

Nigeria seed potato sector regulatory review

Initiating the improvement of seed potato regulatory practice

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August 2026



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Foreword

The development of a vibrant and sustainable potato industry in Nigeria depends significantly on farmers' access to quality seed of improved and suitable potato varieties. An effective regulatory system is therefore essential—not only to safeguard seed quality and plant health, but also to encourage innovation, private-sector participation, investment and the timely availability of improved varieties to Nigerian farmers.

This report, *Nigeria Seed Potato Sector Regulatory Review: Initiating the Improvement of Seed Potato Regulatory Practice*, is a timely contribution to ongoing efforts to strengthen Nigeria's seed potato value chain. It emanates from the seed potato regulatory review meeting held on 11 June 2026 in Jos, Plateau State, which brought together relevant stakeholders to examine opportunities for improving potato variety registration, seed potato importation and exportation, and seed potato quality assurance. The National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC) was pleased to host this important engagement.

The review is particularly important because access to affordable and reliable quality seed remains a major constraint to the growth of potato production in Nigeria. At the same time, recent developments—including the registration of additional potato varieties, increasing private-sector participation and growing national and international partnerships—provide an opportunity to strengthen the sector through appropriate regulatory reforms.

As Nigeria's statutory agency responsible for seed quality assurance, NASC recognizes that regulation must continuously respond to technological advancement, emerging production systems and the realities of farmers and seed entrepreneurs. Of particular importance is the establishment of a practical, science-based and fit-for-purpose seed potato certification system supported by effective field inspection, appropriate disease diagnostics, traceability, packaging and labelling, and competent personnel. The report appropriately identifies these areas as critical components requiring further development within the Nigerian seed potato system.

The recommendations arising from this review should therefore be regarded as an important foundation for continued dialogue and technical engagement among government regulatory institutions, research organisations, development partners, seed companies, potato producers and other stakeholders. I commend SEPIA Foundation, Sahel Consulting, Naktuinbouw, the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), and all participating institutions and stakeholders for their contributions to this initiative. NASC remains committed to working with its partners to develop a transparent, efficient and credible regulatory environment that protects farmers while enabling responsible private-sector investment and innovation.

It is my expectation that this report will serve not merely as a record of stakeholder deliberations, but as a reference for concrete actions towards a stronger seed potato regulatory and quality assurance system. Ultimately, these efforts should contribute to increased availability of quality seed potatoes, improved productivity and profitability for farmers, stronger seed enterprises, and the sustainable development of Nigeria's potato industry.

Hon. Fatuhu Muhammed
Director General/CEO NASC

Acronyms

BuZa	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
CRI	Crop Research Institute
DUS	Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FFS	Farmer Field School
FMAFS	Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
F&V	Fruits and Veggies
HTPS	Hybrid True Potato Seed
LVVN	Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature
NACGRAB	National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology
UPOV	International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants
CSP	Collaborative Seed Programme
RVO	Netherlands Enterprise Agency
NAFDAC	National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control
NAK	Nederlandse Algemene Keuringsdienst
NASC	National Agricultural Seeds Council
NRCRI	National Root Crops Research Institute
NVRC	National Crop Varieties and Livestock Breeds Registration and Release Committee
TPS	True Potato Seed
VCU	Value for Cultivation and Use
RAC	Rooted Apical Cutting

1 Introduction

This report describes the results of the Nigeria seed potato regulatory review meeting that was held on 11 June 2026 in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. In the meeting, the relevant seed potato sector stakeholders in Nigeria discussed possible changes in:

1. Potato variety registration
2. Seed potato importation and exportation
3. Seed potato quality assurance

The meeting was funded by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), and falls, although it is an independently funded event, in a collection of potato sector development efforts, funded through Netherlands private foundations (Achmea Foundation and Heineken Foundation), The Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature (LVVN), The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BuZa), and RVO. The different potato sector activities have been coordinated and implemented by Sahel Consulting and SEPIA Foundation. For this project, the Naktuinbouw from the Netherlands was coopted as a partner, and they assumed the administrative lead. The regulatory review meeting was hosted by the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC) of Nigeria.

