African Seed Trade Association

Vol 108, October 2026

AFSTA E-REVIEW

An electronic newsletter of the African Seed Trade Association | www.afsta.org

Key Congress Dates:

Pre-Congress - 15th March 2027
Congress - 16th - 18th March 2027
Post-Congress - 19th March 2027

NAIROBI, KENYA

Register For the AfSTA Congress

CLICK HERE:
https://afstacongress.com

Registration Opens for the 2027 AfSTA Congress

The African Seed Trade Association (AfSTA) is pleased to announce that registration is now open for the 2027 AfSTA Congress, which will take place from 16–18 March 2027 in Nairobi, Kenya, bringing together stakeholders from across Africa's seed industry and beyond to exchange knowledge, explore business opportunities and strengthen partnerships.

With the overarching goal of advancing Africa's seed industry, the Congress, co-hosted alongside the Seed Trade Association of Kenya (STAK), will provide a platform for seed companies, policymakers, researchers, development partners, regulators and other industry stakeholders to engage on issues shaping the future of the African seed sector.

Delegates are encouraged to register early and secure their participation as preparations for the Congress gather momentum. Early registration also provides an opportunity to plan and make the most of the business, learning and networking opportunities available throughout the event.

Opportunities to Connect, Exhibit and Do Business

The 2027 AfSTA Congress unites leading companies in the seed industry, offering a valuable platform to promote business, showcase innovative products, and stay informed about key industry and government developments.

The Congress will offer organisations and individuals a range of opportunities to strengthen their presence in Africa's seed industry.

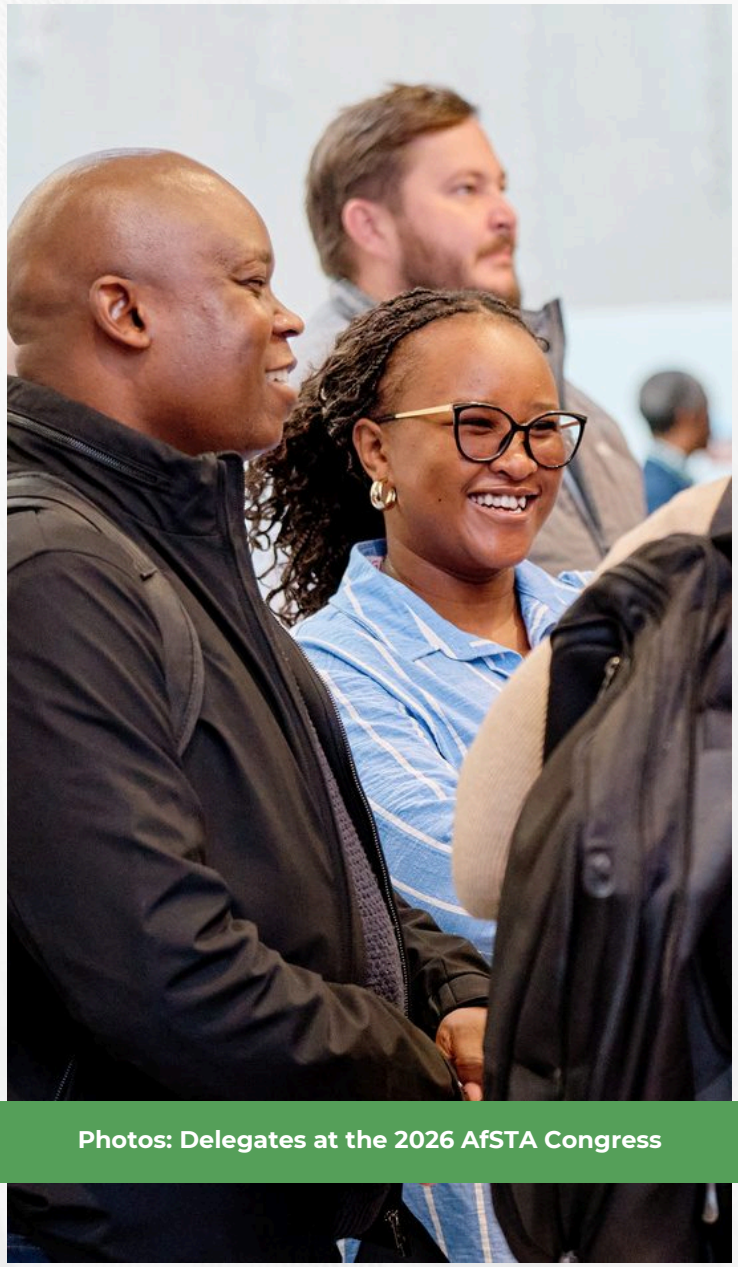
These include **exhibition booths, trading tables, meeting rooms, and special side events**, offering spaces to showcase products and services, engage potential business partners, hold bilateral meetings, and build lasting professional relationships.



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Why Attend the 2027 AfSTA Congress?



Photos: Delegates at the 2026 AfSTA Congress

1. **Networking and Collaboration Opportunities**

The congress will bring together global seed-industry professionals, policymakers, and researchers, facilitating valuable connections that can lead to collaborations and partnerships. There are also reserved trading tables available to facilitate collaboration.

2. **Information and Knowledge Sharing**

Delegates will have access to panel discussions and presentations from expert speakers on the latest global seed industry trends, enhancing their understanding of the industry and enabling them to improve their operations.

3. **Marketing and Trading Opportunities**

Seed companies will have an opportunity to promote their brand, conduct market research, and showcase their products and services to commercial partners and consumers.

4. **Showcasing technologies and innovations**

The congress features exhibitors showcasing new technologies, products, and services, and providing participants with first-hand knowledge of advancements that can improve their operations.

5. **Advocacy and Representation**

The event serves as a platform for the African Seed Trade Association and the global industry to stay informed about industry issues and to advocate for the interests of the private sector's voice to be heard in policy discussions.

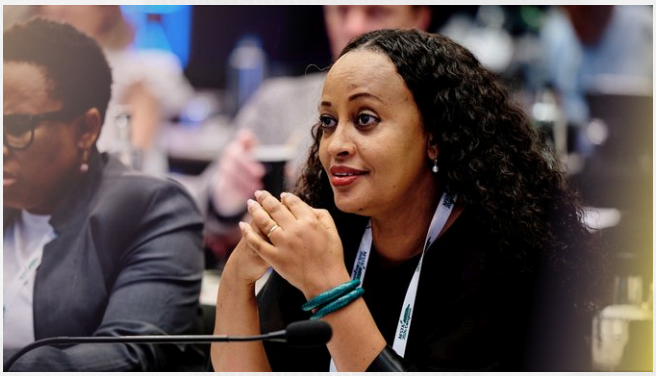
6. **Media Visibility**

AfSTA will host a media corner where seed companies have an opportunity to give interviews and speak about their products, thereby gaining publicity for their products and activities.

7. **Enjoying the Host Country's Culture**

Beyond the main business of discussions on seed matters, Nairobi offers an exciting safari experience, magnificent tourist sites, rich culture, and a reputation for world-class attractions, making it a compelling destination.









afstacongress.com

Call for Congress Registration

Join seed industry leaders, policymakers, researchers and stakeholders from across Africa and beyond for the AfSTA Congress 2027.

