

PACA Pilot Country Selection Report

Introduction

Aflatoxins are naturally occurring fungal metabolites produced by strains of *Aspergillus flavus* and *A. parasiticus*, which are acutely and chronically toxic, immunosuppressive, mutagenic and carcinogenic compounds that attack diverse foods and feeds such as maize and peanuts.

Aflatoxins have proven to be a major barrier in linking African farmers to markets as they prevent commodities from meeting international, regional and local regulations and standards governing agricultural trade and food safety. Cognisant to these problems, in March 2011 at the 7th CAADP Partnership Platform, the African Union Commission was urged to oversee the establishment of a Continental SPS Working Group to mainstream sanitary/phytosanitary matters in the CAADP framework and establish an Africa-led Partnership for Aflatoxin Control. It was through this call that the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) was established.

PACA is an innovative consortium aimed at coordinating and supporting aflatoxin mitigation and management across the health, agriculture and trade sectors in Africa. PACA's overall aim is to support agricultural development, safeguard consumer health and facilitate trade by catalyzing, coordinating and increasing effective aflatoxin control along agricultural value chains in Africa.

Through a consultative strategy development workshop, PACA developed its 10 year Strategy (2013-2022) which identified five thematic areas to address aflatoxins in a holistic and systemic manner.

1. *Research and technology for prevention and control of aflatoxins*

One of PACA's principles is to advocate for evidence based policies and interventions. Knowledge generated through research would provide the necessary evidence to inform policy. Currently, a lot of technologies exist which aim at addressing aflatoxins world-wide, these include, *inter-alia* improved agronomic practices; developing stress, insect and fungus resistant crop varieties; and use of native beneficials, i.e. biological control through non-toxin producing strains of *A. flavus*. Although these technologies exist, interventions to scale up proven technologies are fragmented and uncoordinated; PACA will coordinate efforts to scale up proven technologies by sensitizing policy makers on the advantages of supporting appropriate pre- and post-harvest management interventions for managing aflatoxin risks in countries. PACA also recognizes the need for technology development through catalytic research to fill in current and impending gaps.

2. *Policies, legislation and standards for the management of aflatoxins*

Policies, legislations and standards of aflatoxins in most African countries are often lacking and vague. Currently, there are only 15 African countries that have set limits for aflatoxins, and in countries where the policies exist, they are rarely implemented and enforced. PACA is housed at the Africa Union Commission (AUC) and is considered a flagship program under the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture. Given the political clout and convening power of AUC, PACA is uniquely positioned to

advocate for policy formulation, reform and implementation. PACA will work with countries through Regional Economic Communities to formulate policies and mainstream aflatoxin issues into existing and relevant health and agricultural frameworks.

3. *Growing commerce and trade and protecting human health from aflatoxins*

Aflatoxin undermines efforts to streamline SPS issues continent-wide, it is believed that 25% global food supply is contaminated with aflatoxin. PACA aims to address aflatoxin in trade by developing and promoting industry-wide approaches to facilitate growth in the trade of commodities and products with safe levels of aflatoxins. Therefore, PACA will lead most of its trade interventions by creating awareness of the dangers of aflatoxins and solutions available to producers and consumers. Specifically, PACA will develop policy briefs to sensitize policy makers; work with RECs and Member States to survey the policy landscape, identify gaps, mainstream aflatoxin control in CAADP National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans (NAFSIPs), and build capacity for surveillance and risk assessment; and establish online communities of practice to share successful strategies for mitigating aflatoxins. By so doing, PACA will create incentives that encourage positive behaviors to motivate value chain actors to take the necessary actions to minimize aflatoxin contamination.

4. *Enhancing capacity for effective aflatoxin prevention and control*

PACA understands that for aflatoxin issues to be sustainably integrated into country policies and programs, there is need to build capacity among actors along the value chain. In addition to human capacity building, there is also need to build institutional capacity.

a) *Human Capacity:*

PACA will provide a platform to improve capacity among:

- Agro-dealers and extension workers: to give them knowledge on effective methods of dealing with aflatoxin contamination in the fields and in raw food products.
- Health professionals: to enable them to carry out rapid diagnosis of aflatoxin related diseases
- Policy makers: to enrich their risk based approaches to the development of policy and regulations.
- Development partners: to sensitize them on the appropriate investment decisions towards addressing aflatoxins in Africa

b) *Institutional Capacity:*

Through the policy reviews at country level, PACA will encourage countries to invest in strengthening the capacity of institutions and relevant infrastructure to enable practitioners to diagnose, test and address aflatoxins in country.

5. *Public Awareness, Advocacy and Communication*

By increasing awareness of various stakeholders on the extent of the aflatoxin issues and available solutions, PACA and its strategic partners will contribute to:

- Decreasing contaminated produce along value chains,
- Reducing consumption of contaminated foods
- Creating an enabling policy and institutional environment, and ensure that aflatoxin receives the attention and investment this problem deserves.

