

# AfricaSeeds

The African Seed Sector Development Organization



## Strategy 2022-2031

For inclusive seed sector development to  
support agricultural transformation in Africa









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December 2021

## Acknowledgements

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# Foreword



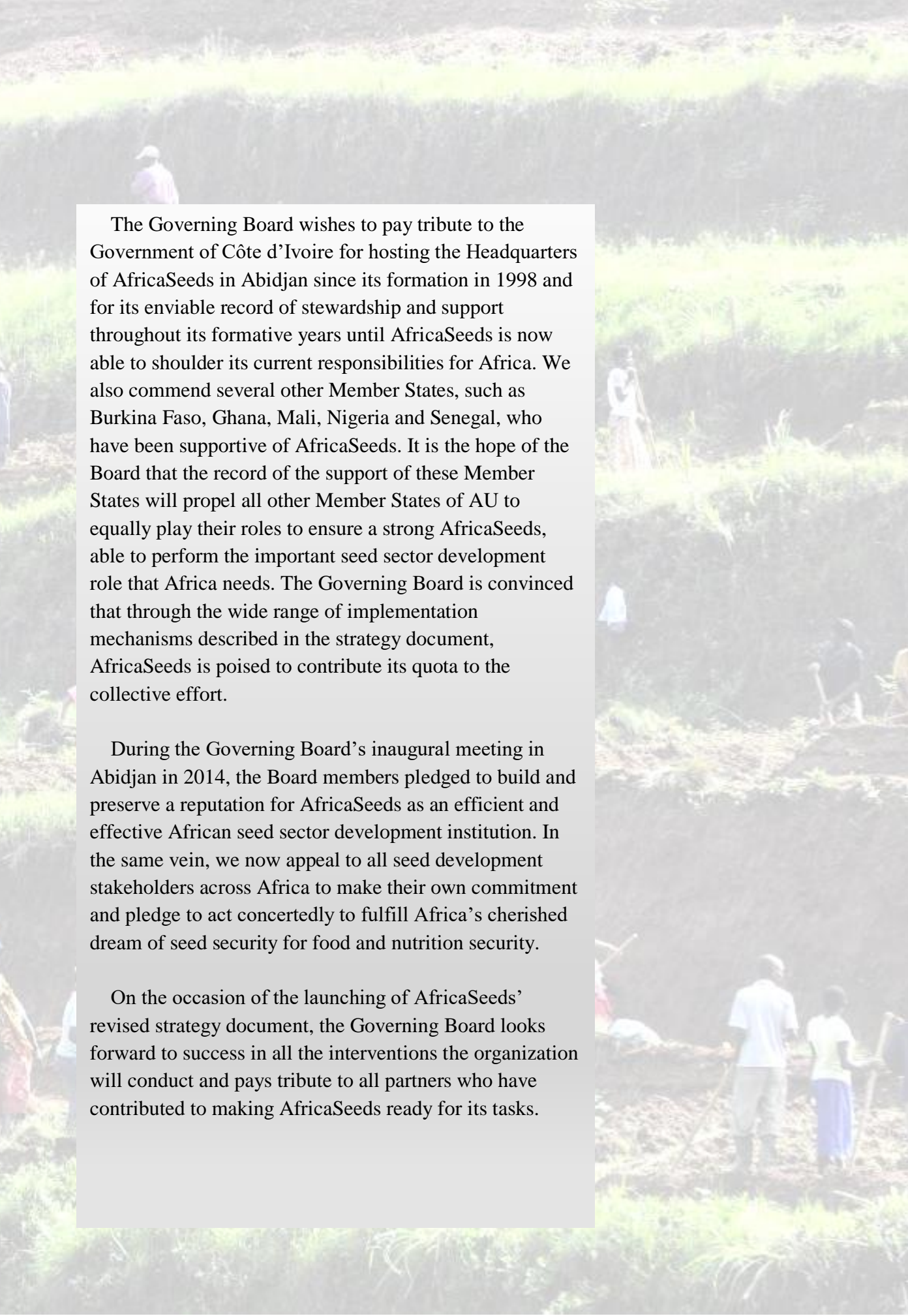
*Dr. Adama Traoré  
Chairman of  
the Governing Board*

There is wide acceptance that a strong and effective seed sector highly contributes to the achievement of agricultural advancement. Consequently, AfricaSeeds has been involved in enhancing seed sector development, starting initially as a network from 1998, when it was formed by 40 sub-Saharan African countries as the African Seed Network (ASN), until 2014, when it was reorganized to widen its mandate and objectives to serve as an implementing agency for the African Union (AU) seed program, the African Seed and Biotechnology Program (ASBP).

In 2015, AfricaSeeds adopted a strategy conversant with its vision and mission that would enable it to effectively play its role in collaboration with its numerous partners to address the imperatives of seed sector development in Africa. Although many aspects of that strategy are still valid, it has become obvious that a rapid succession of new challenges and emerging issues necessitate a revision of that strategy.

AfricaSeeds has championed the cause of ASBP in its first decade, from 2010 to 2020, and been singularly active in its implementation. AfricaSeeds has honed its skills serving in ASBP and collaborating with a wide range of partners and is ready to play its part in the next decade of ASBP implementation. But, more than that, in response to the calls from national seed programs, and in response to the outcomes of the recently concluded United Nations Food Systems Forum, and the emerging consequences of climate change, AfricaSeeds has seen the need to directly assist Member States and regional authorities in the key areas of training, knowledge dissemination, seed policy formulation and implementation and the harnessing of the informal seed sector and will be very active responding to calls from the national and regional programs in collaboration with sponsoring partners.



The background of the page is a faded, grayscale photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there are rows of crops, possibly maize, growing in a field. Several people are visible in the background, some standing and some working, suggesting a farming community. The overall tone is agricultural and community-oriented.

The Governing Board wishes to pay tribute to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for hosting the Headquarters of AfricaSeeds in Abidjan since its formation in 1998 and for its enviable record of stewardship and support throughout its formative years until AfricaSeeds is now able to shoulder its current responsibilities for Africa. We also commend several other Member States, such as Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal, who have been supportive of AfricaSeeds. It is the hope of the Board that the record of the support of these Member States will propel all other Member States of AU to equally play their roles to ensure a strong AfricaSeeds, able to perform the important seed sector development role that Africa needs. The Governing Board is convinced that through the wide range of implementation mechanisms described in the strategy document, AfricaSeeds is poised to contribute its quota to the collective effort.

During the Governing Board's inaugural meeting in Abidjan in 2014, the Board members pledged to build and preserve a reputation for AfricaSeeds as an efficient and effective African seed sector development institution. In the same vein, we now appeal to all seed development stakeholders across Africa to make their own commitment and pledge to act concertedly to fulfill Africa's cherished dream of seed security for food and nutrition security.

On the occasion of the launching of AfricaSeeds' revised strategy document, the Governing Board looks forward to success in all the interventions the organization will conduct and pays tribute to all partners who have contributed to making AfricaSeeds ready for its tasks.

# Abbreviations

## ABCIC

African Biodiversity Conservation and Innovation Centre

## AFSTA

African Seed Trade Association

## AfCFTA

African Continental Free Trade Area

## AGRA

Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa

## AMU

Arab Maghreb Union

## ASARECA

Association for strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa

## ASBP

African Seed and Biotechnology Program

## ASBPP

African Seed and Biotechnology Partnership Platform

## ASIWA

Action Plan for the Implementation of the Alliance for Seed Industry in West Africa

## ASN

African Seed Network

## ASTA

American Seed Trade Association

## AU

African Union

## AUC

African Union Commission

## CAADP

Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program

## CAADPP P

CAADP Partnership Platform

## CCARDESA

Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa

## CEEAC

Economic Community of Central African States

## CEN-SAD

Community of Sahel-Saharan States

## CGIAR

Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research

## COMESA

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

## CORAF/WECARD

West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development

## EAC

East African Community

## ECCAS

Economic Community of Central African States

## ECOWAP

ECOWAS Agricultural Policy

## ECOWAS

Economic Commission of West African States

## ESA

Eastern and Southern Africa

## FANR

Food Agriculture and National Resources (SADC)

## FAO

UN Food and Agriculture Organization

## FARA

Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa

## FAST

Forum for African Seed Testing

## FBO

Farmer Based Organization

## FMSS

Farmer-Managed Seed System

## FO

Farmers' Organization

## GB

Governing Board

## IARC

International Agricultural Research Center

## IFAD

International Fund for Agricultural Development

## IGAD

Inter-governmental Authority on Development

## IGRO

International Research Organizations

## IPM

Integrated Pest Management

## ISSD

Integrated Seed Sector Development

## ISTA

International Seed Testing Association

## M&E

Monitoring and Evaluation

## MDG

Millennium Development Goals

## MoU

Memorandum of Understanding

## NSTA

National Seed Trade Association

## NARS

National Agricultural Research System

## NAST

National Seed Trade Association

## NEPAD

New Partnership for Africa's Development

## NFP

National Focal Point

## NSB

National Seed Board

## NSL

National Seed Laboratory

## NSP

National Seed Program

## PRASAC

Regional Center for Applied Research in the Development of Agricultural Systems in Central Africa

## REC

Regional Economic Community

## RFP

Regional Focal Point

## SADC

Southern African Development Community

## SAA

Specific Action Area

## SADC-FANR

Southern African Development Community / Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Department

## SDG

Seed Knowledge Gateway

## SRO

Sub Regional Organization

## SSG

Seed Systems Group

## UEMOA

Union Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique de l'Ouest

## UPOV

Union pour la Protection des Objets Végétales

## USAID

United States Agency for International Development

## WAAPP

West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program

## WACCI

The West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement

## WFP

UN World Food Program



## 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.

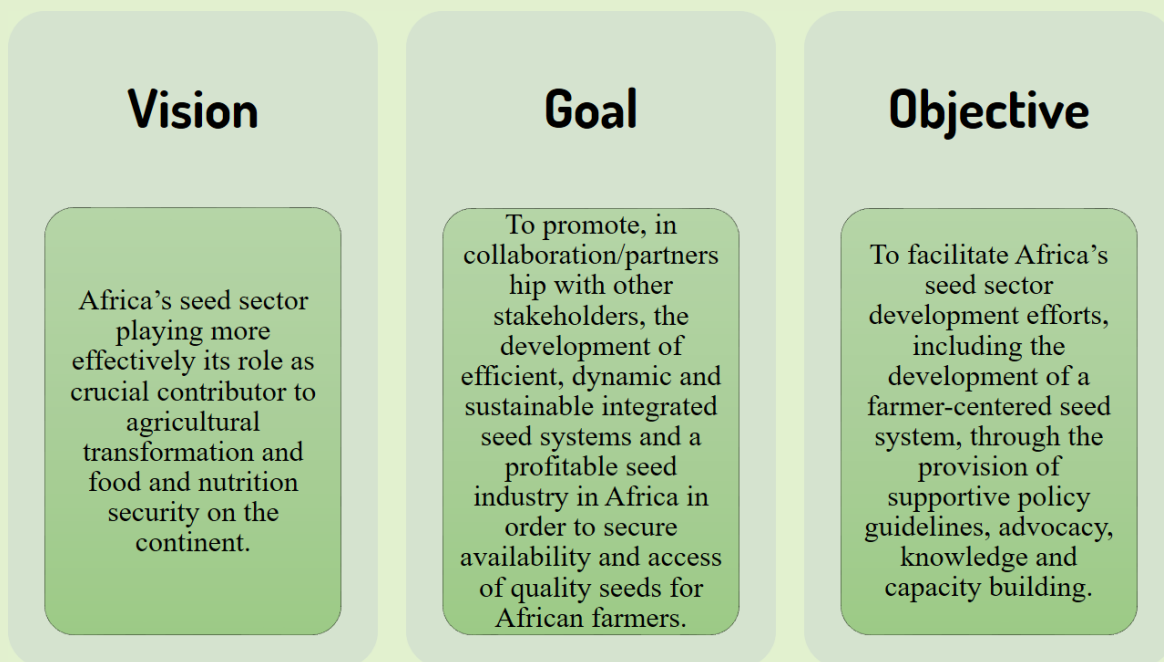
This new Strategy takes into account the fact that quality seeds are critical for increasing overall crop production (potentially up to 30-40% yield increase), and therefore form the basis for food and nutrition security in Africa. The past decade has seen good advances in seed sector development in 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.



