



Partnership
for Aflatoxin
Control in Africa

Partenariat pour
la lutte contre
l'aflatoxine en Afrique

Parceria para o
Controle da
Aflatoxina em África

الشراكة من أجل مكافحة
الأفلاتوكسين في أفريقيا

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PACA's Contributions to Attainment of the Malabo Declaration Commitments

What is PACA?

The Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) is an innovative Africa-owned consortium that is on a mission to coordinate and support aflatoxin mitigation and management across the health, agriculture and trade sectors in Africa. PACA was launched in 2012 by the African Union Commission. The theme of African Union in 2012 was "Boosting Intra-African Trade". One of the concrete actions taken by African leaders during that year was to establish PACA. The rationale for this proactive decision was the need to support member states in addressing the complex aflatoxin problem in the context of broader sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) capacity building so that they become competitive in global and regional markets. However, the impact of aflatoxins goes beyond limiting market access; aflatoxins undermine food and nutrition security as well as public health. The African Union Commission is supporting member states to address the multi-faceted impact of aflatoxins in a holistic manner. This brief focuses on the contribution of PACA to delivery of Malabo Declaration Commitments.

What are aflatoxins?

Aflatoxins originate from fungal infection of crops growing in the field, or during improper postharvest handling and storage. Aflatoxins are virtually indestructible by food processing. They occur widely in diverse food products including cereals, oilseeds, spices,

tree nuts and milk. Consumption of heavily contaminated foods is lethal. The major problem, however, is the ongoing consumption of lower levels of aflatoxin for extended periods leading to high rates of liver cancer and associated death, stunting in children and impaired immune systems leading to permanently compromised lives. Aflatoxins significantly reduce agricultural market activity and trade. They are a major barrier in linking African farmers to markets, as they prevent commodities from meeting regulations and standards governing agricultural trade and food safety. It is estimated that Africa loses 450 to 6700 million US Dollars in export trade earnings annually due to aflatoxin contamination in cereals, dried fruits, and nuts. Further, the impact of aflatoxins to regional intra-African trade, among countries with diverse standards and SPS capabilities, is yet to be understood and overcome. Without the mitigation of aflatoxins in the African agricultural and food systems, achievement of the Malabo Declaration Commitments will be compromised.

The impacts of aflatoxin are expected to increase as a result of climate change. As climate change progresses, crops will be more stressed by drought and erratic rainfall, pest infestations will evolve, and storage conditions are more likely to be hot and humid. Under these conditions, aflatoxin infection of crops will increase. Addressing aflatoxins is critical to mitigating climate change impacts on human health and agricultural markets and trade.

What is PACA's contribution to realizing the Malabo Declaration commitments?

The Malabo Declaration made nine specific commitments to achieve accelerated agricultural growth and transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods. PACA will contribute towards attainment of Malabo Declaration Commitment #3, ending hunger in Africa by 2025; #4, poverty reduction; #5, tripling intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services; #6, enhancing resilience of livelihoods and production systems to climate variability and related risks.

The Implementation Strategy and Roadmap (IS&R) for translating the Malabo Declaration into concrete actions has a set of 11 strategic action areas (SAAs). PACA will contribute directly to the following strategic action areas:

SAA 1a: Sustainable agricultural production and productivity in an inclusive manner, particularly the sub-action on "supporting post-harvest loss management."

SAA 1b: Market infrastructure, regional trade and integration, and value chains development, particularly contributing to the sub-theme: "Harmonize trade regimes, measures and standards, and remove non-tariff barriers (NTBs) within and across regional trade blocs (RECs), and domesticate and implement regional and continental trade agreements at national level."



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SAA 1c: Increased resilience of livelihoods and production systems to climate variability and change and other shocks, specifically by promoting increased actions to address the pervasive aflatoxin problem, which is aggravated by climate change, especially as a result of recurrent droughts and increased temperatures.

SAA 2a: Build and strengthen capacity for evidence based planning, review and dialogue, through several PACA actions, including the food safety database, the Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAIMS).

How is this contribution going to be made?

Even with the best intentions and political will, non-tariff barriers, particularly technical barriers related to food safety/SPS, if not addressed proactively, will be impediments to free trade areas and to increased intra-African trade. If smallholder farmers cannot connect to expanded market opportunities, including exports, they will never be able to escape poverty. No amount of negotiations and harmonization will overcome such obstacles. Moreover, food contaminated by aflatoxins is unsafe food, and unsafe food is not food at all. Consumption damages human health, the impact of which will be felt throughout a person's life, and damages African economies due to lower levels of human capital. Due to climate change, crops will be

more stressed and prone to aflatoxin contamination. Addressing aflatoxins is thus critical to mitigating climate change impacts on human health and agricultural markets and trade.

The bottom line is if we can achieve the same level of standards for produce marketed and consumed locally as that of the international market, we can mitigate the problem of aflatoxins. Specifically PACA will contribute to the following:

- **Narrow the gap in SPS capacity:** Employ aflatoxin control as an entry point to build food control systems and narrow down the disparity in SPS capacity of AU Member States.
- **Support “universal” food safety standards:** Support countries in developing models for dealing with food safety issues in the informal and formal markets. Countries can trade freely among each other when they give adequate emphasis and invest in universal food safety standards. Currently, many countries enforce safety and quality standards in products destined for the international market.
- **Promote alignment and collaboration across countries:** Organize Continental and Inter-Regional convenings to share new developments and best practices, and resolve specific challenges/bottlenecks across countries and regions.

- **Mainstreaming aflatoxin control and food safety into country strategies:** Engage RECs and other stakeholders to mainstream aflatoxin into continental frameworks (e.g., CAADP) to ensure aflatoxin issues are integrated into national priorities and that there is consistency and congruency across frameworks, regions and countries.
- **Knowledge Management:** Serve as a continental knowledge hub by identifying, documenting, and disseminating best practices and effective technologies. The Africa Aflatoxin Information Management system (AfricaAIMS) targets harmonized data collection and making credible information available.
- **Develop and support implementation of country government-led, and stakeholder aligned aflatoxin country plans:** The 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 and mainstream them into national strategies
 - **Stage Three:** Build government capacity and provide catalytic support to implement the plan
 - **Stage Four:** Monitor progress and advocate

What is the envisaged scale of the contribution and timeline?

Short-term milestones: 2015

- Evidence generated
- Comprehensive aflatoxin action plans developed
- Plans mainstreamed into NAFSIPs/RAIPs
- Stakeholders aligned

Medium-term milestones: 2016-2020

- Enhanced capacity to implement action plans in Gambia, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda
- Monitoring and evaluation systems to measure impact
- Scaling to additional 5 countries
- Food control systems including laboratory capacity for aflatoxin testing supported in 11 African countries

Long-term milestones: 2021-2025

- Aflatoxin contamination abated in key value chains promoting food security and nutrition, free trade among countries eventually boosting intra-African trade and poverty eradication