To address the above stated thematic areas, PACA, through its Mid-Term Strategic Plan (2014-2017), has identified various actions to be supported by RECs and Countries PACA will implement these actions in phases, starting with 5 pilot countries in 2014 and gradually increasing the number of countries each year (as funding allows). Specifically, PACA will support the 5 pilot countries in collecting data on aflatoxin prevalence, reviewing opportunities to incorporate aflatoxin control in their NAFSIP, and conduct country-led aflatoxin situation analysis, as needed. Below is a suggested process to assist PACA and RECs in selecting the initial set of pilot countries for consideration by PACA.

Selection Process and Criteria

The Aflatoxin challenge has constituted a significant concern to agriculture, trade and health, therefore undermining the social and economic integration on the continent. Because aflatoxins are a trans-boundary issue, they need to be addressed in a collective and coordinated manner. Many countries and organizations are already taking action; an indicative list of projects is available on the PACA website.¹

In respecting the existing coordination structures, in particular Regional Economic Communities (RECs), PACA proposes a process for selecting pilot countries that is rooted in existing coordination processes at the REC level. PACA presented options and draft criteria for selection of pilot countries at a side event during the 10th CAADP Partnership Platform Meeting in Durban. The meeting participants, including RECs, recommended that the PACA Secretariat improve the criteria based on comments given during the side event, propose a tentative list of pilot countries based on the criteria, and circulate the list to RECs for review.

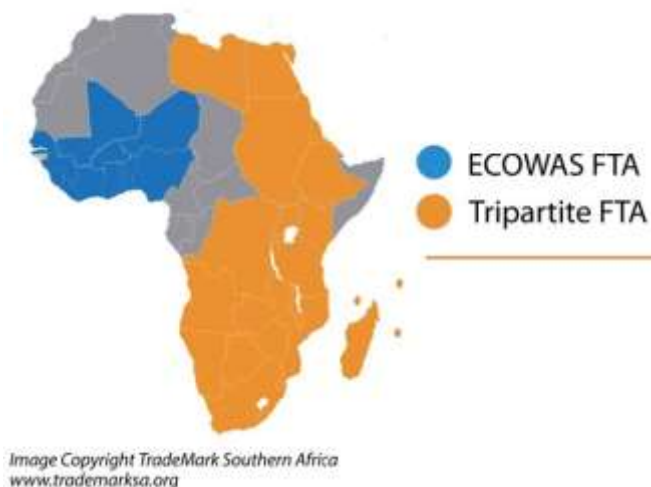
PACA Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria for Regional Economic Communities

1. In 2014 and 2015, PACA will select pilot countries from the COMESA, EAC, SADC (Tripartite Region), and ECOWAS regions. PACA will expand to other regions and countries over time. The initial pilot regions are proposed based on the following criteria:
 - a. Regions advanced in their free trade area agreements.
 - b. Regions with Free Trade Agreements (FTA) covering a large number of countries affected by aflatoxin (most countries in ECOWAS and the Tripartite Region are facing aflatoxin-related challenges. ECOWAS comprises 15 Member States and the Tripartite Region comprises 26 Member States).
 - c. Regions that have engaged PACA in the development of a regional action plan on aflatoxin.
 - i. ECOWAS convened a regional aflatoxin workshop on 18-20 November 2013; an action plan for the region will be finalized by April 2014.

¹http://www.aflatoxinpartnership.org/en/Activities_in_Africa.aspx

- ii. COMESA in the Tripartite region convened a workshop on 11-13 March 2014, an action plan for the region will be finalized by May 2014.
- d. Regions advanced in their CAADP process.



Selection Criteria for Countries

PACA worked closely with RECs to select five pilot countries for 2014 and five for 2015, using set criteria as described below.

The following criteria were used to select pilot countries:

No.	Criteria
1	Country that have demonstrated the will to address the aflatoxin challenge through government and other important stakeholders (e.g., private sector, researchers, farmers, policy makers- from the concerned ministries).
2	Countries that have demonstrated readiness for action on aflatoxin through the creation of committees or plans on aflatoxin, mycotoxin
3	Countries that have experienced aflatoxin epidemics or problems - impacts of aflatoxin on health of the population (chronic exposure)
4	Countries that are more likely to deliver on expected aflatoxin control actions demonstrated having functional food safety focal point or authority
5	Countries with less than three on-going donor funded large-scale interventions to mitigate aflatoxins (to deliberately target countries receiving less support)
6	Countries that are in the post-compact phase of CAADP (to broaden the NAFSIP to be developed incorporating safety/aflatoxins in the stock taking and NAFSIP)
7	Countries that have CAADP NAFSIPs in place (requisite for NAFSIP technical review)
8	Country with significant trade in aflatoxin sensitive foods/products (either imports or exports)
9	countries that have experienced a high incidence of aflatoxin (aflatoxicosis/acute toxicity)

