



OVERVIEW OF ECOWAS IMPLEMENTED SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY ACTIVITIES

COMMUNICATION FROM ECOWAS-USAID SENIOR SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY (SPS) STANDARDS ADVISOR

The following communication, received on 14 July 2017, is being circulated at the request of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. The USAID/West Africa Regional Mission works to support the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to advance their vision to create an economic union and common market. In line with this objective ECOWAS is implementing many agreements designed to support the free movement of goods and people throughout the region. In standards, a USAID/West Africa Cost Reimbursement Implementation Letter no 2 was signed between CILSS and USAID/West Africa. It is through this agreement focus will be on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards.

1.2. With reference to the approved 2017 work plan and in view of improving and strengthening SPS activities in the ECOWAS region the following activities were implemented:

1.1 Establishment of institutional SPS working group

1.3. In the framework of the ECOWAS/USAID cooperation programme on SPS, the Industry and Private Sector Promotion Department of the ECOWAS Commission, organized a technical meeting of the working group on sanitary and phytosanitary on 3 May 2017 in Dakar, Republic of Senegal. The purpose of this meeting was to establish the ECOWAS working group on SPS matters and to analyze draft terms of reference for the working group on SPS matters and its adoption.

1.4. So, the working group on sanitary and phytosanitary was established and comprise of:

- ECOWAS Commission:
 - o Department of Industry and private sector Promotion;
 - o Department of Trade;
 - o Department of Agriculture and Rural Development;
- West Africa Health Organization (WAHO);
- UEMOA: Food safety, agriculture, mines and environment;
- USAID West Africa Regional Mission;
- Observers:
 - o AU-InterBureau on Animal Resources;
 - o AU-InterAfrican Phytosanitary Council.

1.5. The term of reference of the working group was reviewed, amended and validated by all participants. This working group will provide scientific comment and guidance on SPS matters to member States of the region and lead to a secretariat to better manage and provide leadership on the SPS matter.

1.2 Auditing and revitalizing national SPS committees and regional consultation in prioritizing SPS matters

1.6. In view of strengthening national food safety and quality system, in-country SPS committees were created through the support of previous projects including the PanAfrican Standards Setting project led by AU-IBAR with the support of European Union. It was observed that these national SPS committees were not active/nonfunctional especially in the ECOWAS member States. This situation was the results of various conditions and challenges encountered by member States. These challenges are not well known. Further, solutions to address them are not yet proposed.

1.7. From 5-7 July 2017, a regional SPS and stakeholders meeting was convened to review status of country SPS committees, update on progress made since creation, challenges encountered, perspectives for moving forward and creation of regional SPS committee's network for advancing SPS matters in the region with the view of boosting intra-regional and international trade. In term, based on the recommendations, a regional action plan is being developed.

2 PLANT HEALTH AND PLANT PROTECTION

2.1. The agriculture sector in West Africa continues to play a key role in the economic development of the ECOWAS member states. Agriculture contributes 30% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 55% of employment for the rural population. The region has for a long time experienced mixed fortunes as far as food production and productivity are concerned. The region continues to experience an increase in population, which stands currently at 330 million, and should translate into 500 million by 2025. This demographic scenario requires a concerted effort to increase production through intensification to feed the growing population with 60% predicted to be living in the urban period by 2025. Grain production rose from 16 million metric tons in 1980 to 56 million metric tons in 2013. Root and tuber production has also risen in the tropical wet zones and today it stands at 150 million metric tons. Despite these laudable achievements, the region continues to experience food deficits because of number of factors such as low production, climate change, pest and disease prevalence, declining soil fertility, unfavorable trade and economic environment and limited access to technology amongst farmers in the region. A critical factor that limits production is the prevalence of transboundary plant pests and diseases, which affect food and cash crops, causing significant losses to farmers and threatening food security. It is in this light the ECOWAS Agriculture Policy 2025 perspective places a lot of emphasis on the need to develop a holistic approach to plant pest and disease prevention/mitigations plan for the region. PREVENTING is better than TREATING DISASTER.

2.2. The objective was to develop a West Africa (ECOWAS) comprehensive plant pest and disease prevention, surveillance and mitigation framework that will contribute to the realization of the food and nutrition objectives of the ECOWAS Agriculture Policy (ECOWPA 2025/RAIP-FSN 2020) under the CAADP framework (Malabo Declaration 2014).

2.3. From 6-7 June 2017, a regional stakeholders meeting was held and:

- A comprehensive action plan on plant pest and disease prevention, surveillance and mitigation developed for the ECOWAS region;
- A catalog/list of best practices in plant disease management/plant protection for dissemination through existing ECOWAS agricultural platforms and projects;
- A coordination mechanism for plant disease activities taking into consideration the comparative advantage of all the various stakeholders;
- Key quick start activities identified and funds mobilized for implementation.

2.4. As a follow up, a task force will be established (from 7-8 August) with the support of USDA-APHIS, bureau of Dakar, Senegal.

3 FOOD SAFETY AND CAPACITY BUILDING

3.1. A recent four country study on cereals sourcing for the agro-industrial sector in West Africa revealed that aflatoxin issues constitute a critical challenge to the regional grain trade. Aflatoxin contamination represents a threat to both human health and the economic growth of this sector. The West Africa Trade Hub and Investment has designed a three-day Training of Trainers workshop on aflatoxins control and management. Key stakeholders were Approche Communale

pour le Marché Agricole (ACMA Project), Benin's cereals farmer's umbrella organization, FUPRO-Benin, West African Grains Network, civil society and youth agri-foods enterprises.

3.2. From 21-23 June 2017 in Porto Novo, Benin a training of trainers session was jointly facilitated by the West Africa Trade Hub and Investment, USAID West Africa Regional Mission and ECOWAS Commission.

3.3. Thirty-three actors were trained on aflatoxin management and control strategies to guarantee the safety of maize, groundnut and other susceptible agricultural commodities. This training is a pilot program, specific to Benin, but will provide a model for expanding and escalating this type of training throughout the region.

4 ATTENDANCE AT REGIONAL, INTERNATIONAL SPS FORA

4.1. The ECOWAS Commission were represented at regional and international meetings including:

- National Codex Contact points meeting: Nairobi, 28-30 June 2017;
- SPS committee meeting of the World Trade Organization, Geneva, 11-14 July 2017;
- Codex Alimentarius Commission sessions, Geneva, 17-22 July 2017.

5 CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

5.1. In concluding and on behalf of the ECOWAS Commission I would like to express my gratitude to USAID, USDA, USDA-APHIS and all partners and donors for their support in advancing SPS matters in the region and beyond. We seek more supports for the implementation of actions plans as mentioned above.
