



AFRICAN SEED AND BIOTECHNOLOGY PROGRAMME

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I	BACKGROUND	5
	International Agreements and the Seed Sector Development	5
	Informal Seed System	6
	Formal Seed System.....	6
	Biotechnology for Seed Sector Development	6
II	PROGRAMME RATIONALE	7
	Inadequate Regional Seed Marketing	7
	Loss of Germplasm	7
	Obstacles to the effective use of Plant Genetic Resources	7
	Lack of Access to Seed and Planting Material.....	8
	Inadequate use of Available Biotechnology Tools.....	9
	Weak Disaster Management	9
III	PROGRAMME GOAL AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES.....	9
	Programme Goal:	9
	Programme Objectives:.....	10
IV	PROGRAMME COMPONENTS, OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES.....	10
	<i>Component 1: To enhance the collection, conservation, utilization and exchange of plant genetic resources, seed and planting materials.....</i>	<i>11</i>
	<i>Component 2: To strengthen variety improvement programmes and develop better crop production technologies.....</i>	<i>12</i>
	<i>Component 3: To promote effective seed production systems</i>	<i>13</i>
	<i>Component 4: To enhance development of quality assurance systems with more effective stakeholder contributions.....</i>	<i>17</i>
	<i>Component 5: To promote seed marketing and distribution</i>	<i>18</i>
	<i>Component 6: To develop improved disaster preparedness and response to seed insecurity</i>	<i>19</i>
V	PROGRAMME COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION	20
	Developing a Suitable Institutional Arrangement	20
	Institutional Arrangement	20
	Coordination and Advisory arrangements	21



<i>Leadership institutions</i>	21
<i>Management institutions</i>	22
<i>Implementing Institutions</i>	22
Developing an Effective Fund Raising Strategy	22

THE AFRICAN SEED AND BIOTECHNOLOGY PROGRAMME

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Urgent action is needed to create sustainable food security in Africa for which the development of the seed sector at the continental, regional and national levels is an essential element. Seed is one of the most crucial elements in the livelihoods of agricultural communities. Africa has been unable to take full advantage of the recent advances in seed sector development mainly because of weak seed production and distribution systems, inadequate supply of quality seed, lack of access to improved germplasm, weak entrepreneurial capacity of small- and medium-size seed enterprises, and inadequate implementation of seed policies and international agreements and conventions. As a result of the increasing incidence of emergency situations, an increasing proportion of the assistance allocated to Africa is invested in relief operations and a much smaller and decreasing proportion in seed development work needed to increase seed supply and improve preparedness.

The Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union (AU) in Sirte, Libya, on 5 July 2005, in discussing the importance of improved seeds for increasing agricultural productivity and food security in the continent, recognized that African governments individually cannot confront challenges represented by developments in the international seed industries and by legal and technical issues, which restrict access to genetic resources and biodiversity.

Several factors are affecting advancement within the seed sector in Africa, which include a number of complex obstacles that are individually and collectively, significantly hampering progress. The African Seed and Biotechnology Programme (ASBP) is proposed to provide a strategic approach for the comprehensive development of the seed sector and related biotechnology in Africa, taking into account the different needs of the countries and regions. The programme will focus on germplasm management and development, crop research and variety release, including farmer testing/selection activities, dissemination of varieties, and production and supply of seed and planting materials through informal and formal seed systems.

The programme will also support development of improved disaster preparedness. It will pursue an integrated approach to enhance capacities for seed policy development and implementation, strengthen linkages between informal and formal seed sectors, ensure further adherence to international norms and standards, stimulate transfer of appropriate technologies including biotechnology tools and products applicable to the seed sector and encourage public-private partnerships to promote development of local seed enterprises. Overall, the proposed programme will have a total of six components to be addressed at continental, regional and national levels.

Better coordination and capacity building are needed at the continental, regional and national levels to overcome the constraints related to seed trade through harmonization of seed rules and regulations, which include the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). Coordination also at all levels is needed to enhance the collection, conservation and use of important germplasm for Africa to overcome the problem of the progressive loss of germplasm in the process referred to as genetic erosion.

The African Union will provide overall coordination for the implementation of the ASBP given its leading role in the development of Africa within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Commitments and partnerships will be essential from the

among agencies and organizations with interests in agriculture and the seed sector including: national governments, regional economic communities, sub-regional organizations, international organizations, research organizations, seed networks, farmers¹ organizations, and public and private seed and biotechnology organizations and companies, and member of civil society organization, including non-governmental organizations and community-based organization.

