



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

FEED THE FUTURE SOUTHERN AFRICA SEED TRADE PROJECT

Advancing Seed Policy and Trade Across the Southern African Development Community

An Overview of Project Results and Impact: April 2022



FEED THE FUTURE SOUTHERN AFRICA SEED TRADE PROJECT



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REPRESENTATIVE
Jacques Swanepoel



CHIEF OF PARTY
Itai Makanda, PhD

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THE SADC HARMONIZED SEED REGULATORY SYSTEM AND THE FEED THE FUTURE SOUTHERN AFRICA SEED TRADE PROJECT

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SADC HSRS

Agriculture contributes to 17 percent of the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) overall gross domestic product (GDP). Seventy percent of SADC's population, estimated at 360 million, depends on agriculture for food, employment, and income. The region continues to experience food insecurity and the supply of high-quality seed of improved, resilient varieties is considered one of the key interventions to improving the situation. However, small national variations among regulations related to seed quality assurance has led to increased transaction costs and duplicative procedures. This not only raises overall costs, but also increases the time required to get seeds to farmers. Therefore, seed policy harmonization –whose main goal is to facilitate the integration of smaller, more isolated markets into one larger market trading in diverse, high-quality seed –is key to improving food security and resiliency.

The SADC Harmonized Seed Regulatory System (HSRS) is a set of guidelines for seed production and export that all 16 SADC Member States have agreed on, creating a common legal framework on seed regulation that is consistent with the commonly agreed standards, rules, and procedures related to:

- 1 Seed Variety Release
- 2 Seed Certification and Quality Assurance
- 3 Quarantine and Phytosanitary Measures for Seed

Ultimately, the SADC HSRS promotes *economies of scale for economic prosperity and improves the ability of SADC nations to respond to food shocks.*

THE BENEFITS INCLUDE:



Increased investments in the seed sector



Increased seed production



More high-quality, improved varieties available to farmers



Food diversity



Increased competition and better prices



Greater potential for countries to earn valuable foreign exchange currency



Food security and increased resiliency



Hunger and poverty alleviation

The SADC HSRS has been a long time coming...

LATE
1980s

- Regional integration proposals began.

2001

- SADC Seed Security Network (SSSN) established, a precursor to the SADC HSRS.

2004

- The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) funded SSSN; SADC Technical Agreements on Harmonization of Seed Regulations in the SADC Region developed; process implemented directly by Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource (FANR) Directorate

2007/
2008

- SADC Technical Agreements adopted

2013

- Two-thirds of the SADC countries sign the MOU, and it became operational

2016

- USAID-funded Feed the Future Southern Africa Seed Trade Project begins

PURPOSE OF THE FEED THE FUTURE SOUTHERN AFRICA SEED TRADE PROJECT

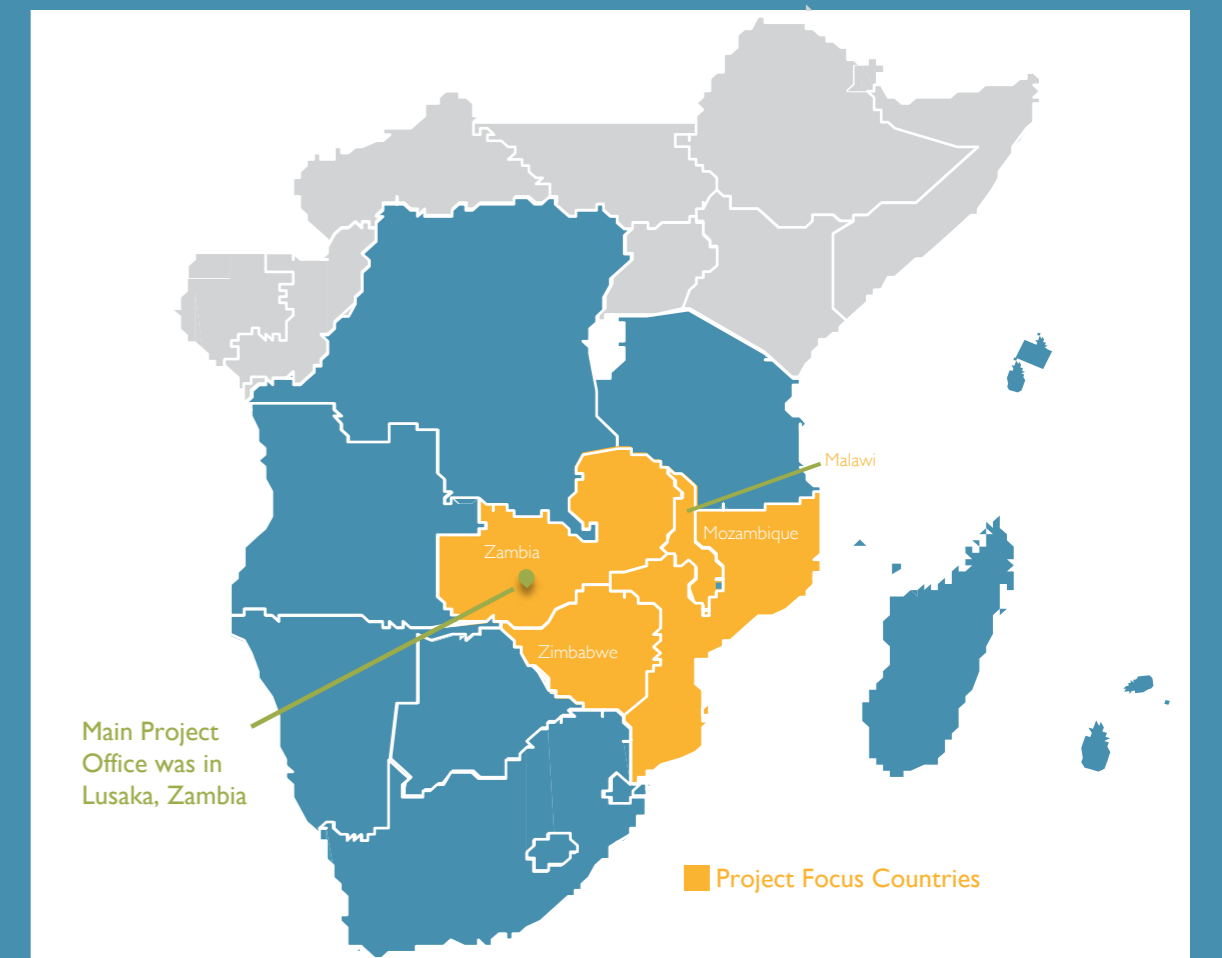
The process to develop the SADC HSRS began in 2001, without significant progress through 2016. At that point, SADC and the USAID Mission in Southern Africa embarked on a partnership to move it forward and realize its full potential, especially to catalyze regional seed stakeholders and ignite economic growth in the agricultural sector. This gave birth to the Feed the Future Southern Africa Seed Trade Project (Seed Trade Project).

The Seed Trade Project's primary goal was to improve the availability of and access to high-quality seed in the SADC Member States by harmonizing national seed policies with the regional standards, and leveraging private sector investments to increase agricultural productivity, profitability, resiliency, and food security.

The Project was designed to support SADC and Member States' leadership and provide the necessary technical assistance to harmonize policies and regulations governing seed trade in the region. This would facilitate seed trade across the region, integrating small and isolated national markets into one larger SADC-wide market for seeds, thereby reducing the cost and time it takes to move high-quality seed across the SADC region.

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

The Seed Trade Project focused on four countries in southern Africa: Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. However, the policy implications of the SADC HSRS affect all 16 SADC Member States, and therefore, the Project conducted regional activities across the entire region. Some of these activities included: reviews of national seed legislation and policies; orientation on the SADC HSRS for seed producers; revamped SADC Seed Centre website; development of regional policy and guidelines documents; and technical meetings aimed at driving national alignment with the regional seed standards.



SEED STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

The Seed Trade Project engaged and involved SADC seed stakeholders and partners to encourage a shared vision for regional seed trade from the Project's inception. Through consultative processes, the Project developed four technical guidelines to implement the SADC HSRS; the SADC Seed Centre Business Model and its Implementation Plan; drafted, analyzed, reviewed, debated, got approval for, or implemented 36 seed-related seed policy documents across 11 SADC Member States; and worked with partners to train specialists along the seed value chain as well as educate policymakers on the need to align national seed legislation with regional standards.

The Project's major partners included:

SADC: Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) Directorate, SADC Plant Genetics Resources Centre (SPGRC), SADC Seed Centre.

