INCREASING SAFE AND EFFICIENT TRADE OF AGRICULTURE IN EAST AFRICA

Locations Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda

Dates 27/01/2020 - 30/04/2024

Summary

The East African Community (EAC) represents one of the fastest-growing regional economic communities in the world. However, trade of agricultural products, from and within this region, has been hindered by factors including Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) issues. The project aims to assess the SPS systems and frameworks, identify challenges and opportunities for further investments and increase the capacity among EAC partner states with the aim of easing SPS-related barriers, regionally and internationally, and creating new trade opportunities in agriculture.

The problem

The EAC is one of the fastest-growing regional economic economies. Agriculture contributes significantly to this. Approximately 80% of the EAC population live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. However, the trade of agriculture between EAC partner states is hindered by among others, unharmonized sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards including different

entry and exit points, inspection procedures, lack of diagnostic capacity, equipment and certification schemes to ensure market standards are delivered safely and efficiently.

Due to the absence of robust SPS systems, countries are exposed to risks including the spread and introduction of animal and plant pests and diseases and food safety threats such as pesticide residues and toxins. As a result, produce is intercepted because of non-compliance.

Furthermore, market access to regional and international high-value markets is threatened while informal cross-border trade of livestock, fruits and vegetables and food crops in the EAC, heighten SPS-related risks and impede livelihoods and agricultural activity.

To address these issues, the EAC Secretariat took some important steps to create common SPS standards that are harmonized among partner states, also referred to as the EAC SPS Legal Framework (ESLF).

What we are doing

The USDA-supported Trade of Agriculture Safely and Efficiently in East Africa (TRASE) project, implemented by Land O'Lakes Venture 37 (V37) will build on the success of the ESLF, assessing SPS systems across the EAC, investment opportunities and increasing the capacity among EAC partner states with the aim of easing SPS-related barriers, regionally and internationally, and creating new trade opportunities in agriculture.

During the initial stages of the project, CABI worked in partnership with targeted EAC Partner States, USDA and other stakeholders. CABI and KO Associates' (KOA) role was to conduct a technical and legal assessment of SPS systems in EAC that will help prioritize SPS investment options and improve both regional and international trade, further strengthening regional integration of the EAC in **five** EAC countries: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

CABI is now providing ongoing technical support and training to address gaps identified in the assessment.

Technical support will increase capacity for surveillance, notifications and emergency response in **four** EAC countries: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda, with a specific focus on enlisted quarantine pests and diseases posing emerging threats.

Training, by CABI, for Plant Health Inspectors in the EAC countries, both from the national plant protection organisation (NPPOs) and private sector actors, will increase NPPOs and private sector associations' inspection capacity and increase the adoption of risk-based inspections through public-private partnerships (PPP).

Plant Health Inspectors play a crucial role in protecting plant health across trade, agriculture, and the environment. Plant health inspectors shall have experience in professional horticulture, with excellent plant, pest and disease identification skills and an understanding of biosecurity measures.

Results so far

CABI and KOA carried out a comprehensive SPS legal and technical assessment which identified constraints of the five target EAC countries (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda). The assessment also sought to determine investment opportunities and recommend interventions that can be supported under the five-year TRASE project.

The results were collated into consolidated reports:

- Assessment of SPS Legal/Regulatory Framework in the EAC Partner States

- Assessment of SPS Systems in the EAC Partner States

Virtual training workshops on the practical implementation of various International Plant Protection Convention and International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures were held for the public sector (NPPOs) and various private sector players. A technical guide for Huanglongbing bacteria Liberibacter asiaticus (Asian greening disease) was also developed and shared, and a pest alert was sent to partner states.

Training on the development of the PPP framework and a national plan for surveillance, notification, and emergency response was held with authorities, research, and commodity trade associations from partner states. The PPP framework and national plan were then later developed.

Under TRASE, CABI has trained Plant Health Inspectors in the EAC countries from NPPOs and the private sector. The training was delivered online and face-to-face; topics included SPS issues, international standards for phytosanitary measures, PPP frameworks and the use of voluntary and private standards to increase oversight and development of Standard Operation Procedures on sampling, inspections and certification for priority agricultural commodities.

Donors	United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
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