

PACA Secretariat Progress Report

July – December 2015

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Secretariat for the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa

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# Overview

Much of the year 2015 has been mainly characterized by PACA Secretariat’s deliberate focus on achieving results in pilot countries. Simultaneously, efforts at providing targeted support at the continental and regional level, and at generating predictable, sustainable and diversified funding for implementation of the Mid-Term Operational Plan received high priority.

Thus, the Secretariat aimed at the following targets:

1. undertake food safety and aflatoxin situational analysis and action planning in pilot countries and validation of results and alignment of stakeholders
2. mainstream national aflatoxin control action plans through CAADP National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans (NAFSIPs)
3. recruit and hire country officers to support implementation of national plans on the ground
4. pursue hiring of additional Secretariat staff to meet the structure and capabilities needed for the refined strategy
5. bring Nigeria on board as the 6th pilot country to support full implementation of aflatoxin situational analysis and action planning in that country
6. continue to build the professional competencies of the PACA Secretariat

In addition, the following received considerable focus during the reporting period:

1. Organization of the regional workshop on “Revamping the groundnut value chain through aflatoxin control” and other regional workshops
2. Developing regional action plans and scoping the policy and regulatory landscape, and
3. Continued efforts at information sharing, communication, advocacy, strategic partnerships and making use of relevant, high-level forums.

# Highlight of Achievements

This Section provides a summary of achievements on continental/regional activities, country level implementation and Secretariat management with respect to the 2015 Budget and Work Plan. Further details on the six pilot countries are presented in the regional reports for East and Southern Africa and for West Africa, both included in SC Document Folder. In addition, the PACA Secretariat Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 reports provide further details on specific outputs achieved and next steps identified during each quarter.

## Continental/Regional Activities

At the continental level, the focus was on mainstreaming through CAADP (elaborated below and under country activities), and on knowledge management support activities (presented under section 2.2 for convenience to match the annual work plan). At REC level, PACA Secretariat’s efforts have focused on developing regional action plans, generating up-to-date information on the policy and regulatory frameworks in the regions, as well as conducting a regional workshop to enhance value chains. During the past six months the following actions were accomplished.

### Mainstreaming Aflatoxin Control at Continental Level

The PACA Secretariat continued with its strategy of embedding strategic action plans for addressing aflatoxin and other food safety issues into the CAADP framework. Country level plans are being incorporated into NAFSIPs in the six PACA pilot countries. This approach is key for effective implementation of country plans and for sustainability of the same. During the reporting period, Tanzania has integrated its National Aflatoxin Control Action Plan to the Agriculture Sector Development Program (ASDP 2). Ugandan stakeholders also validated their national aflatoxin control action plan and identified entry points for mainstreaming into the Agriculture Sector Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP)/ the Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan of Uganda (ASSP). Other pilot countries are finalizing their plan and have engaged consultants to support in the process. Likewise, at the regional level, ECOWAS is considering to embed the regional aflatoxin control plan into its RAIP. COMESA showed interest for doing the same even before the regional plan is finalized.

### Regional Aflatoxin Action Planning

#### A. ECOWAS Aflatoxin Control Action Plan (EACAP)

The EACAP has been finalized by ECOWAS Commission and PACA Secretariat based on inputs from participants of the groundnut aflatoxin workshop on 1-2 September in Dakar, Senegal. The regional plan has been approved by Ministers of Agriculture of ECOWAS Commission in November 2015, laying the foundation for increased regional and country level interventions towards aflatoxin control.

#### B. COMESA Regional Aflatoxin Action Plan

Based on the PACA-COMESA Regional Workshop on Aflatoxin Challenge in Eastern and Southern Africa held in Lilongwe, 11-13 March 2014, PACA has been working closely with COMESA to develop a regional aflatoxin strategy. COMESA re-advertised the call for consultants to support the development of the regional plan and Expressions of Interest were screened (at first COMESA asked for a facilitator to re-mobilize the action planning process, but then it was agreed that an expert in food safety with experience in strategic planning would add more value). There are further delays in this process, but the Secretariat and COMESA are still working on developing the regional plan.

#### C. SADC Engagement

PACA Secretariat started engagement with SADC in 2015. However, no further engagement of SADC during the reporting period. This will resume when PACA Secretariat’s budgetary situation improves, expected in 2016.

#### D. East African Community

The PACA Secretariat continued its engagement with EAC. The focus so far has been to align the communication strategies of PACA and East Africa Community (EAC) and also to avoid overlaps between PACA briefs and EAC technical papers while seeking broader engagement in a range of collaboration areas. During the reporting period, the Secretariat held meetings with EAC on the margins of the Inaugural Conference of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in September 2015. EAC is expected to share technical briefs and to submit a concept note on regional activity that can be jointly implemented with PACA.

