PACA Regional and Country Activities Report (January-June 2016)

PACA/SCMXX/ Aug16/XX

***Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda***

1. **Background**

Governments are central to controlling aflatoxin contamination and exposure, as they have a wide sphere of influence over other key stakeholders, as a result, 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. Therefore, the PACA Secretariat housed at the African Union Commission, achieves systemic change by improving the effectiveness and efficiency of governments to tackle the aflatoxin challenge in Africa. PACA Secretariat forges the necessary partnerships and working relationships with key stakeholders involved in aflatoxin control (e.g., Regional Economic Communities-RECs, private sector actors, NGOs, development partners) to comprehensively support selected governments of Africa in addressing aflatoxin on the continent. In East and Southern Africa, PACA is supporting Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda and working closely with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to tackle aflatoxins in the region.

Therefore, PACA supports countries to:

1. Develop comprehensive government-led, stakeholder aligned aflatoxin control action plans (at national level and regional level)
2. Conduct Country-Led Situational Analysis and Action Plan (CSAAP) to inform the national plans
3. Establish an Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAIMS)
4. Mainstreaming Food Safety and aflatoxin control in National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAFSIPs)

This report highlights achievements and challenges of implementing PACA activities in the east and southern part of Africa, particularly in Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda and their respective RECs for the period January-June 2016.

1. **Regional Activities**

Below are the activities that the PACA Secretariat implemented from January to June 2016 with RECs in the tripartite region – COMESA, EAC and SADC.

* 1. ***COMESA Region***

Based on the PACA-COMESA Regional Workshop on Aflatoxin Challenge in Eastern and Southern Africa held in Lilongwe, 11-13 March 2014, PACA continued to work with COMESA to develop a regional aflatoxin strategy. Due to unavailability of the selected consultant to support development of the regional strategy, COMESA Human Resources team reinitiated the selection process. In June 2016, PACA Secretariat worked with COMESA in selecting a suitable candidate to finalize the strategy work. PACA and COMESA Secretariat will work closely with the consultant selected to develop the regional aflatoxin control strategy and action plan for mainstreaming into the COMESA strategic documents (the target is to validate the regional strategy and action plan at PACA 2nd PACA Partnership Platform Meeting in October 2016).

* 1. ***EAC Region***

The East African Community (EAC) and its partner States have identified aflatoxin as a priority challenge to agricultural and economic development in the region. The EAC and partners States developed a Regional Aflatoxin Prevention and Control Strategy and Action Plan (2017-2021). The strategy and action plan was informed by research through a series of thematic technical papers developed with the research and policy community. The Strategy and Action plan is aligned to the PACA Continental Strategy and other frameworks such as the Malabo Declaration. EAC validated its Regional Aflatoxin Control Action Plan in Kampala, Uganda from 28-30 June 2016. The validation workshop included various stakeholders such as the EAC partners States, the African Union Commission - PACA Secretariat, the Private Sector Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC); the East African Farmers Federation (EAFF), USAID and IITA (who are also members of PACA Steering Committee).

PACA Secretariat will continue working with EAC to ensure that aflatoxins prevention and control of aflatoxins is adequately mainstreamed into CAADP aligned Regional Agriculture Investment Plan (RAIP) of EAC and contribute to the development of regional aflatoxin policy briefs for wide dissemination. Furthermore, Secretariat will follow up with FAO to support the development of a proposal for mainstreaming food safety and aflatoxins in the regional RAIPs and national NAIPS. This will feed into the AUC’s efforts to embed aflatoxin control and food safety in the review and development of second generation NAIPs achieving broader geographical scope and consistency.

* 1. ***Workshop on Engaging Health Sector in Aflatoxin Prevention and Control in Africa***

PACA, in collaboration with Amref Health Africa, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) planned and convened 106 diverse stakeholders working on food safety, health and nutrition across Africa and beyond at a two-day workshop to foster and reinforce multi-sectoral linkages in the health sector and nutrition domain with reference to aflatoxin mitigation in Africa. The workshop titled “*Engaging the Health and Nutrition Sectors in Aflatoxin Control in Africa*” was held on 23-24 March 2016 at the African Union Commission Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The theme of the workshop was “*Mitigating the Health and Nutrition Impacts of Aflatoxins in Africa through Uncommon Partnerships*”.