In the meeting, the results of a rapid analysis of regulatory barriers for seed potato sector development (Gildemacher and Bello, 2026)¹ were shared. The results were used to suggest possible changes to improve the regulatory practice in the seed potato sector. The sector stakeholders present in the meeting discussed the proposed directions of change and proposed the next action required. Experts of Naktuinbouw offered insights and perspectives from the Netherlands and internationally regarding variety registration practices, to animate the discussion. At the end of the meeting, technical working groups were nominated to further advance the regulatory change efforts.

This report presents the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats as they were presented in the meeting, including the proposed practical changes to improve the seed sector regulatory practice (presentation attached as Annex 1), and the results of the stakeholder debate and the proposed next action (raw outcomes attached as Annex 2). Also attached are the presentations by the Naktuinbouw (Annex 3). Annex 4 provides the meeting programme and Annex 5 the list of participants to the meeting.

2 Background

Poor access to quality seed is the single most important constraint for growth of the potato industry in Nigeria. Nigerian potato farmers continue to be deprived of regular and reliable access to affordable quality seed.

Some improvements have been made over the last 5-10 years because of private and public efforts. Fruits & Veggies (F&V) is pioneering seed potato production and marketing. With support from CIP and funding from GIZ, it has established breeder and foundation seed production using the Rooted Apical Cutting (RAC) technology. F&V has also been pioneering domestic seed production based on importation of high-quality certified seed potatoes, and 50 community-based seed potato producers have received training in seed potato production.

¹ Gildemacher and Bello, 2026.

Over the last 10 years, 4 varieties originating from Dutch private companies and 4 varieties originating from CIP have been registered, the last one, Connect, as recently as March 2026. Nigerian-Dutch seed potato business-to-business collaboration is developing, stimulated by the Plateau State government, the RVO and the LVVN.

Two Dutch private foundations, the Achmea Foundation and the Heineken Africa Foundation, are funding a potato sector development project, focusing on the Hybrid True Potato Seed (HTPS) technology, pioneered by Solynta from The Netherlands. The technology is being piloted in Nigeria, and the first varieties are expected to be registered by the end of 2026. In addition, six additional conventional potato varieties have entered the variety registration process and are being field-tested by the NRCRI to fulfill the VCU test requirements to be nominated for registration. Furthermore, a Farmer Field School (FFS) programme has been initiated, through which the first 1,000 farmers have been trained, and the next 2,000 have been engaged, to improve potato farmer seed quality management and general potato production practices.

Seed potato sector development in Nigeria is still in its infancy. The honest assessment of the current reality is that Nigerian potato farmers continue to rely almost exclusively on the open market, non-specialised farmers and their own recycling as sources of seed.

The overarching objective of seed potato sector development efforts is access to good quality, affordable seed for the diversity of potato producers. This requires a strong seed potato sector, built on a diversity of for-profit seed potato entrepreneurs of different sizes, who collaborate for sector innovation and compete for the market. The Nigerian seed potato sector lags seriously compared to almost every country globally. To fast-track seed potato sector development, it has to take strategic advantage of all available international expertise. The private Dutch seed potato industry, as well as the Dutch agricultural development sector, is showing interest and commitment to partner in the development of the seed potato sector in Nigeria.

The Nigerian regulatory authorities can facilitate fast-tracking the development of a strong for-profit seed potato sector by developing and promoting a conducive regulatory environment for variety registration, seed potato import and export, and seed potato quality assurance.

