

Seeds2B Project

Scaling the Seeds2B Africa initiative



Seeds2B
AFRICA



Background

One of the greatest constraints facing the advancement of smallholder agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is low availability of quality, affordable seed of high performing and locally adapted varieties. It is estimated that the commercial seed market in SSA (excluding South Africa) is worth USD 400 million, which accounts for only 10 percent of the total seed planted by farmers. This indicates a high farmer dependence on informal seed systems, which partly contributes to declining productivity in the region attributed to genetically weak seed that is more susceptible to emerging biotic and abiotic stresses.

On the other hand, SSA's emerging formal seed systems are faced with a number of challenges including lack of access to new germplasm, scarcity of certified seed during the planting season, variability in seed quality and low farmer awareness of the existence of improved varieties in local markets. This situation is aggravated by the fact that the bulk of crop varieties widely available to smallholder farmers in SSA were developed over 30 years ago. In the face of many challenges that inhibit increased agricultural productivity in SSA, including new pests and diseases, climate change and natural resource limitations, enhancing smallholder access to a wide range of affordable quality seed of high-performing and locally appropriate improved crop varieties has never been more critical.

\$400 million... *worth of commercial seed market in SSA*

Making quality seed available at the right time, place and price

Low availability of quality, affordable seed of high performing and locally adapted varieties is one of the greatest constraints facing the advancement of smallholder agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa

Demand for improved seed in SSA is expected to rise to \$1.6 billion over the next 10 years as the need for higher yields and efficiency in food production rises in the region. However, due to a range of policy, market and institutional failures, innovative seed-based technologies with potential to transform agriculture in SSA fail to move from the hands of breeders to those of smallholder farmers. To meet this increasing demand for high quality seed, brokered access to new high performing crop varieties for African seed producers and distributors along with effective product stewardship is essential. This will in turn increase access to quality seeds for smallholder farmers which will enable them to sustainably intensify crop production and offer

locally-grown quality produce to domestic and international markets. Empowerment of smallholders and local seed enterprises will foster increased domestic and foreign investment in SSA's seed sector leading to improved food and income security in the region.

Project goal

The Seeds2B Project aims to develop seed bridges that will enable the transfer of best-bet seed-based technologies developed by public and private breeders to smallholders in SSA through local small- to medium-sized seed enterprises.



\$ 1.6 billion...
*Seed demand in SSA over
the next 10 years*

Implementing the Seeds2B Project



Facts and figures on SSAs seed sector

- Seed demand in SSA over the next 10 years is estimated at \$ 1.6 billion
- The commercial seed market in SSA, excluding South Africa, is worth \$400 million
- The bulk of commercial seed varieties available in SSA were developed more than 30 years ago
- Most local small and medium sized seed companies in SSA do not have robust breeding programmes

To introduce better crop varieties to seed markets in SSA, the Seeds2B Project leverages public-private partnership to:

- identify and access high-potential in-demand crop varieties to meet local market needs;
- assess performance, adaptability and market acceptance of a range of varieties across agro-ecologies;
- provide risk mitigation support for smallholders, local seed enterprises and breeders, including stimulation of advanced market demand, facilitation of compliance to applicable regulations, protection of Intellectual Property Rights and provision of product stewardship support; and
- broker partnerships between local seed enterprises and seed technology owners to ensure benefit for all and more so smallholders in SSA.

AATF is developing a hybrid business model that will embrace both for-profit and not-for-profit strategies to facilitate smallholder access to quality, affordable seed of a wide range of better-performing, locally adapted and farmer-preferred crop varieties through local seed enterprises.

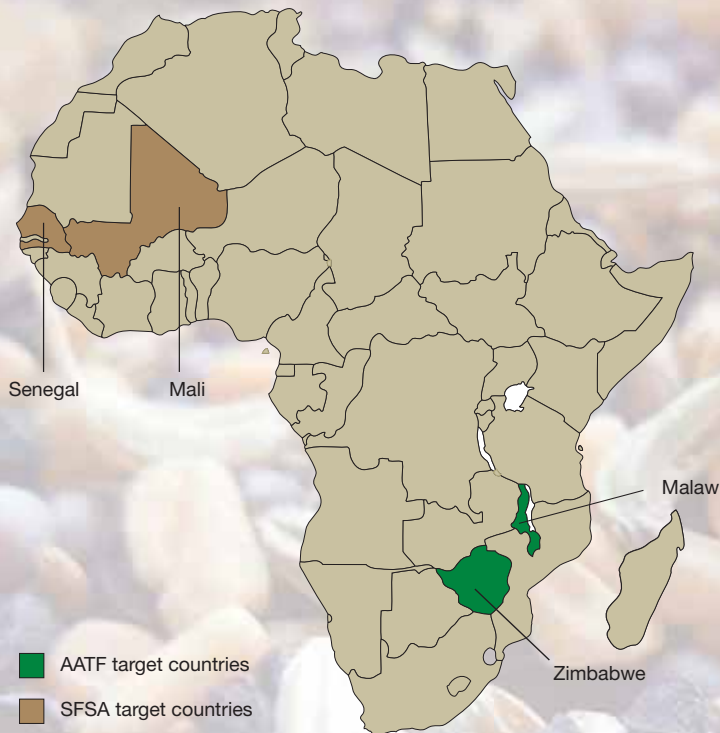
The Seeds2B Project targets a range of crops, with a keen interest on non-core crops, which may have been neglected by formal seed systems, and cash crops, including high value vegetables.

Expected benefits of the Seeds2B Project

- Improved access to quality, affordable seed of a wide range of preferred better-performing and locally adapted crop varieties quality seed for higher yields, increased household income, better livelihoods and food security for smallholders in SSA.
- Effective link with new markets for public and private breeders leading to more returns on investments in technology development.
- Enhanced capacity on technology transfer and seed business management for public and private research organisations operating within targeted value chains.
- Strengthened seed systems through reduced barriers to trade and investment as well as increased competition, higher quality certified seed volumes traded and enhanced profits for SSAs seed industry.



Seeds2B Project Partnership



The Seeds2B Africa initiative is a joint project of AATF and Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture (SFSA) that envisions millions of smallholders in Sub Saharan Africa with access to a wide range of affordable, quality seeds of better-performing and locally-adapted varieties.

- AATF manages implementation of Seeds2B Project activities including: scouting for seed-based technologies that match local needs; coordinating assessments and reporting of varietal performance across agro-ecologies; management of product stewardship as well as regulatory and legal compliance;
- Public and private breeders submit appropriate improved crop varieties for assessment;
- Organisations that facilitate trials:
 - The Department of Agricultural Research Services, Malawi
 - The Department of Research and Specialists Services, Zimbabwe
 - SNV, Zimbabwe
- Local seed enterprises will produce and market seed of selected varieties;
- SFSA provided start-up funding for the Project. It oversees the overall Programme coordination; supports human resources capacity building for the partnership; and provides technical contributions to support Project management.

Investors

Project activities are supported with funding from the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture.

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