
AELGA: USAID's Emergency Transboundary Outbreak Pest and Pesticide Monitoring and Response

Assistance for Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Abatement, formerly known as Africa Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Assistance (AELGA) project was created by the U.S. Agency for International Development to respond to the plague of locusts and grasshoppers that overwhelmed much of Africa, the Middle East and Southwest Asia from 1986-89 threatening crops, pasture and the livelihoods of many communities and to assist countries to establish a mechanism that would enable them to prevent such plagues from occurring in the future. AELGA, in collaboration with other USAID entities, played a critical role in coordinating and launching USG's responses to that plague.



Despite efforts made by host-countries, donors, international and regional organizations to effectively and safely put that plague under control, the 1986-89 campaign was considered costly (US \$300 million plus to which US contributed about US \$60 million) and criticized by some for the enormous spray operations that posed significant threats to the safety and well-being of the citizens and the environment of the affected-countries. The oversupply of pesticides, much of which became obsolete and dangerous stocks over the years, certainly was a cause for concern. Recognizing the potential long-term impacts of these threats and taking into account the recommendations of the Office of Technology Assessment, AELGA shifted its focus on plague prevention, integrating safer, affordable and effective pest management tools, protection of the environment and ensuring safety of the citizens the affected-countries.

Soon after that campaign was concluded, AELGA began intensifying its support for the development and implementation of safer, effective and sustainable alternative tools to prevent and control emergency transboundary outbreak pests (ETOPs), including locusts, grasshoppers, armyworm and rodents and thereby minimize the threat they pose on food security and economic well-being of the affected-communities across Africa and elsewhere. AELGA's supports to strengthen capacities of the host-countries and regional organizations to prevent and control ETOPs, its active participation in policy dialogue with these entities as well as the assistance it has been providing for the cleaning up of obsolete and toxic pesticides since the last plague are widely recognized.

During the 2003-05 desert locust upsurge which affected countries across the Sahel, northern and northwestern Africa, AELGA played a critical role by providing technical directions and guidance to the USG responses. USAID contributed close to US \$20 million to that campaign in bilateral and multilateral assistance. The overall estimated cost for controlling that upsurge, providing relief as well as rehabilitating communities affected by the upsurge was in the upward of US \$400 million.

Over the years, the AELGA has established strong ties with several host-countries, bilateral and regional missions as well as international and regional organizations to implement its strategies and continuously enjoying mutually complementing relationships with its partners. To date, it is the only centrally-funded USAID project dedicated to ETOP operations.