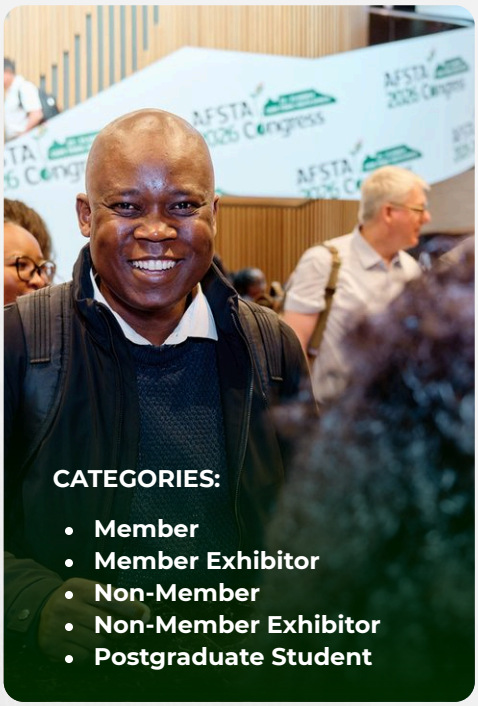
Registration for the AfSTA Congress 2027 is available for members, non-members, exhibitors and postgraduate students.

If you are registering from an AfSTA member seed company or National Seed Trade Association (NSTA), you can request member approval before proceeding with registration.

Please ensure that all information entered during registration is accurate, particularly your full name, passport details, nationality and organisation information.

https://afstacongress.com

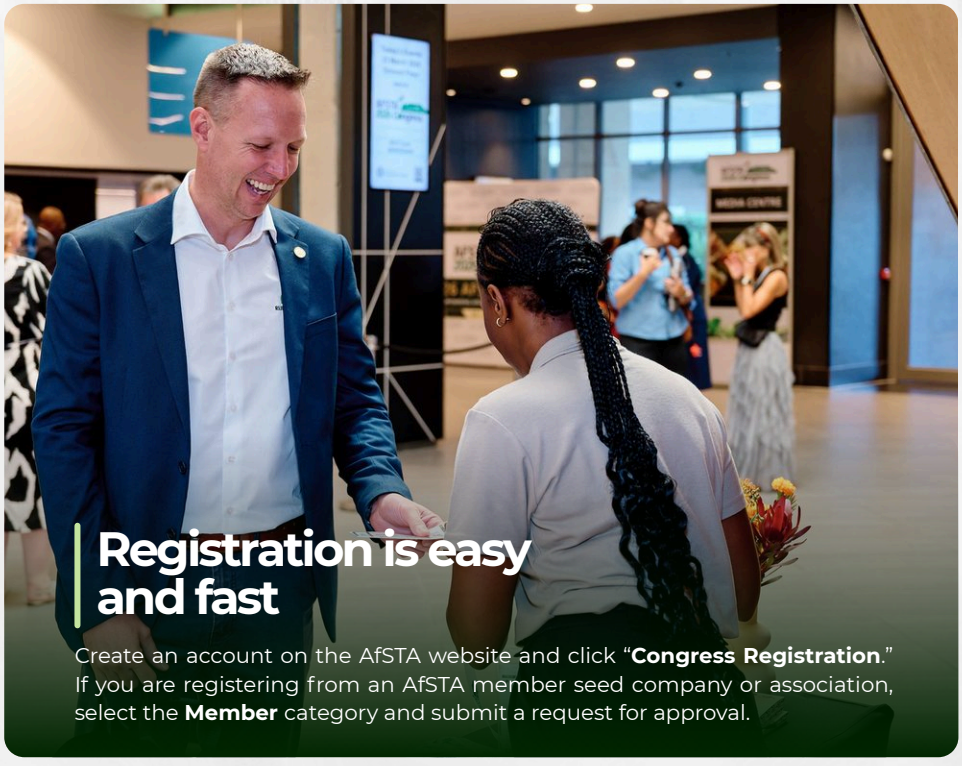
Scan *to register*



CATEGORIES:

- **Member**
- **Member Exhibitor**
- **Non-Member**
- **Non-Member Exhibitor**
- **Postgraduate Student**

Are you an AfSTA member?



Registration is easy and fast

Create an account on the AfSTA website and click "**Congress Registration**." If you are registering from an AfSTA member seed company or association, select the **Member** category and submit a request for approval.

CONGRESS PROFILE

What to Expect at the 2027 Congress

AfSTA Congress Edition
27th

Venue
Nairobi, Kenya

Expected Delegates
700

Coverage
Local, Regional and International

African Seed Trade Association

AfSTA Congress 2027



Call For Sponsorship

Partner with AFSTA and position your brand at the forefront of Africa's seed sector. The AFSTA Congress 2027 offers high-impact visibility, networking, and collaboration opportunities.

Reach out to us via afsta@afsta.org to explore tailored partnership options that align with your organisation's goals.

LINK TO BROCHURE:

https://afstacongress.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/AfSTA-2027-Congress-Sponsorship-Brochure.pdf

Scan *for Brochure*

www.afsta.org afsta@afsta.org 020-24290017

AfSTA Board of Directors Meets in Nairobi to Review Strategic Priorities

OCTOBER 2026: Nairobi, Kenya

The African Seed Trade Association (AfSTA) Board of Directors held an in-person meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, to deliberate on key strategic matters, assess progress in implementing the Association's priorities, and provide strategic direction for its continued work in advancing Africa's seed industry.

Chaired by AfSTA President, Mr Clive Mugadza, the meeting provided an opportunity for Board members to review ongoing initiatives, discuss emerging priorities, and align on actions that will strengthen the Association's role in representing and supporting the African seed sector.

A key focus of the discussions is the 2027 AfSTA Congress, which will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 16–18 March 2027, bringing together stakeholders from across Africa and beyond. The Board received updates on the preparations, progress of planning, and key activities underway, while considering the next steps required to deliver a successful and impactful congress.

The Congress, co-hosted by AfSTA and the Seed Trade Association of Kenya (STAK), will provide a platform for seed industry players, policymakers, researchers, development partners, and other stakeholders to exchange knowledge, explore business opportunities, strengthen partnerships, and discuss issues shaping the future of Africa's seed industry.

Beyond the Congress preparations, the Board's deliberations underscore the importance of strategic leadership, effective governance, and member engagement in advancing AfSTA's mandate.

Continued collaboration among members, National Seed Trade Associations (NSTAs), and strategic partners remains essential to addressing industry challenges, facilitating regional and international seed trade, and strengthening Africa's seed systems.

Through its ongoing work and the board leadership, AfSTA remains committed to fostering a competitive, resilient, and sustainable African seed industry that contributes to agricultural productivity, food security, and economic development across the continent.



AfSTA Board meeting in Nairobi (October 2026)



AfSTA Board President, Mr. Clive Mugadza

The Board meeting reaffirms the Association's commitment to collective leadership and strategic action as it advances its priorities and prepares to welcome the African and global seed community to Nairobi for the 2027 AfSTA Congress.



AfSTA Board Members (Mohamed Saidi and Nathalie Issorat)

ICIPE and AfSTA Explore Collaboration to Strengthen Seed Systems



AfSTA SECRETARIAT COURTESY CALL TO ICIPE

SEPTEMBER 2026: Nairobi, Kenya

The International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) hosted a delegation from the African Seed Trade Association (AfSTA) to explore opportunities for collaboration aimed at strengthening seed systems and accelerating the adoption of sustainable agricultural innovations across Africa.

