Seeds for Impact Programme
Promoting access to improved seed.
Africa is the world’s second largest continent home to 1.2 billion people, most of whom live in rural areas.

The majority of this rural population live in extreme poverty and over 600 million people lack access to electricity. Driven by our mission of enhancing a prosperous and enterprising rural Africa, AECF invests in Agribusiness and Renewable Energy & Climate Technologies that have the potential to disrupt markets.

AECF works where others will not; investing in emerging, post-conflict and transitioning states to create new markets and funding businesses to scale their operations for under-served and hard to reach populations. As AECF acknowledges that we cannot achieve this on our own we forge strategic partnerships with investees and key stakeholders to leverage knowledge and resources to create jobs and improve lives in rural Africa.
Globally the provision and adoption of improved seed and planting material for many crops has raised productivity, improved the lives of millions of farmers and increased the availability of low cost nutritious food in both rural and urban markets. Africa, however, has so far not sufficiently benefitted from this productivity increase. Crop yields for the smallholder farmers who dominate African agriculture are the lowest in the world, due in part to limited access to quality inputs and improved seed varieties suitable for the different climatic conditions, soils and production systems across the continent. Consequently, Africa now imports up to US $35 billion worth of food annually, an amount that is predicted to increase to US $110 billion by 2025.

Improved seed over local varieties underpins agricultural transformation and improvements in productivity needed to feed the continent. The African seed market has great potential for growth given that improved seed is currently available for less than 10% of total arable acreage in sub-Saharan Africa. Small and medium sized African private seed producers can make available culturally and climate appropriate seed varieties. These companies can sustainably reach large numbers of smallholder farmers, but face challenges in getting new varieties to market. Although investment funds are available for larger companies, reaching the ‘missing middle’ of businesses starting to scale requires patient and flexible financing.

Making these seed markets work also needs to effectively include other actors in the value chain-suppliers of other quality inputs to improve productivity; private and public institutions to make available early generation seed; and innovative agricultural technology providers who can link farmers to finance, improve agricultural productivity and integrate producers with markets.

Why invest in the Seed sector?

The programme offers financial and technical assistance to seed companies and supports linkages in value chains to enable 
includin publicly-bred varieties.

Revolution in Africa and the Syn/menta

Seeds for Impact is a US $60 million

600,000 Smallholder Farmers

Concessional loans / Grant s

Programme snap shot

6 Year Programme

10 million seed funding

3 million

60 million fund

10 million seed funding

600,000 Smallholder Farmers
Seeds Impact Programme

Seeds for Impact is a US $60 million programme implemented by AECF with initial funding from the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa and the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture that seeks to address the funding gap faced by scaling seed companies in their quest to produce improved seed for staple crops, including publicly-bred varieties.

The programme offers financial and technical assistance to seed companies and supports linkages in value chains to enable access to improved seed for smallholder farmers across Africa.

Programme snap shot

- 60 million fund
- 10 million seed funding
- 6 Year Programme
- Rolling competitions
- Funding: Concessional loans / Grants
- 600,000 Smallholder Farmers reached with improved varieties
- 3 million people reached
What are we funding?

- Solutions that improve how seed market systems work for smallholder farmers
- Novel approaches in growing Africa’s seed sector, effectively including women and youth
- Models that seek to scale new, in-demand publicly-bred varieties of food crops (climate-smart and nutrition focus to be considered an advantage).
- Ability to leverage partnerships that increase the availability of other key inputs necessary for maximising the benefits of improved varieties of seed and that enable farmers’ access to appropriate finance, extension services, technologies and output markets.
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