



# GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES IN PHYTOSANITARY AND SEED QUALITY SYSTEMS; IMPACT ON SEED QUALITY AND AVAILABILITY

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# Introduction



- Seed is a key **input** for improving **agricultural productivity** and ensuring **food security**.
- It is a preferred **tool** for **re-establishing the livelihoods** of farmers affected by **disasters** and to return them to a life of dignity, independent of handouts.
- **Access to quality seed** also facilitates **food resource diversification** and **prevention** of **genetic erosion** in rural agriculture.
- **Seed trade** is essential for both **agricultural growth** and **regional seed security**. (limited access to improved seeds)



# Introduction cont'd



- **Seed production** has to **comply** with numerous **regulations and standards** in order to **access export** markets.
- Due to **diversity** of national **regulatory systems** in the countries, farmers continue to be **seed insecure**
- **Variations** in national **standards for seed certification** and quality control, and in quarantine and **phytosanitary measures** for seed, **complicate the trading** of seed between countries and cause difficulties for the **efficient movement** of emergency **seed consignments**.



# Global best practices in phytosanitary and seed quality systems



## (1) Harmonization of regulations governing seed quality

- **Equivalency** of phytosanitary measures.
- Seed producers **unable to comply** are left out. Need for **integrating informal** seed producers

**Impact of lack of harmonization:** Reduced seed availability since such seeds cannot be exchanged freely.

- Harmonization **promote** the **entry of new improved** varieties and **ease the movement of quality seed** from countries with surplus to countries in need of seed.



# Harmonization of regulations cont'd



- Improved access to quality seed will contribute to **seed and food security**, and thus support efforts to alleviate hunger and poverty.
- **Harmonization of seed regulations in SADC** (Southern African Development Community) were developed by the SADC Secretariat through the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR).
- **Harmonization:** Crop Variety Testing, Registration and Release System, SADC Seed Certification and Quality Assurance System, and SADC Quarantine and Phytosanitary Measures for Seed.



# Benefits of the harmonization



- Lead to **more seed availability** as a result of **removal of regulatory barriers**
- **Save time and resources** because importing countries **no longer need to re-test** the imported seed
- Allow more **efficient movement** of seed in the region through the use of a **common seed certification scheme**, terminology, standards, procedures, seals and labels
- Establishment of **transparent** and **science-based common standards** and **procedures** for seed movement



# Need for harmonization

- A **survey** on sector policy in eastern and central Africa concluded that **enactment and implementation of harmonized seed policies, regulations** and procedures was needed.
- **Technical agreements on seed policy** harmonization needed in five key areas: **variety evaluation and release; seed certification; plant variety protection; phytosanitary regulations** and **seed import and export procedures**
- **Technical agreements on standards, procedures and regulations** for the seed industry based on **best practices and scientific evidence** were developed



## (2) Registration of landraces or and other local varieties



Developing procedures for registering landraces upon making available

- **Description of the variety** in terms of **performance** (value for cultivation and use [VCU]), distinct, uniform, stable
  - **Farmer experiences** during cultivation
  - Its **name(s)** as well as the **merits** of the variety
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- **Impact**
  - Bringing procedures of **ensuring quality** to the landraces by recognising these varieties and subjecting them through **certification process**
  - Has the benefit of **bringing quality** and ensuring **availability**





### (3) Participation of regulators in all decision making fora



- The NPPO has **membership/representation** and participates in/partners with **governing and decision** making bodies and forums **locally, regionally and internationally**:

#### **Locally**

- Ministry of Agriculture
- Research institutions
- Universities

#### **Regional**

- EAC, COMESA

#### **International**

- IPPC, ISTA-OECD, CODEX

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# Participation of regulators in all decision making fora cont'd



- There is need to **address the gaps in policy and practice** regarding production and trade in seed across countries
- Ensuring that **countries acts** are **consistent** with the **Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Treaty on Protection of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture** to which the countries are signatories.
- Nurturing of **transparency, participatory inter-institutionality** and **multi-disciplinarity** is essential.

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## (4) Public-private partnerships



- The Eastern Africa Seed Committee (EASCOM) exemplifies a public-private partnership that evolved to **address the gaps in policy and practice regarding production and trade in seed** across 11 countries in eastern and central Africa.
- It is evident that **regulatory reforms** require **inclusive participation**
- Need to **bring together** representatives of the **private sector** through the **national seed trade association**; the **technical arm through the national breeders' association**; the **regulatory arm through the national seed certification agency**, and the **policy arm through the ministry of agriculture**
- Overall benefit in partnerships--**increased investments** in the seed sector, **increased seed production**, **access to more varieties**, and increased competition.



# Public-private partnerships



- Farmers are teaming up with:
  - **private-sector seed companies** where farmers are linked as **outgrowers** to a private seed company (e.g., Kenya Seed company)
  - **Farmers** are organised in **groups** and work with **research institutes** (e.g., KARI)
  - **Regulatory bodies** to focus on the **quality** aspects of seeds thus managing the risks
  - **Facilitation** of **partnerships** that **bring private sector** and **public/regulatory authorities** together to discuss, **build trust**, **reach consensus** and **foster collaboration** on key issues.



## (5) Continuous capacity building



- To **support** the smooth **implementation** of the harmonised **regulations**
- To address the **emerging issues** in pests, **pest detection, management** methods
- To allow continued **review and update** of existing **phytosanitary measures**
- **Encouraging** and **supporting** on-farm seed production by farmers is seen as one approach to sustainable seed delivery in Africa
- Human resource development and skill upgrading/ training programmes for Scientists, Researchers and others.
- Obtaining **ISO Quality certification** for major PQ Stations



## (6) Fostering , building, partnership and synergies



➤ **Recognition** of the **differences** as well as the **importance** of the various technical experts is vital

➤ **scientists and policy makers** who have to domesticate the agreement

➤ **regulators** who have to enforce implementation

➤ **legislators** who enact the agreements into bills and laws.

➤ Bringing these diverse teams together

➤ to **forge common understanding** to achieve the desired goals helps to maintain a **healthy balance** between encouraging **competitive production of seeds** and providing **oversight** for implementing **quality control/assurance** schemes.



# Impact of phytosanitary and seed quality systems on seed quality and availability



## Seed quality

- Ensures seeds of high quality and disease free

## Seed availability

- Systems for instance where the **informal systems** are integrated in the production of certified seeds ensure **more availability** of improved and **quality seeds** to the farmers
- Phytosanitary rules **if not harmonized** well can serve as a **barrier to accessing** export market and farmers to obtain quality seeds
- **Excessive high standards** results to **rejection and destruction** of good quality seeds—case of Ethiopia

*‘There is no perfect seed legislation anywhere in the world and the laws and regulations may need to be frequently amended in response to changing circumstances’.* It is therefore recommended that standards be reviewed and revised as necessary to comply with international standards and otherwise to determine what is appropriate for each variety



Thank you

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