

Anchor FMSS policy in agroecology

This factsheet is one 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 Draft FMSS Policy must be anchored in agroecological values and principles. Without this, the policy risks reinforcing top-down industrial seed models that undermine Africa's existing, effective systems. The policy must embed:

- Co-creation of knowledge: Equally value farmer, Indigenous and scientific knowledge.
- Cultural relevance: Acknowledge seeds as part of identity, tradition and foodways.
- Decentralisation: Protect local control and diversity, resist harmful harmonisation.

Call to action

- Embed agroecology throughout the policy text.
- Align with Agenda 2063, CAADP and Africa's biodiversity and climate goals.
- Affirm farmers' rights to seed, culture and innovation.
- Recognise FMSS as a strategic pillar of Africa's development—not an informal exception.

Link to key frameworks

- **UNDROP & UNDRIP:** Seed and biodiversity rights for peasants and Indigenous peoples.
- **ITPGRFA:** Supports Farmers' Rights to save, use and exchange seed.
- **CBD & Post-2020 GBF:** In situ biodiversity conservation via FMSS.
- **UNFCCC & NDCs:** FMSS support climate resilience.
- **Africa's Model Law:** Upholds community and seed sovereignty rights.

Common objections & responses

- **Agroecology is less productive:** FMSS feed 70–80% of Africa and enhance resilience.
- **Agroecology lacks clarity:** Recognised globally by FAO, HLPE and African states.
- **Private sector resistance:** Agroecology enables plural seed markets and local enterprises.
- **Resource constraints:** Builds local capacity and offers low-cost, sustainable solutions.
- **Hard to govern:** Decentralised models can use digital tools for coordination.
- **Conflicts with donor agendas:** Inclusive dialogue can align diverse stakeholders.

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.