



PRESS RELEASE

Access to Seeds Index - SACAU Regional Workshop

Workshop to feed discussion about how and where seed companies can do more for smallholder farmers

The Access to Seeds Foundation (ATSF), in collaboration with the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU), will host a regional workshop on 28-29 November in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The Access to Seeds Index (ATSI), published for the first time in February 2016, measures and compares the world's leading seed companies based on their efforts to improve access to seeds for smallholder farmers. It is also the first index to assess regional companies alongside their global peers, focusing for the first time on Eastern Africa.

The aim of this workshop is to increase the scope of understanding about the practices and challenges in obtaining access to seeds in the SACAU region. In addition, it will give farmers and their representatives the opportunity to provide crucial input on the Index methodology structure. Representing one of ATSF's main contributors, the workshop will be addressed by the Agricultural Counsellor of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in South Africa.

Access to quality seeds will play an important role in increasing agricultural productivity of smallholder farmers. It will also be instrumental in achieving the SDG targets related to ending hunger and achieving food security by 2030. The private sector - in this case field crop and vegetable seed companies on both global and regional scales - possess the technology and capacity to make access to quality seeds a reality.

With funding from AgriCord and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), this workshop will bring together nearly all of SACAU's member organizations and/or their members, thus strengthening the voice of smallholder farmers in a global dialogue about how and where the seed industry can step up its efforts in improving access to seeds. Representation from farmers' and seed producers' organizations from Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Seychelles, Tanzania and Zimbabwe is anticipated.

The Access to Seeds Index is maintained by Access to Seeds Foundation, an independent foundation based in Amsterdam, Netherlands.