



# CSP Nigeria Communiqué

## March 2025

A look back on CSP-Nigeria's  
Seed Week activities  
17th – 28th November 2024

## Introduction

The 2024 Seed Week(s) was extraordinary, bringing together stakeholders to explore new ideas, share knowledge, and achieve significant milestones. We are delighted to present the highlights of these impactful events, organized by and in partnership with our key implementing partners under the Collaborative Seed Programme (CSP).

## Why Seed Week(s) Activities?

The activities were designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Share achievements or innovations from recent efforts by the program's implementing partners.
- Foster knowledge-sharing and learning.
- Plan for the programme's future and ensure the sustainability of introduced innovations.

## When did the activities take place?

The events and workshops lasted eight days, beginning on Monday, November 17th, and concluding on Thursday, November 28th, 2024.

## Where did the activities take place?

As detailed in the following sections, all events and workshops were held in Abuja, Nigeria, at various designated locations.

## Who was in attendance?

The workshops brought together diverse stakeholders, including representatives from the private and public sectors, regulatory agencies, and other key actors in the seed sector.

The Seed Week(s) provided an invaluable platform for stakeholders to come together, exchange ideas, and chart the course for the programme's continued success as we approach its conclusion. We look forward to building on the momentum generated.



The Minister of Agriculture, State, at the Collaborative Seed Programme Exhibition stand at the 7th Seed Connect Conference and Exhibition.



Group photograph of CSP team members with the award presented to the programme by the National Agricultural Seed Council.

Here are snapshots of each day's activities

## Day one - 17th November 2024

*In partnership with the Collaborative Seed Programme, the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC) organized a follow-up training at Denis Hotel, Abuja, to equip the National Executives of the Seed Entrepreneurs Associations of Nigeria (SEEDAN) with effective governance skills. This training is the second of the series, the first of which aided the recent merger with the Association of Registered Seed Companies of Nigeria (ARSCON).*



The day one key highlights:

- **Progress updates on action plans:** The executives shared progress regarding the action plans established in the last training on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2024; most plans have been implemented and await finalization.
- **Revisiting the SWOT analysis:** The session revisited the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis conducted in May 2024, focusing on the identified trends and exploring the reasons behind any discrepancies. The executives realized that their strengths, weaknesses, and threats were constantly compared to their current state; however, they had noticed increased opportunities and are now exploring ways to harness them.
- **Learning from merger failures:** The resource person, Dr. Mulemia Maina, guided the executives through practical examples of merger failures and explained their causes. Using these examples, the executives identified the "big issues" currently faced by the newly merged association and explored strategies to address them effectively.

**Also, on the same day...**

*The Collaborative Seed Programme (CSP) and the National Agricultural Seed Council (NASC) management teams met at the NASC Headquarters in Sheda, Abuja.*



Group photograph with the NASC management at the NASC Headquarters in Abuja.

During the meeting, the CSP team provided a comprehensive briefing on their achievements and outcomes across the various CSP topics, aligning with the work plan and the innovations implemented. In response, the NASC management offered feedback on these briefings and discussed strategies to sustain the successes achieved through the pilot initiatives. The NASC also expressed its full support and commitment to ensuring the long-term sustainability of these

accomplishments.

**Day two - 18th November 2024**

*The second day of activities featured the SEEDAN capacity-building exercise, during which association members engaged in extensive deliberations to identify key challenges facing the organization and to develop clear, strategic pathways for addressing them.*



Group photograph with the national executives of SEEDAN on the second day of the SEEDAN strengthening workshop.

The participants highlighted three significant challenges facing the association:

- **Access to finance:** Limited funding opportunities for seed entrepreneurs and the conditions to access them are often unfavorable even when available.
- **Knowledge sharing, training, and networking:** Improved or Stronger collaboration and capacity-building initiatives are needed to strengthen the sector, as the executives identified communication gaps that hinder the free flow of knowledge and information that would benefit the association.

- **Distribution and marketing:** Inefficiencies and gaps due to limited accessibility of quality seeds to entrepreneurs and farmers alike.

Having identified these challenges, the participants drafted specific, measurable approaches to mitigate their effects and strengthen the association's operations.

The meeting resulted in three action points for SEEDAN; these are points from the meeting in May that need to be concluded:

- **Finalization of the association's website:** The development of the website is in progress and approaching finalization; the completion of the website will enhance communication, outreach, and visibility for SEEDAN members.
- **Formation of a strategic planning committee:** To oversee the implementation of long-term plans and ensure alignment with SEEDAN's goals.
- **Review of the association's constitution:** To update the governing document regarding the recent merger and the association's evolving needs.



