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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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OUTLOOK ON ECOWAS IMPLEMENTED SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY ACTIVITIES DURING THE PERIOD OF JULY-OCTOBER 2017

COMMUNICATION FROM ECOWAS-USAID SENIOR SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY (SPS)
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The following communication, received on 29 September 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. Through this agreement there will be a focus on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards.

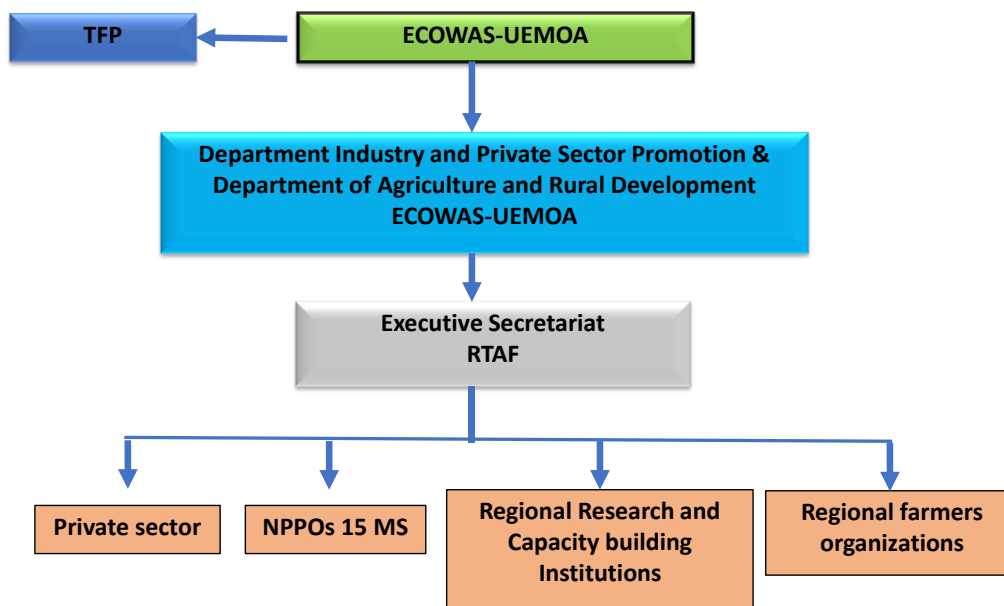
1.2. With reference to the approved 2017 work plan and in view of improving and strengthening SPS activities in the ECOWAS region, the following activities were implemented during the period of July-October 2017.

2 PLANT HEALTH AND PLANT PROTECTION

2.1. As a follow-up to the regional meeting held from 6-7 June 2017 to develop a West Africa (ECOWAS) comprehensive plant pest and disease prevention, surveillance and mitigation Framework that was validated by all stakeholders, and with the support of USDA-APHIS, bureau of Dakar, Senegal, a regional meeting was held from 7-8 August 2017 to establish a Regional Taskforce for Surveillance, Prevention and Control of Crop Pests. The composition, organigramme, objectives and missions of the regional Taskforce (RTAF) are as following:

- Composition
 - o NPPOs of the 15 member States of ECOWAS;
 - o Regional research and capacity building institutions (CABI, CORAF, IITA, CILSS (INSHA, CSP), FARA, AGRA);
 - o Technical and financial partners (CEDEAO-UEMOA, FAO, USAID, USDA, World Bank, EU, WHO, ICIPE);
 - o Regional farmers organization (ROPPA);
 - o Private sector (CropLife); and
 - o Each member State shall establish a national taskforce: NPPO, national extension services, national research institutes, financial and technical partners, farmers organization, private sector.

- Organigramme



TFP = Technical and Financial Partners

- Objective

- o Contribute to the strengthening of the community phytosanitary system against the negative impact on agricultural crops production and trade.

- Missions

- o Develop a synergy between national phytosanitary risk prevention mechanisms measures in the Community;
- o Promote appropriate methods of control, best practices;
- o Facilitate capacity-building activities of member States in the areas of prevention, surveillance and control;
- o Conduct monitoring and evaluation of actions;
- o Ensure communication and information sharing within space.

