

New partnership to reduce hunger, poverty in Africa

DAKAR: USAID and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) recently announced the Scaling Seeds and Technologies Partnership, a US\$47 million, three-year partnership intended to accelerate smallholder farm access to transformative agricultural technologies.



The partnership will work in four countries within the G8's New Alliance for Food Security - Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, and Tanzania - where it will help governments strengthen their seed sectors and promote the commercialisation, distribution and adoption of improved seeds and other key technologies. The partnership aims to increase production of high-quality seeds by 45 percent in three years and ensure that 40 percent more farmers gain access to innovative agricultural technologies.

When the New Alliance was launched, President Obama and others pledged to leverage technology's transformative power by taking innovation to scale. To accomplish this, they committed to a series of enabling actions to promote adoption of agricultural technologies: setting yield targets that support country-defined agricultural goals, identifying key innovations that can help farmers reach those targets, harnessing information and communication technologies to support agricultural growth, and promoting policy reforms to improve the enabling environment for agricultural investment that will lift millions out of poverty.

Help deliver on New Alliance commitments

The Scaling Seeds and Technologies Partnership will help deliver on these New Alliance commitments. By strengthening seed and input sectors, the partnership's efforts will leverage technology's tremendous potential to spur agricultural growth in Africa, which in turn can catalyse broad-based economic growth, improve smallholder incomes, and reduce hunger, poverty and stunting in children. These gains will also help partner governments meet the country-determined agricultural priorities they set during the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Plan (CAADP) process.

"The Scaling Seeds and Technologies Partnership will help strengthen seed sectors, including regulatory systems, and create new local seed companies, ensuring that game-changing technologies can reach and improve the lives of millions of smallholders," said USAID administrator Rajiv Shah. "The United States will continue to support this and other New Alliance efforts through Feed the Future, President Obama's global hunger and food security initiative."

Seeds suited to Africa

"We have seen great progress in the development of seeds and other agricultural technologies in recent years. Crucially, these are seeds that are suited to Africa's soil, weather and needs - they hold tremendous promise for Africa's smallholder farmers. AGRA has been working with our partners across the continent: We have supplied 57,000 metric tons of seeds and released over 300 improved seed varieties. This partnership with USAID will enable us to scale up this work and ensure that even more smallholder farmers can benefit from these extraordinary technologies," said Jane Karuku, president of AGRA.

By helping African farmers access improved seeds, inputs, and complementary technologies, the Scaling Seeds and

Technologies Partnership helps boost agricultural productivity, food security, and economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa. To kick off its new coordination role, the Seeds and Technologies Partnership held an inaugural workshop this week in Nairobi, Kenya, where USAID and AGRA representatives consulted with key government, research, donor and private-sector partners on strategies for coordination and collaboration. These discussions mark the first in a series of in-depth, national level dialogues on scaling up farmers' access to agricultural innovations in New Alliance countries.

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