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: the Young Seed Professionals Program, the promotion of youth and women entrepreneurship and 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.



# 1. Background

## 1.1 Justification for Change in Strategy

**AfricaSeeds' Strategy Document that was formulated in 2015 and originally proposed to remain in force until 2025 has served AfricaSeeds well. It has guided AfricaSeeds' operations in both the African Seed and Biotechnology Program and other continental, regional and national interventions and ensured conformity with the principles of the organization. However, rapid changes have occurred in recent years in the seed sector in Africa requiring a review of the strategy. In July 2021, AfricaSeeds, the African Seed Sector Development Organization, commenced a process of revising the Strategy Document. The review process was aimed at considering the new and emerging developments in the seed sector in Africa, to recommend the proper positioning and strategy for AfricaSeeds that would assist the latter to effectively conduct seed sector**

**interventions that lie in its purview in the next decade, from 2022 to 2031.**

The African seed market has grown appreciably from 2014, reaching close to USD 1.9 billion in 2019 (Agribusiness Research and Analysis, June 2021). African food imports have risen from USD 35 billion in 2020 to an estimated USD 100 billion by 2030. This figure amply demonstrates the necessity for increased domestic crop productivity that is anchored on sound seed systems designed to meet continental seed requirements. Although there are great strides made to modernize the relevant regulations and policies in the African seed environment, there are many issues that need to be addressed. The promotion of an enabling policy environment for the release and adoption of improved varieties will further stimulate private sector interest and investment.





The harvest is in the seed

The African commercial seed market is dominated by maize (42%), vegetables (20%) and cereals (14%) which combine for a three-quarter share of the continental market (Agribusiness Research and Analysis, June 2021). Given that sub-Saharan Africa has the highest incidence of poverty and malnutrition in the world, the stagnation in per-capita grain production is worrisome. There is need for concerted efforts to coordinate the public sector's role in developing transformative seed sector development systems as well as developing new varieties, seed production and seed marketing initiatives.

AfricaSeeds will need to work with national governments, RECs, development partners and all interested parties, including local small and medium-sized seed enterprises who have a comparative advantage in reaching out to all farmers who require good quality seeds.

The issues addressed during the review process included the following:

- current context of seed sector development in Africa;
- characteristics of seed sector in Africa;
- challenges;
- lessons to be learned for positioning AfricaSeeds;
  - areas of priority concern for AfricaSeeds;
  - proposed flagship programs for AfricaSeeds;
- interventions of AfricaSeeds;
  - areas of intervention;
  - mode of intervention;
  - principles for intervention;

- collaboration;
  - relationship with Member States;
  - collaboration with other organizations;
- informal seed sector in which the farmer-managed seed system forms a predominant part;
- animal seeds, being presently discussed by stakeholders to become an integral part of an all-inclusive SEED connotation.

The review discussions yielded the following summary on the current context of seed sector development in Africa:

- wide range of interventions by many stakeholders and partners in seed sector development in Africa;
- current period is the most intense and widespread seed sector development effort in recent history;
- harmonization programs established and functioning in four regions and preparation ongoing in one region;
- low rate in the implementation of harmonization processes;
- creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has introduced high prospects for continental seed marketing;
- ongoing consultation by AUC and partners on continental guidelines for harmonization of regulatory frameworks further improves the prospects of continental seed marketing;
- continued dominance of the informal sector over the formal sector in seed supply to farmers,

justifying the need to consider the mainstreaming of the former;

- low professionalization of the seed sector ;
- emergence of the animal seed dimension of the seed sector;
- threats and crises: e.g. epidemics (COVID-19), climate change;
- many countries may require assistance to develop and/or implement their national policy;
- interaction with international conventions, treaties, associations and organizations
- emerging sciences and technologies.

new concepts, sciences and technologies for which new approaches are required.

The new Strategy Document for AfricaSeeds is here presented for use and reference by AfricaSeeds staff and all collaborators and partners of AfricaSeeds.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Strategy Document

This Strategy Document represents the *modus operandi* of AfricaSeeds. The Strategy will guide the organization in all its operations, including in the implementation of the ASBP; in its relationship and support to other seed initiatives; and in its approaches towards addressing the many issues of the seed sector in Africa.

The Strategy has been formulated by a process instituted by the Governing Board of AfricaSeeds and has benefitted from contributions of several key experts and was eventually approved in November 2021 by the Governing Board and replaces the entirety of the previous Strategy Document. While many elements of the previous strategy are evident in the renewed version, considerable updating is seen in the new strategy due to the need to respond to new trends and changed circumstances,



## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Role and Importance of Seeds

**Quality seeds are known and accepted as being the prime input in agriculture, particularly in their role as exerting a profound effect on agricultural productivity, and ultimately making it possible to realize the goals of food and nutritional security, livelihood empowerment and poverty alleviation. The critical role of seeds in agriculture renders it critical in the security of the nation and thus it has become clear from events in recent times that any nation that does not adequately position its seed matters relegates its food security fortunes into the hands of external forces.**

Africa's agriculture sector is plagued by low productivity which hinders the ability of the continent to adequately feed its burgeoning population, with a wide gap existing between potential and current yields for major food crops including maize and rice.

Adequate seed usage of improved varieties and quality seeds, as well as good management practices, play a key role in determining agricultural productivity. Seeds, together with good production environment, determine the upper limit of crop yields and the productivity of all other agricultural inputs in the farming system. Quality seeds are therefore critical in agriculture.

Since they constitute a key ingredient for enhancing farm productivity and overall crop production, quality seeds form the basis for food and nutrition security. The management of the seed sector is therefore of paramount importance. The basic requirement in a seed system is that good quality seeds should be made available in locations where they are required and, as well, farmers should have access to them and be able to utilize them in the proper manner for the required output.





Visit to the Kamano Seed Company, with its General Manager Ms Sylvia Horemans, Zambia, 2016



For seeds to play the desired role in Africa, an essential prerequisite is an effective seed sector at the national, regional and continental levels. However, the seed sector in Africa is plagued with serious inequities which render it ineffective to cater for the overall needs of agriculture. As food and nutrition security is heavily dependent on seed security, the goal of food and nutrition security will remain elusive unless the seed security of farming communities is achieved first.

Given the critical role that improved varieties play in increasing agricultural production, a key question is how to facilitate the development of a seed system that is capable of generating, producing and distributing quality seeds of new varieties that meet the needs of all farmers, in a cost-effective way.

It is well accepted that seeds are the most important element in crop production; they are the basic unit of plant propagation, and as such a crucial component in agriculture. Quality seeds are a prerequisite to successful agriculture and constitute a major pathway for the success of continental food and nutrition security goals, with the potential to increase overall crop productivity.

## 2.2 Seed Systems in Africa

The two sectors identified in seed in Africa are broadly grouped as the Formal Sector and the Informal Sector.

### Formal Sector

\*\*\*\*\*

Made up of formalized and regulated seed enterprises, both public and private, which are under the purview of legislative quality assurance systems,

commonly seed certification system, and adopting modern varieties, machinery and equipment as well as technological and business methodologies. The sector supplies about 10 to 15% of seeds, mainly cereals and legumes.

The guiding principles of this sector are:

- to maintain variety identity and purity, and
- to produce seeds of optimal physical, physiological and sanitary quality.

### Informal Sector

\*\*\*\*\*

Informal seed sector systems are locally organized and based on the ways farmers produce, disseminate and procure seeds through on-farm saving, exchange with other farmers or purchase from local grain markets.

Largely based on local varieties and landraces, there are also opportunities to incorporate some modern varieties. Predominantly lying outside regulatory frameworks, the informal sector responds adequately to local needs in terms of type, access and quality. The sector also includes unregulated seed enterprises which are only a few steps away from conversion into the formal sector.

## 2.3 Brief History of Seed Sector Development Efforts in Africa

The realization of the role of seeds has seen all nations striving to develop their seed sector. Starting from the emergence of a seed industry which partnered the industrial revolution of the West, to the early pursuit of national seed programs by all African countries following attainment of independence, to the development of seed industries of various stages of specialization and emphasis

across Africa, seeds are clearly seen as leading agricultural transformation efforts.

While these efforts have mostly been initiated and led by governments, developing partners have widely assisted in the efforts, concentrating mainly in the formal sector and supporting the emergence of seed companies, both public and private. Though these efforts have been largely productive, the scope has been limited to the main cereal crops of maize, wheat and rice and the legume crops groundnut and soybean and further limited to the seed certification system. It is, then, rather, the informal sector, unregulated and largely based on landraces and indigenous cultivars, and covering all the needed crops of Africa, which has served as the source of seeds for more than 90% of seed needs but which has been overlooked in development efforts and left to the devices of small-scale farmers.

The formulation and adoption of the ASBP in 2007 by the AU with the collaboration of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the introduction of continental and regional seed development efforts by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the RECs (the latter's efforts resulting in regional seed harmonization programs) have clearly put the seed topic in the forefront of national, regional and continental agricultural conversation and actions.

## 2.4 Key Characteristics of the Seed Sector in Africa

The seed sector in Africa is characterized by numerous diversities in its technical and development aspects relating to:

- actors;
- cultivated crops and varieties (food crops, trees, fodder, etc.);
- seed production and supply systems;
- cultivation and agricultural food production systems;
- initiatives / interventions (addressing diverse issues with sometimes conflicting objectives);
- sources and mechanisms of funding;
- national seed policies.

To be able to effectively relate to and deal with all the aspects, AfricaSeeds, as a continental seed development organization, intends to build its capacity to be able to respond effectively to all issues, establish rapport with all Member States, partners and clients, and constantly acquire knowledge that is relevant to current issues.

## 2.5 Current Status of the African Seed Sector

### 2.5.1 Advances

The past two decades have seen probably the most intense seed development activities in Africa so far. The Eastern and Southern African (ESA) countries have produced world class private seed companies which are making their mark beyond their national boundaries. Though countries in Western and Central Africa have lagged far behind industry leaders in east and southern Africa, several credible private seed companies are now emerging all





over Africa by virtue of opportunities brought about by harmonization programs by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern Africa Development Community) SADC. Spurred on by progressive policies, facilitative regulations and conducive agricultural environments, the place of quality seeds is being established all over Africa. The current efforts by the African Union to establish continental guidelines for the harmonization of regulatory frameworks in Africa demonstrates, at the highest level, the position that quality seeds are desired to occupy.

### 2.5.2 Challenges of the Seed Sector in Africa

In spite of the overwhelming benefits of quality seed, the record of contribution by the seed sector to Africa's agricultural development on the whole has been unsatisfactory. As outlined below, there are several challenges which have constrained the seed sector's contribution, some of which have been taken into account in formulating AfricaSeeds' Flagship Programs.

- i. **Inadequate seed policies:** while a few countries have seed policies which are catalyzing investments, particularly in seed distribution, in many other countries, either there are inadequate seed policies, or the policies are acting as disincentives to further seed industry development. Although it has been generally accepted that harmonizing seed policies and legislations can contribute to enhanced collaboration of national seed industries, in

practical terms implementation of harmonized agreements has been slow. This is largely because the capacities and the resources required have not been adequately developed. Weaknesses are found in the areas of infrastructure, trained manpower, governance, funding, etc.

- ii. **Poor exploitation of plant genetic resources:** several obstacles limit the effective use of plant genetic resources. These include: the lack of organized germplasm collection, conservation and management initiatives, characterization and evaluation data; poor coordination of national policies; and poor linkages between national gene banks and the users of the germplasm.
- iii. **Inadequacies in variety development and deployment:** although most National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) have a good record of variety development of the key crops in the country, serious gaps remain, relating to food security crops such as rice, cassava, yam, cowpeas, open pollinated maize, millet and sorghum, vegetable crops, etc. Further, newly developed varieties often do not reach farmers timely because of lengthy testing requirements which have to be repeated even in countries with similar agro-ecological conditions. Further, there is lack of national capacity to maintain the released varieties and provide breeder and



foundation seeds in a timely manner.