The engagement focused on the availability and commercial production of Brachiaria and desmodium seeds, two important companion crops used in ICIPE's flagship Push-Pull technology for managing cereal stem borers and fall armyworm.

Beyond their role in integrated pest management, Brachiaria and desmodium offer additional benefits to farming systems. They provide high-quality livestock fodder, contribute to improved soil health, enhance soil fertility through nitrogen fixation by desmodium, and help conserve soil moisture and reduce erosion through increased ground cover. Their integration into farming systems therefore presents opportunities to improve agricultural productivity while supporting sustainable land management.

However, limited local availability of Brachiaria and desmodium seeds in Kenya, coupled with reliance on imports, presents a significant supply challenge that could constrain the wider adoption of Push-Pull technology. Addressing this gap requires stronger linkages between agricultural research institutions and the commercial seed industry to develop reliable and sustainable local supply chains.

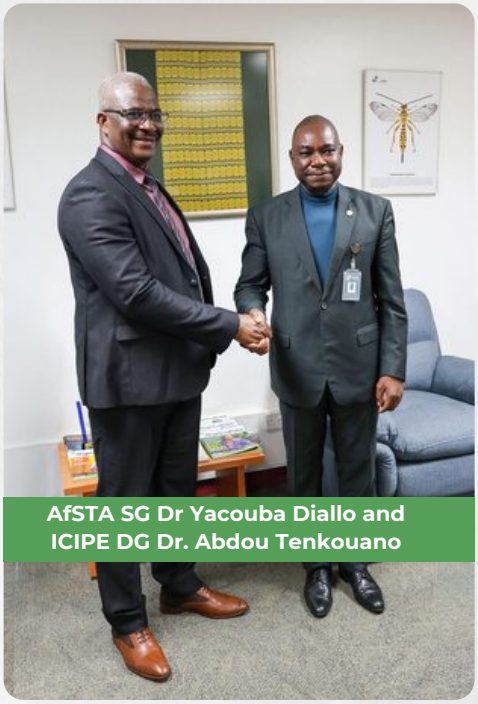
Discussions between ICIPE and AfSTA explored opportunities to connect ICIPE with potential seed-sector partners who could support seed multiplication, local commercial production, and market development. Such partnerships would help strengthen the availability of quality seed and create opportunities for private-sector participation in bringing agricultural innovations to farmers.

ICIPE also highlighted its work in screening desmodium varieties from across Africa, identifying promising varieties with potential suitability for different local conditions. These varieties present further opportunities for engagement with seed companies interested in seed multiplication, commercialisation, and expanding access to improved planting materials.

The engagement reflects the importance of collaboration between research institutions and the private seed sector in translating agricultural research into commercially viable solutions. By bringing together scientific expertise and the seed industry's production, distribution, and market networks, such partnerships can help address seed supply gaps and accelerate the uptake of proven agricultural technologies.

Through this engagement, AfSTA continues to strengthen its role in connecting its members with research institutions and strategic partners, creating opportunities for collaboration, investment, and innovation across Africa's seed industry.

Ultimately, closer collaboration between ICIPE and AfSTA has the potential to contribute to more resilient seed systems, sustainable farming practices, and improved livelihoods for farmers across the continent.



AfSTA SG Dr Yacouba Diallo and ICIPE DG Dr. Abdou Tenkouano

By Lindah Mbaisi, AfSTA Communications Lead

UPDATE: AfSTA Technical Committees Activities and Partnerships

By Kennedy Mangwana, Technical Lead - AfSTA



In 2026, the African Seed Trade Association (AfSTA) increasingly positioned its ***technical*** function around a simple principle, i.e. engagement must lead to implementation. Webinars, committees, international representation and partnerships are therefore being connected into an evidence-to-action pipeline that converts the day-to-day experiences of seed companies and National Seed Trade Associations (NSTAs) into practical industry outcomes.

AfSTA's technical committees have been central to this transition. Work across Intellectual Property Rights and Plant Variety Protection (IPR/PVP), phytosanitary matters, Plant Breeding Innovation (PBI) and biotechnology has increasingly emphasised clear priorities, evidence-based outputs and accountable follow-up.

PVP training in July 2026 strengthened understanding of breeders' rights and innovation incentives, while the October 2026 IPR/PVP engagement brought together perspectives on counterfeit seed, trademarks, UPOV, ARIPO, OAPI, WIPO and Farmers' Rights. The objective is not simply to discuss legal frameworks, but to ensure that they support innovation, investment and access to improved varieties.

This search for balance is especially important for Africa. ***Farmers' Rights and breeders' rights*** should not be treated as opposing objectives. Farmers need access to diverse, high-quality seed; breeders require incentives to invest in new varieties; governments need credible regulatory systems; and companies require predictable conditions for multiplication and commercialisation.

AfSTA's engagement with ***ISF, OECD Seed Schemes and institutions including UPOV, ARIPO and OAPI*** is helping bring African private-sector experience into these wider discussions while supporting a seed-policy environment in which genetic-resource conservation, innovation and farmer access reinforce one another.

The same results-oriented approach is evident in ***phytosanitary work.*** AfSTA's October 2026 webinar brought together industry and NPPO experiences from Kenya, Zambia and Nigeria around import and export processes, laboratory capacity, digitalisation, risk-based inspection and harmonisation. Follow-up focuses on turning company evidence into technically credible recommendations and strengthening cooperation among AfSTA, NSTAs, NPPOs, and international partners. The strategic goal is robust, science-based plant-health protection that supports efficient seed movement.

PBI and biotechnology are another critical frontier. AfSTA is strengthening member understanding of gene editing, biotechnology regulation and biosafety while emphasising the pathway from research to commercially available seed. Peer learning on National Biotechnology Committees has enabled experiences from ***Nigeria and Malawi*** to inform NSTAs in Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and Burkina Faso. These exchanges underline an important lesson: innovation depends not only on science, but also on functioning national platforms connecting companies, researchers, regulators and policymakers.

Partnerships are increasingly being managed through the same implementation lens.

AfSTA's work with ***COMESA/ACTESA*** seeks to turn regional harmonisation, COMSIS and regional seed labelling and certification into commercially usable pathways for cross-border trade.

With ***Seed Systems Group (SSG),*** a proposed 24-month framework organises collaboration around policy harmonisation, digital transformation, technology scaling, capacity building, inclusive market access and resource mobilisation, with responsibilities, milestones and indicators. Engagement with ***CIMMYT*** and related research platforms is connecting promising technologies to licensing, multiplication, market testing and farmer demand.

Through ***AGRA/CESSA,*** AfSTA is also strengthening the institutional capacity of five NSTAs (***Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique and Burkina Faso)*** so that national associations can serve more effectively as evidence, advocacy and implementation platforms.

Taken together, these activities signal an important evolution in ***AfSTA's technical strategy.*** Success cannot be measured by the number of webinars held, committee meetings convened, or MoUs signed. The stronger measure is what changes afterwards: a regulatory barrier addressed, a position paper strengthened, an NSTA better equipped to advocate for members, an innovation moved closer to market, or seed trade made more predictable.

AfSTA's next phase is therefore about disciplined follow-through, i.e. fewer stand-alone activities, clearer country priorities, named responsibilities, action matrices, financing pathways and measurable results.

By linking member evidence to technical expertise, national institutions, regional frameworks and global partnerships, AfSTA is strengthening its role as a bridge between industry challenges and practical solutions.