10	Countries that are more likely to deliver on expected aflatoxin control actions through structures currently in place: national SPS committees embedded within their legal framework and allocated budget for their function
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Each REC was asked to rank the criteria and based on the REC inputs; a weight to each criterion according to the importance placed through the ranking process was given. Based on the REC input and PACA Secretariat ranking, the following importance, weight and score was given to each criterion:

No.	Criteria	Weight	Importance (%)	Score
1	Country that have demonstrated the will to address the aflatoxin challenge through government and other important stakeholders (e.g., private sector, researchers, farmers, policy makers- from the concerned ministries).	29	83%	19
2	Countries that have demonstrated readiness for action on aflatoxin through the creation of committees or plans on aflatoxin, mycotoxin	19	54%	13
3	Countries that have experienced aflatoxin epidemics or problems - impacts of aflatoxin on health of the population (chronic exposure)	11	31%	7
4	Countries that are more likely to deliver on expected aflatoxin control actions demonstrated having functional food safety focal point or authority	24	69%	16
5	Countries with less than three on-going donor funded large-scale interventions to mitigate aflatoxins (to deliberately target countries receiving less support)	13	37%	9
6	Countries that are in the post-compact phase of CAADP (to broaden the NAFSIP to be developed incorporating safety/aflatoxins in the stock taking and NAFSIP)	10	29%	7
7	Countries that have CAADP NAFSIPs in place (requisite for NAFSIP technical review)	14	40%	9
8	Country with significant trade in aflatoxin sensitive foods/products (either imports or exports)	7	20%	5
9	countries that have experienced a high incidence of aflatoxin (aflatoxicosis/acute toxicity)	5	14%	3
10	Countries that are more likely to deliver on expected aflatoxin control actions through structures currently in place: national SPS committees embedded within their legal framework and allocated budget for their function	18	51%	12

Each country was subsequently scored using available data and the weighting system as indicated above. The following countries scored the highest and have been selected to be the PACA pilot countries for 2014:

Gambia, Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda



PACA Pilot Countries – 2014

No	Member States	Criteria and Country scores										Country Score
		Crit 1	Crit 2	Crit 3	Crit 4	Crit 5	Crit 6	Crit 7	Crit 8	Crit 9	Crit 10	
1	Gambia	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	84
2	Senegal	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	88
3	Malawi	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	77
4	Tanzania	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	88
5	Uganda	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	76

The following countries which scored as the next top 5 countries have been selected as PACA pilot countries for 2015:

Kenya, Nigeria, Togolese, Zambia (one from Mozambique, Rwanda, Sudan and Swaziland).

The table below indicates that Mozambique, Rwanda, Sudan and Swaziland tied in the scores; subsequently RECs in the tripartite region will be requested to select one additional country from those countries that tied to be part of the PACA pilot countries for 2015.

PACA Pilot Countries – 2015

No	Member States	Criteria and Country scores										Country Score
		Crit 1	Crit 2	Crit 3	Crit 4	Crit 5	Crit 6	Crit 7	Crit 8	Crit 9	Crit 10	
1	Togolese	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	79 ✓
3	Nigeria	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	79 ✓
5	Kenya	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	67 ✓
6	Mozambique	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	65 ?
7	Rwanda	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	65 ?
8	Sudan	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	65 ?
9	Swaziland	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	65 ?
10	Zambia	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	73 ✓



2. Next Steps:

The following process and timeline will be used to guide the implementation of activities for PACA 2014 and 2015 Pilot Countries:

Activities	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Notify RECs on selected Pilot Countries (letter from AUC to RECs)							
Notify Selected Pilot Countries through letter from AUC/RECs							
Circulate inception workshop concept note to RECs and Countries							
Request countries to nominate representatives for the workshop							
Send out TORs to countries and RECs for the Country-led situation analysis and NAFSIP review and get input on selection of candidates to carry out the work							
Send out invitation letters and background documents to nominated country officials and to REC representatives							
Convene inception workshop and agree on methodologies and implementation processes of situational analysis, AfricaAims ² , NAFSIP review with RECs and countries and agree on timelines (28-29 May)							
Get inputs from EAC, COMESA and SADC on the additional one country to be included as pilot country for 2015							
Implementation of situational analysis							
Implementation of AfricaAims implementation							
Implementation of NAFSIP review processes							
Start engagement with 2015 pilot countries and get them ready for inception workshop in November							
Report progress of implementation at PACA PPM (7-9 October)							
Officially announce 2015 Pilot countries at PPM (7-9 October)							
Convene inception workshop for 2015 Pilot Countries and agree on methodologies and implementation processes of situational analysis, AfricaAims, NAFSIP review with RECs and countries and agree on timelines of implementation in 2015 (November 2014)							

² Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAIMS)