

Seeds of Resilience: From Principles to Action in Nigeria's Emergency Seed Aid

Multi-Stakeholder Workshop on the Ten Guiding Principles for Good Seed Aid (10P) | Abuja, Nigeria



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Acronyms

Acronym	Full meaning	Description
AATF	African Agricultural Technology Foundation	Promotes adoption of agricultural technologies and improved seed systems in Africa.
ADPs	Agricultural Development Programs	State-level programs supporting farmers through extension services and input distribution.
ARCN	Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria	Coordinates agricultural research and technology development nationwide.
CBSP	Community-Based Seed Production	Local farmer groups multiply seeds to improve access, sustainability, and ownership.
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation	International organisation supporting food security, agriculture, and sustainable development.
FMAFS / FISS	Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security / Farm Input Support Services	Oversee agricultural policy, programs, and input distribution at the federal level.
FMBEP	Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning	Allocates budgets and plans financial resources for programs, including seed aid.
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	Humanitarian organisation involved in emergency response and agricultural support.
LWR	Lutheran World Relief	Humanitarian organisation involved in emergency response and agricultural support.
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture	State-level ministry is responsible for agriculture policy, extension, and program implementation.
NASC	National Agricultural Seed Council	Regulates seed quality, certification, and registration of seed companies.
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency	Coordinates national disaster management, emergency response, and early warning systems.
NIMET	Nigerian Meteorological Agency	Provides weather forecasts and early warning information for agriculture and disaster planning.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation	Implements humanitarian, development, or advocacy programs independently of government.
PVP Act	Plant Variety Protection Act	Grants intellectual property rights to plant breeders to encourage new variety development.
PMO, OVP	Project Management Office, Office of the Vice President	Coordinates agricultural and development projects at strategic government level.
SEEDAN	Seed Entrepreneurs Association of Nigeria	Represents private-sector seed producers and distributors in Nigeria.
SSSA	Seed System Security Assessment	Framework to identify vulnerabilities in seed systems before interventions.
USAID	United States Agency for International Development	Supports international development and humanitarian programs, including agriculture.
VSLAs	Village Savings and Loan Associations	Community-managed financial groups supporting members, often linked to agriculture.
VCU	Value for Cultivation and Use	Measures the usefulness and performance of crop varieties for farmers.
10P	Ten Guiding Principles for Good Seed Aid	Framework guiding emergency seed interventions to strengthen local seed systems.
ZOA	ZOA International	Humanitarian organisation supporting market-based and emergency seed assistance programs.

Executive Summary

Nigeria's emergency seed aid interventions have delivered critical support to vulnerable farming households, while highlighting the need for greater alignment with sustainable seed system development. While seed assistance remains essential, particularly in crisis-affected regions, the current pattern of ad hoc procurement and repeated direct distribution is weakening local seed markets, eroding farmer choice, and perpetuating dependency. In October 2025, over 30 stakeholders from government, humanitarian agencies, research institutions, and the private sector convened in Abuja to operationalise the Ten Guiding Principles for Good Seed Aid (10P) and align around a common vision for a resilient, farmer-centred seed system.

The workshop reached unanimous agreement on the relevance and timeliness of the 10P for Nigeria. Stakeholders affirmed that emergency seed aid must no longer function in isolation from national seed systems. Instead, it must actively strengthen them. Without a structured, nationally endorsed framework, well-intentioned interventions may continue to distort markets and marginalise farmers' voices. The 10P provides a practical framework to correct these failures — if they are formally adopted, contextualised, and integrated into seed aid response framework.

A strong consensus emerged around three strategic directions. First, Nigeria should adopt a national seed aid framework anchored in the 10P, making adherence mandatory for all public, private, and humanitarian actors. Stakeholders identified the National Agricultural Seed Council (NASC) as the appropriate body to lead coordination and oversight, contingent on strengthened institutional capacity and inclusive engagement with SEEDAN, state ministries, and humanitarian agencies. Second, repetitive emergency seed aid should transition toward market- and community-based systems, with government leadership at the centre of institutional development. Emergency responses should be designed from the outset with clear transition pathways that support local producers, agro-dealers, and community seed initiatives. Third, transparency, accountability, and learning must be embedded through NASC-led oversight mechanisms that safeguard seed quality, prevent unregulated supply, and ensure that emergency assistance contributes to national recovery objectives.

To enable immediate action, stakeholders affirmed all ten principles as relevant and essential for Nigeria and agreed to prioritise six principles for phased, practical implementation: Farmer's Choice, Seed System Security Assessment, Crop and Variety Choice, Timeliness, Seed Quality, and Market-Based Assistance. This prioritisation reflects a shared commitment to move from consensus to execution by addressing the most urgent and systemic weaknesses in current emergency seed responses. Focusing first on these six principles provides a clear, actionable entry point while keeping the full 10P framework intact as the guiding standard for national reform. Priority actions include convening a larger stakeholder forum to formalise commitments, strengthening NASC's coordination capacity, piloting market-based approaches in priority states, establishing farmer-centred feedback systems, and embedding accountability measures into the design of emergency seed responses.

Background

Integrated Seed Sector Development in Africa (ISSD Africa) is a community of practice that supports countries to build stronger, more responsive seed systems. In Nigeria, where farmers still struggle with inconsistent seed quality, delayed supply, and limited market integration, ISSD Africa's work centres on strengthening the design and delivery of emergency and institutional seed support.

Mercy Corps leads two ISSD Africa action-learning projects that directly touch Nigeria's context. One focuses on improving humanitarian seed responses in fragile, conflict-affected areas; the other strengthens seed business development in the same contexts. Through research, field engagement, and stakeholder workshops, these projects aim to generate and disseminate practical solutions that respond to Nigeria's realities.

A major contribution of this work is the Ten Guiding Principles for Good Seed Aid (10P). Developed through extensive expert consultation, the 10P encourages seed-aid context-aware interventions, market-based prioritisation, and strong regard for farmers' choice, especially in areas where Nigeria's emergency seed support has traditionally faced difficulties.

