

# Secretariat Mid-Term Strategic Direction 2014-2018

As of 24 September 2014

## Summary

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## 1. Background

Aflatoxins are highly toxic fungal metabolites produced by certain strains of *Aspergillus flavus* and related species in cereals, nuts and oilseeds and could naturally contaminate diverse foods and feeds. Aflatoxins cause liver cancer in humans and are associated with childhood stunting and other adverse health effects. These toxins have also wide ranging impacts on trade and food security. Tropical regions between 40°N and 40°S of the equator are chronically affected by aflatoxins. The entire African continent is, therefore, highly affected because it lies within this high risk contamination zone.

Furthermore, traditional crop production practices that are widely used in Africa expose crops to stress and fungal invasion. The harvesting, drying and storage practices also leave very much to be desired, further increasing risk of contamination of food and feed produce. It is also evident that the problem of aflatoxin contamination disproportionately affects the resource poor segment of society.

The heavy reliance on single dietary staples such as maize subjects African populations to increased risks of aflatoxin exposure. In addition, aflatoxins adversely affect African countries' access to bigger export markets due to the difficulty of meeting the regulatory

standards of developed importing countries. These toxins also undermine efforts at regional integration and particularly the establishment of continental free trade area, particularly for many types of agricultural produce.

From the foregoing, there is a moral reason, and an economic and social imperative, to mitigate the aflatoxin problem. Prevention and control of aflatoxin contamination requires a comprehensive, systematic approach, involving a broad range of stakeholders in Africa and beyond due to the complex nature of the problem.

## 2. Context

The Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) was established in 2011 as a partnership initiative based at the African Union Commission (AUC) with the mission to support agricultural development, safeguard consumer health, and facilitate trade by catalyzing, coordinating and increasing effective aflatoxin control along agricultural value chains in Africa.

PACA developed the PACA Strategy, 2013-2022, through an inclusive process based on inputs from PACA Strategy Development – Stakeholder Consultation Workshop that was convened in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in April 2013. PACA Community Members identified comprehensive Strategic Thematic Areas (STAs) and associated Key Result Areas (KRAs) that captured the range of activities that both the PACA Community and Secretariat would address to realize the PACA vision of “an Africa free from the harmful effects of aflatoxin”. The PACA Steering Committee provided leadership during the crafting of the PACA Strategy, which culminated in the approval of the Strategy in the Steering Committee meeting of August 2013.

Building upon this work, the PACA Secretariat engaged management consultants from Monitor Deloitte from May to August 2014 to assist the Steering Committee in refining this strategy to distinguish the Secretariat’s core activities from those to be managed by the larger PACA Community. The strategy refinement resulted in identification of activities in which the Secretariat will not be directly engaged, and clarification of activities in which the Secretariat would empower and support the PACA Community at large to achieve.

The recommendations from Monitor Deloitte, which were drawn from a participatory process that is a hallmark of PACA, were discussed and enriched at a stakeholder consultation workshop on 26 August 2014, and then reviewed and endorsed in the business sessions of the PACA Steering Committee on 28 August 2014. These recommendations will guide the strategic direction that the PACA Secretariat is taking for the mid-term, 2014 - 2018.

It is worth noting that the consultant’s recommendations affirmed the general direction developed by the PACA Steering Committee and key stakeholders in 2013 towards strong coordination of action with RECs, and towards targeted country level activities, but offered a more targeted focus for Secretariat activities. The strategic direction is guided by the need for PACA Secretariat to play vital roles and a relatively unique value proposition, to make choices for making the best use of the small PACA Secretariat, and to catalyze change towards effective and sustainable aflatoxin control in African countries.

### 3. Strategic Areas

The Strategic Plan Refinement findings are endorsed by the PACA Steering Committee as the new strategic direction for the PACA Secretariat.