¹ Farmers include both men and women farmers. In Africa, it is recognized that women play a significant role in the seed sector, especially within the informal seed sector

AFRICAN SEED AND BIOTECHNOLOGY PROGRAMME

I BACKGROUND

1. The report of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) states that as of 2001, about 28 million people in Africa have been facing food emergencies due to droughts, floods and strife, of which some 25 million needed emergency food and agricultural assistance. Urgent action is needed to create sustainable food security in Africa for which the development of the seed sector at the continental, regional and national levels is an essential element.
2. Seed is one of the most crucial elements in the livelihoods of agricultural communities. It is the repository of knowledge passed from generation to generation, and the result of continual adaptation and innovation in the face of ever-greater challenges for survival. The potential benefits from the use of good quality seed of adapted varieties by farmers can be enormous, and the availability to farmers of quality seed of a wide-range of varieties and crops to farmers can increase productivity, reduce risks from pest, drought and disease pressure, and increase incomes. Production increases through the use of adapted varieties in a given area can create employment opportunities related to processing, marketing, and other activities generated through quality seed production. Food security is heavily dependent on the seed security of the farming community. Seed sector development is essential to foster agricultural growth.
3. Africa has not been able to take full advantage of the advances in seed sector development, mainly because of weak seed production and distribution systems, inadequate supply of quality seed, lack of access to improved germplasm, weak entrepreneurial capacity of small- and medium-size seed enterprises, women's limited access to and control over productive resources, and inadequate implementation of seed policies and international agreements and conventions.
4. The Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union (AU) in Sirte, Libya, on 5 July 2005, in discussing the importance of improved seeds for increasing agricultural productivity and food security in the continent, recognized that African governments cannot individually confront challenges represented by developments in the international seed industries and by legal and technical issues which restrict access to genetic resources and biodiversity. The Assembly of AU further stressed Africa's potential for creating its own seed producing industry and requested its commission to consider all aspects in developing a comprehensive programme for the revitalization of the African seed sector in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

International Agreements and the Seed Sector Development

5. Seed sector development and management includes a range of activities including germplasm collection and conservation, varietal improvement and production and distribution of quality seeds to farmers, combined with local seed industry development and compliance with international agreements. The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources and the *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Global Plan of Action)* provide frameworks for linking the

conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) with seed sector development. Also, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) provides a mechanism by which phytosanitary issues related to seed are dealt with through capacity building, institutional development and harmonization. In addition, the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety have provisions that are relevant to seed development. Indeed, all these treaties and conventions have a key role to play in the development of the seed sector of Africa.

Informal Seed System

6. In a local or informal seed system, farmers themselves produce, disseminate and access seed directly from their own harvest or through exchange and barter from within their communities or nearby ones. The seed may be of variable quality and the distinction between seed and grain is not always clear. The local system is rarely monitored or controlled by government policies and regulations. The informal seed system plays a critical role in many African countries, including providing seed for minor and women's crops. However, with changing markets, reduced rainfall and new pests and diseases, farmers need a wider diversity of crops and varieties that are not always available from the informal seed system.

Formal Seed System

7. The formal seed system is a deliberately constructed system normally focused on cash crops (maize, cotton, soybean, rice, etc.). The sector is usually subject to national policies and regulations, and involves various stakeholders. A chain of interlinked activities results in seed products that are of well-defined quality in respect of genetic purity and physiological, physical and phytosanitary quality. These activities include research, multiplication, processing, distribution and uptake, transport and storage of seeds. The role of the private sector in a formal seed system is normally concentrated on seed production and marketing with appropriate compliance to quality assurance.

Biotechnology for Seed Sector Development

8. A number of biotechnology applications and approaches are being employed to enhance of agricultural production in many African countries. For example, biotechnology-based tools are used for mass propagation of disease-free plantlets. Other promising biotechnological methods are used to enhance the efficiency of traditional breeding, such as marker-assisted selection, which allows a faster and more targeted development of improved genotypes. Such markers provide new research tools which can assist in the conservation and characterization of biodiversity. Modern biotechnologies applications dramatically increase the potential and efficiency of using genetic resources. For example, genomics enhances the precision in crop improvement.
9. The development and deployment of modern biotechnologies also includes genetically modified organisms (GMOs) obtained through genetic engineering, which should be managed safely. National capacities in practical crop improvement can be strengthened in African countries through effective and efficient integration of biotechnology into the conventional breeding work.

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10. Recent and emerging biotechnology applications as well as future applications tools and approaches emerging from biotechnology research are likely to have great potential to assist African countries to enhance agricultural production, including providing assistance to small scale resource-poor farmers. For this to be achieved, the application of new technologies and approaches should be as part of an integrated and comprehensive agricultural research programme, which gives priority to the need and problems of small-scale resource-poor farmers.

II PROGRAMME RATIONALE

11. Several factors are affecting advancement within the seed sector in Africa, which include a number of complex obstacles that are individually and collectively, significantly hampering progress. The African Seed and Biotechnology Programme is aimed at providing a comprehensive and strategic approach to overcome current barriers and obstacles and to further plan development of the seed sector, as a critical element in achieving food security in Africa.

