PACA regional and country activities report:

PACA/SCM08/ Mar16/D-5

***The Gambia, Nigeria and Senegal***

**Background**

PACA secretariat’s newly refined strategy clearly defines and focuses the activities of the PACA secretariat to improving effectiveness and efficiency of African governments to tackle the aflatoxin problem that countries are currently facing. The newly refined strategy will guide the strategic direction of the PACA Secretariat for the mid-term, 2014-2017. This new direction for the PACA Secretariat emphasizes important, strategic Secretariat roles, in order to catalyze needed changes in effective management of aflatoxins on the continent.

The PACA secretariat will help pilot country governments develop and implement an action plan to mitigate and control the aflatoxin problem in the countries. In consultation with the country focal points and the regional economic community (RECs) ECOWAS, PACA will help pilot countries to form a country action plan steering committee (SC) through which the country planning will be supported and monitored. The Secretariat’s country activities will build on the country planning work already underway:

1. The establishment of an Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAIMS)
2. Support a Country-Led Situational Analysis and Action Plan (CSAAP)
3. Mainstreaming Food Safety and aflatoxin control in National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAFSIPs)

These activities will lead up to the country action planning to be conducted in countries. The establishment of AfricaAIMS, and the situation analysis study are part of the process in gathering evidence to inform the action plans.

**PACA activities at the regional level: ECOWAS**

1. **Revamping the Groundnut Value Chain in West Africa through aflatoxin Mitigation Workshop**

PACA, in collaboration with ECOWAS, IITA and others, organized a regional workshop on how to “revamp the groundnut value chain of West Africa through aflatoxin mitigation”. The workshop looked at the history of the groundnut industry in West Africa, the aflatoxin challenge and its impact on economies such as Nigeria, Senegal and The Gambia while also exploring its potential for growth and intervention opportunities. Strong private sector experiences were shared and participants delved into discussions on opportunities and challenges of the private sector in engaging in the groundnut value chain.

The ECOWAS Aflatoxin Control Action Plan (ECOACAP) was one of the highlights of the workshop where it was presented and fully endorsed as a great framework for action. The workshop also focused on identifying interventions needed in the areas of technology, policy, and finance in order to revamp the value chain in West Africa. The workshop proposed four flagship projects aimed at revamping the groundnut value chain in West Africa such as: African Groundnut Project- Private Sector Led, Market Driven, Integrative PPPP (Public Private Producer Partnership); Project on Improved Technology Package to Enhance Groundnut Value Chain Competitiveness; the Flashpoint Project; and Innovative Financing - Establishment of a Special Purpose Vehicle for the Revamping of the Groundnut Value Chain. In order to kick start these projects, the following next steps will be taken:

* Identified Champions will work with other partners on the African Groundnut Project
* PACA secretariat will select a working group to develop the Project on Improved Technology Package
* PACA secretariat will select a working group to prepare a business plan and lead the project on Innovative Financing
1. **ECOWAS – Aflatoxin Control Action Plan**

ECOWAS in collaboration with PACA and other stakeholders has developed and finalized an aflatoxin control action plan in 2014. The ECOWAS Aflatoxin Control Action Plan (ECOACAP) was presented at the regional workshop on “Revamping the groundnut Value Chain in West Africa through Aflatoxin Mitigation” on 01-02 September 2015 and endorsed. The secretariat revised the document to incorporate all comments received from the workshop participants and sent a finalized copy to the ECOWAS commission. On 14-16 November 2015, on the margins of the 10th ECOWAP International Conference, experts and Ministers of Agriculture met and unanimously approved the ECOWAS Aflatoxin Control Action Plan.

