

MALAWI QA recommendations

A total of 8 key recommendations to address deficiencies and/or opportunities in the QA area of Malawi's seed system have been developed by the assessment team and vetted with stakeholders. The recommendations are roughly, but not strictly, listed in order of importance or recommended sequencing.

Recommendation # 1: Expansion of crop scope/portfolio for seed QA
Description
Support national seed regulatory authority (Seed Service Unit) to develop protocols for all priority scheduled/focus crops with a view to formalizing seed certification for a wider range of crops, including for vegetatively propagated materials
Estimated cost and/or key determinants of costs
Cost of developing protocols for certification, including meetings
Recommendation # 2: Scoping studies for functional QA laboratories
Description
Conduct scoping study to assess current and anticipated QA laboratory volume; determine adequacy/inadequacy of current labs, staff numbers, staff experience, staff capacity, equipment, staff locational distribution, training needs, facilities, and infrastructure; propose specific approaches to remedy inadequacies; identify levels of capital investment as well as annual financing required to deliver viable and adequate seed testing services. If transition of lab-based activities to private sector is recommended and viable, incorporate the implications of third-party authorization into recommendations and findings
Estimated cost and/or key determinants of costs
Cost of baseline study for lab services, cost of lab equipment, staff requirement and training costs,
Recommendation # 3: Scoping studies for effective field-based QA activities
Description
For field-based sampling and other QA activities such as inspections, conduct scoping study to establish the current and optimal: number of field inspectors, levels of competency, logistical/transport support, equipment, facilities, office infrastructure, and budgetary support. If transition of field-based activities to private sector is recommended and viable, incorporate the implications of third-party authorization into recommendations and findings
Estimated cost and/or key determinants of costs
Cost of baseline study, cost of implementing the findings (hiring of new seed inspectors, training, vehicles)

Recommendation # 4: Reduction in low quality and counterfeit seed
Description
Develop practical plans to address low quality and fake seed, e.g.: support full adoption and use of scratch card labels; strengthen seed inspectorate units for proper surveillance and monitoring; provide support for retesting and repackaging of expired and torn packets; and implement appropriate levels of pre- and post-control activities. Support enactment and implementation of government legislation and penalties meant to deter dealers in fake and low-quality seed
Estimated cost and/or key determinants of costs
Cost of roll out of scratch labels, cost of hire of more seed inspectors, cost of pre and post controls
Recommendation # 5: Digital tools for increased volume and efficiency
Description
Identify opportunities and practical, recommended approaches to support QA processes with digital tools such as e-certification, GPS-linked field tracking and inspection reporting, and online registration of seed growers
Estimated cost and/or key determinants of costs
Cost of roll out of e-certification, GPS electronic gadgets and user training
Recommendation # 6: Implement legal enforcement measures to uphold quality assurance standards
Description
Support enactment and implementation of government legislation and penalties meant to deter dealers in fake and low-quality seed
Estimated cost and/or key determinants of costs
Cost of strengthening seed inspectorate unit- staff hire, training and enforcement
Recommendation # 7: Sector legal reforms for a vibrant and transformative seed system
Description
Support national seed sector transformation from informal to semi-formal and semi-formal to formal, as relevant and practical, by establishing legislation governing seed system options such as standard certified seed and encouraging implementation of quality assurance systems for planting material for vegetatively propagated crops
Estimated cost and/or key determinants of costs
Cost of stakeholder meetings for enactment of laws and protocols for new seed classes (Standard Seed, QDS) and crops

Recommendation # 8: Sector dialogue between seed industry players
Description
Support government commitment to, and implementation of, inclusive sector dialogue to improve the enabling environment for private sector participants and investors. Strengthen Malawi Seed Traders Association’s ability to advocate for stronger systems and improve self-regulation among members
Estimated cost and/or key determinants of costs
Cost of carry out of seed trade needs assessment and implementations