One of the major challenges faced by the SADC region is the need to improve agricultural productivity, and to facilitate regional and international trade in agricultural products. A major constraint to agricultural productivity and food security in SADC is inadequate supply of consistently high quality seed of both cash and food crops due to climatic, economic and human factors. In years of seed shortages member states import seed from sources within and outside the region. However, member states importing seed within the region face difficulties because regulations and procedures on seed and phytosanitary measures are diverse and fragmented, hampering the movement of seed and vegetative planting material from member states with surplus to those experiencing deficits. This is partly due to the lack of cohesion between the seed laws of different countries, which are tailored to meet the unique political, economic and cultural requirements of each individual country. This has not been in the interests of seed industry development, seed security, nor overall food security. This has continued in spite of the approval of and signature by Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Food Security of the Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the SADC Harmonised Seed Regulatory System.

Harmonized Seed Security Project

The objective of Phase II of the Regional Seed Security project is to contribute to food security in the SADC region through the domestication of harmonised, effective and efficient seed systems to enhance availability and access to improved seed varieties to small-scale farmers. This involves working both on legislation framework as well as knowledge management aspects of seeds in the region.

Focus Countries:
1. Malawi
2. Swaziland
3. Zambia
4. Zimbabwe

This is a pilot, lessons learnt will inform implementation scale-up SADC and COMESA-wide.

In an exclusive interview with FANRPAN, His Excellency Ngwazi Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika emphasized the need for research organisations at national and regional level to concentrate on seed multiplication and also on improving the seed plant and seed quality.
Domestication and implementation of the SADC Harmonised Seed Regulatory System in the different SADC Member countries will effect harmonization in the region. Harmonization of the policy and regulatory environment relating to seeds and phytosanitary measures across countries will integrate smaller and isolated national seed markets into one larger SADC market for seed. This will encourage entry in the region of new improved varieties and ease the movement of quality seed from countries with surplus to countries experiencing deficit. This is one way of contributing to improved efficiency through the reduction of transaction costs relating to seed trade and encouraging economies of scale in seed production.

Rationale for project interventions

The purpose of the project is to provide enabling support to four SADC member states to domesticate the regional seed protocol, harmonise their seed policies and legislation, and effectively implement the provisions of the protocol with enhanced national capacities. HaSSP is a pilot project that is designed to gain entry into four countries - Malawi, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Reviewing national policy and legislation on seed

There is still inadequate collaboration and harmony at the regional level regarding development, movement and use of improved seed. Seed certification and variety release requirements differ from country to country and together with excessive phytosanitary regulations, function as non-tariff barriers hampering regional seed trade. Harmonization is the process of bringing together regionally different approaches (policies, laws, regulations and procedures) into a unified strategy with the ultimate aim of increasing the flow of seed across national borders. Activities under the HaSSP will facilitate alignment of national seed legislation to the SADC Harmonized Seed Regulatory System protocols on seed variety release and registration; seed certification and quality control; as well as quarantine and phytosanitary measures for seed. This will be achieved through establishment of policy dialogue platforms, consultancy studies, policy research and legislative processes that will be undertaken in the project countries.
Policy research and advocacy - The rationalization to harmonize seed systems in SADC is based on scientific evidence and justification. During domestication and implementation of the SADC harmonized seed regulatory system, policy research will be implemented through studies that will be undertaken in the project. Results of the studies will help inform decision making processes in the implementing countries and will be channeled to the SADC Seed Centre in periodic reports. There will also be need to create awareness and understanding of the project to all stakeholders in the seed value chain. Regional and national dialogue platforms will be provided annually through regional and national workshops. Bringing seed practitioners together will provide opportunities for sharing of knowledge, best practices and ideas.

Project target groups and beneficiaries

In principle, the project will target all the stakeholders in the seed value chain. These include government departments of agriculture; the national agricultural research and extension services; civil society organizations; the farmer unions; the international seed research organizations; and individual organizations that are involved in seed marketing; as well as the farmers themselves. For specific activities however, the project will focus on specific institutions or geographical areas and will therefore have specific direct beneficiaries. For example the community seed projects will be established in those areas selected by stakeholders from each country during the planning meetings while activities aimed at strengthening seed certification institutions will focus on seed certification units and National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs).

The ultimate beneficiaries of the project are the small-scale, resource poor farmers who need access to a wide range of good quality seed at the right time and at affordable prices. Implementing and non-implementing SADC Member States, institutional partners, NGOs, commercial seed companies and seed producing farmers will benefit from the project, as they will have access to information, which will assist them in taking important decisions. At the National level the National Seed Authorities (NSAs) will benefit from strengthening of seed certification facilities and training of seed inspectors and seed analysts. NPPOs will benefit from training of Plant Health Inspectors. NSAs and NPPOs will also enhance their capacity to implement the system and contribute more effectively to provision of quality seed to farmers.
Regional Steering Committee