1. **Food Safety Policy Landscape Study in ECOWAS Region**

As part of its evidence gathering exercise to inform policy, PACA has commissioned a study in the ECOWAS region to assess food safety control systems, regulations, standards and capacities (human and laboratory) for aflatoxin control in ECOWAS countries. The Scoping study was presented at the regional workshop on “Revamping the groundnut Value Chain in West Africa through Aflatoxin Mitigation” on 01-02 September 2015. The scoping study was endorsed finalized and circulated to all ECOWAS Member states as well as others in the field of aflatoxin control. The Scoping study made several recommendations for ECOWAS and its Member states on improving food safety systems.

**PACA activities at country level: Nigeria, Senegal and the Gambia**

1. **Establishment of the Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (Please also refer to the report on AfricaAIMS, PACA/SCM/Mar16/D6)**

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. AfricaAIMS is therefore a tool where information on aflatoxins and related issues can be adequately available. AfriaAIMS will serve as a “one stop shop” information harbor for aflatoxin information in the health, trade and agriculture sectors. Data will be collected and owned by the countries. The information on the AfricaAIMS will serve policy makers, regulatory bodies, potential investors, technical agencies (agriculture, health, and trade), researchers, farmers, and other stakeholders to make relevant interventions and decisions.

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

For strategic implementation of interventions for aflatoxin management and control, governments need to assess the current situation in the countries. The PACA Secretariat supports its pilot countries in conducting country‐led food safety system and aflatoxin situation analysis and action planning by assisting countries to create empirical evidence on existing aflatoxin prevalence, legislation, policy and regulation, management practices and other existing control mechanisms that can effectively inform interventions. The C-SAAP will also provide the necessary input to align aflatoxin control with broader food safety and SPS issues within countries. PACA Secretariat has engaged consultants to work with key stakeholders in drafting and supporting a concrete country action plan for mitigating aflatoxins, based on the findings of the situational analysis.

1. ***Nigeria***

As the latest PACA pilot country to come on board, the supplementary CSAAP study in Nigeria is yet to be initiated. In 2002, Abt Associates, in collaboration with national experts, conducted a country assessment on aflatoxin contamination and control in Nigeria. The study carefully looked at the prevalence of aflatoxins in some regions of Nigeria as well as the risks of aflatoxin contamination and exposure in Nigeria. The study also highlighted the economic impact on agriculture and food security, trade and health from aflatoxin contamination. Although the study is somewhat comprehensive, there is a need for a supplementary study to fill in data gaps and refine the national aflatoxin control action plan. As a result, PACA secretariat in collaboration with the Nigerian government and other partners identified few firms/individuals to potentially conduct the supplementary CSAAP study. The secretariat sent out a call for proposals to engage consultants to undertake the study. Proposals are currently under review.

The secretariat will take the following steps to ensure completion of the CSAAP study:

* Finalize review of proposals and identify a competent firm to conduct CSAAP study
* Work closely with the consultants to develop the CSAAP
* Validate the CSAAP with various stakeholders
* Outcomes of the country-led situation analysis will inform a comprehensive action plan that will be mainstreamed into the NAFSIP
* An implementation plan will be developed with the action plan
1. ***Senegal***

In July 2015, Senegal validated its situational analysis and kick started the action planning and implementation plan. The consultants are still working on the action plan and implementation plan for the short term, medium term and long term. Senegal will validate its action plan and implementation plan in the first quarter of 2016. The action plan will also be mainstreamed in the NAFSIP and a business meeting will be held in the second quarter of 2016.

The following steps will be taken in order to finalize the action plan and implementation plan:

* Based on the situation analysis, the consultants are developing a comprehensive action plan that includes an implementation plan and a funding strategy
* This will be reviewed and validated in a workshop with various stakeholders
* The action plan will be mainstreamed in the NAFSIP
* A business meeting with the government and development partners will be convened
1. ***The Gambia***

The Gambia situation analysis and action plan was validated in late September 2015. Based on the Situational Analysis, the IRIS team is developing the national aflatoxin control plan as well as an implementation and financing strategy.

