

## UGANDA QCSP recommendations

A total of 5 key recommendations to address deficiencies and/or opportunities in the QCSP area of Uganda'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.

<b>Recommendation # 1: Strengthen the seed quality control capacities and measures within seed companies</b>
<b>Description</b>
The Seed and Plant Regulations of 2010 outline the requirements for the registration of seed companies (or seed merchants) in Uganda in terms of human resources and infrastructure. These requirements are intended to ensure that all registered seed companies produce quality commercial seed in line with national standards. To strengthen this effort, the National Seed Certification Service (NSCS), in collaboration with the Uganda Seed Trade Association (USTA), should develop a comprehensive set of requirements and protocols for seed companies to meet as a condition of their registration. The requirements/protocols should include staffing requirements (such as seed technologists), protocols for quality seed production, and protocols for seed processing, among others. In addition, the NSCS and USTA should conduct annual audits of each seed company to assess whether it is adhering to the laid-out requirements and protocols. When gaps are identified in a company, a plan should be put in place to address them within a given timeline. Failure to address the gaps may lead to a withdrawal of the company's operating license.
<b>Key determinants of costs</b>
Associated costs include: (i) Staff time for NSCS and USTA staff, (ii) meeting costs to define and agree on these requirements/protocols and then to raise awareness of the same among seed companies, (iii) transport costs for NSCS and USTA to conduct audits of all registered seed companies (merchants).
<b>Additional comments, if needed</b>
This may also be captured under the Quality Assurance Thematic Area

<b>Recommendation # 2: Evaluate the early performance of the Seed Tracking and Traceability System (STTS), implemented by the National Seed Certification Service (NSCS), and then scale it up.</b>
<b>Description</b>
The National Seed Certification Service has recently started using a Seed Tracking and Traceability System to monitor seed from the breeders to the agro-dealers. The initiative, established in 2020, is still in its infancy stage. NSCS, in collaboration with the Uganda Seed Trade Association (USTA) and other actors, should evaluate the initial performance of this tool. This evaluation aims to identify any emerging bottlenecks and define strategies to address them. Since the tool tracks seed along the value chain, the evaluation should involve all the key actors such as breeders, seed companies, and agro-dealers. The evaluation should assess the extent to which the digitization of the system enhances the efficiency of its implementation.
<b>Key determinants of costs</b>
The costs related to the evaluation would include: (i) meeting costs to bring together the stakeholders to discuss the performance of the STTS, and (ii) staff time for the NSCS officials who oversee the implementation of the STTS and prepare the evaluation report.

**Recommendation # 3: Evaluate the performance of the national agricultural support program implemented by the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) to identify and address any arrangements that disrupt the development of a market-driven seed distribution system.**

#### Description

The government's agricultural input support program, Operational Wealth Creation, implemented by the NAADS is a major buyer of seed for maize (32% of maize seed company sales, on aggregate) and bean (18% of bean seed company sales, on aggregate). The program has been implemented since 2014. The program regularly distorts the seed market due to the unpredictability of the volumes and types of seed to be sourced from the market. Seed companies are often informed about the seed supply requirements late. There is a need to evaluate the performance of the program against its original objectives and clearly define and commit to implementing remedies to the identified challenges.

#### Key determinants of costs

The associated costs include: (i) costs to conduct an independent evaluation of the program, and (ii) costs to convene a meeting to discuss the findings of the independent evaluation with seed sector stakeholders and agree on the responses to the findings. (iii) costs of implementing report recommendations.

#### Additional comments, if needed

The NAADS program is a government initiative under the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries. An effort to evaluate the performance of the program would only be effective if endorsed by the government. Further, to implement this recommendation, AGRA (and the seed industry) may need to discuss with the NAADS team to discuss the challenges of the program. Lastly, NAADS already has an internal (and external) monitoring and evaluation system.

**Recommendation # 4: Evaluate the level of compliance and effectiveness of the seed labels issued by NSCS and USTA, and whether e-verification labels are needed to complement the existing labels.**

#### Description

The National Seed Certification Service (NSCS) and the Uganda Seed Trade Association (USTA) jointly issue seed labels for all packaged seed to be used by seed companies. All packaged seed must carry these official labels before it can be sold. This requirement is also stated in the Seed and Plant Regulations of 2010. USTA and NSCS need to evaluate: (i) the level of compliance with this requirement by seed companies and (ii) the level of awareness of the purpose of the labels among agro-dealers and farmers. A project on e-verification labels on seed packages was introduced in 2017 and used for three seasons up to 2018. The purpose of the project was to counter the problem of the sale of counterfeit (fake) seed by providing an authentication label on all seed packages. USTA and NSCS should assess whether this initiative should be revisited, as it can serve to complement the current system of issuing seed labels. To do this, USTA and NSCS should: (i) discuss the technical implications of the new system at the company level, propose a timeline for the roll-out, and agree on a costing structure, (ii) work closely with the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS), which also issues labels for quality assurance, to ensure there is no duplication of the labels being used, and (iii) work closely with the Uganda National Farmers' Federation (UNFFE), the Uganda National Agro-dealer Association (UNADA), the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) and other actors on a comprehensive farmer awareness campaign to ensure that the end-users are informed about the purpose and benefits of the labels.

#### Key determinants of costs

Associated costs include hiring an outside expert to evaluate the effectiveness of the seed labels issued by NSCS and USTA. The evaluation should focus on the level of awareness of agro-dealers and farmers, and the level of compliance among seed companies.

**Additional comments, if needed**

The actual activities around awareness of the labels among agro-dealers and farmers would fall under the Farmer Awareness and Participation Thematic Area.

**Recommendation # 5: Increase the capacity of USTA to provide oversight on internal quality control systems within seed companies**

**Description**

The Uganda Seed Trade Association (USTA) recently hired a quality control officer to work with seed companies to strengthen their internal quality control systems. This is a positive step and needs to be strengthened by: (i) establishing protocols and standards against which seed company performance should be benchmarked, and (ii) assessing whether a second quality control officer is needed to undertake this task.

**Key determinants of costs**

The associated costs include: (i) USTA's staff time to conduct these tasks and (ii) an outside expert to work with USTA to develop the protocols and standards for assessing seed company internal quality control systems.

**Additional comments, if needed**

The overall objective of this recommendation is to strengthen USTA's capacity to provide training to seed companies on seed quality control. For this recommendation to be effectively implemented, USTA would need to design a framework for this in collaboration with the seed companies.