Inadequate Regional Seed Marketing

12. There is a **lack of collaboration, consultation and harmonization** at the regional and continental levels concerning the development, movement and use of high-yielding vegetatively propagated materials and seed. This has led 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 exchange. **Better coordination and capacity building** are needed at the national, regional and continental levels to overcome the constraints related to seed trade through **harmonization of seed rules and improved policies and regulations**, taking into account the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

Loss of Germplasm

13. Country reports on the state of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture prepared as a contribution to the first *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (PGRFA) confirmed that losses of diversity have been significantly and that erosion continues. Erosion of **plant genetic resources** for food and agriculture will significantly negatively affect seed production. Of major concern is the irreversible loss of genes, the basic functional unit of inheritance and the primary source of variation in appearance, characteristics and behaviour among plants. In order to overcome this problem, better coordination is needed at the national, regional and continental levels to enhance the collection, conservation and use of important germplasm for Africa.

Obstacles to the effective use of Plant Genetic Resources

14. Several obstacles limit the effective use of plant genetic resources. These include: the lack of characterization and evaluation data, poor coordination of national policies and poor linkages between the national genebanks and the users of the germplasm. Utilization of plant genetic resources maintained by farmers is limited due to lack of information on their characteristics and lack of availability. International research centres and African national agricultural

research systems have developed new improved varieties. However, these varieties often do not reach farmers because of lengthy testing requirements which have to be repeated even in countries with similar agro-ecological conditions. For existing and approved varieties, **lack of national capacity to maintain the variety and provide Basic Seed in a timely manner hampers exploitation** of the varieties, and this situation must be addressed.

Lack of Access to Seed and Planting Material

15. Currently, more than 80 per cent of the seed planted by African farmers is produced by the informal seed sector where farmers themselves produce, disseminate and access seed directly from their own harvest or through exchange and barter among members of the local communities. While the informal seed sector is currently the primary source of seed in African, and will remain so for the foreseeable future, improved access to seed from the formal sector would be highly beneficial. Unfortunately, there is limited collaboration between participants in the formal and informal seed sectors. The result is that many farmers dependent on the local seed system often do not have access to early generation seed of new, improved crop varieties, and high value fruit and vegetables that are available from the formal seed sector.
16. Several studies suggest that currently less than 20 per cent of the cropped area in Africa as a whole is planted with high-yielding varieties. There are a number of barriers that are affecting seed distribution and these include:
 - **Poorly developed infrastructure:** Long distances between farmers and seed outlets and poor roads results in high transportations costs and poor storage arrangements impact on seed quality, especially with lengthy transport periods.
 - **Inadequate extension services:** Farmers often need extension service and demonstration programmes to help them understand the expected benefits resulting using improved seed, and to encourage them to use new varieties.
 - **Inadequate policy seed policies:** While in some countries there are adequate seed policies encouraging investments, particularly in seed distribution, in many others, either there are inadequate policies related to the seed sector, or policies are acting as disincentives to further seed development.
 - **Inadequate support for small-scale seed sector entrepreneurs:** Often government support for small scale **seed entrepreneurs** is not adequate to develop the sector. They often have no access to rural credit and marketing opportunities for agricultural products in general, and seed retailing systems in particular are weak. The result is that smallholder farmers cannot access higher quality seed as it is not available in their area, or the seed is too expensive for most farmers to purchase.
 - **Inability of women to access and use quality seeds:** The limited involvement of women in the decision-making process on family income, as well as access to land, extension education and other factors of production, continue to reduce demand on quality seed even where it exists.

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17. A strategic approach is essential to address the barriers that are impeding farmer access to higher quality seed seeds. For example, improved linkage between the formal and informal seed sectors in the participating countries will ensure that seed development programmes fully consider farmers needs and the diversity of crops being employed including major, minor and women's crops.

Inadequate use of Available Biotechnology Tools

18. Biotechnology is an integral feature of modern plant breeding research and practice but is not sufficiently well embedded in practical plant breeding and crop improvement in developing countries where inadequate infrastructure, scarce funding and lack of trained staff represent major obstacles². Furthermore, evidence from developing countries outside Africa suggests that micro-propagation and tissue culturing can be profitably applied to many crops. Countries like Thailand, India and others are producing millions of disease-free plantlets every year for a range of fruit and horticultural crops, such as banana, papaya, grape, tomato, potato and others. The potential of this technology for Africa has not been exploited due to lack of facilities and expertise. Assessment of the potential applications of biotechnology tools is essential, as is capacity building to enhance use of the available technologies, and to implement appropriate biosafety measures.