The following steps will be taken to develop the action plan and implementation strategy:

* Finalize the action plan and implementation and financing strategy
* The IRIS team will also make proposals on mainstreaming of the action plan into other relevant frameworks
* The action plan will be endorsed by the government and validated in a workshop with stakeholders
* The action plan will be mainstreamed in the GNAIPs
* A business meeting with the government of the Gambia, development partners and other stakeholders will be convened
1. **Mainstreaming food safety and aflatoxin control in CAADP National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans (Mainstream FoodSAC)**

One of PACA’s aims is to strengthen existing structures and frameworks and avoid creating parallel structures and duplication of efforts. The PACA Secretariat will support countries in mainstreaming the aflatoxin issues into existing frameworks such as the CAADP National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans (NAFSIPs) for effective and more sustainable approach to mitigating aflatoxins.

1. ***Nigeria, Senegal and the Gambia***

In all three countries, the following steps will be taken in order to mainstream the National Aflatoxin Control Plan into the NAFSIP of each country:

* Once the comprehensive plans have been developed, the consultants will cost priority areas/activities to be mainstreamed in the NAFSIPs
* The consultants with the CAADP focal persons in country and other stakeholders will review the NAFSIP of Nigeria and identify intervention areas to incorporate aflatoxin and food safety issues.
* A NAFSIP review meeting will be convened with the ministries and mainstreaming initiated
* The PACA secretariat with the consultants will make sure that action areas have been incorporated within the NAFSIP of Nigeria
* Following the mainstreaming exercise, a Business Meeting with Nigerian Government, Development Partners, private sector and other relevant stakeholders will be convened to agree on priority areas and commit funding
* The Implementation of activities will be tracked through the CAADP Results Framework; Country M&E Systems; and PACA M&E and AfricaAIMS

**Other country level PACA activities**

1. **Country Officer Hire**

The PACA secretariat’s newly refined strategy identifies the country officer as one of the most critical positions within countries. The PACA country officers will effectively coordinate between the various sectors and engage stakeholders to align to the aflatoxin action plan of the country. The country officers will work closely with various stakeholders to advance PACA activities. The following steps have been taken to hire a country officer in each country.

1. ***Nigeria***

Upon request, the PACA secretariat received several recommendations for the PACA country officer position in Nigeria. The secretariat reviewed CVs; short listed and interviewed seven candidates for the position. A second interview was conducted for the top three candidates. The interview panel ranked all interviewees and identified a candidate for the position. The panel included IITA nominated by the government of Nigeria, the ECOWAS Commission, Meridian Institute and PACA secretariat. The following steps are being taken to finalize the hire of the country officer:

* An Memorandum of Agreement has been signed by the African Union Commission and sent to the Host Institution (Ministry of Agriculture) for signature
* Once, the MOA is signed by both parties, the identified country officer will be hired through Meridian Institute.
* The country officer will be hosted in the focal institution and will oversee all PACA activities in country
1. ***Senegal***

Initially, the country officer for Senegal was unanimously endorsed as a PACA country officer by the ATWG. However, the candidate is not available at this time. Currently, the secretariat is receiving a recommendation from the ministry of agriculture as well as others. The secretariat will re-announce the position to the ATWG for further recommendations and hiring. The following steps will be taken to identify a candidate for the position:

* The secretariat will request for recommendations from the various ministries and partners in Senegal
* The secretariat will short list candidates and interview
* The panel will identify a suitable candidate for the position
* A revised Memorandum of Agreement has been sent to the Legal Counsel of the African Union Commission
* The MOA will be signed by the AUC and host institution (Ministry of Agriculture)
* The country officer will be hired through Meridian Institute

1. ***The Gambia***

In collaboration with the government of the Gambia through the Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA), and the ECOWAS Commission, the PACA secretariat conducted interviews of recommended candidates. The MOA between the AUC and FSQA has been signed by both parties. The following steps will be taken to hire the country officer: The following steps have been taken to hire the country officer in The Gambia:

* The PACA secretariat will get the interview report signed by all panel members
* The candidate will be informed of his/her candidature
* The PACA country officer will be hired through Meridian institute

