

BACKGROUND:

As a Center of Excellence, CESSA catalogues and provides ready access to a range of seed system knowledge products, offering a range of resources that include links to **databases and datasets for African Seed Systems, case studies, tools, and models** required by a wide range of stakeholders, particularly governments, donors, and seed companies among others to effectively run their business and activities. To achieve these objectives, AGRA commissioned a study in 2023 to research, document and develop knowledge products. During this assignment over eighty (80) key informants collaborated in the exercise, to gain a deeper understanding of future users of CESSA: their needs, expectations, and what contributions they can make to CESSA in the future.

The knowledge materials are used to illustrate the different seed systems, their strengths and weaknesses as well as highlight the use of digital technology to increase operational efficiency, ensure quality and inform market development.

The scope of knowledge platform includes:

1. studies that have datasets on African seed systems for staple crops.
2. models of formal and informal seed systems that can be adapted to accelerate the delivery of quality seed to address specific markets and agroecologies across a range of staple crops.
3. case studies that highlight key insights and practices to improve the performance of African seed systems.
4. Existing tools to support the seed sector that could be adopted or adapted and integrated into CESSA over time.
5. stakeholders' engagements: - including governments, national and international research for development institutions, universities with seed systems training portfolios, private sector, donors, seed trade associations and individual seed companies, and seed sector benchmarking institutions who can offer practical insights on what knowledge products would be most useful to position CESSA for success.

Additional areas key informants identified included: financing models for seed companies, seed sector associations in Africa, harmonization of regulatory standards in Africa to promote intra-Africa seed trade, and online digital courses that can be hosted by CESSA , with the example of ([Khan Academy](https://www.khanacademy.org/)¹for the African Seed Sector).

The resources developed under this consultancy are a start towards an ongoing learning journey to build knowledge and networks to support a vibrant African seed sector to ensure farmers have access to quality seeds of relevant varieties to increase productivity, incomes, resilience to climate change and deliver better nutrition to society.

¹ <https://www.khanacademy.org/>

Key recommendations:

1. Mapping out the connections between CESSA knowledge management and other strategies across AGRA, especially country strategies will help ensure it delivers valuable content to key stakeholders.
2. AGRA web developers should integrate survey tools to capture user feedback and suggestions to enhance the value of case studies, tools, models, and datasets over time.
3. CESSA should work with AGRA stakeholders within African seed systems to prioritize future content generation to ensure CESSA responds to the evolving knowledge demands of a vibrant African seed sector.
4. Training modules developed under the Seed Enterprise Management Institute (SEMI) can be converted into web resources for training young professionals on seed production.