Ultimately, the objective is a ***competitive, innovative and resilient*** African seed industry that delivers quality seed, expands farmer choice and supports food and nutrition security across the continent.

SNAPSHOT: AfSTA MOU/ PARTNERSHIPS



The collaboration with the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO) is geared towards jointly hosting the AfSTA Post-Congress event and field visit in March 2027, providing delegates with an opportunity to explore KALRO's research facilities, engage with scientists and researchers, and gain insights into ongoing agricultural research.



The collaboration with ICIPE seeks to bridge the gap between agricultural research and commercial seed delivery.



AfSTA - COMESA/ACTESA MOU SIGNING IN ZAMBIA

AfSTA's work with COMESA/ACTESA seeks to turn regional harmonisation, COMSIS and regional seed labelling and certification into commercially usable pathways for cross-border trade.



AfSTA - AGRA Partnership meeting

Through AGRA/CESSA, AfSTA is also strengthening the institutional capacity of five NSTAs (Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique and Burkina Faso) so that national associations can serve more effectively as evidence, advocacy and implementation platforms.



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From Research Fields to Farmers' Fields: The African Cereal and Legume Breeding Consortium Mobilises Africa's Seed Industry



Participants at The African Cereal and Legume Breeding Consortium (ACLBC) annual Workshop in Kaduna, Nigeria

Kaduna State, Nigeria

Nigeria's seed companies have taken a closer look at a new generation of improved crop varieties as the African Cereal and Legume Breeding Consortium (ACLBC) held its 2026 workshop.

The two-day programme, organised by the ***Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) and the African Seed Trade Association (AfSTA)***, was designed to bridge the gap between agricultural research and commercial seed delivery by putting TAAT-vetted varieties directly before the seed companies that can multiply and take them to farmers.

At the centre of the programme was a one-hectare demonstration plot in Zaria, Kaduna State, established with Premier Seeds, the ACLBC Champion Partner in Nigeria, alongside the Seed Entrepreneurs Association of Nigeria (SEEDAN), The National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC) and participating TAAT Compacts.

The demonstration plot featured promising varieties of maize, rice, sorghum, millet, soybean, groundnut and cowpea, allowing seed companies to assess their performance under field conditions before making decisions on which varieties to add to their commercial portfolios.

Recall that Nigeria has an estimated 600 seed companies, the highest concentration of seed enterprises in Africa, making the country a strategic market for the commercialisation of improved crop varieties. The ACLBC is targeting more than 200 seed companies across Africa for the adoption and scaling of TAAT-vetted seed technologies.

The first day of the Nigerian workshop was dedicated to a Green Field Day themed "Harvesting Evidence–Mature Crop Performance Showcase."



Geoffrey Nsofon, ACLBC Lead

Participants toured the one-hectare demonstration plot to assess mature crops, with attention to yield potential, grain quality, post-harvest and processing characteristics and comparative performance among varieties. Selected plots were harvested on-site, allowing participating companies to observe yield and seed quality directly.

Technical experts and TAAT Compact leads provided information on agronomic practices and performance data.

The second day of the event focused on translating the field evidence into partnerships and commercial opportunities under the theme, "Scaling TAAT Seed Technologies–Partnerships for Impact."

The programme featured keynote presentations, technical sessions, a panel discussion and an interactive session with breeders and technology developers.

For seed companies, the programme offered an opportunity to identify varieties with commercial potential and explore multiplication, licensing and distribution opportunities. For breeders, it provided direct feedback from the market and potential commercial partners. For farmers, the longer-term benefit would depend on whether participating companies adopt the varieties, multiply them at scale and make quality seed available through commercial channels.

Via Independent (News Outlet)

New breeding lines and hybrids break ground in Benin courtesy of the Africa Vegetable Breeding Consortium

Cotonou, Benin

The Africa Vegetable Breeding Consortium (AVBC) held its largest-ever annual workshop in Cotonou, Benin, drawing a record number of participants and countries. The new breeding lines and hybrids showcased at the event could help expand climate-resilient, market-focused vegetable production across Africa and beyond.

Hosted by the WorldVeg West Africa Regional Office, the event brought together 40 participants from 19 seed companies, representing 18 countries from as far as DR Congo, France, Italy, South Africa, and Tanzania, with Egypt joining for the first time. This was the widest geographical participation since the consortium was established in 2018, reflecting its growing reach in Africa and beyond.

Participants evaluated field demonstrations of 41 vegetable breeding lines across eight crops: tomato, chilli and habanero pepper, okra, pumpkin, amaranth, mungbean and African eggplant (see below for full details).

These crops are vital to diets and livelihoods across Africa, with significant potential for scaling up and commercial expansion. But farmers often lack access to quality seeds of resilient varieties that produce good yields with good quality fruits, withstand harsh growing conditions and meet the needs of local markets.

AVBC aims to close this gap by getting better-performing, locally adapted varieties and hybrids into the hands of African seed companies and, ultimately, to the farmers. It provides AVBC members with exclusive, early-bird access to WorldVeg-improved breeding lines and hybrids, which they can use to enhance their own breeding programs and develop new varieties and hybrids for commercial release.

AVBC is a joint initiative of WorldVeg and the African Seed Trade Association (AfSTA), working to build Africa's capacity to develop, produce and market improved vegetables suited to African growing conditions and markets.

The annual AVBC workshops enable members to see the options growing in the field and provide opportunities for



Participants at the AVBC Annual workshop in Benin

them to interact with WorldVeg breeders and other seed companies exchange ideas and strategies and develop activities together. Beyond the workshops, WorldVeg's research network provides another advantage for AVBC members.

With scientists and research sites across multiple African countries, breeding material and hybrids can be tested and evaluated under different agroecological conditions. The Center's English- and French-speaking teams also help connect companies across linguistic divides that can otherwise limit collaboration between seed businesses in different parts of the continent.

In addition to the breeding lines, the Benin event included AVBC demonstration plots of hybrid plants for the first time: 30 experimental hybrids, 16 tomato and 14 pepper types (11 chilli and three habanero) developed by WorldVeg.

While breeding lines can be released as open-pollinated varieties (OPVs), whose seed farmers can save and plant again, hybrids are produced by crossing two carefully selected parent lines. The first generation of hybrids can combine useful characteristics from both parents and perform particularly well – an effect known as hybrid vigour, or heterosis.

This can mean higher yields, more uniform crops and greater resilience. But those advantages are not reliably maintained if farmers save seed from the hybrid crop and plant it again, so they need to buy new hybrid seed to get the same benefits. This creates a stronger commercial opportunity for seed companies, making hybrids an important expansion of the AVBC portfolio.

> **"What we are seeing this year is a much broader range of options for African seed companies, from promising breeding lines to hybrids," said Dr Yacouba Diallo, Secretary General of AfSTA.**

This year, AVBC also recognised the outstanding contribution of its members in two key areas. The first award recognised seed companies COPROSEM from Mali and BOUTAPA from Burkina Faso for their strong engagement, having released more than 10 varieties, including mungbean, pepper and tomato, demonstrating the contribution of AVBC to improving the vegetable genetics available in African markets.

With record participation, the introduction of hybrids and increasingly targeted breeding projects, the Benin workshop reflected how AVBC is evolving and gaining momentum as the African vegetable seed sector grows. The aim remains simple: give more seed companies access to the genetics and breeding tools they need to develop competitive varieties in and for Africa – and accelerate the process of getting quality seed to farmers.