The strategic direction for the PACA Secretariat falls under the following four areas, defining the Secretariat's:

1. **Mission**
2. **Roles**
3. **Activities**
4. **Organizational structure, capabilities, and resources**

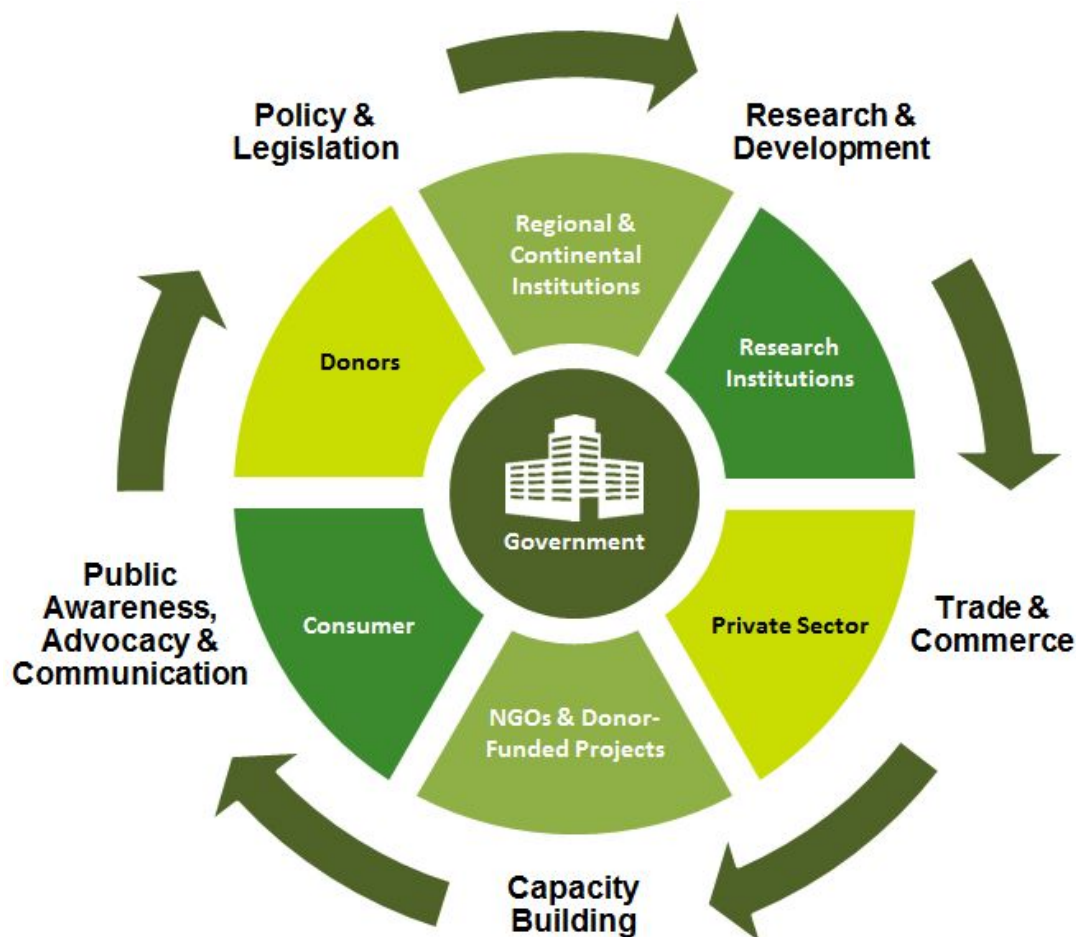
#### 3.1. Mission

The Secretariat should refine its mission and focus to “improving the effectiveness and efficiency of governments to tackle the aflatoxin challenge in Africa”. This mission will require the Secretariat to forge strong partnerships and work jointly with other key stakeholders involved in aflatoxin control (e.g., RECs, private sector actors, NGOs, development partners) to comprehensively support the governments of Africa in addressing aflatoxin on the continent. Thus, the Secretariat will strive to achieve this refined mission by directly supporting governments, and working with other aflatoxin control stakeholders to enable them to more effectively work with governments, to tackle the aflatoxin issue.