Weak Disaster Management

19. Disasters (droughts, floods and conflicts) are increasing in frequency in Africa where acute disasters are developing into chronic disasters which lead to food and seed insecurity. However, although it is generally accepted that disasters occur regularly, 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 disaster in an effective and sustainable manner. A number of efforts to deal with the impact of disasters such as food aid, food imports by government and supply of seeds as part of relief programmes have had only minimal impact on the overall food situation, and the frequent introduction during disasters of unsuitable varieties erodes biodiversity and leads to loss of valuable local genetic resources. As a result of the **increasing incidence of emergency situations, an increasing proportion of the assistance allocated to Africa is invested in relief operations and a much smaller and decreasing proportion in seed development work** needed to increase sustainable seed supply and improve preparedness. This complex situation must be reviewed and solutions found to ensure adequate investment in seed development.

III PROGRAMME GOAL AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Programme Goal:

² FAO. 2005. The Way Forward to Strengthen National Plant Breeding and Biotechnology Capacity. Summary from a meeting at FAO in February 2005.

20. The overall programme goal is:

To contribute to increased food security and nutrition and to poverty alleviation in Africa, through the establishment of effective and efficient seed systems and enhanced application of biotechnologies and methodologies within the seed sector.

Programme Objectives:

21. In support of the Programme goal the following objectives will be pursued:

- **Enhanced national capacity for improved seed production, multiplication and distribution to better supply farmers with high quality seed that enables them to respond to changing environmental conditions and market demands.**
- **Improved seed quality assurance procedures in place to ensure sustained production and distribution of high quality seed to farmers.**
- **Strengthened linkages between the formal and informal seed sectors to better understand and respond to farmer needs, including small-scale and women farmers.**
- **Effective seed policies and regulations in place to enable and promote increased seed trade among African nations.**
- **Enhanced capacity for the conservation and sustainable use and development of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, to ensure adapted crop varieties are available to meet future farmer needs.**
- **Increased capacity to utilize tools of biotechnology to enhance plant breeding and high quality seed production.**
- **Increased capacity to implement biosafety measures in relation to seed production and distribution and plant genetic improvement, to protect human health and the environment.**
- **Establishment of model codes of conduct for seed used in emergency situations.**

IV PROGRAMME COMPONENTS, OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

22. The programme is based on an interrelated set of components that collectively provide a strategic approach to address the main barriers and challenges to improving the seed sector in Africa. The programme has been designed with a focus on diverse farmer needs across the continent of Africa. It promotes partnerships with international organizations such as FAO, the CGIAR, international and continental-level seed organizations and other concerned stakeholders, which will assist nations to achieve commitments under relevant international conventions, such as the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and other international agreements that affect seed sector development.

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23. Overall, the programme has a total of six components addressing key seed-related issues, to be implemented at, national, regional and continental levels.

Component 1. To enhance the collection, conservation, utilization and exchange of plant genetic resources, seed and planting materials

Output 1.1. International conventions and treaties for germplasm conservation and use, plant variety protection, phytosanitary and biosafety requirements implemented, to promote seed sector development

Activities

Activity 1.1.1. Raise awareness concerning international obligations among decision-makers on issues and opportunities through high-level engagement strategies

Activity 1.1.2. Coordinate exchange of expertise among African and other organizations to improve understanding of the requirements of international conventions and treaties including biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and phytosanitary and biosafety measures

Activity 1.1.3. Establish mechanisms to support national and regional efforts to harmonize phytosanitary and biosafety legislation

Activity 1.1.4. Establish mechanisms to support national and regional efforts to harmonize seed legislation and to develop model Material Transfer Agreements for common use

Activity 1.1.5. Identify and distribute information on seed-related biotechnology, including the development of capacities to regulate biosafety

Output 1.2. Regional germplasm collection, safe handling and conservation strategies in place, and genebank networks established for improved germplasm exchange

Activities

Activity 1.2.1. In consultation with relevant stakeholders, prepare regional priority conservation strategies for germplasm most at risk of being lost, and implement collaborative measures to collect and conserve indigenous varieties and knowledge

Activity 1.2.2. Develop country-based regional databases to better track the status of crop varieties of regional interest and concern

Activity 1.2.3. Establish regional procedures for the safe movement of plant genetic resources including by, conducting training courses on phytosanitary guidelines and seed and planting materials handling, and quality maintenance practices for safe movement

Activity 1.2.4. Establish regional training courses to develop best practices in regional initiatives for germplasm conservation, varietal improvement and exchange

Output 1.3. More efficient management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, including improved germplasm collection, characterization, conservation and sustainable use

Activities

Activity 1.3.1. Coordinate efforts to strengthen African networks of genebanks to increase the availability and use of germplasm and associated information

Activity 1.3.2. Support development of an African information system to better document strategies for the application of biotechnologies for the conservation, sustainable use and characterization of seed and planting materials