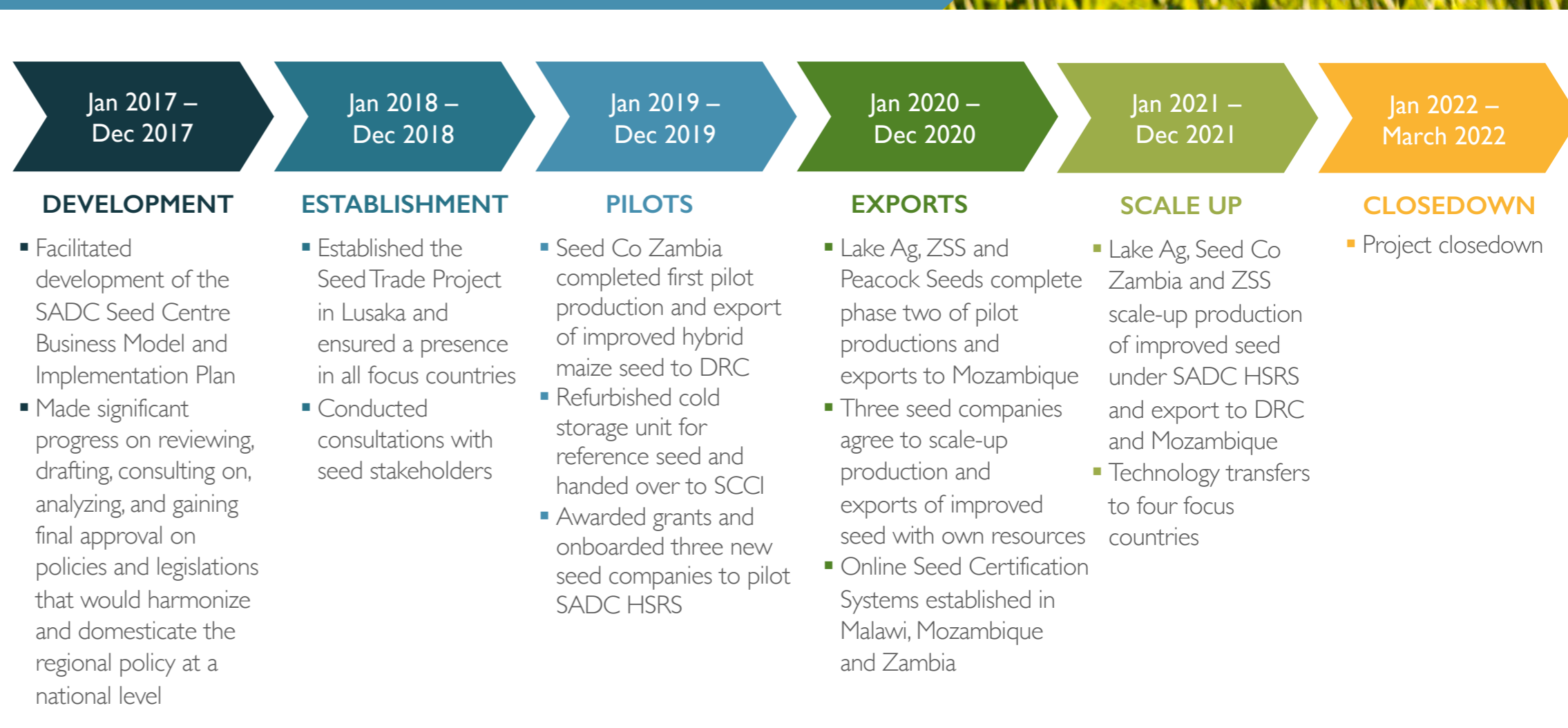
National Seed Authorities: Malawi Seed Services Unit (SSU); Mozambique National Directorate of Agrarian Services (DNSA); Zambia Seed Control and Certification Institute (SCCI); and Zimbabwe Seed Services Institute (SSI).


National Plant Protection Organizations: Malawi Department of Agricultural Research Services (DARS) Plant Protection Services; Mozambique Departamento de Sanidade Vegetal; Zambia Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI)'s Plant Quarantine and Phytosanitary Services (PQPS); Zimbabwe Plant Quarantine and Phytosanitary Services.

Private Sector Seed Companies: Seed Co Zambia, Lake Agriculture of Zambia, Zimbabwe Super Seeds Cooperative Company, Peacock Seeds of Malawi + 11 other seed companies.

Seed Associations: Seed Trade Association of Malawi (STAM); Association for the Promotion of the Seed Sector in Mozambique (APROSE), Mozambique Seed Trade Association (MOSTA); Zambia Seed Trade Association (ZASTA); Zimbabwe Seed Association (ZSA); and Africa Seed Trade Association (AFSTA)

International Partners: United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Subregional Office for Southern Africa, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), and others





OPERATIONALIZING THE SADC HSRS: DEVELOPMENT OF THE SADC HSRS TECHNICAL GUIDELINES AND AWARENESS-RAISING OF THE POLICY





The SADC HSRS, coordinated by the SADC Seed Centre, is not about enacting uniform seed legislation in each SADC country, but rather, in developing a common legal structure on seed regulation that is consistent with commonly agreed standards, rules, and procedures. In a move toward operationalizing the HSRS, SADC developed *The Technical Agreements on Harmonization of Seed Regulations in the SADC Region*. These are broader frameworks giving the region guidance on standards to be followed around Seed Variety Release, Seed Certification and Quality Assurance, and Quarantine and Phytosanitary Measures for Seed. These agreements give Member States high-level direction on which elements of their seed laws need to be reviewed and brought into alignment with the SADC HSRS.

However, these high-level agreements needed to be operationalized on the ground by specific guidelines that stakeholders would know, understand, and use. Stakeholders needed to be sensitized on the SADC HSRS and all its components, including the said technical agreements and field guidelines. Therefore, the Seed Trade Project provided financial and technical support to SADC and selected Member States to achieve these goals.

DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL TECHNICAL GUIDELINES

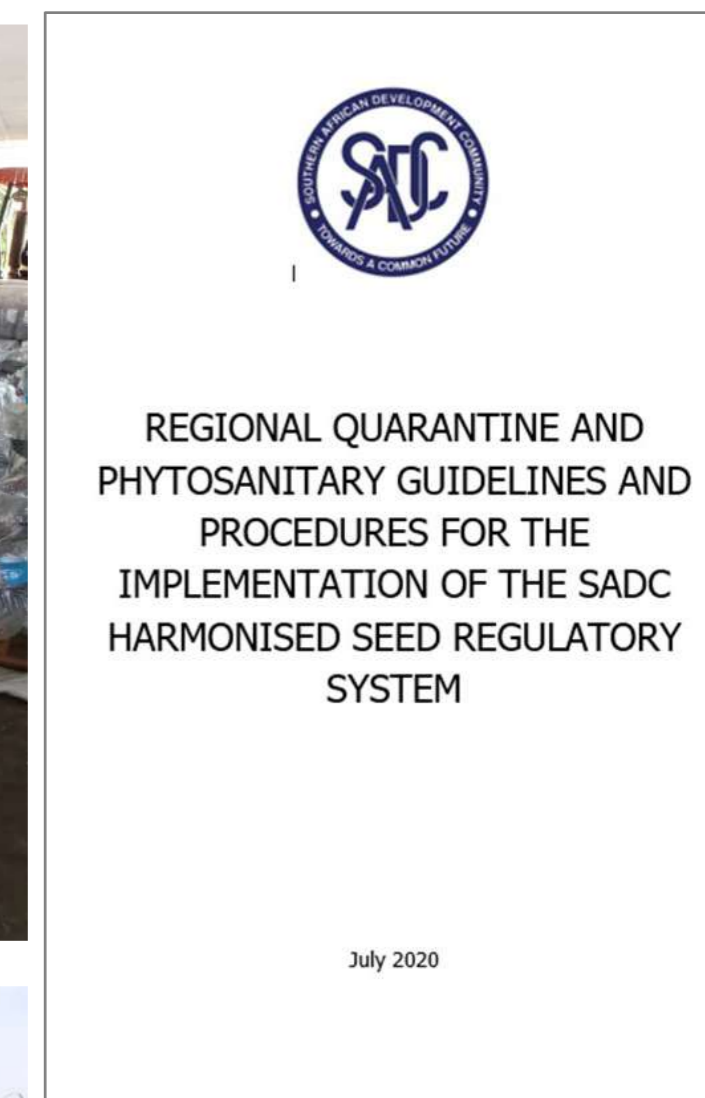
The Seed Trade Project supported SADC with financial and technical procurements to develop a set of field guidelines for seed production and export that all 16 SADC Member States could agree on. These guidelines are important in the implementation of the three Technical Agreements on Harmonization of Seed Regulations in the SADC Region, namely (i) Seed Variety Release, (ii) Seed Certification and Quality Assurance, and (iii) Quarantine and Phytosanitary Measures for Seed. Through a consultative process with seed stakeholders, guidelines were developed for each component of the System, edited through a collaborative process, and validated among the same stakeholders.