- iv. **Slow development of the private seed sector:** it is well accepted that a vibrant private seed sector will give a major boost to the seed sector development objective of the continent. Because well-meaning policies and interventions are available only in a few countries, the goal of the private seed industry as the dominant actor in seed production and trade has remained elusive. Inadequate investment in seed infrastructure (seed laboratories, processing plants, warehouses, marketing outlets etc.); lack of access to credit; difficulties in quantifying demand for seeds; poor organizational capacity; and harsh investment environments, among others, hinder private sector growth.
- v. **Inadequate support for smallholder seed entrepreneurs:** often, government support for small scale seed entrepreneurs is not adequate. Smallholder seed sector operators often have no access to rural credit and marketing opportunities for their seed is limited. Additionally, business management skills are lacking. The result is that ordinary smallholder farmers cannot access high quality seed as it is either not available in their area, or the seed is too expensive for most farmers to purchase.

- vi. **Unavailability of other agricultural inputs:** seed has a synergistic relationship with other inputs such as fertilizer in the sense that on one side the availability of quality seed can influence the adoption of other agricultural inputs, and on the other side, seed may require other inputs to realize its full genetic potential. There are serious challenges in the prices and availability of other agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and chemicals that militate against the availability and use of those inputs, and consequently affect the usefulness of quality seeds.
- vii. **Lack of effective, comprehensive and reliable seed information systems:** lack of information (including sound seed databases and statistics) and knowledge poses a serious constraint in planning in almost all areas of the seed sector. Understanding farmers' needs and practices, market information, seed regulations, demand forecast, seed and variety availability are a few of the areas where seed sector data and knowledge are generally not adequate.
- viii. **Poorly developed infrastructure and capacity:** capacities are generally poor across the industry: from variety development, production, processing, marketing etc. The need for capacity is seriously felt but long unsatisfied. Long distances between farmers and



seed outlets and poor roads result in high transportation costs while poor storage arrangements impact negatively on seed quality.

- ix. **Inadequate seed marketing:** national seed marketing networks are inadequate to ensure equitable distribution of seeds especially in remote and rural locations. At the regional and continental levels, there is lack of collaboration, consultation and harmonization regarding the development, movement and use of quality seeds and vegetatively propagated materials. This leads to unduly restrictive seed certification and variety release requirements, which differ from country to country, and which, together with excessive phytosanitary and foreign currency regulations, function as non-tariff barriers that hamper seed trade among African countries.
- x. **Limited investment in public agricultural research:** limited capacities of Governments to invest in public agricultural research and advisory services.
- xi. **Lack of private sector incentives:** overall there are inadequate incentives for the private sector to invest in the seed industry.
- xii. **Unclear Farmers' Rights rules:** absence of clear rules regarding Farmers' Rights on the use of seeds of protected varieties.
- xiii. **Lack of incentive for breeders:** no incentives for breeders to invest in breeding programs except for hybrids.
- xiv. **Inadequate seed extension services:** extension services, including demonstration activities, need to be enhanced to promote production and use of quality seeds as means to improve adoption of new varieties by farmers.
- xv. **Inadequate exploitation of informal seed sector:** currently, more than 80 % of seed planted by African farmers is produced by the informal seed sector. While the informal seed sector is currently the primary source of seeds in Africa, and will remain so for the foreseeable future, improved access to seed from the formal sector and improving the informal system in such areas as seed quality aspects, could contribute to agricultural transformation. Unfortunately, there is limited collaboration between participants in the formal and informal seed sectors for the enhancement of the informal seed systems for producing and distributing quality seeds. Further, in spite of widespread acceptance of the need for harnessing the informal seed sector as an equally accepted source of seeds in all respect, practical approaches towards that are not yet seen.
- xvi. **Ineffective seed security measures:** disasters (droughts, floods, conflicts and epidemics) are frequent in Africa where acute disasters are developing into

chronic disasters which lead to food and seed insecurity. Moreover, climate change challenges are fast emerging with serious implications for the seed industry and agriculture. However, there is little forward planning or consultation at national or regional levels, and African countries currently do not have the necessary capacity to respond to disasters in an effective and sustainable manner. The supply of seeds, as part of relief programs, has had only minimal impact on the overall food situation. Moreover, the frequent introduction of unsuitable varieties during disasters erodes biodiversity and leads to loss of valuable local genetic resources.

**xvii. Inadequate seed experts and professionals:** there is a depletion of competent and experienced graduate level seed experts as well as well-trained seed technicians and technical professionals in several African countries. Even when they are available, they are poorly paid and there is a high risk of them quitting their jobs. In any case, the valuable human resource required in the seed sector takes a long time to create is generally lacking in many developing countries.

**xviii. Inadequate seed quality assurance systems:** seed quality assurance system is the process which confers credibility on formal seed. For AfricaSeeds, seed quality control is required to

be operational along the entire value chain, e.g., from variety development to marketing, although it is often more referred to specifically at the seed production and marketing levels of the chain. It is basically a public function and continues to be so even where the private sector is advanced, although under some scenarios, the private sector may be allowed to participate under licensing arrangements. Unfortunately, in many African countries, the quality assurance function does not exist or is poorly implemented. Effective seed quality assurance systems are essential in harmonization of seed laws and regulations of the RECs, as well as promoting seed marketing at national, regional and continental levels.

**xix. Women and youth interests:** efforts in incorporating the interests and opportunities for youth and women in seed sector are not adequate. Women and youth have a big potential to contribute to seed sector development. In Africa, women farmers are predominant and have shown immense capability with traditional knowledge in germplasm conservation and improvement. They have often displayed high levels of resilience and been leaders in the informal sector, often serving as authoritative repositories of indigenous varieties. When women are given the chance to act as front-line participants in seed sector decision making and



activities, they are likely to bring their stored-up knowledge and skills to bear on seed development.

In the case of the youth, they are seen as natural actors in the emerging scientific and technological phases that the seed sector is entering. More than that, to successfully replace Africa's aging farmers with the educated and tech-savvy youth of today, requires specific strategies to woo the latter into a sector which hitherto has been largely confined to traditionalism.

**xx.** **International treaties and conventions:** access to genetic resources by national seed programs and farmer participatory germplasm manipulations is inadequate. There are inadequate provisions in national policies to recognize and incorporate into national regulatory frameworks, suitable provisions of the AU Model Law that has the objectives of regulating use of genetic resources and protecting rights of local communities, including farmers, while providing space for breeders to undertake research activities.

**xxi.** **Challenges relating to biotechnology tools:** inadequate training and lack of attention to opportunities have denied seed programs the chance to utilize various simple biotechnology tools. For example, the use of mass propagation techniques for vegetative planting materials, *in vitro* techniques, and biotechnology strategies in breeding and quality assurance practices could

significantly enhance the role of biotechnology in the seed industry.

**xxii.** **Emerging issues:** seed sector development has recently been confronted with various emerging issues among which are effect of climate change, biosafety, animal seed, loss of biodiversity and issues of breeders' and farmers' rights. The advent of these important issues directly influences how the seed sector would develop in the future. Such issues need to be taken account of in the planning and implementation of seed activities since they contribute to the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development. Seed interventions will be required to ensure that the expected outputs are not diluted by negative effects of these emerging issues.

Of urgent concern is the mainstreaming of the animal seed dimension in the connotation of "SEED", which has recently picked up much steam and is engaging the attention of the African Seed and Biotechnology Partnership Platform (ASBPP). The subject is emerging and there is a need for clear definitions to dissipate confusion in initiatives for implementation. AfricaSeeds will go along with the consensus, bearing in mind, however, that AfricaSeeds' first target is to address issues related to forage crop seeds.

On the topic of animal seeds per se, AfricaSeeds will recognize that the ASBPP will be relied upon to table the initial round of concepts, formats, targets, standards and goals. But AfricaSeeds will join in with its



perspectives on how the animal-related concepts fit in with the crop counterparts. For example, definitions, terms, processes and formats which have been familiarized in the crop domain, may have to be either adjusted to admit the animal dimension, or the animal dimension may require parallel equivalents.



# 3. Role of AfricaSeeds

## 3.1 History

AfricaSeeds, the African Seed Sector Development Organization, has played a key role in seed sector development over the past 25 years. AfricaSeeds was born in 1998 as a result to the concern that countries of Africa needed to address a multitude of hindrances that militated against a cherished goal of Africa: food and nutrition security. Originally emerging as the African Seed Network, from an initiative conducted by FAO and 40 African countries in Abidjan<sup>1</sup>, it metamorphosed in 2014 into AfricaSeeds<sup>2</sup> to position itself as the default implementer and coordinator of the ASBP of AU. Having played a lead role in ASBP implementation in the first decade of the program, it has primed itself to be ready for the second decade of ASBP implementation and to address the concerns of Member States widely and directly by elaborating its vision and goal as follows.

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<sup>1</sup> *Seed policy and programmes for sub-Saharan Africa: Proceedings of the Regional Technical Meeting on Seed Policy and Programmes for sub-Saharan Africa: Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 23-27 November 1998 / Seed and Plant Genetic Resources Service, Plant Production and Protection*

*Division – FAO Plant Production and Protection Paper n° 151*

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Meetings of the STC and Coordinating Board of the African Seed Network (ASN), Abidjan – Côte d'Ivoire, 11-14 August 2014*



Visit to the Minister of Agriculture of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Hon. Audu Innocent Ogbeh and the Director-general of the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC) Dr Philip Ojo, Nigeria, 2018



In dialogue with the press, Côte d'Ivoire, Oct. 2016



The African Union Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) H.E. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko and the Chairman of the AfricaSeeds Governing Board Dr Adama Traore, Ethiopia, Nov. 2018



Visit to the Permanent Secretary of the Minister of Agriculture Dr. Florens M. Turuka Tanzania, Jul. 2016



Visit to the Minister of Agriculture & Irrigation Schemes Mr Jacob Ouédraogo, Burkina Faso, 2019

## Vision

Africa's seed sector playing more effectively its role as crucial contributor to agricultural transformation and food and nutrition security on the continent.

## Goal

To promote, in collaboration/partnership with other stakeholders, the development of efficient, dynamic and sustainable integrated seed systems and a profitable seed industry in Africa in order to secure availability and access of quality seeds for African farmers.

### 3.2 Objective of AfricaSeeds

To facilitate Africa's seed sector development efforts, including the development of a farmer-centered seed system, through the provision of supportive policy guidelines, advocacy, knowledge and capacity building.

### 3.3 Core Functions of AfricaSeeds

AfricaSeeds will contribute to the overall development effort of the seed sector through:

- policy advocacy and provision of technical support for policy reforms and development;
- knowledge creation and sharing;
- advocacy and counselling;
- capacity building;
- coordination of seed programs;
- implementation of ASBP;
- partnership development;

which will lead to the achievement of agricultural transformation, food and nutrition security, poverty alleviation and creation of wealth on the continent.

### 3.4 AfricaSeeds' Overall Agenda for Africa's Seed Sector Development for Sustainable Agriculture Growth and Transformation

AfricaSeeds recognizes the following agenda which summarizes the key areas of required intervention, to be addressed by all partners, which will enhance the critical role of seeds in African agriculture growth and transformation.

- A rapid development and growth in seed enterprises in which small and medium scale seed entities are prioritized with demand-driven marketing arrangements which



efficiently and profitably assure farmers of continuous access to quality seeds adapted to their farming areas.