This workshop was meant to deepen knowledge on and raise awareness of the 10P among Nigeria's government, regulatory agencies, private sector and humanitarian actors. It also promotes structured dialogue to gain commitments from various seed-sector stakeholders for its endorsement and implementation. The effort focuses on three interconnected areas: integrating the 10P into policy discussions, allowing regulatory flexibility where necessary, and supporting operational teams in applying the principles during real-time responses.

In this context, it is essential for seed sector stakeholders to develop a shared and practical understanding of the 10P. Such knowledge is critical to ensuring that emergency seed responses in Nigeria are not treated as standalone interventions, but are systematically designed, coordinated, and implemented in ways that align with national seed systems. Building a common foundation is a necessary step towards institutionalising the 10P within Nigeria's seed responses strategy, strengthening coherence across actors, and ensuring that seed assistance consistently supports farmer resilience rather than weakening it.

National Partner



International Partners



Objectives and Methodology

The workshop aimed to deepen understanding of the 10P among Nigerian stakeholders, build collective ownership of the framework, surface context-specific barriers to their implementation, and co-develop practical mitigation measures.

The meeting convened diverse seed-sector stakeholders, including government, private-sector, and humanitarian agencies, for two days of structured engagement (see Appendix I for the complete participant list). Sectoral representation included:

- Government agencies: National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC), National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Farm Input Support Services Department (FMAFS/FIIS), Project Management Office, Office of the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and state ministries.
- Humanitarian organisations: Oxfam, ZOA, Mercy Corps, Lutheran World Relief.
- Private sector: Rawat Consult, Seed companies, including Gwani Agro and Afri Agri Products Limited.
- Research institutions: International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN).

The methodology combined presentations (10P framework, institutional seed market assessment), panel discussions with field practitioners, interactive debates on policy propositions, breakout groups analysing barriers and developing strategies, and plenary sessions securing consensus and commitments on the way forward.



Photo 1: Chinedu Agbara, Sahel Consulting, during a context-setting presentation on why the 10P matters for Nigeria. Photo source: Sahel Consulting, 2025

In setting the stage for discussions on operationalising the 10P, the team implemented a structured champion-engagement process to raise national awareness. Seed Champions are senior, highly experienced stakeholders in Nigeria's seed sector who have played a sustained and influential role in strengthening seed systems across the country. They are individuals with the authority, networks, and leadership capacity to influence policy decisions and shape strategic directions. The selection of seed champions involved comprehensive stakeholder mapping and the use of defined criteria to identify influential champions across federal agencies, state governments, farmer associations, research institutions, and humanitarian actors. Selected champions, including the heads of NASC, ARCN, All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), NEMA, the Project Management Office in the Office of the Vice President, and the Bauchi State Commissioner for Agriculture, were then engaged through targeted strategic dialogues that introduced the 10P, aligned the principles with their institutional mandates, and identified opportunities for policy and operational integration. A virtual awareness-raising session further broadened

understanding of the 10P, strengthened cross-sector collaboration, and built momentum for national adoption. Collectively, these efforts generated strong institutional interest, secured high-level advocates, and laid the groundwork for integrating the 10P into Nigeria's seed aid systems.

Why the 10P Matters in Nigeria

During the workshop, stakeholders were presented with findings from a comprehensive study on Nigeria's institutional seed markets (see the complete study [here](#)). The study, which engaged over 142 stakeholders, examined challenges within large-scale seed transactions between institutional buyers and suppliers.

Nigeria continues to receive seed aid, particularly in the Northeast, due to the region's ongoing recovery from years of instability, which has affected agricultural activities and limited farmers' access to quality planting materials. Many households are rebuilding their livelihoods, and seasonal challenges, such as unreliable rainfall, limited market access, and reduced seed availability, create periodic gaps that seed assistance helps to address. As a result, government and development partners provide seed aid to strengthen local production, support resilience, and ensure farmers can plant on time. This makes the 10P particularly relevant in guiding more coordinated, market-aware, and farmer-responsive interventions.

The study revealed how Nigeria's seed system is caught in a vicious cycle of ad hoc bulk purchases and direct distribution of seed, actions which weaken commercial markets, limit investment in local seed systems, and create a dependency on seed aid. This cycle is driven by several factors, including unpredictable institutional demand, disruption of distribution networks, financial constraints, and the absence of structured procurement policies. The study contrasted this with a potential virtuous cycle in which structured, multi-year institutional procurement could strengthen commercial seed markets and increase investment in local systems. Analysis of past interventions underscores the need for a structured framework to guide effective seed aid responses. . Together, these findings and initial recommendations set the stage for a focused dialogue on advancing the implementation of the 10P across Nigeria.

Catalytic Overview of the 10P

Mercy Corps, represented by Geoffrey Otim, delivered an interactive session introducing the 10P to participants, aiming to strengthen their understanding of the principles and ensure stakeholders could analyse them in their specific contexts. Developed collaboratively by Mercy Corps and SeedSystem under the ISSD Africa project, with partners including USAID, FAO, and the African Union, the 10P provides a framework for developing a farmer-responsive, market-aligned, and resilient seed aid system. The presentation highlighted the rising scale of emergency seed aid, from US\$51 million in 1996–97 to over US\$470 million across more than 200 FAO projects alone in 2023, underscoring the need for interventions that support, rather than undermine, local seed systems. The 10P addresses a key challenge: seed aid often fails when programs assume farmers' needs rather than assess them. It outlines ten essential steps, from diagnosing seed problems and selecting appropriate assistance, to ensuring timely delivery of quality seed, supporting local markets, and giving farmers a choice in what they plant. Following these principles helps in delivering effective aid while strengthening local seed systems.

See more about the 10 P [here](#).