The fields guidelines are:

-  SADC Variety Testing and Release Technical Guidelines,
-  SADC Technical Guidelines on Variety Testing and Release of Public-Bred Varieties,
-  SADC Regional Quarantine and Phytosanitary Guidelines, and
-  SADC Seed Certification and Quality Assurance Guidelines (developed in partnership with FAO Subregional Office for Southern Africa).

The review and validation workshops were conducted during the SADC Seed Technical Committee Meetings, which were organized with support from the Seed Trade Project. The field guidelines are on-the-ground documents used by technical practitioners to aid in variety release and seed quality assurance according to the SADC HSRS standards. During these engagements, the SADC Seed Labels and Certificates were also developed, validated, and adopted.

The Technical Agreements on Harmonization of Seed Regulations in the SADC Region live on the SADC Seed Centre website and can be downloaded at www.sadcseedcentre.com.



ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE SADC SEED CENTRE

The SADC Memorandum of Understanding for the Implementations of the SADC HSRS was approved by SADC Ministers of Agriculture in 2009, allowing for the established of the SADC Seed Centre. The SADC Seed Centre is the coordinating body of the SADC HSRS. The design of the Centre was based on experiences gained and include appropriate representation of those stakeholder who use and fund the Systems. The organization of the SADC Seed Centre emphasizes the important roles of the SADC Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate (FANR) and the National Seed Authorities in each Member State as its National Designated Authority. Further, the Centre functions as a key advisor to SADC in all areas of seed policy and seed availability in the region, as well as capacity-building.

While it plays an important role in regional seed trade, the Centre has struggled to become operationalized and create funding streams to support its work. Since its inception, the Seed Trade Project has pushed for the full functionality of the SADC Seed Centre. The SADC Seed Centre is the unit that holds together and operationalizes the SADC Harmonized Seed Regulatory System. Without an operational, sustainable SADC Seed Centre, the SADC HSRS will crumble. Therefore, the Seed Trade Project supported SADC and Member States to develop the *SADC Seed Centre Sustainability Business Model and the SADC Seed Centre Sustainability Business Model Implementation Plan*, both of which were approved by the SADC Council of Ministers responsible for Agriculture in its June 2019 Windhoek meeting.

With the Business Plan in place, the Seed Trade Project continued to push for the operationalization of the SADC Seed Centre, which was now curtailed by the non-signing of its Charter by the Member States. Therefore, the Project successfully engaged the SADC Secretariat and Member States to co-opt the Centre under the SADC Plant Genetics Resources Centre (SPGRC) in the interim pending the two-thirds signing of its charter that will render it operational as an independent institute. Moving it under SPGRC proved a necessary step that allowed a Coordinator to be seconded from the SPGRC, thereby giving the Centre functionality. This was a big step that avoided frustration from those SADC Member States and stakeholders, especially seed companies, that have made investments in the SADC HSRS.

The next challenge in the drive towards the operationalization of the Centre was its ability to charge the fees prescribed in the approved Business Model. Without a Charter, processes such as opening of bank accounts were a challenge. As a result, during the August 2021 SADC Seed Technical Committee meeting, the Seed Trade Project worked with SADC and Member States to find a solution, culminating in the passage of a resolution that allows the SADC Seed Centre to proceed with charging fees for its services while operating under the SPGRC. In turn, the SADC Secretariat was tasked to put modalities in place to implement the resolution.

SENSITIZATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING ABOUT THE SADC HSRS

To have regionally agreed upon technical agreements and field guidelines in place was one thing. Implementing the SADC HSRS and getting seed stakeholders to use it was another.

In the early stages of the Seed Trade Project, grant awards were made to national seed associations to conduct sensitization and awareness-raising workshops about the policy among key seed stakeholders. These sessions not only showcased the benefits of the SADC HSRS, but mobilized engagement and interest from critical players. The seed associations worked closely with the National Seed Authorities and the National Plant Protection Organizations, including plant breeders, to build the capacities of seed producers, agro-dealers, customs officials, clearing and forwarding agents, and others, to ensure they understand, recognize and can implement the system in their respective areas of specialty.

POLICY HARMONIZATION AND DOMESTICATION

Since its inception in 2016, the Seed Trade Project has analyzed, consulted on, drafted or revised, or helped usher the approval of **36 seed-related policies, bills, regulations, Statutory Instruments (SIs), white papers, and other policy documents across 11 of the 16 SADC Member States**. To do this, the Project facilitated numerous policy dialogues and conducted reviews of national seed policies and legislation. Of most importance to USAID and the Project were the four focus countries.

IN MALAWI...

In late 2021, the Seed Trade Project in partnership with Malawi's Seed Services Unit (SSU), convened Parliamentarians to inform them of revisions to the National Seed Bill so they could conduct informed debate. The Seed Trade Project worked with partners, providing technical guidance to ensure the Bill is aligned to the regional standards, the SADC HSRS. Following this sensitization meeting, SSU met with the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs to discuss some areas of clarification in December 2021. The National Seed Bill has moved forward and is waiting to be published in the Government Gazette and enacted into law.

Prior to that, the Project worked with partners to review the Plant Protection regulation including the domestication of the SADC Pest List in accordance with the SADC HSRS' Quarantine and Phytosanitary Measures for Seed Technical Agreement.

IN MOZAMBIQUE...

In 2018, the Seed Trade Project conducted a thorough analysis of the country's seed legal and regulatory framework, published in the report *Assessment of Mozambique's Seed Sector Legal and Regulatory Framework*. The Project, in partnership with the National Seed Department and the Association for the Promotion of the Seed Sector (APROSE), convened Mozambican seed stakeholders and, together, developed eight policy briefs from the report. While Mozambique's seed policies were found, for the most part, to align with the SADC HSRS, several recommendations came out of the briefs. As a direct result, the national pest list was revised and validated specifically to ensure adequacy and alignment with the third component of the SADC HSRS Technical Agreements: Quarantine and Phytosanitary Measures for Seed. Further, the Project supported the role of two consultants to draft proposed amendments to Mozambique's seed regulations, Decree 12/2013 of April 10, which were aimed at improving the function and efficiency of Mozambique's seed regulations, bringing it into full alignment with the SADC HSRS in readiness for regional trade. At the close of the Project, these proposed amendments had been validated by relevant stakeholders and submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development for enactment.





IN ZAMBIA...

One of the biggest wins for the Seed Trade Project was Zambia becoming the first nation to domesticate the SADC HSRS, deepening the country's position as a leading seed exporter in the region and Africa more broadly. The final step occurred concurrent with the Seed Co Zambia pilot production and export of seed in accordance with the SADC HSRS, the first time the system has ever been used. The Seed Trade Project worked closely with Zambia's Ministry of Agriculture's Plant Quarantine and Phytosanitary Service (PQPS) to develop three Statutory Instruments (SIs), covering the last component of the SADC HSRS –Pest Risk Analysis, Surveillance, and Phytosanitary Procedures. With both technical and financial support from the Seed Trade Project, PQPS developed; (i) The Plant Pest and Diseases (Plant Quarantine and Phytosanitary Services fees) regulations, 2020, and (ii) The Plant Pests and Diseases (Phytosanitary Certification) (General) Regulations, 2020. The Ministry of Justice approved the final version of the SIs, collectively known as the Phytosanitary Certification Regulation 2020, in June 2020. From there, the regulations were published in the Government Gazette in August 2020, marking the final step in full domestication of the regional seed trade policy.

IN ZIMBABWE...

Another big win for the Seed Trade Project occurred in November 2021. The President approved the country's accession to the SADC HSRS Memorandum of Understanding, receiving SADC's acceptance and a warm welcome. Although being a top seed producer and exporter in the region together with Zambia and South Africa, Zimbabwe had not signed the HSRS MoU. This makes Zimbabwe the latest SADC Member State to accede to the SADC HSRS MoU and will allow the net seed exporter to not only contribute to national and regional food security, but further positions it to seamlessly trade high-quality seed internationally. This development was made possible with the support of the Seed Trade Project through a grant awarded to the Zimbabwe Seed Association (ZSA) in 2019. Under the award, ZSA developed a white paper on the benefits of Zimbabwe's accession to the MoU and the benefits of the SADC HSRS on the country and presented it to Zimbabwean policymakers. With the laws aligned to the SADC HSRS due to its migration to and implementation of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Seed Schemes in 2019, and having piloted the system and subsequently scaled-up its use, Zimbabwe is set for seed trade according to the SADC HSRS.

