



Building national capacity

Key facts

Focusing on developing and building human capacities ensures the sustainability and the development of national and regional capabilities.

Capacity building improves the locust unit's performance and enhances its ability to function and continue to stay relevant within changing environment.

The activities proposed aim to address the identified challenges and through their implementation, the management of DL in the region is greatly enhanced.

FAO considers staff training as a priority to ensure that well-qualified national locust officers are able to conduct survey and control operations in a professional manner and contribute to an effective preventive control strategy. Accordingly, the FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC) provides support to the National Locust Control Units (NLCUs) in both frontline and invasion countries within the region. Special emphasis is given to the frontline countries because they host important seasonal breeding areas where outbreaks can develop that, if not monitored or controlled, can produce swarms that can easily migrate to the invasion countries.

The EMPRES programme initiated innovative training programmes that were adopted and taken over by the Commission. These programmes have contributed and improved the ability of the member countries to manage Desert Locust populations by using more efficient, less expensive and environment-friendly methods that enhance the effectiveness of Desert Locust preventive control.

In general, the training programmes for building national capacities have been implemented through intensive courses and workshops at the national, regional and international levels on a wide variety of topics. In total, more than 1200 Desert Locust survey and control officers, information officers, assistant and other staff have been trained and re-trained since 2000.

The following activities were conducted from 2000 to 2018:

National training courses



More than 70 courses introduced the main information of Desert Locust operations and management with a focus on the practical aspects of survey and control operations. Over 1 200 locust officers and staff from the frontline countries have benefited from these courses. Desert Locust experts and qualified Master Trainers played a significant and important role in the implementation of these training courses.

Subregional training workshops



Ten training courses were designed mainly for the invasion countries (non-frontline countries) and aimed at maintaining adequately qualified human resources to deal with any unexpected Desert Locust developments, benefiting over 200 plant protection and agricultural officers.

Train-of-Trainers courses



Five courses were organized to build national expertise by focusing on designated Master Trainers in order to develop and empower a new generation of trainers. More than 80 officers from the frontline countries and most of the invasion countries have benefited so far from this programme. Those officers are also qualified in Desert Locust operations management.

Specialized workshops on the maintenance of Desert Locust sprayers



In order to maintain, update and sustain control expertise in the NLCUs, the Commission conducted six specific courses on the maintenance of locust sprayers using regional specialized experts, to increase the efficiency of control management at the national levels. More than 80 technicians from various member countries benefited from these courses.

Specialized training at FAO Desert Locust Information Services (DLIS)



In the same context, DLIOs from the Commission member countries and other Desert Locust Commissions are trained at FAO Desert Locust Information Services (DLIS), FAO HQ, on the collection and analysis of locust information data, and working as technical assistants for eleven months. So far, seven officers from CRC have benefited from this programme.

Specified training courses on aerial survey and control operations



In view of the high performance of aerial control in survey and control operations of Desert Locust, which helps to rapidly contain locust outbreak, CRC has been providing training on the use of aerial control technologies, in collaboration with the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA). More than 80 locust officers and pilots from member countries have profited from these courses.

Desert Locust Management Diploma

A special program has been designed in collaboration with the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Khartoum from 2001 to 2008. Forty three locust officers graduated from member countries in the region. The aim was to improve the scientific skills of the staff of the NLCUs in order to improve the management of Desert Locust operations, in addition to qualifying national capacities to assume leadership positions in the NLCUs, allowing the application of new strategies and techniques in the management of Desert Locust operations. The program focused on supporting applied research in the fields of survey methods, control application, barriers treatment and biological control.

Specialized workshops on Desert Locust information management

The Commission, in cooperation with FAO Desert Locust Information Services (DLIS), has been keen to conduct an annual regional workshop specialized on the use of the database of Reconnaissance and Management System of the Environment of Schistocerca (RAMSES), in addition to using the eLocust devices, used by survey officers to transmit the field data remotely from the field. Around 100 DLIOs from the front line countries have participated in these courses.

Post Graduate Studies - M.Sc.

Since 2001, M.Sc. studies abroad is continuing, especially in the applied researches and studies. 10 Desert Locust Officers from member countries benefited from this programme, which focused on remote sensing, geographical information system, biocontrol pesticides, Desert locust population dynamics and survey methods etc.

Specialized training courses on applying Environmental and Health Standards

Recognizing the risks on human health and environmental safety associated with the use of chemical pesticides, the Commission has been organizing workshops on environment, health and safety standards (EHS) since 2012. This programme aimed at improving environmental and human safety measures to be applied during control operations, as well as monitoring the impact of chemical control on the environment, non-target organism and human health. To date, three regional workshops and six national training courses have been conducted to implement these standards in front-line countries. 120 locust officers participated in this programme so far.

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