



Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Early Warning Working Group for Inter-regional Platform for the Management of Desert Locust and Other Trans-Boundary Pests

Invasion of Desert Locust in the IGAD region

1. Since 2018, Eastern Africa has witnessed an upsurge of Desert Locusts (DL), spreading across several countries at a high rate, posing a major threat to food security and livelihoods in the Greater Horn of Africa. During the invasion, thousands of hectares of cropland and pasture were damaged in the region with severe impact on the livelihoods of millions of households. Scientists are linking this new infestation to the warming climate and increasingly extreme weather events. It is argued that increases 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 new environment for pest breeding, development and migration¹. This suggests that global warming and the subsequent climate change played a role in creating the conditions required for the development, outbreak and survival of the locusts.
2. Although, the scale and extent of the pest is significantly smaller compared to a year ago, 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 coming future.

IGAD's Response to the Desert Locust Invasion

3. Following the mandate given to IGAD by the Heads of States of the IGAD Member States during their 34th Extra Ordinary Summit in Addis Ababa in early 2020 to coordinate Desert Locust issues the IGAD Executive Secretary (ES) appointed a Desert Locust Task Force – comprising of the following entities; ICPAC, ICPALD, AED, CEWARN, IDDRSI and IGAD Special Envoy Offices.
4. IGAD organised a high level inter-regional technical meeting, followed by IGAD Ministerial Meeting in April and May, 2020 respectively and Technical Ministerial Meeting in June 2021; for stakeholders to share lessons on good practices, discuss challenges and propose a framework for joint complementarity in DL eradication.
5. In addition, during the outbreak, ICPAC managed to develop Desert Locust spread prediction using climate/weather forecasts and environment monitoring since Jan/Feb 2020. Similarly, through the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group-FSNWG partners, IGAD intensified Desert Locust response advocacy through all forms of media, raising awareness which significantly contributed to resource mobilisation.

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 ill-preparedness and capacity gaps, 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 and DLCO-EA will set up and operationalize an Inter-Regional Platform for the Sustainable Management of Desert Locusts and other Trans-Boundary Pests project, 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^[1].

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 regional and national capacity for coordination, monitoring, surveillance, and control operations and 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).

Functions of the Early Warning Working Group

While IGAD provides technical and coordination support, the members of the EWWG shall provide services *pro-bono* in the spirit of regional and inter-regional cooperation and will be supported by the Desert Locust Response Coordination Unit - DLRCU recruited by the IGAD and within the Platform implementation referred to as *Platform* Secretariat. In general, the EWWG will primarily guide implementation of early warning-related platform activities, through the Platform Secretariat. Specifically, the EWWG will:

1. Develop and/or review the EWWG periodic work plans
2. Facilitate monitoring and mapping of the breeding and spread (movement and migration) of desert locusts and other trans-boundary pests, both at national and regional level.
3. Support national and regional level assessments or studies related to early warning on desert locusts and other transboundary pest.
4. Support establishment of regular linkages with existing international and inter-regional Early Warning Systems.
5. Contribute to the lessons learned on early warning in the member states and other stakeholders for the development of a functional regional early warning system.
6. Document and share progress reports on the implementation of the EWWG work plan with the Platform Secretariat and the Platform Steering Committee.

7. Facilitate the development and operationalisation of a regional/inter-regional plan on harmonizing various early warning tools used by DLCO-EA, IGAD and non-IGAD member states in early warning for the different transboundary pests.
8. Facilitate data and information sharing with various government and regional entities in order to inform decision-making process on the management of desert locusts and other transboundary pests.
9. Support the establishment of information validation and verification systems to harmonize and standardize data from member states and partners for improved analysis that support efficient actions.
10. Review and recommend for adoption new technologies that will potentially enable timely information for decision makers for early action. Example is recommending improvements of existing tools and the adoption of improved tools like drones and remote sensing in surveillance and control of transboundary pests.
11. Review and contribute to the Platform's related policy documents among them; guidelines and operational procedures for data and information collection, studies and reports; with reference to DLCO-EA and IGAD data sharing policies proposed.
12. Review the effectiveness and efficiency of the transboundary pests early warning and forecasting systems and recommend improvement measures accordingly;
13. Support networking and collaboration with other actors working in the surveillance, control and recovery of transboundary pests to ensure that response actions are efficiently integrated and synchronized, expectations are fulfilled quickly and efficiently;
14. Support resource mobilisation efforts of the integrated regional transboundary pests early warning systems and proposed activities.
15. Identification and recommend for invitation more members of the working group that would strengthen information on early warning.

16. Support the development of capacity building mechanisms on early warning, data collection, data analysis, storage, information generation and sharing.
17. Support the development and improvement of communication of early warning information to national and other regional actors.

Composition of the Early Warning Working Group

Within the institutional structure and arrangements of the Platform is an Early Warning Working Group (EWWG), whose members are technical officers from DLCO-EA, desert locust and other transboundary pest control units of IGAD Member States, and IGAD secretariat and its specialised institutions and a selected number of partners.

Members of the Steering Committee shall, voluntarily propose technical officers from their desert locust and other transboundary pest control units to be part of the EWWG. The nominees shall then be vetoed and approved by the PSC during one of its meetings.

Members of the EWWG may recommend an organization to be admitted to the committee, through a nomination process. The IGAD Executive Secretary will, through writing, formally invite the nominated organisation to join the working group. After approval by the PSC, the organization shall prescribe to the rules and regulations of the EWWG.

The EWWG will be chaired by a member nominated, volunteered or elected by other members of the working group members.

The working group is made up of the national units which are the basic coordination structures for survey and control operations, and are responsible for monitoring and mapping locust breeding, spread (movement and migration) of DL and other trans-boundary pests. They also share data with various governmental entities required for formulating plans and approaches of control operations.

The Early Warning Working Group will be coordinated by the Platform Secretariat.

Coordination mechanisms of the Early Warning Working Group

The Early Warning Working Group will be chaired by a member nominated, volunteered or elected by other members of the working group members.

The working group will meet at least quarterly or more often as decided by circumstances at the time, such as during a pest invasion. The meetings shall be called by the EWWG chairperson or the PSC co-chairs when a pressing matter is involved.

Prior to a working group meeting, the EWWG chair will, through the Platform Secretariat and with contribution from other members, set the agenda and dates for the meeting.

The Working Group will report to the Platform Steering Committee which will be composed of high level technical and political representatives of all stakeholders involved both from within the IGAD region and beyond, to review progress and approve short to long-term work plans and progress after receiving feedback from the technical committee.