Activity 1.3.3. Coordinate efforts to develop continent-wide collection and conservation strategies for major and minor crops, including genetic stocks that are important for food security

Activity 1.3.4. Promote the application of technologies (including biotechnology) for conservation, sustainable use and characterization of seed and planting materials

Activity 1.3.5. Promote documentation of the use of indigenous knowledge related to farmers' varieties

Component 2. To strengthen variety improvement programmes and develop better crop production technologies

Output 2.1. Human resources and institutional capacities arrangements strengthened in order to develop the necessary expertise to further develop the seed sector

Activities

Activity 2.1.1. Assess human resources capacity to implement priority activities of the African Seed and Biotechnology Programme, and implement strategies for required capacity building

Activity 2.1.2. Assess research capability and infrastructure necessary to support implementation of priority activities of the African Seed and Biotechnology Programme, and enhance research capacity and infrastructure, as required

Activity 2.1.3. Develop and implement University degree programmes and curricula in seed technology/production in African universities at regional level

Activity 2.1.4. Conduct expert consultation in seed production and seed technology to determine needs, review technical components and identify potential universities and institutions for seed technology/production degree programme, as well as training programmes for field technicians, extension agents, agribusiness managers, etc.

Activity 2.1.5. Provide competitive scholarships to students at regional level to study seed technology/production

Activity 2.1.6. Develop curricula based on guidance from expert consultation

Output 2.2. Strengthened programmes for variety development and crop production technologies

Activities

Activity 2.2.1. Promote best practices for variety release and multiplication of, in particular public varieties, to local and private seed entrepreneurs

Activity 2.2.2. Strengthen multiplication and supply of Breeder and Basic Seed institutions and organizations

Activity 2.2.3. Conduct training course on best practices in regional initiatives for germplasm conservation, varietal improvement and exchange

Activity 2.2.4. Coordinate development of variety improvement strategies at the regional and national levels in collaboration with NARS, the CGIAR centres, private sector and others partners

Activity 2.2.5. Promote technology transfer, including proprietary technologies in partnership with technology holders and advanced research institutes

Activity 2.2.6. Promote the development and maintenance of information dissemination systems to facilitate technology transfer

Activity 2.2.7. Coordinate and support the development of training programme materials on modern technologies, including biotechnologies for variety development.

Output 2.3. Agro-ecological characterization enhanced through the establishment and strengthening of germplasm exchange networks and crop-based networks

Activities

Activity 2.3.1. Support the establishment and maintenance of crop-based networks to perform germplasm exchange and multi-locational evaluation

Activity 2.3.2. Coordinate capacity building for agro-ecological characterization and interpretation

Component 3. To promote effective seed production systems

Output 3.1. National seed policies, systems, and activities analysed, reviewed and endorsed

Activities

Activity 3.1.1. Prepare national seed compendiums, review and verify compendium information to support establishment of integrated policies for seed system development, including germplasm conservation, characterization, utilization and improvement, application of biotechnologies, variety release and seed production and distribution

Output 3.2. National capacity to manage germplasm, release varieties and supply seed increased

Activities

Activity 3.2.1. Determine best practices for the multiplication and release of, in particular, public varieties, to local and private seed entrepreneurs, including developing best approaches for royalty and maintenance arrangements

Activity 3.2.2. Strengthen relevant institutions/organizations (including farmer based organizations) to better meet national requirements, in-line with international norms as applicable

Activity 3.2.3. Promote release and diffusion of new varieties and use of quality seeds

Output 3.3. Support for emerging seed entrepreneurs in both formal and informal seed sector increased and strengthened

Activities

Activity 3.3.1. Establish a policy and regulatory framework to facilitate the establishment of small seed enterprises

Activity 3.3.2. Develop and provide technical training to farmer/farmer groups for quality seed production and marketing, including how to gain access to appropriate germplasm, technologies, and information

Activity 3.3.3. Organize training courses for farmers/farmer groups concerning establishment and management of small seed businesses, including group formation, access to micro-credit etc.

Activity 3.3.4. Support the poor and especially women seed entrepreneurs, so that they are empowered and not marginalized

Output 3.4. Improved linkages among representatives and their organizations in the formal and informal seed sectors, and increased opportunities to share experiences

Activities

Activity 3.4.1. Characterize existing seed systems (focused on different seed sources) in order to identify opportunities to link the formal and informal seed sectors

Activity 3.4.2. Based on identified opportunities, design and implement training courses for seed producers and traders in the informal and formal sectors to increase seed supply, ensure seed quality and improve market efficiency

Activity 3.4.3. Design and implement a training course for extension staff (community, governmental, private sector and non-governmental organizations) to increase their involvement in and capability to enhance seed supply and quality at farm level