3 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

3.1 Potato Variety Registration

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Registration possible in 2 seasons • DUS testing can be taken over from another country • Harmonised ECOWAS regulation • UPOV membership • Practice-oriented National Variety Release Committee • Committed National Root Crops Research Institute	• Costs for variety testing and registration process are high and opaque • Number of trial seasons and locations demanded unnecessarily high • Trial mandate uniquely given to NRCRI • Strong focus on yield in variety appraisal while demand is more complex • NVRC meets infrequently for variety registration

Opportunities	Threats
• Include potato in the vegetable exemption • Continuous assessment of variety dossiers by the NVRC • Allow the private sector to choose who implements variety trials, while NRCRI maintains the supervisory mandate • Reduce the number of test locations and limit to Plateau State • Become the go-to place for potato variety registration in ECOWAS	• Reduced enthusiasm from the international private sector if variety registration is frustrated • Continued deprivation of Nigerian farmers from the international portfolio of newly emerging potato varieties • The tendency to want to 'protect farmers' from too much choice of varieties • Varieties entering the market without due process, creating regulatory challenges in the seed potato chain

Strengths

For potato variety registration, it is possible to implement the different VCU and farmer-managed trials that are required to prepare a variety registration dossier to present to the NVRC in two seasons, which means for potato, this is possible within a year.

The NASC Act addresses variety registration in general terms. More specific guidelines were published in 2016 (NACGRAB, 2016) and have been updated in April 2025 (NACGRAB, 2025). The update guideline adds exceptions in which cases the variety registration process can be implemented faster. The main addition relevant for the case of (hybrid) potatoes is that if DUS testing data is available from another country, this can be presented in the variety release request, and no additional DUS testing is required. Exceptions aside, the guidelines prescribe:

- 1 season DUS testing, on-station
- 2 seasons VCU testing, on 10 locations, spread across the relevant agro-ecologies for the crop
- 1 season on-farm testing, at 10 farmer-managed sites, spread across the relevant agro-ecologies for the crop. This can be implemented in parallel to the VCU testing.

Nigeria benefits from the harmonised ECOWAS variety registration system, in which variety registration in one of the ECOWAS countries assures acceptance in all ECOWAS countries, even though in practice, one season of VCU and on-farm verification trials is still demanded.

In a major milestone, Nigeria formally acceded to the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), becoming its 80th member under the 1991 Act, with accession taking effect on 27 March 2025.

An important strength is the practice- and result-oriented NVRC. The committee is responsive, ready to engage in debate with stakeholders on improvement of the regulation, and willing to pilot and spearhead innovations. The committee looks at the overall objectives of its role, rather than fixating on the details of the written regulation and is open to continuous improvement of the regulation and regulatory practice.

Another strength is the presence of the NRCRI station dedicated to potato research in Kuru, close to Jos. The station is dedicated to potato sector development and has a collaborative attitude and is willing to collaborate with the national and international private sector to expedite the registration of a wider diversity of potato varieties, for the benefit of the potato producers in the country.

Weaknesses

VCU and farmer-managed trials are demanded in 10 locations for the completion of a registration dossier, which is high compared to what is usually demanded in other countries, and it drives up the costs for trial installation and data collection. The regulation stipulates that varieties need to be tested in all relevant agro-ecologies in the country, which has in the past been interpreted as all corners of the country where potatoes can be grown, which multiplies costs enormously, as it requires cross-country travel, trial installation, and data collection. At the same time, an estimated 95% of the national potato production takes place within the confined agro-ecology of the Jos Plateau. The latter weakness has already been addressed by the NRCRI and the NVRC by allowing the presentation of a variety registration dossier based on VCU trials from the Jos Plateau alone, which confirms the above-mentioned strength of having a practice-oriented NVRC.

The costs for the implementation of variety registration trials are not transparent and not published. They are subject to negotiation with the NRCRI, the single designated research organisation for potato variety research. International public and private breeding wishing to register their varieties for commercial use in Nigeria have no choice but to engage with the NRCRI, which makes negotiating the costs difficult.

In the assessment of the performance of potato varieties, much attention is given to the measured yield in the VCU trials. In practice, however, yield is only one of the many parameters that determine the fit of a potato variety. Also, drought tolerance, disease resistance, earliness, drought and heat resistance, response to flooding, dormancy and, importantly, market demand play a role.

A final weakness is that the NVRC meets infrequently, usually twice a year, to assess the different variety registration dossiers, causing delays in variety registration.

