



**EMERGENCY PREVENTION SYSTEM FOR
TRANSBOUNDARY ANIMAL AND PLANT PESTS AND DISEASES
(EMPRES)**

CENTRAL REGION PROGRAMME

REPORT

on the

5TH EMPRES CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

and

PLANNING WORKSHOP FOR PHASE III

ROME, 19-23 MAY 2003

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Opening

1. The 5th EMPRES Consultative Committee and the Planning Workshop for Phase III was officially opened by Mr. Mahmoud Solh, Director, Plant Production and Protection Division. On behalf of the Director-General, he welcomed the delegates of the locust-affected countries, the representatives of the donors and FAO staff from the field.
2. Mr. Solh reminded participants that although the Desert Locust component of the Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases (EMPRES) had been fully operational in the Central Region (CR) since 1997, it had always been planned as a long-term activity, originally estimated at 12 years. It was not expected that a sustainable impact could be made quickly on such an ancient problem. He said that the recent independent evaluation had produced a generally favourable verdict on the progress of EMPRES/CR in Phase II and had recommended that a Phase III follow, in the likelihood that it be the last one. Mr. Solh further stressed that EMPRES was a cooperative effort between the affected countries, the donor community, and FAO. Most of the affected countries had made considerable investment on their own account to strengthen national capacity. He acknowledged and expressed FAO's appreciation of donor support to EMPRES/CR, especially those countries that had supported EMPRES continuously, notably the Netherlands, the United States and Switzerland. In conclusion, Mr. Solh said that one of the objectives recommended by the Evaluation Mission was the gradual handing over of EMPRES activities to the Central Region Commission. If the Planning Workshop agreed to follow this advice, then Phase III would be a very important step in the evolution of EMPRES, and he wished that the meeting's discussions be fruitful in deciding the directions in the next three years.
3. The meeting was chaired by Mr. N. Van der Graaff, Chief, Plant Protection Service and the Agenda prepared by the Secretariat was followed (see Annex I). A list of participants is given in Annex II.

Achievement Highlights for EMPRES/CR Phase II

4. The Coordinator of EMPRES/CR, Mr. C. Pantenius, described the principal achievements of EMPRES/CR during Phase II. The major components of the Phase had been:-

- Enhanced interaction between the stakeholders;
- Early detection and early warning;
- Introduction of economic and environmentally safer control technologies;
- Capacity building and training;
- Contingency planning and rapid deployment.

He reviewed each of these topics and drew attention not only to the achievements made but also indicated where shortcomings had occurred. While progress in almost all the components had been satisfactory, there was still some unevenness among the participating countries in respect to the degree to which EMPRES activities had been pursued and its practices adopted. The lack of locusts had been an important constraint

in testing new approaches and Contingency Planning needed much more development before member countries could be said to be fully prepared to deal with upsurges in locust populations.

5. In the discussions that followed, the delegate of Switzerland asked if the current locust recession was part of a natural cycle or if it was an exception. It was explained that the current recession was not cyclical in that no predictions could be made as to when the next upsurge might occur except when good and repeated rains fell in suitable locust habitats. During a recession, it was necessary to monitor rainfall and vegetation continuously and to carry out a certain minimum of ground surveys, in order to avoid being surprised by rapidly increasing locust populations.
6. The delegate from Ethiopia asked how countries should set about registering biopesticides. He was informed that FAO guidelines existed. These needed updating, which was under consideration at FAO but would take time to finalize. In the meantime, most countries were treating biopesticide registration in the same way as chemical pesticides, and the details varied from country to country. In the Sudan, it was necessary that the manufacturer had an agent in the country. It was noted that most countries were prepared to issue temporary permits for operational trials to be carried out prior to registration.
7. The lack of progress on initiating research projects in the region was mentioned by the delegate of the Netherlands. It was indicated that there has been a major problem with the quality of research proposals. Furthermore there had been some staffing problems. The Coordinator explained that in the past research topics had been discussed directly between the researchers and the staff member. EMPRES/CR was now encouraging the PPDs to identify areas of interest and to initiate dialogue with research institutions. Although there was still a difficulty in achieving the necessary quality in proposals submitted, recently two new projects had been approved. Nevertheless, the overriding difficulty was the lack of locust populations to work with which limited the scope of potential studies.

