

## Project summary

# Enhancing reliable access to quality seed in Africa



**WAGENINGEN**  
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH



A new Africa-wide programme aims to support the development of a vibrant, market-oriented and pluralistic seed sector in Africa.

### Comprehensive programme

Access to quality seed remains a great challenge for smallholder farmers across Africa. This affects their agricultural productivity, income and resilience. Addressing this challenge is a complex task and cannot be done at national levels alone.

The Comprehensive Programme on Integrated Seed Sector Development in Africa (ISSD Africa) aims to [enhance reliable access of smallholder farmers](#) to sufficient quantities of quality seed of superior varieties at the right time and at an affordable price.

The programme — supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Dutch Government — will be conducted in phases.

### Piloting phase ISSD Africa

The Piloting Phase of ISSD Africa -running from September 2014 to August 2016, will contribute to the development of the five-year Comprehensive Programme.

During the piloting phase, ISSD Africa will work with existing seed programmes in 8-10 countries to explore how seed sectors can be integrated at local and national

**Title:** ISSD Africa 2015-2016

**Start:** 1 September 2014

**End:** 31 August 2016

**Client(s):** Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation;  
Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs

**Budget:** 2,3 million Euro

Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (CDI) is the knowledge broker of Wageningen University & Research. We foster and contribute to sustainable and inclusive food systems through actions in four specified and interlinked focus areas: Agriculture and Markets, Climate and Environment, Food and Nutrition, and Governance and Partnerships. Our staff has the unique combination of substantive knowledge, an international network and excellent process management qualities.

level. The organisers hope to draw out lessons that will inform international dialogues on seed policy. The piloting phase is designed based upon the experiences, research results and an intensive consultative process in earlier phases of ISSD Africa (2009-2013).

### Piloting themes for seed sector development in Africa

Four priority themes have been identified:

- Promoting entrepreneurship in the seed value chain
- Access to varieties in the public domain
- Matching global commitments with national realities
- Supporting African Union programmes and seed sector development

Addressing these themes will be done through action research, innovation trajectories, policy dialogues, capacity strengthening, and joint learning in eight to ten pilot countries.

### Setting up Africa-wide network of experts

The piloting phase of the programme aims to set up an Africa-wide network of experts, seed programmes and related organisations, and encourage those in the seed sector to learn from each other and work together.

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## ISSD Africa coordination and partners

The programme is coordinated by the Centre for Development Innovation, and the Tegemeo Institute of Agricultural Policy and Development — a policy research institute of the Kenyan-based Egerton University — will host the African-based Secretariat. Other partners in the coordinating consortium are the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) and Future Agricultures Consortium (FAC).

## Guiding principles

The design of ISSD Africa is inspired by the ISSD Guiding Principles on seed programs and policies.

1. Foster pluralism and build programs upon a diversity of seed systems;
2. Work according to the structure of the seed value chain;
3. Promote entrepreneurship and market orientation;
4. Recognize the relevance of informal seed systems;
5. Facilitate interactions between informal and formal seed systems;
6. Recognize complementary roles of the public and private sector;
7. Support enabling and evolving policies for a dynamic sector;
8. Promote evidence based seed sector innovation.



### Marja Thijssen – project leader

Senior Advisor Plant Genetic Resources and Seed Systems

Specialised in cell biology, entomology, tropical crop science, applied plant breeding. Since 1997 involved in training programmes on seed production/technology, applied plant breeding; since 2001 programme coordinator on agro-biodiversity, biotechnology, plant breeding and seed sector development. Genetic resources conservation & management.

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