The Secretariat should center its focus on governments for two reasons. First, governments in Africa play a central role in aflatoxin control. Governments are central to controlling aflatoxin contamination and exposure, as they have a wide sphere of influence over other key stakeholders (e.g., consumers, value chain actors, NGOs, private sector companies). As a result, only governments have the ability to change behaviors and set priorities across these stakeholders by enacting and enforcing policies, standards, and regulations; launching capacity building initiatives; and implementing awareness campaigns (**Fig. 1**<sup>1</sup>). However, the primary and secondary research and analysis showed that despite government's important role, there were few actors that currently focus on supporting governments to mitigate the harmful effects of aflatoxins. In fact, of the 208 organizations analyzed in the aflatoxin external landscape assessment, only 20 directly support governments. This number is quite low, especially in comparison to, for example, the 122 organizations that are focused on supporting agricultural producers. The PACA Secretariat has an opportunity to fill this gap to *improve governments' effectiveness in mitigating the harmful effects of aflatoxin*.

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<sup>1</sup> All diagrams are based on the Final Deliverable of PACA Strategy Refinement by Deloitte Consulting LLP (2014)



**Figure 1: Illustration of the potential sphere of influence of the PACA Secretariat working through member states’ governments in Africa**

Second, the Secretariat also has a comparative advantage in accessing, supporting, and influencing country governments from its position within the AUC. The primary and secondary research revealed that the AUC has unparalleled access to country governments – there are few other stakeholders with the ability to set the agenda working with governments that the Secretariat has within the AUC. As stated in one interview, “Because PACA sits under the AU umbrella, they can talk to permanent secretaries and members of Parliament, and they’ll be heard.” **Table 1** summarizes the important comparative advantages of the AUC-based Secretariat.

**Table 1. Comparative advantages of the PACA Secretariat**

Advantages of being an African Union-Based Organization	
1. Access to high-level government stakeholders	5. Support from a large, diverse multi-stakeholder community
2. Authority to convene high-level REC and government stakeholders	6. Ability to leverage the established CAADP framework to set priorities
3. Authority to set agenda for stakeholder conventions	7. Neutral, unbiased third party image
4. Esteemed, high-quality brand	

### 3.2. Primary Roles

The Secretariat should support governments and work jointly with other key stakeholders to improve governments’ effectiveness through *three primary roles*:

1. **Convener**
2. **Knowledge Manager**
3. **Financial Resources Provider**

Additionally, in the next three years, 2014-16, the Secretariat should also serve as a Technical Assistance Provider and then look to transition this role to national consultants for the longer term.

These roles were identified because they are highly aligned with both the Secretariat’s comparative advantages and the needs of governments. And, they build upon the Secretariat’s successes to date.

For example, in the **Convening role**, the Secretariat will leverage the AUC’s convening authority to work with RECs to organize continental, inter-regional, regional, and country convenings that engage all relevant aflatoxin control stakeholders. *The purposes of these convenings will be to share lessons learned and best practices, resolve specific challenges and bottlenecks, launch the county pilot program, align stakeholders on the identified plan, and mobilize resources to implement the plan.*

In the **Knowledge Manager role**, the Secretariat will leverage its position within the PACA Community, and with the technical expertise of its staff, *to aggregate evidence, gather knowledge, and disseminate information to support country plan preparation and execution, as well as capture knowledge and information about best practices, developments, and research to support broader continental efforts.* This role will better equip all stakeholders to implement “government-led and stakeholder-driven” country plans.

In the **Financial Resources Provider role**, the Secretariat will provide catalytic resources to support the development, implementation, and progress monitoring of country plans to mitigate the harmful effects of aflatoxin. *Specifically, the Secretariat will purchase testing*

*equipment to support country plans and hire consultants to develop country plans, mobilize resources and build government capacity to execute the plans, and conduct progress assessments.* This role will be executed in strong partnership with the RECs, who will oversee government capacity building.

Finally, in the Technical Assistance role, the Secretariat will leverage the technical expertise of its staff to conduct government capacity building in the next three years. However, in the long-term it is not fully scalable or sustainable in the long-term for the small Secretariat staff to conduct technical assistance for all members states across the continent. Therefore, after three years the Secretariat should transition this role to consultants (e.g. research institute technical experts) to provide technical capacity building, in the long-term.

