



Director – Seed Systems (CESSA)

Location: Nairobi, Kenya

Job Reference: DSS/CTE/12/2024

AGRA and its Work

AGRA is an African-led institution that actively supports the drive towards inclusive agricultural transformation and sustainable food systems. We do this by empowering the continent's 33 million small-farming households to transform their agriculture from a struggle to survive to profitable businesses. The continent's farmers regularly face challenges, and we aspire to provide uniquely African solutions that respond to their agricultural and environmental challenges, leading to increased harvests for reduced hunger and more income.

Working in alignment with the development priorities of our focus countries, we enable farmers to access improved and high-yielding seeds, gain knowledge on sustainable farming, and link to profitable markets. In our work, we aspire to build the alliances, partnerships, and networks required to drive an inclusive agricultural transformation. We work with our partners to create an equitable youth-friendly environment that harnesses the youth dividend on the continent to drive growth and facilitate open employment opportunities for young women and men. We achieve our key objectives through a focus on the following areas of intervention:

1. Policy and state capability - We support governments in creating an enabling environment for private sector involvement in agricultural transformation.
2. Seed systems – We trigger higher productivity by increasing the availability and access to improved seeds by farmers allowing them to increase their harvests for food security and better incomes.
3. Sustainable farming – We support farmers in building resilient farming systems for sustained high yields through interventions such as mechanization and irrigation.
4. Inclusive markets, Trade, and trade – We work to increase the linkages between farmers, and other market actors for a positive, sustained cycle of commercialization and reinvestment.
5. Youth, Gender, and Inclusiveness – We enable women and youth to contribute to and benefit from agriculture for their economic empowerment.

Implementing Our New Strategy Through People

People are the heart of our organization and remain the true drivers of our delivery and our impact.

We work with incredible people and partners who have roots in farming communities across the continent combined with an inclusive and diverse workforce from over 24 nationalities. Our commitment to a call to action goes beyond ourselves as we arise to catalyze African Food Systems' transformation by being *Deeply collaborative, Executing Excellently, Sincerely Constructive, and Increasingly Entrepreneurial* aligned with our values of (I-RISE; Integrity, Respect, Innovation, Stewardship, and Equity).

We are looking for people who are passionate about Africa to join our innovative, growing, and multidisciplinary team. Together, we can grow Africa's food systems by improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. Want to join us?



The Position

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The Director – Seed Systems (CESSA - Center of Excellence for Seed Systems Africa) is a senior member of the Center of Technical Expertise division. In this role, he/she will provide strategic direction for the Seed Centre of Excellence and play an integral role in program development, management of the seed systems component of a multi-country program, and monitoring of impact in all countries AGRA operates. The role is key in ensuring collaboration between Seed Systems teams with each other, across other technical areas and program delivery areas. The role drives the design and oversight of all elements of AGRA's technical programs and strategy under the Center of Excellence for Seed Systems Africa.

The ideal candidate will set and champion a strong vision for strengthening CESSA within the AGRA 3.0 strategy context, and provide technical guidance on the development, deployment, and implementation of technologies, practices, and innovations from the various disciplines aimed at transforming seed systems at the country, regional and continental levels. The Director of the Center of Excellence for Seed Systems Africa will constantly mine the global realm of technologies and learnings in Seed Systems and match them to both articulated and unarticulated consumer needs to drive the agricultural sector and AGRA business.

Key Duties and Responsibilities:

- Lead and act as a scout for new technologies/initiatives in the Center of Excellence for Seed Systems Africa ensuring that new technologies and initiatives are transferred to continental, regional, and country-level program delivery.
- Recommend deployment and utilization of new products, create enticing product claims, evaluate crop varieties, and identify cost-saving opportunities.
- Provide technical assistance to technical teams within their function overseeing their general management, including program development, delivery, and evaluation, as well as fundraising, budget setting, knowledge management, and all external relationship management.
- Strategizes and directs the technical teams within the function and leads systems development activities.
- Ensure strong support for AGRA's program delivery teams to rapidly accelerate the development of country and regional seed systems while ensuring access and adoption of certified seed by smallholder farmers on a national scale.
- Address through systems approach major weak spots emerging from the Seed SAT analysis, such as coordination, also with agro-processors, policy enabling environment, seed quality, and early generation seed access.
- Collaborate closely with other colleagues and teams, especially within the Centre for Technical Expertise, to ensure alignment on project goals, effective use of resources, and explore innovation possibilities. Ensuring a very strong link with our Inclusive Markets team, our Policy and State Capability Team, our Sustainable Farming team, our Gender, Youth and Inclusion Team, and our Analytics team is essential.



- Nurture and develop professional relationships with various agricultural institutions and industry personnel through electronic and oral communications and by attending and/or participating in professional meetings and field days.
- Inspire and grow teamwork, partnership, and collaboration among the CESSA team and the Centre for Technical Expertise division to raise overall team contributions and performance.
- Direct and provide coaching to technical and administrative staff within the function.
- Enable talent management and development of existing staff, acquiring new staff as necessary, and managing team dynamics to ensure high-performance and positive employee experience.
- Communicates results through presentations and written and verbal communication.
- Review project standards and goals, direct execution of projects where required, and evaluate progress through regular performance reviews.
- Review the scope of work, provide input, and evaluate funding proposals.

Key Qualifications and Experience Required:

- Masters in agricultural science and management or a related area.
- Experience in agricultural development in Africa including at least 5 years in senior management role.
- Demonstrate industry experience in product development, marketing, business case, and a strong understanding of the economics of the seed industry. deployment, report development, and communications.
- Specialization in Seed Systems development is an advantage.
- Fluency in English is required; the ability to communicate in French will be considered an asset.
- Possess a deep understanding of seed production, processing, storage, quality control, certification, and distribution systems. This includes knowledge of various seed technologies relevant to the target crops and contexts.
- Familiarity with plant breeding principles and the development of improved crop varieties, including an understanding of germplasm management and varietal selection.
- Broad knowledge of agricultural practices, cropping systems, and the challenges faced by farmers in the target regions. This includes an understanding of agronomy, soil science, and pest and disease management.
- Ability to analyze seed markets, identify opportunities, and develop strategies for improving seed access and marketing. This includes understanding pricing strategies and business models for seed businesses.
- Demonstrated ability to manage budgets effectively, track expenditures, and ensure responsible use of resources including an understanding of grant management and financial reporting.
- Must be able to inspire others toward a common vision and foster trust ethical behavior, and development of others by providing a supportive environment for enhanced performance and professional growth.

If you believe you are the right candidate for this position, kindly submit your application with a detailed CV (including your e-mail and telephone contacts) to recruit@agra.org. Please quote the job reference number **DSS/CTE/12/2024** in the subject line of the application e-mail.



Applications must be received on or before 29th January 2025. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

For more information on the AGRA, visit www.agra.org.

AGRA is an Equal Opportunity Employer