The meetings main objectives were to:

* Update participants on the burden and current situation of health and nutritional effects due to aflatoxin exposures at global, regional and country levels.
* Inform participants of the role of nutrition in health-based aflatoxin research.
* Catalogue the various interventions targeting human and animal health as well as nutrition initiatives and actors in countries.
* Create a platform (proposed as: *Africa Aflatoxin Health and Nutrition Forum*) that would link actors across the three focal sectors (with special emphasis on health and nutrition) of the African economy impacted by aflatoxins to effectively crusade against this deadly fungal “poison”.
* Identify gaps (especially as related to the nutrition sub-component) on current responses in line with the health component of the PACA strategy.
* Develop an operational plan to address the gaps and/or implement the health and nutrition component of the PACA strategy

From speeches, technical papers in plenary, panel and parallel breakout group discussions, diverse thematic areas related to aflatoxins in human and animal health, nutrition, agriculture, awareness and communication were documented during the meeting.Challenges limiting effective aflatoxin mitigation in the thematic areas of health (human and animal), agriculture, nutrition and awareness were catalogued and thoroughly discussed. Recommendations on areas of interventions and actions (13 in total), were given for the various thematic areas identified. A plan of action and roadmap was further developed and currently being refined for circulation. A workshop report and draft action plan has been developed and shared with Amref Health Africa. PACA Secretariat will share the report and draft action plan to the identified workshop focal points to finalize plan of action and roadmap document. The Secretariat will also disseminate workshop report and action plan documents to PACA Community. Furthermore, PACA Secretariat will engage focal points and relevant stakeholders to drive implementation of activities outlined in plan of action document.

1. **PACA activities at country level: Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda** 
   1. ***Establishment of the Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System***

In order to make informed decisions on policies and interventions, resource allocation, and awareness raising, governments and other stakeholders rely on accurate and evidence based information. One of the major challenges in mitigating aflatoxin in Africa is the lack of adequate information and harmonized data collection system on aflatoxins. To address this gap, PACA is establishing the Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAIMS) which will serve as a “one stop” information harbor for aflatoxin information in the health, trade and agriculture sectors. Data on the AfricaAIMS will be “home-grown” owned by AU Member States and respective RECs. The information on the AfricaAIMS will serve policy makers, regulatory bodies, technical agencies (health, trade and agriculture), researchers, farmers, civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector partners along the value chain and other interested parties.

The period January-June 2016 saw great progress in operationalizing AfricaAIMS on the continent and in PACA Pilot Countries. The PACA Secretariat in collaboration with AU-IBAR finalized the development of health, trade and agriculture modules to enable data entry. Additionally, Uganda, Tanzania, Gambia and Senegal finalized the collection and analysis of data. Consequently, a refresher training for the four Pilot Countries was held in February 2016 to enable data entry on AfricaAIMS. The momentum of continual data submission in Uganda, Tanzania, Senegal and Gambia has been sustained. Malawi has since finalized data collection and initiated analysis of data in the 2nd quarter of 2016. PACA Secretariat will support Malawi and Nigeria in the 4th Quarter to conduct a refresher training and to enable data entry on the portal. For more details on AfricaAIMS implementation, please refer to AfricaAIMS report **(PACA/SCM/Aug16/XX).**

* 1. ***Country-Led Situation Analysis and Action Planning (CSAAP)***

PACA supports its pilot countries in conducting country‐led food safety and aflatoxin situation analysis and action planning (C-SAAP). Through C-SAAP, countries will create empirical evidence on existing aflatoxin prevalence, legislation, policy and regulation, management practices and other existing control mechanisms that can effectively inform policy and interventions. The C-SAAP will also provide information to enable the alignment of aflatoxin control with the broader food safety and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) issues within countries. PACA Secretariat has been working with national consultants to engage with key stakeholders in supporting the development of a comprehensive country action plan for mitigating aflatoxins, based on the findings of the situational analysis.

