



The rise of the seed-producing cooperative in West and Central Africa: A viable path towards improving access to quality seeds in the region

3 October 2018, Iran Room
12:30 – 14:00

Summary

In a region where the adoption rate of quality seeds remains remarkably low, it is evident that no local or regional actor involved in the seed industry and capable of delivering quality seeds into the hands of smallholder farmers should be overlooked.

It is often stated that only 20% of the seed used in sub-Saharan Africa is certified seed from the formal seed sector. The so-called informal seed sector, which covers community-based initiatives and farm-saved seed practices, accounts for the other 80%. Cooperatives are often regarded as part of the informal sector.

Although this may still be correct for a lot of cooperatives, the statement ignores the fact that in most of Western and Central Africa, seed-producing cooperatives are increasingly being formally recognized as producers of certified seed, as a new study by the Access to Seeds Index revealed.

This study profiles 54 seed-producing cooperatives that were identified through landscaping studies in 20 countries. It showed that seed-producing cooperatives play a key role in improving access to quality seeds in the region. Cooperatives often partner with national and international research institutes to select and test improved varieties and with seed companies to distribute their seeds nationally and regionally through the seed companies' channels.

The study identified strong examples of seed-producing cooperatives in four countries – Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal. The situation in eight other countries – Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo – can be characterized as promising. In four countries – Gabon, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau and Republic of Congo - no seed-producing cooperatives were identified that are formally recognized or may be in the near future.

Wednesday 3 October

12:30 – 12:40	Opening by Ambassador of The Netherlands To FAO (and chair of the meeting)	Mr. Hans Hoogeveen (Chairperson)
12:40 – 12:45	Opening remarks by FAO	Mr. Hans Dreyer (Director Plant Production and Protection Division)
12:45 – 13:00	Presentation on the main findings of the study on seed-producing cooperatives	Dr. Yacouba Diallo (Research Consultant, Access to Seeds Index)
13:00 – 13:40	Presentation seed cooperatives and partners Brief introductions of their respective organizations and experiences in partnering to improve access to quality seeds in the region	Ms. Nancy Wakawa Mohammed (Jirkur Seeds, Nigeria) Mr. Yacouba Tanda (Madda Ben de Falwel, Niger) Dr. Michael Vabi Boboh (ICRISAT, Nigeria) Mr. Ernest Assah Asiedu (CORAF, Senegal)
13:40 – 13:55	Q&A with audience	
13:55 – 14:00	Closing remarks	Mr. Hans Hoogeveen