



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Seed Security and Resilience: Gender perspectives

Shawn McGuire





A. Seed Security

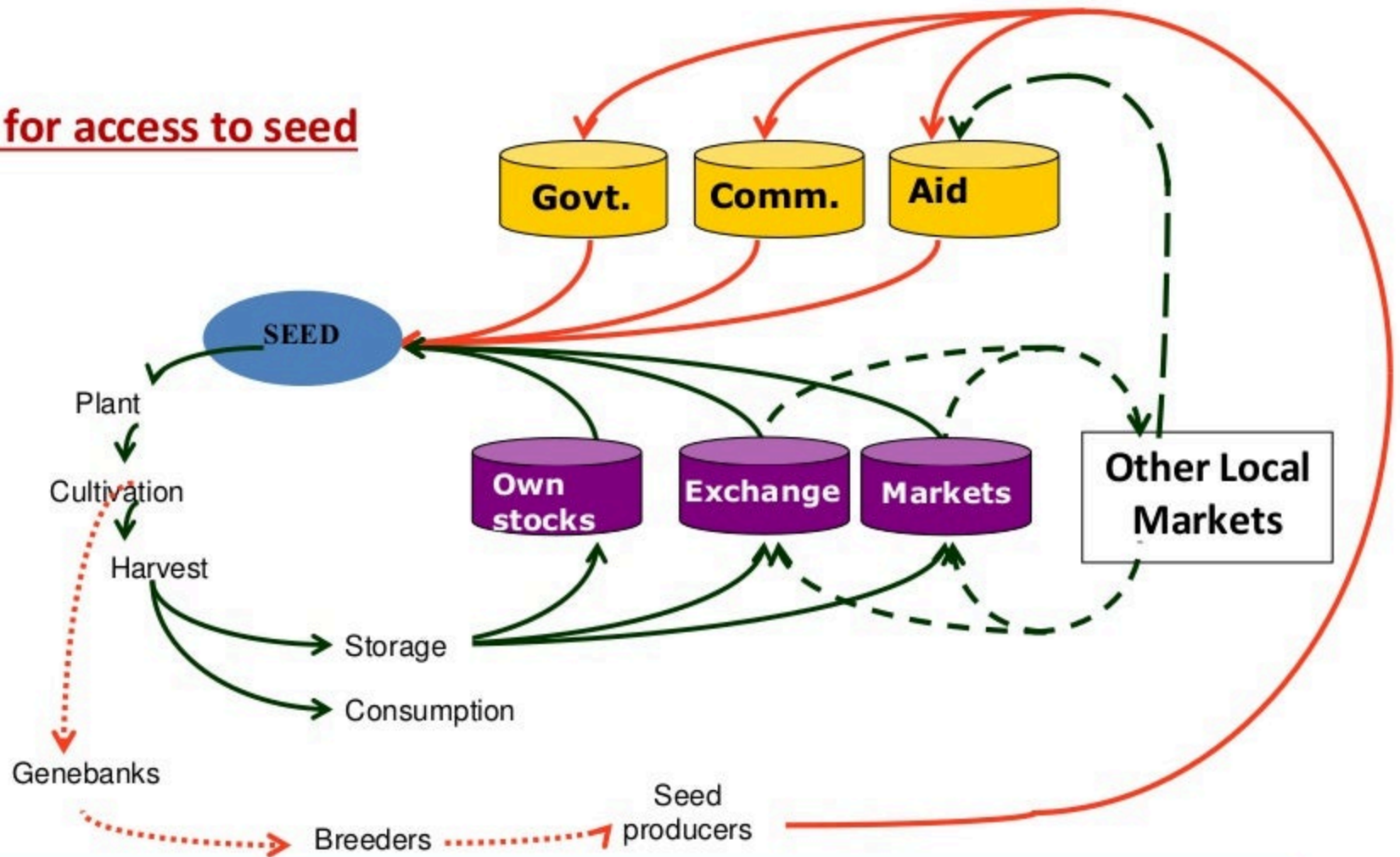
= Farmers are able to access the quality seeds and planting materials they desire at time of sowing

3 dimensions

- 1. Availability** – is there seed in the area, at time of sowing?
- 2. Access** – can farmers buy / barter / borrow seed
(*also, related knowledge*)?
- 3. Quality**
 - **Genetic** – adapted to environments, traits farmers want?
 - **Seed** - healthy, free of contaminants, can germinate?