In the reporting period January-June 2016, the PACA Secretariat continued to provide technical external reviews of the C-SAAP documents with support from Abt Associates in order to ensure consistency and highest technical standards of the documents across the Pilot Countries.

* + 1. ***Tanzania***

Tanzania finalized C-SAAP study and validated the national aflatoxin action plan in May 2015. Furthermore, Tanzania consultants have addressed comments emerging from the external review of Abt Associates. The Tanzania C-SAAP report will be designed and disseminated widely in the 3rd quarter of 2016.

* + 1. ***Uganda***

Uganda validated their C-SAAP in June 2015. PACA Secretariat is working with Uganda to externally review the situational analysis document. The technical review process will be finalized in the 3rd quarter of 2016.

* + 1. ***Malawi***

Malawi developed an inception report of the economic impact assessment to supplement the Malawi Program for Aflatoxin Control (MAPAC) in 2015. The inception report was externally reviewed by Abt Associates. Malawi has identified consultants to engage for incorporating the external review comments and finalization of the supplemental economic impact analysis document which will be finalized in the third quarter of 2016.

For results of the C-SAAP in the three countries, please refer to the report on salient findings of C-SAAP **(PACA/SCM/Aug16/XX).**

* 1. ***Mainstreaming food safety and aflatoxin control in CAADP National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans (Mainstream FoodSAC)***

The aflatoxin challenge can be addressed effectively and in a more sustainable and comprehensive fashion if it is mainstreamed in existing frameworks and structures, such as CAADP National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans (NAFSIPs). Therefore PACA Secretariat has been working with Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda to ensure that the national aflatoxin action plans are mainstreamed into their respective NAFSIP[[1]](#footnote-1).

* + 1. ***Tanzania***

Tanzania action plan was mainstreamed into the Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan (ASDP II) to be implemented through the Tanzania Food and Agriculture Investment Plan (TAFSIP). Following which, Tanzania convened its business meeting on 12 May 2016 where the Government pledged support to submit the aflatoxin control action plan through the national budgeting process for funding. Focal points from the PACA Pilot Countries in Senegal, Gambia, Malawi and Uganda participated in the Tanzania business meeting in order to learn lessons that emerged in the process for application in the respective Countries.

* + 1. ***Uganda***

The national consultants in Uganda with support from PACA Secretariat continue to work with the Government of Uganda to finalize the mainstreaming of the action plan into the Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan (ASSP). Once the action plan has been mainstreamed and to ensure effective implementation of plan, PACA will, in the 3rd quarter of 2016, support the Republic of Uganda in designing a funding strategy and convening a business meeting with key stakeholders including the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture - AUC, Government line Ministry representatives, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Development Partners, and Private Sector in order to agree on a resource mobilization strategy. The business meeting will provide a platform for stakeholders to agree on the funding strategy and implementation road map that will ensure sustainable and predictable funding for implementing the aflatoxin control action plan.

* + 1. ***Malawi***

Malawi continues to implement the MAPAC priority activities with a major focus on communications strategy and development of a food safety policy and food safety bill. Through these efforts, Malawi developed and validated an Aflatoxin Control Communication, Awareness and Skills Development Strategy in June 2016. Additionally, Malawi government with support from the World Bank has since allocated $38,571 for implementing the communications strategy, and $40,000 for developing the Food Safety Policy. Malawi with support from PACA is partnering with FAO to support the Country to develop a food safety bill to legalize the food safety policy.

PACA will continue supporting Malawi to finalize the economic impact assessment which will inform the revision of the MAPAC. Furthermore, the priority action plans of the MAPAC will be mainstreamed into the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach and a business meeting for mobilizing resources will be held in the 4th quarter of 2016.