Improved Locust Management: Results of the Country Focus Programme in Sudan

8. The head of the Locust Control Section in Sudan, Mr. R. Khalil described the improvements that had been achieved in his country. The Government had made an effort to increase the allocation for Desert Locust management in recognition of the importance of the EMPRES Programme. This had included some new vehicles and resources being made available for national training events. Training had been conducted with several different levels of staff. With only a little help needed from EMPRES and/or the Central Region Commission, training could now be said to be a sustainable activity. The Section had executed its Country Focus Programme including the preparation of a draft Contingency Plan. It also carried out routine surveys in the winter and summer locust habitats, and had participated in several joint-surveys with neighbouring countries.

9. Sudan had also collaborated with several locust research initiatives including that of Wageningen University where a Ph.D. student studied solitary locust populations and their distribution in vegetation types, and that of Uppsala University, through which FAO Associate Professional Officer worked for two years on the side-effects of locust control on environmentally sensitive areas. The Locust Control Unit (LCU) had also assisted with the Locust Diploma at Khartoum University, both by making some presentations to the students but also by facilitating their field work.
10. The delegate of Sudan, Mr. Khidir, head of the Pest Control Department , said that 80% of the resources allocated to the Department went to locust management. The remainder was devoted to other pests including the Red-billed Quelea bird. The Ministry also had its own Agriculture Research Corporation which could carry out research on other pests as required. He said that all new pesticides submitted for registration had to pass through the Pest and Disease Committee, and could only be commercialized once they had been approved by the National Pesticide Council.
11. The delegate of Djibouti said that the progress achieved by Sudan in national training was laudable. In respect of research activities, he requested clarification on the dissemination of results. The Sudan ELO said that the LCU was establishing a locust library. An electronic listing of research outputs would be circulated to EMPRES/CR countries.
12. The Coordinator EMPRES/CR asked to what extent locust control was now centralized in Sudan, given that centralization was generally considered as an essential element in effective preventive control. The delegate of Sudan said that several years ago a political decision was taken to decentralize authority and for the Government to work on a federal basis. He added that theoretically about 90% of locust management was now centralized, with all migratory pest problems managed from the PPD Headquarters in Khartoum North. Centralization of migratory pest control was now a Government policy.

Use of Geographical Information Systems and Remote Sensing to Improve Early Warning in the Central Region

13. The presentation was given by the Remote Sensing consultant of the FAO Locust Group, Mr. P. Ceccato. He described the principles of the GIS locust management database RAMSES (Reconnaissance And Management System of the Environment of Schistocerca), how it provides a platform for viewing remote sensing images, checking past records of Desert Locust occurrence, and assisting decision-making in respect of locust survey and control. He also reported on recent developments in imagery using the SPOT satellites and how the capacity for examining vegetation condition on a smaller and smaller scale is becoming available. The objective of developing the interpretation of the images was to be able to carry out more targeted locust surveys to areas identified as green, and thereby reduce the cost of the surveying component of preventive control.
14. In the discussions that followed, the consultant said that although smaller-scale images produced a large amount of data, the speed of modern computers was well able to

handle the volume. However, for most purposes the kilometre-square pixels were sufficient, and only certain areas where favourable locust vegetation was very thinly distributed, would need to be examined at a smaller scale. It was still not certain whether eventually locust swarms could be detected. It was expected that knowledge of these areas would be gradually built up as the images became more and more routinely used. Also knowledge of false positives would also grow and allow features such as palm tree groves that showed up as green in images, to be screened out. In response to a question from the delegate of the United States, the consultant explained that the images were delivered every ten days, not in real time, but the locust data being collected in the field and transmitted by the *elocust* and modem/radio system would be received instantly in the national LCU.

15. The consultant said that in the Central Region RAMSES was now installed in Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Yemen, Oman and Saudi Arabia. All the countries that had access to the Internet, could download the SPOT images. The *elocust* data transmission system had, so far, been introduced in Sudan and Yemen.
16. The Director, DLCO-EA, indicated the need to train the DLCO-EA Information Officer for RAMSES backstopping and trouble-shooting, and in GIS technology.

Review of EMPRES/CR financial situation: expenditure 2002; estimated expenditure 2003; likely balances available for Phase III

17. The information on the current financial situation was presented by the Secretariat. EMPRES/CR is being directly supported by five donors (the Central Region Commission, the Desert Locust Control Committee, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United States) and by FAO's Regular Programme. A bilateral contribution to Phase II was made by Germany. The first two of the donors derive their funds from member countries that are affected by locust plagues. Final figures were presented for 2002 expenditure which reached a total of US\$ 1, 029,119. This level is almost the same as in Year 1 of Phase II. Expenditure in 2003, is expected to increase by about 25% in 2003.
18. Unspent balances are expected to exist in the Netherlands-funded project and in the two grants/projects funded by the United States at the end of 2003. FAO has not yet been informed whether these funds can be carried forward into Phase III. If the estimated balance in the Netherlands project, and the Committee/Commission agree to maintain their level of support, plus the expected resources from the Regular Programme become available, then the resources already available for Phase III will reach about US\$ 1.7 million. Until the Planning Workshop has completed its work and the resulting workplan for Phase III has been costed, the exact requirement for Phase III is not known. Initial indications suggest that a level of expenditure similar to Phase II can be expected, in which case a total of about US\$ 3.5 million will be required. If Switzerland and the United States agree to continue their support, there is still likely to be shortfall of about US\$ 1 million. FAO is in preliminary discussions with potential new donors, including the African Development Bank and there are some signs that support will be considered seriously.