**Table 1. Planned Programmatic Activities and Achievements, July – December 2015**

| PACA’s Annual Target | Achievements | Challenges | Way Forward |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Continental/regional support for aflatoxin control
 |  |  |  |
| Enhance aflatoxin control in key value chains |  |  |  |
| Organize a regional workshop on "Revamping the groundnut value chain of West Africa through aflatoxin mitigation" | A successful regional workshop organized on 01-02 September 2015.  | Last minute withdrawal of ECOWAS from sponsoring participants | Follow-up on recommendations of the workshop- Implementation of flagship projects  |
| Support to RECs |  |  |  |
| Commission scoping study on policy landscape and aflatoxin regulation capacities in ECOWAS Member States | Scoping study was presented at the regional work 01-02 September 2015 and endorsed by stakeholders. The Study was revised and circulated to all stakeholders. |  | Follow-up on recommendations from the study  |
| Validate ECOWAS Regional Action Plan | The ECOWAS action plan was presented at the regional workshop where stakeholders gave their inputs before endorsing the plan. The ECOACAP was then endorsed by Ministers of Agriculture of ECOWAS member States on the margins of the ECOWAP 10th International Conference.  |  | Ensure alignment of country action plans to ECOACAP. |
| Mainstreaming food safety and aflatoxin control in continental frameworks supported |  |  |  |
| NAFSIPs reviewed incorporating aflatoxin control in five countries | NAFSIPs yet to be reviewed in Senegal and the Gambia after the national action plans are developed and finalized  |  | Finalizing the national action plans  |
| Website hits of 8,000 per year | Website updated somewhat regularly | Staff capacity | Expedite hiring of communication officer; track number of hits |
| Produce quarterly newsletter | August and November issues released with regularity |  | Produce high quality newsletter with utmost regularity |
| 1. Pilot country Support
 |  |  |  |
| Country plan implementation support (plan reforecasted and focus on evidence generation and country plan development) |  |  |  |
| Evidence generation to inform plans and interventions – situational analysis in five countries | Senegal and the Gambia have validated their CSAAPs. Proposals to conduct CSAAP in Nigeria are being reviewed.  |  |  Address issues arising from reviews by Abt Associates. Hiring consultants working on the CSAAP in Nigeria  |
| Development and validation of National Aflatoxin Control Action Plan (NACAP) in five countries | Senegal and the Gambia are completing their national action plans. Nigeria should follow after finalization of the situational analysis.  | Getting the government engaged in all processes and responding to consultants  | Finalizing the national action plans and implementation plan in both countries  |
| Steering Committees established and functional for cross-sectoral coordination to oversee NACAP implementation | ATWGs have been established and functional in all PACA Pilot countries. Nigeria established a SC and an ATWG. |  | Formalize all SCs and ensure that the TORs for ASC do not overlap with the ATWG |
| Business meetings and approval of funding strategy for NACAP implementation in five countries | The Gambia and Senegal have started engaging Donors to align to the national action plans | Having consultants with relevant portfolio in pilot countries  |  |
| Hiring of PACA Country Officers in 6 countries | MOA has been signed by The Gambia, interview conducted, candidate to be informed and hired. MOA for Nigeria is ready for signature but still with Legal due to lack of special paper. Interview conducted and candidate identified. Once the MOA is signed, the country officer will be hired. The MOA is being reviewed by legal.  | Legal clearance of MOAs taking long and Withdrawal of Senegal’s candidate from the post. | MOAs to be signed by host institutions and the AUC and officers hired. Commence the hiring process again in Senegal  |
| Establishing the Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAIMS) | Senegal has finalized collecting and analyzing AfricaAIMS data for agriculture, health and trade. The Gambia has finalized data collection and analysis in agriculture as well as health. Nigeria will receive VICAM and staff training as soon as equipment is delivered.  | Delay in signing the Letter of Agreements in Nigeria | Work with the Nigerian government to finalize the LOA.  |