

Biosecurity skills program aims to build capacity in East Africa and Australia

A plant biosecurity skills program will help East African farmers and policymakers address regional plant pest and disease issues and facilitate intra-regional trade.



Credit: Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)

The two-year \$0.8 million Plant Biosecurity Capacity Development Initiative is funded through the Australian International Food Security Research Centre, which operates within the [Australian International Centre for Agricultural Research \(ACIAR\)](#).

Activities are expected to include short-term placements of African biosecurity specialists in relevant Australian agencies, plant biosecurity workshops in Africa, a mentoring system for African participants and funding assistance for developing biosecurity action plans at a national and regional level.

The initiative aims to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability, strengthen agricultural value chains and help overcome regulatory impediments, while building capacity for agricultural innovation in Australia and Africa.

'Poor capacity to control the movement of significant plant pests and diseases in eastern Africa limits farmer incomes and food security, and is an obstacle to regional trade of agricultural products,' says Dr Nick Austin, CEO of ACIAR.

'Biosecurity is a global challenge,' says Dr Michael Robinson, CEO of the [Plant Biosecurity Centre for Cooperative Research](#), which is part of the consortium that will deliver the program.

'If our expertise can help developing nations with crop protection and export opportunities, then Australia will benefit from a stronger global biosecurity system,' says Dr Robinson.

A regional workshop, to be conducted in Nairobi in coming months, will kickstart the program.

The program will be delivered by a consortium led by Australia's Plant Biosecurity Centre for Cooperative Research, CSIRO, the Crawford Fund and CABI International.

Source: ACIAR

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