A regional steering committee which is made up of veteran champions (Seed Elders) who are well versed with policy processes, understand the seed business, and will speak for the project and open doors for policy engagement was established. Membership of the committee is comprised of former ministers and former permanent secretaries from the project pilot countries, former members of the private sector who are champions on seed issues; experienced farmers; and former researchers. The Project Steering Committee will review project activities to assess project development and recommend measures necessary to address any shortcomings; assist in information management including appropriate government and donor visibility and policy level sensitisation; resolve conflicts between stakeholder groups; and impart wisdom in the resolution of strategic or political issues that may arise during the implementation of HaSSP. HaSSP Seed Elders were nominated by the national teams during the Regional Common Vision Workshop in May and they actively participated in the national...
Profiles of FANRPAN-Harmonized Seed Security Project Seed Elders

Seed Elder: Hon. Obed Dlamini-SWAZILAND
Former Prime Minister of Swaziland and currently Advisor to King Mswati III, “Liqoqo”.
NGO: Secretary General for the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU).
Public service: Senator and Member of Parliament for his constituency.
Business: farming.

Seed Elder: Mr Edson Musopole-MALAWI
Public sector: Ministry of Agriculture as an Agriculture Extension Coordinator.
NGO- Worked at Action Aid Malawi as Smallholder Seed Development Coordinator.
Currently: Chairman of the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET), Malawi’s FANRPAN Node hosting institution.

Seed Elder: Dr Samuel Muchena -ZIMBABWE
International- educated in Zimbabwe and Makerere University in Uganda; CIMMYT, Mexico; and Cornell University in USA. Involved with International Fertilizer Development Centre (IFDC) and was tasked to set up the African Centre for Fertilizer Development (ACFD) by the African Union.
Public sector: Government of Zimbabwe- Deputy Permanent Secretary of Agriculture.
Lecturer- University of Zimbabwe.
Research: Initiated a pearl millet breeding programme and developed dwarf maize breeding program. He has released three dwarf maize varieties so far which have proved to be popular with farming communities.

Seed Elder: Mrs Thabile Gooday-SWAZILAND
International: studied at the Faculty of Agriculture in the then University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. Trained in Horticulture in Ireland; Development Planning in Kenya; and Communication for National Development with San Diego University, California.
Public Sector- Government of Swaziland for 15 years.
Business: Farming- running a poultry enterprise marketing 10000 chickens per month. Runs an abattoir with a slaughter capacity of 1000 birds daily, and with a freezer storage capacity of 2 500 birds.
Capacity Development: Runs a mentorship programme for young women who are guided by mentors in their proposed careers.
Seed Elder: Dr Samson Simbarashe Mundia-ZAMBIA
Public Sector: worked for Ministry of Health as Deputy Director, Medical Services, Commissioner of Human Rights, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives 2004-8.
Education- Dr Mundia holds two medical degrees and is a specialist in cardiology. He was a Consultant in the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka and Lecturer of Medicine in Cardiology.
Private sector-In addition to supervising his medical practices, he runs an agro-processing and packaging business.

Seed Elder: Dr Liberty Mhlanga-ZIMBABWE
Public Sector- Permanent Secretary for Energy.
International- Bachelors’ degree in Biology and a Masters’ in Geography at Clark University in Worcester Massachusetts in the USA; doctoral degree in Science Education dealing with Ecology and Environment at Columbia University in New York City.
Served in the secretariat of the United Nations on Environment and Development Conference- in Stockholm Sweden in 1972, and was part of the process which led to the formation of ENDATIERMONDE – “ENDAs”. There are now more than 20 ENDAs in Africa, Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.
Farming-At independence in 1981 he was invited to come back to Zimbabwe to put together TILCOR Agricultural Development Association (ARDA) and the agricultural projects of the Sabi-Limpopo Development Authority which started with nine farms, the bulk of them located in the communal areas. Before very long they had increased agricultural production of wheat, tea, maize, vegetables, milk, beef, beans, groundnuts and sugar cane significantly.
Chairman of Vice President Joshua Nkomo’s 350,000-hectare Nuanetsi Ranch.

Seed Elder: Mr. Winter Chibasa-ZAMBIA
International- studied agriculture in Sudan at the University of Khartoum which was the sub college of the University of London.
Public Sector- Ministry of Agriculture, rose to the position of Director of Research.
Commercial farming: worked on a commercial farm where he learnt to grow strawberries and tomatoes for export. Joined ZAM-SEED where he rose through the ranks and ended up as Managing Director of the company.
Currently: farming. Capacity Building: With support from USAID he participated in a project which trained staff working in research as well as members of staff from Seed Control and Certification Institute SCCI in which up to ten PHD holders, twenty masters and thirty bachelors and diplomas were trained.
About FANRPAN

The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) is a regional multi-stakeholder network that was established in 1997. It was formed in response to a call by Agriculture Ministers in the Eastern and Southern Africa region for a network that could provide independent evidence to inform policy harmonization at regional level. The network is representative of government, farmer organizations, researchers, the private sector, parliamentarians, and the media. FANRPAN currently works in 14 countries: Angola, Botswana, DR-Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Vision

A food-secure Africa, free from hunger and poverty.

Mission

- To promote effective food, agriculture and natural resources (FANR) policies by:
- facilitating linkages and partnerships between government and civil society,
- building the capacity for policy analysis and policy dialogue in Africa, and
- supporting demand-driven policy research and analysis