

Seed Alert

#02 June 2020

Seed Alerts identify current challenges and outline urgent actions needed in the Nigerian seed sector, based on surveys and focus group discussions with various stakeholders

Nigeria

Photo: NASC

Alert 1

Mobility restrictions and lockdown disrupt the processes involved in the evaluation and release of new varieties

Alert 2

Mobility restrictions and lockdown hinder the timely production of early generation seed, and the planning of its supply

Alert 3

Mismatch between financial products and services, and seed business models and needs, limits access to finance

Alert 4

Mobility restrictions and their enforcement impede seed producers' access to agro-inputs and mechanization services

Alert 1

Mobility restrictions and lockdown disrupt the processes involved in the evaluation and release of new varieties

What is the impact?

- Due to the current government measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19, researchers cannot visit and evaluate the variety performance trials
- At the same time, the National Variety Release Committee (NVRC) is unable to hold its biannual meeting in June, with the result that new varieties cannot be approved or released in the short term
- Research institutes cannot start the production of early generation seed (EGS) of these varieties yet; consequently, seed companies and seed producers cannot include in their portfolios, or promote, promising new varieties
- As a result, farmers are not able to access more productive varieties with desirable traits such as resistance to pests and diseases, and early maturity, and it takes even longer for farmers to benefit from public investments in crop development

What actions are required?

- Ensure that researchers and farmers who are managing and hosting trials for variety release follow all measures put in place by the government to stop the spread of COVID-19
- Develop a structure to delegate and decentralize the evaluation of on-station and on-farm variety trials, which includes working with lead farmers, providing them with support through telephone calls
- Ensure that at least one or two members of the NVRC, who are based in closest proximity to the trials across the country, visit the trials and provide photographic evidence to support the process of variety release
- Create a digital archive of all the documents required for varietal release
- Slightly postpone, not cancel, the NVRC meeting originally planned for June, and hold it on a virtual platform
- Under the current conditions, allow for EGS production of promising new varieties, to prevent further delays in the process of providing farmers with access to new improved varieties

What stakeholders are involved?

- National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology (NACGRAB)
- NVRC
- National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC)
- National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs), universities and international research centres
- Seed companies and the Seed Entrepreneurs Association of Nigeria (SEEDAN)
- Lead farmers, and farmers' groups and associations

**Who takes initiative?
Who drives action?**

- NARIs prepare protocols for the engagement of lead farmers in the management of their on-farm trials
 - The Registrar of the NVRC, in collaboration with the NASC and other stakeholders, develops and implements measures to cope with the challenges of varietal release, including the hosting of the NVRC meeting on a virtual platform in the next few weeks
 - The Registrar of the NVRC liaises with the NASC to obtain for its members, the travel permits issued by the Inspector General of Police for the seed sector
-



NASC Officers on an inspection visit to IITA-GoSeed (Photo: NASC)



Value Seeds Limited staff kitted and ready for the field (Photo: Value Seeds Limited)

Alert 2

Mobility restrictions and lockdown hinder the timely production of early generation seed, and the planning of its supply

What is the impact?

- The COVID-19 measures make it difficult to adequately plan for EGS production and supply
- Currently there is a lack of clarity regarding the localities and quantities of EGS production, including potential sources of EGS within CGIAR Research Centers
- Inadequate planning and lack of information will most probably result in a mismatch between EGS supply and demand
- This demand and supply gap will negatively affect quality seed production in the next cropping season

What actions are required?

- Set up a structure/network for information management and planning of EGS production and supply, ensuring that EGS requests are met and carryover is minimized
- Promote the use of virtual meetings for the coordination of EGS production and supply
- Encourage and scale up the use of the National Seed Tracker as an inventory structure to link EGS producers with quality seed producers and seed companies
- Facilitate access to mobility passes for EGS-producing organizations to allow their staff to travel to EGS fields
- Plan for increased production of EGS in the dry season using irrigation to compensate for losses, and have sufficient quantities of quality EGS for next year's main season

What stakeholders are involved?

- NARIs
- NASC and NACGRAB
- CGIAR Research Centers
- Seed companies and seed producers

Who takes initiative? Who drives action?