### **3.3. PACA Secretariat Activities**

The Secretariat should focus on supporting governments and work jointly with other key stakeholders to improve governments' effectiveness through three categories of activities:

- 1. Continental activities**
- 2. Regional activities**
- 3. Country activities**

*At the continental level,* the Secretariat will support three types of activities:

- Continental and Inter-Regional Convenings: Support continental PACA Community convenings and inter-regional convenings to promote alignment and collaboration across countries, share new developments and best practices, and resolve specific challenges / bottlenecks across countries and regions.
- Mainstreaming: Engage stakeholders to mainstream aflatoxin into continental frameworks (e.g., CAADP, CODEX) to ensure aflatoxin issues are integrated and addressed within these platforms and that there is consistency and congruency between frameworks and harmonization across regions.
- Knowledge Management: Serve as a continental knowledge hub by identifying, documenting, and disseminating best practices and effective technologies; and serving as technical knowledge hub for aflatoxin related information.

*At the regional level,* the Secretariat will work closely with RECs to support four types of activities:

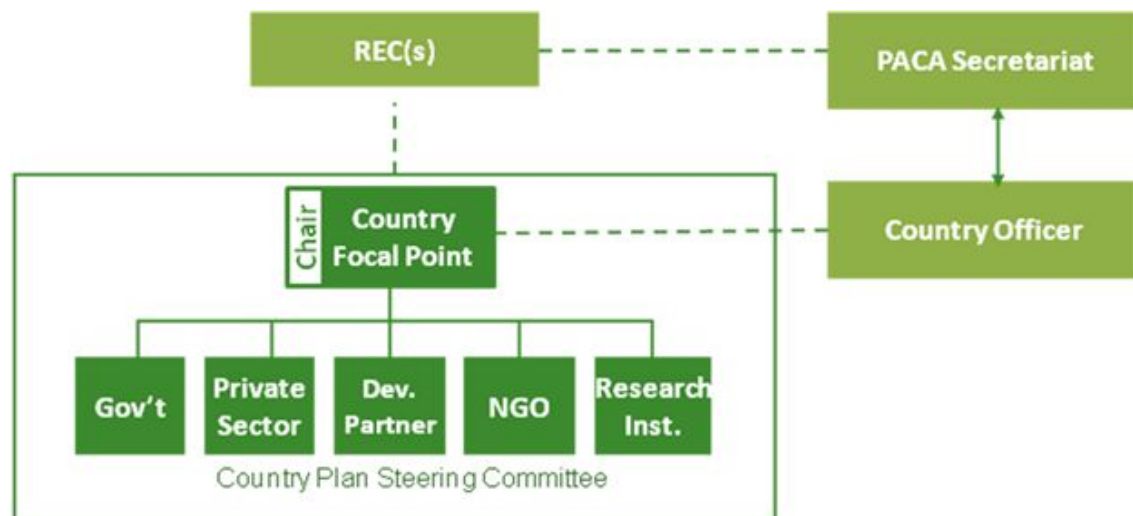
- Regional Convenings: Support RECs to organize regional convenings to promote alignment and collaboration across countries, share new developments, and best practices, and resolve specific challenges and bottlenecks across regions.
- Mainstreaming: Support mainstreaming of aflatoxin in regional frameworks to ensure aflatoxin issues are integrated and addressed within these platforms and that there is consistency and congruency between frameworks and harmonization across countries.
- Country Planning: Work with RECs to support country plan preparation and execution.

At the country level, the Secretariat will work closely with RECs and local country stakeholders through a country steering committee to support the preparation, execution, and oversight of *country government-led, and stakeholder aligned country plans*. The Secretariat’s country activities will build on the country planning work already underway. These country plans will be prepared and executed through the following four stage process:

- Stage One: Gather evidence to inform the plan
- Stage Two: Develop, validate and finalize the country plan
- Stage Three: Build government capacity to implement the plan
- Stage Four: Monitor progress and advocate

Through this process, the Secretariat will hire consultants, engage a country steering committee to develop an evidence-based country plan, develop an associated implementation roadmap that specifies discrete activities and required budget amounts, and outline a resource mobilization strategy to obtain commitments from development partners and the country to fund activities and stakeholders/organizations to implement activities.

To support the country planning process, a country steering committee will be formed and will be comprised of a diverse group of 6 to 8 members representing all key stakeholders segments (e.g., national government, REC(s), development partners, private sector, research institutes, NGOs, and PACA Secretariat). The Country Steering Committee will be chaired by the country focal point from a relevant government ministry. The respective REC will play facilitation role to support the operations of the Country Steering Committee. The Country Steering Committee will work hand in hand with a local Country Officer funded by the Secretariat. The local country officer will be a full-time contractual staff position, embedded in a country institution. The organogram below illustrates the structure envisaged (Fig. 2).