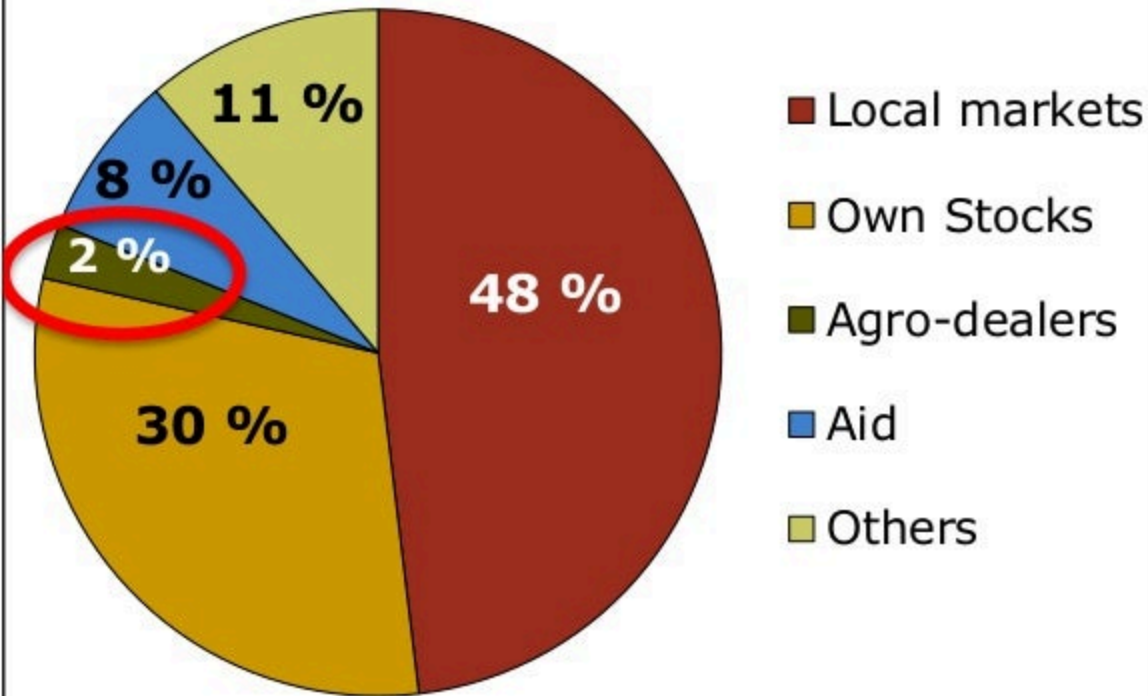
Formal and informal systems

Channels for access to seed



Seed sources smallholders use

**% of all seed supplied –
all crops (n=10 076)**



- Informal sources dominate
- **Purchase is important**
– mostly in local markets
- Farmer-farmer exchange?



(Data from: Haiti, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, South Sudan,
Democratic Republic of the Congo; McGuire and Sperling, 2016)



Gender and seed security

- **Availability** – (not normally limiting)

Gender: Which crop? E.g. vegetative, neglected / underutilised?

- **ACCESS** – frequently a constraint

Gender: Purchasing power, information channels, mobility, links to financial or policy support