Stakeholder Reflections on the 10P



Photo 2: Stakeholders voting during polling sessions at the workshop **Photo source:** Sahel Consulting, 2025

Stakeholders unanimously agreed (as shown by all raising green cards, photo 2) that the 10P were relevant and needed in the Nigerian context. This overwhelming support underscored the timeliness of the dialogue and reinforced the importance of contextualising and officially endorsing the framework to guide seed aid responses in strengthening the resilience of the country's seed system.

Stakeholders provided substantive reflections that acknowledged the importance of the principles and identified specific gaps in Nigeria's current seed system (all raised green cards in support of 10P, Photo 2).

*"When seed distributors rely on contractors without adequate advance planning, it undermines the efficiency of the entire system. There is a need for the Federal Department of Agriculture to coordinate a year ahead with NASC and ARCN to support proper production planning and better alignment across institutions. SEEDAN should also take up this role and work more closely with other actors, as the current siloed approach limits overall effectiveness," said **Dr Arokoyo***

While many participants expressed strong support for the 10P, a few voices urged caution and called for more technical, in-depth dialogue before firm commitments are made. These participants suggested convening a targeted seed roundtable that would bring together specific government officials, seed production experts, financial institutions, and other value chain actors for deeper deliberation. Such a gathering, they argued, could strengthen accountability across the seed value chain and support more robust long-term planning, including on climate-critical issues such as drought and flood resilience, without pre-empting broader stakeholder consensus.



Photo 3: Dr Osundiya, NASC, giving his reflection on the 10 P. **Photo source:** Sahel Consulting, 2025

Dr Ndirpaya (AATF) highlighted that while efforts have been made to support seed interventions, significant improvement is needed in production capacity. He called for developing a seed production roadmap to ensure traceability, particularly for priority commodities, and to identify how to obtain genuine seed and target real, efficient seed suppliers in crisis-prone areas. Dr Osundiya (NASC) stressed the importance of interaction with humanitarian institutions and ensuring all relevant actors are present in these conversations. He specifically recommended inviting the ICRC to future discussions.

*Efforts have been made to support seed and seedling attempts. We need to improve production capacity, focus on each value chain separately, and develop a seed production roadmap to ensure traceability. – **Dr Ndirpaya, AATF.***

Mr Yusuf Madiya, representing the Honourable Commissioner of Agriculture in Bauchi State, reinforced this point. He observed that, while the discussion was highly technical, the farmers, the most affected category of stakeholders and seed users, were not adequately represented in the meeting. He emphasised that most last-mile farmers may not sufficiently benefit from current interventions and called for their meaningful involvement throughout the entire process, particularly in responses involving seed multiplication and community-based production. Doing so, he noted, could also help address the concerns about timeliness challenges during emergencies.



Photo 4: Mr Yusuf Madiya, MoA, Bauchi state, giving his reflection on the 10P. Photo source: Sahel Consulting, 2025

The National Agricultural Seed Council, represented by Dr Osho, affirmed the views of earlier participants, noting that efforts to endorse and integrate the 10P in Nigeria are timely and aligned with the growing interest among development partners in promoting more sustainable local production systems. He further emphasised that Nigeria can leverage the 10P to achieve greater impact for farmers when properly contextualised and integrated.

"We are trying to make the 10P fit the Nigerian context... Community seed-production can leverage the 10P for greater impact." – **Dr Osho-Lagunju, NASC.**

Overall, stakeholders' reflections reaffirm Nigeria's interest in shifting towards market-based emergency seed aid interventions guided by the 10P framework, with a strong interest in adapting the principles to local realities, involving all relevant stakeholders, including farmers, incorporating long-term planning mechanisms, and ensuring accountability across the entire seed value chain.

Policy and Regulatory Directions

A facilitated open debate was held to discuss policy and regulatory direction for seed aid in Nigeria, building on the earlier reflections on the 10P. The discussion centred around three propositions for operationalising the principles within Nigeria's policy and regulatory environment:



Photo 5: Dr Ndirpaya, AATF, giving his reflection on the 10P
Photo source: Sahel Consulting, 2025



Photo 6: Stakeholders voting during polling sessions at the workshop
Photo source: Sahel Consulting, 2025

1. Emergency seed aid in Nigeria should be guided by a national framework anchored in the 10P, making adherence mandatory for all public, private, and humanitarian actors.

2: When emergency seed aid becomes repetitive (more than 5 years), national authorities should instruct humanitarian agencies to transition toward community and market-based seed interventions.

3: Seed aid actors should work under a coordinated oversight mechanism led by NASC and partners to ensure transparency, quality monitoring, and post-distribution learning, while supporting local seed producers and distributors as part of national recovery efforts.

The debate on these propositions revealed the real structural dynamics within the Nigerian seed sector. While there was strong consensus on some issues, some stakeholders also raised concerns about thorny issues that must be addressed for effective implementation.

1. Establishing a National Seed Aid Framework Aligned to the 10P

Stakeholders expressed strong support for developing a national framework that makes adherence to the Ten Guiding Principles for Good Seed Aid compulsory for all public, private, and humanitarian actors. Supportive voices emphasised that such a framework would help protect business integrity among seed distributors, strengthen coordination, and reinforce NASC's institutional capacity. Some participants also supported extending regulatory oversight to individuals involved in seed support to communities, noting that such oversight could serve as an effective deterrent to unregulated seed aid operations. The importance of collective rule-setting, under NASC leadership, was also highlighted.

However, contributors raised cautionary points. They stressed that a national framework should be adapted to Nigeria's unique social, traditional, and environmental contexts beyond purely technical considerations. Participants shared examples in which poorly contextualised emergency seed interventions exacerbated crises, underscoring the need for safeguards against unintended consequences. For instance, a stakeholder shared a scenario in which misaligned seed interventions failed to produce expected results, placing immense social and moral pressure on local leaders and implementers and reinforcing the need for context-sensitive planning that supports communities. Another stakeholder highlighted a situation in which large quantities of imported seeds were distributed without assessing local demand, crowding out locally adapted varieties and undermining farmers' choice, underscoring the importance of context-sensitive planning. Concerns were also raised about potential circumvention of regulations and the need for the 10P to extend beyond technical guidance to humanitarian actors.