**Figure 2. Country-level coordination structure**

During the initial pilot phase the Secretariat will focus on just five countries and support these country programs for three years, and up to five years. After three years, the

Secretariat will review the pilot program progress to assess outcomes and effectiveness, refine the country planning approach to accommodate scaling, and consider additional funding available before scaling beyond these five initial countries (Fig. 3).



**Figure 3. Implementation approach of PACA: from piloting to scaling (left map showing 2014 pilot countries Gambia, Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda – shaded green; other maps are illustrative)**

### **3.4. Organizational Structure, Capabilities, and Resources**

To support these identified roles and activities the Secretariat will need to add the following five new full-time staff. These individuals should co-locate with the PACA Secretariat team at the AUC:

- 1. Finance, Procurement and Logistics Officer**
- 2. Strategy and Operations Officer**
- 3. Policy Advisor**
- 4. Knowledge Manager**
- 5. Communications and Donor Relations Officer**

With this new structure, the Programme Manager will concentrate on the executive leadership and overall strategic direction. The Finance and Procurement officer will be responsible for working within the AUC system to execute financial management.

The Strategy and Operations Officer should be viewed as the Secretariat's Chief Operating Officer, providing both strategic and operating expertise and managing the country planning process. She or he will directly oversee the Knowledge Manager, the two Programme Officers, and the Finance Procurement and Logistics Officer.

The Policy Advisor and the Technical Advisor will work hand-in-hand with each other and serve as the subject matter experts. The two Programme Officers will also work collaboratively together, but each individual will have oversight over 2-3 country pilot programs. The Knowledge Manager will assume all knowledge management activities.

With this strategic direction, the Secretariat should be able to implement programs without the need to establish a third party grant making organization. This conclusion is based on evaluation of five criteria from the consultant's analysis:



- Predictability: The grants made by the Secretariat will be predictable, thereby eliminating the need for highly flexible and ad hoc grant making that a third party grant making organization would be needed to facilitate
- Frequency of Disbursements: The Secretariat’s grants will be one-time disbursements, rather than ongoing, eliminating the need for a sophisticated grants infrastructure to continually manage and monitor disbursements
- Financial implications: Through an internal Secretariat-based grant making structure, PACA could realize savings of 10-30% of the total disbursement amount in overhead
- AUC Process Alignment: The Secretariat can be supported by the existing AUC finance and procurement system without affecting the implementation timeline for PACA activities
- Finance & Procurement Officer Expertise: An officer with financial management and procurement expertise would be able to expedite AUC processes and support the Secretariat without unduly stretching the AUC system. This position is essential for the Secretariat to function smoothly without a third party grant making organization.


Overall, the revised strategy and operational plan will require a budget of \$11M between FY ‘15 through FY ‘17. With funds available as of August 2014, the Secretariat will face a budget deficit starting at the beginning of FY ‘16.



#### 4. The PACA Secretariat’s Value Proposition

The Secretariat’s value proposition comes from leveraging its comparative advantages to catalyze country-specific and continental action across all aflatoxin control stakeholders. For PACA to be a leader and preminent player in aflatoxin control, the Secretariat must focus on **enabling governments to drive wholesale change with engagement from Regional Economic Communities** and other stakeholders. Through the activities outlined above, the Secretariat will enable various stakeholders to build governments’ effectiveness in tackling the aflatoxin issue.

The value proposition of PACA Secretariat lies in it’s three key roles (**Table 2**) in continental, regional, and country actions to directly support governments in their aflatoxin control efforts and to help coordinate support to other stakeholders.