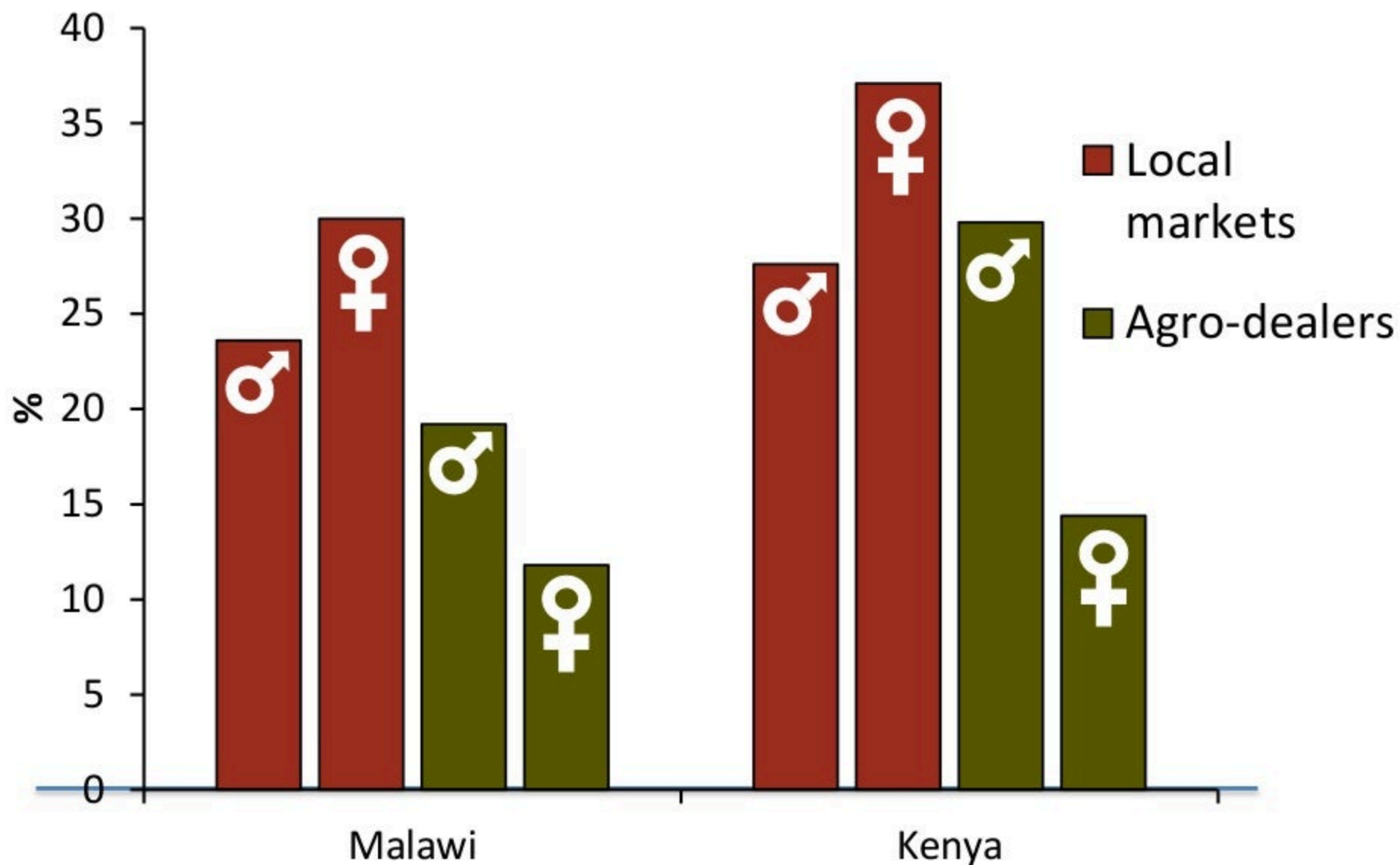
- **Quality** – can be a constraint

Gender: linked to access; support for on-farm storage,