- Development of a facilitatory regime of policy and regulatory processes at national, regional and continental levels which will ensure the right technical, operational and investment climate and provide the required basis for actions by governments, farmers, private sector enterprises, civil society organizations and other stakeholders in the short, medium and long term.
- Adoption of a corrective program of expanding the benefits of modern crop improvement to the large number of traditional and minor crops which have hitherto been sidelined by research and the seed companies; in line with this, interventions are required to widen the seed industry portfolio and incorporate several key seed types of vegetatively propagated crops, indigenous and traditional vegetable crops, tree crops and minor cereals; and further enhance the contributions of the informal seed sector through the introduction of variety improvement and quality assurance into the sector.
- Ensuring a holistic coordination and monitoring of all seed sector efforts with a view to enhancing collaboration by all stakeholders, deploying public-private partnership strategies, eliminating duplications, assessing possible gaps and facilitating the actions required to address the gaps as well as taking advantage of emerging opportunities. Establishment of credible targets and benchmarks as well as progress measurement indicators linked to the

Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) Results Framework will be important aspects of coordination.

The above agenda will need to be implemented through a strategic sharing of roles among seed sector development partners, under a purpose-built coordination system, and supported by a continental seed sector development financing mechanism.

### 3.5 Priority Areas for AfricaSeeds' Actions

To the wide range of areas that AfricaSeeds and various seed sector actors are already engaged, AfricaSeeds will add further and innovative contributions from the following areas for which it is most prepared.

- Assistance to Member States in the development and adoption of seed policies and regulations (national, regional and continental).
- Integration of the seed systems, including the embracing and facilitation of the informal seed sector.
- Development of a comprehensive seed database of knowledge and statistics (to address information needs of all stakeholders in the seed sector).
- Development of relevant skills and expertise for seed sector development.
- Seed industry entrepreneurship and investment programs including for youth and women.



# 4. AfricaSeeds Collaboration with Partners

**No single partner can accomplish all the needful in seed sector development. The hallmark of AfricaSeeds' *modus operandi* is collaboration, on the basis that the seed sector is manned by diverse value chain actors who must all collaborate closely to deliver the desired end product. Thus, AfricaSeeds considers as key partners all governments of Member States, all seed institutions, developmental partners, seed topic specialists and consultants, farmers groups, civil society entities and continental and regional authorities. Particularly, collaboration is sought with major continental seed institutions and donors whose seed sector development activities would significantly benefit from the incorporation of AfricaSeeds' knowledge and familiarity with the African seed sector terrain.**

## 4.1 Collaboration with AUC

The AUC is a key collaborator in view of its oversight responsibility for ASBP. Via MoU, AfricaSeeds will serve as the default implementer and facilitator of ASBP, seeking by that role to galvanize action by all seed actors across Africa to respond to the AU call to collaboratively address the continental seed concern.

## 4.2 Collaboration with AfricaSeeds' Member States

The national seed programs are also key collaborators on behalf of the Member States. Via their direct participation in AfricaSeeds' affairs at both the Focal Point level with the Executive Director and during the General Meetings of Member States and Partners, Member States will be able to direct and influence the operations to be





At the International Workshop on Registration of Farmers' Varieties, Uganda, Dec. 2018



Women farmers, Toumodi, Côte d'Ivoire, Nov. 2017



Signature of the MoU between Ghana and AfricaSeeds by the Minister of Agriculture Hon. Owusu Afriyie Akoto, Accra, Mar. 2018



Project Design Meeting with ISSD-Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, Oct. 2018



Meeting with a Women's Association of Seed Producers, AfricaSeeds Headquarters, Côte d'Ivoire, Apr. 2022

conducted by AfricaSeeds, as illustrated in the Organogram in 10.1. Further, AfricaSeeds will address the concerns of the national seed programs through RECs, or directly, according to membership terms, via MOU terms and as per the dictates of sponsored projects.

AfricaSeeds will work towards ensuring and securing the buy-in and recommitment by Member States. This will be done through a process detailing the following.

- Disseminate information on why and how AfricaSeeds was formed and the ownership of the Organization.
- Undertake a round of visitations and contacts to Member States in order to:
  - remind and re-establish the origin of AfricaSeeds;
  - recall commitment of Member States through signing of ASN agreement;
  - narrate intervening periods of low activities due to silence from them;
  - recall efforts, since 2014, to secure recommitment by Member States.
- Resume and accelerate MOUs with Member States. These to be designed to reflect, on case-by-case basis, how AfricaSeeds will perform with each Member State.
- Assistance by AfricaSeeds to national seed programs (e.g. assist in planning and implementing the seed development plans in Member States)
- National Focal Points (NFP) and Regional Focal Points (RFP) to be the most appropriate and effective seed sector person at the national or institutional level (e.g. the head of the seed service or chairman of the national seed council).

## 4.3 Intended Partnerships and Collaborations

The range of institutions identified to develop or continue collaboration /partnership within specific areas related to their respective specialized areas of expertise, of relevance to AfricaSeeds' interventions, is shown in Table 1.

## 4.4 Strategy for Partnership and Collaboration

AfricaSeeds strategy in partnership will hinge on the following aspects.

### 4.4.1 MoU and Contract Arrangement

Formal agreements and frameworks for AfricaSeeds' relationship and actions in partnerships and assignments between AfricaSeeds and governments, institutions and clients.

### 4.4.2 Networking

(alliances and networking for leveraging – synergy and complementarity and impact at scale)

AfricaSeeds recognizes that networking is important to seed sector development. The networking function will enable AfricaSeeds to enhance the sharing of knowledge and experiences among Member States as an aid towards addressing emerging issues and scaling up successful initiatives. The publication of a periodic AfricaSeeds network newsletter will be one of the more visible manifestations of the network function but other activities such as conferences, training sessions and visits will also be carried out.



**Table 1. Intended Partnerships and Collaborations per Strategic Domain**

<b>Continental Policy Support</b>	
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b>	AUC/ASBPP
<b>RELEVANCE / ROLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With the formation of the African Seed and Biotechnology Partnership Platform, there now exists an implementation framework for the orderly conduct of ASBP which currently is guided by a renewed strategy for implementation in the next decade from 2020 to 2030. As part of the implementation oversight framework, a Steering Group and Working Groups responding to the key seed sector elements have been established.</li> </ul>
<b>AREAS OF COLLABORATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AfricaSeeds to contribute to Seed Policy Working Group, other Working Groups and the Steering Group of ASBPP to further the aims of ASBP.</li> <li>Act as default ASBP implementer.</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Economic Policies and Development Support</b>	
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b>	CILSS, COMESA, EAC - CEEAC, ECOWAS, SADC, UEMOA
<b>RELEVANCE / ROLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Policy guidance developments and/or regional and continental agenda development process.</li> <li>Technical and institutional capacity building and program implementation.</li> <li>Support in the generation, dissemination and large-scale adoption of technologies and innovations.</li> </ul>
<b>AREAS OF COLLABORATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional regulation harmonization and enforcement.</li> <li>Co-manage projects at regional level.</li> <li>Assistance to Member States in harmonized policy domestication and national program design and implementation.</li> </ul>



Table 1. cont'd

Sub-Regional Research Support	
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b>	ASARECA, CORAF/WECARD, PRASAC and FANR/CCARDESA
<b>RELEVANCE / ROLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sub-regional organizations (SROs) i.e. (CORAF/WECARD, ASARECA and SADC-FANR/CCARDESA are made up of seed related, research-based institutions operating specific programs and projects within the regional contexts. By their adoption of specific mandate areas, they are positioned to serve as relevant and effective partners in the implementation of ASBP at the regional and national levels. All three SROs will be involved.</li> </ul>
<b>AREAS OF COLLABORATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional research, development program design and implementation.</li> <li>Science-based knowledge and statistics, and policy papers development.</li> <li>Establishment of sustainable information platforms (SKG).</li> </ul>
International Agricultural Research	
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b>	CGIAR and similar organizations
<b>RELEVANCE / ROLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCs) have mandates to assist in Africa's agricultural development and have an important contribution to make in the implementation of seed sector development in Africa. Recognizing and formalizing their role as important continental and strategic partners will enable their own on-going and planned interventions in the area of seed to be viewed in that context. Particularly, there will thereby be an opportunity to propose to IARCs, specific issues and agenda to which they will be required to develop answers, to move the continental seed sector development agenda forward.</li> </ul>
<b>AREAS OF COLLABORATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research programs in the seed sector.</li> <li>Improved material and germplasm and variety.</li> <li>Science-based knowledge and statistics and policy papers development.</li> </ul>

Table 1. cont'd

Continental and Regional Seed Sector Development	
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b>	AGRA, FARA, Academia, ISSD, SSG
<b>RELEVANCE / ROLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutions operating independently of AUC may adopt ASBP as a framework to guide in their seed interventions. In such cases, they may require assistance to integrate the relevant aspects of ASBP that conform to their initiatives. For that, all that is required is for the organization to formally notify AfricaSeeds that they have adopted the ASBP framework for the necessary coordination with AfricaSeeds to begin. Collaboration will continue with FARA from the previous initiatives commenced with it, stressing on enhancing FARA's role as Secretariat of the newly formed ASBP P and AfricaSeeds responsibility as member of the Policy Working Group of ASBPP.</li> </ul>
<b>AREAS OF COLLABORATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fund raising and joint program implementation in seed sector.</li> <li>Synergy and complementarity for effective responses to emerging trends and issues in the seed sector.</li> <li>Supporting the governance of ASBPP.</li> </ul>
National Seed Programs and Initiatives	
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b>	Member States/Governments
<b>RELEVANCE / ROLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Seed Programs are the sum of seed related activities at the national level. They are under the coordination of a National Seed Service or a National Seed Committee. AfricaSeeds will partner with National Seed Programs for the effective implementation of seed-related projects in the Member States.</li> <li>Member States will be expected to offer assistance and support in various forms to AfricaSeeds, to build up its capacity and enhance its effective operations.</li> </ul>
<b>AREAS OF COLLABORATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistance to national authorities to develop and implement seed programs including for "Women and Young Seed Professionals";</li> <li>Strengthening the capacity of national seed programs.</li> <li>Providing technical and institutional support (frameworks, strategic directions, orientations and innovative tools, models and modules) to national programs.</li> <li>Deployment and implementation AfricaSeeds' vision and programs at the national level.</li> </ul>



Table 1. cont'd

Continental, Regional and National Seed Industry Development	
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b>	AFSTA, NSTAs, ASIWA
<b>RELEVANCE / ROLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional and national seed associations represent and protect the interests and rights of their members. Depending upon their level of expertise, they can be effective partners to policy makers at the regional and national levels, to discuss possible bottlenecks and provide solutions to emerging issues leading to the creation of an effective national seed system and a healthy seed industry.</li> </ul>
<b>AREAS OF COLLABORATION</b>	<p>Collaboration, jointly with RECs and IGROs, in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National policy guidance developments and/or regional and continental agenda development process.</li> <li>Technical and Institutional capacity building and program implementation.</li> <li>Support in the generation, dissemination and large-scale adoption of technologies and innovation.</li> </ul>
International Development Assistance	
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b>	<p>UN Agencies (FAO, WFP, UNDP, IFAD), ISTA, UPOV Bilateral/Multilateral Donors, etc. Advocacy and development partnership such as with United People Global (UPG)</p>
<b>RELEVANCE / ROLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International development partners comprise of donors and funding agencies, as well as knowledge institutions who will be engaged to assist in the provision of the skill and resource needs of AfricaSeeds.</li> <li>Of particular mention in the advocacy and capacitation area is UPG, a key partner.</li> </ul>
<b>AREAS OF COLLABORATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seed program designing and implementation.</li> <li>Fund mobilization and technical back-up.</li> <li>Assistance in advocacy to enhance image, improve capacitation and jointly address gaps in the seed sector.</li> </ul>