OTHER SELECTED COUNTRIES...

Following the successful review of the Mozambique legal and regulatory framework of Mozambique, the Seed Trade Project and SADC extended the study to include seven more countries. Therefore, the seed sector legal and regulatory frameworks of Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, and Namibia were assessed. The results were published in a report, *Assessment Report on Alignment of Seed Laws of Selected SADC Member States to the SADC HSRS*. The purpose of the assessment was to:

- (i) identify the gaps that hinder, or might hinder in the future, the full implementation of the SADC HSRS;
- (ii) proffer recommendations to address such gaps.

The study revealed that, while the selected countries are making efforts to harmonize their respective seed and plant protection legislation/regulations with the SADC HSRS, none of them have reached the status of full harmonization. The report, which was shared with the SADC Secretariat, triggered the FAO Subregional Office for Southern Africa to conduct a similar assessment of the remaining SADC Member States. The results were also shared in a report with the SADC Secretariat.



Feed the Future Southern Africa Seed Trade Project

Assessment Report on Alignment of Seed Laws of Selected SADC Member States to the SADC HSRS



The report is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development. The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the United States Government.



COUNTRY	VARIETY RELEASE SYSTEM	SEED CERTIFICATION & QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM	QUARANTINE & PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES FOR SEED
Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Seed Policy approved and launched by Ministry of Agriculture in Q2 2018. Seed Bill drafted and reviewed in Q2 2018. Awaiting enactment. Both documents aligned to SADC HSRS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seed Policy approved and launched by Ministry of Agriculture in Q2 2018. Seed Regulations 2018 approved by Ministry of Justice/Agriculture in Q1 2018 (published in the government gazette in March 2018). The regulations are largely compliant with the SADC HSRS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant Protection Act (CAP 64:01) implemented with the Plant Protection (Export) Regulations and Plant Protection (Import) Regulations were reviewed and gaps identified. The Plant Protection Bill has been drafted and is still to be enacted. The Bill is largely compliant with SADC HSRS. Pest List reviewed/updated in Q4 2018.
Mozambique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Seed Regulations (Decree 12/2013) and the Ministerial Diploma 58/2018 were reviewed and found to be largely aligned with the SADC HSRS. However, a few adjustments were needed, either through amendments to the existing instruments or through additional ministerial diplomas to set a path for improved implementation. Policy briefs drafted/reviewed in Q4 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Seed Regulations (Decree 12/2013) and the Ministerial Diploma 58/2018 was reviewed in Q3 2018 and found to be largely aligned with the SADC HSRS. However, a few adjustments were needed, either through amendments to the existing instruments or through additional ministerial diplomas to set a path for improved implementation. Policy briefs drafted/reviewed in Q4 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Phytosanitary Inspection and Plant Quarantine Regulations (Decree 5/2009) reviewed and align with the SADC HSRS' Quarantine and Phytosanitary Measures for Seed. Pest List reviewed/updated in Q4 2018. Policy briefs drafted/reviewed in Q4 2019. In 2021, the Seed Trade Project will support the NPPO to convene a stakeholder validation workshop to ensure that the Mozambican seed sector stakeholders participate in the revision of the regulations and the pest list to solicit their buy-in and accelerate adoption and implementation.
Zambia	The Plant Varieties and Seeds Act Chapter 236 and the Plant Variety and Seeds Regulations, 2018 are compliant with SADC HSRS.	The Plant Varieties and Seeds Act Chapter 236 and the Plant Variety and Seeds Regulations, 2018 are compliant with SADC HSRS.	Phytosanitary Certification Regulations 2020 (Surveillance, Pest Risk Analysis, Phytosanitary Procedure, and Phytosanitary Services Fees) drafted, reviewed, and published in the Government Gazette in Q3 2020 in alignment with the SADC HSRS.
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeds Act, Chapter 19:13, and the Seeds (Certification Scheme) Notice of 2000 were reviewed and are largely aligned with SADC HSRS though there are gaps which have been identified. Draft legislation has been drafted for full alignment. The enactment of the draft will now proceed given the signing of the SADC HSRS MoU in November 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeds Act, Chapter 19:13, and the Seeds (Certification Scheme) Notice 20 of 2000 were reviewed and are largely aligned with SADC HSRS though there are gaps which have been identified. Draft legislation has been drafted for full alignment. The enactment of the draft will now proceed given the signing of the SADC HSRS MoU in November 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant Pests and Diseases Act [Chapter 19:08]; the Plant Pests and Diseases (Import) Regulations; and the Plant Pests and Diseases (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) Regulations of 2016 were reviewed and are largely aligned with SADC HSRS though there are gaps which have been identified. Draft legislation has been drafted to ensure full alignment. The enactment of the draft legislation will now proceed given the signing of the SADC HSRS MoU.



STRATEGIC GRANTS BUILD CAPACITY OF INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS

The effective and sustainable implementation of the SADC HSRS requires robust institutional capabilities within SADC Member State governments and private sector in terms of both a critical mass of competences and modern equipment to successfully deliver high-quality seed to farmers. The Seed Trade Project worked to build the institutional capacities of the focus countries to at least meet the minimum required to implement the regionally agreed upon seed quality assurance standards. The Project used grants in highly strategic, timely, and thoughtful ways to not only test the SADC HSRS but also build the individual and institutional capacity of regional seed stakeholders.

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE REGIONAL GUIDELINES

The Seed Trade Project's initial tranche of grants went to the seed traders' associations in each focus country including the Seed Trade Association of Malawi, the Association for the Promotion of the Seed Sector in Mozambique (APROSE), the Zambia Seed Trade Association, and the Zimbabwe Seed Association. The main goal of these funds was to support the national associations as they did outreach and promotion of the SADC HSRS among seed stakeholders in their respective countries and organized and facilitated policy discussions. The objective was to make sure all the stakeholders with a role in seed production, processing and packaging, and trade are aware of the system, and can recognize and know the meaning of the SADC seed labels and certificate. Stakeholders reached included those focused on cross-border procedures for border post officials, such as plant protection inspectors, customs officials, customs brokers, transport and forwarding agents, and seed companies.

TOTAL GRANT AMOUNT DISPERSED TO NATIONAL SEED ASSOCIATIONS = \$319,007

PRESSURE-TESTING THE SADC HSRS

As discussed in more detail later in this document, the U.S. government, through the Seed Trade Project, invested approximately \$100,000 each in four seed companies –Seed Co. Zambia Ltd, Lake Agriculture, Zimbabwe Super Seed Cooperative Company, and Peacock Seeds of Malawi –to pilot the SADC HSRS. The Project worked closely with National Seed Authorities and National Plant Protection Organizations of the respective countries to train seed company staff on the field technical guidelines, as well as seed inspectors and border/customs officials, to ensure quality control, certification, and the smooth movement of seed consignments across borders. The first pilot was with Seed Co. Zambia Ltd, which produced hybrid maize seed during the 2018/2019 growing season, followed by Zimbabwe Super Seeds, Lake Agriculture, and Peacock Seed, which produced hybrid maize and sugar bean seed during the 2019/2020 growing season in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi, respectively. This was the first time the long-discussed SADC HSRS had been operationalized. Therefore, the pilot provided a critical pressure testing moment and the results allowed for strategic implementation, capitalizing on strengths observed and reworking areas of weakness.