Activity 3.4.4. Undertake capacity building aimed at strengthening linkages and access among researchers and extension service staff with farmers. Approaches include Participatory Plant Breeding (PPB) (linked to varietal development component)

Output 3.5. Availability of seed at the regional level improved

Activities

Activity 3.5.1. Undertake inventories of existing regional arrangements for production, exchange and availability of seed

Activity 3.5.2. Assist in the design of the most appropriate mechanisms for regional seed production and exchange

Activity 3.5.3. Assess and publicize a report on the current status of regional seed production systems, including the identification and analysis of critical issues

Activity 3.5.4. Compile regional case studies on key elements for successful formal and informal seed production systems

Output 3.6. Continental seed strategies based on analysis of seed production systems, capabilities and comparative advantage developed and published

Activities

Activity 3.6.1. Analyse current African seed production systems, including the identification and analysis of critical issues based on national and regional studies

Activity 3.6.2. Compile case studies on key elements for successful formal and informal seed production systems based on results of national and regional studies, and widely distribute the results

Output 3.7. African organizations and institutions and locations for specialized seed and planting material production identified and promoted

Activities

Activity 3.7.1. Identify institutions and organisations currently involved in specialized seed production.

Activity 3.7.2. Identify capacity building needs and opportunities to further develop or strengthen organizations and institutions for specialized seed/planting materials production

Activity 3.7.3. Oversee surveys to identify ecologically suitable areas for seed and planting material production

Output 3.8. Mainstreaming of informal seed sector issues

Activities:

Activity 3.8.1. Create awareness among regional and national actors and other stakeholders on the contribution of the informal seed sector by documenting contributions of the sector

Activity 3.8.2. Identify gaps to enhance contributions of the sector.

Activity 3.8.3. Develop strategies to link informal and formal sectors.

Activity 3.8.4. Assist in organizing the informal sector: such as through provision of institutional support .ensuring traceability of the seeds used.

Output 3.9. The informal seed sector is providing farmers with quality seed in adequate quantities to meet their production needs

Activities at National level:

Activity 3.9.1. Carry out seed systems analysis to identify opportunities and constraints, including better understanding of constraints to further develop seed for minor and women's crops

Activity 3.9.2. Based on analysis, increase farmer capacity to produce and supply quality seed through Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and other approaches, considering all crops, including minor and women's crops

*Activity 5.2.2*Develop lessons learned, scale up, and determine opportunities for stronger linkages between the informal with the formal seed sectors to address seed quality and quantity

Component 4. To enhance development of quality assurance systems with more effective stakeholder contributions

Output 4.1. Strategies and codes of conduct for quality assurance of key African crops developed and being implemented

Activities

Activity 4.1.1. Coordinate and oversee development of strategies with relevant partners (OECD, IPPC and ISTA, regional organizations and the private sector) to develop continental-wide models for quality assurance.

Activity 4.1.2. Prepare a model code of conduct for the use of quality seed in emergency situations, to assist country and regional planning efforts.

Output 4.2. African seed laws and regulations harmonized

Activities

Activity 4.2.1. Compile and disseminate information on legal frameworks to facilitate the development of regional and continental-wide variety catalogues and to harmonize legal frameworks across Africa (seed certification, plant quarantine, variety release, etc.)

Output 4.3. Regional seed policies and legal frameworks developed and adopted

Activities

Activity 4.3.1. Review existing mechanism for seed production and exchange and design harmonized policies, legal frameworks and procedures including procedures and penalties to deal with non compliance.

Activity 4.3.2. Develop regional variety catalogues

Activity 4.3.3. Develop Regional Laboratories/Reference Laboratories using same test factors.

Activity 4.3.4. Organize meetings and consultations with international organizations, such as OECD, IPPC and ISTA, regional organizations and the private sector to develop and use model procedures for quality assurance in local seed systems.

Activity 4.3.5. Develop a model code of conduct for accessing and use of quality seed in emergency situations

Output 4.4. Critical issues affecting national seed quality assurance identified and options to overcome obstacles identified

Activities

Activity 4.4.1. Review and assess documentation procedures on seed control, certification and quality assurance systems, and draft recommendations to improve the situation

Output 4.5. Relevant national laws and regulations for seed quality assurance formulated, adopted and implemented

Activities

Activity 4.5.1. Undertake a detailed review at the national level of existing arrangements for seed quality management, and national procedures, and formulate appropriate laws and regulations as required to ensure seed quality assurance procedures

Activity 4.5.2. Monitor, widely publicize and enforce national seed quality assurance laws and regulations

Activity 4.5.3. Develop national variety catalogues

Activity 4.5.4. Develop supporting implementation manuals

Component 5. To promote seed marketing and distribution

Output 5.1. Seed marketing and distribution channels at national, regional and continental levels are improved

Activities

Activity 5.1.1. Conduct surveys to establish current status of marketing and distribution and develop strategies at regional and continental levels, for an expert consultation

