

Minutes of MLN Community of Practice

Third Virtual Meeting held on

15th Feb 2017



Participants List

No.	Name	Institution	Phone no.	Email address
Members present				
1	Stephen Mugo	CIMMYT	+254207224610	s.mugo@cgiar.org
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Absent with Apologies				
22	B.M. Prasanna	CIMMYT	+254207224610	b.m.prasanna@cgiar.org

Agenda

Activity	Facilitator	Est. Duration (mins)
Welcome and introductions	Chair – Katemani Mdili PHS Tanzania	5 mins
Recap on MLN CoP virtual meeting held on 19/10/2016	Stephen Mugo, CIMMYT	5 mins
Update on USAID-MLN Project activities by CIMMYT	Project manager - Francis Mwatuni	10 mins
Country / Institutional /Collaborators (Partners) briefs on MLN activities	1. Kenya – George Ngundo 2. Uganda – Daniel Kwemoi 3. Rwanda – Fidel Nizeyimana 4. CIMMYT - David Hodson, Ethiopia 6. AATF – Gospel Omanyia 7. AGRA – Sammy Okita	5 mins each
Brief on 2017 Project activities W/Plan	Project manager - Francis Mwatuni	5 mins
Brief on BMGF MLN epidemiology project activities	Ann Wangai, CIMMYT	5 Mins
Closing remarks, Chair. Next meeting (virtual) June 2017	Chair	5 mins
Total		65 mins (1 hr. 5 mins)

Introduction

This is the third Virtual CoP meeting and the first one in the year 2017. The CoP meetings are aimed at updating members on the various issues on MLN activities under the project and from other initiatives in participating countries and institutions. This aims at keeping the members updated. The previous virtual CoP meeting was held on 5th of August 2016 at 2.00 – 3.30pm EAT. The latest being the Face to Face meeting which was held on 19th September 2016 after the Project Review and Planning meeting on 18th Sept 2016. Telephone connectivity was difficult with the 12 members of the 21 participants disconnected without success in reconnection by Chorus Call, our call provider.

Min 1/02/17 Welcome Remarks

The members were formally welcomed to the meeting by Stephen Mugo, CIMMYT-Africa Regional Representative (CRR) who is also the lead for the MLN Phytosanitary Community of Practice (MLN CoP or simply CoP).. He did a roll call to ascertain the members connected for the call. He noticed that not all members were connected and prompted the call provider to continue making efforts to reconnect the members who had been disconnected. He first wished all the members a Happy New and prosperous 2017. He recognized that this was the first CoP meeting this year preceding the last face to face meeting in October last Year. He appraised the members on the objectives of the CoP and the achievements made so far in developing of MLN Free seed production in consultation with stakeholders from participating countries. He also sensitized members to be ready to share any new technology/technologies that can help combat MLN in the region. He encouraged the members to share any experiences from the country and institutional initiatives towards MLN mitigation efforts for other members to benefit through integrated implementation. He offered to chair the meeting since the chair and vice chair had not been connected. He gave apologies for Dr. Prasanna, the Director, CGIAR MAIZE CRP and Director, CIMMYT Global Maize Program (GMP) and the MLN Diagnostics Project Leader who could not participate in the meeting.

Min 2/02/17 Recap on MLN CoP meeting held on 19/10/2017

This session was facilitated by Stephen Mugo. He recapped the deliberations of the last Face to Face meeting and gave a summary of the achievements of the CoP in the last one Year of the project cycle. The meeting had a record attendance of 41 partly due to the combination with the Project review and planning meeting. He gave an overall performance of the CoP which was quite commendable with the active participation of the activities of the CoP. He outlined the series of CoP activities which included the situation analysis of the participating countries, formation of a communication platform for exchange of information and ideas. He also emphasized that efforts towards MLN diagnostics and management, advancement in research

activities towards MLN management had started bearing fruit some MLN endemic countries. He also mentioned that the expansion of the CoP membership had been realized by co-opting members from other regional institutions and from the NPPOs of southern Africa countries. The CoP has facilitated participation of various multidisciplinary stakeholders along the maize value chain from various National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS), Regional bodies from the private sector to actively engage in the CoP activities. The CoP also was appraised on the regional training on MLN Surveillance and diagnostics using modern tools for NPPO staff from the project countries. An insight on new advancements in MLN diagnostics were presented by Monica Mezzalama - CIMMYT Mexico.

In the same meeting, several recommendations were made where members elected the new CoP office bearers. Katemani Mdili, PHS Tanzania was elected as the chair and Kasaija Banage (Seedco Rwanda) as the vice chair. The secretary remains Francis Mwatuni, The project Manager. It was noted that the membership had improved significantly from the original 21 members to 41 at the moment.

Min 3/02/17 Update on MLN Project Activities by CIMMYT

The Project Manager gave an update of the project activities for the last three months since the last CoP meeting. Below are the activities:

1. Finalization of the MLN free seed production checklist for Uganda and Rwanda. The meeting was done in Kampala on 30th Nov. 2016 with 44 participants from various disciplines. This activity was coordinated by AATF.
2. There was a training for the small scale commercial seed producers for several seed companies in Kenya at Perkeria Irrigation scheme, Marigat, Kenya. A record 272 out growers attended the training. Several such trainings will be done in the growing season of 2017.
3. A surveillance team for Uganda was trained on MLN surveillance and diagnostics using modern tools. The project manager and Daniel Bomet facilitated in the one day training in NACCRI, Namulonge, Uganda.
4. Several subgrants have been finalized to facilitate MLN surveillance in southern Africa countries and funds will be disbursed any time from the time of the meeting. This included those for Zambia, Zimbabwe and Rwanda. In the eastern Africa, we have finalized with Uganda and Rwanda.
5. Plans for facilitating surveillance in the southern Africa countries are almost complete. Evaluation of the QR codes and the MCMV Agristrips had been done.
6. Evaluation of immediate activities as per the work plan was ongoing with specific reference to those activities pegged on the cropping season and those that are not. Some activities were to be fast tracked.

