SFSA’s experience of ECOWAS seed regulation

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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