Table 1. cont'd

Knowledge and Learning	
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b>	Makerere, WACCI
<b>RELEVANCE / ROLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>African Universities can contribute significantly to addressing major issues in seed sector development in Africa, through training and graduate studies, in collaboration with other research and development institutions working in the sector. The collaboration with the Universities will expand when the programs of Seedsmen's Practical Seed Course and the Young Seed Professional Program take off.</li> </ul>
<b>AREAS OF COLLABORATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curricula designing and upgrading.</li> <li>Short training and graduation orientation in the priority areas and emerging professions in the seed sector.</li> <li>Promote Research-Academia-business linkage.</li> <li>Support for coaching/mentoring program development for the young graduates.</li> </ul>
Private Sector Participation in Seed Sector Operations	
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b>	Regional and Local Companies and Multinationals
<b>RELEVANCE / ROLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the development of private seed enterprises in Africa is still low and mainly limited to hybrid (e.g. maize) and high-value horticultural crops, the private sector has a crucial role to play as a driving force, in the promotion and development of efficient seed systems in Africa. Of particular interest are smallholder seed enterprises which can enhance market access to affordable seeds of improved varieties by smallholder farmers for increased productivity and improved food security. Though much of the assistance needed for the private seed sector efforts are found in commercial and investment interventions as well as government support in terms of research regulatory and extension, AfricaSeeds will specifically contribute to knowledge and skills, advocacy, facilitation of the policy environment and entrepreneurial development of smallholder seed entities.</li> </ul>
<b>AREAS OF COLLABORATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and promotion of efficient and sustainable seed business models for Africa.</li> <li>Assistance for seed market and investment solutions for private sector.</li> <li>Support in facilitating the private sector access to improved material from the research and breeding institutions.</li> </ul>



**Table 1. cont'd**

<b>Regional and National Farmer Issues</b>	
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b>	Local Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) and Regional FBOs ROPPA, PROPAC, EAFF
<b>RELEVANCE / ROLES</b>	<p>Farmers are major actors in the seed system development on the continent as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- active participants in seed research and release processes;</li> <li>- vital links in seed production and distribution through farmer-to-farmer seed exchange networks;</li> <li>- independent seed entrepreneurs producing seed for the local market;</li> <li>- contract seed producers and informed agents/seed traders linked with other private and public seed companies;</li> <li>- as end users of seeds emanating from the various seed systems.</li> </ul>
<b>AREAS OF COLLABORATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of the active participation of farmers in seed policy decision-making and program designing.</li> <li>• Support in information, dissemination and large-scale adoption of technologies and innovations.</li> <li>• Support market access to affordable seeds of improved varieties by smallholder farmers.</li> </ul>

#### 4.4.3 Communities of Practice

Communities of Practice are expected to develop among the consortium of AfricaSeeds and its regional partners. The Communities of Practice are common actions on key topics based on accepted common approaches and norms which are evidence-based and accepted to be scaled up and widely adopted. This will likely occur among AfricaSeeds and its partners.

#### 4.4.4 Thematic Groups

Thematic groups will be established to debate and exchange on identified thematic issues in order to provide consensus or expert opinion to be presented to the Scientific and Technical Committee for final resolution and recommendations to AfricaSeeds. The thematic groups will be led by lead technical experts selected from the wide

range of African and development partner institutions. Members of the Thematic Groups will be senior experts who will be willing to engage in discourse on key seed sector topics and issues, mainly on voluntary basis, as far as possible via internet-based exchanges. Membership of the Thematic Groups will be kept at a manageable level, from 6 to 8 experts per group. A minimum number of AfricaSeeds-sponsored assembled group meetings may be organised where specific circumstances so require. The thematic areas will be chosen based on emerging issues in the African seed sector.

#### 4.4.5 Expert Consultation

AfricaSeeds will utilize the strategy of expert consultations to subject key seed sector issues to debate, in collaboration with all partners in the seed sector.

Resultant consensus emanating from the discussions will shape the content and direction of AfricaSeeds interventions as well as serve to assist partner organizations in their own actions. In this process, African seed institutions and/or initiatives will be considered as very important allies in building up knowledge and in outsourcing development expertise. All concerned national and international research institutions, seed trade organizations and regional and international seed testing and quality assurance institutions will therefore become very important partners of AfricaSeeds.

#### 4.4.6 Public-Private Partnerships

AfricaSeeds will build up expertise in and make good use of the strategy of public-private partnership (PPP) which has the potential of bringing together the advantages and contributions of the public and private sectors to effectively address problems which in the past have not been satisfactorily addressed by either sector acting alone.



# 5. Major Efforts by AfricaSeeds

**Overall, the following commenced initiatives will be pursued into the next decade.**

## ASBP

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AfricaSeeds will continue to serve as the default development institution at the ready to respond to all planned ASBP activities for which it has the capacity. This will primarily cover the areas of policy, training, seed production and seed certification planning, seed systems analyses, seed knowledge and assistance to farmer-based seed systems.

## Assistance to National Programs

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AfricaSeeds considers national seed programs as the conduit by which Member States can develop national seed security and will strive to respond to Member States' calls for assistance to install all the necessary protocols and programs by which the relevant structures will be erected.

## Continental initiatives

\*\*\*\*\*

At the continental level, AfricaSeeds targets specific initiatives meant to rapidly extend to all Member States the basic elements that will enable a knowledge-based and evidence-based progress to be realized. The main initiatives in that regard are as follows.





Workshop for the validation of the Seed Knowledge Gateway project document, Côte d'Ivoire, Aug. 2019



Field visit in Senegal, May 2012



Discussions with stakeholders, Côte d'Ivoire, Oct. 2016



Expert Consultation Meeting on Measuring the Performance of the Seed Sector, Côte d'Ivoire, Oct. 2016



Preparatory Meeting to the Expert Consultation Meeting on Measuring the Performance of the Seed Sector, Côte d'Ivoire, Oct. 2016

## Seed Knowledge Gateway

The Seed Knowledge Gateway initiated in 2020 and planned to be completed by 2024, is a computerized database and a ready source of seed data statistics and information, freely available to all seed actors on the continental and meant to address the hitherto serious shortfall in seed data on the continent.

## Index partnerships

Ability to track and measure the performance of the seed sector has constituted a major shortfall in Africa. AfricaSeeds' initiative of 2015 that brought all international index initiatives together to agree on common index formats will be continued to enable reliable indices to be available at all time to appraise the seed efforts. AfricaSeeds intends to work towards conducting a follow-up meeting with the Index groups to ensure proper follow up on decisions taken in 2015 and also to incorporate newly emerged needs such as covering the needs of the informal sector.

## Collaboration with FAO to develop The Seed Toolkit

FAO has collaborated with AfricaSeeds from 2016 to 2017 to develop the Seed Training Toolkit, a manual with modules covering various topics that present the latest technical information, to adequately impart knowledge and skills to seed program operators. AfricaSeeds will take the Seed Toolkit to the next level by collaborating with Member States to train national staff on the topics of the Toolkit: development of small-scale seed enterprises, seed processing, seed quality assurance, seed

sector regulatory framework, seed marketing, seed storage.

## Harnessing the Informal Seed Sector

The role of the informal seed sector in Africa clearly justifies that it should be recognized and embraced as an important seed source which can play an even greater role if its main features are facilitated. AfricaSeeds will continue to be in the forefront of the widespread move to embrace the informal seed sector in recognition of the overwhelming reliance on it by the majority of African farmers. AfricaSeeds recognizes that irrespective of the seed system preferred by a farmer, the common interest of all farmers is to have seeds that are viable, healthy and pure. To that end, AfricaSeeds will extend knowledge to all farmers, irrespective of their system, to ensure they are able to assure of the three quality parameters (viability, purity and health) in the seed they access and use. Beyond that, AfricaSeeds will assist to practically harness the informal seed sector practices that have the potential to transcend their hitherto local confines to have relevance in the wider seed markets at the national level. AfricaSeeds will particularly target the unregulated seed enterprises in the informal sector recognizing that adopting compliance with minimum regulatory frameworks would bring them over to mainstream seed marketing and swell the volumes of traded seeds.

## Young Seed Professionals Program

Initiated in 2018, the Young Seed Professionals Program allows freshly graduated seed professionals to augment their university knowledge with practical knowledge and experience in the field



via attachment to active and relevant seed projects to which AfricaSeeds is associated. The arrangement will allow the next generation of Africa's seed sector experts and leaders to be sufficiently mentored and groomed to gain the necessary familiarity with the opportunities and gaps in the African seed sector environment. This will prepare them to return, upon completion, to their national programs with higher preparedness to respond to the national call, or to be in a good position to identify other opportunities on the

continent that better challenge their enhanced expertise.

## 5.1 AfricaSeeds' Flagship Programs

Of the various potential interventions, the following four have been selected as the Flagship Programs of AfricaSeeds and priority and emphasis will be placed on their resourcing, advocacy, execution and monitoring.

# AfricaSeeds' Flagship Programs

### Development of Seed-Related Capacities and Skills

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).

### Assistance to the Development and Adoption of National Seed Policies

Assistance in the development and adoption of National Seed Policies (directly in response to national programs requests; as regional training activities, in collaboration with RECs & development partners).

### Seed Knowledge Gateway (SKG)

An already commenced program to develop a continent-wide computerized network on data, statistics and information for seed sector planner, developers and farmers.

### Informal Seed Sector

Harnessing the informal seed sector as a major seed source that needs to make further impact in overall food production.



# 6. Principles of Intervention

**The principles upon which AfricaSeeds will base its interventions are as follows.**

## 6.1 Partnership and Collaboration

Through MoUs and other agreements for collaboration, AfricaSeeds will ensure synergy by adding its advantages and opportunities to partners' own contributions to the activity.

## 6.2 Alignment with Regional and Continental Agendas

Based on the premise that a wide range of policy organs, stakeholders and specialized institutions would have acted together to agree on regional and continental agendas, AfricaSeeds will, as far as possible, align with such agendas, ensuring only to approach any possible deviation through constructive engagements.

## 6.3 Recognition of the Specificity and Complexity of the African Seed Sector

The recognition that the African seed sector is specific in the sense that it is unique from all others as well as complex in respect of the diversity of systems, actors, crops, etc. will influence the approaches to it that AfricaSeeds will adopt, realizing fully well that each approach will need to recognize the diversity of elements likely to be encountered.

## 6.4 Seed Value Chain Approach

The strategy of AfricaSeeds is based on the recognition of the specificity and complexity of the African seed sector and therefore the need for addressing, in an integrated manner, the entire seed value chain. In that vein, AfricaSeeds will seek to identify key bottlenecks inherent in all the stages of the seed value chain and, acting with relevant partners, assist in addressing all inequities which hinder the seed sector.





Visit to the Biotechnology Laboratory of the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute -Mikocheni (TARI-Mikocheni), Jul. 2016



Expert Consultation on assessment of the decade of implementation of the ASBP (2008-2018), Côte d'Ivoire, Sep. 2019



Workshop for the validation of the Training Seed Operation Toolkit with FAO, Côte d'Ivoire, Jun. 2016



Visit to the Minister of Agriculture Hon. Omar A. Jallow Gambia, 2017



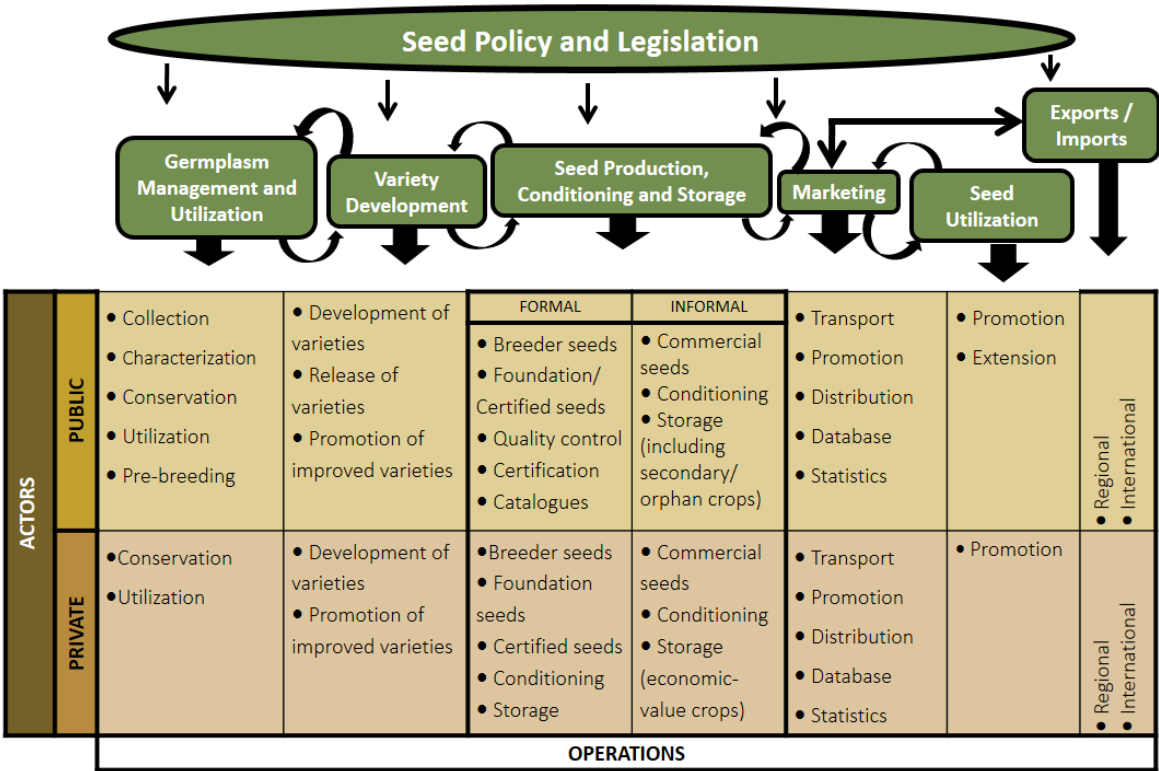
Visit to the Kamano Seed Company, with its General Manager Ms Sylvia Horemans, Zambia, 2016

The value chain approach offers significant opportunities for ensuring the sustainability of seed sector development interventions on the continent.