Local Markets and Gender – maize

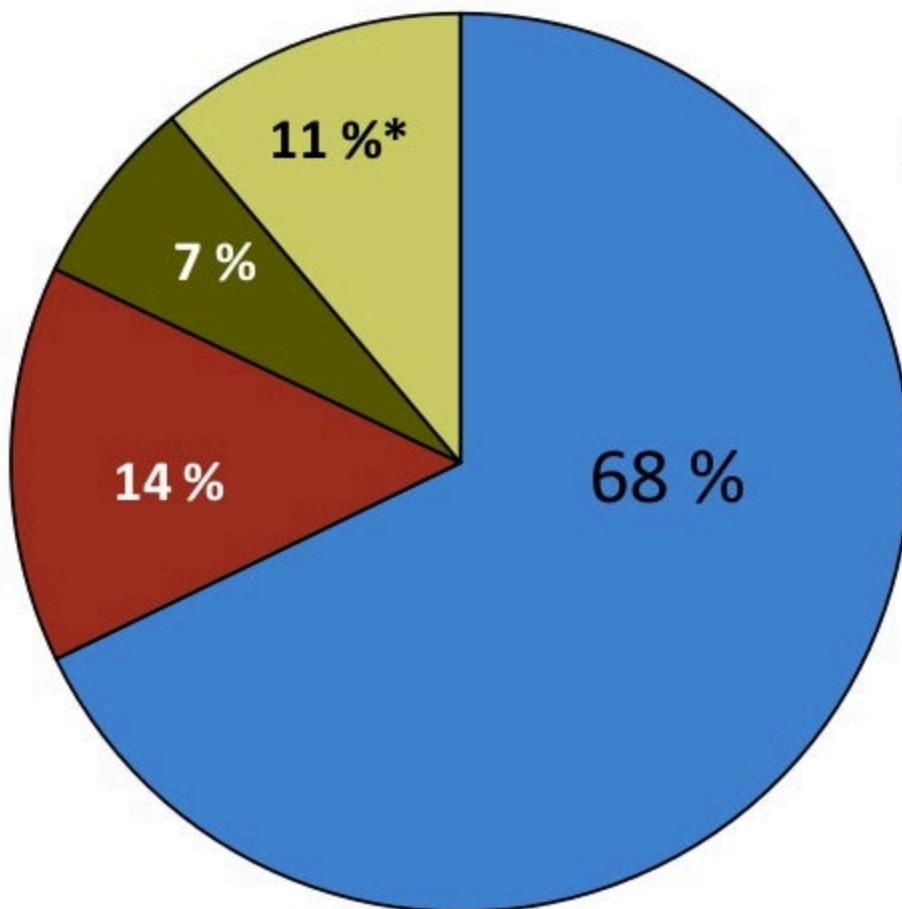
n=464





Sources of new varieties

(n=1, 683)

