Seed sector in Myanmar

The Myanmar seed industry has great potential, owing to the country’s strategic position and proximity to major markets in the region, such as China, Bangladesh and Thailand.

The National Seed Policy of 2016 clearly demarcates the activities of the public and private sectors. The policy aims to increase the role of the private sector in producing registered and certified seed and providing quality assurance.

In 2017, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation approved the Road Map for Myanmar’s Seed Sector: 2017-2020, which emphasizes the need to enforce a regulatory framework.

Steps have been taken to set up a Myanmar seed association, with support from East-West Seed, among others.

Since 2002, GM Bt cotton has been planted in Myanmar. In 2017-18, 0.3 million hectares of insect-resistant GM Bt cotton was grown, equivalent to 90% of the total cotton acreage, but still using the Bt varieties first released in 2002. Myanmar is the only country in Southeast Asia without a legal national biosafety framework, and hence field testing and approval of additional Bt cotton varieties has not taken place.

Observations

Fourteen index companies report having a presence in Myanmar. East-West Seed has testing, seed production, seed processing and extension activities, and 100% of its seed production in the country is carried out by smallholder farmers.

None of the companies report breeding locations, which can be attributed to the political changes Myanmar has undergone and a weak policy environment. Companies appear to have entered the country relatively recently. Membership of UPOV might encourage the seed sector to invest further, including in breeding activities.

Breeding, processing and provision of extension services are the main areas of improvement for companies.

Company activities identified in Myanmar

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<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Crops in portfolio</th>
<th>Company activities in country</th>
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<td>Field crops</td>
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Other local companies identified in the regional landscaping study and their activities

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