AfricaSeeds will engage seed actors, based on comparative advantage, to jointly identify opportunities and challenges along the chain and work

together with them to address the challenges and exploit the opportunities, to enhance performance. The approach guarantees buy-in and ownership by all actors, thereby ensuring the sustainability of interventions and results. Figure 1 illustrates the broad steps along the seed value chain represent the main topics for interventions, as well as key operations and actors involved.

Figure 1: The seed value chain



6.5 Structures and Issues Relating to the Informal Seed Sector Harnessing Effort

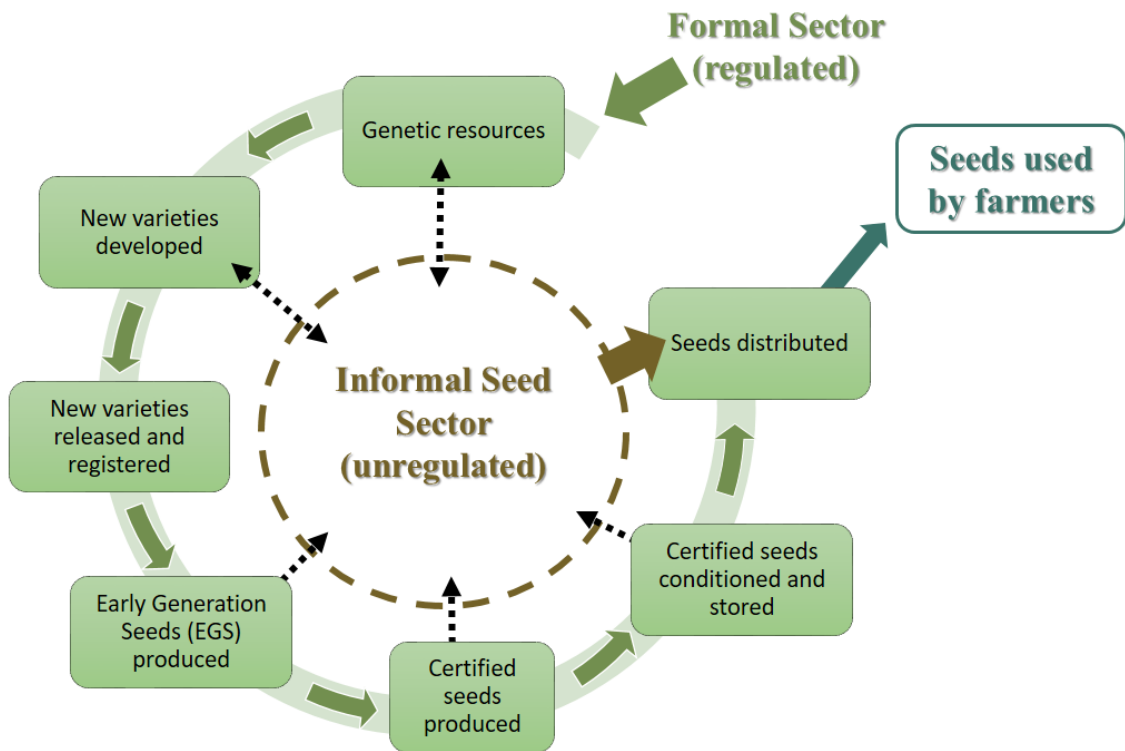
The informal seed sector is by far the main source of seeds in Africa, producing more than 90% of seeds and even up to 100% for several traditional crops and vegetatively propagated crops in most locations. At production,

marketing and utilization levels in the seed chain, the informal seed sector carries roles which have important implications for both seed and crop production which need to be addressed. AfricaSeeds also recognizes that interventions in the informal sector have good prospects of evolving informal seed actors, at their option, into the ranks of the formal sector, thus narrowing the huge numerical and output gaps that

presently exist between the formal and the informal seed sectors to the disadvantage of the former. This strategy also has the advantage of scaling up the advantages that the informal seed sector possesses which can be of benefit to the formal sector. For example, the formal seed sector can take a cue from the informal sector regarding indigenous knowledge, particularly in genetic

resources manipulations, rural seed marketing skills and coverage of food security and minor crops. Taking a cue from Figure 2, AfricaSeeds will pay attention to informal seed sector issues, including farmers' rights, smallholder seed systems and how both formal and informal sectors could jointly contribute to the strengthening of the seed value chain in its entirety.

**Figure 2: Formal and informal seed sectors interactions**



AfricaSeeds considers every farmer, irrespective of the seed system which supplies his/her seeds, is concerned that his/her seeds should meet desired standards for viability, purity and health. Thus, for farmers, a good seed delivery system is the one that uses the appropriate combination of formal, informal, market and non-market channels to efficiently meet farmers' demand for quality seeds. To that effect,

AfricaSeeds will join with other stakeholders to assist in the incorporation of the positive practices and benefits of the informal seed sector into the overall seed industry, conducting activities relating to advocacy and awareness creation, policy dialogue, education and upgrading (see box in Annex1).





### 6.5.1 Some Observations on the Structure of Informal Seed Sector in Africa

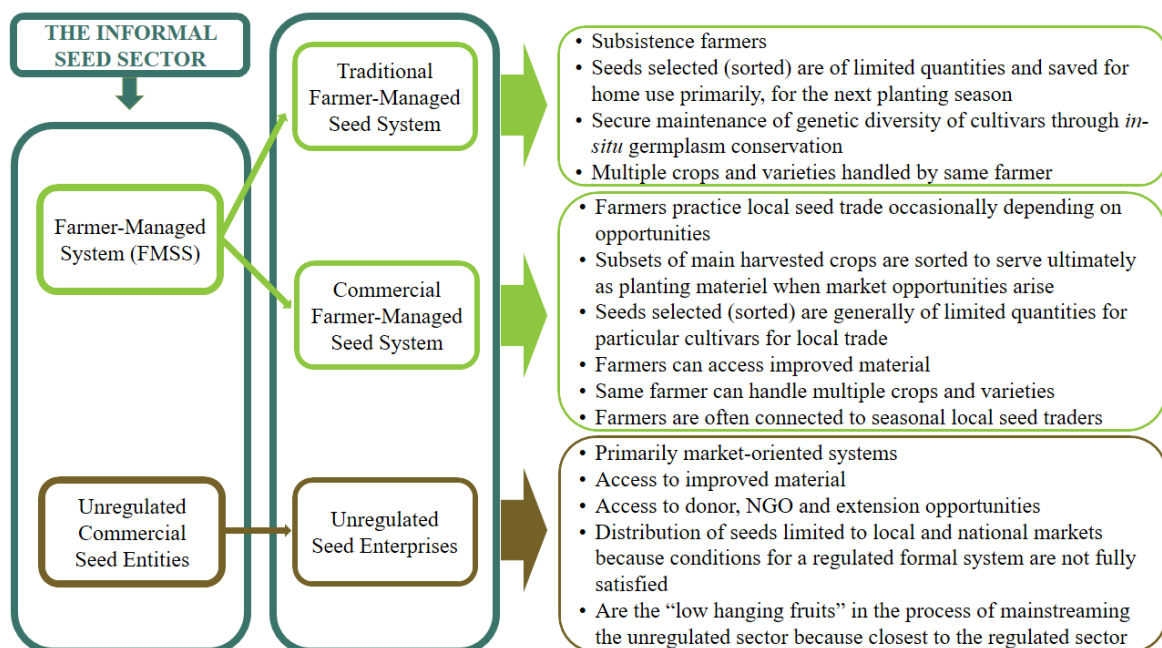
AfricaSeeds views the informal sector not as a monolithic entity but made up of a string of seed sources such as Farmer-saved seed, Farmer-exchanged seed, farmer-marketed seed, (these collectively called Farmer-Managed Seed System - FMSS); community seed bank, indigenous seed enterprises etc. (collectively named Unregulated Seed Enterprises). While the FMSS is traditionally integrated in ordinary

farming by many African small-holder farmers, the USE cover all the commercial seed entities which do not respect or do not follow national seed regulations for various reasons.

### 6.5.2 Structure of the Informal Seed Sector

AfricaSeeds considers the FMSS as sub-divided into a traditional farmer-managed seed system and a commercial farmer-managed seed system as explained in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: The informal seed sector structure**





## 6.6 Policy Advocacy

Within the context of the CAADP Results Framework and conforming to regional strategies expressed in regional harmonization programs and as per ASBP guidelines relating to policy, AfricaSeeds will identify and coordinate a process whereby applicable recommendations and outcomes will be fed into national and regional policy formulation processes. Towards that goal, AfricaSeeds will sharpen its expertise to assist Member States, particularly those lagging behind in the attainment of seed sector regulatory frameworks, to accede to the desired status. Training, advisories, surveys, networking and consultations will be key

tools in AfricaSeeds assistance to Member States in this regard.

## 6.7 Subsidiarity

The strategy of subsidiarity enables the hierarchical and complementary roles of different partners to address seed sector issues in a more holistic manner. AfricaSeeds will adopt the strategy of subsidiarity to ensure that the major partners take responsibility for actions based on their strengths and comparative advantages at the continental, regional and national levels. Roles and responsibilities will be agreed with partners operating at different levels.



# 7. Coordination

**Coordination will assist in keeping track of and facilitating the many seed sector activities that may be on-going at all levels. AfricaSeeds will work towards securing the collaboration of AUC, FAO and other specialized technical agencies in order to ensure provision of required technical assistance. Further, AfricaSeeds will seek partnerships with all initiatives that are relevant to the development of the African seed sector, as summarized below.**

## 7.1 International Seed Initiatives

AfricaSeeds will endeavour to capture the contribution of partner international initiatives per the following activities.

- Conduct inventory of major international seed programs in Africa along with their respective agenda and areas of interventions and targeted beneficiaries.
- Carry out recording and assessment of respective geographic coverage of the different programs.
- Conduct identification and characterization of remaining gaps in the specific domains of the interventions.
- Promote partnership initiatives to enhance efficiency.
- Conduct periodic meetings.

## 7.2 Regional and National Seed Programs

While the overall oversight and direction of AfricaSeeds' activities will fall under the responsibility of AfricaSeeds management in the Headquarters, Heads of Regional and National Seed Programs will serve as AfricaSeeds Focal Points to promote relevant, effective and direct interactions with regional and national seed programs. The arrangement of having NFP and RFP who are already leaders of their programs, will ensure a more effective implementation of AfricaSeeds' programs at regional and national levels. Furthermore, the arrangement will lead to better communication, adequate monitoring and timely reporting of activities. Additionally, having the Focal Points within regional and national programs minimizes the cost of AfricaSeeds' institutional arrangement, enhances ownership, capacity building in the national seed programs and efficiency.