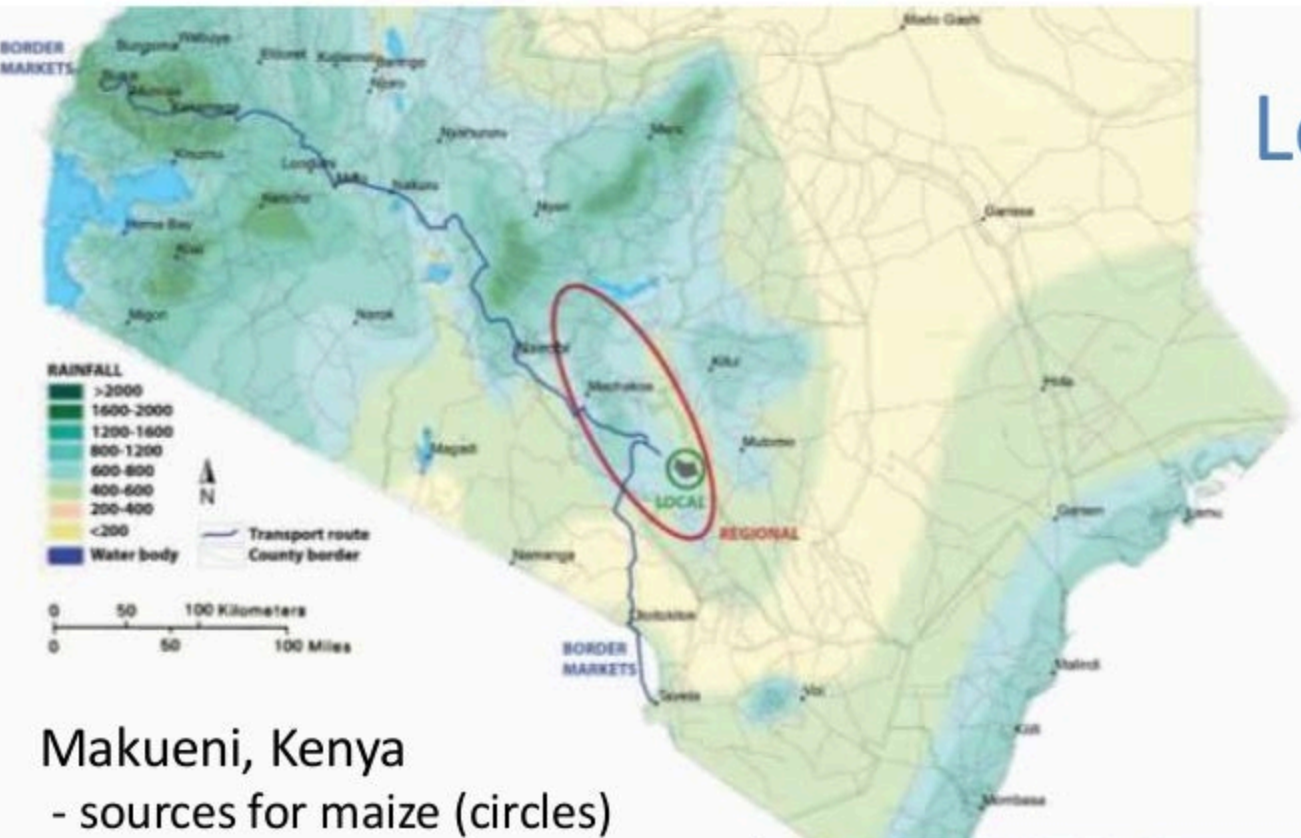


37% of farmers- across crops

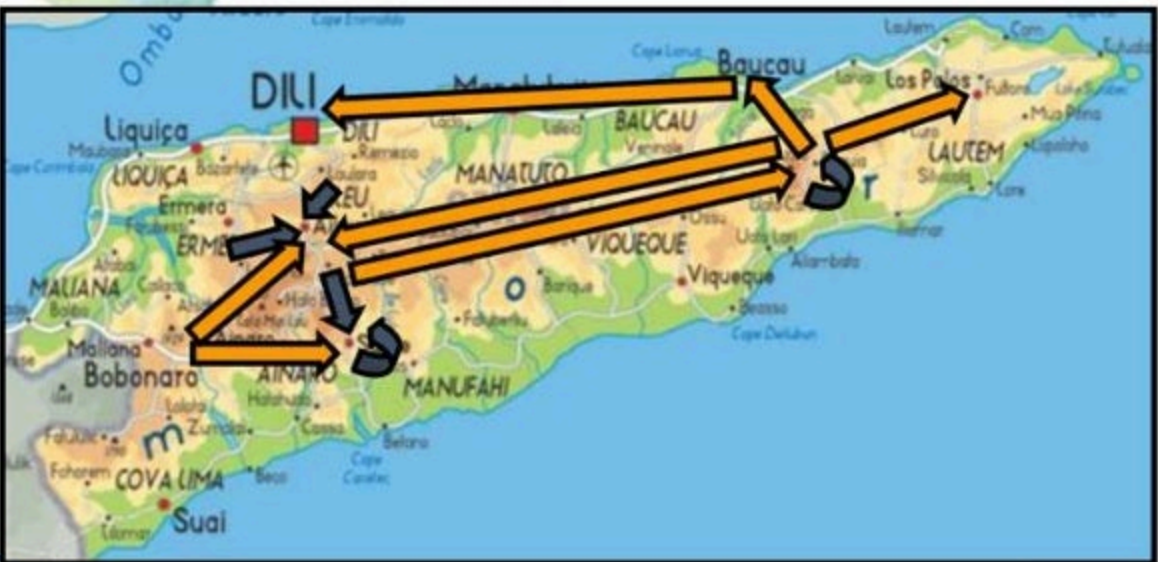
- NGO/Gov't assistance
- Local markets
- Agro-dealers
- Others