Opportunities

A first opportunity is to grant potatoes the same exclusion from VCU trials as vegetables. The vegetable exemption is elaborated in the 2025 update of the variety registration guidelines by NACGRAB (Box 1, NACGRAB, 2025). Vegetable varieties can be registered after testing on farm in 10 locations, after which data needs to be presented from 5 of these locations. The trials can be managed by the applicant, in coordination with the designated CRI, which would, in the case of potatoes, be the NRCRI.

The weakness of infrequent handling of variety registration dossiers by the NVRC could be addressed by handling dossiers once they come in and allowing the dossier presentation to be done online through video conference, rather than accumulating the dossiers and organising bi-annual meetings in a central place in which the applicants or the CRI present their variety registration propositions.

To offer more control to the private sector over the implementation of variety trials, it is an opportunity to allow the private companies the option to implement the variety registration trials themselves, under oversight by the NRCRI, while keeping the full outsourcing to the NRCRI as an option.

Considering the common international practice, the number of locations demanded for VCU and on-farm testing could be reduced from the current demanded minimum of 10 locations to a minimum of 5. Considering that potatoes are predominantly grown on the Jos Plateau, it could be justified to allow variety testing trials to be implemented across the Jos Plateau only, and refrain from including minor potato-growing areas, which will still benefit from a broad and diverse potato variety portfolio, which would be the result of a simplified, shorter, and cheaper variety registration system.

A last opportunity worth mentioning is that Nigeria can become the regional hub for potato variety registration and applied potato research by the international public research community as well as the international private potato breeding and seed sector. As registration in Nigeria will automatically mean potato variety registration in the entire ECOWAS region, Nigeria can become an attractive first country of entry, especially considering that it has the largest potato growing area of all the ECOWAS countries.

Box 1: Vegetable exemption for variety registration

16.0 Exemption E: No VCU testing and reduced number of farmer fields for vegetable crop varieties

- 16.1 In the case, the applicant during notification, has indicated that a candidate variety is of a vegetable crop, the following steps are to be taken to get exempted from VCU testing with a reduced number of farmer fields:
- a) The applicant indicates in the notification form the crop for the candidate variety, and in case this is a vegetable crop, requests exemption from VCU testing and a reduced number of farmer fields in on-farm trials;
 - b) The Registrar confirms the notification, and subsequently, in the guidance of the process, exempts the applicant from VCU testing;
 - c) The applicant and the CRO start the planning for on-farm testing of the candidate variety;
 - d) The on-farm trial includes at least ten (10) farmers' fields across different agro-ecologies during one growing period; while for nomination at least data from five (5) farmers' fields are presented;
 - e) The trial can either be coordinated by the applicant within its own on-farm trials or demos, though following the required lay-out for on-farm trials and supervised by the CRO, or by the CRO collaborating with government extension or other local partners.

Source: NACGRAB, 2025. Updated and revised guidelines for registration and release of new crop varieties in Nigeria. 28 pp.

Threats

The generic threat is a reduced enthusiasm by the international private sector if variety registration is lengthy and frustrating, which would be a setback now that the international private seed potato sector has just taken an interest in exploring business-to-business collaboration with Nigerian entrepreneurs. It would result in the continued deprivation of Nigerian farmers from the international portfolio of newly emerging potato varieties.

Another threat would be the tendency by regulators to want to 'protect farmers' from too wide a choice of varieties. As the seed potato sector is a private sector and market-driven, this fear is not justified. The market and producers will select the winning varieties from the offer made available to them by testing and trying for themselves, based on the complex combination of household economic, market and agro-ecological circumstances that are specific for each potato-producing

household. The assumption that potato farmers are helped by a strict research-based selection of varieties is flawed, as it is virtually impossible to consider the full complex combination of factors that determine variety choices. Ultimately, winning varieties will emerge after their integration into the market and testing by farmers, traders and consumers.

A final risk is that, if the process is cumbersome, expensive, and lengthy, new varieties will still enter the market, but without a due variety registration process, creating regulatory challenges in the seed potato chain of the inability to formally import and commercially reproduce seed of those varieties, should they become popular.