- The NASC coordinates EGS production and supply, and the scaling up of the National Seed Tracker
 - NARIs, CGIAR Centers, and private companies engaged in EGS production, ensure the production of sufficient quantities of quality EGS
-



Training by SG-2000 and IITA on the dissemination of AKILIMO support tools for using efficient agronomic practices and optimizing income from growing cassava (Photo: Adefisayo Adebayo)

Alert 3

Mismatch between financial products and services, and seed business models and needs, limits access to finance

What is the impact?

- Limited access to finance for producers of seed of cowpea, cassava and several other crops, further increases the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 crisis
- Even if financial products and services are available for the agricultural sector, a poor understanding of the seed business model makes commercial banks hesitant to provide loans to seed producers and seed companies
- Moreover, the process of accessing funds from commercial banks is lengthy and cumbersome, and is not aligned with the seasonal crop calendar and immediate needs of seed producers and companies driving seed business
- Hence, processes and requirements for access to finance do not match the needs of seed companies and seed producers
- As a result, seed producers and seed companies face problems in paying for the necessary inputs and services, including buying back the seed from their out-growers, putting their business at stake

What actions are required?

- Map the disconnect between the financial services and products currently available, and the needs of the seed industry
- Raise awareness of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), and the State Ministries, on this disconnect
- Develop guidelines and tools for providing financial support to seed companies and seed producers
- Encourage the CBN, financial institutions and development partners to provide financial support tailored to the business model of seed companies and seed producers

What stakeholders are involved?

- The CBN, commercial banks and financial institutions, like the Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL) and the Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Corporation (NAIC)
- FMARD and State Ministries
- NASC and SEEDAN
- Seed companies and seed producers

Who takes initiative? Who drives action?

- The CBN, NIRSAL and commercial banks, in connection with SEEDAN and the NASC, map the disconnect between the current financial products and services, and seed business needs
 - The FMARD liaises with the CBN for providing loans to seed producers and companies targeting their immediate needs
-

Alert 4

Mobility restrictions and their enforcement impede seed producers' access to agro-inputs and mechanization services

What is the impact?

- Mobility restrictions constrain the supply of fertilizer and crop protection products to agro-dealers and markets
- Similarly, they limit access to those products for seed producers and companies
- Moreover, the restrictions hinder mechanization service providers from delivering their services to seed producers and companies
- The enforcement of mobility restrictions by police and security forces constrains the transport and supply of seed as officers are unaware of the exemptions for agricultural products
- This severely constrains the production of quality seed in the current growing season

What actions are required?

- Raise awareness of police and security forces on the necessity of uninterrupted transport of agro-inputs and mechanization services, as essential agricultural goods
- Prioritize mechanization and issuing of transport permits for essential services like tractor hire, etc.
- Establish a hotline for solving immediate problems on agricultural and seed-related issues, like obstacles in the transport of essential agro-inputs and services

What stakeholders are involved?

- Federal and State Ministries of Agriculture, including the Department of Farm Inputs Support Services (FISS)
- Fertilizer Producers and Suppliers Association of Nigeria (FEPSAN)
- Agro-input providers and agricultural mechanization services
- Security agencies, including the police and other paramilitary forces

Who takes initiative? Who drives action?

- The FMARD establishes a multi-stakeholder hotline, taking a cue from the NASC, to respond to feedback from agro-input providers and mechanizations services who are still facing restrictions in movement
- The Nigerian police force assigns a senior officer to the seed sector for proper coordination
- The FISS works with FEPSAN to ascertain that fertilizers required for cowpea (Single Super Phosphate in particular) and other crops are available and accessible nationwide to seed producers, seed companies, and farmers



Flag off of seed distribution for the 2020 wet season (Photo: Premier Seeds Limited)



Premier Seeds Limited distributing inputs for seed production to its out-growers (Photo: Premier Seeds Limited)

Dashboard

Outcomes of June Survey Nigeria -
identification of FDG topics or Alerts

- Severe negative impact
- Negative impact
- Slight negative impact
- No impact; business as usual

