



# Terms of Reference (ToR) for the National Task Forces for Inter-regional Platform for the Management of Desert Locust and Other Trans-Boundary Pests

## 1. Invasion of Desert Locust in the IGAD region

Between 2018 and 2021, Eastern Africa witnessed an upsurge of desert locusts that spread across several countries and exacerbated the food security situation in the region. Thousands of hectares of cropland and pasture were damaged with severe impact on the livelihoods of millions of households. Scientists have since linked the infestation to the warming climate and increasingly extreme weather events. It is argued that increase in temperature and rainfall over desert areas (that soaks land to create ideal conditions for desert locusts egg laying and hatching), and the strong winds associated with tropical cyclones, provided a conducive environment for pest breeding, development and migration<sup>1</sup>. This suggests that global warming and subsequent climate change played a role in creating the conditions required for the development, outbreak and survival of the locusts.

Although, the scale and extent of the pest is currently significantly smaller compared to 2021, it is paramount that all countries sustain their survey and control efforts in reducing existing swarms as well as detecting and controlling any breeding in the future.

## 2. IGAD's Response to the Desert Locust Invasion

The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was mandated to coordinate Desert Locust (DL) issues by the IGAD Heads of State and Governments at their 34th Extra-Ordinary Summit on Feb 9, 2020 in Addis Ababa. To implement this, the IGAD Executive

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-020-0835-8>

Secretary appointed a Desert Locust Task Force – comprising of IGAD specialised institutions and divisions including the; IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC), IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD), Agriculture and Environment Division (AED), Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN), IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) and Special Envoy Offices.

During the outbreak, ICPAC developed desert locust spread prediction using climate/weather forecasts and environment monitoring.

Further still IGAD organised various multistakeholder forums in order for stakeholders to share lessons on good practices in desert locust management, discuss challenges and propose a framework for joint complementarity in DL eradication. These forums included; high level inter-regional technical and ministerial meetings held on 23 April and 21 May 2020 respectively, followed by another round of technical and ministerial meetings on 4 May and 17 June 2021 respectively. IGAD also utilised the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG), to intensify awareness creation efforts and desert locust response advocacy using different media.

### 3. Inter-Regional Platform for the Management of Desert Locusts and Other Trans-Boundary Pests in the IGAD Region

The 2018 desert locust upsurge brought to light the ill-preparedness and capacity gaps within the region, and reinforced the need for increased flow of information between countries where DL and other transboundary pests are endemic and those where they are not. Sustainable control and management of the DL and other transboundary pests' invasion requires coordinated interventions with all affected countries, and a regional platform that provides an early warning system for continuous intensive surveillance and monitoring in a coordinated way could help the region.

With funding support from the World Bank, IGAD has set up and is operationalizing an Inter-Regional Platform for the Management of Desert Locusts and other Trans-Boundary Pests, as part of the Bank's Emergency Locust Response Program Phase 3 (SSELRP) that supports the Republic of South Sudan and IGAD to respond to the challenges posed by the desert locust invasion<sup>2</sup>.

The overall goal of the platform will be to strengthen synergies and sustained management of desert locusts and other transboundary pests in the IGAD region. The platform will be utilised to strengthen inter-regional, regional and national capacity for coordination, monitoring, surveillance, and control operations and to improve early warning and early response. Operationalization of the platform will be conducted in partnership with the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA) and the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC).

#### 4. National Desert Locust and Other Transboundary Pest Task Force (DL-TPTF)

The primary goal of the National Desert Locust and other Transboundary Pest Task Force established in the IGAD member states, is to contribute to the ongoing efforts towards strengthening the effectiveness and impact of the desert locusts and other trans-boundary pest control and management initiatives. The Task Force represents the basic coordination structures for survey and control operations at national level and will work closely with the Desert Locust and Trans-Boundary Pests Response Coordination Unit, which is referred to as the *Platform Secretariat*, within IGAD.

The Task Forces will also share data required for formulating plans and approaches of control operations, with the various public, private and other local and international partners. More importantly, because transboundary pests are temporal - alternating absence with peaks of high activity- the Task Forces will be expected to maintain the infrastructure needed for sustainable transboundary pest management during recession times.

#### 5. Rationale

The taskforce will strengthen the existing structures at national and regional levels through the coordination of activities related to the desert locust and other transboundary pests' surveillance, monitoring, control and response mechanisms. It will also generate a horizontal cooperation with regional and international partners.