Dr. Mulemia Maina, Managing Director, Agri Experience Ltd, was the resource person during the session at the strengthening SEEDAN workshop in Abuja, Nigeria.

By the end of the session, the association had clear insights into addressing its challenges and strengthening its governance and operational structures.

### Also, on the same day...

*The programme facilitated a feedback workshop to review the progress of piloting the Decentralized Seed Quality Assurance (DSQA) models.*

### Workshop Highlights:

The workshop focused on evaluating the progress of three DSQA pilot models:

- **Seed Company Internal Quality Control Model:** Where seed companies take responsibility for quality control within their production systems.



Photograph with the partners of the Decentralized Seed Quality Assurance models pilot at the feedback workshop in Abuja.

- **Third-Party Seed Quality Assurance Model:** Involving independent organizations to provide unbiased quality assurance services.
- **NASC Licensed Seed Inspector (LSI) Model:** Utilizing NASC-trained and licensed inspectors to oversee seed quality assurance processes.

During the session, partners responsible for each pilot model presented detailed progress reports.

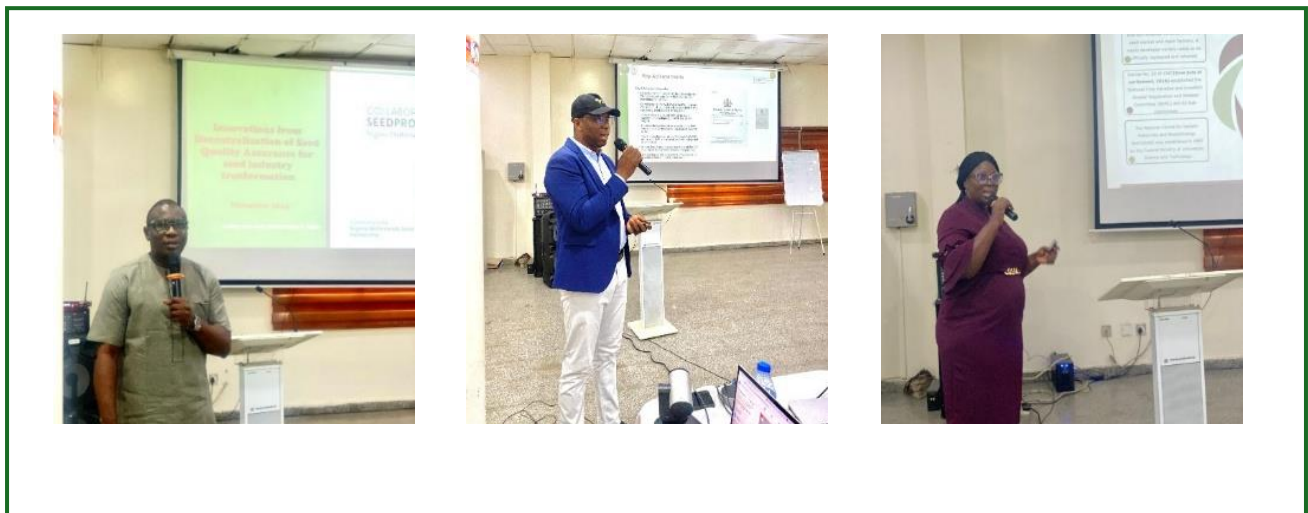
These reports outlined:

- What worked well or what was successful in their respective models.
- Challenges encountered during the pilot implementation.
- Suggestions for potential solutions to address these challenges.

The programme will thoroughly examine each DSQA model to assess its effectiveness and suitability. This evaluation aims to identify the model(s) best aligned with the needs of the Nigerian seed system as the pilots close-out.

## Day three - 19th November 2024

*The Collaborative Seed Programme (CSP), in partnership with the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC), hosted a learning workshop to update seed companies on key innovations in the CSP topics of Variety Release, Plant Variety Protection (PVP), and Decentralized Seed Quality Assurance (DSQA).*



### Workshop highlights:

**Accelerated Variety Release:** For crops listed in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Seed Catalogue, on-farm and on-station trials are conducted simultaneously to reduce the time required for Variety Release. This innovation streamlines the process, ensuring farmers have faster access to improved seed varieties.

**Domestication of the Licensed Seed Inspector (LSI) model:** The LSI model should be adapted to fit Nigeria’s unique seed system and operational realities. Institutionalizing the model requires stakeholders to take responsibility and remain accountable to ensure its success.

**Promoting quality in seed markets:** Participants emphasized the need for seed companies to act as ambassadors for seed quality control, working collectively to reduce the infiltration of adulterated seeds in the market.

