STRENGTHENING PEST AND DISEASE MANAGEMENT IN THE SADC REGION

Locations
Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, The Seychelles, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Dates
01/03/2021 - 30/09/2021

Summary
Transboundary plant pests and diseases threaten food and nutrition security and adversely affect trade and the agricultural sector’s competitiveness. In the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States, the five key priority pests include Maize lethal necrosis disease (MLN), Tomato leaf miner (Tuta (Phthorimaea) absoluta), Oriental Fruit Fly (Bactrocera dorsalis), Fall armyworm (FAW Spodoptera frugiperda), and Banana Fusarium Wilt (Fusarium oxysporum f. sp. Cubense Tropical race 4 (Foc TR4)). In this project, CABI is supporting the FAO-led ‘Support towards operationalization of the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy (STOSAR)’ project to strengthen national and regional capacities to prevent entry, control spread and manage these priority plant pests and diseases. The project will seek to support Member States in reviewing and developing harmonized national strategies for the key pests while providing training on Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) and implementing applicable Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures.
Throughout the SADC region, the agriculture sector is of great economic and social importance, contributing between 4% and 27% of GDP and approximately 13% export earnings in the Member States. 70% of the SADC region’s population depend on agriculture for food, income and employment. Therefore, if underperforming, this sector can hinder food security, economic growth and social stability.

Pests and diseases directly impact the sector and are known to migrate and move across borders, adversely affecting crop production. However, managing them can mitigate the effects.

Five key pests have been identified as problematic in the SADC Member States: MLN, *Tuta absoluta*, Oriental Fruit Fly, FAW and Banana Fusarium Wilt. To-date, MLN has only positively been identified in two SADC Member States, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania. However, because of its transboundary nature, the presence of the disease in countries bordering the SADC Member States is of great concern and immediate steps need to be taken to prevent the entry of the disease and manage its spread.

To mitigate the effects of pests and diseases within the region and individual countries, national and regional capacities need to accurately identify the viruses associated with the diseases, analyzing the risk of introduction and implementing SPS measures to prevent entry and provide a first line of defence.

The project contributes to two components of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) Regional Indicative Programme (RIP): enhancing information on agricultural production, sustainability and competitiveness for evidence-based decision-making; and improving access to markets through implementation of plant pest and disease control strategies at the regional level.

It aims to provide support to the SADC Secretariat by strengthening national and regional capacities to prevent entry, control spread and manage five priority plant pests and diseases. Additionally, it will strengthen regional cooperation and coordination on SPS issues, focusing on those pests and diseases identified in the region.

The project seeks to develop a harmonized regional strategy for MLN disease and provide technical support to the Member States to develop and review their national strategies for this disease. Technical assistance to develop national Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies in line with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) will also be given.

Key activities include:

- Developing regional and national strategies for MLN disease
- A systematic review of current national strategies for the control and management of FAW, *Tuta absoluta*, MLN, Fusarium wilt Foc TR4 and Oriental Fruit fly in the SADC region and aligning these with the SADC plant health strategy
- Regional training on pest and disease risk analysis for the implementation of SPS measures for the priority transboundary pests and diseases
- Hosting a series of webinars on selected topics to enhance inspection and diagnostic skills, and improve the understanding of SPS issues and provide updated guidelines for inspectors, regulators and other National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) personnel

CABI will also provide specialized services to strengthen pest and disease risk analysis capacities in the region, including the development of, and updating of, national commodity pest lists which will help to implement SPS measures concerning the priority transboundary pests and diseases.
Results so far

A regional workshop on national pest strategies was held (11-13 May 2021) to review Member States’ progress towards the development of national strategies that will effectively, and sustainably, manage and control the five priority transboundary plant pests and diseases in line with key IPM principles. At least 34 NPPO staff were present at the meeting that identified gaps and needs for further technical support.

Virtual PRA training was conducted (14-18 June 2021) for the region and was attended by 57 delegates (53% male, 47% female). The training aimed to build the capacity of Member States in conducting PRA using CABI decision support tools such as the PRA Tool, Crop Protection Compendium and the Horizon Scanning Tool.

The following webinars were organised by CABI as part of this project and were well attended by over 85 participants, mainly from NPPOs in SADC, but also a few from other African countries. Links are provided to the presentations which were followed by Q&A sessions.

Webinar 1: Application of integrated phytosanitary measures to enhance export market compliance, 6 July 2021. Speakers: Dr Megan Quinlan (Imperial College London) and Mr Thembelani Theo Pongolo (NPPO, South Africa).

Webinar 2: Feasibility of establishment & maintenance of pest-free areas for market access: Practical application of ISPMs 4 and 10, 27 July 2021. Speakers: Dr Washington Otieno (CABI), Dr Julian Smith (Rothamsted Research) and Mr. Jan Hendrik Venter (NPPO, South Africa).

Donors
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Partners
SADC Secretariat

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