3.2 Import regulation and practice

Strengths • Import permit for research purposes is relatively easy to obtain • Import of commercial seed potatoes possible • Low import duty tariff (5%) and VAT exemption	Weaknesses • Procedure is not clear, not published and subject to negotiations • Costs are obscure, prone to variation and unnecessarily high • No complaints procedures in case of non-compliance of authorities with procedure • Customs has limited understanding of seed potatoes • Superfluous involvement of NAFDAC
Opportunities • Publish and communicate the seed potato import procedure and tariffs • Develop oversight and complaints process • Assure that no NAFDAC approval and Form M are required for seed potato imports	Threats • Decision makers not understanding seed potatoes are a consumable requiring continuous replacement • Protectionist sentiment resulting in regulation hampering International-Nigerian seed potato business-to-business collaboration and renewed isolation of Nigerian seed potato sector

Strength

Obtaining an import permit for new potato genetic material for research purposes is relatively easy. Obtaining an import permit for commercial seed potatoes is also possible and import of both research material as well as commercial seed potatoes is practically possible, as has been shown by the irregular import of seed potatoes by private seed companies. Another strength is the VAT exemption for agricultural inputs and the low import duty tariff of 5% on agricultural inputs.

Weaknesses

The main weakness in the seed potato import regulation and regulatory practice is the lack of clarity and transparency in the procedures of seed potato importation. The full process is not published, and is, in practice, subject to negotiation with different regulatory bodies such as the NASC, customs and NAFDAC. Fees and levies that are being charged seem arbitrary and cannot be linked to a published tariffication system. There is no formal, functional complaints procedure for private companies to resort to if they conclude that the import regulation is not applied appropriately and

the responsible regulatory bodies are not providing the required services. An example is the involvement of the NAFDAC in the seed potato importing process, which is, according to the regulation, not required, as seed potatoes are not a food product, but an agricultural input.

Opportunities

The seed potato sector would benefit from the publication and communication of the seed potato import procedures and associated tariffication. In addition, an associated complaints procedure with escalation steps to the management level of the relevant regulatory bodies can assist in case the agreed procedures are not adhered to. Finally, and more specifically, it would be helpful if the published process for seed potato import clarifies that no NAFDAC approval nor a Form M is required to import seed potatoes into the country.

Threats

The most important threat is a protectionist approach, in which the importation of seed potatoes is hindered with the objective of stimulating the domestic private sector. This would deprive the Nigerian potato producer of access to the international private-sector-owned potato variety portfolio and deprive emerging Nigerian seed potato entrepreneurs of essential know-how and potential business partnerships to develop the domestic seed potato sector. A protectionist approach to the seed potato sector would take Nigeria back to stagnation and lack of progress in access to quality seed potatoes, which has hampered the development of potato farming in the country for decades.

3.3 Seed certification regulation and practice

Strengths - Seed potato certification guidelines developed - Accredited inspector system introduced	Weaknesses - Inspection guidelines not client-oriented and too elaborate and rigid to be implemented - Proposed system is not in use - Capacity of seed potato producers is low - Potato knowledge of NASC is relatively limited - TPS not included - No (in-field) disease diagnostic capacity - No packaging and labelling system
Opportunities - Develop a more basic, fit-for-purpose, demand-driven seed potato quality assurance system for the coming 5 years, in collaboration with the private sector - Reconsider proposed disease tolerances based on field reality and economic damage - Learn from errors and successes in other countries	Threats - Insisting on copied and pasted regulation making certified seed production economically impossible - Quality parameters requiring expensive and complex disease diagnostics - Aiming for high-tech, before building a functioning basic system

Strength

Seed potato certification guidelines have been developed and published by a committee of experts in 2022 (FMAFS & NASC, 2022)². In parallel, a seed potato quality assurance and certification system has been proposed, based on accredited inspectors, supervised by the NASC.

Weaknesses

Although seed certification guidelines have been developed, they do not seem to link well enough to the reality of seed potato producers in Nigeria. They do not take into consideration the endemic nature of some soil-borne diseases, such as bacterial wilt, and overly rely on the assumption that the NASC will be able to provide advanced disease diagnostics in a timely and affordable manner. It has to be acknowledged that the proposed seed potato inspection and certification system is currently not in use. At this moment, there is no inspection system, nor a packaging and labelling system that would allow a seed potato user to independently distinguish quality-controlled seed potatoes from non-controlled seed potatoes.