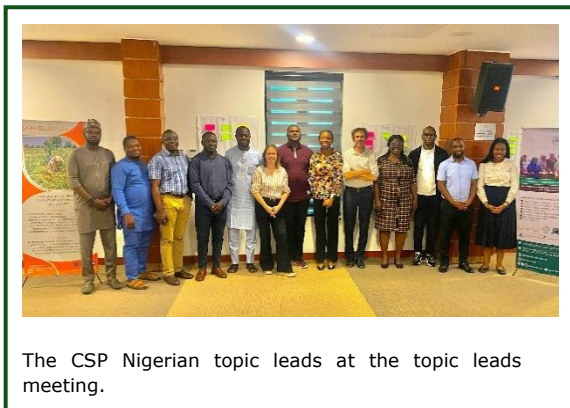
**Strengthening plant breeders' rights:** With the signing of Nigeria's Instrument of Accession for the Plant Variety Protection (PVP) Act, the Nigeria seed system is now more regulated to protect breeders' intellectual property. However, stakeholders acknowledged that more substantial efforts are needed to enforce these protections, as they are vital to attracting investments and fostering innovation in the sector.



The Variety Release topic lead, Dr Ibidun Adetiloye, making a presentation at the seed companies learning

## Day four - 20th November 2024

*The Nigeria Topic Leads gathered to review key achievements across the Collaborative Seed Programme (CSP) topics and to align on strategies for the next steps as the project approaches its conclusion.*



The CSP Nigerian topic leads at the topic leads meeting.

- **Reflections on key achievements:** The discussions centered on strategizing for joint action in the coming year and ensuring a smooth transition as the CSP concludes.

Each Topic Lead provided insights into specific innovations introduced within their respective topics. Notable highlights for each topic include:

- The successful pilot of the Licensed Seed Inspector model and scaling of the seed Tracker for potatoes under the Decentralization of Seed Quality Assurance topic. The next steps explore scaling the seed tracker to other agencies and crops.
- For Extension on Seed and Cultivation Practice, the team conducted action research by engaging in and learning with farmers, understanding their challenges, taking appropriate actions, and extending and developing the capacity of extension agents and farmers. The next steps involve scaling action research to other crops beyond tomato and cabbage, expanding it beyond Kaduna State, and translating extension materials into other Nigerian languages.
- For Seed Company Marketing and Promotion, transition of farmers into seed agents within their communities for seed companies and the use of social media and bulk SMS to drive seed marketing and promotion, assessment of seed entrepreneurs to key entrepreneurial strengths of seed companies and identify Business to Business (B2B) opportunities with Dutch seed companies. The next steps will involve providing targeted training for seed company staff in areas lacking expertise, including study visits to foster knowledge sharing, and establishing additional B2B linkages between Dutch and Nigerian companies to enhance business opportunities.

- The seed sector has now become interested in the institutional market. An assessment study of seed companies and institutional market participants has also been carried out. The action point for this topic is to develop a policy brief on different procurement and dissemination practices for institutional markets and guidelines on best practices.
- For the Seed Sector Platform, the National Seed Roadmap (NSRM) dashboard has been developed to track the development of the Nigeria seed sector. Also, the sustainability of a functional seed sector platform to drive knowledge sharing of seed sector innovations has been established. For the next steps, the NASC commits to ensuring the continuity of the seed sector platform, hosting quarterly webinars on key innovations within the seed sector, and providing yearly updates, scores, and publications of the 22 strategic, innovative pathways as outlined in the seed sector dashboard.
- For Plant Variety Protection, the signing of the Instrument of Accession of Nigeria to become a member of the International Union of the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) and the development of the digital PVP platform. The next step is to support the process for the first varieties to be protected with PVP in 2025.
- The recently launched Nigeria Seed Portal aims to increase the efficiency of the variety release process. The next steps will focus on incorporating these innovations into the digital platform, specializing in different crop groups, and developing guidelines for registering and releasing farmer varieties.

## Day five – 25th November 2024

*The Collaborative Seed Programme held its Variety Release stakeholders' workshop at Bolton White Hotel, Abuja.*

The workshop aimed to evaluate innovations in Variety Release and to identify challenges while exploring opportunities for scaling and institutionalizing best practices, specifically for key crops such as maize, tomato, and cassava.



Stakeholders at the Variety Release stakeholders' workshop in Abuja.