3 FOOD SAFETY AND CAPACITY BUILDING

3.1 First ECOWAS member States capacity strengthening on Codex related activities

3.1. In view of strengthening national food safety and quality systems, National Codex Contact Points were appointed and in-country SPS committees were created in ECOWAS member States through the support of previous projects, including the PanAfrican Standards Setting project led by African Union-Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) with the support of the European Union. Further, the Codex Trust Fund (CTF) was created in 2003 to enhance Codex members physical participation in Codex meetings and build in-country capacity.

3.2. The phase 1 of the CTF contributed immensely to widening and strengthening participation of developing and transition countries in the work of Codex and helped improve awareness of Codex in most beneficiary countries.

3.3. Based on the successes of CTF1, the CTF secretariat launched CTF2. Globally, the secretariat received 41 applications through the on-line system by deadline of 3 May 2016. 38 out of 41 applications were accepted after meeting pre-screening criteria. Therefore, 38 (24 from Africa region) applications were sent to FAO/WHO Regional Food Safety Advisors for comments; thereafter they were submitted to the Technical Review Group for assessment.

3.4. It was noticed that many ECOWAS member States were not able to apply for the first round of application due to many reasons, including the application process, difficulties in conducting

national consultation and scientific assessment and be able to fill the application form. Most importantly, the low rate of success is mostly due to the lack of real and functional national Codex structures in Africa in general and in ECOWAS member countries in particular.

3.5. After the first round of application it was observed that only two (13.33%) countries from the ECOWAS region namely Senegal and Ghana were successful. Hence, they benefited from the funds.

3.6. At the last Codex Alimentarius Commission meeting held from 17-22 July 2017 in Geneva, a progress report of the first year implementation of the activities was presented by delegates from Senegal and Ghana. Both countries presented success stories that need to be capitalized and information shared between member States and other relevant stakeholders.

3.7. Furthermore, one of the cardinal pillars for effective participation in Codex is to establish strong national Codex structures such as a functional Codex Contact Point (CCP), a National Codex Committee (NCC), a consultation mechanism for engaging stakeholders on Codex issues, etc. Strong national Codex structures are necessary for presenting coordinated and unified regional positions on Codex issues.

3.8. In 2015, a Food Safety Actors Network in ECOWAS countries to develop synergy of actions in the field to better protect the interests of member countries was created. An interim committee was established to coordinate activities as follows: Chairman (Senegal); Vice-chairman (Nigeria); two secretariat: Secretary general (Ghana) and Deputy secretary (Benin).

3.9. However, it was observed that since creation the coordination unit and the network have not been functional. There were no coordination meetings held, no up to date activities conducted, no feedback to members regarding status.

3.10. It is in view of addressing the above gaps that a regional capacity building workshop was held from 11-15 September 2017 in Banjul, The Gambia. The objectives of this workshop are:

- To capitalize success stories of 1st year implementation of CTF2 activities in Ghana and Senegal;
- To share information and lessons learnt among member States;
- To build capacity of member States in order to submit a bankable CTF2 application;
- To review activities of the national codex committees as well as the food safety actors network;
- To identify challenges faced by the food safety actors network;
- To define strategy to alleviate the identified challenges; and
- To define mechanism for financing and sustainability of the network.

3.11. At the end of this workshop, the following were achieved:

- Success stories of first year implementation of Codex Trust Fund 2 (CTF2) activities in Ghana and Senegal documented;
- Information and lessons learnt shared among member States;
- Capacity of member States built to have a bankable CTF2 application submitted before the deadline of 15 October 2017;
- Member States committed to submit online application before the set deadline;
- Applications for the National Codex activities as well as for the food safety actors network reviewed;
- Food safety actors network revitalized and coordination bureau confirmed with clear activities to be implemented in the short term as following:
 - o the transmission of official correspondence to the ECOWAS Commission for the recognition of the network;
 - o the necessary support to countries for the submission of applications to the CTF2;
 - o the development of the statute texts of the network;
 - o the proposal of a road map presenting the activities of the bureau.

