

Strengthening the Region's Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Systems: Accelerating Regional Trade

Why SPS is Important

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) mandates that trading partners share information regarding pest status, or Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS). This is important for preventing the spread of pests and diseases across borders. SPS protects the public against toxins that may develop in storage and provides clear standards for producers and traders. Consistently regulated and monitored SPS also facilitates the smooth transit of safe goods between countries. Proper SPS systems can stimulate agricultural production, accelerate broader economic growth and decrease poverty.

The Problem

SPS systems in the East Africa region are currently disjointed and uncoordinated. Lengthy border inspections by phytosanitary inspectors often slow access to markets for agricultural products. As a result, SPS is viewed as a non-tariff trade barrier that can reduce intra-regional trade and drive up costs along the value chain. Inadequate SPS systems can also decrease the reliability of food supplies, create fluctuations across seasons and years, and increase the dependence on imports from outside the region.

The East Africa Trade Hub's Approach

The USAID East Africa (EA) Trade Hub is working with the Center of Phytosanitary Excellence (COPE) and the East African Phytosanitary Information Committee (EAPIC) to charter a process for developing regional pest lists using rice as the test case. This initiative should streamline the process for other commodities, shorten the SPS

inspection process at East African Community (EAC) borders and expedite the movement of staples around the region. The EA Trade Hub and its partners are also working to build the capacity of National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) to consistently manage and monitor SPS for staple foods through a regional training program and the development of an online pest management resource that strengthens the regional NPPO network and facilitates knowledge sharing.

The Pest Information Management System (PIMS)

This is to thank you all for the support to Rwanda NPPO! The training was successfully completed and was very interesting for us. The trainers have really upgraded the competences of our NPPO staff.

*Beatrice Uwumukiza
Rwanda Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources*

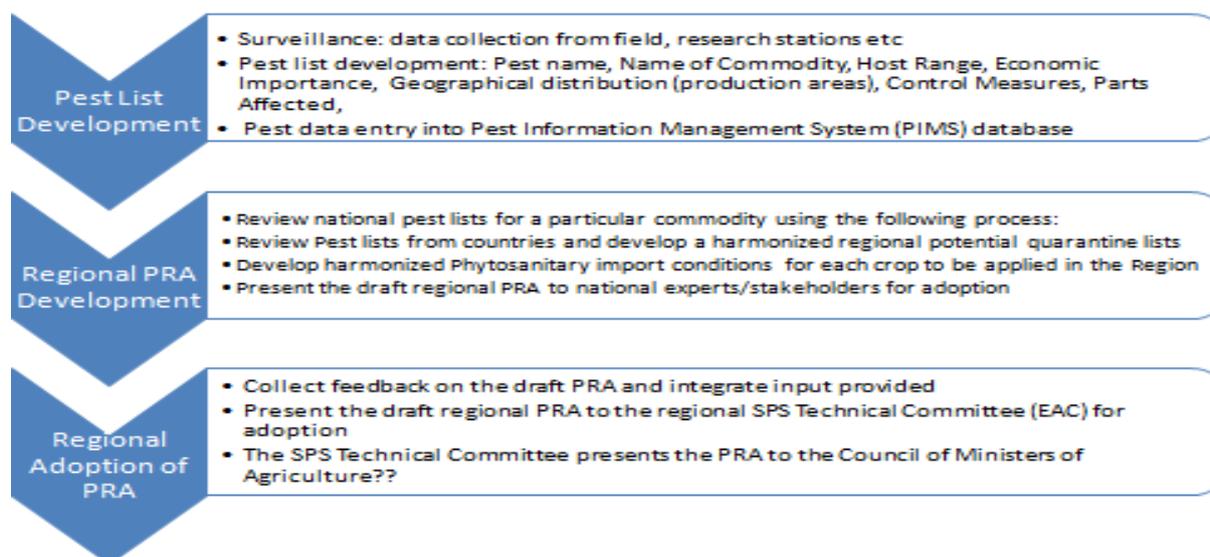
The EA Trade Hub and EAPIC have collaborated to develop PIMS (www.eapic.org), which serves as a regional repository of pest information to streamline the Pest Risk Assessment (PRA) process. PRAs, which evaluate information related to specific pests, are done to protect a country's agriculture sector from potential damage caused by harmful (quarantine) pests. The PRA evaluates the likelihood of entry, establishment, and spread of a specific pest. It also provides an analysis of the potential biological and economic consequences associated with the spread of the pest.

Databases such as PIMS allow trading partners to access and share reliable

information that satisfies international trade obligations. It allows NPPOs to share

resources and develop joint strategies for agricultural pest management.

How to Adopt a Regional PRA in the East African Community



Getting to a Harmonized Regional Pest List for Rice

The EA Trade Hub and EAPIC selected rice for the first regional PRA because it is the least contentious of the region's top-five priority staple crops. Charting a successful process using rice would pave the way for more difficult crops such as maize.