19. In the discussions that followed, it was explained that the CRC, to which it is expected that EMPRES/CR will be handed over during Phase III, is funded partly by its own Trust Fund contributed by its 14 member countries, and partly by FAO which covers the cost of the Secretary's post and some of the Secretariat's running costs. The CRC is a statutory body of FAO and is therefore a permanent institution.

Report of the Evaluation Mission (February 2003) – Progress of Phase II and recommendations for Phase III

20. The Team Leader of the Mission, Mr. B. Bultemeier, FAO Evaluation Service, explained that this evaluation was the third to be carried out on EMPRES/CR since it became operational in 1997. Because of time and other constraints, only Egypt, Sudan and Eritrea could be visited, but locust staff from Yemen came to Cairo to meet the three-man evaluation team. Other information was gained by written questionnaire and by telephone.
21. The mission identified eight areas in which important results had been achieved including the close collaboration with CRC, the increased membership of CRC to include some more EMPRES countries, the exemplary planning and reporting routines established, improved technical/administrative support from FAO/AGPP, the introduction of RAMSES and elocust, the efforts to promote biopesticides, the development of a training manual, and the training programmes leading to the creation of national (master) trainers.
22. Progress was assessed as limited in three areas including research initiatives within the region, socio-economic studies, and the failure fully to establish management systems to support and verify best practices for survey and control.
23. Overall the mission considered that sufficient progress had been made in Phase II to warrant an extension of the programme into a third phase of three years duration. Phase III should focus on completing unfinished activities from Phase II and establishing a sustainable locust management system in the Central Region. The mission voiced the view that consideration be given to employing EMPRES approaches to the other migratory pests that affected the region, especially the Armyworm *Spodoptera exempta* and the Quelea bird *Quelea quelea*, but cautioned that any such extension should not be at the expense of preventive Desert Locust management.
24. In the extensive discussions that followed, the delegates both of Ethiopia and Sudan supported the mission's suggestion to extend EMPRES to the other migratory pests mentioned and to other locust species such as the Tree Locust. It was pointed out that handling only the Desert Locust problem would not ensure food security if the other species caused extensive damage to crops.
25. The delegate from Ethiopia questioned whether the work on biopesticides should focus on only *Metarhizium* and phenyl-aceto-nitrile PAN, or should include the search for other materials. The Secretariat said that the bringing of metarhizium to its present state of being ready for operational testing had been an immensely long and costly

- procedure. The delegate from Sudan asked whether or not, in the absence of Desert Locust, biopesticide trials for registration purposes could be done against other species of locust or grasshopper, and used for registration of the biopesticide against Desert Locust. It was clarified that under current legislation, trials and registration had to be species specific. The EMPRES/CR Coordinator said that a research project on using biopesticides against other acridid species was under way in Ethiopia, and projects could also be considered in other countries. The purpose of these trials was to familiarize national authorities with the use and efficacy of biopesticides against locusts and grasshoppers, such that it would be easier to test them against Desert Locust when the opportunity finally arose. The Chief, AGPP, said that, although FAO was fully supporting the development and use of biopesticides, it should be remembered that in the event of a serious upsurge, control teams would almost certainly have to fall back on chemical pesticides. The delegate from the United States said that EMPRES should include best practices for chemical pesticide management in its contingency planning. Given the enormous cost of disposing of obsolete pesticides, best practices that led to the avoidance of the problem could justify preventive control economically.
26. The criticism of the socio-economic studies by the mission was not accepted in that the subject had been included in the EMPRES/CR workplan for Phase II by the previous planning workshop and EMPRES had carried out two such studies. These, and another study by DFID/UK, had concluded that the poorest farmers were the most vulnerable and that after drought, locusts was the farmers' next most important worry. It was nevertheless accepted that the economic arguments in favour of preventive control versus emergency control had not been well articulated and it would be a valuable exercise to develop a discussion paper that put all the arguments and evidence together. The Coordinator EMPRES Western Region (WR) mentioned that it should be remembered that prevention not only had economic benefits but also advantages in minimizing the effects of locust control on the environment and human health. The delegate of Switzerland added that EMPRES would benefit from publicising its work at the Committee on Food Security.
27. Several participants expressed their view that Contingency Planning should be one of the key elements in Phase III. It was also generally agreed that the plans developed should be tested in practice drills, or independent evaluations, to check that what was on paper could also be made a reality. EMPRES/CR was planning to initiate a study even before the end of Phase II to compare the state of preparedness today in the Central Region compared to that which had existed in the 1980s. The Chief, AGPP, also said that contingency plans at a regional level should evidently include both the role of the CRC and of the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA).
28. The Secretariat mentioned the need to harmonize the work of the three EMPRES regions to ensure the avoidance of duplication and the sharing of progress made in one with region with the others.