Seed sector operations and services	Seed Alert May	Seed Alert June
Breeding on-station and multilocational trials	■	■ Alert 1
Farmer variety trials	■	■ Alert 1
Variety release committee and release process	■	■ Alert 1
Production of early generation seed	■ Alert 4	■ Alert 2
Supply of early generation seed	■ Alert 4	■ Alert 2
Field inspection for seed quality assurance	■ Alert 3	■
Laboratory testing for seed quality assurance	■ Alert 3	■
Access to finance for seed production		■ Alert 3
Access to agro-inputs for seed production	■	■ Alert 4
Access to labour for seed production	■	■
Field operations for seed production	■	
Harvest and processing operations for seed production	■	■
Seed import	■	■
Seed and variety promotion	■	■
COVID-19 measures on mobility	■ Alert 1	
Stocking seed at points of sale		■
Access to points of sale/input markets for seed companies and agro-dealers	■ Alert 1	■ Alert 4
Mobility of farmers to points of sale/agro-dealers	■ Alert 1	■
Presence of substandard seed in markets	■	■
Prize and availability of seed in markets	■ Alert 2	■
Farmers' cash availability	■ Alert 2	
Farmers' willingness to pay for quality seed	■ Alert 2	■
Sales of quality seed/seed market	■	■
Farmers' access to seed from informal markets	■ Alert 1	■
Farmers' access to seed from informal sources	■	■
Government funding of services	■	■
Government investment in marketing and distribution	■	■
Seed sector information sharing and coordination	■	■
Government exemptions and tailored strategies for agricultural and seed sector		■
Quantity and quality of seed sown	■	
Quantity and quality of produce harvested	■	■
Food and income security	■	■

Rapid Assessment & Seed Alert

To avoid a food and hunger crisis following the current COVID-19 pandemic, urgent action is needed to address key agricultural challenges, including those identified in the seed sector. The rapid assessment conducted for the current Seed Alert was carried out in the first week of June. The survey included 40 respondents covering 8 stakeholder groups, while the focus group discussions engaged 26 participants from 18 different organizations. We plan to repeat these rapid assessments at least once a month, to identify alerts and determine the immediate action required. More details on the methodology and steps can be accessed through this [link](#).

Purpose

The aim of the Seed Alert is to assess the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the functioning of the seed sector. The Rapid Assessment project operates in Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nigeria and Uganda, where Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (WCDI) is working on seed programmes in collaboration with partners. More details can be accessed through this [link](#).

Alerts in other sectors

In June and July 2020, similar Alerts are anticipated to cover the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the functioning of the sesame, fertilizer and horticultural sectors. Working with a similar model in various sectors and countries within a specific timeframe facilitates an interpretation and synthesis of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on food systems at national, regional and global levels, while also providing insights into immediate and practical actions needed to address emerging challenges.

It furthermore offers insights into the use of the sector model as a diagnostic tool for supporting strategic development, planning, and monitoring interventions that aim to enhance the functioning, resilience and inclusiveness of specific agricultural sectors and food systems.

Institutional reference

This Seed Alert is the result of a collaborative project that brings together experts from Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (WCDI), the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC) and Sahel Consulting Agriculture & Nutrition Limited.

Contributing organizations

The 'Seed Alert: Nigeria' involved representatives of the following organizations in the survey and focus group discussions: National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC); Sahel Consulting Agriculture and Nutrition Limited; National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology (NACGRAB); Institute for Agricultural Research, Zaria (IAR); Sasakawa Global 2000 (SG-2000); Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB); National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI); International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA); IITA-GoSeed; Jirkur Seed Company Limited; Value Seeds Limited; Sourvenire Seeds Limited; Institute of Agricultural Research and Training, Ibadan (IAR&T); Edo State Ministry of Agriculture Agricultural Development Project, Zamfara State; Samlak Seeds Limited; Umudike Seeds, NRCRI Umudike; North Central Agro-Input Dealers Association (NOCAIDA).

The 'Seed Alert' is published within a series of 'Rapid Assessments' and 'Alerts' in multiple countries, and is a WCDI Sector Transformation publication.

Responsible team: Folarin Okelola, Osundiya Olusegun and Olusegun Philip Ojo of NASC; Chinedu Agbara of Sahel Consulting; Arnab Gupta, Marja Thijssen and Walter de Boef of WCDI.

Please cite as: Seed alert: Nigeria, number 2. Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, National Agricultural Seeds Council, and Sahel Consulting, June 2020 (date 25 June 2020)

For more information:

Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, info.cdi@wur.nl | www.wur.eu/wcdi

Project lead: Walter de Boef

Email: walter.deboef@wur.nl

National Agricultural Seeds Council, Nigeria info@seedcouncil.gov.ng | www.seedcouncil.gov.ng

Project lead (Nigeria): Folarin Okelola

Email: fspkelola@gmail.com