TOTAL GRANT AMOUNT DISPERSED TO PILOT SEED COMPANIES = \$355,309



BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF NATIONAL SEED ORGANIZATIONS

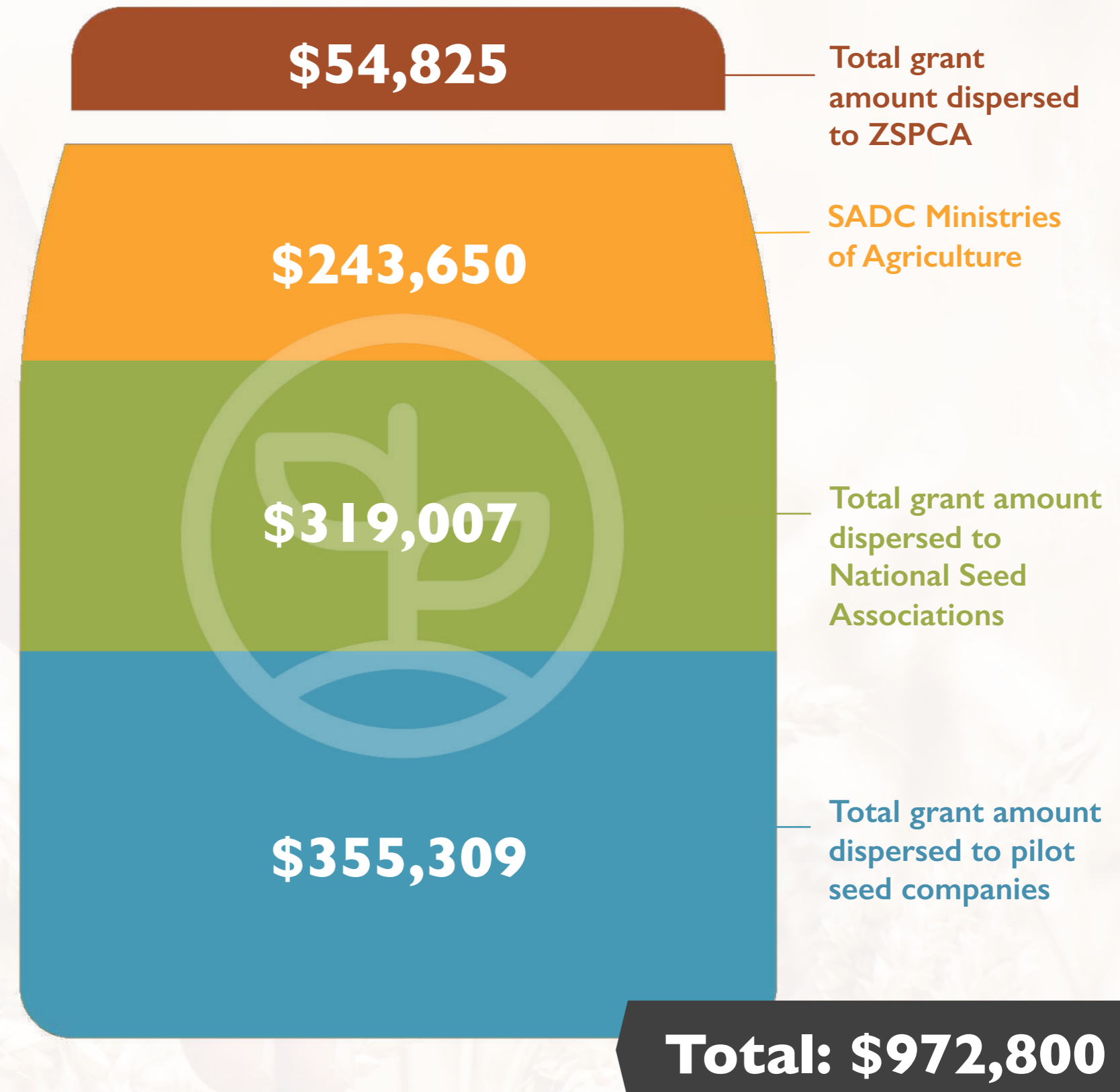
For National Seed Authorities (NSAs) and National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs), the cost of doing business, short staffing, lack of modern equipment, and other inefficiencies created significant backlogs in work. To help address some of these issues, the Seed Trade Project awarded grants to the NSAs and NPPOs of Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia, primarily for technology upgrades. One major technology upgrade was digitizing seed quality assurance, moving the countries from manual seed certification processes to an online platform, saving paper, manpower, costs, and time. Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia are now fully digitized, each having a tailor-made Online Seed Certification System. Further, both government staff and seed producers have been trained to use the system.

TOTAL GRANT AMOUNT DISPERSED TO NSAs = \$182,577
TOTAL GRANT AMOUNT DISPERSED TO NPPOs = \$61,073
[Grant total to SADC Ministries of Agriculture = \$243,650]

In addition to supporting NSAs and NPPOs, the Seed Trade Project procured bacterial wilt testing equipment to upgrade the laboratory for the Zimbabwe Seed Potato Companies Association, a private sector association producing and trading Irish potato seed.

TOTAL GRANT AMOUNT DISPERSED TO ZSPCA = \$54,825

Overall, the Seed Trade Project awarded 18 grants worth US\$972,800, representing 102 percent achievement of the life of project target (US\$952,943).



| PILOT PRODUCTIONS AND EXPORTS

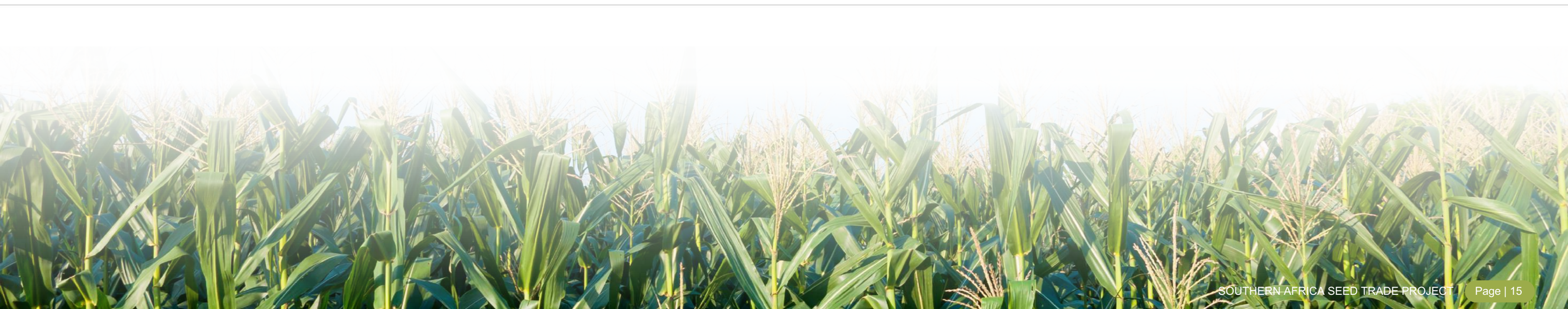
In late 2018, the Seed Trade Project set out to test the Harmonized Seed Regulatory System (HSRS) and the accompanying technical guidelines. The main purpose of this effort was to ensure all types of seed companies, large or small, could participate fully and reap the benefits of the System.

SEED CO ZAMBIA LTD TAKES INITIAL LEAP OF FAITH

Seed Co Zambia Limited marked an historic milestone in agricultural trade and export becoming the first seed company to produce and export hybrid maize seed under the SADC HSRS, including use of the SADC seed labels and certificates. The joint venture between Seed Co, Seed Trade Project, the SADC Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate (FANR), and the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) kicked off during the rainy season of 2018/2019 with an announcement of a \$100,000 U.S. Government grant to support the pilot. Following a full production season, Seed Co. Zambia produced 226 metric tons of improved seed under the SADC HSRS valued at \$370,000. This was the first ever use of the System. Of the total produced, 200 metric tons was successfully exported from Zambia to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on September 9, 2019, and 26 metric tons remained on the local market for trade. The results proved so successful, it inspired three other SADC-based seed companies to reach out to the Seed Trade Project, responding to the Annual Program Statement, with hopes of participating in seed production under the regional system.

THREE EMERGING SEED COMPANIES COMMIT TO PRESSURE-TESTING THE SYSTEM

After news of Seed Co Zambia's success made headlines, Lake Agriculture of Zambia and Zimbabwe Super Seeds Cooperative Company reached out to the Seed Trade Project in 2019. Each ultimately received a grant award of \$100,000 to produce 200 metric tons of high-quality hybrid maize seed and 200 metric tons of improved sugar bean seed, respectively, with the goal of exporting the seed from Zambia and Zimbabwe to Mozambique. Then in late 2019, Peacock Seeds of Malawi joined the pilot group and was awarded \$100,000, as well, to produce a targeted 200 metric tons of improved maize seed for export to Mozambique. During the production cycle and to build capacities for SADC HSRS implementation, the Seed Trade Project, in partnership with National Seed Authorities, trained the seed companies and outgrowers on the technical guidelines, seed inspectors on seed certification protocols, and border/customs officials on quarantine and phytosanitary measures for seed to prevent the movement of invasive pests and plant diseases.



