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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 MARCH – JUNE 2019

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

The following communication, received on 24 June 2019, 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 signed between CILSS and USAID/West Africa, was extended. It is through this agreement that focus will be on the continuity of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards.

1.2. With reference to the approved 2018-2019 work plan and in view of improving and strengthening SPS activities in the ECOWAS region, the following activities were implemented during the period of March – June 2019.

2 PLANT HEALTH AND PLANT PROTECTION

2.1. The recent introduction of the fall armyworm (FAW) as well as the discovery of the new alien invasive pest identified in West Africa and its growing threat to agriculture and food security have caused much concern in about 44 countries in the sub-Saharan region, including 15 West African countries. The FAW is a crop-destroying worm and can cause high damage to maize, rice, sorghum, vegetables. These attributes have made the control of FAW a challenging task. There have been efforts to sensitize, build capacity for pest identification, knowledge sharing, etc. Overall, development of long-term management options has mobilized international experts and the national capacities of affected countries and raised general attention to caterpillar attacks on various crops. In the sub-region of West Africa, a taskforce of National Plant Protection Officers and partners of West Africa sub-region was established to ensure joint management of the pest and others.

2.1 Strengthening the monitoring, prevalence and impact of Fall Armyworm (FAW) at the country level in West Africa: Experiences, Options and Solutions

2.2. FAO has also put in place various monitoring, risk measurement, impact and dashboard decision support tools to monitor and warn about the FAW situation, and to map it by linking it to agricultural practices, ecology and natural enemies. In line with the monitoring, joint missions (FAO-ECOWAS-CILSS) were organized and highlighted key findings and challenges that were presented to RPCA in Banjul in December 2018.

2.3. To overcome these challenges, a four-day workshop was jointly planned and organized in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 15 April to 18 April 2019, at the Azalai Hotel, to build capacity on the measurement of prevalence, risk, impact on food security and livelihoods, and the development of

decision support dashboards. This workshop aims to promote the sharing of information and experiences between the countries concerned and to work on the drafting of a country action plan for 17 countries (Guinea Bissau, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Chad, Togo) from West Africa and Sahel with more than 40 participants.

2.4. Following the training, countries have developed draft national action plans for the implementation of key activities to control FAW and sustain actions at national level. The development of regional holistic programme for "Plant pest control program in West Africa with emphasis on fight against Fall Armyworm" was also suggested.

2.5. The following key recommendations were made:

- To Country and Region
 - Draft country action plan finalized with consultation and contribution of all national stakeholders concerned;
 - Effective implementation of FAW tracking tools: FMEWS, FAW risk, FAW impact and Dashboard;
 - Dashboards in countries and at regional level (once per season and or twice if possible) developed;
 - National task forces should be formalized and made operational in all ECOWAS and Sahel countries;
 - Term of reference to guide the establishment of National Task Forces developed.
- To FAO HQ (TCE) and Region
 - Support to countries for the implementation of action plans (Fonds HQ and AfDB) provided. It is important to note that in the short time (May - December 2019), support is being provided by FAO to Benin and Burkina Faso for USD\$ 80,000 and USD\$ 60,000, respectively;
 - The regional holistic programme for "Plant pest control program in West Africa with emphasis on fight against Fall Armyworm" developed and submitted to African Development Bank (AfDB) (USD\$ 50,000,000).

2.2 Training workshop on development and monitoring of phytosanitary inspection and pest identification guides

2.6. The training was attended by 33 participants from: ECOWAS member States (14 countries present): Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Ghana (not present).

2.7. The training aims: (i) to build the technical capacities of phytosanitary border inspectors to develop and monitor phytosanitary inspection and pest identification guides; (ii) to establish a technical working group, as a forum for exchanges between countries, to develop harmonized template guides for phytosanitary inspection and pest identification to be presented at the next annual regional Taskforce and partners meeting.

2.8. The workshop was a training one which combined theoretical and practical field work on pest identification in the laboratory at the University of Nangui Abrogué, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Further, a draft document of harmonized guidelines for import/export inspection was developed. A working group was established to continue working on the draft harmonized guidelines for import/export inspection. This draft will be finalized by November 2019. Once finalized, the harmonized guidelines will be disseminated for implementation at country level.

2.9. The following key recommendations were made:

- To ECOWAS Commission
 - the drafting and finalization of the harmonized guidelines for import/export inspection in the ECOWAS sub-region supported and coordinated;
 - leadership and coordination for strengthening regional border inspection provided;
 - member States supported to finalize their regulated pest list and ensure publication of the lists on IPPC website;

- to continue to work with financial and technical partners to mobilize funds for sustaining actions on plant health in the ECOWAS sub-region;
- to advocate with high level policy makers in the ECOWAS member states to prioritize sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues;
- to engage high level policy makers on the negative impact of SPS issues on agricultural production and productivity, safety issues and impact of national/regional economy and the need to invest in SPS issues and capacity building towards compliance with international standards.