In July 2012 with EA Trade Hub support, representatives from the six EAPIC member countries, Tanzania, Zambia, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya, plus Ethiopia met in Nairobi, Kenya to compare and harmonize their pest lists for maize, beans and rice. They developed the following draft documents:

- Harmonized regional potential quarantine lists for maize, beans and rice
- Regional PRA for rice (processed, unprocessed and seed rice)
- Harmonized phytosanitary import conditions for rice to be applied in the Eastern African Region

National Rice PRA Validation

Following the July 2012 meeting, all EAC countries held one-day national stakeholder rice PRA validation meetings, which brought together relevant stakeholders in the rice industry to review and validate the draft regional rice PRA. These efforts were led by the heads of the phytosanitary units at the NPPOs.

Next Step: Ensuring Adoption across the EAC

KEPHIS has consolidated all comments and feedback from the national validation meetings and will present the finalized rice PRA document to the EAC SPS Council of Experts for adoption at a regional level, currently scheduled for May 2013. The expected outcome is that once this PRA is adopted, the phytosanitary barrier for rice grown within the East Africa region will be removed.

EA Trade Hub's Role and the Need for Sustainability

The EA Trade Hub supported the process of pest list development, surveillance and

the validation workshops. In total, EA Trade Hub supported the training of 178 representatives from NPPOs, government parastatals, university researchers, and the private sector including farmers. Representatives came from eight countries: Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia and Ethiopia.

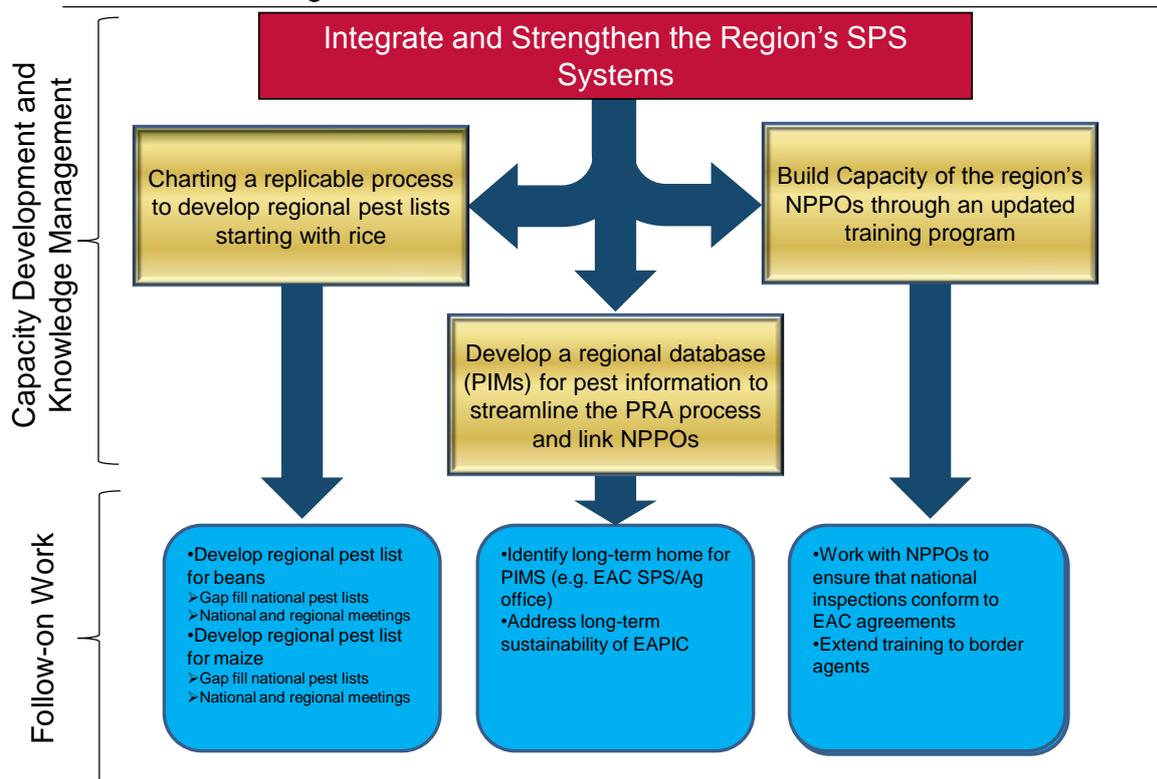
Unfortunately, EA Trade Hub will not be on the ground to oversee adoption of the PRA at the ministerial level, and subsequently the implementation at the national level. The success and sustainability of this program, including the development of PRAs for maize and beans, will depend on the commitment of

implementing partners at the country level.

In the coming months EA Trade Hub plans to facilitate the establishment of National Phytosanitary Working Groups to work hand-in-hand with the NPPOs and create public awareness on the importance of complying with phytosanitary standards. Proposed members include: NPPOs, universities, research institutes, traders associations, agricultural inspectors, farmers etc. This technical brief should serve as a background to that process. To build these consortia and ensure that we include the right organizations, the EA Trade Hub plans to leverage the in-country knowledge and networks of bilateral missions and projects.

EA Trade Hub’s SPS Work – The Way Forward

What we are doing and what still needs to be done



16