

Executive Summary

This new Strategy replaces AfricaSeeds' previous, 2016-2025, Strategy Document. A revision of the Strategy has become necessary in order to respond to new trends and changed circumstances, new concepts, sciences and technologies for which new approaches are required. Of particular importance is a need for the new Strategy to be aligned with and contribute to the 2063 African Union Agenda on inclusive and sustainable development.

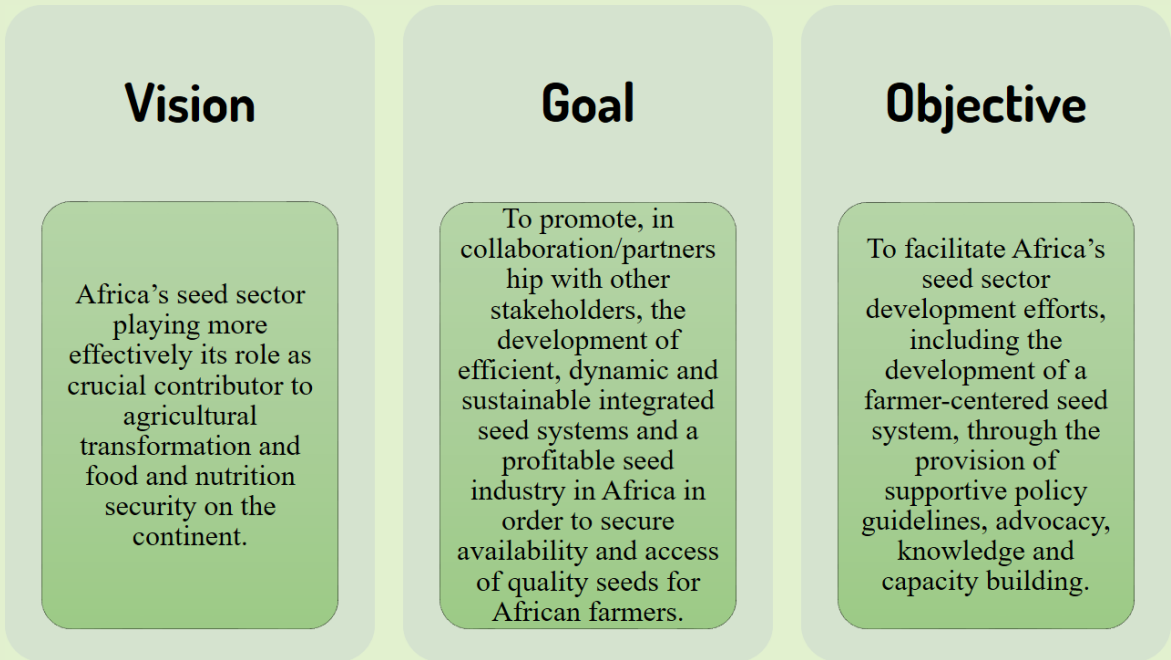
This new Strategy takes into account the fact that quality seeds are critical for increasing overall crop production (potentially up to 30-40% yield increase), and therefore form the basis for food and nutrition security in Africa. The past decade has seen good advances in seed sector development in Africa made possible by a high level of partnership and collaboration between governments and developing partners and spearheaded by regional seed harmonization programs of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), in which AfricaSeeds played a

crucial role as implementation coordinator of the ASPB. However, in spite of the perceived benefits of quality seeds, the record of seed sector contribution to Africa's agricultural development has been below par, a situation contributed to by the slow growth of the private seed sector in most countries.

Some of the key challenges which have constrained the contribution of the seed sector include: deficient seed policies; limited variety development and deployment; slow progress in development of the private seed sector; inadequate support for small-scale seed entrepreneurs; weak infrastructure and capacity; fragile seed marketing; poor extension services; inadequate attention to informal seed systems; and limited efforts in emerging issues such as climate change, breeders' and farmer's rights and biodiversity loss.



Key elements of the new strategy are outlined as follows.



Quality seeds are critical for increasing overall crop production (up to 30-40% yield increase) and therefore form the basis for food and nutrition security in Africa. The past decade has seen good advances in seed sector development in Africa made possible by a high level of partnership and collaboration between governments and developing partners and spearheaded by regional seed harmonization programs by Regional Economic Communities (RECs). However, in spite of the overwhelming evidence of the benefits of quality seeds, the record of seed sector contribution to Africa's agricultural development has been below par. Some of the challenges which have constrained the contribution of the seed sector include: inadequate seed policies; inadequacies in variety development and deployment; slow development of the private seed sector; inadequate support for small-scale seed entrepreneurs; poorly developed infrastructure and

capacity; inadequate seed marketing; inadequate extension services; inadequate exploitation of the informal seed sector, including farmer seed systems, as well as the neglect of such emerging issues as climate change, biodiversity loss and breeders' and farmers' rights.

In line with well-accepted connotation of seeds, AfricaSeeds will operate on the basis that SEEDS means all reproductive and vegetative planting materials of plants and forest species. But AfricaSeeds will exercise flexibility and admit also the animal dimension of SEEDS when the issues relating to the admittance of animal seeds are satisfactorily resolved.

AfricaSeeds will continue its active participation in the implementation of the ASBP and contribute to policy development and resource mobilization for seed programs to assist in the

development of inclusive national, regional and continental seed programs, to contribute more effectively in achieving agricultural transformation, as well as food and nutrition security in Africa.

The overall concentration of AfricaSeeds will be on its four Flagship Programs:

- development of relevant capacities and skills for seed sector development Young Seed Professionals Program, Promotion of youth and women entrepreneurship in seed sector, joint training activities with learning institutions;
- development and adoption of national seed policies: directly in response to national programs requests; as regional training activities, in collaboration with RECs and development partners;
- the Seed Knowledge Gateway Program: an already commenced program to develop a continent-wide computerized network on data, statistics and information for seed sector planner, developers and farmers. AU to be requested to get involved in this Program;
- harnessing the informal seed sector as a major seed source that needs to make further impact in overall food production.

for which priority and emphasis will be placed relating to resourcing, advocacy, execution and monitoring.

AfricaSeeds will address the needs for seed sector development in cooperation with all seed stakeholders and

developmental partners, through integrated seed sector development actions, public-private partnerships and networking to achieve sustainable national, regional and continental seed programs and industries, in line with the ASBP and the goal of continental agricultural transformation and food security.

In its interventions, AfricaSeeds will advocate for support and prioritization of seeds for agricultural development and food and nutrition security, ensure availability and access of quality seeds to farmers in both the formal and informal seed sectors, for increased crop production and productivity, enhance and support private seed entrepreneurship, promote seed trade and market development, promote resilience of national seed systems vulnerable to threats and crises and promote seed-related data, information and knowledge systems.

Fostering effective partnership and collaboration with all key stakeholders, including AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities, the AU Commission, farmers and farmers' organizations as well as technical and development partners, will be essential to the implementation of AfricaSeeds' strategy. The expectation is that this Strategy Document sufficiently introduces and adequately exposes the workings and aspirations of AfricaSeeds to the extent that it enables its partners to join in efforts to enhance the effectiveness of AfricaSeeds and sell it to its various constituencies, both benefactors and beneficiaries.