* Incl.: social networks 7.5%; contract growers 0.2%
community seed groups 1.7% ; other 1.7%

Local markets



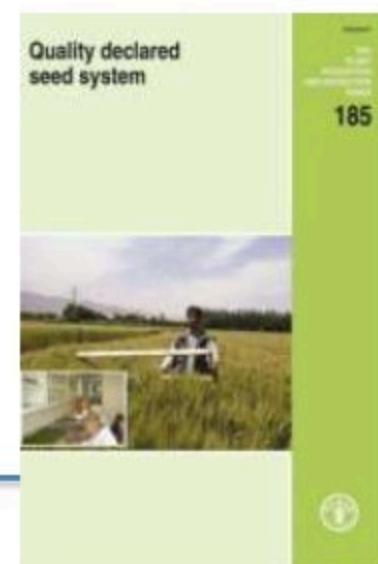
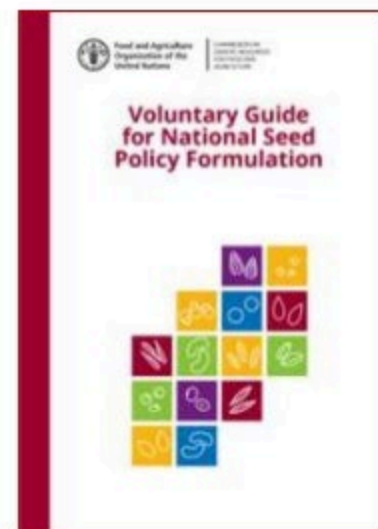
- Makueni, Kenya
- sources for maize (circles)
 - supply corridor for beans (line)



Flow of bean seed in Timor-Leste

B. Quality Declared Seed / Planting Material

- Some countries have adopted: **Quality Declared Seed / Planting Material**
- Aim: **expand reach** of formal system (geography, crops, producers); fill gaps; bring quality seed to smallholders at **affordable prices**
- Successes in Uganda – production of legume QDS expanded, prices lower than Certified seed
- Potential to **improve access**, expand **market opportunities**?
- Needs access to Foundation seed, technical and institutional support, an enabling environment, effective distribution and marketing
- Many questions remain, particularly around farmer **demand**, **benefits**, impact on **diversification**





C. Resilience

FAO's Resilience strategy has 4 pillars

1. Enable the environment – policy frameworks and institutions
2. Watch to Safeguard – early warning systems
3. Apply Risk and vulnerability reduction measures – Seed security, natural resource management, adaptation planning
4. Prepare and respond – seed reserves, contingency plans; humanitarian assistance, social protection





Resilience and seed systems

- **Diversity** important –germplasm, channels, business models
- Range of **flexible** responses needed → crop and variety portfolios, farmer choice
- Comes via **Systems**, not assets: Not only a variety trait



Some areas for action

1. **Identifying varieties** suited to different scenarios: 'crop/seed systems in reserve';
2. **Enhancing availability** of diverse varieties;
3. **Ensuring access** to diverse seed, for vulnerable;
4. **Information systems** to build knowledge of all seed chain actors of supply, demand, adaptation - and *continued learning*;
5. **Expand crop/variety repertoires, seek opportunities.** Linking seed systems to dynamic elements – e.g. commercial opportunities, crossing geographic boundaries



Examples

- Demonstration plots, Farmer Field Schools, seed fairs
- Decentralize and **diversify seed production**
- Supporting access: use diverse supply channels
- Supporting access: financial services, social protection. Also - insurance? Unconditional cash?
- ICT - Early warning systems, market information
- Regional harmonization of seed policies



Practical tools



A **six-module Toolkit** to support the development of farmer-led and smaller-scale seed enterprises (English, French and Spanish)

- Development of Small-Scale Seed Enterprises
- Seed Processing
- Seed Quality Assurance
- Seed Sector Regulation
- Seed Marketing
- Seed Storage

<http://www.fao.org/seeds/en/>



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THANK YOU!



Shawn McGuire shawn.mcguire@fao.org

Seed security Officer

Plant Production and Protection Division

FAO, Rome