USG SEES 337 PERCENT RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR PILOT PRODUCTIONS

Together, the four seed companies produced 701 metric tons of high-quality seed during the pilot phase. Of the total produced, 516 metric tons was seamlessly exported to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (200 metric tons) and Mozambique (316 metric tons), while the remaining seed (185 metric tons) stayed on local markets for domestic trade. These exports to the DRC and Mozambique proved quite timely, as both countries had been hit hard by climate-related shocks in 2019, of note being cyclone Idai and Kenneth that ravaged Mozambique and parts of Malawi and Zimbabwe.

In addition to the positive impact for all involved, the U.S. government USG also saw a hefty return on its investments. With a total USG investment of \$355,318 plus an additional \$500,000 of private sector investment bringing the total seed production value to \$1,268,000, the USG had a 337 percent return on investment (ROI) with just the pilot productions. Under the *Scale-up Production and Exports* section, that ROI continued to grow.



Zimbabwe Super Seeds outgrower farmers sorting through pilot sugar bean crop, November 2020. The company uses a smallholder farmer outgrower model, benefiting many families in the rural communities.



Seed Co. Zambia Ltd. maiden export of hybrid maize seed produced under the SADC HSRS, September 2019.



Mike Jackson, Lake Agriculture's Managing Director receives SADC HSRS seed certificate at pilot export event at the SADC Plant Genetic Resource Centre in Zambia, October 2020.

SEED CO ZAMBIA LTD.

LAKE AGRICULTURE OF ZAMBIA

ZIMBABWE SUPER SEEDS COOPERATIVE COMPANY

PEACOCK SEEDS OF MALAWI

USG INVESTMENT



\$99,999 + \$100,000
company investment

\$99,930 + \$150,000
company investment

\$99,690 + \$200,000
company investment

\$55,699*

PRODUCTION



Produced 226 MT of hybrid maize seed valued at \$370,000

Produced 250 MT of hybrid maize seed valued at \$381,000

Produced 200 MT of improved sugar bean seed valued at \$477,000

Produced 25 MT of improved maize seed valued at \$40,000**

EXPORT



200 MT was exported to the DRC in Sept 2019

216 MT was exported to Mozambique in Oct 2020

100 MT was exported to Mozambique in Nov 2020

DOMESTIC TRADE



26 MT stayed on the Zambian market for domestic trade

34 MT stayed on the Zambian market for domestic trade

100 MT stayed on the Zimbabwean market for domestic trade

All 25 MT remained on the Malawi market for domestic trade in Nov 2020

OVERALL PILOT PHASE RESULTS

The four pilot seed companies produced 701 MT and exported 516 MT of high-quality hybrid maize and sugar bean seed, leaving 185 MT for local trade



Total USG investment = \$355,318

Total Private Sector investment = \$500,000

Total Production Value = \$1,268,000

Reflecting a 337% ROI for the USG

*Actual approved award was \$105,200; \$55,699 was dispersed.
**Peacock experienced major challenges during the production phase, including limited viability of the male parent, hence the limited production figures.

SCALE UP PRODUCTIONS AND EXPORTS

The success of the pilot productions and exports along with other significant benefits, including access to all 16 SADC markets and ease of trade across borders, led to three of the four seed companies committing to scale up production and trade of high-quality seed under the SADC HSRS during the 2020/21 planting season. Peacock Seeds could not scale up production as it is awaiting the Malawi Seed Bill to be gazetted, which is imminent, and for the Seed Services Unit (SSU) to fully implement the SADC HSRS.

With continued technical support from the Seed Trade Project –including training of new outgrowers, company agronomists, and seed inspectors –the three participating seed companies collectively scaled up their productions **from 701 metric tons to 2,109 metric tons** of improved, high-quality seed varieties during the 2020/2021 season using their own financial resources.

SEED COMPANIES SEE BENEFITS OF SADC HSRS TO THEIR BOTTOM LINES

Seed Co Zambia demonstrated the largest jump from its pilot going from 226 metric tons in 2019 to 1,050 metric tons in 2021, marking a 365 percent increase and total value to nearly \$1.5 million. Further, Seed Co exported the full amount to the DRC in September 2021.

Seed Co Zambia's success is followed closely by Lake Agriculture's accomplishments. Lake Agriculture met its scale-up target by producing 850 metric tons and exporting 570 metric tons to Mozambique using the SADC seed labels and certificate. The remaining 280 metric tons stayed on the local Zambian market for trade.

Additionally, Lake Agriculture has expressed interest in producing publicly bred improved sugar bean variety, NUA 45, currently produced by Zimbabwe Super Seeds, during the 2021/2022 season with a goal of producing 200 metric tons for export to Lesotho and Swaziland. Zambia's NSA, SCCI, approved the production using the trade name "Mbereshi" on the Zambian market, and only restricted the company from producing in and trading to Zimbabwe where Zimbabwe Super Seeds is already present. Further, Lake Agriculture has agreed to co-share SADC Seed Variety Catalogue registration and maintenance fees of NUA 45 with Zimbabwe Super Seeds. Zimbabwe Super Seeds also successfully scaled up production of their sugar bean seed, however, it was to a lesser extent due to COVID lockdowns in-country throughout 2021.

Zimbabwe Super Seeds produced 209 metric tons of NUA 45, which is shy of its 300 metric tons target, but 5 percent higher than its pilot quantity. The company exported 20 metric tons to Mozambique due to high demand on the local market where the remaining 189 metric tons were sold. The export moved across national borders using the OECD labels and International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) certificates while the Seed Services Institute (SSI), Zimbabwe's National Seed Authority, continues to make progress on designing its SADC seed label and certificate following its recent, October 2021, accession to the SADC HSRS MoU.





SEED CO SCALED UP 3 REGISTERED MAIZE VARIETIES

FROM **226 MT**  TO **1,050 MT** 

=

 A **365% INCREASE** FROM THEIR PILOT



EXPORTING ALL 1,050 MT TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



LAKE AG SCALED UP PRODUCTION OF ITS LAKE 601 MAIZE SEED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH QBS

FROM **250 MT**  TO **850 MT** 

=

 A **240% INCREASE** FROM THEIR PILOT




EXPORTING 570 MT TO MOZAMBIQUE. REMAINING 280 MT OF HIGH-QUALITY SEED WAS TRADED ON THE LOCAL ZAMBIAN MARKET

ZIMBABWE SUPER SEEDS SCALED UP PRODUCTION OF ITS NUA 45 SUGAR BEAN SEED

FROM **200 MT**  TO **209 MT** 

=

 A **5% INCREASE** FROM THEIR PILOT



EXPORTING 20 MT TO MOZAMBIQUE, WITH THE REMAINING 189 MT KEPT ON THE LOCAL MARKET DUE TO HIGH-DEMAND



TOTAL PRODUCTION DURING SCALE-UP = **2,109 MT**



TOTAL EXPORTED DURING SCALE-UP = **1,640 MT**



COMBINED PILOT AND SCALE-UP PRODUCTIONS = **2,810 MT** OF HIGH-QUALITY SEED



TOTAL VALUE OF **\$5,038,590**, WHICH SURPASSES THE LOP TARGET BY NEARLY **500%**



564% OF LEVERAGED INVESTMENT



EXPORTS HELP MOZAMBIQUE TO BUILD BACK BETTER, STRONGER

Mozambique has notoriously struggled with poor crop yields due to low usage of improved agricultural inputs, such as hybrid maize seed. Moreover, the presence of fake or substandard seed permeates the Mozambican market, and this has a cascade effect, discouraging further investment by farmers who experience poor yields season after season.

To make matters worse, during the spring of 2019, Cyclones Idai and Kenneth wreaked havoc on Mozambique and further exasperated the seed situation. Severe winds and flooding from that storm wiped out 168,000 hectares of farmland and caused damage worth \$778 million in Mozambique. With more than 2.2 million people affected, Cyclones Idai and Kenneth proved to be in the top five most devastating storms to hit Mozambique, and Idai went on record as the deadliest and most catastrophic storm in recorded African history.

Mozambique desperately needed relief and a different approach to address the underlying dynamics that created such a precarious situation in the first place, and way to bring food security and resilience to the country.

In partnership with SADC, the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, and exporting nations, USAID through the Seed Trade Project, focused on sustainable policies, close collaborations with national governments and private sector engagement.

Normally, it would take Mozambique three years to return to its status quo prior to the cyclones, replenishing parent (pre-basic and basic seed) and regular seed supplies. The pilot and scale-up exports not only helped expedite that recovery process, but it made high-quality seed available on the Mozambican market and gave the farmers reached an opportunity to build back better and with greater resiliency.

Value of USG and private sector investment vs value of seed produced during pilot production.

