SFSA’s experience of ECOWAS seed regulation

Camille Renou, Seeds Programme Manager, Syngenta Foundation
Feb. 28, 2017, Dakar
Plan

1. Background on the West African Seed Regulation

2. SFSA focus on seed regulation and variety registration

3. Our past activities on policy / seed regulation in West Africa

4. Our current experience as an applicant

5. Other pending questions & topics
1. Background on the West African Seed Regulation

- « CEDEAO-UEMOA-CILSS » regulation
- Signed in 2008
- 15 ECOWAS countries + Mauritania and Chad
1. Background on the West African Seed Regulation

- Among many other objectives, the harmonized seed regulation aims to:
  
  - Standardize variety registration procedures
  
  - Ensure access, recognition and use by all other countries of any material registered in one member state.
    
    - Allow sales in country « B » of a seed produced, certified and/or distributed in country « A »
    
    - Build a Regional catalogue of released varieties, which is the sum of all National catalogues
1. Background on the West African Seed Regulation

- ECOWAS mandated CORAF « West Africa Seed Programme » (WASP) for implementation of the Regional regulation

- 5-years work done by CORAF/WASP in order to harmonize regulations and procedures in the 17 countries

- Syngenta Foundation partnering with CORAF/WASP since 2012 to support implementation of the harmonized regulation
2. SFSA focus on seed regulation and variety registration

• Our work on ECOWAS regulation is different:
  
  • With other African economic groups (COMESA, SADC, EAC, we are able to focus on extending marketing consent from existing registrations
  
  • With ECOWAS → necessary for us to generate new registration data in order to test the system as an applicant
3. Our past activities on policy / seed regulation in West Africa

Main objective:

Capacity building with NARS in Mali and Senegal to implement Regional variety registration protocols
3. Our past activities on policy / seed regulation in West Africa

In Mali:
- Working with sorghum breeders of IER in order to collect DUS and VCU data as per « ECOWAS protocols » (following UPOV guidelines)
3. Our past activities on policy / seed regulation in West Africa

In Senegal:

- Working with ISRA to develop protocols and implement multi-location trial network following ECOWAS variety registration protocols
4. Our current experience as an applicant

- SFSA funded sorghum breeding programme in Mali with National programme and CIRAD (2009-2015);

- Best varieties also tested in Senegal and performing well → potential for regional adoption

- Willingness to register this material in Mali and seek regional recognition + marketing consent

= Implementation of a real test case
Visit of the National Seed Committee inspecting sorghum DUS & VCU registration trials (following ECOWAS protocols) in Mali, October 2016
4. Our current experience as an applicant

Some questions on the process to follow:

- Necessity to have pre-registration trial data to support application?
- Up-to-date and clear process/manual missing for variety release process at National level
- Application process
- Work with National and Regional seed committees
- Entering National and Regional catalogues and markets
- Register a variety if the breeder is not based in the country
  - Working through an agent? Who can be an agent? What is the process?
- The whole cost of registration
4. Our current experience as an applicant

**Some questions on the next steps:**

- When will varieties, formally registered in one country, be accepted onto the Regional catalogue?
- How will these registered varieties enter the National & Regional catalogue?
- How will other countries see these new varieties which have been accepted onto the Regional Catalogue?
- When can the Regional trade start?
- How a seed company multiplying seeds for regional market can ensure they will be allowed to sell their seeds in other countries?
- How to differentiate « marketing consent » and « adaptation to the agroecology »
5. Other pending questions & topics

• Procedures manual exist for 11 crops. **What about other crops?**

PROCEDURE MANUAL FOR VARIETY REGISTRATION
IN THE NATIONAL CATALOGUE FOR CROP SPECIES
AND VARIETIES IN WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES

PART II
ANNEX

NATIONAL/REGIONAL TESTING PROTOCOLS FOR DUS AND VCU
FOR
GROUNDNUT, SORGHUM, RICE, MAIZE, CASSAVA, PEARL,
MILLET, IRISH POTATO, YAM, ONION, TOMATO, COWPEA
5. Other pending questions & topics

Uniformity of DUS & VCU protocols in the region:

How to ensure

- all countries are following same protocols for variety registration?
- a registration enabling access to Regional catalogue and recognition by other member States?

→ Lack of consistency between francophone and anglophone manuals, as well as on the different UPOV criteria to observe (compulsory & optional) – (example of DUS protocols on sorghum)
5. Other pending questions & topics

• What about registration of vegetables?

Current practice Vs Regional regulation

SECTION IV: SEED MARKETING

CHAPTER XXII: MARKETING BY PRODUCER-DISTRIBUTORS AND DISTRIBUTORS

Article 70: Variety of Seeds marketed on the Regional Market

Only seeds registered in the West African Catalogue of Plant Species and Varieties shall be marketed in the sub-region.

• What is the process to register hybrids, particularly regarding the presence and trial of parental lines?
Conclusion

• We are doing a test case with public material to identify issues and bottlenecks in order
  • to better understand the process
  • To be able to advise future applicants

→ Clear regulations and functional processes for variety release which result in regional marketing consent will:
  • Facilitate dissemination of new varieties
  • Raise interest of local and international seed companies (and increase their investments)
  • Ensure a dynamic seed sector