The technical, business management and infrastructural capacity of seed potato producers is currently poor, which results in a limited ability to maintain high quality of seed potatoes over several generations of multiplication. The technical capacity at the NASC, both at national and international levels, in relation to seed potato quality assurance is insufficient to effectively implement a seed potato quality assurance system. True Potato Seed, promising as a component of the future seed potato system in Nigeria, now that hybrid TPS varieties are becoming available commercially, needs to be included in the regulation as a reliable category of basic seed for the production of certified seed potatoes, with specific quality assurance protocol, that differs from seed tubers, as the phytosanitary risks of true seed are significantly lower compared to seed tubers.

Another significant weakness is the lack of potato disease diagnostic capacities and facilities needed in a seed potato quality assurance system. Ideally, on-the-spot in-field disease diagnostics are used to complement visual disease observations in the field by capable inspectors. If in-field diagnostics are not available, samples can be taken and tested in a phytopathology laboratory. The latter requires a logistically functional system of sample collection, rapid testing, and communication of results. No such system, nor the required laboratory infrastructure, nor the human capacity are currently available on the Jos Plateau.

Opportunities

The first opportunity is to develop a basic, fit-for-purpose, demand-driven seed potato quality assurance system for the coming 5 years, in a collaboration between the private sector and the NASC, as a first step. Part of such an effort is the need to reconsider the proposed disease tolerances based on the field reality and the economic damage that the diseases are causing. A final opportunity is that similar efforts have been made in other sub-Saharan African countries to build a functional seed potato quality assurance system, with varying success, which offers important lessons for Nigeria.

Threats

The most important threat is insisting on the currently proposed seed certification protocol, which is complex, rigid and expensive. It would make certified seed production economically impossible under

² <https://seedcouncil.gov.ng/?s=Seed+Potato+Inspection+and+Certification+Guideline>

the current circumstances in Nigeria. Related to this, it is a threat to focus on the latest technical advancements in disease diagnostics and including testing protocols without regard for the associated costs, which will have to be integrated into the cost of the seed potatoes. A general threat is a focus on building an advanced seed quality assurance and certification system, mirroring the system in, for example, the Netherlands, while the more urgent first challenge is the building of a functional basic system of declaration of seed fields, seasonal field inspections, and labelling of the certified seed.

4 Stakeholder discussions

In the stakeholder meeting of 11 June 2026 in Jos, opportunities for regulatory reform were debated. The meeting was organized by the NASC, and facilitated by Sahel Consulting, SEPIA Foundation and NAKTuinbouw. Several opportunities for change were proposed, based on the SWOT analysis presented in chapter 3 and Annex 1. The participants suggested additional opportunities for change. Meeting participants were able to contribute to two out of the three topics, in two rounds of facilitated group discussion. The full results of the discussions are attached in Annex 2 and are summarized in this chapter.

4.1 Potato variety registration

Table 1 summarizes the results of the discussion on variety registration. The stakeholders agreed with the suggestion to include potato in the vegetable exemption that allows variety registration after a single season of testing, resulting in data from a minimum of 5 on-farm locations. It was agreed that this can facilitate more rapid access by Nigerian potato producers to productive varieties suitable for their agro-ecologies and allow Nigerian farmers to benefit rapidly from the latest advancements in potato breeding. It was suggested to use a two-step approach: first piloting the regulatory change before finalizing the regulatory change formally. It was also mentioned that it does not mean that potato as a crop will fall under the vegetable crops; it must remain part of the root and tuber crops, and the NRCRI is the appropriately designated national crop research institute.