Emerging Issue:

There is broad agreement that a national framework is essential, but it must be flexible and context-specific. Ensuring that regulations reflect local realities and avoid triggering secondary crises is central to building a more resilient seed aid system.

*"In Nigeria, the priorities of local communities, including flood-prone areas, hence, interventions must be context sensitive. A one-size-fits-all approach risks worsening crises instead of mitigating them," **Mr Okunwa, NEMA.***

2. Transitioning from Prolonged Emergency Seed Aid to Market- and Community-Based Systems

Participants recognised the need for structured transitions away from repetitive emergency seed aid, particularly when crises persist beyond five years. Supportive voices argued that emergency interventions should be viewed as market opportunities, with transition planning embedded from the outset. They called for coordinated, multi-actor efforts to build functioning systems, supported by early warning mechanisms available within the national

systems. Government initiatives using non-kinetic¹ approaches were also noted as important steps in addressing deeper structural drivers.

At the same time, divergent views emerged around the timeframe and responsibility for this transition. Some stakeholders argued that the five-year benchmark was too long and that the concept of “repetitiveness” required a more precise definition (see participants' reaction in photo 6). Others stressed that sustainable transition is not solely the responsibility of humanitarian agencies; government leadership and institutional development are essential. Additional concerns included the risk of farmer dependency and the vulnerability of systems in unstable communities.

Emerging Issue:

While the need for transition is widely accepted, there is no consensus on the optimal timeframe. There is, however, a clear agreement that the government must lead institutional strengthening and that future interventions should work through existing community structures, strengthen extension services, and prioritise market-based approaches while accommodating the realities of fragile environments.

3. Enhancing Transparency and Coordination through NASC-Led Oversight Mechanisms

Stakeholders strongly supported the proposition for seed aid actors to operate under a coordinated oversight mechanism led by NASC and its partners. Supportive voices noted that NASC has both the technical mandate and the operational experience required to ensure quality assurance, transparency, and learning from seed distribution initiatives. Coordination was viewed as critical to preventing fragmented aid flows and ensuring that emergency interventions support, rather than undermine, local seed producers and distributors.

Concerns focused primarily on capacity and inclusivity. Several participants emphasised that NASC would require targeted strengthening to perform this oversight role fully. Equally, they stressed that any oversight mechanism must include all relevant bodies, including SEEDAN and the Ministry of Agriculture. The need for well-defined accountability and enforcement systems was highlighted as a key prerequisite for success.

Emerging Issue:

There is strong acceptance of the need for an NASC-led coordination structure for emergency seed aid responses, contingent on institutional capacity strengthening and inclusive stakeholder participation. Ensuring clear accountability pathways will be essential for transparent and effective national recovery efforts.

¹ In the context of emergency seed aid, non-kinetic approaches refer to development-focused interventions that strengthen agricultural productivity, market functioning, extension services, and local governance. These interventions improve conditions for farmers to access quality seed through regular channels, reducing reliance on repeated emergency aid and supporting longer-term resilience.

Experiences from the Experts



Photo 7 Left to Right: Mr Godwin Okunwa, NEMA, Dr William Mafwala, Oxfam, Dr Osho-Lagunju Bankole, NASC. Ms Racheal Avindia, ZOA, in an expert panel session to share experiences, moderated by Za

The panel discussion on *Experiences and Lessons from Nigeria* featured representation from Oxfam, ZOA, NEMA, and NASC. The discussions covered experiences of interventions in emergency seed aid, focusing on what worked, what didn't, challenges and adaptation techniques. It also explored the relevance of the 10P to their unique experiences of sustainability. Here are insights:

Relevance to 10P Contextualisation

Panelists highlighted specific principles from the 10P framework that are directly applicable to the Nigerian landscape:

- **Seed System Security Assessment** (Principle 1): NEMA's needs assessments provided a clear illustration of how to identify vulnerabilities in seed systems.
- **Timeliness** (Principle 5): Discussions centred on the urgent need to address storage challenges and procurement delays, which significantly hinder farmers' access to seeds.
- **Market-Based Assistance** (Principle 6): ZOA's programs utilising cash and vouchers demonstrated how enabling farmers to make purchasing decisions can enhance overall market functionality.
- **Seed Quality** (Principle 8): Multiple panellists identified seed quality as pivotal for maintaining farmer trust; Oxfam specifically noted its importance in sustainability-focused interventions.
- **Farmers' Choice** (Principle 9): Post-distribution assessments confirmed that farmers prefer direct linkages to seed sources over repetitive aid.
- **Feedback** (Principle 10): While feedback mechanisms were discussed, concerns about their frequency and implementation quality were raised.

Overall, while participants recognised the concepts of the 10P framework, the discussions illuminated significant institutional and political barriers to actualising these principles.

Experiences from the Field

What Worked

- **Community-Based Seed Production Models:** Oxfam representative, Dr Mafwalal, described success with farmers forming production groups to multiply preferred seeds. This model encouraged ownership and profitability, creating sustainability beyond the intervention period.
- **Technology-Enabled Targeting and Verification:** Oxfam's use of digital profiling tools and ZOA's biometric verification improved targeting, ensuring aid reached the intended beneficiaries.
- **Market-Based Approaches:** ZOA's implementation of voucher assistance, empowering farmers to choose seeds based on their assessments of accessibility and quality, thus strengthening market structures.
- **Improved Coordination Among Actors:** Dr Osho, NASC, noted that better synergy among organisations led to more responsive interventions aligned with farmers' needs, enhancing accountability.