### Food Safety Policy Landscape Studies

In 2015, PACA and ECOWAS Commission engaged a consultant and initiated a regional scoping study to assess the policies, regulations and standards on aflatoxin and enforcement capacities in ECOWAS Member States. The ECOWAS regional study was completed and reviewed at the regional workshop on “Revamping the Groundnut Value Chain of West Africa through Aflatoxin Mitigation” in Dakar, Senegal in September 2015. The ECOWAS commission was instrumental in identifying key individuals in countries to conduct questionnaire survey and in reviewing and finalizing the report.

### Regional Workshops

#### FAO/WHO-PACA workshop on mycotoxins in sorghum

Recall that PACA hosted and co-organized the FAO/WHO-PACA regional workshop on mycotoxins in sorghum. The workshop report is being finalized by FAO and WHO teams.

#### Workshop on Revamping the Groundnut Value Chain in West Africa through Aflatoxin Mitigation

The PACA secretariat organized a workshop on “Revamping the Groundnut Value Chain of West Africa through Aflatoxin Mitigation” in Dakar Senegal on 01-02 September 2015, which achieved the following outputs:

* The workshop themed “Call for Action to enrich livelihoods and economies” brought together key stakeholders (with a total of 101 participants) including experts and policy makers from the member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), small and medium- enterprises and corporate food industries, research organizations and academia, development partners, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), government ministries from trade, agriculture and health, farmers organizations, the private sector, civil society and the African Union Commission.
* The workshop allowed deep discussions on the track record and potential of the groundnut subsector in the region as well as the impact of aflatoxins and lessons from private sector experiences. Based on concrete examples, participants discussed opportunities and challenges for private sector engagement in the groundnut value chain, including the essential role of smallholder farmers in the groundnut value chain in Africa; successful approaches for mitigating aflatoxin to make groundnut suitable for regional and global trade and safe for domestic consumption; alternative uses for rejected crops; and key elements to incentivize private sector investment in groundnut value chains in Africa.
* The workshop also created the opportunity for stakeholders’ review of the ECOWAS Aflatoxin Control Action Plan (ECOACAP). Participants endorsed the plan as an excellent framework for action and made a number of suggestions to further strengthen and incorporate the plan into regional and national agricultural investment plans in West Africa.
* Participants also reviewed a report on PACA commissioned scoping study looking at the policy landscape and capacities for aflatoxin control in the region.
* Stakeholders were able to identify needed actions in the areas of technology, policy, and finance to revamp the groundnut value chain in West Africa.
* Stakeholders also synthesized the action areas and identified four potential flagship projects aimed at revamping the groundnut value chain in West Africa through aflatoxin mitigation.
* The workshop communiqué and proceedings have been finalized and shared with workshop participants and the PACA Community
* As recommended by the workshop stakeholders, the PACA secretariat will identify small working groups to develop the flagship projects identified during the workshop and champion their implementation

#### Workshop on “Engaging Health Sector in Aflatoxin Prevention and Control in Africa”

In collaboration with Amref Health, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization – International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), PACA is co-organizing a workshop on “Engaging Health Sector in Aflatoxin Prevention and Control in Africa”. The workshop will be held on 23-24 March 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The workshop will be a forum where information and knowledge on the impact of aflatoxins on human health and nutrition will be exchanged, interventions targeting human and animal health as well as nutrition initiatives and actors in countries will be catalogued and an operational plan to address gaps and/or implement the health and nutrition component of the PACA strategy will be worked out. The workshop will serve as the nucleus of a platform that would link actors across the three focal sectors with special emphasis on health and nutrition (proposed as: “Africa Aflatoxin Health and Nutrition Forum” or “Africa Aflatoxin Health and Nutrition Network”). The main aim of the platform is to respond to the needs for coordination among different players to effectively address the aflatoxin problem. This workshop is made possible through the tireless effort of Amref and other task members and importantly GAIN’s meaningful contribution to the workshop budget.

## Knowledge Management Functions

### PACA Website

The PACA website serves as the main platform where PACA shares information. The Secretariat maintained the PACA website 2.0 (launched in 2014) with up-to-date information. The website will be further enhanced with the hiring of Communication Expert and Knowledge Manager in early 2016. The transfer of the website to the AUC will be completed in the near future. The process of transfer will be accelerated with the hiring of the Communication Expert and Knowledge Manager anticipated in first quarter of 2016.