It was also agreed that the private sector could opt to implement the variety trials themselves, under supervision by the NRCRI, rather than contracting the NRCRI to implement the trials autonomously. This would require a clear definition of the responsibilities between the private sector and NRCRI's supervisory role. This can be included in the piloting of the rapid variety release based on single-season testing. Finally, it was agreed that for variety release it would suffice that the variety trials would be implemented in Plateau State alone, considering that almost all consumption potatoes in Nigeria are produced on the Jos Plateau. The performance of varieties in other agro-ecologies can be tested and tried after formal variety release in the country. The opportunities for potato production in other regions should not be forgotten and should receive due attention.

Table 1 Summary discussion potato variety registration

	Statement	In favor / against	First step
1	Include potato in the vegetable exemption, which allows variety registration based on data from at least 5 locations in 1 season.	In favour Reduces the time and costs for variety introduction; Research data from other countries can complement the data in Nigeria	Pilot the innovation involving relevant stakeholders
2	Allow the private sector to organise the implementation of	In favour Will facilitate faster release of seed potato varieties.	Clear definition of roles and responsibilities among

	variety trials themselves, under supervision by the NRCRI.	This is already included in the CSP-1 innovation plans. Trials are supervised by the NARI, which holds the mandate for genetic improvement.	the stakeholders involved; Pilot the innovation to determine whether it can scale or requires further study.
3	Reduce the number of VCU locations to 5, from 9 or 10, in Plateau State alone.	In favour A minimum of five locations is ample for Plateau State; Plateau produces over 80% of the country's ware potato and serves as the national potato hub. This approach will reduce pressure on NARI and improve overall efficiency For additional agro-ecologies, local testing can be done.	Stakeholder alignment; Propose how to give attention to other regions

4.2 Seed potato import regulation and practice

Table 2 summarizes the results of the discussion on seed potato import. There is a great demand for clarity regarding procedures and associated tariffs for seed potato importation. All MDAs endorse the suggestion to review the process and publish a factsheet, and broad communication of such a factsheet is demanded. This will allow national and international companies to predict costs and refer to a widely accepted guiding document in case administrators raise additional requirements. Publishing the procedure and tariffs on the Nigeria Trade portal is accepted as a suggestion, but not considered enough, and it was emphasized that the regulation, tariffs, and factsheet need to be endorsed by all actors involved.

Table 2 Summary discussion seed potato import

	Statement	In favour / against	First step
1	List, assess procedural steps and associated tariffs, and abolish those that are obsolete, including clarification that no NAFDAC approval or Form M is required.	Agreed Clear and expedient procedures for importation of seed potatoes benefit the sector. NAFDAC regulation is on processed food commodities and not for agricultural inputs. Transparency on tariffs is needed to avoid exploitation by agencies.	Engage all relevant stakeholders & MDAs to collate and align procedural steps for seed potato import via stakeholder engagement.
2	Write a factsheet, endorsed by the relevant authorities, which shows seed potato import steps and associated tariffs.	Agreed It will provide clarity and compliance on import steps and associated tariffs It should be widely circulated	Convey stakeholder engagement to develop the factsheet
3	Publish the seed potato procedure and import tariff structure on the Nigeria trade portal	Agreed It should be published to guarantee easy access to information and transparency	Ensure it is endorsed by all agencies

4.3 Seed potato certification

Table 3 summarizes the results of the discussion on seed potato certification. While some of the stakeholders did see merit in quality assurance based on truthful labelling, the majority rejected the idea, and it was considered not appropriate for the seed potato sector in Nigeria. Considering the low level of trust of farmers in the quality of inputs in general, there is value in an independent quality assurance system for seed potatoes, which supports seed clients in recognizing quality seed potatoes, and supports seed potato professionals to distinguish themselves.

The current seed potato certification requirements, though, are considered to be too complex and expensive, and they are not considered to be practically applicable by the majority of stakeholders, and most importantly, by the seed potato producers who tried to use them and the accredited seed potato inspectors that have tried to apply them. The representatives of the NASC and the NRCRI in the discussion did insist on the value of the regulation developed, as it had been elaborated by a team of national and international seed potato experts. It was agreed that the existing guidelines do provide a good first basis, but can be discussed and amendments can be proposed, both permanent amendments as well as temporary simplifications of the guidelines, that may be required at the current moment to build a first seed potato inspection and certification system.