Activity 5.1.2. Organize an expert consultation to develop and validate strategies to overcome constraints in regional inter-regional and continental trade, and disseminate widely results to the private sector and regional organizations

Activity 5.1.3. Promote seed demonstrations and seed fairs at national and local levels

Output 5.2. Information systems and tracking for seed trade within Africa significantly improved

Activities

Activity 5.2.1. Standardise methodologies for data collection, processing and presentation of seed trade data, and maintain and make them publicly (*Data will cover variety lists (including local varieties) and their adaptation, quantitative data*)

on seed trade in order to promote commercial trade and small seed business development and establish seed security baseline data)

Activity 5.2.2. Identify sources of information, establish contacts and set up and maintain regional and continental databases

Component 6. To develop improved disaster preparedness and response to seed insecurity

Output 6.1. National and regional arrangements formulated and implemented to enhance effective preparedness and response to disasters affecting seed security

Activities

Activity 6.1.1. Provide country specific guidance for improved coordination, disaster preparedness, and response, including a range of disaster responses that integrate the different seed systems that farmers are using (including compilation of relevant information and facilitate access to it)

Activity 6.1.2. Carry out participatory seed system and security assessments (including the seed systems that farmers are using)

Activity 6.1.3. Design and implement national training programmes to strengthen capacity of all stakeholders in disaster planning and response

Activity 6.1.4. Support national disaster planning and response information system for seed varieties including farmer varieties and proven modern varieties

Activity 6.1.5. Support seed system profiling/database for disaster planning and response and overall community disaster preparedness

Activity 6.1.6. Provide guidance at the regional level for disaster preparedness and response, including a range of disaster responses and funding strategies that fully consider the different seed systems that farmers use

Activity 6.1.7. Support appropriate regional information systems for seed varieties, including farmer varieties and proven modern varieties

Activity 6.1.8. Support regional seed system profiling/database for preparedness

Activity 6.1.9. Incorporate seed security assessment into Famine Early Warning Systems

Output 6.2. Enhanced coordination and collaboration in planning the response to disasters that affect seed security across Africa

Activities

Activity 6.2.1. Provide guidance at the continental level for disaster preparedness and response, including a range of disaster responses and funding strategies that integrate the different seed systems that farmers use

Output 6.3. Variety improvement programmes to develop new germplasm that can cope with climate change and disaster factors (e.g. drought, submergence, insects and rodents) strengthened

Activities

Activity 6.3.1. Collect landraces and related species in arid and flood-prone areas, as well as in other difficult environments

Activity 6.3.2. Characterize resistance of germplasm to climatic and biological constraints, particularly those linked to natural disasters

Activity 6.3.3. Develop plant ideotypes and associated technologies for climatic changes

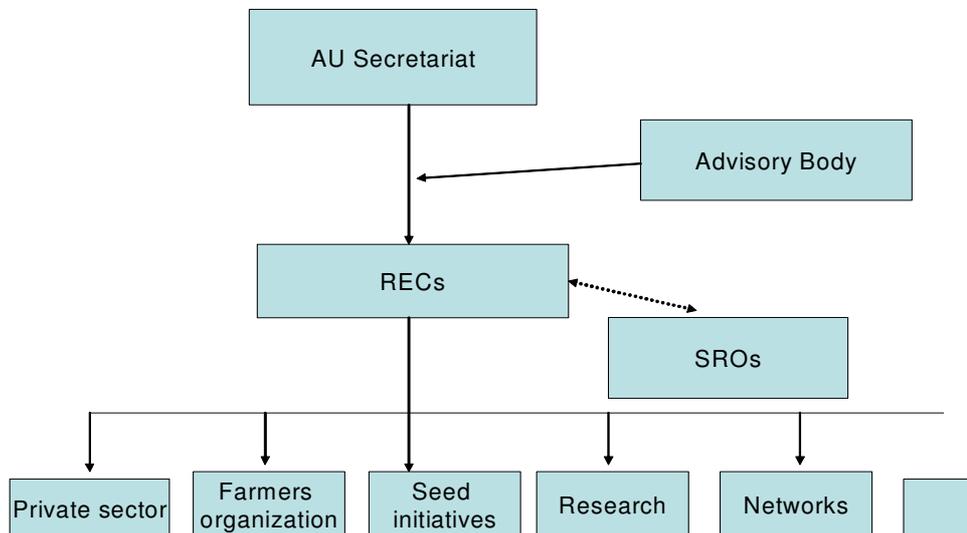
V PROGRAMME COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