### PACA Newsletter

The Newsletter highlights spotlight updates of activities, planned PACA and other relevant events, and provides recent and reliable information on aflatoxin issues to the PACA community members and other stakeholders.

During the reporting period, the Secretariat released two issues of the Aflatoxin Partnership Newsletter, namely, Issue 3 and 4 of Volume III. The secretariat will continue to produce high quality and focused newsletter with utmost regularity.

### Policy Briefs and Technical Papers

The Secretariat produced one policy brief, namely, “Strategy for Enhancing Food Security, Trade and Public health through Aflatoxin Management in Africa” which was presented at the experts and ministers Conference of the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment in September 2015. Various technical papers based on the situational analyses in pilot countries are being developed.

### Sponsoring PACA Aligned Value Adding Forums

As part of knowledge sharing and promotion, the PACA Secretariat supported and participated in different fora. It is to be recalled that PACA supported the 1st African Symposium on Mycotoxicology (ASM), which led to the establishment of the African Society of Mycotoxicologists, with a strong PACA footprint. PACA also supported the annual conference of the Nigerian Mycotoxicologists Society in 2015.

Furthermore, PACA co-sponsored three events during the reporting period:

1. Side event at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, on 15 July 2015:

* PACA in partnership with Mars convened a side event on “Uncommon Partnerships Address Aflatoxins: an Urgent Worldwide Food Safety Challenge”. A sign of the growing partnership between Mars and PACA, the joint side event highlighted the tremendous potential to address the challenge through various unconventional partnerships.
* The panelists including WFP, USAID as well as Mars and PACA described the food safety challenge and its threat to food security as well as aflatoxins’ negative impact on nutrition and women and children’s health. The panelists also discussed the various opportunities that exist to prevent and control aflatoxins.
* The side event explored the idea of creating uncommon partnerships to address food safety issues on the continent.

1. Side events at the 42nd UN Committee for Food Security (CFS 42) in collaboration with Mars, Incorporated and other partners, 11-14 October 2015, Rome, Italy. The following were outcomes of this effort:

* PACA in partnership with Mars Inc. organized a successful side event entitled “Multi-Sector Partnerships Drive Food Safety Solutions that Increase Food Availability, Improve Nutrition and Health, and Enhance Economic Status”.
* Shed light on different aspects of the aflatoxin challenge by a panel consisting of PACA Secretariat and other global leaders and Member States representatives
* Drew important recommendations with focus on the role of partnerships in aflatoxin control in Africa
* Employed other relevant sessions to engage stakeholders and advocate for aflatoxin control.

1. Workshop and exhibition at the 6th edition of the African Day of Food and Nutrition Security, 28-30 October 2015, Kampala, Uganda

The PACA Secretariat participated in a session and made a presentation entitled: “concrete steps towards attaining food security, improved nutrition and market access through integrated aflatoxin control,” which brought focus on the impact aflatoxins on health and nutrition. Additionally, PACA exhibited at the event in order to raise awareness among meeting participants on the impact of aflatoxins, mitigation measures and AUC’s commitment towards meaningful mitigation. Eventually, the ADFNS recognized the need for aflatoxin control for sustainable nutrition programming and recommended, as part of the call to action from technical discussions, to “**embed aflatoxin control in nutrition and value chain development projects**”.

At the ADFNS, the Secretariat also participated in AUC’s Continental SPS Committee meetings, where PACA progress was presented to the SPC group and the need to present aflatoxin control as one of the major SPS challenges facing the continent and the need to use the SPS Committee to further advocate were agreed upon.

### Meta-Analysis of Aflatoxin Situation in Africa

PACA Secretariat aimed at generating comprehensive, credible and useable information on the current state of knowledge and gaps through a systematic analysis of existing data and information.

Undertaking a Rapid Evidence Assessment, generating Evidence Gap Maps, and documenting the magnitude of the aflatoxin problem and its impact at continental level, identifying what works for aflatoxin control and at what cost based on credible evidence will be some of the components of the meta-analysis. During the reporting period, the Secretariat has been partnering with CTA, to conduct technical assessment and finalize an in-depth literature review on the situation of aflatoxin contamination of major food commodities in Africa. CTA-commissioned consultants, while PACA provided technical resource in delineating the scope, the review question, and quality assurance of the report. CTA and PACA will jointly produce the report. CTA and PACA collaboration is growing. PACA will commission a meta-analysis study on the aflatoxin situation in Africa in 2016 in partnership with CTA.

## PACA Pilot Country Activities

Implementation at pilot country level was marked by development of the government led and stakeholder aligned country plans. Implementation of the inter-related three early win PACA ‘signature projects’, namely AfricaAIMS, C-SAAP, and Mainstream FoodSAC continued.

### Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAIMS)

The PACA secretariat continued work towards establishing the AfricaAIMS as a one-stop information portal related to aflatoxin in Africa. This portal contains aflatoxin-related information drawn from the three relevant sectors, namely, agriculture, health and trade to start with from the six PACA pilot countries as well as technical materials and training resources.

The Secretariat working with AfricaAIMS partner labs and other partners accomplished the following:

* All six pilot countries have collected data in the agriculture sector.
* PACA Secretariat and AU-IBAR conducted refresher training to AfricaAIMS focal persons, 8-12 February 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya, and developed and tested modules for uploading data on IBAR’s Animal Resources Information System (ARIS 2). Meanwhile, data were uploaded on AfricaAIMS.
* Letters of Agreement (LoA) between AUC and the AfricaAIMS partner institutions in all pilot countries have been signed.
* Support to Kenya through an agreement between AUC and the Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) led to provision of VICAM testing instrument and Kenya is participating in AfricaAIMS. The experience from Kenya will inform our approaches for extending AfricaAIMS to other non-pilot countries, without a Country Officer or a coordinating Steering Committee (SC).
* Procurement of VICAM testing instrument and supplies for Nigeria will be undertaken as soon as agreements are signed between AUC and the AfricaAIMS partner institution (Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Services, NAQS).

### Country-led Aflatoxin and Food Safety Situation Analysis and Action Planning (C-SAAP)

The PACA Secretariat has been supporting and monitoring the implementation of C-SAAP in its six pilot countries through joint planning and monitoring meetings. The C-SAAP provides empirical evidence on existing aflatoxin prevalence, legislation, policy and regulation, and management practices that can effectively inform policy and interventions.

The following were accomplished:

* PACA Secretariat has contracted external consultants (Abt Associates) to technically review the C-SAAP reports (especially the economic impact models) produced by Pilot Counties and to ensure consistency and highest technical standards of the reports. The C-SAAP reports for Uganda, Tanzania, Senegal and The Gambia and draft synthesis for the Economic Impact Assessment of Malawi have been reviewed. National consultants from Tanzania, Uganda, Senegal and The Gambia are in the process of working through and finalizing of the reports based on the recommendations from the external reviewers. Malawi is in the process of identifying consultants to engage for incorporating the external review comments and finalization of the supplemental C-SAAP economic impact analysis document.
* PACA Secretariat is supporting Pilot Countries to develop National Aflatoxin Control Action Plans (NACAPs) based on the outcomes of the situation analyses. On completion, the NACAPs will be mainstreamed into NAFSIPs of each Pilot Country. Tanzania and Uganda already validated their NACAPs in May/June 2015 and initiated a process to ensure that the action plans are adequately reflected in their investment plans. Tanzania has successfully embedded aflatoxin control in the Tanzania Agriculture Sector Development Plan (ASDP). Uganda is in the process of ensuring that aflatoxins are adequately reflected and mainstreamed in the Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan (ASSP).
* PACA engaged a consultant in Uganda in order to engage relevant stakeholders in the Country to form a functional SC that will advise the implementation of the NACAP. Stakeholders convened on December 4, 2015 in Kampala, Uganda with representatives from the various line ministries and development partners to discuss and approve suggestions for composition of the SC and review ToRs for the SC. A functional SC was formed and an institution, namely the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF), was agreed upon to host the PACA Country Officer who will coordinate the implementation of the NACAP.
* In addition, the Malawi Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD) confirmed plans to review Malawi’s NAFSIP – the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach – in 2016 incorporating the national aflatoxin control plan.

Going forward, PACA Secretariat will work closely with national consultants and external reviewers to finalize C-SAAP documents. In addition, the Secretariat will provide support to the national consultants and governments of The Gambia and Senegal to validate their respective national action plans and mainstream into NAFSIPs. PACA in collaboration with the national consultants and governments will convene business meetings for charting implementation roadmaps and financing NACAPs) in the first-second quarter of 2016 in most pilot countries. Also, the hire of Country Officers will be completed in the coming few months. The Country Officers will facilitate the operationalization of steering committees and mainstreaming of NACAPs into NAFSIPs as well as supporting the implementation and M&E of NACAPs

### Mainstream Food Safety and Aflatoxin Control (Mainstream FoodSAC) into NAFISPs

As indicted in the preceding section, PACA continued its support to pilot countries to mainstream aflatoxin and other food safety challenges into relevant frameworks with focus on CAADP NAFSIPs. Thus, the national aflatoxin control action plans in Tanzania and to an extent in Uganda were embedded into national strategies through “NAFSIP review”. This involved validating the national plans and agreeing on entry points for the mainstreaming through review meetings.