Expert Consultation Workshop on Measuring Seed Sector Performance jointly organized by the Wageningen University and AfricaSeeds. Abidjan, Oct. 2016

### 7.2.1 Coordination with Regional Seed Programs

Coordination of seed activities at regional level will be conducted by AfricaSeeds through the work of the RFP. The incumbent will be appointed by the relevant REC in consultation with AfricaSeeds. As far as possible, the RFP shall be clearly the main subject matter specialist and technical expert in seed program activities being conducted under the auspices of the REC.

The responsibilities expected of the RFP include the following.

- Serve as the main technical link between AfricaSeeds and the relevant REC.
- Facilitate the transmission of information between AfricaSeeds and the REC.
- Supervise and conduct operations that might be on-going at the regional level as may be directed by AfricaSeeds.
- Assist in the coordination of national seed programs in the region.

### 7.2.2 Coordination with National Seed Programs

Coordination of seed activities at National level will be conducted by AfricaSeeds through the work of the NFP. Where possible the head of the national seed program will be the NFP. The NFP will facilitate and be actively involved in the following areas of collaboration between AfricaSeeds and national seed programs as well as activities aimed at strengthening national seed programs which will include:

- periodic audit of the national seed program as basis of seed

development interventions at the national level;

- training;
- elaboration of national seed development action plans;
- development of project proposals and fund raising;
- implementation of funded projects.

By entrenching the activities of AfricaSeeds in the national seed programs through the heads of those programs, AfricaSeeds becomes welded to the national interests and becomes a continuous partner in the planning and implementation processes in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.

AfricaSeeds' actions at the national level will be undertaken on the basis of an intervention model. The model will contain steps by which to systematically undertake activities that will transform and upgrade the national seed sector. AfricaSeeds will adopt a flexible approach in addressing requests for interventions in national seed programs in recognition that each country situation comes with its own peculiarities. However, AfricaSeeds has adopted a generalized approach which will allow adaptation of the intervention model to suit a wide range of country seed sector development contexts.

The model will be composed of the following steps which will be jointly planned and agreed with national authorities from the start:

- identification of the challenges, opportunities and gaps of the national seed sector, in concert with national experts;



- national workshops for validation of results of the national seed audit;
- formulation or updates of national seed policies and national seed plans based on results of the seed audit;
- formulation of projects based on major gaps and constraints identified by the audit;
- joint resource mobilization initiatives for the cleared projects;
- joint implementation of funded projects exploiting comparative advantages of the partners, i.e. national seed program and AfricaSeeds.



## 8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Programs and projects will be designed to have strong Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) components to ensure that, on a case- by-case basis, objective and timely monitoring and evaluation of all AfricaSeeds activities are conducted. Additionally, AfricaSeeds expertise in this area will be developed to be able to offer M&E services to partners, where required. As far as possible, the M&E process established for ASBP will be adopted by AfricaSeeds.

The results of the evaluation processes will contribute to situation reports which will eventually feed into the General Meeting explained later (see paragraph 10.1). Subject to availability of funds, a small but well-resourced unit with responsibility for M&E will be incorporated into the AfricaSeeds Headquarters. Maximum use will be made of external expertise in order to remove chances of bias.



Field visit to a maize seed producer, Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire. 2015

## 9. Sustainability

AfricaSeeds will cooperate with AUC in the implementation of coordination, monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes that will be established for the next phase of ASBP. AfricaSeeds will also adopt strategies which, on a bilateral and multilateral basis, aim at establishing programs that will have high levels of sustainability. In that respect, AfricaSeeds will aim at undertaking continental seed initiatives with the support of the host country, other Member States and international organizations and donors.

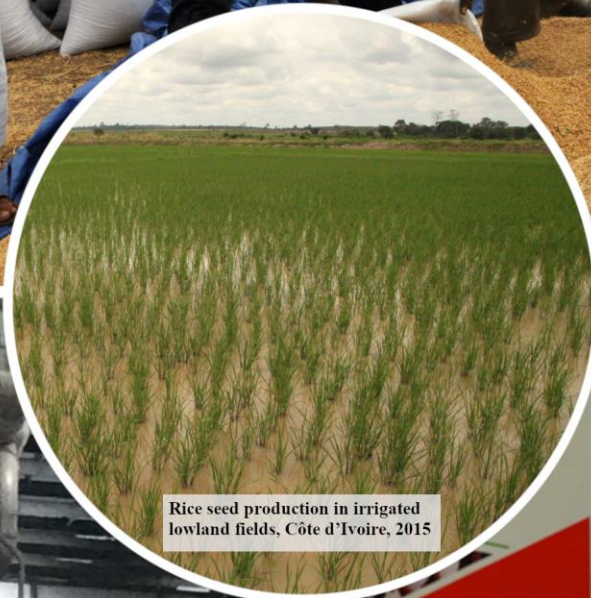
The capacity building objective will be high on the agenda and practical and effective exit strategies will be important dimensions in each activity in order to achieve sustainability. Coordination will be considered the main check against duplication, gaps and misdirection.

AfricaSeeds will seek to complement initiatives of other stakeholders in line with its objectives, along the seed value chain. Considerable effort will be made to capitalize on work already done so as to avoid duplication of efforts. This will guarantee buy-in and ownership by all actors, thereby ensuring the sustainability of interventions and results.





Rice seed production,  
Mauritania, Mar. 2012



Rice seed production in irrigated  
lowland fields, Côte d'Ivoire, 2015



Visit to the SeedCo Company,  
Zambia, 2016



At SeedConnect Abuja, Nigeria, Aug. 2018

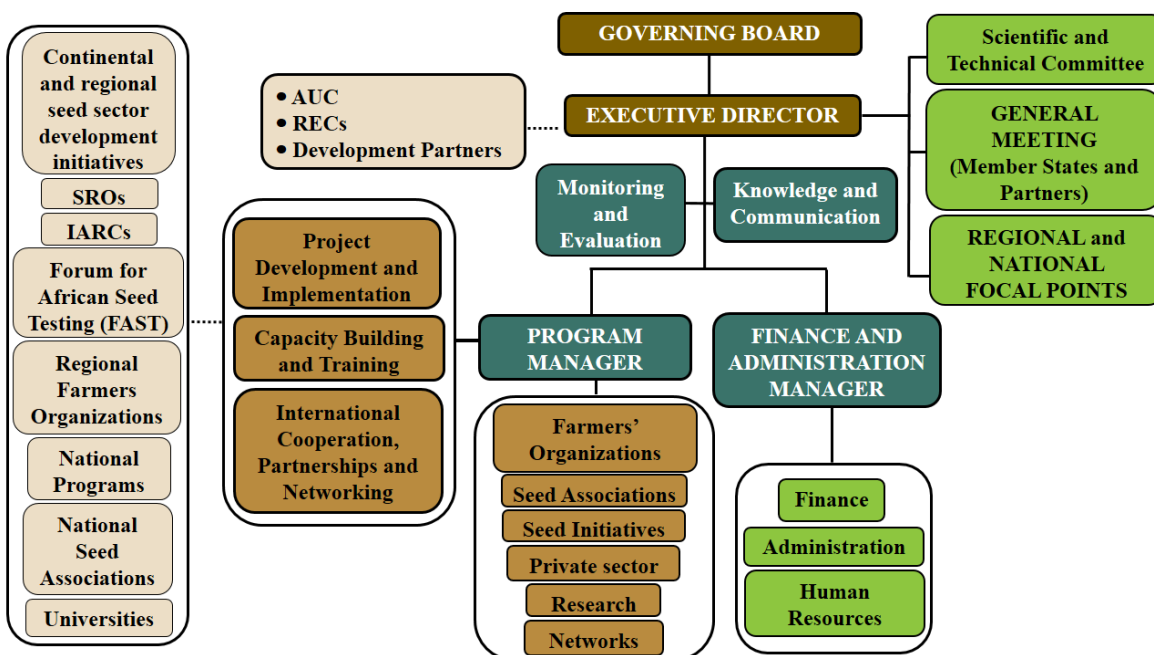


Visit of a member of the AfricaSeeds Governing Board to a  
Women's Cooperative, Toumodi, Côte d'Ivoire, Nov. 2017





The structure of AfricaSeeds is dictated by its role as seed sector development organization and as an implementer of ASBP. The structure is illustrated in the following diagram.



## 10.1 Roles and Functions

### General Meeting

\*\*\*\*\*

The General Meeting of AfricaSeeds will be take the form of an enlarged Governing Board Meeting which will be open to all Member States and partners. The meeting will enable Member States and partners to take stock of the work and output of AfricaSeeds and all its partners as well as the performance of the seed sector in general and chart a way forward that appropriately addresses the emerged seed sector situation in order to further shape the vision, mission and mandate of AfricaSeeds and partners.

### Governing Board

\*\*\*\*\*

The Governing Board (GB) is the overall oversight body of AfricaSeeds. It is made up of a minimum of 7 members and a maximum of 15 members selected on the basis of their outstanding knowledge and contributions in the various components of the seed sector, either organizational, developmental or administrative. Key international institutions will be invited to serve on the Governing Board to ensure harmonisation and guidance on technical and policy issues and to conform to current norms in seed development. AfricaSeeds management will consult with the GB to ensure a GB make-up that reflects a good level of representation of AUC, Member States (possibly on a formula arranged with RECs), international/continental institutions, donor agencies, key operational partners and selected seed sector specialists.

The terms for the mission of AfricaSeeds' Governing Board are as follows.

- Establish the overall course and thrust of AfricaSeeds' activities in consonance with its mandate, vision and mission.
- Assist in developing AfricaSeeds as a credible continental seed institution through advocacy with Member States and development partners.
- Guide and assist the Executive Director in promoting the activities of AfricaSeeds in fulfilment of AfricaSeeds' vision and mission.
- Develop and implement procedures for proper governance, administrative and operational processes and practices of AfricaSeeds.
- Be responsible for the approval or otherwise of all major actions by AfricaSeeds including budgeting and accounting, projects and work plans, senior level recruitment and major agreements with development partners.
- Ensure adequate working arrangements within AfricaSeeds to meet the needs of Member States and to ensure efficiency of operations.
- Facilitate funding assistance from donors and financing organizations for AfricaSeeds activities.

### Scientific and Technical Committee

\*\*\*\*\*

The Scientific and Technical Committee comprises of 4 to 8 members selected on the basis of their proven technical expertise in the seed sector. The role and functions of the Scientific and Technical Committee are defined as follows.



- Provide relevant technical inputs as may be required for the guidance of the Governing Board's oversight activities.
- Provide technical clearance as required to guide the Executive Director and the Governing Board in the approval of development proposals and relevant reports.
- Promote specific meetings on technical subjects within areas of activity in the key seed sector components.

#### Executive Director

\*\*\*\*\*

Acts as Chief Executive of AfricaSeeds with responsibility, under the overall authority of the Governing Board, of providing leadership in all activities and functions of the organization. Specifically, the Executive Director's primary responsibilities are as follows.

1. Ensure that AfricaSeeds' organizational structure, operational policies and other business processes are **sound and able to effectively deliver** on the strategic objectives defined by AfricaSeeds' Board.
2. **Exercise authority** over personnel and human-resource matters and further strengthen performance management by tracking key performance indicators across the organization.
3. Maintain a **positive work environment** that facilitates collaboration and information sharing and is conducive to attracting, retaining, and motivating diverse talent.
4. Effectively **manage operational or financial matters** to deliver on the mandate of AfricaSeeds.
5. Operationalize, lead and monitor the **implementation of AfricaSeeds' strategy**, and ensure the effective implementation of new business models and instruments to deliver on the strategic objectives.
6. **Represent AfricaSeeds at the highest level**, ensuring its role within the African agriculture community is well understood, through direct engagement with policymakers and the execution of an effective media strategy.
7. Build and maintain **effective alliances and operational collaboration** with public and private partners, such as governments of African countries, United Nations agencies, bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations, the business sector, farmers' organizations and civil society actors.
8. Interact with governments at the highest political level to **advocate for the importance of seeds** for agriculture transformation, food and nutrition security, poverty alleviation and creation of wealth in Africa.
9. Maintain **effective communications** with all stakeholders.
10. Ensure the **development and dissemination of information** among Members States and partners and promote meetings and discussions on technical subjects in



collaboration with the Scientific and Technical Committee.

