

**Beneficiary**

Public and private sector in Malawi

**Led by**

Ministry of Industry and Trade, in collaboration with ICRISAT and Luz Diaz Rios

**Time-frame**

February – August 2013

**STDF funding**

US\$46,265

## COORDINATING ACTION ON AFLATOXIN CONTROL IN MALAWI

### The safe trade gap

Aflatoxins, naturally occurring toxins produced by fungi, contaminate many dietary staples in Africa, including groundnuts, maize, cassava, sorghum and rice. In Malawi, one of the world's poorest countries, aflatoxin contamination has been a major problem for agriculture, trade and health. Small-holder farmers in Malawi faced difficulties in controlling aflatoxins in production, and since the 1980s with strict regulations in export markets, trade opportunities closed, impacting the economy. Aflatoxins are also a major food safety challenge, affecting children's growth and liver cancer rates. Government agencies, private sector, donors and development partners, voiced a need for action.

### Partnership approach

The Malawi Programme for Aflatoxin Control (MAPAC) effectively brought together stakeholders working in agriculture, health and trade, from government agencies to the private sector and farmers' organizations, research, academia, civil society and consumer organizations. It developed a strategic, coordinated programme for aflatoxin control that built on experiences and lessons, and identified outstanding gaps and priorities. This collaborative approach built on work to prioritize SPS investment options using STDF's P-IMA framework, as well as other assessments and studies. The process led to a widely shared vision for aflatoxin control, with agreement on priority actions, key roles and responsibilities, a coordination mechanism, available financing and investment gaps.

### Results

- MAPAC led to a coordinated, strategic response to aflatoxin control across agriculture, public health and trade, helping to raise awareness, plug gaps and leverage resources.
- MAPAC helped to set up the institutional framework for coordinated action on aflatoxin control, creating and funding a MAPAC Steering Committee and Aflatoxin Technical Working Group, and a national-level MAPAC coordinator role in the Ministry of Industry and Trade.
- With MAPAC in place, the African Union Commission through the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) selected Malawi as a pilot country for aflatoxin mitigation measures.
- PACA and development partners, including WBG, allocated resources to roll out MAPAC activities. The government is working to secure resources for outstanding needs.
- PACA has highlighted the value of MAPAC's multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral process to respond to the aflatoxin challenge, promoting the approach to other countries in the region.

### Sustaining impact

- Since 2014, PACA has supported MAPAC, including with an analysis on the economic impact of aflatoxins in Malawi, and it continues to be a valuable planning and financing framework.
- MAPAC was the catalyst to develop and roll out a new aflatoxin communications strategy in 2016 and use new technology to test for aflatoxins without the need for technical skills. MAPAC has provided inputs into other efforts for an improved food safety policy for Malawi.
- Experiences and lessons from MAPAC have been shared at global events, from conferences to webinars by the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development, and WBG.
- In 2017, PACA worked to secure support for a revised MAPAC resource mobilization strategy.

*"MAPAC provided a coherent national plan to drive systemic change in aflatoxin control, going beyond episodic, fragmented and scattered efforts to date. If fully funded, the roll-out of this plan will lead to meaningful and sustained health and economic impacts on the ground".*

Wezi Chunga-Sambo, PACA

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