals in fishery products; and
- EU legislation on labelling and traceability

Whilst these measures are recognised to be necessary to protect the health of consumers, they do represent additional costs to exporters in terms of standard setting, the costs of technical compliance, the costs of verification and transitional arrangements.

Considerable efforts were made by the development agencies notably the World Bank, IDA and Integrated Framework to assist Yemen overcome them. However, much of the effort of these projects was aimed at improving public sector capacity and relatively little was aimed at the private sector. This gap was recognised by the Standards and Trade Development Facility, which has been tasked with improving the capacity of private and public sector organisations involved in trade development.

Recognising the existence of a gap and the need to take on the private sector on board in its capacity as the both the beneficiary and reliable instrument to penetrate the coveted European market, the project of our success story called Improving Capacity for Ensuring the Quality of Yemeni Seafood Products was destined to be born. The project primarily targeted the Yemeni Seafood Exporters Association YSEA.

The overall objective of the project was to enable (YSEA) to develop the capacity of its members to better meet the commercial requirements of SPS measures and thereby improve the quality and safety of seafood products emerging from Yemen.

The Project main objective was to establish a comprehensive and a thorough understanding of the non-tariff barriers governing entry into the key regional and overseas market. This approach made it possible to maximises the opportunities for adding value and achieving the highest prices possible for Yemeni seafood products.

The establishment of the Yemeni Seafood Exporters Association (YSEA) was a vital component within the fisheries sector that provides valued services to its members as well as acting as a responsible forum for development initiatives in cooperation and consultation with the artisanal sector as well as the Ministry of Fish Wealth and to act a driver for better practices at sea and during early stages of the supply chain that will result in better quality and safer products to become available on the domestic market.

The Association made it possible for individuals to better understand the seafood markets that are receptive to Yemeni seafood products and to develop a strategy that addresses the SPS requirements and barriers to these markets. This was most important due to the wide variation in both the nature and the quality of seafood products emanating from Yemen.

Components of the project

1. Setting up a Risk Assessment Framework

Setting up a risk assessment framework for major fisheries products that allows major risks to health and safety be to be identified at an early stage and suitable strategic responses to be prepared and communicated through developing a SPS standard for all plants in Yemen producing fish for the domestic and international markets. Companies who have

high standards are concerned about the negative publicity generated by poor quality exports of Yemeni seafood products. A primary driver for the creation of the YSEA was a need to raise the minimum standard of production in Yemen. Although development of a Yemeni SPS standard for fish production was aimed primarily at the export markets, its impact spread to regional and domestic sales.

2. Development of a Yemeni seafood quality mark

Yemeni fish products have a mixed reputation on the international markets. There is a general recognition that the artisanal nature of much of the catching sector is attractive because of the potential quality of hand-lined fish, such as tunas and some demersal species, yet this is rarely realised as a result of poor icing at sea and subsequent careless handling.

3. Develop a cross sector training strategy based on common Standards

This work was coordinated with the EC-funded components of the Fisheries Resource Management and Conservation Project (FRMCP) and may provide services to capacity-development initiatives under this project. Companies involved in the processing and marketing of seafood products are required to train their staff in a manner proscribed in their HACCP plans with a view to instill a greater understanding of export market needs and requirements so that Yemeni seafood producers can respond to these markets and maintain their competitiveness with other producers.

4. Develop a sector-wide SPS strategy for key Yemeni seafood Markets

The objective was to better understand the seafood markets that are receptive to Yemeni seafood products and to develop a strategy that addresses the SPS requirements and barriers to these markets

5. Compile a database of regional and international SPS regulations and requirements.

The database is periodically updated and distributed to provide exporters with an up-to-date, accessible and easy to use database of regional and international SPS regulations

6. Yemen Seafood Exporters Association's capacity development

This component was designed to enable the YSEA to become an effective and proactive organisation that provides both the private and public sector with the information and resources to improve the quality of their products and ability to access key overseas markets

7. Develop an Association website

Connect overseas buyers with Yemeni seafood producers. The Internet is now the premier global information medium. Its advantages are almost universal access, the ability to upload and receive new information almost instantaneously.

Impact of the project

Although this project was not very large nor did it have a massive budget, it nevertheless had a big impact because it complemented efforts by bilateral agencies; it complemented the World Bank, EC joint-fund 'Fisheries Resource Management and Conservation Project' (FRMCP). While the FRMCP project provided development assistance to the fisheries sector, with a particular focus on technical and institutional capacity building, especially for the Ministry of Fish Wealth. This project focused on improving the private sector processing capacity and its ability to delivery safe and high quality products to regional and international markets.

Improved market access opportunities:

Raising the minimum standard of Yemeni seafood products has been rewarded by a better reputation of Yemeni seafood products, and being able to enter the European markets, exporters are getting higher profit margins that create a stronger incentive for the exporters to expand and reinforce the standards at all levels of the value chain. The sub-sector becomes self-sustaining and consequently it becomes a stable source of income for thousands of families of artisanal fishers and their families.

Innovativeness: the project builds on experience gained from previous projects in the fisheries sector and its implementation of risk assessment have rarely been used in Yemen and certainly in the fisheries sector. The empowerment of a private sector organisation such as YSEA through the development of their business planning capacity is also a novel approach in Yemen. The sector has been fortunate to have a group of dedicated businessmen who truly want to help themselves and help the sector.

Exporting of fishing is a complicated process, which requires meticulous care starting with catching the fish, chilling

them, and handling them with great care all along the value chain. If Yemenis can do that, they can do the same in less demanding sub-sectors such as exporting fruits, vegetables, honey, and other products.

Success in accessing global fish markets can serve as a show case to other sectors of the economy on how it is possible to adapt and adjust to meet export market regulations and thus benefit from trade in reducing poverty and improving the economy.

Q10: Lessons learnt

There are a number of lessons that can be learnt from this case story they include:

1. A project will be most beneficial when it supports what people need and want. The case story is about a small project that was well targeted and as a result bore fruit.
 2. Private sector can be very a good force when it comes to projects that help them achieve their targets.
 3. Private sector participation and drive will sustain the project and show case what Yemenis are capable of doing.
 4. the project built its success on ground work make by others and complemented their work.
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