

Summary of CABI's SPS activities and initiatives: March 2016

In the latest round of regional consultations, CABI's Member Countries have again given high priority to trade and market access, including SPS issues. CABI's contribution in this area is in capacity development and in addressing specific SPS constraints.

Breaking Barriers, Facilitating Trade (STDF/PG/346)

This is a project of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), aiming to reduce the costs of trade through simplifying the application of SPS measures, while maintaining the appropriate level of protection (www.standardsfacility.org/PG-346). Tools and approaches will be developed and piloted on specific commodities (animal and plant) traded between the seven participating countries (Egypt, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe). A methodology is under development for determining the SPS-related costs of a particular trade, which will be used to establish baselines and identify possible avenues for cost reduction.

CocoaSafe: SPS capacity building and knowledge sharing for the cocoa sector in SE Asia (STDF/PG/381)

The goal of this project in Indonesia, Malaysia and PNG was to support production and trade of cocoa that meets SPS standards, by improving SPS awareness and practices among supply chain stakeholders. Training materials have been prepared on food safety, GAP and appropriate use of pesticides, and Master Facilitators trained to train local extension staff, lead farmers, agro-dealers and cocoa processors. The manuals and other information materials are available on a website (www.cocoasafe.org) set up at the beginning of the project. The project has just had its closing meeting for project partners and the ICCO (advisory agency), which reviewed achievements and lessons learnt, and assessed the need for additional work.

Strengthening Phytosanitary Controls in the Floriculture Sector of Uganda (STDF/PG/335)

This project enhanced capacity in the floriculture sector to meet the phytosanitary requirements of the EU market, especially on *Spodoptera* (www.standardsfacility.org/PPG-335). Stakeholder understanding was raised, and procedures established to improve the export certification system, including SOPs and a QMS manual. The Centre of Phytosanitary Excellence in Kenya provided training for inspectors and private sector staff, with attention to changing from end-point inspection to a production chain approach. Dialogue between the NPPO, the Flower Exporters Association and farm owners led to formal partnership arrangements and joint working for the first time. In 2015 there was only one *Spodoptera* interception, down from 34 in 2013 and 18 in 2014.

Australia-Africa Plant Biosecurity Partnership (AAPBP)

The AAPBP (funded by ACIAR) aims to enhance plant biosecurity skills and planning in 10 countries of East and Southern Africa. Fifteen Senior Fellows (from NPPOs) and 30 Associate Fellows (from public and private sector) are taking part in activities including: short-term placements for senior fellows in Australian organisations (November 2015); training workshops in Africa on important plant biosecurity issues (3 more planned for 2016); mentoring to support long-term learning; development of plant biosecurity action plans at national and regional level. Training covers soft skills (such as communication) as well as technical areas prioritised by a regional workshop at the start of the programme.

SPS capacity development in Pakistan

Plant health officials are participating in a multi-year blended-learning course on the "Principles for Developing a Model Agriculture Import/Export System, developed by the USDA, Texas A&M University and CABI. Online modules, in English and Urdu, are complemented by APHIS-led workshops. Modules include the SPS Agreement, IPPC and standard setting, market access, national policy and regulation, surveillance, PRA, pest free areas, pest ID systems, phytosanitary certification, inspections and treatments. CABI is also working with USDA to strengthen pre- and post-harvest management of phytosanitary problems in selected value chains. Biocontrol agents are being released for papaya mealybug in Sindh and for codling moth in Baluchistan. In the rice value chain the focus is on Khapra beetle. Horticulture stakeholders took a "Walk the chain" study tour to fruit and vegetable producing and exporting areas of South Africa.

Biosecurity planning for the Malaysian oil palm industry

This work is strengthening biosecurity measures in Malaysia's oil palm industry by improving emergency preparedness in the event of the introduction of a new pest. The Malaysian Oil Palm Board commissioned CABI to conduct risk analyses, including identifying potential pest introduction pathways. Contingency and emergency response plans are being developed with the different stakeholders including actions to address the identified risks. A draft biosecurity plan has been completed, which the National Committee on Biosecurity for Oil Palm is reviewing prior to adoption.

Support to COMESA's SPS programme

CABI has assisted COMESA with developing a revised SPS strategy for the period 2016-20, coinciding with COMESA's new Medium Term Strategic Plan. The draft strategy includes capacity development, reducing trading costs of SPS measures and managing the major regional SPS risks, such as Panama disease TR4. CABI will also be supporting the implementation of activities in an AfDB-funded tripartite capacity development initiative, which parallels STDF/PG/346.

"Global Warning": an early warning system for alien tree pests

This EU-funded COST networking project (www.ibles.pl/en/web/cost/globalwarning) led by CABI aims to provide the basis for establishing an early warning system for the detection of pests of woody plants prior to their introduction. There are currently partners in 45 countries, developing and implementing protocols and regulations allowing the establishment of sentinel plantings, through which potential pests can be detected in their area of origin. The action is related to another similar activity in which CABI is a partner, focused on botanic gardens and arboreta (www.plantsentinel.org).

Improved management strategies for cocoa in Papua New Guinea

Funded by ACIAR and led by Sydney University, this project addresses the cocoa pod borer (CPB), a major pest in the region and of quarantine concern to Australia where it was reported in Australia in 2011 but subsequently eradicated. A manual on cocoa GAP is in development, and a baseline survey is being conducted. The activities are drawing from the materials developed in CocoaSafe (STDF/PG/381).

Brunei SPS capacity building

This project has just concluded, and was funded by the Government of Brunei Darussalam. Main project activities included capacity building in plant and animal health, strengthening of risk-based approaches to phytosanitary and sanitary management, and data management. One key outcome of the project has been the consolidation of national resources through the reorganization of the various quarantine branches into a Biosecurity Division.

Strengthening the horticulture sector in Ghana to enhance exports to the EU

Supported by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency, this initiative seeks to reverse the decline in vegetable exports from Ghana to Europe, resulting from frequent interceptions of quarantine pests. CABI is facilitating the partnership between the NPPO (PPRSD), vegetable producers and exporters (GAVEX), and importers. An EC FVO audit in April 2015 identified a number of areas where improvements are needed, and the project will assist in addressing the recommended actions. Export inspection and certification procedures will be strengthened through training, development and implementation of standard operating procedures, and production-level systems will be established to reduce the risk of infested produce leaving farms.

IPPC-CABI Technical Working Group

To further strengthen cooperation between IPPC and CABI, a joint letter of intent has been drafted, with specific goals and a provisional work programme for 2016-17. The organisations plan to hold further joint IPPC/Plantwise workshops (Caribbean and Asia), and the IPPC Secretariat took part in the Plantwise 2016 planning meeting. CABI will support IPPC in promoting the proposed International Year of Plant Health amongst its Member Countries, and IPPC will attend CABI's Review Conference, the top level decision making body. Several joint studies and publications are also planned.