A specific simplification that was suggested for discussion, to exempt the first generations in the seed multiplication system from independent quality assurance and focus on the generation of foundation and certified seed alone, was rejected. The capacities and experience of seed potato producers in Nigeria is considered to still be weak, and quality assurance throughout the multiplication chain is considered to be necessary.

Table 3 Summary discussion seed potato certification

	Statement	In favour / against	First step
1	Allow seed companies to package and trade seed potatoes based on a truthful labelling system.	Majority against Most stakeholders see the need for independent quality assurance to allow serious seed producers to distinguish themselves and for seed clients to recognize quality seed.	None
2	Develop and pilot a basic, fit-for-purpose seed potato quality assurance system for the coming 5 years, with the private sector.	Agree Stakeholders agree that a temporary easier process can be debated. The current regulation can be reviewed and adapted.	Review the current certification protocol and consider temporary and permanent amendments
3	Reduce seed potato certification and independent quality assurance to the categories of foundation and certified seed.	Disagree The current capacity of stakeholders is limited, and EGS is the basis of all generations. Quality assurance of the early generations is important.	Review EGS quality assurance protocol

5 Next steps

Through the discussions, a number of concrete actions have been defined to improve the regulatory environment for the seed potato sector (Table 4). These activities can be pursued immediately, but will also be integrated in the action plans of the second phase of the Nigeria-Netherlands CSP, which is expected to start in September 2027.

Table 4: Proposed next steps for seed potato regulation reform and regulatory practice improvement

Activity	Expected result	Lead organisation
Variety registration		
Formalise the pilot of rapid potato variety registration, following the example of the vegetable exemption.	Potato variety registration based on 1 season of on-farm testing in a minimum of 5 locations piloted from Q4 2026.	NACGRAB; secretariat of the variety release committee
Discuss division of responsibilities between seed company and NRCRI in case	Role and responsibilities of NRCRI clarified and costed; Private company managed variety trials piloted	NRCRI

of private-sector-run variety trials		
Seed potato import		
Review the importation process and associated tariffs	A factsheet with processes and tariffs, endorsed by the relevant regulators and published on the online Nigeria trade portal	Customs and NAQS with support from NASC
Seed potato certification		
Review of the seed potato guidelines and suggestion of temporary and permanent amendments	Reviewed guidelines building on early experience gained; A proposal for a practical seed potato certification protocol for the coming 3-5 years	NASC

For each of the three topics, a working group was nominated, representing regulation, research and private sector.

Table 5: Nominated technical working group members

Technical Working Group Members					
Group 1- Potato Variety Registration		Group 2- Seed Potato Import		Group 3- Seed Potato Quality Assurance	
Name	Designation/ Organisation	Name	Designation/ Organisation	Name	Designation/Or ganisation
Dr. Anthony Okere	Director, NACGRAB	Mr. James	NAQS	Dr. Osho-Lagunju Bankole	NASC
Dr. Ibidun Adetiloye	Variety Release Desk Officer, NACGRAB	Imabong Umoh	NASC	Dr. Mewase Rebecca	NASC
Prof Shehu Garki Ado	Chairman, Technical Subcommitte, NVRC	Lina Molta	Camiola Global Resources Limited	Dr. Kahya Shuaibu	NRCRI
Mr. Usman Bello	Fruits & Veggies Limited	Mr. Steve Bawa	Fruits & Veggies Limited	Mr. Isaac Buwah	Solanum Potato
Dr. Sagiru Yakubu	Director, Seed Certification, NASC	Mr. Amamong D. Bryce	Nigeria Customs Service	Dr. Rosemary Uche- Oguneme	NASC
Dr. Christian Nwadii	NRCRI			Lilian Davou	Fruits & Veggies Limited

6 Acknowledgements

This work has been funded by the Netherlands enterprise Agency (RVO). It furthermore builds on efforts of the Achmea Foundation and Heineken Africa Foundation funded project “The Nigeria Hybrid True Potato Seed Revolution”, as well as the Collaborative Seed Program (CSP), which was funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded.

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ANNEXES