Min 4/02/17 Country / Institutional briefs on MLN activities – New initiatives, activities in the country/institutions

Uganda

Daniel Bomet from NACCRI Uganda gave a brief for Uganda. He briefed the meeting about the Sub grant for MLN surveillance between NACCRI and CIMMYT which was finalized last year. The surveillance team was trained in Namulonge as earlier presented by the Project Manager. The trainees were from different sectors including researchers, plant pathologists, breeders, diagnostics research assistants and officers from the Ministry of Agriculture.

The surveillance activity commenced and already several areas had been sampled and analyzed. Seed from agro dealers and seed companies was also collected with a target of 300 samples. These will be analyzed in the labs. All the data from the surveillance was captured by the MLN database and the analyzed data will be available on the MLN web portal once it is complete. The remaining highlands maize growing areas will be completed in May/June 2017.

Rwanda

Fidele Nizeyimana from Rwanda Agricultural Board (RAB) gave the brief for Rwanda. He reported low incidences of MLN that season in Rwanda. A survey was planned during the planning meeting in Nairobi and with the support from Tuwura an MLN surveillance and impact study was done for the eastern province of Rwanda. A total of 4,370 samples were collected and so far 2000 had been analyzed using the ELISA kit. Only 3 samples had tested positive for MCMV, indicating the low incidences. However, a full report will be submitted once all the samples have been analyzed. Efforts had been made towards implementing field management practices to keep the MLN incidences low.

AATF

Gospel Omanywa gave the brief of AATF. He mentioned that so far AATF in conjunction with AGRA had held four stakeholders consultative meetings. He briefed the meeting about the Stakeholders meeting in Uganda and Rwanda as stated earlier. Most of the activities had been implemented jointly with AGRA. The finalized checklists have been shared by all the stakeholders from those countries and have been well received. The second step will be to monitor the use of these checklists by stakeholders which are the core activities in the Y2 work plan. Stephen thanked Gospel and welcomed Monica Mezzalama to the meeting.

Min 5/02/17 MLN Quarantine facility in Zimbabwe

Monica Mezzalama, Plant Pathologist and Head of The Seed Health lab in CIMMYT- Mexico gave a brief talk on the establishment of an MLN quarantine facility in Zimbabwe. This is after a formal agreement between CIMMYT and the Government of Zimbabwe through the Phytosanitary Services Department. The site is at Masowe 15 minutes' drive from Harare. She highlighted the quarantine procedures and structures that have been put in place at the site. The site has a secure fence and all the workers have been sensitized on strict upholding of Phytosanitary and quarantine procedures. The CIMMYT station has a small seed health lab that will compliment on testing for MLN viruses during active growth. Already some seed from Kenya has been planted as it is expected that 1.6ha will be planted this year. Stephen added also clarified that this facility will facilitate movement of seed from MLN endemic countries to non-endemic countries without a risk of spreading the disease.

Min 6/02/17 MLN Epidemiology Project

Ann Wangai gave some information on the new BMGF funded MLN Epidemiology Project. The project is aimed at understanding MLN better. It is a purely research project trying to answer several research questions especially in the area of seed transmission of MLN viruses. It is envisaged that a lot of data will be generated under this project on seed transmission of the disease in Africa which will inform various institutions on the management of the disease backed with credible scientific data. The location of the virus in the seed will be investigated to facilitate treatment if necessary especially through commercial seed movement. Residual effects and transmission of MLN through soil will also be investigated. The Western Africa countries are also at risk but CIMMYT in collaboration with IITA are working on establishing a quarantine facility in the region similar to the one in Zimbabwe. The project will also exploit appropriate diagnostic methods which are specific, sensitive and affordable.

The 2 year project started in June 2016 and is being implemented by several institutions namely CIMMYT, University of Minnesota (USA), Ohio State University (USA), KALRO and IITA – West Africa.

Johnny Massangwa from Malawi enquired on when the project was started but he was informed that the project started in June last year. Grace from AFSTA sought clarification on movement of seed from endemic areas to non-endemic areas. It was agreed that the presenters on country reports will be clarifying these issues during their presentations in future.

Min 7/02/17 Closing remarks

Kasaija Banage, the CoP vice Chair gave the closing remarks by first thanking the members from various countries and institutions who participated in the meeting. He voiced some concern on the time for the meeting which was a bit confusing hence led them (Rwanda team) to join late. He was however glad that the meeting took off and that members have been well connected throughout the meeting. He lauded the launch of the Epidemiology project and expressed his optimism that the project will address various sticky issues in MLN spread and management. He expressed concern about the new maize pest i.e. the fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) if it will complicate the MLN mitigation measures in the eastern Africa. He expressed hope that mitigation strategies for the management of the pest will be in place soon.

He once again thanked the members for their participation in spite of the connectivity problems.

The meeting was officially closed at 17:15 Hrs EAT