3 FOOD SAFETY AND CAPACITY BUILDING

3.1 Codex trust funds countries achievements

3.1. In 2017, it was noticed that many ECOWAS member states were not able to apply for the first round (2015) 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 and comply with the general criteria as highlighted above. 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.

3.2. In view of addressing that gap, a capacity building training workshop was organized in Banjul, The Gambia, in September 2017 with the support of USAID and technical training provided to national Codex contact points and national WTO SPS focal point of the wider community of the 15 ECOWAS member States. There have been also bilateral refresher trainings and advice provided through emails exchange and telephone calls to Codex contact point in the various member States before final submission to the CTF3 (round 3, 2018).

3.3. Despite the challenges at country level for the application process as described above, Ghana and Senegal were successful for their application during the CTF round 1 (2015). Success stories and best practices from the two countries formed the basis of the technical training.

3.4. The following table 1 highlights the current status of the impacts of the capacity building training provided and the total amount mobilized for the region was USD\$ 1,629,796. Overall, following the technical training ten countries were successful with their applications benefiting support from the Codex Trust Funds (CTF) in order to strengthen their national Codex committee, involvement and engagement in Codex work.

3.5. This result is impressive, and efforts should continue to get the other five countries of the region to benefit from the CTF in order to impact the entire community and ascertain the effectiveness of countries involvement and in a sustainable manner in Codex work and SPS activities at large.

Table 1. Impact of the technical training provided in relation to the application for Codex trust fund

No	Country	Title of project	Period of implementation	Cost USD\$ (support of CTF)
1	Ghana	Provision of Support to the implementation of a program to build strong national capacity for effective engagement in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission	2016-2019	100,000
2	Senegal	Improved knowledge and recognition of Codex Alimentarius standards to increase the compliance and competitiveness of food commodities on local, regional and international markets	2017-2019	150,000
3	Burkina Faso	Revitalization of the Burkina Faso National Codex Alimentarius Committee (CNACA)	2018-2020	151,922

No	Country	Title of project	Period of implementation	Cost USD\$ (support of CTF)
4	Cabo Verde	Strengthening the National Codex Program in Cape Verde by the Codex Trust Fund II	2019-2021	181,935
5	Guinea Conakry	Strengthening Codex in Guinea Conakry	2018-2021	211,010
6	Mali	Strengthening national Codex committee in Mali	2019-2021	150,000
7	Benin	Supporting participation in the work of the Joint FAO / WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission	2020-2022	240,829
8	Côte d'Ivoire	Strengthening national Codex committee in Côte d'Ivoire	2020-2022	150,000
9	The Gambia	Strengthening of the national Codex committee and enhancing awareness on Codex work	2019-2022	150,000
10	Nigeria	Strengthening national Codex structure of Nigeria and enhancing participation in Codex work	2019-2022	144,100
TOTAL MOBILIZED FOR THE REGION				1,629,796¹

3.6. The above describe the outcome of the technical support to ECOWAS member States improve participation in the Codex work and particularly contributed to helping each Member State to re-dynamizing their national Codex committee. However, there have been challenges as countries are not at the same level of development. These challenges include:

- Limited number/inexistence of qualified human capital to capture and translate the acquired knowledge into practice;
- Frequent turn-over of government staffs as well as the change of government have made it difficult in some selected member States;
- Limited/availability of fund to organize in-country bilateral physical refresher trainings;
- Weak participation of the member States in Codex work and SPS activities.

3.7. In view of monitoring the effective implementation, impact and sustainability of these initiatives at country level, the following recommendations could be formulated:

- Strengthening advocacy for increased investment in the food safety and sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS);
- Awareness creation among all stakeholders on the importance of Codex work, food safety, SPS and its implication for public health and international, regional and national trade;
- Creation of conducive environment for the implementation of international/regional technical regulations, codes of practices, recommendations related to food safety and SPS;
- Supporting capacity building activities in food safety and SPS within and beyond the region;
- Supporting effective and active participation of representative from member States in the international standards setting processes and implementation (Codex, OIE, IPPC, WTO SPS);
- Supporting effective coordination of activities at regional and national levels;
- Supporting implementation of refresher trainings in order to update targeted stakeholders on the new development and keep the momentum;
- Scaled up the training and capacity building to other Codex regions.

4 GENERAL CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

4.1. The ECOWAS Commission take this opportunity to thank USAID Regional Office, West Africa, USDA, European Union, FAO, African Development Bank (AfDB), World Bank Group, AU-IBAR, SADC, EAC and all partners and donors for their continuing support in advancing SPS issues in the ECOWAS

¹ Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia and Nigeria were the last countries to be successful (2019). The CTF secretariat will be in contact with each of these member States to finalize their plan and budget. Therefore, the total mobilized for the region may be reduced slightly.

region and beyond, and also want to call for more collaboration, support for future implementation of actions to better address SPS matters in the region.