11. Promote efforts to **obtain funding assistance** from donors and financing organizations for strengthening AfricaSeeds' activities.
12. Oversee and **advance the development of new and effective funding streams** for AfricaSeeds, broadening the donor base and encouraging increased investment in seed sector development programs from African countries themselves.
13. Participate in **Governing Board Meetings**, and ensure effective and timely preparation and distribution of all materials in accordance with Board-mandated policies and procedures.
14. **Communicate Board decisions** to AfricaSeeds' staff, and other relevant stakeholders.

## 10.2 AfricaSeeds Headquarters and Field Staff

AfricaSeeds Headquarters shall be in Côte d'Ivoire. AfricaSeeds will maintain a lean and efficient Headquarters staff initially made up of the Executive Director, one Program Manager with a minimum number of professional staff, one Administration and Finance Manager and support staff. The staff position, both at headquarters and in the field, will be improved on the basis of increments in the workload and availability of matching resources. The staffing schedules and staff profiles and conditions will be contained in the AfricaSeeds governance manual.

## 10.3 Experts

The staff position of AfricaSeeds will initially be strengthened using a pool of 'stand-by' experts who will be available to meet human resource needs of emerging projects and other assignments. This option drastically minimizes the cost of staff while enabling AfricaSeeds to tap on a large pool of experts to meet its implementation and coordination needs rapidly and effectively. In preparing the 'stand-by' list, an elaborate format will be designed to guide in the recruitment of qualified and willing seed industry experts of all types. This list, which will be updated from time to time, will be of additional help in the composition and operation of thematic groups.





**Fully conducting the institutional mandate will call for considerable resources. Currently, the limited resources available will dictate the extent that activities can be conducted. But considering the critical linkages between the seed sector components, an aggressive resource mobilization will be pursued, to be able to attain the minimum operating budget as soon as possible to be able to implement a comprehensive and balanced seed sector development agenda which will lead to the desired impact being made.**

The actions of partners will be important in achieving a holistic coverage of the seed sector development needs. Therefore, AfricaSeeds will join in all efforts to advocate for a high level of support for seed development in Africa. Particularly, AfricaSeeds will support all efforts to launch a global fund-raising event or donors' conference as part of a continental seed sector development financing mechanism mentioned as part of the Seed

Development Agenda shown in paragraph 3.4.

The following resource mobilization activities will be embarked upon.

### 11.1 Host Country Support

AfricaSeeds will rely on the support from the Government of Côte d'Ivoire at three levels:

- a) host country contribution;
- b) contributions from a Member State;
- c) provision of legal framework/diplomatic status.

AfricaSeeds will continue to count on the continued support of the Ivorian Government, seeing in it an exemplary demonstration of good faith and confidence in AfricaSeeds that should serve as encouragement to other African governments.

## 11.2 Contributions from Member States

Member States should form a complementary source of funding through their contribution of counterpart or matching funds which will become part of project budgets. In addition, specific private and public sector institutions may enter into MoU arrangements with AfricaSeeds for the delivery of specific services. The revenue accruing from such services can also be an important source of funding from Member States.

## 11.3 Support from Development Partners

AfricaSeeds will count on support from development partners for the implementation of national, regional and continental seed sector development initiatives. AfricaSeeds will engage key donors and international funding institutions to be included in their lists of regular beneficiaries. The request for regular and continuous international institutional support is based upon the considerable developmental responsibilities that AfricaSeeds will be carrying out. Further, successes in several areas of seed development that AfricaSeeds will be conducting, particularly towards seed security and food security, should eventually lead to huge savings in donor funds that would otherwise be spent in addressing the consequences of seed emergencies.



# 12. AfricaSeeds' Expectations from the Impact of its Contributions

**It is the expectation 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 sell AfricaSeeds to its various constituencies, both benefactors and beneficiaries.**

Particularly, there is need to popularize the mission and role of AfricaSeeds for the realization by the whole of Africa that an institution borne out of Africa's own search for answers to its seed aspirations is here and ready to serve. Secondly, there should be awareness that Member States should prioritize the needed support for an institution which, after all, is their very own, to build its capacitation sufficiently to serve their own needs. Lastly, AfricaSeeds hereby conveys to donors and development partners that partnering with AfricaSeeds and supporting it to play its role, enhances their own contribution to Africa.

Towards the above expectations and in order to position itself adequately, AfricaSeeds recognizes the need to rapidly attain a credible capacitation that allows it to perform its role.

Consequently, the following will be pursued.

- To demonstrate, through advisories, technical bulletins and field activities, the potential that AfricaSeeds has to serve the goal of seed security for Africa as well as the goals of its partners.
- To launch a program to remobilize Member States to the support of AfricaSeeds and to also demonstrate the immediate benefits that will accrue to the Member States.
- To demonstrate, through a continental support and resource mobilization campaign that reaches out to all donors and development partners, the abilities and potential of AfricaSeeds as the Africa-owned, Africa-targeted, Africa-driven and Africa-run seed development institution that will synergize the contribution of all partners by adding AfricaSeeds' all-important local knowledge, specialized skills and expertise borne out of experience of tackling Africa's seed development hindrance for more than two decades.



# 13. Conclusion

Good strides been made in seed sector development in the past decade. But emerging needs and persisting challenges warrant renewed actions by all seed actors. Stakeholder efforts, if properly directed and coordinated, should contribute towards addressing challenges that hinder the impact of seeds in its contribution towards the achievement of agriculture transformation, food and nutrition security, poverty alleviation, and massive employment of the youth, as well as enhance business opportunities and creation of wealth among participants and users, leading to a greater socio-economic development of

the continent. What AfricaSeeds brings to contribute to the overall stakeholder efforts are the important features of holistic and integrated approach, complementarity, collaboration and consultation, as well as advocacy and commitment.

Therefore, at the start of the application of the new Strategy of AfricaSeeds, a clarion call goes out to all of Africa's seed development practitioners, development allies, farmers and all other related institutions, to join forces with AfricaSeeds to achieve the seed sector goals that Africa has set.



Seed rice fields of a women's cooperative, flowering stage. Kita, Mali. 2012.



# Annex 1

## Annex 1

### Proposed Informal Seed Sector Harnessing Process

The need to practically embrace the informal sector as the main source of seeds in Africa is expressed in most national seed policies and strategies. To translate that intention into concrete reality will, however, need considerable innovations, requiring judicious and skillful interventions in the various seed systems in the informal sector, while maintaining the indigenous knowledge, adaptability, utilization advantages and other parameters which make the informal seed sector attractive to most African farmers. Benefits from a comprehensive harnessing exercise will include the following.

- It will lead to entrenching more indigenous varieties in African agriculture.
- By a gradual incorporation of seed quality standards, more and more informal seed sector operators would enter into commercialized transactions, improve the size of seed supply and demand, and consequently also improve the size of the fledgling seed industry across Africa.

AfricaSeeds will, in collaboration with all its partners, work towards the practical implementation of the harnessing of the informal seed sector in farmers' fields. In that context, AfricaSeeds will address the issue not in the sense of pitching the informal sector against the formal sector, but rather, in consideration that all seed systems are part of a continuum which contributes severally and collectively to enhance the efficiencies of the seed supply in Africa for the achievement of seed security in Member States.

### Basic Principles for Harnessing the Informal Seed Sector

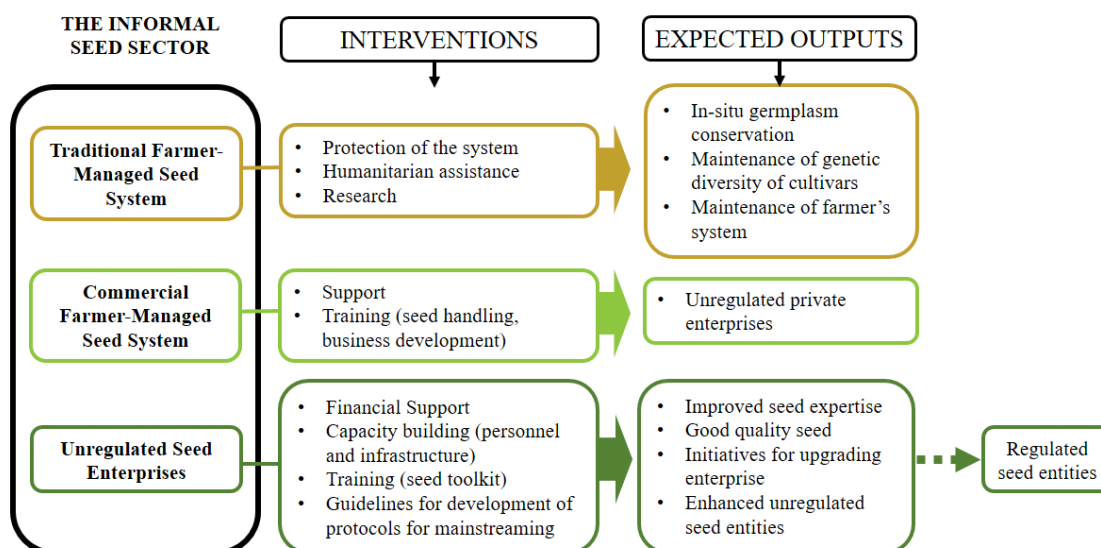
The potentials of the various systems that make up the informal sector should be exploited in an effective and sustainable manner, through appropriate and targeted interventions. Thus, specific objectives will be in relation to the respective assets of the various systems in the informal sector, and their potentials to contribute to the seed supply in Africa.

On that basis AfricaSeeds proposes the following diagram below in which specific areas identified in the different seed systems of the informal sector are targeted for interventions that will render the harnessing process to be relevant and effective.



# Annex 1

## Steps of the Informal Seed Sector Harnessing Process





## **Guidelines for the Informal Seed Sector Harnessing Process**

1. Governments should allow farmers to freely produce, use and exchange seeds of farmer or traditional varieties without infringing seed regulations, as a general policy.
2. The harnessing process should contribute to create an enabling environment to foster participation of seed systems in the informal sector and enhance the benefits accruing from farmers' deployment of seeds from these systems.
3. The process should contribute to ensure that seeds from the informal sector divest themselves of perceived negativity and accentuate their positive aspects that farmers find attractive and useful.
4. The aim of the harnessing process is not to formalize seeds from the informal sector in their regular or traditional forms, but rather to enhance their usefulness and impact and exploit their advantages that will enable the informal seed sector to contribute to increase availability of quality seeds to farmers in Africa.
5. The harnessing process should not be aimed at forcing regulatory compliance on informal sector to move entirely to the formal sector and rob it of some of its comparative advantages.
6. The process may however, in its own accord, lead to significant proportions of seeds from the informal sector migrating to the formal sector to boost the base of the commercial seed industry at least at national level, for a wider range of crops, including traditional and food security crops that presently almost completely relies on the informal sector.
7. AfricaSeeds accepts that the harnessing process may bring in its wake a measure of organization, recording, quality intervention and monitoring. This is in recognition that a complete free-for-all admittance of seeds from the informal sector into mainstream formal seed trade will run the risk of accentuating and accelerating the incidences of faking and adulteration which the seed sector is presently grappling with.
8. Issues having to do with variety description and characteristics, quality assurance and seed standards, adaptability etc. will need to be addressed to move farmer-managed seeds into mainstream seed operations
9. When developed, protocols to address these issues will first need to be adopted at national level where they will mostly be deployed for local use.









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