#### 6. Objectives of the Task Force

The general objective of the national task force is to improve the coordination and ensure preparedness, control and response mechanism of transboundary pests are well established and synergized at national and regional levels. It will also serve a channel of guiding and harmonizing policies and strategies including development of standard operations (SOPs).

## 7. Composition of the Task Forces

The National DL-TPTF will be composed of technical representatives from the national line ministries related to management of transboundary pests. The task forces may include representation from development and humanitarian partners, research institutions, Academia, NGOs, and supporting agents of pest control like military and civil aviation.

The membership of each National Task forces will have at least representatives with the following expertise:

1. Pest control and plant protection head (chair)- Ministry of Agriculture
2. Food and feed security assessment (animal feed, crop production and animal husbandry/production).
3. National crisis communication (migratory pest team leader or department head)
4. FAO country office representative
5. DLCO-EA base manager office in each country
6. Ministry of planning and finance.
7. Additional organizations and specialists can be added by countries as deemed relevant.

## 8. Roles of the Task Forces

The members of the DL-TPTF shall provide services and will be supported by the members of the Platform Steering Committee and the Desert Locust and Transboundary Pest Response Coordination Unit (DLRCU). Ministries in charge of transboundary pests of the respective countries will be mandated to lead the overall coordination of the taskforce. Generally, the taskforce activities include but not limited to supporting surveillance, monitoring, impact assessment, response, development of national strategy and plans; ensure environmental, health and social safeguards, and Identify policy gaps and forward to policy and decision makers.

The specific tasks of the National DL-TPTF include:

**1. Coordination:**

- i. Liaising with various national ministries, departments and institutions as well as the DLRCU and development partners;
- ii. Identify and prioritize national and sub-national level pest prevention, management and mitigation strategies;
- iii. Working closely with the country representative on the Platform Steering Committee to follow-up implementation of the decisions and recommendations from committee meetings;
- iv. Working closely with the country representative on the Platform Steering Committee to document and share reports on the national management of desert locusts and other transboundary pests;
- v. Advancing a strategy for achieving the strategic objectives and key results for the short, medium and long terms, including an effective coordination structure.

**2. Capacity Building:**

- i. Building capacity of relevant national institutions and local communities in conducting assessments and mapping pests' breeding areas as well as their entry and migration trends;
- ii. Contributing to the technical and knowledge capacity of agricultural extension officers and desert locust and other transboundary pests' monitors.

**3. Surveillance, Monitoring and Early Warning:**

- i. Supporting regular surveillance, monitoring and control operations, with particular focus on pest prone areas, Risk monitoring and Risk communication;
- ii. Facilitate impact assessment and lead mid-term and long-term interventions for livelihood development.
- iii. Promoting use of advanced technologies and information systems (satellite and a real imagery, GIS, digital data collection tools) for locust control and analysing ecological, rainfall and meteorological data received from affected areas.

**4. Mobilizing resources** (human, financial and physical) for desert locust and other transboundary pests' surveillance, monitoring and control operations. The DL-TPTF shall utilize findings of survey activities to estimate the scale of risk and level of required control so as to inform their resource mobilization efforts.

**5. Knowledge Management and Coordination:**

- i. Advancing a strategy for achieving the task forces' objectives and key results for the short, medium and long terms, including an effective coordination structure;
- ii. Harmonizing knowledge sharing and effective technologies and tools for transboundary pests early warning and preventive control;
- iii. Promote the safe use and handling of pesticides by promoting to the member states best practices through capacity building and knowledge exchange.
- iv. Facilitating an independent evaluation of effective locust and other transboundary pest control products and potential impact on human health and the environment;
- v. Synthesize, reproduce appropriate information for dissemination of the locust and other pest-related technical papers and providing timely reports. A logical reporting approach is required to manage and analyse information at the national level and sub-national levels so that it can be used for effective planning and decision-making. For example, ELocust3m application can be used to guide appropriate response, produce situation maps and forecasts of future development.

## 9. Coordination mechanisms of the Task Force

The ministries in charge of agriculture will be responsible for the overall coordination of the task force at country levels.

Each national DL-TPTF will choose a chairperson and secretary and agree on the location of their meetings. The taskforce shall determine how often they meet depending on the workplan activities and prevailing pest situation. The TF shall adopt working mechanisms that minimise redundancy and incoherence and improve coordination among key stakeholders to accomplish the tasks to which they have been assigned.

Through an engagement process, Platform Secretariat will develop guidelines on the establishment of the National Transboundary Pests Task Force before the second Platform Steering Committee meeting and share them for endorsement by the task forces.