Barcelona, Spain: AfSTA Engages in Global Seed Industry Discussions at ISF Annual Meetings

Barcelona, Spain

In October, the African Seed Trade Association (AfSTA) participated in the International Seed Federation (ISF) Annual Meetings in Barcelona, Spain, with its Technical Lead, Kennedy Mangwana, joining representatives from across the global seed sector to deliberate on key issues shaping the future of the seed industry.

AfSTA's participation reflects its continued commitment to representing the interests of Africa's seed industry in international technical and policy discussions, while strengthening engagement with global industry stakeholders.

During the Annual Meetings, AfSTA maintained an active presence in several key ISF committee engagements, including Plant Breeding Innovation (PBI), Phytosanitary and Intellectual Property.

These committee meetings provide an important opportunity for AfSTA to contribute African perspectives, share industry experiences and engage in discussions on issues that directly affect seed businesses and the movement of seed across borders.

Key areas of discussion include innovation in plant breeding, science-based policy development, international seed movement, access to genetic resources and responsible business practices. These issues are central to building an enabling environment for seed trade, supporting innovation and strengthening the competitiveness of the global seed industry.

For Africa, participation in these discussions is particularly important given the need for greater alignment between international frameworks and the continent's seed sector priorities. Engagement in global technical and policy processes also enables AfSTA to represent its members' interests and contribute to conversations on policies and practices that influence the development of African seed systems.

Further, this year's Annual Meetings mark an important milestone as the first to be held following the implementation of ISF's Key Strategic Objectives (KSOs) for 2026–2030.



Participants at the ISF Annual Meetings

The new strategic period provides direction for the Federation's priorities and activities over the next five years, reinforcing the importance of collaboration, innovation and constructive engagement across the global seed value chain.

AfSTA's involvement in the various committee meetings provides an avenue to strengthen its relationship with ISF and other international seed industry stakeholders, while ensuring that Africa remains part of the conversations influencing the sector's future.

As Africa's seed industry continues to grow, active participation in international platforms is essential to ensuring that the continent's experiences, priorities and perspectives inform global discussions.

Through its engagement with ISF, AfSTA continues to champion the interests of its members, promote international collaboration and contribute to the development of policies and frameworks that support seed innovation and trade.

The Association's participation in the Barcelona Annual Meetings reinforces its commitment to connecting Africa's seed industry with the global seed community and advancing a competitive, innovative and sustainable seed sector across the continent.



ISF Annual Meetings



L-R: Kennedy Mangwana (AfSTA Technical Lead), Lorena Basso (ISF President) and Arthur Santosh Attavar (Past President, ISF)

AfSTA Advances Private Sector Engagement in ASBP and the AU Africa Seed Summit 2026

The African Seed Trade Association (AfSTA) is strengthening private-sector representation in continental seed policy and development processes through its leadership of the Private Sector Engagement Technical Working Group (TWG) under the Africa Seed and Biotechnology Programme (ASBP), as well as its participation in preparations for the Africa Seed Summit 2026 convened by the African Union (AU).

In July 2026, AfSTA participated in the inaugural meeting of the reconstituted ASBP Technical Working Group platform, convened virtually by the African Union Commission (AUC) and AUDA-NEPAD, with technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO).

The meeting brought together 42 participants representing AU institutions, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), research institutions, development partners, farmer organisations, private-sector bodies and Member State agencies. It marked the relaunch of the ASBP Partnership following the transition of its Secretariat to AUDA-NEPAD.

The discussions focused on revitalising the Programme's coordination structures, reviewing its Ten-Year Action Plan and aligning priority activities with continental agricultural transformation objectives, including the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the Kampala Declaration.

As the lead of the Private Sector Engagement TWG, AfSTA highlighted the critical contribution of private enterprises to Africa's seed supply, noting that the private sector currently supplies between 80 and 90 per cent of certified seed in many African countries.

However, the industry continues to face challenges, including policy inconsistencies, infrastructure gaps, limited access to financing and geopolitical instability.

Addressing these constraints requires stronger enabling regulatory frameworks, improved financing mechanisms, increased investment in innovation and more effective public-private partnerships.

AfSTA's contribution emphasised the importance of positioning the private sector as an active partner in the development and implementation of continental seed policies and programmes.

The Africa Seed Summit 2026

The ASBP Technical Working Group meeting also reviewed preparations for the Africa Seed Summit 2026, which took place from 5–7 October 2026 in Eswatini.

The Summit secured high-level political commitment, mobilised investment, promoted resilient seed systems and strengthened enabling policy and regulatory environments across Africa.

Key expected outcomes included a revised Ten-Year ASBP Action Plan, a Summit Declaration, an implementation Roadmap, a Seed Sector Performance Index Report and a Farmer-Managed Seed Systems Framework.

AfSTA's participation in the technical coordination process provides an opportunity to ensure that private-sector priorities and industry perspectives inform these continental deliverables.

The meeting further agreed to strengthen coordination among Technical Working Groups through biweekly meetings in the lead-up to the Summit, with the aim of ensuring timely delivery of the agreed outputs.

Through its leadership of the Private Sector Engagement TWG and continued participation in ASBP processes, AfSTA remains committed to advancing a stronger role for the private sector in building competitive, resilient and sustainable seed systems across Africa.

Strengthening private-sector participation is essential to translating continental commitments into practical actions that support investment, innovation, seed availability and improved access to quality seed for African farmers.



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Farmers' Rights, Intellectual Property (IP) and Genetic Resources: Key Takeaways from the ISF Annual Meetings



Finding a Balance Between Farmers' Rights and Breeding Innovation

One of the key issues emerging from the ISF Annual meetings is the increasing importance of Farmers' Rights within the broader international debate on plant genetic resources, intellectual property, plant breeding innovation, and access to seed.

The discussions within ISF highlighted the need for the seed industry to remain actively engaged in the ongoing international processes concerning Farmers' Rights under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). Particular attention is being given to developments around Farmers' Rights, the functioning of the Multilateral System (MLS), and the wider discussions being taken forward within the Treaty process.

AfSTA to work closely with ISF

An important observation from the meetings is that these international discussions have significant implications for the African seed industry. However, African private-sector perspectives are not always sufficiently represented in these global discussions. This creates an important opportunity for AfSTA to work more closely with ISF and other relevant partners to ensure that the realities of African seed companies, breeders, National Seed Trade Associations and farmers are adequately reflected.

For AfSTA, the issue is particularly important because Farmers' Rights cannot be considered in isolation from Plant Breeders' Rights, access to plant genetic resources, benefit-sharing, continued investment in breeding and the commercialisation of improved varieties.

The discussions therefore reinforced the need for a balanced approach. Farmers make an important contribution to the conservation, development and sustainable use of plant genetic resources. At the same time, breeders and seed companies require predictable intellectual-property frameworks and appropriate incentives to continue investing in the development of improved, climate-resilient and market-responsive varieties.

This balance becomes even more important as breeding increasingly incorporates new technologies and plant breeding innovations.

Africa needs policy and regulatory frameworks that facilitate innovation while ensuring that the benefits ultimately reach farmers through greater access to diverse, high-quality and improved seed. The ISF discussions are also directly relevant to the work of the AfSTA IPR/PVP Sub-Committee.

