

AID-FOR-TRADE: CASE STORY

CENTRE OF PHYTOSANITARY EXCELLENCE (COPE)

Establishing a Centre of Phytosanitary Excellence (COPE)

Date of Submission: 31st January 2011

Region: Eastern Africa

Type: Project – STDF 171

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Executive Summary

A Centre of Phytosanitary Excellence (COPE) was established to enhance the capacity of national phytosanitary systems to increase the ability of African countries compete in international markets by meeting international phytosanitary standards as well as protect national agriculture and natural resources. The COPE has been developed by a team of experts from several African countries in collaboration with the African Union's InterAfrican Phytosanitary Council (IAPSC), the secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), FAO, the Netherlands Plant Protection Service (NPPS), and the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI). The COPE has a secretariat in Nairobi hosted at the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) and the University of Nairobi (UoN).

This story describes the establishment of the COPE and the services it offers including in-service and university certificate courses, work attachments/bench training, Pest Risk Analysis and pest information, coordination of regional plant health initiatives and consultancies. The centre is a potential model for achieving coordinated and effective phytosanitary capacity development at a regional level. Though it is too early to report major outcomes and impacts of the Centre, given it has just been established, we hope this story demonstrates good building blocks towards regional phytosanitary capacity development. The Centre was established during a two year (2008-2010) project phase funded by the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF).

1. Issues addressed: African Phytosanitary Capacity Development

Results from IPPC's Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) tool have repeatedly shown there is **inadequate capacity** amongst African countries to apply international phytosanitary standards in their countries. Lack of capacity has led to increased crop loss during production and post harvest hence decreasing the continents ability to meet its targeted food security. Further this has hindered Africa's **access to international trade** particularly in horticultural produce. In order to protect agriculture at both country and pan-Africa level, the continent requires **a coordinated phytosanitary capacity development approach**. The desired level of African capacity can only be achieved through **collaboration and partnerships** between government, private sector and international organizations, both within countries and beyond.

This story describes how a Centre of Phytosanitary Excellence (COPE) has been established through a 2 year (2008-2010) project (STDF 171 COPE) to address African phytosanitary capacity development in both public and private organizations. As a collaborative venture between a range of organizations, development of partnerships has been central to this process, and will continue to be as the centre continues operating.

COPE's capacity development activities are based on an underlying understanding of IPPCs definition of national phytosanitary capacity which emphasizes that capacity is not only about individuals, not only about technical knowledge, and can involve organizations outside a country. Recent studies have shown that capacity development is most effective when driven from the inside and when it builds on existing strengths. Hence COPEs activities aim

to make use of existing regional capacity and also collaborate with experts and organizations worldwide.

2. Objectives pursued: STDF 171 COPE

The objective of the STDF 171 project was to establish a Centre of Phytosanitary Excellence (COPE) for developing African phytosanitary capacity. The project phase was to set up an administrative structure for running the Centre, develop and promote the Centre's services, and establish mechanisms for collaboration between various interested parties at national and regional levels.

3. Project design and implementation

The project was borne out of extensive consultations between IPPC, KEPHIS, University of Nairobi and CABI over a number of years and commenced in May 2008. The project design benefited from external input provided by a consultant funded by STDF. A technically sound team – Project Management Committee - was engaged to advise the project during its implementation and has been central in ensuring project success. This team comprised of National Plant Protection Organizations from Eastern and Southern Africa, the regional private sector horticultural organization, the African Union's InterAfrican Phytosanitary Council (IAPSC), the secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the Netherlands Plant Protection Service (NPPS), FAO Regional Office for Africa, USAID Regional Mission for East Africa and CAB International (CABI). KEPHIS and UoN were the lead implementing agencies, while CABI was responsible to STDF for management of project resources and delivery of outputs.

Engagement with private and public sector was designed into the project's implementation process in form of surveys, meetings and workshops in order to generate a demand driven programme for the Centre. Regulatory and training institutions from Seychelles, Mozambique, Zambia, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda, Comoros and Kenya were engaged in designing COPE's services.