### Key Insights:

- **Documentation of innovations:** Stakeholders emphasized the importance of documenting these innovations within the National Variety Release Committee (NVRC) guidelines. This documentation will help structure and guide the scaling of innovations to other crops.
- **Collaboration among agencies:** Enhancing cooperation between agencies involved in the variety release process is essential. This approach simplifies operations, reduces redundant costs, and creates a seamless stakeholder experience. Strengthening linkages and partnerships among acting agencies is needed for a more cohesive system.



- **Flexible and inclusive process:** The variety release process must be flexible enough to reflect farmers' realities. Requirements should empower farmers rather than impose undue burdens, ensuring their effective participation in the release process.
- **Advocacy for the TRICOT methodology:** Considerations to adopt and integrate the Triadic Comparison of Technologies (TRICOT) methodology to hasten the variety release processes, enhancing efficiency and effectiveness.

## Day six – 26th November 2024

The Collaborative Seed Programme was prominently featured in the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the annual Seed Connect Conference and Exhibition, which NASC organized at Nicon Luxury Hotel in Abuja.



During the launch of the Nigerian Seed Portal and the National Seed Roadmap dashboard at the Seed Connect.

### Event highlights from the first day:

- **Launch of the Nigeria Seed Portal:** This is a pioneering digital platform dedicated to transforming and digitalizing Plant Variety Registration and Release and Plant Variety Protection processes in Nigeria. The portal aims to streamline the administration of plant varieties, fostering agricultural innovation and growth. You can access the portal [here](#).
- **Launch of the National Seed Roadmap Dashboard:** Complementing the portal launch, the National Seed Roadmap Dashboard was unveiled as a key tool for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the nation's strategic seed sector goals in line with the 22 Strategic Innovative Pathways as outlined in the National Seed Roadmap. This dashboard provides stakeholders with a visual overview of key metrics, milestones, and progress in the seed system.
- A session to create awareness about the signed Plant Variety Protection instrument of accession and the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties (UPOV) membership was also featured.
- **Session on strengthening farmer community-managed seed systems (FCMSS):** The CSP also facilitated a panel discussion focusing on different perspectives on strengthening the FCMSS. The Farmer-Community Managed Seed System (FCMSS) plays a priority role in developing the seed sector by bridging gaps in seed access, promoting agrobiodiversity, and empowering smallholder farmers.



Ongoing panel discussion on strengthening the farmer community-managed seed system at the Seed Connect.

It ensures quality seeds reach underserved and remote areas, complements registered seed companies by extending access to rural regions, and strengthens farmers' capacity

through training programs. FCMSS also enhances genetic conservation by encouraging diverse, farmer-maintained seed varieties.

By integrating gene bank resources and leveraging local varieties, FCMSS supports the development of improved modern varieties, ensuring seeds are adapted to local environmental conditions and challenges. Several measures were recommended to strengthen the FCMSS, which stakeholders also addressed.

- **Participation in the Seed Connect Conference and Exhibition tour and display of the CSP documentary films:** The CSP team, at their stand at the Seed Connect, participated in the exhibition tour and displayed the CSP documentary films.

## Day seven – 27th November 2024

*The Collaborative Seed Programme was also featured on the second day of Seed Connect. The team also facilitated a panel discussion on fostering sustainable institutional markets in Nigeria. Additionally, the programme received recognition for its support in developing the Nigerian seed sector.*



Snapshot of panelists during the panel discussion on fostering a sustainable institutional market at the Seed Connect.

**Here are the event highlights from the second day:**

- **Panel discussion on fostering a sustainable institutional market in Nigeria:** The Institutional Market (IM) for seeds faces challenges that hinder its effectiveness. A major issue is the disconnect between seed distribution systems and farmers, mainly due to a lack of education, which limits the proper use of seeds. Systemic problems such as fragmented processes, inconsistent

policies, poor infrastructure, and unreliable distribution channels lead to delays and poor-quality seed delivery. Additionally, market distortions caused by free or subsidized seeds reduce farmers' willingness to invest in seed inputs and disrupt pricing systems.