The Committee is increasingly providing a platform through which AfSTA can examine Farmers' Rights alongside Plant Variety Protection, breeders' rights, counterfeit seed and trademarks, and developments within UPOV, ARIPO and OAPI.

Strategic implication for AfSTA

Going forward, AfSTA should particularly seek to:

- Strengthen African seed-industry participation in international discussions on Farmers' Rights and the ITPGRFA;
- Closely follow developments relating to the Multilateral System, access and benefit-sharing and their implications for African breeding programmes and seed companies;
- Use the IPR/PVP Sub-Committee to consolidate perspectives from AfSTA members and NSTAs before major international policy discussions;
- Build the capacity of NSTAs and seed companies to understand the practical implications of Farmers' Rights, PVP and genetic-resource policies; and
- Work with ISF and other relevant partners to promote policy approaches in which Farmers' Rights, breeders' innovation, conservation of genetic resources, private-sector investment and farmers' access to quality seed are mutually reinforcing rather than competing objectives.

By Kennedy Mangwana, AfSTA Technical lead

India–Africa Seed Summit 2026 Opens New Opportunities for Collaboration in the Seed Industry



The Summit highlights

Hyderabad, India: The inaugural India–Africa Seed Summit 2026 is bringing together policymakers, industry leaders, researchers, seed experts and other key stakeholders from India and Africa in Hyderabad, India, to explore opportunities for stronger collaboration and partnerships in the seed sector.

Hosted by the Indian Chamber of Food and Agriculture (ICFA), with the African Seed Trade Association (AfSTA) serving as the African partner, the summit provides a platform for strengthening connections between the two regions and advancing cooperation across the seed value chain.

The gathering seeks to promote dialogue, knowledge exchange and partnerships that can support the growth of the seed industry, facilitate trade and strengthen agricultural resilience in both regions.

Launch of the Seeds Without Borders Report

A key highlight of the inaugural session was the launch of the ***"Seeds Without Borders"*** report, which examines opportunities for enhanced India–Africa collaboration in the seed sector.

The report explores areas of mutual interest, including seed trade, climate resilience, genetic diversity, technology and research. It also proposes a shared roadmap to guide future cooperation and strengthen engagement between stakeholders in the two regions.

The report provides a basis for identifying practical opportunities to deepen partnerships, address common challenges and harness complementary expertise in advancing seed sector development.

Advancing India–Africa Seed Trade and Partnerships

The India–Africa Seed Trade Roundtable provided an important platform for stakeholders to exchange perspectives, strengthen networks and identify practical areas for collaboration.

Discussions focused on key opportunities for cooperation, including seed trade and market access, technology transfer, research and innovation, public–private partnerships, trade facilitation and knowledge sharing.

Participants highlighted the importance of strengthening institutional and business linkages between India and Africa to facilitate the exchange of expertise, technologies and innovations that can support the development of competitive seed industries.

Beyond commercial opportunities, discussions emphasised the need for stronger connections between research institutions, private sector players and other stakeholders to accelerate innovation and ensure that seed systems respond effectively to the evolving needs of farmers and agricultural markets.

Strengthening Cooperation for Resilient Seed Systems

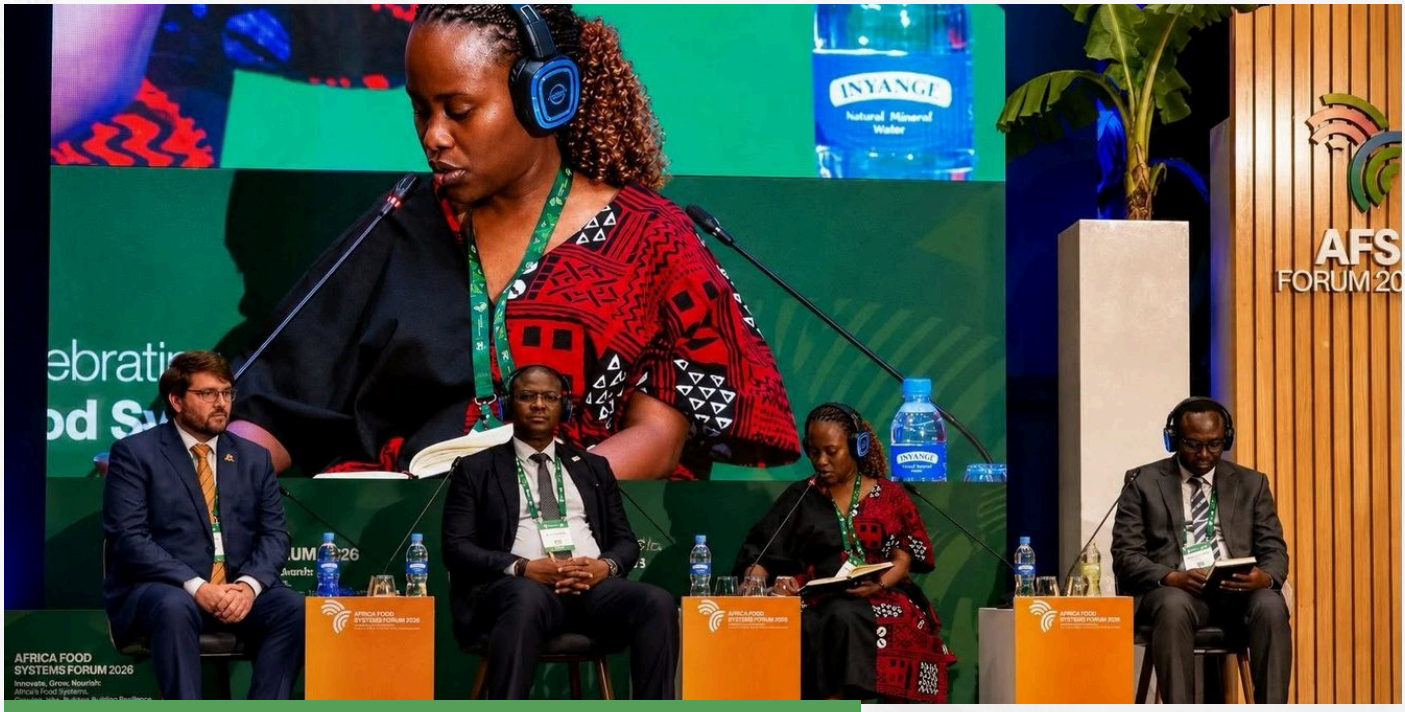
For Africa, stronger engagement with India's seed sector presents opportunities to access technical expertise, promote investment, strengthen research collaboration and expand trade relationships.

Through its partnership in convening the summit, AfSTA continues to advance its mandate of promoting seed trade, fostering strategic partnerships and strengthening the competitiveness of Africa's seed industry.

The India–Africa Seed Summit 2026 marks an important step towards building stronger connections between the two regions, with sustained collaboration, knowledge exchange and investment offering pathways towards more innovative, resilient and sustainable seed systems.

By AfSTA Communications

AfSTA Highlights the Role of the Private Sector in Advancing Africa's Seed Sector at the Africa Food Summit



Strengthening Private Sector Participation in Vegetable Seed Development

The African Seed Trade Association (AfSTA) participated in the Africa Food Summit, organised by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) in Rwanda, contributing to discussions on strengthening Africa's food systems through agricultural innovation, strategic partnerships and private sector engagement.

