

CONCEPT NOTE: 3RD RWANDA NATIONAL SEED CONGRESS 2026;
Date: 20th - 21st July 2026

Theme: “Seeds as a Strategic Engine for National Transformation: Advancing a Competitive, and Private-Sector-Led Seed System for Food Security, Jobs and Trade”.

1.0 BACKGROUND AND STRATEGIC RATIONALE

Africa’s population is projected to reach 2.5 billion by 2050, requiring substantial increases in food production, productivity, and resilience, alongside the creation of millions of jobs, particularly for youth. Agriculture and agribusiness, underpinned by strong and efficient seed systems, offer the most viable pathway to achieving these objectives.

Improved seed is globally recognized as the most cost-effective agricultural technology, capable of increasing yields by 20–40%, enhancing climate resilience, accelerating the adoption of modern farming practices, and maximizing returns on complementary investments such as fertilizers, irrigation, and mechanization. Consequently, strong seed systems are fundamental to delivering the ambitions of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the African Union’s broader food systems transformation agenda.

In Rwanda, despite notable investments in agricultural transformation, productivity across major crops remains below potential. This is largely driven by limited and inconsistent access to quality seed—one of the most critical constraints in the sector. While adoption rates are relatively high among large-scale farmers for crops such as maize (70.4%) and paddy rice (58.5%), uptake remains low for vegetables (37.6%), wheat (9.9%), and Irish potatoes (3.7%), reflecting uneven access across value chains.

Persistent yield gaps further point to systemic challenges related to seed quality, affordability, and distribution. Addressing these constraints through strengthened seed systems, increased production of quality seed, and more efficient distribution networks will be essential to achieving Rwanda’s National Strategy for Transformation (NST2) productivity targets.

1.2 PRIVATE SEED SECTORS’ STRATEGIC CONTEXT FOR NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

To address these challenges, the National Seed Association of Rwanda (NSAR), in collaboration with the Rwanda Private Sector Federation, developed the **Private Sector Strategic Roadmap for Rwanda Seed Industry 2030**. This roadmap positions the seed sector as a strategic economic driver rather than a traditional input market, contributing to: food and nutrition security, agricultural productivity and climate resilience, export competitiveness and regional trade, job creation and youth employment, rural income growth and financial inclusion, and digital innovation and biotechnology adoption

The roadmap promotes cross-ministerial collaboration—spanning agriculture, trade, finance, environment, ICT, local government, and labour—to ensure coherence between seed policy reform, private sector growth, climate action, and digital transformation.

1.3 LEARNING'S FROM THE 1ST AND 2ND NATIONAL SEED CONGRESSES

The **1st Rwanda National Seed Congress (2023)** and the **2nd Rwanda National Seed Congress (2024)** provided important platforms for dialogue among key stakeholders, including policymakers, researchers, seed companies, financial institutions, and development partners from across four continents.

These engagements generated several key recommendations including: (i) strengthen public–private partnerships (PPPs) to drive implementation of the Seed Industry Roadmap, (ii) enhance human, infrastructure, and institutional capacity for seed testing and certification (ISTA and OECD standards), (iii) strengthen NSAR's role as a self-regulatory body, (iv) promote crop improvement innovations, including biotechnology, alongside farmer awareness initiatives, (v) increase agricultural financing through tailored financial products and risk-sharing mechanisms, and position Rwanda as a regional hub for seed production and trade.

1.4 SHOWCASING PRIVATE SEED SECTOR ECOSYSTEM TRANSFORMATION DURING THE 3RD NATIONAL SEED CONGRESS

Building on previous congresses and emerging progress, the **3rd Rwanda National Seed Congress (RNSC 2026)** will serve as a high-level platform to accelerate implementation of the Seed Industry Roadmap and position Rwanda as a regional seed hub and prospective host of the ISTA Congress 2028.

Overall Objective:

To showcase the role of the private sector in driving national seed system transformation and to accelerate the development of a resilient, inclusive, and globally competitive seed sector.

Specific Objectives:

- 1. Enhance Policy and Regulatory Coherence:** Promote harmonized policies and regulatory frameworks to facilitate efficient seed systems and reduce trade barriers.
- 2. Strengthen Variety Development and Production:** Support investment in climate-resilient, high-yielding, and market-responsive varieties.
- 3. Accelerate Private Sector Investment and Commercialization**
Identify scalable business models, PPPs, and financing mechanisms.
- 4. Advance Innovation and Technology Adoption:** Promote climate-smart seeds, biotechnology, digital traceability, and AI-enabled systems.

5. Promote Inclusion and Skills Development: Increase youth and women participation and strengthen professionalization within the seed sector.

The Congress will foster a multisectoral approach, aligning with Rwanda's Vision 2050, NST2, PSTA 5, Green Growth Strategy, and AfCFTA frameworks.

1.5 STRUCTURE AND APPROACH

The Congress will be held over two days and will include:

- **High-level plenary sessions** for strategic dialogue and policy direction
- **Technical sessions** focused on implementation, financing, technology, markets, and human capital development

Each session will generate actionable outputs, including policy recommendations, investment briefs, technical roadmaps, and partnership commitments.

1.7 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The Congress is expected to deliver tangible progress in Rwanda's seed sector, including:

1. Strengthened regulatory frameworks and enhanced certification capacity (ISTA/OECD).
2. Accelerated adoption of climate-resilient and high-yielding seed technologies.
3. Improved quality assurance systems and stakeholder collaboration.
4. Enhanced seed market systems and distribution channels.
5. Expanded investment opportunities and PPP pipelines.
6. Increased inclusion of youth and women, alongside improved skills and financial access.
7. Strengthened multisectoral coordination for roadmap implementation.

1.9 TARGET PARTICIPANTS.

The Congress will convene over 300 participants, including Government officials and regulators, Seed companies and private sector investors, Development partners and financial institutions, Regional economic communities (RECs), Research and academic institutions, Farmers' organizations, Youth and women representatives and Technology and digital solution providers

2.0 A CALL TO COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR RWANDA'S SEED SECTOR TRANSFORMATION

The National Seed Association of Rwanda (NSAR) invites all strategic partners and stakeholders to participate in the **3rd Rwanda National Seed Congress 2026** and commit to collective action in building a resilient, competitive, and future-ready seed system for Rwanda.

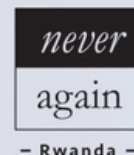


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