On 20-21 May 2015, Tanzanian stakeholders including representatives of ministries, private sector and academia agreed to mainstream the national aflatoxin control plan into the Tanzania Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan (TAFSIP) and the Agriculture Sector Development Plan (ASDP II). Uganda reviewed its Aflatoxin Action Plan on 25-26 June 2015, and agreed to mainstream the plan into the DSIP/now ASSP.

The in-country workshops on “Reviewing the Draft Aflatoxin Control Action Plan and Mainstreaming into National Frameworks” achieved the following:

* Reviewing the critical gaps and proposed interventions emerging from the situation analysis;
* Reviewing, prioritizing (short, medium and long term) and validating the interventions proposed in the NACAP;
* Agreeing on entry points and mainstream the NACAP into the NAFSIP;
* Agreeing on budget for the intervention areas and implementation modalities;
* Reviewing and agreeing on the Monitoring and Evaluation framework of the action plan; and
* Agreeing on next steps for convening a business meeting for mobilizing resources for implementation of the NACAP.

Gambia, Nigeria, Senegal and Malawi are expected to complete the mainstreaming by mid-2016.

## PACA Core Operations (Governance)

### Steering Committee Leadership

The PACA SC is the apex organ in the governance structure of PACA and convenes biannually. In addition, SC members play emissary roles in support of the PACA Secretariat and provide ongoing support.

#### Steering Committee Meeting

* The seventh meeting of the Steering Committee and Subcommittees was held in Dakar, Senegal on 3-4 September 2015 on the margins of the groundnut aflatoxin workshop (Secretariat supported successful meeting: developed meeting materials and coordinated logistics);
* SC made major decisions including review and guidance on resource mobilization efforts, review of the implementation of regional convenings planned for 2015 including the African Health Forum Focusing on Aflatoxins (now confirmed for March 2016);
* SC reviewed the outcomes of the workshop on the Regional workshop on “Revamping the groundnut value chain of West Africa through aflatoxin mitigation” and provided guidance on charting the way forward;
* SC reviewed and provisionally approved the 2016 Work Plan and Budget of the Secretariat;
* SC deliberated on PACA’s implementation progress in Pilot Country, regional, and continental activities;
* SC discussed approved nominees for SC new membership and a staggered rotation plan for rotation of SC members as presented by the Secretariat and Ad-Hoc Committee;
* Emissary roles and specific tasks accomplished by Steering Committee Members: During the reporting period, Steering Committee members provided the following support and guidance to PACA Secretariat:
* Florence Temu helped coordinate the planning of the Africa health and nutrition forum focusing on aflatoxins. Cris Muyunda also supported the coordination of the health workshop as a member of the planning task team.
* Ernest Aubee supported the C-SAAP validation meetings in Senegal and Gambia and the regional scoping study
* Henry Kimera provided support to country meetings and engagements with national partners and development partners in Uganda
* Orin Hasson played key roles in linking the Secretariat with private sector partners, potential key participants to the groundnut aflatoxin workshop, as well as in engaging other development partners on behalf of PACA
* Cris Muyunda, Ernest Aubee and Ranajit Bandyopadhyay served on the Planning Task force and in the execution of the groundnut aflatoxin workshop.

### PACA Secretariat Management

#### A. Secretariat Staff Capacity Building

The Secretariat with guidance from SC and AUC is working towards hiring the critical mass of staff and building capacity to effectively support continental, regional and country level activities and become a leader and preeminent player in aflatoxin control in Africa.

* With AUC, shortlisted candidates for five positions, Policy Advisor, Technical Advisor, Strategy and Operations Senior Officer, Knowledge Manager, Communications Officer. The recruitment process had wide circulation and numerous applications.
* Hiring PACA country Officers: All pilot countries nearly completed selection of candidates; Secretariat is following up to finalize memorandum of agreement between the host institution in-country and AUC. It is exciting to report that in ---, Country Officers have been hired and deployed.
* Short-term consultant hired in the capacity of Technical Advisor; extended until April 2016.
* Youth Volunteer hired to fill in capacity gaps for 3 months.

**Secretariat Staff Professional Development:**

In 2015, the PACA Secretariat planned for staff training as part of professional development and to match the increasing responsibilities of Secretariat staff. The PACA Steering Committee approved the staff training as part of the 2015 plans on PACA operations.