4. Problems encountered

Developing this first centre of phytosanitary excellence in Africa has presented a number of unique challenges to the advisory committee and partners. A key challenge was how to come up with an institutional framework that allowed joint "ownership" amongst different countries, whilst at the same time allowing for efficient and cost-effective day to day management. Through extensive consultations, partners developed a common ownership by shaping COPE's aspirations and programmes and now have a joint responsibility to make it work.

Africa has many examples of good initiatives that stalled once the 'project funded phase' ended – and hence a big challenge as in all projects was 'getting over the project mentality' from the onset. Our challenge was how to develop an institutional framework and business model that ensured the Centre's financial and organizational sustainability. Ordinarily such arrangements, especially for institutions that provide a service for regional public good, entail large financial investment over a long period of time as well as strong government support.

In order to gain support, be efficient and avoid potential conflicts, the Centre needed to avoid duplicating work that is already being addressed by partners. Having put all these issues into consideration, COPE has been designed as a 'Centre without walls' that can be reached by its clients with the least bureaucracy. The Centre's financial management will be run on a 'not for profit business model' hence ensuring sustainability of its intended impacts.

Another challenge has been pursuing the approach of developing capacity through existing regional capacity. This has been addressed in part through using the establishment phase of the centre to undertake capacity building work. For example, it is recognized that many universities in the region have great strength in crop protection and pest management, but less capacity in the application of these skills in phytosanitary systems in relation to international trade. One of the curricula developed was therefore for re-orienting university lecturers in crop protection towards phytosanitary systems. Not only was the course developed, but it was piloted for university staff from several countries in the region.

5. Factors for Success /Failure

COPE's goal is to enhance the capacity of national phytosanitary systems to protect agriculture and natural resources as well as increase the ability of African countries compete in international markets by meeting international phytosanitary standards. Factors that will lead to its success in the long term will include its ability to remain financially sustainable; and its ability to be demand driven hence meeting the evolving needs of its clients. Having been recently launched the Centre's impact can be gauged in coming years.

In terms of the intended project output – to establish the Centre – we feel this has been accomplished successfully. In spite of challenges encountered, a number of factors contributed to the project meeting its immediate objective. First and foremost is the commitment demonstrated by the internationally drawn Project Management Committee who brought on board a wealth of both technical and organizational development expertise.

The lead implementing agencies, KEPHIS and University of Nairobi, invested in the Centre by providing staff to run the project. Both institutions have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for joint management of the Centre and allocated both human and physical resources for day-to-day management. Persistent and well structured regional consultations have ensured that COPE's initial services address current needs of its stakeholders. These consultations are expected to continue through regional partnerships.

6. Results Achieved

6.1 Defining the Centres institutional framework

A key part of establishing the COPE was to determine the institutional framework through which it would operate. We engaged legal consultants who helped us consult with key stakeholders to identify and describe possible institutional models for the Centre, analyze the options and advise the Project Management Committee in its selection of the most appropriate option. For each of the three proposed models, the consultants described ownership, governance and leadership structure; internal operations and management; and financial arrangements. Further we undertook a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and

Threats (SWOT) analysis of the models and ranked them demonstrating their advantages and disadvantages in respect of practical feasibility, regional buy-in and financial sustainability.

We selected the model that had COPE initially as a department within KEPHIS and University of Nairobi. Through a negotiated process, the two institutions entered into an MoU for joint management of the Centre with day to day responsibilities being undertaken by a secretariat. They also registered COPE as a business name as well as its trade mark logo (Figure 1). Members of the PMC agreed to be the first Advisory Board and held their first meeting in October 2010.

Although its secretariat is hosted by KEPHIS and the University of Nairobi, it is envisioned as a “centre without walls” and will therefore collaborate and build synergy with both national and international bodies involved in phytosanitary work. It will build and maintain partnerships with national, regional and international organizations such as Universities, Regional Economic Bodies, international technical agencies, and development partners who have interests in promoting phytosanitary capacity development. The Secretariat is currently recruiting strategic partners and collaborators across Africa and beyond. This administrative arrangement will be reviewed after two years, with the possibility of establishing COPE as an independent legal entity in the long run to be included in the review.



Figure 1: The registered trade mark of COPE

6.2 COPE's Business Plan

Once the institutional framework was agreed upon, we embarked on defining the centre's business plan including its mission, values, services and financial sustainability.