A key highlight of AfSTA's participation at the World Vegetable Center (WorldVeg) Eastern and Southern Africa side event titled ***"AfricaVeg: African Seeds, African Solutions."***

The session brought together experts and industry stakeholders to explore how African seed systems can better respond to farmers' needs and changing agricultural conditions through the development and delivery of locally adapted, climate-resilient vegetable varieties.

The discussion highlighted the importance of collaboration between research institutions, seed companies, entrepreneurs and other value chain actors in accelerating the development and commercialisation of improved vegetable varieties.

The private sector plays an important role in translating research and breeding advances into accessible seed products that respond to market demand and farmers' production needs, underscoring the importance of developing and delivering locally adapted, climate-resilient vegetable varieties that can withstand changing climatic conditions while meeting the needs of farmers and consumers. Strengthening these linkages is essential to ensuring that improved vegetable varieties reach farmers and deliver tangible benefits across the continent.

Through improved varieties, Africa's vegetable sector has significant potential to increase agricultural productivity, strengthen resilience, improve nutrition and create new economic opportunities for farmers and seed businesses.

Research institutions such as WorldVeg are contributing to this agenda through research and breeding programmes across Africa, developing improved vegetable varieties with the potential to address production challenges and strengthen the competitiveness of the vegetable sector.

AfSTA's engagement at the side event also highlighted its ongoing partnership with WorldVeg through the Africa Vegetable Breeding Consortium (AVBC).

The consortium brings together research institutions and private sector actors to strengthen vegetable breeding and support the development and delivery of improved varieties suited to African markets and production environments.

By connecting research and innovation with the expertise and market reach of seed companies, AVBC seeks to accelerate the availability of improved vegetable seed and strengthen the role of the private sector in Africa's vegetable value chain.

In Photo:
Panellists at the World Vegetable Center (WorldVeg) Eastern and Southern Africa side event

AfSTA Member Spotlight

ZASTA Highlights Key Issues Affecting Zambia's Seed and Agriculture Sectors

The Zambia Seed Trade Association (ZASTA) has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the growth of Zambia's agricultural sector, highlighting key issues affecting its members, farmers and the wider seed industry during a recent media briefing.

The ZASTA President outlined four priority areas:

Supporting the Government's Grow Zambia Agenda

The ZASTA President, Mr Patrick Nyumbu, commended the Government for introducing the "Grow Zambia Agenda" and reaffirmed the Association's readiness to work with the Government towards achieving its agricultural production targets.

He noted that ZASTA members, as key suppliers of certified seed, were prepared to provide the quality seed required to support the country's targets of producing 10 million metric tonnes (MTS) of maize, 3 million metric tonnes of soybean and 1 million metric tonnes of wheat by 2031.

Combating the Sale of Counterfeit and Fake Seeds

The Association raised concern over the continued sale and use of counterfeit seed, warning of its far-reaching implications for farmers, the seed industry and national food security.

The ZASTA President highlighted that counterfeit seed exposes farmers to significant financial losses through poor crop performance and reduced yields. It also undermines confidence in the formal seed sector and threatens the sustainability of legitimate seed businesses.

Farmer Preparedness for Anticipated El Niño Conditions

In light of the anticipated El Niño conditions and their potential impact on crop production, the ZASTA President urged farmers to make informed seed choices and prepare for possible drought and heat stress.

He encouraged farmers to consider drought- and heat-tolerant seed varieties available on the market, emphasising the importance of selecting varieties based on their specific agronomic characteristics.

He cautioned against assuming that all early-maturing varieties are necessarily drought-tolerant, explaining that early maturity alone does not guarantee resilience to drought or high temperatures.

Encouraging Seed Uptake Through the FISP E-Voucher System

The Association also highlighted concerns raised by its members and other seed suppliers regarding farmers' redemption patterns under the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) e-voucher system.

The ZASTA President observed that many farmers were prioritising the redemption of fertiliser at the expense of seed and other essential agricultural inputs, contributing to low uptake of seed available on the market.

He emphasised that seed is the foundation of crop production, noting that fertiliser alone cannot support crop production without seed being planted first.

Mr Nyumbu encouraged farmers participating in the e-voucher programme to prioritise the redemption of quality seed alongside other inputs to maximise the benefits of the Government's agricultural subsidy programme.



ZASTA President, Patrick Nyumbu





ZASTA Board Members

Through these engagements, ZASTA continues to advocate for an enabling environment for the seed industry while promoting access to quality seed, responsible farming decisions and stronger collaboration between the public and private sectors.

AfSTA Facilitates Peer Learning to Strengthen Zimbabwe's Seed Trade Association



Building Stronger National Seed Trade Associations

As part of advancing the institutional capacity of National Seed Trade Associations (NSTAs) through peer learning and knowledge exchange, AfSTA hosted a capacity-strengthening and peer-learning webinar for the Zimbabwe Seed Association (ZSA), providing a platform for experience-sharing and practical insights into building an effective, inclusive and sustainable seed trade association.

The webinar drew on the experience of the South African National Seed Organisation (SANSOR) and the Zambia Seed Trade Association (ZASTA). Through their experience, both SANSOR and ZASTA representatives shared insights into institutional development, member engagement, advocacy, stakeholder relations and resource mobilisation, offering valuable lessons that ZSA could draw upon in strengthening its organisational capacity.

A key focus of the engagement was understanding how successful peer associations organise their operations, deliver value to members and mobilise resources to support their activities. Discussions further explored approaches to association governance and management, sustainable funding mechanisms, and strategies for building strong relationships with members and industry stakeholders. These experiences highlighted the importance of a clear institutional structure, a well-defined mandate and a strong value proposition in sustaining an effective industry association.

The engagement also underscored the importance of strengthening advocacy and lobbying to enable National Seed Trade Associations to effectively influence agricultural and seed policies, regulatory frameworks, and engage effectively with regulators.

There is a need for AfSTA member associations to create meaningful opportunities for members to contribute to decision-making, participate in activities and shape the organisation's strategic direction. Building this sense of ownership is essential to strengthening collective action and ensuring that the association remains responsive to members' needs.

A strong network of capable National Seed Trade Associations is essential to building a more coordinated, competitive and sustainable African seed industry. Effective associations provide a collective voice for seed businesses, facilitate constructive public-private sector engagement and contribute to the development of enabling policy and regulatory environments.

Through initiatives such as this engagement with ZSA, AfSTA continues to foster a culture of peer learning and collaboration, working towards its broader goal of strengthening national associations and driving seed business growth across Africa.

AfSTA seeks to promote the sharing of practical experiences, successful approaches and lessons that can be adapted to different national contexts.

NaSTAG Calls For Procurement Quota For Locally Produced Seeds

ACCRA, GHANA

Members of the National Seed Trade Association of Ghana (NaSTAG) and the National Seed Council (NASC) have demanded a huge procurement quota for locally produced quality seeds to enhance food production in the country.

The call comes at a time when the reset agenda of the Government through its Feed Ghana Programme continues to procure and supply quality foreign seeds to farmers, leaving the locally produced ones to rot in several grain warehouses across the country.

The Board Chairman of the NASC, **Alhaji Abubakari Mumuni**, made the call and was endorsed by the NaSTAG at the opening of the 7th Ghana Seed Business Forum, dubbed SEEDLINK 2026 in Accra.

The premier national seed sector event was organised by the NaSTAG, in collaboration with the NSC on 29th October 2026 also coincided with the 10th anniversary of the NaSTAG.

