



Partnership
for Aflatoxin
Control in Africa

Partenariat pour
la lutte contre
l'aflatoxine en Afrique

Parceria para o
Controle da
Aflatoxina em África

الشراكة من أجل مكافحة
الافلاتوكسين في أفريقيا



From PACA Phase I to Phase II:

Introducing the Scope and Approaches of PACA II, 2016 – 2019

Aflatoxin contamination has emerged as a global problem due to the movement of susceptible commodities in international trade. However, prevalence of the toxin in food and feed, as well as the presence of the toxin in human body fluids (as evidence through biomarker data), attests to the daunting challenge of aflatoxins in Africa. Aflatoxin causes liver cancer, immune-suppression and is associated with childhood stunting. Aflatoxin contamination thwarts food security and nutrition, limits access to trade, and hampers agribusiness and economic development.

Aflatoxin is the only mycotoxin that occurs both preharvest and postharvest across food systems. The preponderance of factors that aggravate the problem, such as drought stress, pest attack and other forms of stress (preharvest risk factors) as well as inadequate harvesting, handling and storage practices (postharvest risk factors), show the urgent need to address the problem comprehensively in Africa. The multitude of influencing factors, potential widespread occurrence and the numerous commodities affected make aflatoxin contamination a complex problem, requiring holistic approaches and coordinated actions across a broad range of stakeholders in Africa and beyond for effective mitigation. This recognition led to the establishment of the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) at the African Union Commission.

Seven achievements of PACA since inception (in 2012) and operationalization (in mid-2013):

1. Generation and use of locally relevant evidence (country-led situation analysis and action planning, and policy scoping studies across regional economic communities)
2. Spearheading coordinated and sustainable action at country level
3. Capacity building for surveillance of aflatoxin contamination and evidence generation (Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, The Gambia, Nigeria, Kenya)
4. Convening and coordinating stakeholders with concrete action plans (e.g., West Africa regional workshop, ECOACAP, COMESA, PACA Partnership Platform)
5. Partnering with the private sector in the fight against aflatoxin (MoU with Mars; Néstlé in the pipeline; dialogue with farmer organizations)
6. Building alliances against aflatoxins with nutrition, health, agriculture and rural development initiatives
7. Information dissemination and publications (e.g., website, Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAIMS), published materials, conferences)

Rationale for renewed emphasis in PACA Phase II:

PACA I established effective continental, regional and country level awareness and action, initiating the reduction of the harmful effects of aflatoxin in Africa. A moral and economic imperative exists to continue action to build on these successes for the benefit of all Africans.

Further, the rationale includes:

- Aflatoxin control contributes to realizing Malabo Declaration Commitments and Sustainable Development Goals
- PACA has demonstrated the need for holistic and coordinated approaches to addressing the complex problem of aflatoxin contamination in Africa, effectively and sustainably
- Wholesale, system change in aflatoxin control is required beyond the historic fragmented and scattered responses
- Alignment with AUC and focus on flagship programs addresses complex, cross-cutting, continental challenges
- Support to RECs and African Member States is required to address this complex developmental challenge
- PACA Phase II must utilize, extend and scale-up the asset base created during PACA Phase I.



PACA Phase II Scope and Approach:

Scope of PACA Phase II: Drive systemic change in aflatoxin control in Africa

Approaches to achieve systemic change:

1. Establish a strong **knowledge base** through:
 - Developing AfricaAIMS into a searchable database with credible data and information;
 - Capturing and sharing knowledge through regional and continental meetings/conferences.
2. Ensure **implementation sustainability** through inclusion of aflatoxin mitigation in:
 - National development strategies, e.g., CAADP;
 - National quality and standards programs;
 - National agricultural extension, community health and education curricula;
 - Market incentives ('carrot') and regulatory enforcement ('stick') that drive behavior changes for adoption of aflatoxin mitigation.
3. Support **intervention scaling and replicability** through:
 - Promoting program implementation by developing awareness and behavior change interventions tailored to the needs and challenges of various value chain actors;
 - Building capacity through massive training and program shadowing;
 - Identifying technologies and practices that are appropriate for the multiple agro-ecological zones of countries;
 - Laying a strong foundation for enabling policies for technology adoption.
4. Ensure **financial sustainability** through:
 - Enhancing government support and allocation of government resources towards aflatoxin mitigation activities and actions;
 - Promoting private sector and development partners' investment in aflatoxin prevention and control;
 - Ensuring monitoring and evaluation of program implementation.

Conclusion:

Realization of the linkages between food safety and nutrition security is crucial to achieving the regional and global development agenda. Aflatoxin contamination is the most pervasive food safety challenge in Africa. PACA is spearheading integrated approaches to address the complex aflatoxin challenge. PACA's work is key to achieving the Malabo Declaration Commitments, including ending hunger in Africa by 2025, achieving poverty reduction, tripling intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services, and enhancing resilience of livelihoods and production systems to climate variability. PACA also contributes to fast tracking the Continental Free Trade Area in many agricultural commodities, thus contributing to the Agenda 2063 of African Union. Moreover, effective aflatoxin mitigation is indispensable to achieving Sustainable Development Goals: No Poverty, Zero Hunger, and Good Health and Wellbeing.

The rationale for the scope of PACA Phase II stems from the unique value proposition and comparative advantages of PACA as one of the innovative food safety organizations in the world. PACA's proven track record of effective implementation by working with and through country governments in Africa, as well as the approach of establishing strong stakeholder buy-in, political will and increased awareness of the problem and intervention options, establishes the recipe for success for the next phase. The PACA Secretariat, housed at the African Union Commission, understands the complexity of the aflatoxin challenge and the need for systemic actions by multiple actors for effective mitigation. PACA Phase II calls for stakeholders who are committed to food security, nutrition and health, income generation and poverty reduction to join hands and assist in the fight against aflatoxins in Africa.



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