1. **Other country level PACA activities** 
   1. ***Country Officer Hire***

In order to execute the country plans mainstreamed into the NAFSIPs, PACA will hire Country Officers in each of the Pilot Countries. The Country Officers (Cos) will play key roles especially in aligning stakeholders around the country plans. They will also play a unique role in accelerating the institutionalization of country plans as part of national strategies (mainstreaming into NAFSIPs and other frameworks).

In this regard, Malawi, Uganda and Tanzania working closely with PACA Secretariat and Aflatoxin Technical Working Groups/Steering Committees selected potential candidates for the CO positions. The following steps have been taken to hire Cos in Malawi Uganda and Tanzania.

* + 1. ***Malawi***

The African Union Commission and the Government of Malawi have in place a Memorandum of Agreement to hire and host a PACA Country Officer in the Ministry of Industry Trade and Tourism (MoITT). The Malawi CO – Mr. Mphatso Dakamau was selected through a transparent and rigorous process involving representatives from PACA Steering Committee, AUC, PACA Secretariat and representatives from the MAPAC Technical Working Group, and the three Sector Ministries of Health, Trade and Agriculture. Mr. Dakamau has accepted the job offer and will start work as a Country Officer on 1 July 2016.

* + 1. ***Tanzania***

The African Union Commission and the Government of Tanzania have in place a Memorandum of Agreement to hire and host PACA Country Officer in the Tanzania Food and Drug Authority (TFDA) under the Ministry of Health. The Tanzania CO – Dr. Happy Magoha was selected through a transparent and rigorous process involving representatives from PACA Secretariat, Tanzania Mycotoxin Steering Committee and TFDA. Dr. Magoha has accepted the job offer and will start work on 1 September 2016.

* + 1. ***Uganda***

The African Union Commission and the Government of Uganda are working towards the finalization of a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) to enable the Country Officer Hire. In this regard, the MoA has been cleared by both the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development and the Solicitor General of Uganda. The cleared MoA stipulates that the MoA should be governed by Uganda National Law, however, since AUC is an international entity, negotiations are underway to reverse the amendment by Uganda Government to allow for International law to govern the MoA. To expedite implementation of activities in Uganda, PACA Secretariat through Meridian, has put in place a short contract for the selected Country Officer- Ms. Grace Akao. Ms. Akao is therefore supporting Uganda Country activities while awaiting the finalization of the MoA. PACA Secretariat will continue working with Uganda to finalize the MoA with AUC.

