

## ***Heads up***

### **Market access issues**

The COVID-19 pandemic is seen to have increased conversations around protectionism in the trade environment for various industries around the world. For our sector, this could also influence regulations affecting seed movement, including phytosanitary and other requirements, which could result to added complexity and challenge in seed business operations. Such protectionist trend poses risks to the efficient movement of seeds globally.

**Therefore, we would like call on our members to share information on market access issues so that these may be assessed and consulted with the relevant experts, and that potential solutions and actions may be arrived at collaboratively and in a transparent way.**

#### ***What are market access issues?***

Seed is a globally traded agricultural product, with international seed trade having increased tenfold during the past 15-20 years. Today there is no country that could fully supply farmers with seed of their choice solely from their own production. Seeds are produced and trials are conducted in different countries all over the world as a way to mitigate the risk of crop failures. By finding optimal locations for seed production, timing of harvest, and localized expertise, the seed sector ensures the steady supply of seed for farmers everywhere.

But because seeds are produced in countries other than where treatment, packing and sales take place, the seed sector often contends with market access issues including phytosanitary requirements and other non-tariff barriers that affect import and export of seeds for research, multiplication, or commercial purposes. That is why it is very important for those of us in the seed sector to be proactive in sharing information and best practices on the best way forward when it comes to dealing with such challenges and emerging issues.

#### ***How to report market access issues***

Companies or National Seed Associations (NSAs) who are members of ISF can report market access issues by filling up the [reporting sheet](#) available on the ISF website and sending it to the ISF Secretariat c/o Rose Souza Richards, Seed Health Manager, [r.souzarichards@worldseed.org](mailto:r.souzarichards@worldseed.org).

The ISF Secretariat then assesses the report, and consults with its own bodies (committees, sections, Executive Committee). Some criteria for assessment include the magnitude of effect to the seed industry, level of economic impact, urgency and potential to spread to other countries (as in the case of disease outbreaks).

Depending on the issue, a task force may be nominated to coordinate efforts and information from various stakeholders who may be handling similar issues. A proposed plan will be drafted and actions could take the form of communication or engagement where needed, with the goal to arrive at a better understanding and to support the resolution of the issue. This process allows ISF to directly target issues that may restrict international seed movement.