COMPANY	CROP VARIETY	COUNTRY	QTY. (MT)	VALUE OF USG INVESTMENT	ESTIMATED VALUE OF PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT	VALUE OF PRODUCTION	RETURN ON USG INVESTMENT
Seed Co	Maize: SC 637 and SC 719	Zambia	226	\$99,999	\$100,000	\$416,800	417%
Lake Agriculture	Maize: Lake 601	Zambia	250	\$99,930	\$150,000	\$381,000	381%
Zimbabwe Super Seeds	Sugar Bean: NUA 45	Zimbabwe	200	\$99,690	\$200,000	\$477,000	478%
Peacock Seeds	CAP 9001	Malawi	25	\$55,699	\$100,000	\$40,000	71.8%
Grand Total			701	\$355,318	\$500,000	\$1,314,800	

Value of private sector investment vs value of seed produced during scale-up production

COMPANY	CROP VARIETY	COUNTRY	QTY. (MT)	VALUE OF USG INVESTMENT	ESTIMATED VALUE OF PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT	VALUE OF PRODUCTION	RETURN ON USG INVESTMENT
Seed Co	Maize: SC 637 and SC 719	Zambia	1,050	365%	\$684,031	\$1,942,500	284%
Lake Agriculture	Maize: Lake 601	Zambia	850	240%	\$702,174	\$1,258,850	179%
Zimbabwe Super Seeds	Sugar Bean: NUA 45	Zimbabwe	209	5%	\$123,983	\$522,440	421%
Grand Total			2,109	203%	\$1,510,188	\$3,723,790	



INCREASED ACCESS TO IMPROVED SEED VARIETIES

As a way of giving farmers across SADC equal access to high-quality seed and seed producers access to all 16 SADC markets, the Seed Trade Project gave considerable energy to working with private sector and the SADC Seed Centre to get new and improved seed varieties registered on the SADC Seed Variety Catalogue.

By the end of the Seed Trade Project, the regional catalogue reflected 96 approved varieties from 15 different seed companies. This marks a 284 percent increase from the 2016 baseline of 25 varieties.

Much of the steep increase in registered improved seed varieties stems from the success of the pilot and scale-up productions. The Project realized its largest jump of 28 new seed varieties to the regional catalogue in second quarter 2020, moving from 58 to 83 different options for SADC farmers, following the Seed Co Zambia pilot results and the onboarding of three new seed companies during the pilot phase.

IN THE PIPELINE

In tandem with the scale-up process from 2020/21, 13 more varieties were approved and seven remain in the pipeline, which if all are approved, will bring the total to 103. The newest arrivals include three soybean seeds by Seed Co Zambia (SC Safari, SC Spike and SC Sentinel); one vitamin-A enriched orange maize public-bred variety, GV637A, by the new entrant, Advanta Seeds; and one sugar bean variety, Lake 101, by Lake Agriculture.

Seed Co Zambia has four other maize seed varieties applications, SC555, SC553, SC547 and SC449, in progress, and Corteva Agriscience Zambia has three varieties, PAN 53 and PAN 3M-05 (maize) and PAN 148 (sugar bean), awaiting approval.

KEEPING MOMENTUM

As the Project ended, it co-hosted a Seed Producer Webinar with the SADC Food, Agriculture and Nutrition Resources (FANR) Directorate, attracting 58 participants from seed companies and Consultative Group (CG) Centres across the SADC region. The purpose of the session was to demonstrate the business case for seed producers, highlight the benefits of producing and exporting seed under the SADC HSRS, and providing a tutorial on how to register new seed varieties. This webinar was coupled with three informational videos related to the same topics, which live on through the revamped SADC Seed Centre website. The new website, developed with support from the Seed Trade Project, also hosts the SADC Seed Variety Catalogue, variety registration application, and provides detailed guidance on how to register a new variety.



“ Last season, I planted the seed ‘Vulanjila 601’. What I was looking for before buying was its ability towards drought tolerance. 601 is good seed and it gave me a bumper harvest. So, I’m going for the same seed and this time in a bigger quantity.”

Bernadette Musonda of Kapiri, Zambia

“ The main difference I have noticed with ‘Vulanjila 601’ is that the cobs are bigger. They are much bigger, they have a longer lifespan and the expenses are lower compared to other seeds. Non-certified seed are much smaller and they easily get rotten.”

Petronella Chiwaya of Valleyview, Zambia

“ Our harvest of NUA 45 has increased a lot from 1 ton to 1.5 tons.”

Tumai Jese of Masvingo, Zimbabwe

“ The seed value of a seed crop (Zimbabwe Super Seed sugar bean NUA 45), like in this case, great value in zinc and iron, that is why it is gaining ground. The crop is performing wonderfully good in terms of disease and pest tolerance. The coming in of SADC in production, especially the SADC regulations on seed production, it has improved our farming stamina.”

Tinashe Chirambadare of Masvingo, Zimbabwe

“ I can only advise my fellow farmers to start planting ‘Vulanjila 601’ because it doesn’t rot, pest control is cheaper and it’s very affordable.”

Gift Masaka of Milena, Zambia



Seed Co Zambia farmer on Nyamanzi Farm speaking with the SADC Seed Coordinator, Tilabilenji Phiri, during a monitoring visit.



ZSS outgrower farmers during the threshing phase of their NUA 45 sugar bean crop.



TECHNOLOGY TRANSFERS EXPAND NATIONAL CAPACITY FOR SAFE INTERNATIONAL SEED TRADE

The Seed Trade Project achieved many other notable milestones during its six years of operation, particularly in the development and transfer of technologies that have expanded national and regional capacities to deliver on reliable, safe international seed trade. Through the procurement and delivery of modern seed testing laboratory equipment and pest and plant disease testing equipment, establishment of a cold storage facility in Lusaka, Zambia, and development of tailored Online Seed Certification Systems, the Project has enabled its four focus countries the ability to certify and move improved seed according to regional standards.

THE COVID-19 FACTOR

The Seed Trade Project recognized that effective and sustainable implementation of the SADC HSRS requires robust institutional capabilities within SADC Member States. This relates to both a critical mass of competences and availability of modern equipment along the seed value chain. Given considerable supply chain challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Project faced several barriers to ensure delivery before closedown. However, it pressed on and delivered on all commitments.

IN MALAWI...

The Seed Trade Project completed delivery of all procured seed testing equipment to the Chitedze Seed Testing Laboratory, outfitted the laboratory with an industrial generator to curb power outages, and provided IT equipment to ensure full implementation of the Online Seed Certification System. The final tranche of pest and plant disease testing equipment arrived in-country in early 2022 and was delivered to target border post and entry/exit points. To accommodate COVID travel restrictions, the Project developed a technology transfer video and media package in lieu of a formal handover event.



IN MOZAMBIQUE...

The Seed Trade Project completed the transfer of seed testing equipment to the Chimoio Regional Seed Testing Laboratory and provided the laboratory with an industrial back-up generator to curb power failures. Additionally, to strengthen the operationalization of the Online Seed Certification System, the Project supported the National Directorate of Agrarian Services (DNSA), Mozambique's NSA, to conduct a monitoring visit to satellite laboratories and seed companies in Nampula and Chimoio to evaluate the implementation of the System, assess any challenges, and identify areas for improvement. Like Malawi, the Project procured and delivered pest and plant disease testing equipment to the Departamento de Sanidade Vegetal, Mozambique's NPPO, which will be installed at target border posts and points of entry/exit. The Seed Trade Project formally concluded activities in Mozambique in November with a technology handover event. Ms. Mary Hobbs, Director of USAID Mozambique's Office of Economic Growth, announced the transfer of nearly USD \$200,000 worth in technology to the Government of the Republic of Mozambique's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

IN ZAMBIA...

The Seed Trade Project completed the procurement and delivery of a digital microscope to the Seed Control and Certification Institute, Zambia's NSA, in early 2021. The digital microscope is already improving SCCI's ability to conduct purity testing, increasing its proficiency in Other Seed Determination (OSD) tests as required the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) requirements, on which the SADC HSRS seed testing protocols are benchmarked. This was preceded by the Seed Trade Project's installation and operationalization of a cold storage facility that can store up to 10,000 reference seeds at the same institution. As with Malawi and Mozambique, the Project has procured and delivered pest and plant disease testing equipment to the Zambia Agriculture Research Institute's (ZARI) Plant Quarantine and Phytosanitary Service (PQPS), Zambia's NPPO, and it will be installed at target border posts.



IN ZIMBABWE...