In quarter 4, 2015 the current members of the Secretariat staff undertook professional training. The following trainings were undertaken in line with the responsibility areas and skill gaps of the Secretariat staff:

1. **Amare Ayalew, PACA Program Manager**: participated in a training workshop on **“evidence based policy”** organized by RIPA International, from 30 November – 04 December 2015 in London, UK. Surprisingly, it has been difficult to find short-term trainings on policy offered within Africa and elsewhere. The chosen training is, in so far as we know, the only relevant training we could come across and it was chosen because of the emphasis on evidence-base while covering the policy development cycle, and the specific topics covered including meta-analysis, theory of change, and other topics that are of direct relevance to PACA Secretariat in more effectively guiding ongoing, planned processes, exactly in these areas. He brought to the PACA team extensive career-long expertise on aflatoxins, and skills from his certified in-depth trainings on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) matters, project management, and institutional leadership as well as hands on experience in these fields. A specific training focusing on policy is vital in his role overlooking the Secretariat’s activities in policy interventions and guiding countries on evidence based policy and regulations for aflatoxin control.
2. **Wezi Chunga, PACA Program Officer** coordinating Eastern and Southern African focus countries: participated in a training on **food safety** at the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology in Arusha, Tanzania from 16-27 November 2015. The PACA Secretariat searched for relevant food safety trainings throughout the world and the training identified was tailored to meet the needs of PACA Program Officers; the NMAIST team worked with Program Officers in developing the training package to make the best out of the training. She brought to the PACA team expertise in the area of policy and development and wide-ranging experience in the CAADP process and NAIP development and review. A training on food safety and mycotoxins is vital in her role supervising country officers (to be hired soon) and working with stakeholders in implementation of national aflatoxin control plans, as major food safety challenge.
3. **Winta Sintayehu; PACA Program Officer** coordinating Western African focus countries: participated in a training on **food safety** at the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology in Arusha, Tanzania from 16-27 November 2015. The PACA Secretariat searched for relevant food safety trainings throughout the world and the training identified was tailored to meet the needs of PACA Program Officers; the NMAIST team worked with Program Officers in developing the training package to make the best out of the training. She brought to the PACA team expertise in the area of policy and development, and from additional training on project management. She has gained experience in the CAADP process and NAIP development and review from her intensive engagement in PACA focus countries. A training on food safety and mycotoxins is vital in her role supervising country officers (to be hired soon) and working with stakeholders in implementation of national aflatoxin control plans, as major food safety challenge.
4. **Mahlet Sileshi**, **PACA Administrative Assistant**: participated in training by Hundfold International on **Management Skills for Office Managers and Administrators**, 16-20 November 2015, in Nairobi, Kenya. This is an all rounded training that was identified. She has brought to the PACA team strong marketing and project assistance expertise and experience as well as knowledge of the AUC system. An all-rounded training to boost her contribution to PACA planning and reporting, customer relations management would further enhance her support to the Secretariat.

#### C. PACA Planning

The following were accomplished during the reporting period:

* Reforecasted 2015 work plan and budget
* Reviewed and revised 2016 work plan and budget;
* Developed draft 2017 work plan and budget

#### D. Meetings with Funders and Potential Strategic Partners

The following activities and areas of focus are worth noting during the reporting period:

* Steady and deliberate communication with PACA community members and Steering Committee
* Partnership with private sector:
  + In December 2015, AUC and Mars, Incorporated signed memorandum of agreement to tackle aflatoxins.
  + PACA Secretariat and Mars are working on identifying and implementing concrete areas of collaboration
* Expanding the funding base: A meeting between PACA Secretariat and the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ) as well as GIZ took place in October 2015. BMZ agreed to screen existing projects for aflatoxin control (meanwhile implemented) and is considering support to the PACA Secretariat.
* Further promoted integration of PACA Secretariat to DREA:
  + Regular debriefing to DREA senior management.
  + Submission of work plans and budget, procurement plans , calendar of events and mission matrix per AUC format.
  + Contributed to the inaugural meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) of Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (see above under *policy briefs*)

## Stakeholder Engagement through Non-PACA Forums

The PACA Secretariat also participated in the following strategic non-PACA meetings:

* PACA Program Officer “Human Capacity Building to Monitor Nutritious and Fortified Foods In the East, Central, and Southern Africa Region” organized by GAIN, 21-23 October 2015, where:
* Aflatoxin issues were highlighted at the meeting through a PACA and IITA presentation.
* PACA, IITA, USAID, NEPAD  and GAIN  agreed on the need of addressing aflatoxin in the health and nutrition sector – meanwhile partnered to co-organizing and funding the workshop on Engaging the Health and Nutrition Sectors to be held in Addis Ababa on 23-24 March 2016.
* PACA Technical Advisor participated in Mycotoxin Society of Nigeria Annual Conference held at IITA Ibadan, Nigeria on 13-15 July 2015, where PACA could engage diverse stakeholders, following Nigeria’s launch as pilot country in June 2015.
* PACA Technical Advisor participated in CTA cross learning workshop held at Dakar, Senegal on 21-25 September 2015, contributing to review of several studies.

