

Summary of CABI's SPS activities and initiatives: March 2017

CABI has recently produced its Medium Term Strategy in which building SPS capacity to expand trade and secure biosecurity was highlighted as a key priority area for 2017-2019. This builds on recent SPS work carried out in Asia and Africa and reinforces the prioritisation of trade and market access by CABI's Member Countries as discussed in the last round of regional country consultations.

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). A tool has been developed and piloted at the Kenya-Uganda border looking at trade in fish and dairy. Initial results suggest SPS costs are not a major constraint to this trade, for various possible reasons. The tool will be deployed at other borders in Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Egypt and Sudan, looking at other agricultural commodities. A related project under the African Development Bank-funded Tripartite Capacity Development Program (COMESA, SADC, EAC) is using the same approach to look at SPS and TBT costs for trade of other commodities amongst other countries in the region.

Australia-Africa Plant Biosecurity Partnership (AAPBP)

The AAPBP (funded by ACIAR) covered 10 countries of East and Southern Africa. Fifteen Senior Fellows (from NPPOs) and 30 Associate Fellows (from public and private sector) have taken part in a series of capacity development activities including: short-term placements for senior fellows in Australian organisations; training workshops in Africa on important plant biosecurity issues; mentoring to support long-term learning; development of plant biosecurity action plans at national and regional level. Training covered soft skills (such as communication) as well as technical areas prioritised by a regional workshop at the start of the programme. Plans are now being made for COMESA to take up coordination of the network, which falls within the scope of their SPS strategy.

SPS capacity development in Pakistan

Plant health officials continue to participate 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. We are also working with the USDA on a USAID-funded programme to strengthen pre- and post-harvest management of phytosanitary problems in selected value chains. CABI is strengthening the capacity of Pakistan's systems to implement biocontrol programmes for pests that cause huge qualitative and quantitative losses in major horticultural commodities in Balochistan, Gilgit Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh. Biocontrol agents are being released for papaya mealybug, codling moth, fruitfly and mites. Trainers trained during a study trip to South Africa and by a rice value chain/Khapra beetle expert from Kansas State University are now passing on that knowledge to the growers, exporters, provincial extension agents, and other related research and extension organizations in several horticultural crops and rice. Training manuals have been developed on the sustainable management of papaya mealybug, monitoring of Khapra beetle in rice and SPS compliance in fresh produce supply chains.

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. In addition to the oil palm biosecurity plan a similar plan is currently being developed for the coconut industry.

“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 protocols and regulations allowing the establishment of sentinel plantings, through which potential pests can be detected in their area of origin. A student at CABI studies pests in seeds of twelve tree species from three continents, obtained from botanical gardens and commercial suppliers on two of those continents. 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 has been developed and baseline surveys conducted, this will be followed by in-country training of Master Facilitators. The activities for this project are drawn from the materials developed in the CocoaSafe project (STDF/PG/381).

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), Ghana Association of Vegetable 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. Scientific trials are on-going in seven farms to evaluate monitoring methods and different treatments for four target pests (false codling moth, whitefly, thrips and fruitfly). These results will be used to develop pest survey and surveillance systems. Production and post-harvest manuals have been drafted to address phytosanitary issues and will be used in training the various supply chain actors.

CABI collaboration with the IPPC

To further strengthen cooperation between IPPC and CABI, a joint letter of intent was drafted, with specific goals and a defined programme of work. In February CABI's CEO met with the Secretary of IPPC to further discuss opportunities for collaboration. CABI will support IPPC in promoting the proposed International Year of Plant Health amongst its Member Countries, and CABI will present at a side session during the upcoming Commission on Phytosanitary Measures.

SPS capacity building in East Africa

CABI has been commissioned by the USAID-supported East Africa Trade and Investment Hub (EATIH) to provide SPS capacity development services to the countries of the East African Community. This will include training workshops on practical risk analysis, SPS controls and inspection in animal health, plant health and food safety. Reviews will also be conducted on needs and opportunities for institutionalisation of risk-based approaches and rapid response mechanisms.

Strengthening SPS capacity in Laos (STDF/PPG/548)

CABI has been requested by partners in Laos to carry out a consultation for the recently approved STDF PPG: Strengthening the Lao PDR National Sanitary and Phytosanitary Capacity to Support Market Access of Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Produce to the EU and other Potential Markets.

Mitigation and remediation of cadmium in cocoa (STDF/PPG/577)

Led by the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO), CABI will carry out a detailed assessment of research and scientific studies conducted in the Latin America and the Caribbean relating to mitigation and remediation of cadmium contamination in cocoa. This will also include preparation of a full project proposal to further current national programmes and improve knowledge sharing among the research communities in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Trinidad & Tobago.