The emphasis here is on quality locally produced seeds. It has also become a known fact that stakeholders continuously import seeds for the production of crops in this country. Sometimes the sources of these seeds are not even known and cannot be traced, according to Alhaji Mumuni.

"The Government of Ghana frowns on this practice and does not intend to patronise the importation of these materials, which can be produced in Ghana.

To ensure that only quality seeds are offered to farmers for sale in the country, the council is in discussion with the National Security apparatus to deal with this issue as a security threat in Ghana, and therefore, anybody who contravenes these rules would be dealt with according to the laws of Ghana".

The contribution of the National Seed Plan in driving initiatives aimed at strengthening the country's seed system is evident. Among these is the introduction of a seed traceability system designed to address the challenge of counterfeit seed and enhance accountability across the seed value chain.



Participants at the 7th Seed Business Forum held in Accra

Such initiatives are critical to protecting farmers, building confidence in the formal seed sector and ensuring that quality seed reaches farming communities

NaSTAG President **Seidu Abdulai Mubarak**, addressing the issue of seed affordability, noted the efforts made by seed companies and producers to respond to farmers' financial constraints during the farming season.

As part of these efforts, seed industry players implemented a 25% reduction in seed prices to improve affordability and support farmers' access to quality seed. This demonstrated the industry's willingness to respond to farmers' needs while recognising that affordability remains an important consideration in expanding the use of quality seed.

As Ghana's seed industry looks ahead, sustained collaboration, effective advocacy and coordinated action will remain essential to building a resilient seed sector and ensuring farmers have access to quality and affordable seed.



As SEEDLINK marks its tenth anniversary, the 2026 gathering provides an opportunity to reflect on the progress made while identifying priorities for the future of Ghana's seed sector.

Photo Credit: NASTAG Via Africa Eye Report

STAK Congress 2026: Advancing Kenya's Seed Industry Through Innovation, Farmer Protection and Food Security

The Seed Trade Association of Kenya (STAK) convened its 2026 Congress on 4–5 November in Nairobi, bringing together policymakers, regulators, researchers, seed companies, development partners and other stakeholders to deliberate on the future of Kenya's seed industry.

Held under the theme ***"Securing Kenya's Seed Future Through Innovation, Farmer Protection and Food Security,"*** the two-day congress provides a platform for industry dialogue, policy engagement and collaboration on key issues affecting seed production, trade, innovation and farmers' access to quality seed.

Policy and Regulatory Reforms Take Centre Stage

The congress opened with discussions on the state of Kenya's seed industry and its contribution to national food security, setting the context for deliberations on policy priorities, regulatory reforms and opportunities for growth.

A key focus was the proposed amendments to the Seed and Plant Varieties Act, 2025, and the ongoing review of the Seed Act. Discussions explored the implications of the proposed reforms for seed businesses, farmers and the wider agricultural sector.

Stakeholders examined how the legal and regulatory framework can balance farmer protection, access to quality seed and incentives for innovation. Particular attention was given to the relationship between formal certified seed systems and farmer-managed seed systems, including how regulation can recognise and support different seed systems while maintaining quality assurance.

The discussions also explored the role of intellectual property and Plant Variety Protection (PVP) in encouraging investment in plant breeding, while ensuring that smallholder farmers continue to access improved seed varieties.

Through facilitated group discussions, participants were expected to identify and prioritise three key amendments that could strengthen farmer protection and improve seed-sector governance.

The Sixth TASAI Study in Kenya: Generating Evidence for Industry Growth



A highlight of the congress was the African Seed Access Index (TASAI) study focusing on seed production. Presented by Dr Michael Waithaka and Dr Mercy Mburu, the study's headline findings provided an opportunity for stakeholders to examine the state of Kenya's seed production sector.

The findings are expected to inform discussions on the opportunities and challenges affecting seed production, industry investment and the broader development of Kenya's seed sector.

The session provided an important evidence-based platform for the industry to reflect on progress, identify gaps and consider practical responses to the issues emerging from the study.

Strengthening Kenya's Seed Industry Through Collaboration



The STAK Congress 2026 comes at an important time for Kenya's agricultural sector, as the country seeks to strengthen food security, expand agricultural productivity and build resilience to climate change.

The discussions underscore the importance of an enabling policy and regulatory environment, investment in research and innovation, effective regional integration and stronger public-private sector partnerships.
For AfSTA, participation in platforms such as the STAK Congress provides an opportunity to support its national association members, contribute to policy discussions and promote collaboration towards a competitive and sustainable African seed industry.

Ultimately, securing Kenya's seed future will require coordinated action from government, regulators, research institutions, seed businesses and farmers to ensure that quality seed, innovation and investment translate into improved agricultural productivity and food security.



AVBC Special Projects

The African Vegetable Breeding Consortium (AVBC) has new special projects that are available for seed companies



- **CMS chilli hybrid development.**

This is an opportunity for seed companies to strengthen and accelerate their hybrid breeding programmes through access to parental lines, practical training and technical support.

Scan *to register*



- **Accelerating Tomato Breeding in Africa**

This project provides access to advanced F1 tomato hybrids that have already been evaluated in the field by the World Vegetable Center, together with their parental lines.

Scan *to register*

Why Join AfSTA?

Benefits of Being an AfSTA Member

1. **Grow Your Business and Raise Its Visibility Across Africa: AFSTA membership opens the door to new markets and commercial opportunities across the continent.**
2. **Influence Policies That Shape the Seed Industry: AFSTA represents the collective voice of Africa's seed sector in discussions with governments and regional bodies.**
3. **Access Knowledge, technologies, and Innovations: Stay ahead in a competitive seed industry through timely updates on developments shaping the seed sector and cutting-edge knowledge and technical expertise.**
4. **Build Strategic Partnerships and gain connections to members across the entire seed value chain: AFSTA connects members across the entire seed value chain to create partnerships, joint ventures, and new collaboration opportunities.**
5. **Get privileged Access to Africa's Largest Annual Seed Industry Event and the African plant breeding consortiums: The Annual AFSTA Congress provides unmatched opportunities to build partnerships, identify distributors, promote seed products, and expand into new markets.**

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Upcoming Events:

- **COP31, 9-20th November 2026, Antalya, Türkiye**
- **AfSTA Phytosanitary Webinar, 30th November 2026**
- **Africa Seed and Biotechnology Platform meeting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (10–11 November 2026: 7th Steering Group Meeting, 12–13 November 2026: 3rd General Assembly)**
- **AfSTA West and Central Committee Virtual Meeting on 17th November 2026**
- **Asian Seed Congress, Türkiye, 1 - 5 December 2026**
- **ASTA's Field Crop Seed Convention: December 14–17, 2026.**
- **AfSTA Congress, 15 - 19 March 2027, Nairobi, Kenya**
- **IFAJ Congress, 6- 10 September 2027, Cape Town, South Africa**
- **COP32, 8- 19 November 2027, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

Call for Articles: AfSTA Magazine (13th Edition)





The African Seed Trade Association (AfSTA) invites experts, practitioners and value chain stakeholders in the seed sector to submit articles, in **English or French,** for the 13th edition of the African Seed Magazine, to be published in **March 2027.**

We welcome well-researched and insightful articles highlighting initiatives, innovations, policies, and developments shaping the African seed sector.

Submission Deadline: 31 December 2026

Please submit your articles to the AfSTA Communications Lead, Lindah Mbaisi, at: lindah@afsta.org.

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