

Seed Systems Development

High level multi-stakeholder workshop about Enabling and Scaling Genetic Improvement and Propagation Materials

Friday May 17, 2019, 9:00-14:00

ILRI Campus

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

This international multi-stakeholder workshop on Seed Systems Development will gather around 80 experts from the seed sector in various countries and regions, from research, governmental institutions, business and civil society. This workshop explores how these international stakeholders can tackle major bottlenecks in the functioning of seed systems for smallholder farmers, including through stronger mutual coordination and collaboration.

Objectives

The overall objective of this workshop is to create interest among key international and regional agrifood sector actors and investors to collaborate in further enabling and scaling genetic improvement and propagation materials (briefly: “seeds”). The meeting will look at the challenges in current seed sector practice and develop common ground in how to address those. It will take a strong research in development focus that involves not only researchers but also policy makers, and practitioners engaged in business and development. It will strengthen and boost CGIAR collaboration with major stakeholders from the agrifood sector and the seed sector in particular. Through:

1. **Deeper understanding.** Enhance the joint understanding about why many new seed varieties (particularly beyond maize, rice and wheat) haven’t made it to the farmers’ fields. Building on that, foster the exchange and joint understanding of institutional arrangements that have worked in practice to address those challenges, and appreciate the complexities of those institutional arrangements.
2. **Double impact.** Jointly identify solutions to tackle these challenges at systemic level, particularly in view of scaling promising seed system innovations and enabling the flow from research innovation to delivery. In this context, the opportunities will be explored to learn from institutional arrangements that have worked in practice, and to create synergy and mutual reinforcement of programme outcomes of current initiatives.
3. **Country collaboration.** Collaborating at country level is key to deliver on the partnership ambitions of CGIAR and its partners. A coordinated space at the country level is where real impact on the ground can be achieved. The meeting will look at the collaboration in Ethiopia as a significant country experience, where institutional arrangements were gradually built and a joint seed sector agenda was developed.

Background: Seed System Development Challenges

Getting improved seed and animal seed stock of good quality from breeders to smallholder and family farms in low- and middle-income countries is challenging. Much good genetic material is available in particular public research institutes including the CGIAR institutes and National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS), but due to limitations in the seed and animal seed stock value chains and the enabling environment, improved varieties and breeds are often not or not easily available or accessible for smallholder and family farms in LMICs. Several studies underline the potential and the importance of the local private seed sector to solve this problem.

Some of the major challenges in the “seed” value chain are:

- Seed value chains in LMICs are generally poorly developed.
- Formal or at least quality declared seed value chains do not reach smallholder and family farms in remoter areas. Women and youth are often not targeted by actors in the seed value chain.
- Public seed providers have wider crop portfolio’s but may not be strongly client driven, while private seed and animal seed stock enterprises are usually strongly client driven, but focus on marketing a more

limited portfolio of 'seeds' that are the most profitable ones. Public-private partnerships that often bridge public R&D varietal releases to commercial seed enterprises, while prevalent in OECD countries, are mostly absent in LMICs.

- The demands of farmers and intermediates in the seed value chain are not always similar to the demands of end users and policy makers (e.g. nutrition, climate, genetic diversity, biodiversity).
- In many LMICs the enabling environment for seed value chains is not well developed, e.g. regarding intellectual property or quality control systems. The broader political-economic environment may also enhance or impede seed policies.
- Lack of in-country/regional expertise on phytosanitary seed and animal seed stock health quality.

A whole range of initiatives and investments take place to address the above challenges, by governments, international institutions, non-governmental organizations, private sector, as well as by research institutions. Several major international and national collaborative efforts are undertaken. The workshop will explore the lessons of major seed sector initiatives in Africa and beyond, and connect the work of a/o CGIAR with that of bilateral and multi-stakeholder actors as well as with nine [research projects](#) recently started in the context of the CGIAR-Netherlands partnership.