Conclusion

29. The Chairman said that the discussions of the Evaluation Mission's results and recommendations had helped to identify a number of critical issues for consideration by the participatory Planning Workshop which followed as the next topic of the meeting. Among others, he singled out the institutionalization of RAMSES, the position of research within the region, the role of DLCO-EA, contingency planning, the testing of preparedness, and the management of pesticide stocks. He looked forward to seeing the results of the workshop at the end of the meeting.

Planning Workshop

30. The Planning Workshop for Phase III was moderated by Mr. El-Fouly and held in a participatory format. Using the card system, the expected results and main activities, responsibilities, indicators, sources of verification and important assumptions for Phase III were developed through discussion and agreed to jointly over a period of three days. The Programme Planning Matrix tabulates the conclusions reached (Annex III).

Adoption of the Report

31. The draft report on the 5th Consultative Committee meeting and the draft Programme Planning Matrix for Phase III were adopted with amendments.

Closure

32. The Chairman thanked all the participants for their contributions, the messenger and the interpreters for their support to the smooth running of the meeting, and the Secretariat for preparing the report in a timely manner. He expressed the hope that sufficient funding would be found to keep the EMPRES Central Region Programme viable for what was anticipated to be its final but crucial Phase III, and he wished all participants a safe journey home.

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AGENDA

Day 1 – Monday 19 May: Consultative Committee Meeting (09:00hrs)

1. Opening (Director, Plant Production and Protection Division)
2. Highlights of Progress achieved during Phase II (EMPRES/CR Coordinator)
3. Improved Locust Management: Results of the Country Focus Programme in Sudan (ELO Sudan)
4. Use of Geographical Information Systems and Remote Sensing to Improve Early Warning in the Central Region (Remote Sensing Officer).
5. Report on Financial Situation (Locust Group Budget Holder)
6. Introduction to the Goal-Oriented-Project-Planning methodology (Moderator)

Day 2 - Tuesday 20 May – Day 4 Thursday 22 May: Phase III Planning Workshop

1. Report of the Evaluation Mission (February 2003) – Progress of Phase II; Recommendations for Phase III (Team Leader)
2. Identification of Phase III programme purpose, expected results, indicators, important assumptions and main activities (Moderator, Workshop participants)

Day 5 - Friday 23 May: Phase III Planning Workshop (contin.)

Morning:

1. Preparation of summary of workshop findings and draft minutes of meeting (Drafting Committee, Moderator)
2. Donor / FAO Meeting on Financial Contributions to EMPRES/CR Phase III

Afternoon:

1. Adoption of summary of workshop findings and draft minutes of meeting.

Closure 17:00

Programme Planning Matrix, Phase III

Results/Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Sources of verification	Assumptions
<p>Development Goal:</p> <p>To reduce the risk of Desert Locust plagues emanating from the Central Region of the Desert Locust distribution area in order to mitigate food security, economic and environmental concerns in the Central Region and beyond</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistics • Reports • Studies 	
<p>Programme Goal:</p> <p>To strengthen the capacities and capabilities of the national, regional, and international components of Desert Locust management system to implement effective and efficient preventive control strategies based on early warning, and timely and environmentally sound early control interventions</p>		<p>Up to 8 of the Desert Locust Control Units in the Central Region practice at least X essential components of preventive control techniques/methods as part of their Desert Locust management strategy in a sustainable way (end of the programme)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning documents • Strategy papers • Reports 	<p><u>To contribute to the development goal:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desert Locust Control Units in the Central Region sustained and further components of preventive control strategies developed • The governments of the affected countries maintain support to the Locust Control Units during recession periods • External assistance in case of emergency provided in time
<p>Purpose of Phase III:</p> <p>Improved preventive Desert Locust control management approaches reinforced on sustainable basis</p>	<p>FAO-EMPRES, EMPRES/CR-countries, CRC</p>	<p>At least 6 countries have adopted and applied at least 3 improved preventive control components as part of the national Desert Locust management system by 2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country reports • Evaluation reports 	<p><u>To reach the programme goal:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All EMPRES member countries become part of the CRC • Donor agencies support the EMPRES Programme