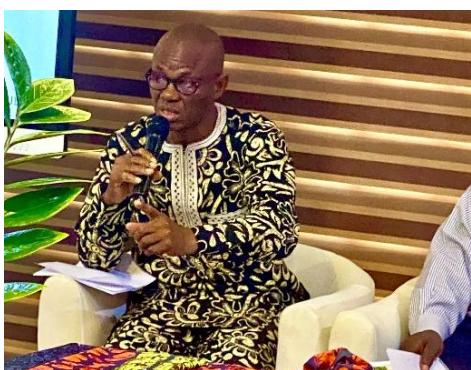


Photo 8: Mr. Godwin Okunwa, NEMA, sharing experiences in the expert panel session. **Photo source:** Sahel Consulting, 2025

What Did Not Work

- **Political Interference in Beneficiary Selection:** Panelists highlighted that political pressures often influence beneficiary profiling, undermining the integrity of the selection process. Stakeholders, in response, expressed scepticism about whether current mechanisms adequately address these concerns, stating the need for an automated process with sanctions for errors.
- **Procurement Process Inefficiencies:** The procurement system is often slow and cumbersome, resulting in delays that negatively affect the timeliness of seed distribution. Stakeholders emphasised the urgency of resolving these systemic bottlenecks and called for a transition to market-based approaches that empower farmers through community-based seed production. Likewise, they agreed that community leadership involvement in distribution creates local accountability mechanisms that are harder to bypass.
- **Storage and Seed Viability Challenges:** Panelists noted that inadequate storage facilities limit the preservation of seeds. Stakeholders echoed concerns about the lack of planning for seed viability during emergencies, calling for it to be a key consideration.
- **Market and Quality Infiltration:** Uncoordinated responses lead to the introduction of substandard seeds into the market, eroding trust. This point resonated with the stakeholders, who are aware of the potential long-term implications for farmers' trust. Collaboration with NASC and post-distribution quality assessments could enhance sourcing strategies and verification processes. While NASC offers advisory support, enforcing quality standards remains a challenge, as political influences compromise it, amidst other factors.

Key Takeaways

- **Direct Distribution Should Be an Exception:** Panellists agreed that effective interventions should prioritise market-based strategies that empower local systems.
- **Clear and Consistent Farmer Preferences:** Farmers favour direct linkages over repetitive aid, showcasing the need for agency in their choices.
- **Inseparable Quality and Trust:** Quality assurance in seed delivery is vital for maintaining trust and ensuring future program success.
- **Community Ownership Enhances Sustainability:** Engaging farmers directly within production groups creates incentives that last beyond initial interventions.
- **Improved Coordination Yields Better Outcomes:** Collaborative efforts among organisations lead to enhanced intervention quality and reduced overlap.
- **Digital Solutions:** Technological tools improve processes but cannot single-handedly resolve deeper political issues.



Photo 9: Prof. Emmanuel Ogbodo, PMO, OVP, sharing his reflections. Photo source: Sahel Consulting, 2025

Barriers and Recommendations for Implementing the 10P



Photo 10: Stakeholders deliberating during the strategy development activity Photo source: Sahel Consulting, 2025

Farmer's Choice

If we want farmers to make good choices, the system must first provide them with meaningful options. Stakeholders observed that farmers often lack knowledge of new varieties, limiting their selection to a narrow range. To overcome this, actors such as state ADPs, seed companies, NGOs, and community groups should increase the number of demonstration plots, seed fairs, and on-farm trials, supported by funding for logistics, field agents,

and promotional materials. Farmers' indigenous varieties also remain marginalised. Research institutes, breeders, and NASC need to be showcased, documented, and recognised. Above all, the VCU (Value for Cultivation and Use) process must prioritise what farmers find valuable. For this to happen, regulators and policymakers need to see these last-mile farmers as central to their work and design a system that better serves them. If farmers' choice is the goal, then the system must reach where farmers are.

Seed System Security Assessment (SSSA)

Nigeria's emergency seed responses will significantly improve if SSSA becomes standard practice. Stakeholders highlighted a persistent lack of standardised tools, limited capacity, and the complex realities of displacement, conflict, and political interference. Specific locations face cyclical crises in which communities are uprooted and traditional seed channels collapse, yet responders often lack a structured method for diagnosing needs. The key actors include NEMA, NGOs, humanitarian agencies, state ministries, and ADPs, all of whom require access to standard SSSA tools, funding for field assessments, digital data systems, and refresher training for operators.



Photo 11: Full view of stakeholders deliberating during the strategy development activity. Photo source: Sahel Consulting, 2025

"Availability, accessibility, quality, and affordability are prioritised... Assessment-linked accessibility gives farmers decision-making power." – Ms Avindia, ZOA.

In conflict-prone zones, community-based facilitators, religious leaders, and local volunteers need specialised training to collect data safely. Political influence must be diminished through transparent protocols. Additionally, security threats frequently hinder access to farms, so responders must coordinate with security agencies for escorted assessment missions. Implementing SSSA is the initial step towards sending the right seed to the right people at the right time. Nonetheless, a pre-assessment is vital to fully understand the realities that would guide a comprehensive yet specific SSSA tool.

Crop and Variety Choice

Stakeholders emphasised that actors in emergency interventions often select crops for farmers rather than involve them in the selection process. The solution starts with farmer participation, beginning with planning meetings led by humanitarian agencies and government bodies. Limited access to diverse crops and varieties remains a significant obstacle, especially where centralised systems control supply. The answer lies in empowering local seed production, including community-based seed growers who need early generation seed (EGS), training, storage support, and basic equipment. Another gap is awareness: farmers are unaware of the full range of varieties available. Extension workers and media campaigns are vital, supported by budgets for content development and field officers' mobility. Stakeholders also noted a shortage of active plant breeders due to weak incentives. Government departments, research institutes, and donor programmes should work to improve breeder incentives and accelerate the rollout of the Plant Variety Protection (PVP) Act to encourage investment.