The Seed Trade Project continued working with the private sector, pushing for a state-of-the-art bacterial wilt testing set for potato seed intended for the Zimbabwe Potato Seed Companies Association (ZPSCA) laboratory through the very end. Despite significant delays and supply chain problems related to COVID, the Project confirmed the delivery of the equipment.

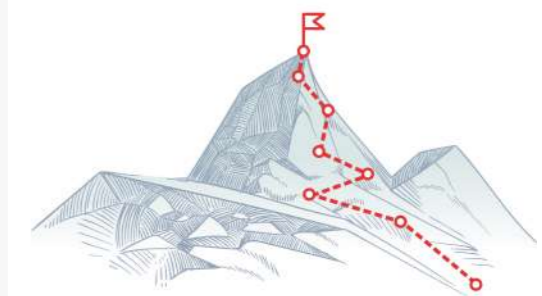


**120%
ACHIEVEMENT**

The Seed Trade Project **exceeded its life of project target by two for a total of 12 technologies transferred**, representing a 120% achievement.



**LOP TARGET SURPASSED
BY CLOSE TO \$20K**



Further, the conclusion of the technology grants and final disbursements brings the **total value of grants distributed to \$972,800, surpassing the life of project (LOP) target by close to \$20K.**

| SUSTAINING IMPROVED SEED TRADE IN SADC

With the slow development and implementation of the SADC HSRS from the turn of the century until 2016, the introduction of USAID's Seed Trade Project provided an opportunity for accelerated adoption and use of the regional guidelines. A dedicated team relentlessly pursued policy harmonization at the national level, worked with national partners to build understanding of the System among seed trade actors, shored up human capacity and modernized laboratories, worked directly with the private seed companies to demonstrate the benefits to all SADC stakeholders, and made the SADC Seed Centre a reality.

To ensure momentum and sustainability of all efforts, the Seed Trade Project began with the end in mind and prioritized policy alignment and activities that were more squarely within the Project's control.

NATIONAL POLICY ALIGNMENT WITH REGIONAL STANDARDS

Alignment of national seed laws to the regionally agreed guidelines is an essential ingredient to guaranteeing sustainability in the implementation of the SADC HSRS. The process starts with acknowledging the *Memorandum of Understanding on the Harmonization of Seed Regulations in the Region*.



THE SEED TRADE PROJECT
HAD DRAFTED, ANALYZED,
REVIEWED, DEBATED,
APPROVED, OR IMPLEMENTED



36

SEED-RELATED POLICIES, BILLS,
REGULATIONS, STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS
(SIS), WHITE PAPERS AND OTHER POLICY
RELATED DOCUMENTS ON BEHALF OF 11
SADC MEMBER STATES.



THIS REFLECTS A **1,200% ACHIEVEMENT**
OF THE LIFE OF PROJECT TARGET.



In terms of impact, all four focus countries acceded to the SADC HSRS MoU during the Project. Further, the attention to policy alignment resulted in Zambia becoming the first SADC nation to fully domesticate the SADC HSRS in August 2020; Malawi harmonizing its plant protection laws including domesticating the SADC Pest List and developing a new National Seed Bill that will need to be gazette into an Act for full domestication; and Mozambique aligning its national seed regulations (which are in draft form and submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) and awaits full domestication.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

To turn policy into action, the Seed Trade Project had to focus efforts to raise seed stakeholders' awareness of the regional guidelines, build the knowledge and skills of those working along the seed trade value chain, and expand the ability of national level institutions to do their jobs more efficiently and effectively. However, with sustainability in mind, the Project led from behind, always partnering with NSAs, NPPOs, seed associations, and SADC to conduct trainings, workshops, webinars, and other engagements.

Ultimately, the **Seed Trade Project was involved in training 2,156 people*** (671 females and 1,485 males) on everything from seed production and certification to pest risk analysis and border/customs clearances. Those trained came from public, private, and civil society institutions and most were not one-time participants in Project-supported activities. Implementation of the SADC HSRS through the production and trade of certified seed according to the regional guidelines, the quality assurance of the seed and border clearance are all testimony to the importance of the knowledge imparted by the Seed Trade Project.

Strengthening the capacity of both public and private sector institutions to carry out various responsibilities outlined in the SADC HSRS guidelines is also essential to ensuring sustainable implementation of the System. To this end, the **Seed Trade Project supported 192 organizations**, spanning private enterprises and women's groups to trade associations and community-based organizations. Activities ranged from training on equipment and technical meetings to facilitating policy and legislative reviews. Supporting Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and other countries to review and align their seed laws with the SADC HSRS and the ability demonstrated by the four countries in producing and trading, both exporting and receiving seed under the SADC HSRS, demonstrates strengthened institutions.

*Total number of those trained by the Seed Trade Project are only counted one time. However, many attendees participated multiple times in Project-supported activities.



PRIVATE SECTOR BECOMES THE SYSTEM'S BIGGEST ADVOCATE

Involving private sector seed companies early on in piloting and scaling up the SADC HSRS proved a strategic win, not only for their bottom lines, but promotion of the SADC HSRS in a real and tangible way. As other seed companies observed the success of productions and exports under the System, they raced to register their improved seed varieties to the SADC Seed Variety Catalogue, gaining them access to all 16 SADC markets in a fraction of the time. Traditionally, before the SADC HSRS, it took an average of three years for companies to conduct the required national performance trials to release varieties in each country. By the close of the project, 15 seed companies had registered 96 seed varieties to the regional catalogue, with seven additional varieties in the pipeline.

“

The beauty of the SADC system is it is developed by SADC for SADC and it improves the efficiency of moving seed across borders. We all know that Africa needs to feed itself and feed the world in the future and that can only happen with regional seed trade, so all seed companies should be looking to get involved.

*Mike Jackson,
Managing Director for Lake Agriculture,*

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ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SADC SEED CENTRE

The full operationalization of the SADC Seed Centre, as detailed in the *SADC Seed Centre Sustainability Business Model* and its *Implementation Plan*, continued to be the Seed Trade Project's focus until the very end. At the August 2021 SADC Seed Technical Committee Meeting, Member States validated and recommended that the SADC Seed Centre begin charging fees as it operates under the SADC Plant Genetic Resources Centre and put in place modalities for seed companies using the system to pay the necessary user fees to the Centre.

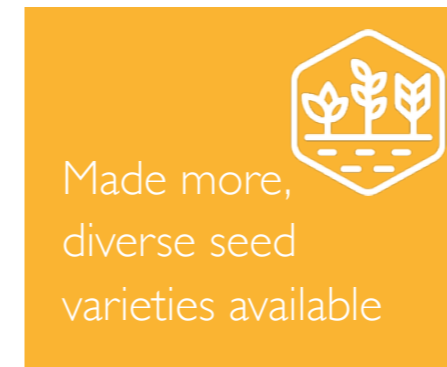
In addition to charging fees that will sustain the SADC Seed Centre, the Seed Trade Project worked with the Centre to develop a more substantial presence online by revamping the SADC Seed Centre website. The new website shares valuable information on the benefits of the SADC HSRS, how to go about registering a new variety, and market information.

Lastly, the SADC Seed Technical Meeting reviewed and validated the Technical Guidelines on SADC Variety Testing and Release of Public-bred Varieties. These guidelines will allow many emerging seed companies, who mainly rely on public varieties released by governments and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), to register varieties on the SADC Seed Variety Catalogue and take advantage of the SADC HSRS to expand their markets by trading regionally. This will further increase the number of varieties on the regional catalogue, leading to the expansion of a revenue base for the SADC Seed Centre. This has already been demonstrated by Zimbabwe Super Seeds Cooperative Company that registered NUA 45, a publicly bred sugar bean varieties released through the national research systems. Ultimately, this will lead to a more sustainable way of serving various seed sector players to the greater benefit of the agricultural sector and the 360 million people of the SADC region at-large.



IN CONCLUSION...

Simply put, the purpose of the SADC Harmonized Seed Regulatory System is to improve seed trade across the SADC region. At the conclusion of the Seed Trade Project, it had successfully:



So, while every seed company has an opportunity to considerably expand their market by taking advantage of the SADC HSRS, ultimately it is the farmer who wins. Higher yields and more diverse crops mean more income, better nutrition, and food security and resilience. Greater competition means high quality at more affordable prices. And high-quality, improved seed means less expenses on agricultural inputs and more resilient crops.



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

To learn more about the SADC Harmonized Seed Regulatory System and get the latest updates, visit the SADC Seed Centre at www.sadcseedcentre.com.

Feed the Future is the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative. It brings together partners across sectors in a coordinated way to lift families and communities out of poverty, malnutrition and food insecurity.

www.feedthefuture.gov