# Critical Success Factors

* Timely release of budget
* AUC convening power
* Unreserved support from PACA Steering Committee members, DREA management and backstopping from Meridian Institute
* Country buy-in: locally relevant evidence on impact of aflatoxins is contributing

# Major Challenges and Way Forward

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| --- | --- |
| **Challenges** | **Way forward** |
| Coordinating the implementation of PACA country activities without having PACA country presence | Hiring of Country Officers underway: MoAs review by Legal Counsel, recruitment and interviews |
| Budget concerns for aggressive implementation of the MTOP | Resource mobilization through professional RM experts |
| Discrepancies in C-SAAP and AfricaAIMS methodologies and collection of data across pilot countries | Working with consultants and country partners to harmonize C-SAAPs and AfricaAIMS |
| COMESA scoping study, incompetence of consultant | Secretariat to finalize the report with available information |
| Staff capacity for faster implementation and more visibility | Youth volunteers, consultant hired to fill in capacity gaps  Expediting hiring of new staff |
| Office space for PACA Secretariat | DREA management intervention to secure office space taking into account the new staff |

# Finances

The statement of budget performance for 2015 appears below followed by a summary that reflects the overall budget performance of the PACA Secretariat, including relevant AUC and Meridian Institute spending. A detailed report is provided in the 2014 Budget vs. Actuals document (PACA/SC08/Mar18/\_\_).

January – December 2015 budget execution summary: AUC-based

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item | Released budget | Expenditure | Balance | Remark |
| Staff Salaries | 206,868.00 | - | 206,868.00 | New staff not hired so far |
| Operations | 54,128.00 | 6,182.71 | 47,945.29 | Procurement already done |
| Staff travel | 266,800.00 | 109,924.87 | 156,875.13 |  |
| Steering Committee | 82,320.00 | 69,832.35 | 12,487.65 |  |
| AfricaAIMS | 50,000 | - | 50,000 |  |
| C-SAAP | 423,000 | 202,618.49 | 220,381.51 |  |
| Mainstreaming | 102,000 | 14,536.40 | 87,463.60 |  |
| Advocacy & communication:  Website, Info & communication materials;  Newsletter | 12,000  63,000  20,000 | - | 12,000  63,000  20,000 | NL Completed by PACA Staff; Translations by AUC |
| Total | 1,280,116.00 | 403,094.82 | 877,021.18 |  |

Table 2: January – December 2015 budget execution rate: full program, AUC- and Meridian-based

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PACA Full Program Budget (US$)** | **AUC based budget (US$)** | **Meridian based budget (US$)** | **Expenditure AUC (US$)** | **Expenditure Meridian (US$)** | **Total expenditure (US$)** |
| **3,783,536.81** | 1,248,461.20 | 2,535,075.61 | 403,094.82 | 1,170,436.52 | 1,573,531.34 |
| **Budget Execution Rates** |  |  | 32% | 46% | 42% |
| Remark | AUC approved budget is: 1,280,116.00 | Check discrepancy |  |  |  |

# Conclusions

The PACA Secretariat has made significant strides in the last six months. The level of country buy-in and government support continued to be strong. The process that is being piloted in the six countries is expected to generate models that can be replicated more broadly. The endorsement of the PACA model by the experts and ministers of the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment is a strong vote of confidence for the initial success of that model and the strong asset base built with pilot country governments who were strong advocates. As always, the Secretariat recognizes the enormity of the tasks to be relevant in the fight against the aflatoxin challenge in Africa. Staff capacity and delays in hiring of Secretariat staff and Country Officers is slowing progress of implementation. Although PACA seems to have strong traction in Africa and beyond it could improve on its visibility and results. The Secretariat is also mindful of the urgency for mobilization of funding support beyond the current BMGF grant which is made available through the Meridian Institute.

The small Secretariat teams both at the AUC and Meridian Institute gratefully acknowledge the AUC leadership, our funders, the Steering Committee Members, our pilot country partners and service providers for their contributions and commitments, without which the progress reported here would not have been possible.