Photo 12: Closer view of stakeholders deliberating during the strategy development activity. **Photo source:** Sahel Consulting, 2025

Timeliness

In emergencies, delays cost livelihoods. Stakeholders highlighted that procurement systems are too slow, funding arrives late, and infrastructure issues hinder movement, leaving farmers stranded. Addressing this requires special emergency procurement windows, where federal and state ministries adopt quicker, pre-approved procedures specifically for seed response. Government and donors must also allocate an emergency seed fund to ensure funds are available immediately during crises. Poor road networks and storage gaps mean actors such as the government and NGOs must improve coordination, supported by transport resources and functional storage facilities. Innovation also plays a role; drones for remote delivery, community seed banks in every LGA, and strengthened state and federal seed banks require investment, trained operators, and community management structures.

Seed Quality

A poor seed response that delivers substandard seed worsens a crisis. Stakeholders highlighted non-seed companies infiltrating supply systems, weak coordination, and the politicisation of seed distribution. Ensuring quality begins with enforcing the rule that only NASC-registered companies and certified producers supply seed during emergencies. This entails updated procurement specifications, verified supplier lists, and clear penalties. Coordination must be strengthened by prioritising quality control at the centre of seed aid delivery, ensuring that all actors follow uniform quality protocols and use standard reporting tools.



Photo 13: Stakeholders deliberating during the strategy development activity. **Photo source:** Sahel Consulting, 2025

Market-Based Assistance

Emergency seed aid should strengthen, not distort seed markets. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of enabling farmers to purchase seeds from local markets rather than relying solely on free distributions. This requires organisations such as NGOs, government ministries, humanitarian agencies, and seed companies to develop voucher or cash-based assistance, connect farmers with local agrodealers, and prevent flooding markets with free seed that undercuts local businesses. Market information systems must be activated to give farmers timely data on seed availability, prices, and distribution points. For this shift to occur, policy makers need to update emergency response guidelines to prioritise market-based approaches where feasible.



Photo 134 Geoffrey Otim, Mercy Corps, consolidating insights during group activity. **Photo source:** Sahel Consulting, 2025

“Most farmers wait for interventions; it should be treated as a business... Interventions can be effective at a critical point but must be sustained economically.” – Dr Olusegun Osundiya, NASC.

Conclusions and Recommendations



Photo 15 & 16: Stakeholders deliberating during the group activity. Photo source: Sahel Consulting, 2025

The workshop concluded with a clear alignment on the need to strengthen coordination and empower farmers across all stages of the seed system. Key outcomes include:

- 1. National Framework:** There is consensus on the need for a NASC-led national framework to guide emergency seed aid and broader seed system interventions. This framework should ensure alignment across government, NGOs, and community actors.
- 2. Actionable Priority Principles:** Stakeholders recognised all 10P as foundational, highlighting six as immediate priorities for actionable interventions (see Appendix III). This approach balances comprehensive guidance with targeted, implementable actions.
- 3. Farmer-Centred Systems and Accountability:** Stakeholders agreed to develop feedback mechanisms to capture farmers' perspectives and integrate robust accountability measures into emergency seed responses.
- 4. Secure National Endorsement and Commitment:** Successful implementation requires active endorsement and collaboration from government agencies, NGOs, and community organisations, ensuring that interventions are both responsive and sustainable.

Adopting these measures would enable emergency seed aid to become a strategic tool for resilience, directly addressing farmers' needs and contributing to a sustainable, inclusive agricultural future.

Immediate Next Steps:

- Convene a multi-stakeholder platform, led by NASC, to formalise discussions and guide implementation.
- Enhance NASC's institutional capacity to coordinate emergency seed interventions.
- Pilot market-based approaches in selected priority states to test and refine interventions.

"We must hold hands. The 10P is a good starting point to improve seed security... "From a humanitarian perspective, systemic failure makes interventions repetitive... Coordinated efforts can move it to the next point."
– **Dr Mafwala, Oxfam.**

A Call to Action



Photo 17: Group photograph of participants after day 2 of the workshop. Photo source: Sahel Consulting, 2025

To strengthen Nigeria's seed aid ecosystem and enhance resilience during crises, stakeholders emphasised the following urgent priorities:

1. Adopt a National Seed Aid Framework

- Ensure all actors adhere to the Ten Guiding Principles.
- Contextualise the framework to reflect Nigeria's social, cultural, and environmental realities.
- Establish enforcement mechanisms and sanctions to deter non-compliance.

2. Plan and implement transitions away from repetitive emergency seed aid

- Develop transition plans from the outset of interventions.
- Strengthen institutions and empower government to lead system-building.
- Work through community structures and invest in extension services.
- Promote market-based and early-warning-driven responses.

3. Establish and strengthen NASC-led coordination and oversight

- Build NASC's capacity to lead transparent and accountable oversight.
- Ensure inclusive engagement of SEEDAN, MoA, and other relevant actors.
- Support local seed producers and distributors as part of recovery and resilience efforts.

Policy Reflection and Directions

This synthesis presents a consolidated set of stakeholder perspectives that directly inform policy choices required to strengthen Nigeria's seed aid and recovery systems. The propositions and emerging issues outlined here highlight where regulatory reform, institutional leadership, and coordinated action are urgently needed. By distilling both supportive and divergent voices, this brief provides policymakers with actionable direction on how to establish a context-responsive national seed aid framework, transition from prolonged emergency assistance to resilient market- and community-based systems and reinforce NASC's leadership in oversight and coordination. These insights are intended to guide decision-makers in shaping policies that prevent recurrent crises, protect local seed markets, and enhance national preparedness and response capacity.

In conclusion, the workshop provided a platform to explore opportunities for strengthening the approach to emergency seed aid in Nigeria. Discussions highlighted the potential value of a NASC-led, nationally coordinated framework, the relevance of the 10P principles, particularly six priorities identified for further consideration, and the importance of farmer-centred feedback and accountability mechanisms within any future system. Participants'

contributions underscored a shared interest in improving how seed aid interacts with local seed systems and in identifying pathways that could enhance resilience and sustainability. These exchanges offer an opportunity to shift emergency seed aid from a largely reactive measure toward a more strategic tool for supporting long-term agricultural stability, farmer empowerment, and national food security.