**Table 1. Planned Programmatic Activities and Achievements, January – June 2016**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PACA’s Annual Target | | Achievements | Challenges | Way Forward |
| 1. Continental/regional support for aflatoxin control | | | | |
| 1.1 Support to RECs | | | | |
| Develop COMESA Regional Action Plan | | A consultant has been hired and a draft regional aflatoxin control action plan will be presented and validated on the margins of the 2nd PACA PPM | It has taken a long time to select the final consultants through COMESA | Hold a validation workshop for the COMESA Action Plan on the margins of the 2nd PACA PPM |
| Engage EAC | | * PACA participated in the validation workshop of the Regional Aflatoxin Prevention and Control Strategy and Action Plan (2017-2021). * EAC participated in the PACA Steering Committee Meeting as a new member in March 2016. |  | Continue engaging EAC through the PACA SC meetings and other platforms to ensure aflatoxins are adequately addressed in the region and mainstreamed into the CAADP aligned Regional Agriculture Investment Plan |
| 1.2 Regional Workshops | | | | |
| Workshop on Engaging Health Sector in Aflatoxin Prevention and Control in Africa | | * Technical papers and meeting discussions were documented in meeting report * Recommendations on areas of interventions and actions were given for the various thematic areas identified. * A plan of action and roadmap was developed and currently being refined for circulation | Limited staff capacity to follow up with reviewing plan of action for health workshop | * PACA Secretariat to share report and draft action plan to the identified workshop focal points to finalize plan of action and roadmap document. * Disseminate workshop report and action plan documents to PACA Community. * Engage focal points and relevant stakeholders to drive implementation of activities outlined in plan of action document. |
| 1. Pilot country Support | |  |  |  |
| * 1. Country plan implementation support | | | | |
| Evidence generation to inform plans and interventions – situational analysis in the three countries | * Tanzania and Uganda CSAAPs and Malawi economic impact assessment has been externally reviewed by Abt. Associates for technical accuracy and consistency * Tanzania C-SAAP has been finalized and is ready for final design and dissemination * Malawi consultants have been identified to finalize economic impact assessment | | Harmonizing methodologies of economic impact assessment in all the countries was a challenge especially in Uganda where the methodology used was in question and the C-SAAP document was advanced when requested to make changes | * Follow up with Uganda to incorporate comments from external review and disseminate report after completion in 3rd quarter * Validate Malawi economic impact assessment in 4th Quarter |
| NAFSIPs reviewed incorporating aflatoxin control in two countries | * Tanzania mainstreamed aflatoxins in the Tanzania Agriculture Sector Development Plan (ASDP II) * Some of Malawi MAPAC’s priority activities have been mainstreamed into the ASWAp SP, in the process Malawi Government through World Bank Support has secured over $70,000 for implementing priority activities | |  | Finalize mainstreaming of Uganda aflatoxin control action plan into the Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan (ASSP) before the business meeting  Finalize the review of the MAPAC and re-prioritization of activities based on outcome of economic impact assessment – mainstream the revised MAPAC into ASWAp in 4th Quarter |
| Steering Committees established and functional for cross-sectoral coordination to oversee NACAP implementation | ATWGs and National Steering Committees have been established and functional in all PACA Pilot countries. | |  | Continue engaging the Steering Committees and Aflatoxin Technical Working Groups (ATWGs) to ensure that they are functioning effectively |
| Business meetings and approval of funding strategy for NACAP implementation in countries | * Tanzania held a successful business meeting to validate a strategy for mobilizing resources for the implementation of the aflatoxin control action plan * Tanzania pledged support to submit the aflatoxin control action plan through the national budgeting process for funding * Templates of resource mobilization strategy have been developed * PACA has contracted national consultants to carry out the Uganda business meeting planned in the 3rd Quarter | | * Development Partners participation at the Tanzania business meeting was low, whereas bilateral engagements with Development Partners (DPs) prior to Tanzania business meeting was high * Not having a Country Officer in place in Tanzania soon after the business meeting to follow up with interested DPs for funding has slowed down resource mobilization efforts | Continue engaging Uganda and Malawi towards convening the business meetings in 3rd and 4th quarters respectively |
| Hiring of PACA Country Officers (Cos) | * Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda have selected candidates for the position * Memoranda of Agreements between AUC and Malawi/Tanzania are in place. * CO for Malawi expected to assume position on 1 July 2016. * CO for Tanzania expected to assume position on 1 September 2016. * Uganda clearance of MoA in various Government Offices has been finalized | | Uganda’s insistence on having the MoA Governed by National Law instead of International Law will delay the finalization of MoA and signing by AUC | Continue engaging Uganda to finalize the MoA |
| * 1. Establishing the Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAIMS) | | | | |
| Establishing the Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAIMS) | * Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda have signed LoAs with AUC. * PACA Secretariat with AU-IBAR have finalized the development of modules for AfricaAIMS (health, trade and agriculture) * Refresher training on the AfricaAIMS portal was conducted for focal points in Uganda, Tanzania, Gambia and Senegal * Uganda and Tanzania have uploaded data on AfricaAIMS * Malawi has collected data for AfricaAIMS and analysis has been initiated. | | * Some equipment supplied to Malawi (blender) were faulty- this stalled the finalization of data analysis in Malawi | * Replace faulty blenders to enable finalization of data analysis * Conduct refresher training for Malawi and Nigeria to allow for data to be submitted in Malawi on AfricaAIMS |

1. Malawi – Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp); Tanzania – Tanzania Food Security Investment Plan (ASDP); Uganda- Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan (ASSP) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)