Stakeholders agreed that COPE would aspire to be *“An internationally recognised centre of phytosanitary expertise”* with a mission to *“provide phytosanitary capacity building services to clients in the public and private sectors, so that countries are better able to prevent the introduction and spread of plant pests and meet the phytosanitary requirements of international trade”*.

COPE aims to provide a range of phytosanitary capacity development and related services. However, it will not duplicate services provided by national organisations, but take a facilitative role, adding value particularly through regional collaboration and coordination where appropriate. Service offered includes:

- Short, in-service courses, such as for plant inspectors and phytosanitary managers

- University certificate courses
- Work attachments or bench-training matched to the needs of the trainee
- Customized training for groups and individuals
- Pest risk analysis and pest information
- Coordination of regional plant health initiatives
- Consultancies, e.g. on pest listing, diagnostics, surveillance

A key aim of COPE is that it will be financially self sustaining, by charging for its services for cost recovery and growth. This will be through direct charge to clients or by providing services sponsored by other development partners. It will thus run in a business-like manner. As part of its marketing activities, COPE was officially launched at a regional event held in October 2010 in Nairobi.

6.3 Establishing a Training Unit

The second project output was to put in place a training unit which entailed developing a training programme. We initially carried out a regional training needs assessment from which target groups and their training needs were identified, see table 1. It emerged that countries did not have structured phytosanitary training opportunities. Instead only general courses in agriculture, crop protection and similar subjects exist. With the much needed support from the FAO regional office for Africa, IPPC and NPPS, a regional team developed courses and curricula that would address these gaps. Currently COPE is offering four short in-service courses and three academic university certificate courses:

Short-term in-service training courses

1. Phytosanitary certification and import verification procedures for phytosanitary inspectors and technicians
2. Training course in phytosanitary systems improvement and management for phytosanitary managers and senior technical staff
3. Phytosanitary skills enhancement course for subject matter specialists and technicians
4. Application of phytosanitary measures for university lecturers and trainers in institutions of higher learning (re-orientation course)

University certificate courses

1. Certificate in principles of phytosanitary measures
2. Diploma in phytosanitary measures
3. Postgraduate diploma in phytosanitary measures.

Because members strongly felt that any capacity development is most effective when it builds on and uses existing capacity we trained potential trainers on subject matter as well as business administration and teaching skills. This pool of trained personnel forms a core team that will be called upon to collaborate in COPE's mission in their countries.

Table 1: Initial target groups for COPE's training programme

Group	Training Objective
Managers and policy makers	To provide awareness to policy makers and managers on how phytosanitary issues relate to national priorities, e.g. livelihoods, health exports and import markets; emphasize country's commitment to comply with SPS requirements; and how countries benefit from complying with national and international phytosanitary standards
Middle level managers (production and phytosanitary)	<p>Aims at enabling managers' to use and apply phytosanitary knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how to organize an NPPO and its various services ▪ country obligations and changing phytosanitary requirements ▪ threats to national biodiversity and industry ▪ protection of domestic trade, food and other natural resources ▪ export/import regulation: how to cooperate and network with others
Subject matter specialists (inspectors & technicians)	The training provides 'work instructions' including clear steps of what should be done once a pest is detected; and provides easy to follow procedures to undertake phytosanitary work
Trainers	To equip trainers with contemporary knowledge of phytosanitary systems; and skills to undertake relevant capacity building

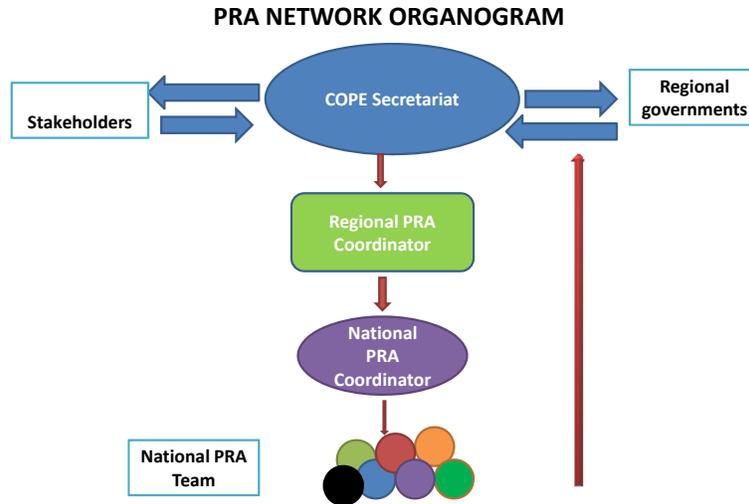
6.4 Establishing a Pest Risk Analysis Unit

Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) is an important activity in a national phytosanitary system as it enables sound judgement on the significance of a threats posed by plant pests. This provides a basis for choosing the severity and nature of phytosanitary measures to reduce the probability of pest introduction and spread through trade. Therefore PRA is an important area of focus for COPE's anticipated capacity development activities. We spent some time contemplating how best COPE would address PRA issues. Given that a considerable number of PRA trainings have been conducted in Africa over recent years, we concurred that COPE's focus should be in facilitating a regional network of pest risk analysts.

Through regional training workshops and meetings hosted by the project, NPPO staff from seven countries have gained better understanding of PRA issues affecting this region and has subsequently formed a regional PRA network. The team agreed on a mission, priority activities, and have selected a coordinator from Zambia – see figure 2. The team has also gained skills in conducting PRA and on how to use PRA tools such as the CLIMEX™ software (www.hearne.com.au).

Currently they are working on regional PRAs for three food security commodity crops and will come up with harmonized phytosanitary measures including the facilitation of intra-regional trade, consistency with international standards, transparency and technical justification of phytosanitary measures. The team also agreed to lobby for the establishment of PRA units in their respective countries, as most countries do not yet have this in place. This will enable countries to participate in regional PRA work more effectively and efficiently.

Figure 2: Regional PRA Network Organogram



One of the challenges experienced in conducting PRA's was access to relevant information and therefore through help of an information specialist priority pest information resources were identified, procured and made available to the teams.

Furthermore, NPPOs require updated pest lists in order to conduct transparent and reliable science based PRAs. Currently, most member states are hosting outdated list of pests resulting in unreliable information exchange and generation of non-science based phytosanitary import requirements. Hence, COPE is collaborating with regional initiatives such as the East African Phytosanitary Information Committee (EAPIC) in developing and promoting avenues for sharing pest information. Meanwhile, the regional pest risk analysts are updating the pest lists for the prioritized commodity crops.

7. Lessons Learned

Our biggest lesson concerns the process of building viable partnerships. A big effort in project implementation was to harness a common vision and sense of joint ownership between interested parties. This meant using facilitated processes for trust building where each partner shared their expectation and interest and then worked towards trade-offs in order to meet expectations. Hard work and commitment demonstrated by partners paid off in the end.

However we still feel COPE needs to work harder to engage with the private sector as a key player in trade and possibly as a provider of regulatory services as happens in other parts of the world.

8. Conclusion

Through funding by STDF, a Centre of Phytosanitary Excellence has been developed to cater for capacity development in the Eastern Africa region. The design and functioning of the centre has been through regional partnership. National Plant Protection Organizations and others from Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Seychelles, and Comoros have all been involved in various ways, so although coordinated from Kenya, COPE reflects the needs and aspirations of the countries in the region.

In the establishment phase it has been important to focus on developing some core capacity development activities in terms of training curricula and the PRA network. However, many other possibilities exist, and it is expected that COPE will evolve to adapt to the changing needs of the region. Institutionally such evolution could result in COPE becoming established as a legal entity. Or it could become more closely linked to existing regional organizations such as the African Union or the trade blocs. The future will demonstrate how successful the effort to establish COPE has been.

COPE's activities can also be expected to evolve. Although the purpose of COPE is capacity development, it could in the future undertake research on phytosanitary systems, or research on capacity development itself, areas that universities might be particularly interested in. COPE could also become a focus for other phytosanitary activities, such as convening seminars or conferences. COPE will need to ensure that it is complementing and working with other players including COMESA, IAPSC, FAO, IPPC and national regulatory organizations, rather than duplicating ongoing efforts. It has to retain a business-like approach that will provide sustainability.