This moment presents an opportunity for stakeholders to translate the dialogue and emerging perspectives into concrete actions that deliver real value to Nigeria's farmers.

Appendices

Appendix I: Participant List

S/N	Name	Organisation
1	Godwin Okunwa	National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)
2	Dr. Osho-Lagunju Bankole	National Agricultural Seed Council
3	Dr Osundiya Olusegun	
4	Dr. Rebecca Mewase	
5	Abba Hassan	
6	Uzoamaka Ugochukwu	Lutheran World Relief (LWR)
7	Dr. William Mafwala	Oxfam-Nigeria
8	Dr. Yarama Ndirpaya	African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF)
9	Dr. Thomas Arokoyo	Rawat Consult Limited
10	Basiru Shehu Gwandu	Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN)
11	Oluwafemi Salako	
12	Olalekan Ogunniyi	
13	Racheal Avindia	ZOA
14	Tahir Dalarima	Project Management Office (Agribusiness and Productivity Enhancement), Office of the Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
15	Ogbodo Emmanuel	
16	Abubakar Shinkafi	
17	Akinsola Latifat A.	Department of Farm Input Support Services, Federal
18	Ajayi Omobolanle	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (FISS/FMAFS)
19	Bolatan Peter	
20	Yohanna Peter	Afri Agri Products Limited
21	Yusuf Madiya	Ministry Of Agriculture, Bauchi State. <i>Representing The Hon. Commissioner for Agriculture, Bauchi State, Nigeria.</i>
22	Dr. Beatrice Aighewi	IITA, Abuja
23	Bilkisu Ibrahim	Gwani Agro
24	Elizabeth Soladoye	Extension Africa
25	Ezeh Nnaemeka Michael	
26	Geoffrey Otim	Mercy Corps
27	Temi Adegoroye	Sahel Consulting
28	Chinedu Agbara	
29	Zayyad Bello	
30	Stephen Adeyemo	
31	Victor Akaten	
32	Eseose Umoelin	

Appendix II: Group Work on Identifying Barriers and Opportunities

Principle	Needed?	Barrier	Solution/ Recommendation
Farmer's Choice	Yes	Limited demonstration of existing varieties among farmers, hence limited choice.	Increase promotional activities such as seed fairs.
		Farmers' indigenous varieties are not recognised.	Profile and recognise farmers' varieties
		Weak Value for Cultivation and Use (VCU) in the release process.	Prioritise VCU in the release process.
Seed System Security Assessment	Yes	Assessment tools are not available.	Adopt standard tools
		Lack of capacity	Training & re-training
		Displacement due to conflict	Specialised training to community-based structures
		Political influence	Sensitisation
		Security	Liaising with security agencies.
Crop And Variety Choice	Yes	Responses are not farmer-centred.	Involve farmers in planning the Seed Aid Response.
		Limited access to crops and variety diversity.	Empower decentralised production and supply. – Community-based seed producers.
		Limited Knowledge of available varieties.	Increased awareness of social media, e.g, Extensions agent, mass media.
		Limited number of active plant breeders.	Increase incentives for breeding programs.
		Poor incentives for plant breeders.	Strengthening Plant Variety Protection (PVP) Act implementation.
Timeliness	Yes	The procurement process is long, not aligned with the emergency .	Design a special procurement procedure to fit the emergency context
		Delayed funding release from the government during the emergency.	Prioritise some seed percentage of the seed fund for the emergency
		Poor infrastructure of the network's roads and storage facilities.	Coordinate humanitarian seed response activities.
		-	The state government should initiate a seed emergency fund.
		-	Innovation in seed delivery, such as the use of drones in hard-to-reach areas
		-	Strengthen existing and establish new community seed banks in each local government.
		-	Strengthen seed banks at the Federal and State governments.
Seed Quality	Yes	Non-seed companies engaging in seed supply.	Adhere to seed supply regulations involving NASC-registered companies
		Weak coordination in seed aid response.	NASC to actively be involved and coordinate the Quality of seed supplied as aid.
		Supply of bad-quality seed by politicians.	Strengthen the State Seed Coordination Committee to reinforce NASC in enforcing quality standards.

Appendix III: Group Work on Strategy Development

Principle	Barrier	What needs to change?	Action needed?	Who leads?	Resources needed?	Timeline
Seed Quality	Weak coordination in seed aid response	Stronger synergy among stakeholders Mindset change	Identify the drivers Role rationalisation Political will Establish operational guidelines for seed aid. Aggressive sensitisation & educational enlightenment of seed industry players on these barriers Enhancing funding to NASC for seed law enforcement	NASC; SEEDAN, NEMA, NIMET, ARCN, Office of the National Security Adviser, FMAFS.	Financial and human resources	1 – 6 months
	Political influence on seed aid	Only accredited companies should supply seed lots with seed codex tags affixed	Name & shame the culprits NASC should be more proactive in its regulatory role Enhance publicity	SEEDAN; NASC, FMAFS, Law enforcement agencies.	Financial and human resources	1 – 6 months
Farmers' Choice	Limited demonstration of existing varieties among farmers, hence limited choice.	Increase awareness	Increase promotional activities Establishment of demonstration plots.	Agricultural development programs, Extension agents, and research institutions.	Land, seed, fertilisers, human resources, and financial resources.	3-6 months, depending on the variety
	Farmers' indigenous varieties are not recognised.	Recognise the farmers' indigenous varieties.	Profiling of farmers' indigenous varieties.	NACGRAB, Farmer associations, community leaders/heads.	Funding User-friendly	1-2 years