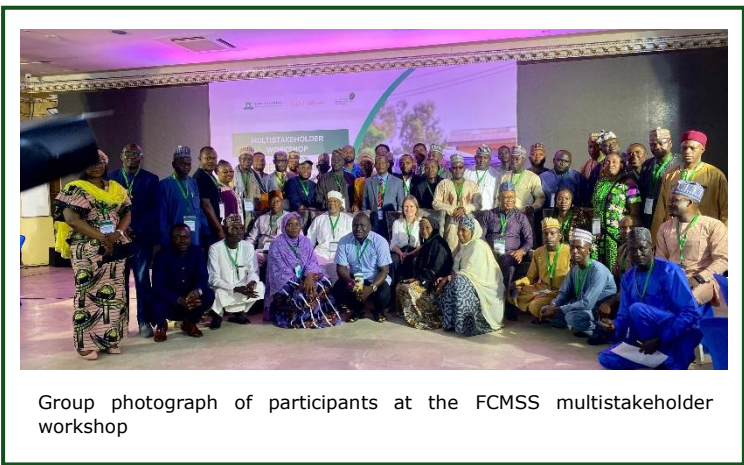
Other concerns include mismatched seed varieties that fail to align with ecological conditions, unethical practices in seed production, insufficient supply due to poor planning, inadequate storage, and unreliable data.

To address these issues, recommendations include improving farmer education through extension programs, strengthening regulatory frameworks, and leveraging technology like data-driven systems for better transparency and planning. Collaboration among stakeholders—government agencies, seed companies, and farmers—is essential to streamline processes and ensure contracts are awarded to capable producers. Long-term investments in storage facilities, gene banks, and Early Generation Seed (EGS) production, along with expert assessments of seed suitability and proactive demand planning, are crucial. Clear guidelines for quality-focused contracting and demand management will further enhance the efficiency and integrity of IM systems.

- **Recognitions and awards:** The Collaborative Seed Programme was recognized as a “Champion In Seed Sector Development” for its continuous contribution and support to the seed system and the annual Seed Connect Conference and Exhibition.

## Day eight– 28th November 2024

*The Collaborative Seed Programme facilitated a multistakeholder workshop on perspectives for strengthening the Farmer-Community-Managed Seed system (FCMSS) and held the Fifth Steering Committee meeting.*



### **Key highlights from the workshop:**

The discussions have revealed essential insights that enhance seed accessibility and promote agricultural sustainability. FCMSS ensures rural farmers have access to seeds through strategies like demonstration plots and farmer field schools, allowing them to provide valuable feedback on variety development. This collaborative approach fosters greater adoption of improved varieties and strengthens community involvement.

FCMSS empowers farmers by supporting local seed markets and promoting climate-resilient varieties. Sustainability requires a shift from short-term projects to business-oriented models. Establishing leadership structures and facilitating farmer-to-farmer seed exchanges are crucial for scaling these initiatives sustainably. Such empowerment encourages communities to take ownership of their seed systems.

Additionally, FCMSS plays a vital role in conserving genetic diversity in the face of climate change and environmental threats. Community gene banks and connections between seed producers and researchers help prevent the loss of traditional varieties, emphasizing the importance of community-driven conservation. Supporting policies that acknowledge farmers’ contributions is essential for preserving agrobiodiversity.

The system also strengthens climate adaptation by preserving climate-resilient varieties and developing new adaptive crops. Increased awareness, investment in climate-smart seeds, and education on adaptive practices are important in addressing changing climatic conditions. Effective adaptation strategies require collaboration among breeders, farmers, and policymakers.

Finally, systemic challenges such as weak policies and inadequate infrastructure hinder FCMSS's effectiveness. Strengthening cooperation between formal and community seed systems can enhance quality assurance and market access, creating substantial synergies.

### **Also, on the same day...**

*The CSP Steering Committee convened, with objectives including highlighting significant accomplishments across the CSP topics in 2024 and establishing alignment on proposed action plans.*

### Key highlights from the meeting:

- The discussions emphasized the need for farmer-centric approaches that prioritize farmers' voices to uncover real challenges and drive practical, solutions-oriented outcomes.
- Address knowledge gaps in indigenous vegetable production through capacity building to reduce reliance on imported seeds.



CSP steering committee members at the fifth steering committee meeting.

- Enhancing collaboration by developing strategies to address resistance and learning from past challenges, building the capacity of indigenous scientists to replicate international standards, and fostering local recognition of improved varieties.
- **Protection of varieties:** Committee members emphasized the need for guidelines on registration and protection of farmer varieties and rights, ensuring proper documentation processes.

The SEEDAN President, Alh. Yusuf Kibiya had this to say:

*"The programme has profoundly impacted the seed sector across the board; the variety release system, the SEEDAN training on effective governance for seed associations, and the SCMP interventions have delivered significant benefits. SEEDAN members have acquired new knowledge and embraced improved practices, marking a clear advancement from their previous methods before the project's implementation."*

Prof Lateef Sani emphasized the need for youth involvement in the system, stating that:

*"The system needs youth involvement to drive sustainability. A new generation of breeders should be developed as the current generation is retiring. This highlights the need to incorporate a component into projects focusing on capacity building for young breeders."*