INCREASING SAFE AND EFFICIENT TRADE OF AGRICULTURE IN EAST AFRICA

Locations  Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda

Dates  27/01/2020 - 15/12/2021

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 will assess the SPS systems and identify challenges and opportunities for further investments.
The problem

The EAC is one of the fastest-growing regional economic economies and 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.

The EAC Secretariat has recently taken important steps to create common SPS standards that are harmonized among partner states, also referred to as the EAC SPS Legal Framework (ESLF).

While the EAC SPS Protocol has not been fully ratified, some regulations have been adopted by the Council of Ministers as harmonized EAC SPS measures. These include (i) phytosanitary measures; (ii) the Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) guides for maize, rice and beans; and (iii) the food safety measures, with nearly 80% of the work on harmonized animal health measures being completed.

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 from these successes and work at regional and national levels across two phases.

Phase one, CABI will work in partnership with targeted EAC Partner States, USDA and other stakeholders, CABI and KO Associates (KOA) are conducting a technical and legal assessment of SPS systems in EAC to help prioritize SPS investment options that will improve both regional and international trade and further strengthen regional integration of the EAC.

CABI will engage with authorities and private sector players within the EAC to identify SPS issues affecting regional and international trade and will develop regional commitments and investment opportunities at country and regional levels whilst applying synergies from existing projects and investments. Phase one will:

- Expand trade of agricultural products domestically, regionally and internationally in the EAC by domesticating the EAC SPS Legal Framework (ESLF), a series of regulations, standard operating procedures and measures, at national levels
- Drive best practices in SPS functions such as testing, inspection and enforcement. The TRASE project will establish three center of excellence (CoE) laboratories as regional models. TRASE will also work with identified Competent Authorities to strengthen pest and disease surveillance, notification and overall transparency at the regional and domestic levels
- Strengthen regional and national SPS committees to coordinate and communicate with the private sector and partner states to reduce trade barriers, increase transparency and raise SPS awareness
- Increase producer and consumer awareness on the importance of safe food and the harmful effects of low quality and/or counterfeit inputs on public health and trade, which will drive demand for safer products and increase political will to support and enforce SPS standards.

Phase two, CABI has been contracted to provide technical support geared towards increasing 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. Phase two will include the development of a regional strategy, national implementation plans, training on pest risk management and field simulation exercises.
Results so far

CABI recruited eight consultants and established a working relationship with KOA. An effective approach and tools for undertaking the assessment were developed and agreed upon at an e-workshop involving CABI, KOA, Consultants and V37 staff.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual approaches for collecting SPS information from the five target EAC countries have been developed and the assessment is progressing well. Results from the consultants will be collated into a consolidated report that will inform investment opportunities for the five-year TRASE project.

Second phase results are due to be reported.

Donors
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

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