					technology for farmers Technical expertise.	
Crop And Variety Choice	Responses are not farmer-centred.	Farmers' involvement in variety selection	Mapping of farmers in target areas	Seed aid producers, farmers, and researchers.	Funding User-friendly technology for farmers Technical expertise.	3 months
	Limited Knowledge of available varieties.	More awareness of the available varieties.	Farmer field days	National Agricultural Seed Council, private extension agents.	Financial resources	Quarterly
Timeliness	The procurement process is long and not aligned with the emergency.	Shorten the procurement process for seed aid intervention	Need for an emergency seed funding budget. Starting committee convening	NASC FMAFS State government Private partners FMBEP Humanitarian organisations Seed Entrepreneurs Association of Nigeria (SEEDAN) Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN).	Financial capacity Human capacity Time	Immediate response 1-6 months
	Delayed release of funds from the government during an emergency	Reduce the bureaucracy involved	Develop a seed emergency procurement plan	Ministry of Finance NASC FMAFS Private partners NGOs	Financial resources Time	3-6 months
Seed System Security Assessment	Lack of capacity	Simple, usable and adaptable seed assessment tool	Training and retraining Development of a functional seed system security	Government-Federal Ministry of agriculture and Food Security (FMAFS)	Assessment tool professional Funding to build and sensitise for adoption.	1 months

			assessment tool.	National Agricultural Seed Council (NASC) Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning (FMBEP) NGOs		
Political influence	Enforce regulations	Sensitisation	State government NASC Private sector	Funding to drive wide media coverage.	6 months – 1 year	

Appendix IV: Summary of Stakeholder Perspectives on Policy and Regulatory Propositions

Proposition	Key Arguments in Support	Key Concerns and Counterarguments	Emerging Consensus
Proposition 1: Emergency seed aid in Nigeria should be guided by a national framework anchored in the Ten Guiding Principles for Good Seed Aid, making adherence mandatory for all actors; public, private, and humanitarian.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation protects business integrity for distributors Enables intentional coordination to equip NASC's capacity Oversight should extend to parliament and judiciary with sanctions as deterrents Need for stakeholders to set rules guided by NASC collectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Framework must account for Nigeria-specific peculiarities and social/traditional nuances Some emergency responses can generate further crises (example: World Bank tractor distribution followed by flooding led to suicides) Plans needed for stakeholders who might circumvent regulations Principles must be broadened beyond technical seed provision 	Strong support for a mandatory national framework, but must be contextualised to Nigerian realities including social, traditional, and environmental factors to ensure interventions prevent rather than create disasters
Proposition 2: When emergency seed aid becomes repetitive (more than 5 years), national authorities must instruct humanitarian agencies to transition towards community and market-based seed interventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interventions should be treated as business opportunities, hence the need for a transition plan at the very beginning. Need coordinated efforts (not just humanitarian agencies) to build functioning systems to aid this transition. Early warning systems can enable proactive responses using NIMET forecasts Government efforts to address root causes through non-kinetic strategies and projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not humanitarian agencies' responsibility- government must establish institutions to break the cycle. Five years is too long; "repetitiveness" needs a more precise definition. Farmers wait for interventions, creating dependency Crises can destroy established systems in unstable communities Farmers fall back into vicious cycle of direct seed aid 	Mixed views on timeframe and responsibility, but agreement that: transitions must occur; government must lead institutional development; strategies should include working with existing community structures (VSLAs, village heads), strengthening extension services, and market-based approaches; need to balance emergency response with system building in persistently unstable contexts
Proposition 3: Seed aid actors should work under a coordinated oversight mechanism led by NASC and partners to ensure transparency, quality monitoring, and post-distribution learning, while supporting local seed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NASC has the technical mandate and capacity for this role (NEMA) Coordination ensures transparency and quality monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NASC capacity needs strengthening to fulfill this role Must involve all relevant stakeholders including SEEDAN and MoA 	Strong acceptance for NASC-led coordinated oversight, contingent on capacity enhancement and inclusive stakeholder engagement

producers and distributors as part of national recovery efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitates post-distribution learning• Supports rather than undermines local seed producers and distributors• Prevents uncoordinated aid flows	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires clear mechanisms for accountability and enforcement	
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Appendix V: Workshop Agenda

Day One 28 October: Setting the Context and Building Shared Understanding

Time	Session	Description
09:30 – 09:10	Introductory session	Introductions, objectives, and expected outcomes
09:50 – 10:00	Goodwill Messages	Goodwill messages from participating organisations
10:00 – 10:15	Setting the Scene	Presentation on Assessment of Institutional Seed Markets in Nigeria
10:15 – 10:45	10P Catalytic Presentation	Overview of the Ten Principles for Good Seed Aid
10:45 – 10:55	Interactive feedback session	Questions and Answers
10:55 – 11:10	10P champions reflection	Highlights of practical entry points and leadership roles
11:10 – 11:40	Tea Break	
11:40 – 12:00	Panel Discussion: Experiences and lessons from Nigeria	Experiences and Examples from the field: government, private sector, and humanitarian
12:00 – 12:45	Breakout session: analysis of barriers and opportunities	Analysis of policy, regulatory, and operational barriers and opportunities for implementing the 10Ps: government, private sector and humanitarian perspectives
12:45 – 01:00	Plenary Presentation	Group-level presentation and feedback
1:00 – 1:45	Lunch Break	
01:45 – 02:45	Interactive Debate on Policy & Regulatory Perspectives	Reflection and debate on 10P propositions
02:45 – 02:55	Feedback and Briefing on Day 2	
02:55	Close of day 1	

Day two, 29, October: Building Consensus and Securing Commitments

Time	Session	Description
09:30 – 09:40	Recap of day one	Highlights of day one, key take-home messages
09:40 – 10:40	Breakout session: Strategy development and action planning	Analysis of what, who and when for addressing barriers for practical 10P implementations at organisations and the national level.
10:40 – 10:20	Summary of key issues from strategy development and action planning	Summary of key issues, recommendations and feedback from the session
11:00 – 11:40	Tea Break	

11:40 – 12:10	Consensus & Accept ment Session	Secure stakeholder commitments to adopt and promote the 10Ps.
12:10 – 12:40	Reflections	Reflections, acknowledgements
12:40 – 01:00	Next Steps & Closing	Post-workshop roadmap, timelines, and learning documentation
01:00 –	Lunch & Networking	