Organization and registration

Organizing partners of this workshop are the Government of the Netherlands, CGIAR System Organization, USAID and ISSD Africa, with facilitative support of the Food & Business Knowledge Platform, NWO-WOTRO and AgriProFocus Ethiopia.

Please register for the workshop (incl/excl. excursion), via this link <https://forms.gle/rYskgDYReEmHUchH99> or contact AgriProFocus Ethiopia (Ms. Mahder +254 91 524 2789). Members of the research consortia under the SSD-R call will have registered for the workshop and the excursion through their contact point (NWO-WOTRO).

Preparatory reading

- Nine Research Projects funded to improve seed systems in Africa & Asia (NL-CGIAR partnership): <https://knowledge4food.net/nine-projects-for-improving-seed-systems-in-asia-and-sub-saharan-africa/>
- CGIAR Excellence in Breeding Platform: <http://excellenceinbreeding.org/>
- CGIAR Initiative on Crops to End Hunger: https://www.cgiar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/SC7-B_Breeding-Initiative-1.pdf
- Integrated Seed Sector Development Africa <http://www.issdafrica.org/> and <http://www.issdseed.org/>
- USAID: <https://www.usaid.gov/site-search/seed>
- Particular reading on Early Generation Seeds: <https://www.agrilinks.org/search?criteria=early+generation+seeds>
- The Netherlands, your partner in quality seed: <https://knowledge4food.net/knowledge-portal-item/netherlands-partner-quality-seed/>
- Access to Seeds Index Eastern and Southern Africa: <https://www.accesstoseeds.org/index/eastern-southern-africa/>
- African Seed Access Index: <https://tasai.org/>

Programme

08:30 Registrations at ILRI campus

09:00 Opening session

- CGIAR System Council representative (tbc)
- USAID, Mr. Robert Bertram
- Ethiopian government representative (tbc)

09:30 Keynotes

- A value chain of innovation towards delivery. How to tackle the challenges for seed system change.
By André Zandstra (CGIAR, Director External Engagement)
- The practice of current seed value chains towards delivery. The role of public-private partnerships.
By Ian Barker (Syngenta Foundation, Head Agricultural Partnerships)
- Ethiopia's Seed Sector Transformation.
By Mohammed Hassena (Integrated Seed Sector Development, Ethiopia, Deputy Manager)

10:30 Summary of kick-off meeting of SSD-Research projects May 15-16, 2019

By Joe DeVries (Seed systems group Nairobi)

10:50 Break

11:10 Structured poster viewing session

Focus on the nine SSD-R projects, and with posters a/o on Gender Dynamics in Seed Systems studies

11:40 Interactive panel debate

"Institutional arrangements for realizing the potential of improved varieties", with the following panelists:

- Michel Evéquoz (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation)
- Alessandra Galiè (ILRI Kenya)
- Selamawit Firdissa (BENEFIT, Ethiopia)
- Mohammed Hassena (ISSD, Ethiopia)
- Shemelis Getachew (GAWT International Business PLC, Ethiopia)

12:40 Conclusions

13:00 Networking lunch

Including poster viewing

14:00 End of formal programme

Excursion (optional)

14:00 Departure from ILRI campus

15:00 Visit Debre Zeit Agricultural Research Centre (DZARC)

- Meeting with Centre Director. Introduction to DZARC's role in research and seed production.
- Meeting with pulse improvement team leader. Pulses are one of the challenging crops in terms of seed business, attracting limited interest from private companies. DZARC will explain how they worked with seed producer cooperatives and private companies to increase the production of seeds of pulse crops.
- Visit to laboratory where DZARC prepares seed.

16:30 Visit Amuari High Yield Varieties and Agricultural product PLC

Private company working with the Debre Zeit Agricultural Research Center. What makes this company and few others different is that they only produce non-hybrid crops. These are low profitable crops, but they are managing it. They produce seed through contract farming with smallholders. Partly the company emerged from a seed producer cooperative.

17:30 End of visit, departure to Addis

18:30 Back at ILRI campus

Airport transport arrangements may be made for those leaving the same evening. Please contact organizing committee timely.