26. The African Union will coordinate the implementation of the programme based on its leading role in the development of Africa within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). A coordination unit will be established within African Union Commission headquarters, located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to ensure effective communication with AU member countries, and to ensure the Programme builds on existing continental, regional and national networks.
27. The coordination unit will ensure opportunities for the full and effective participation of all relevant stakeholders in the planning and implementation of activities. A full realisation of the Programme will require a serious commitment of member country policy makers, the international donor community, CGIAR centres, and African regional networks, farming organizations, seed companies, biotechnology providers and member of civil society organizations. FAO will collaborate with the African Union Commission, providing technical assistance and will facilitating partnerships among the international conventions secretariats that are relevant to the African seed sector.
28. Once the African Seed and Biotechnology Programme is endorsed the coordination unit will collaborate with a wide-range of organizations and interests to develop detailed project proposals and plan the implementation of priorities. African experts will continue to be involved in the process. As projects are developed and implemented, a programme monitoring and evaluation process will be established.

Institutional Arrangement

29. The Consultation Workshop on the Implementation of the ASBP in Addis Ababa in February, 2008 discussed various options in relation to an appropriate institutional arrangement for the effective implementation of the ASBP. The final draft structure comprises of four subsidiary levels of coordination: an advisory tier; a leadership tier; a management tier; and an

implementation tier. The structure is based on the FARA – SRO – NARS model as shown in the following sketch:



Coordination and Advisory arrangements

30. The highest level of the institutional arrangement will be the Coordination and Advisory Unit which will be located at a Secretariat to be located at the Africa Union. A Programme Coordinator will be appointed to act as the overall coordinator of the ASBP. The Secretariat will be made up only of the Coordinator and a small office staff of administrative and financial personnel.

31. The role of the Secretariat and the Programme Coordinator will be as follows:

- Coordination
- Advocacy
- Mobilization of funds
- Information sharing and learning alliance at country and regional levels
- Reporting to AU
- Facilitating, monitoring and evaluation and impact assessment

32. The Secretariat and the entire coordination system shall be assisted by a Programme Advisory Committee which shall be made up of carefully selected technical experts representing the wide range of stakeholders who shall be involved in the ASBP. The advisory committee will include such bodies as Regional agencies, FAO, CGIAR centres etc. The committee will provide technical support to the secretariat and give technical direction to the entire ASBP.

Leadership institutions:

33. At the next lower level of the organization structure will be the leadership institutions:

- Mobilize Funds

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- Allocate funds
 - Monitoring and evaluation and impact
 - Linking with existing Initiatives e.g. AGRA

Management institutions:

34. At the lower level from the leadership institutions shall be the Management Institutions which shall serve as the substantive executing agencies: FARA and sub regional organizations (SRO) are examples of possible management institutions. Their roles will include the following:
- Chart programme of work
 - Develop strategies for implementation at regional level
 - Assist in selecting and providing guidance and support to implementing organizations
 - Receive and analyse project reports and provide technical backstopping to on going programme activities

Implementing Institutions:

35. Implementing Institutions shall be made up of Government Ministries, Universities, Private Sector, farmers' organizations, NGOs etc who shall be the substantive implementers of ASBP projects. The roles of implementing agencies shall include the following:
- Participate in developing country level plans
 - Conduct ASBP activities in line with mandates
 - Share information
 - Mobilize additional resources (e.g. co-funding)
36. The 2008 Consultation Workshop Addis Ababa accepted that, while the latest draft structure provides a good starting point for further development, it does not yet fully meet the needs of a framework programme. Accordingly, AU will continue the process of close consultation with all relevant stakeholders to finalize the institutional arrangement prior to programme start up.

Developing an Effective Fund Raising Strategy

37. While it expected that funding sources will include traditional development, fund raising will start with high level contacts by AU among African leaders and policy makers to initiate a process of resource allocation to initiate ASBP. AU member countries will also be expected to establish their own seed development fund to display their own level of commitment in the belief partners and new donors who shall be vigorously lobbied, AU will bend all efforts to ensure that AU member countries themselves constitute an important source of programme funds in a sustainable manner. This will signal to donors the importance that AU member countries themselves attach to the ASBP and should assist in leveraging support from Africa's friends. In line with this, AU will endeavour to maintain seed issues at the highest level on the political agenda that this will serve as a good leverage to encourage donors to make matching contributions.

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38. At the same time a number of project profiles which have been cleared by the February 2008 Consultative Workshop will be finalized and circulated to a large number of donors prior to the holding of a Donors' Meeting.
 39. AU will ensure that a flexible resource mobilization strategy is developed which incorporates the hybrid objective of:
 - ensuring a good degree of centralized funding to be able to cover potentially lean areas, and
 - enabling contributors to exercise an option of directly contributing resources to areas of their interest or choice both in terms of location and subject matter.
 40. Through its various communication channels and contacts, AU will commence an awareness-creation and sensitization process to prepare all stakeholders, including programme actors and national governments ahead of programme implementation.