

Design and deploy inclusive funding mechanisms for FMSS

This factsheet is the fourth of five highlighting key advocacy messages addressing gaps in the African Union's draft Farmer Managed Seed Systems Policy 2025. For full context, read it alongside the complete document available [here](#).

Farmer Managed Seed Systems (FMSS) are community-based seed systems led by smallholder farmers, especially women. They provide more than 80% of Africa's seed and are central to seed and food sovereignty. FMSS are:

- Rooted in traditional knowledge and cultural practices.
- Biodiverse, resilient and cost-effective.
- Adapted to local agroecological conditions.
- Vital for climate adaptation, food security and ecosystem restoration.

Core message

The AU FMSS policy must include clear, inclusive funding mechanisms that channel resources directly to farmer-led innovation, not just commercial or donor-driven agendas. The draft policy references resource mobilisation but lacks concrete proposals. It leans on public-private partnerships (PPPs), which often exclude smallholders and promote dependency. The policy must:

- Redirect Farm Input Subsidy Programmes to support FMSS.
- Invest in solidarity-based finance—cooperatives, savings groups, seed banks.
- Audit and reallocate public R&D budgets to back farmer-led innovation.

Call to action

- Shift resources toward what already works: farmer-led, local systems.
- Recognise FMSS as investment-worthy, not informal or secondary.
- Design funding to empower farmers—not just attract private sector interest.
- Build long-term resilience, not short-term dependency.

Link to key frameworks

- **UNDROP & UNDRIP** – Farmer and Indigenous peoples' rights to seed and development.
- **CBD & Post-2020 GBF** – In situ biodiversity conservation.
- **ITPGRFA Article 9** – Financial support for on-farm conservation.
- **Africa's Model Law** – Support for community-managed seed systems.
- **UNFCCC & NDCs** – Climate adaptation through resilient local systems.
- **Agenda 2063, CAADP** – Inclusive rural development and food system transformation.

Common objections & responses

- **Budgets are tight:** FMSS support is cost-effective and boosts resilience.
- **FISPs too complex:** FMSS integration can start with pilots and scale gradually.
- **Local models can't scale:** Community-based finance works—with the right support.
- **Risk of mismanagement:** Participatory governance reduces capture and builds trust.
- **Donor dependency is inevitable:** Local models reduce reliance and increase sustainability.

Case studies

Case studies of agroecological FMSS prove the viability and scale of this system. Read the full document [here](#) to find a range of case studies providing the evidence for FMSS based on agroecological principles and practices.