Results/Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Sources of verification	Assumptions
<p>R1: EMPRES/CR Desert Locust management components¹ gradually taken over by the CRC and the participating countries</p> <p>1.1 Support member countries to develop sustainable national training programmes, with reduced technical and financial support of EMPRES.</p> <p>1.2 Support the national Locust Control Units in improved management and administrative procedures and methods</p> <p>1.3 Support member countries in initiating bilateral projects on selected Desert Locust management components</p> <p>1.4 Prepare a Monitoring and Evaluation system in collaboration with the CRC²</p> <p>1.5 Give support to Countries Focus Programmes</p>	<p>FAO-EMPRES, CRC, EMPRES/CR-countries</p>	<p>I.1.1: Improved preventive Desert Locust management component taken over by 2 countries by 2004, 3 more by 2005, 2 more by 2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country reports • Survey reports 	<p><u>To reach the purpose:</u> Trained staff is retained at the Locust Control Units</p> <p><u>To reach the result 1:</u> A.1.1: Member countries fulfil their commitments within the EMPRES Programme</p>

¹ **Components of safer control technologies:**

- Training of staff
- Contingency planning & rapid deployment
- Stakeholder interaction
- Early detection and early warning
- Economic and environmentally safer control technologies

² Assist CRC to organize annual meetings similar to EMPRES Liaison Officers Meetings from 2005 onwards

Results/Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Sources of verification	Assumptions
<p>R2: Implementation of improved early warning systems supported</p> <p>2.1 Make routine use of the RAMSES locust database and the interpretation of results</p> <p>2.2 Facilitate the interpretation of remote sensing satellite images and their use in directing survey operations</p> <p>2.3 Support joint cross border survey</p> <p>2.4 Support development of survey practices and technologies through solicited research projects</p>	<p>FAO-EMPRES, CRC</p>	<p>I.2.1: Improved early warning systems (routine survey, functional national information offices etc.) are operational in at least 6 Locust Control Units by 2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country reports 	<p><u>To reach the result 2:</u></p> <p>A.2.1: Accessibility of breeding areas in the region assured</p>

Results/Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Sources of verification	Assumptions
<p>R3: Campaign evaluation measures and contingency planning mechanisms in place</p> <p>3.1 Encourage the concerned countries to create national locust management committees (Steering Committees)</p> <p>3.2 Prepare guidelines for national contingency planning mechanisms³</p> <p>3.3 Support the national entities in developing national contingency planning mechanisms</p> <p>3.4 Assist the CRC in developing regional contingency planning mechanisms in accordance with those of countries and FAO</p> <p>3.5 Assess the “operationality” of the contingency planning mechanisms</p> <p>3.6 Develop guidelines for campaign evaluation</p> <p>3.7 Develop mechanisms to collect data on infestation limit, crop damages etc. during control campaign</p> <p>3.8 Evaluate the comparative economic advantage of preventive control vs. emergency control</p> <p>3.9 Assist member countries in developing simulated control campaigns in the field</p>	<p>FAO-EMPRES, CRC, EMPRES/CR-countries</p>	<p>I.3.1: National contingency planning mechanisms adopted and the operationally assessed as satisfactory for 2 countries by 2004, 3 more by 2005, and 2 more by 2006</p> <p>I.3.2: Regional contingency planning mechanisms adopted by the CRC and operationally assessed and satisfactory by 2005</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans • Reports of Assessment • Plans • Reports 	<p><u>To reach the result 3:</u></p> <p>None</p>

³ Including rapid deployment procedures and good pesticide management practices at all stages

Results/Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Sources of verification	Assumptions
<p>R4: Alternative control technologies supported</p> <p>4.1 Participate with member countries and other collaborators in the FAO process to harmonize bio-pesticide regulations</p> <p>4.2 Support demonstrations on the efficacy of bio-pesticides</p> <p>4.3 Support solicited research projects</p>	FAO-EMPRES, CRC	I.4.1: At least one bio-pesticide against the Desert Locust registered in at least 3 countries and ready for operational use by 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration documents 	<p><u>To reach the result 4:</u></p> <p>A.4.1: Locust infestations permit field trials</p> <p>A.4.2: National legislation allows the registration of DL bio-pesticides</p>