3.2 Joint trade Africa border inspection workshop

3.12. Further, in the framework of Trade Africa initiative, USDA-FAS is providing technical expertise to the government of Côte d'Ivoire to support building capacity to implement the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and to strengthen Côte d'Ivoire's SPS regime. Supported activities include the "Phytosanitary Border Control Protocols Project (PBCP)". Through its PASA with USAID, USDA-FAS also developed a 2017 West Africa Work Plan to help West Africa countries develop and implement harmonized phytosanitary border procedures, including risk-based inspection protocols, pest identification, border operations, etc. It is in line with the objectives of this framework that a joint FAS/APHIS regional training workshop on "Practical tools and procedures for Phytosanitary Inspection and Sampling for Pest detection and Introduction to basic tools for Pest Identification" was held from 28-31 August 2017 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

3.13. The main objective was to strengthen the capacity of inspectors and phytosanitary departments with focus on border inspection. Specifically, the training workshop aimed to build capacities on practical tools for plants and plant products inspection, sampling procedures and pest identification, to help promote plant quarantine operations and safe trade of plants and plant products in West Africa and beyond.

3.14. Fourty NPPOs were trained and capacitated to conduct proper plants and plant products inspection at borders. It shall be noted that key recommendations were made including:

- To member States: Harmonize regulatory texts; strengthen and build human capacity, material, logistics, infrastructures, and financial resources; support specialization of plant protection personnel;
- To ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions: Support member States in harmonizing regulatory texts particularly the list of quarantine and non-quarantine pests; support member States in capacity-building initiatives for inspectors and ensure refresher training; organize frequent experience and success stories sharing sessions between inspectors; in collaboration and with the support of technical and financial partners train and equip plant health inspectors on inspection and sampling procedures; updating and making available to the inspectors the lists of regulated and quarantine pests; proposing a simple hygro-metric of ISPM 31 table in relation to the determination of the sample size; equip border inspection posts with the adequate phytosanitary inspection equipment; develop formal frameworks between government and universities for pest identification.

4 ANIMAL HEALTH AND SANITARY STANDARDS

4.1. The extensive transhumant animal production systems in the ECOWAS region pose major challenges to efforts in the prevention and control of transboundary animal diseases (TADs). The European Union funded veterinary governance (VETGOV) project that was implemented by the African Union-Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and ECOWAS supported the review of the ECOWAS regulation on disease prevention and control. Animal health management has been organized with the establishment of regional epidemiological surveillance (RESEPI) network, and veterinary laboratory (RESOLAB) network to boost disease prevention and control. The annual animal health network workshop aims at reviewing animal disease control strategies and peer review among ECOWAS member States. ECOWAS funded the assessment of its two regional veterinary laboratories to enable supporting needed improvement for effective animal disease diagnosis.

4.2. The annual workshop of the Regional Veterinary Committee (RVC) established as provided under the ECOWAS harmonized SPS regulations, aimed at reviewing progress of member States on the implementation of the regulations, peer review, and proffer solutions to challenges faced on the front. The implementation of the harmonized regulations of veterinary drugs has been a challenge. The institutional arrangements differ in the English, French, and Portuguese speaking member States. ECOWAS funded a study to understand the differences and make the following recommendations for alignment of the implementation agencies: (i) to strengthen institutional arrangements that will enable the seamless implementation of the harmonized SPS regulations in non-francophone ECOWAS member States; (ii) to encourage a review of outdated laws in the member States to align with the ECOWAS harmonized regulations with regards to authorized

enforcement agencies; (iii) to provide continuing training on sanitary measures to producers; (iv) to develop policy briefs and sensitize decision makers on the need to support sanitary standards for trade; (v) to advocate for needed political support in member States to ensure implementation of regulations. The study has been concluded and submitted to ECOWAS for further action including funding mechanism for implementation.

5 ATTENDANCE AT REGIONAL, INTERNATIONAL SPS FORA

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

- SPS Committee meeting of the World Trade Organization, Geneva, 11-14 July 2017;
- 40th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission meeting held from 17-22 July in Geneva;
- Participation to the workshop on transparency organized by the WTO-SPS Committee from 30-31 October 2017 in Geneva as well as to the WTO-SPS Committee meeting from 1-3 November 2017;
- Participation to the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV) meeting to be held from 2-6 October 2017 in Kampala, Uganda; and
- Participation to the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) meeting to be held from 13-17 November 2017 in Chicago, United States of America.

6 CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

6.1. The ECOWAS Commission take this opportunity to thank USAID, USDA, USDA-APHIS and all partners and donors for their support in advancing SPS issues in the region and beyond, and call for more collaboration and support for the implementation of actions to better address SPS matters in the region.