**Table 2. Unique value proposition of PACA Secretariat**

<b>Convener Role</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PACA is a respected continental organization with the backing of the AUC and major partners</li> <li>• It is a community of the major stakeholders and actors in the aflatoxin control space led by PACA</li> <li>• PACA support and convening is key for developing and validating a single cohesive, government-led and stakeholder-aligned country plan to bridge the gap between needed interventions and dedication of resources</li> </ul>
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<b>Knowledge Manager Role</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PACA Secretariat is the preeminent and impartial expert on aflatoxin control priorities and solutions, with visibility across countries, value chains and stakeholder groups</li> <li>• PACA has the resources and cross sector access to gather existing evidence and research and create a repository of aflatoxin knowledge that can be shared and proactively disseminated to other stakeholders in order to influence policy and incite action</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Resource Provider</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PACA, through the AUC, has tremendous opportunity for joint actions with the regional institutions and government policy makers, to put the aflatoxin agenda at the highest levels and help craft national action plans to address aflatoxin contamination</li> <li>• The Secretariat has capability to supplement its influence with targeted grantmaking to catalyze action and remove bottlenecks as necessary</li> </ul>

The risks associated with this narrower focus, include that the Secretariat will not be able to directly support all Community members and activities. As a result, some activities and Community members may not receive the support they need. However, this risk will be mitigated by the PACA Secretariat leading and monitoring the country plans, to ensure that the required support is included and provided. Ultimately, the Secretariat will be able to devote its resources and capabilities to a few focus areas to have deeper impact and create a more fruitful enabling environment for all PACA Community members.

## 5. Theory of Change

The theory of change (**Fig. 4**) that guides PACA Secretariat’s work stipulates that its major contribution is by creating an improved enabling environment for aflatoxin control contributing to mitigation of the harmful effects of aflatoxin. The intermediate outcomes of the theory of change depicted below features outcomes such as increased aflatoxin interventions, alignment among stakeholders towards action, improved awareness and application of best practices, as well as adoption of policy and regulatory frameworks.

Theory of Change: The Secretariat’s activities under the refined strategy will generate outputs that create an improved enabling environment for aflatoxin control

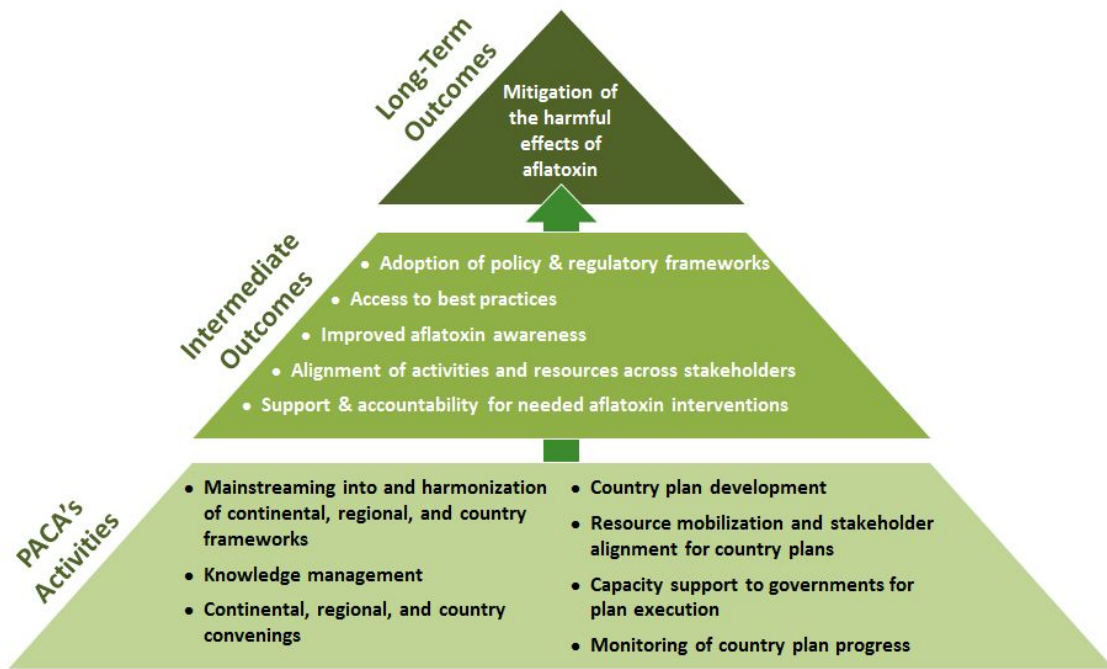


Figure 4. The theory of changing guiding PACA Secretariat’s strategic plan



**Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa**

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