

Abstract

Since its inception in 2005, the Nematology Initiative for Eastern and Southern Africa (NIESA) is a project that has been sponsored by the Charitable Foundation (UK) to build capacity in the discipline of Nematology, and to develop a network expertise in eastern and southern Africa, originally with technical support from a UK consortium— CABI Bioscience, Rothamsted Research and the University of Reading. At present, NIESA is composed of a cadre of qualified nematologists from Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The project has also started to move from its capacity building phase to sharing and transferring NIESA nematologists' expertise to ascertain the extent to which plant-parasitic nematodes act as a constraint to local and regional crop production and to create awareness among farmers and local communities about the importance of nematodes. To achieve this, NIESA, as a group, will continue carrying out scientific research and training of farmers and phytosanitation staff for the practical benefit for local communities, crop health and food security. Networking, joint research fund application, cross-learning and peer support among practising nematologists in Africa can facilitate an active and interactive support to overcome the lack of a critical mass of nematologists in any one country. It can also link the network to information services available through partner scientists, formal research and training collaborations to improve understanding and raise the profile of Nematology within Africa