# Annex: Planned Programmatic Activities and Achievements, July – December 2015

| PACA’s Annual Target | Achievements/Status | 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" | Workshop undertaken on 1-2 Sept 2015; flagship projects to revive the sub-sector identified | None during Q1 and 2 |  |
| Improved awareness of media |  |  |  |
| Conduct Holistic Stories Training Series: training to media representatives (30 media representatives trained) | Postponed | Staff capacity and need for cost saving | To be implemented in PACA Phase 2 and after hiring of Communication Expert |
| Support to RECs |  |  |  |
| Develop COMESA Regional Action Plan | Call for EOI consultants re-advertized | Excessive delay | Continued engagement with COMESA |
| Commission scoping study on policy landscape and aflatoxin regulation capacities in ECOWAS Member States | Report completed and available to users | None during the reporting period |  |
| Validate ECOWAS Regional Aflatoxin Control Action Plan | Experts reviewed the draft plan at the groundnut workshop and ECOWAS Ministers of Agriculture endorsed the plan |  |  |
| Engage SADC | Engagement suspended | Need for cost saving | To be continued when the budget situation improves |
| Mainstreaming food safety and aflatoxin control in continental frameworks supported |  |  |  |
| Participate in CAADP PP meetings | Implemented in previous semester |  |  |
| Integrate PACA plans into DREA/AUC work programs | See narrative above |  |  |
| NAFSIPs reviewed incorporating aflatoxin control in five countries | Review completed in 2 countries  into the Agriculture Sector Development Plan (ASDP) of Tanzania; and into DSIP/ASSP of Uganda (at final stages) | Getting formal endorsement of stakeholder recommendations; delays in finalization of NACAPs | Targeted efforts and continued engagement |
| 2. Knowledge Management Functions |  |  |  |
| Website hits of 8,000 per year | Website updated somewhat regularly | Staff stretched with other duties | Expedite hiring of communication officer; track number of hits |
| Produce quarterly newsletter | August and November 2015 issues released with reasonable regularity | Staff stretched with other duties | Expedite staff hiring |
| Produce aflatoxin year book | See AfricaAIMS below |  |  |
| Produce overview guides and fact sheets | In progress |  |  |
| Meta-analysis of aflatoxin situation in Africa | On-hold (postponed to 2016 or 2017)  Linkage with CTA on systematic study | Budget concerns and staff capacity | Better implemented after hiring of KM in PACA Phase 2 |
| FAO-PACA regional workshop on sorghum mycotoxins | Completed during previous semester |  |  |
| Produce 8 policy briefs and position papers | On Malabo Commitments and for AU STC  Country meeting outcome briefs at different stages development |  |  |
| Sponsor 3+ PACA aligned forums | First Africa Symposium of Mycotoxicologist sponsored (African society of Mycotoxicologists established) in previous semester  Sponsored Mycotoxin Society of Nigeria; FfD3, CFS 42; ADFNS |  | Nigeria Mycotoxin Society and Africa Heath Forum on Aflatoxins to be sponsored |
| Develop PACA Communication Strategy | On hold | Delay in hiring of new staff | To be undertaken in 2016 |
| 3. 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 | Gambia, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda CSAAP reports and validation completed | Relying on consultants for quality and timely work has been difficult in Malawi therefore causing delays  Ensuring consistency among the pilot Country methodologies for C-SAAP (despite the templates and ToRs)  Absence of in-house capacity to review econometric models for impact analysis | Engage a new set of consultants in Malawi to conduct the C-SAAP  Engage a consulting firm to ensure harmonization of C-SAAPs and validating the models |
| Development and validation of National Aflatoxin Control Action Plan (NACAP) in five countries | Uganda and Tanzania completed national aflatoxin control action plans |  |  |
| Steering Committees established and functional for cross-sectoral coordination to oversee NACAP implementation | ATWGs (SC) have been established in all PACA Pilot countries and functional in most  (except Nigeria that established a SC recently) |  |  |
| Business meetings and approval of funding strategy for NACAP implementation in five countries | Postponed to 2016 | Having consultants with relevant portfolio in pilot countries | Extra technical support to local consultants through the PACA Secretariat (RM consultants inputs) |
| Hiring of PACA Country Officers in 6 countries | Senegal, Uganda and Tanzania have nearly finalized selection of candidates and waiting for memorandum of hosting agreement between the host institution and AUC | Legal clearance of MOAs taking long | Planning with long lead time for all countries |
| Establishing the Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAIMS) | All pilot countries collected data for agriculture; health and trade data at different stages (completed in ------)  Support to Kenya through the IITA-KALRO lab at Katumani, Kenya; procurement of VICAM testing instrument completed  Nigeria will receive VICAM and staff training in Q1/Q2 of 2016 | Delay in data submission | Refresher training and finalizing modules |