



TERMS OF REFERENCE OF REFERENCE FOR THE SECRETARIAT OF THE AFRICAN SEED AND BIOTECHNOLOGY PLATFORM

1.0 Background

The Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union (AU) in Sirte, Libya, on 5 July 2005 recognized the importance of collective action in confronting the technical and legal challenges faced by African governments in the establishment of effective and efficient seed systems as well as enhancing application of biotechnologies and methodologies within the seed sector. The Assembly, therefore, directed the African Union Commission in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (AUC) to develop a comprehensive programme for the revitalization of the African seed sector in Africa. As a result, the African Seed and Biotechnology Programme (ASBP) was endorsed by the AU Assembly of 2007 as a strategic framework for the development of the seed sector in Africa (Assembly/AU/Dec. 135(VIII)).

Cognisant that the implementation of this program is the responsibility of all stakeholders under the coordination of the AUC, the 3rd Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (STC, ARDWE) recommended the establishment of an institutional framework to facilitate the implementation of the ASBP at national, regional and continental levels. Consequently, the African Union Commission-Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture embarked on a series of activities that culminated in validation of the African Seed and Biotechnology Partnership Platform Operational Guidelines during a virtual meeting of seed sector stakeholders held on 4 September 2020. Among the essential elements of the Governance structure is the aspect the Secretariat hosted by an African institution with a proven record on seed systems development in Africa.

2.0 Functions of the Secretariat

In general, the Secretariat will provide administrative and logistical support to the operations of the Governance structure of the African Seed and Biotechnology Platform including the Steering Group, Working Groups and General Assembly.

In specific terms, the Secretariat will

1. In collaboration with the African Union Commission-Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, coordinate and facilitate activities by the various bodies for the effective functioning of the Platform;
2. Support organization of advocacy activities;

3. Support resource mobilization efforts for the functioning of the Platform;
4. Initiate and promote linkages among stakeholders;
5. Support generation of and information sharing on seed system development projects on the continent;
6. Develop an annual workplan aligned to the ten year action plan of the ASBP;
7. Produce an annual report on the implementation of the ASBP.

3.0 Proposed Criteria for the ASB Platform Secretariat

The institution to host the ASB Secretariat will be proposed by the Steering Group, adopted by the GA and endorsed. The process will be referred to the AU Policy Organs including the Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment for endorsement. After approval, a Host Agreement will be signed between the institution and AUC.

4.0 The guiding set of selection criteria for the host institution:

1. A legally registered and reputable intergovernmental or regional institution with seed¹ sector and biotechnology development as its core mandate;
2. There should be appropriate and efficient modern infrastructure especially telecommunication facilities to enable the Secretariat to function efficiently. The institution has to have adequate office space and facilities with a permanent address, (physical location, email, website);
3. A proven record of past and present initiatives contributing towards the goal of the ASBP: To contribute to increased food security and nutrition and to poverty alleviation in Africa, through the establishment of effective and efficient seed systems and enhanced application of biotechnologies and methodologies within the seed sector;
4. Proven technical and financial capacity to undertake the responsibility of the Secretariat of the ASBP Platform and enhance the implementation of the ASBP Agenda. This includes the ability to recruit and support at least two staff to run the Secretariat (one ASB Platform Coordinator and an Administrative Assistant);
5. Working languages of the Secretariat are in line with AU languages (at least English and French);
6. Experience in working with national, regional, continental and global institutions;
7. Proven record of strong partnerships and collaboration with national regional, continental and global institutions to achieve the objectives of ASBP;
8. The General Assembly of the ASB Platform may decide on the transfer of the Platform to another host, in the event that the host secretariat concerned is in

¹ A seed refers to the product of the fertilization of mature ovule (or egg) by pollen (plants) or sperm (animals), but propagation of germplasm can also be facilitated using 'pre-seed' (e.g. pollen/sperm or unfertilized egg) or and 'post-seed' (e.g. seedlings or Day-Old Chicks) stages of development.

breach of these criteria or the host agreement, or in case of natural or other disaster that has the effect of making the Secretariat unable to function;

9. The present criteria shall be reviewed periodically when deemed appropriate by the ASBP Governance structure.

5.0 Motivation for hosting the Secretariat of the ASB Platform

1. AUC will support building strategic partnerships and high level advocacy for seed related initiatives, projects and programmes;
2. AUC will support resource mobilization efforts to advance the activities of the Platform;
3. AUC will support capacity building efforts for the host institution;
4. AUC will provide the host institution opportunities to participate in high level events including AU Assembly, Specialized Technical Committees, CAADP Partnership Platform Meetings including drafting documents to influence the seed sector agenda in Africa.