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ESA is the voice of the European seed industry, representing those active in research, breeding, production and marketing of seeds of agricultural and ornamental plant species. It represents more than 30 national seed associations (and with that more than 1000 seed businesses in the EU, most of them SMEs) and more than 40 direct company members.

ESA's mission is to work for fair and proportionate regulation of the European seed industry, freedom of choice for customers in supplying seeds as a result of innovative, diverse technologies and production methods and for effective protection of intellectual property rights relating to plants and seed.

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Position

On Horizon 2020, the Common Strategic Framework for Research & Innovation 2014-2020

The **European Seed Association** (ESA) is the voice of the European seed industry, representing the interests of those active in research, breeding, production and marketing of seeds of agricultural, horticultural and ornamental plant species. It represents corporate and associate members and accounts for over 7000 European companies, with a large majority of SMEs, and a total market value of €7 billion.

The **seed industry** is at the forefront of research and innovation, with companies investing on average 15-20% of their annual turnover on R&D. The industry employs over 50.000 people, with a ¼ dedicated to R&D activities.

Providing **quality seeds** is the basis of the agricultural production value chain and of the bioeconomy as a whole. Plants from seed are the origin of all food, provide innovative and environmentally friendly industrial products and beautify our landscape. Without plants there is no food, no feed, less energy and more pollution.

ESA welcomes the European Commission's proposals for establishing Horizon 2020, the Common Strategic Framework for Research and Innovation 2014-2020. The emphasis on responding to societal challenges through innovation is in line with **greater industrial participation** in European research programmes, both as participant in projects and co-sponsor of public-private partnerships.

In particular, **ESA strongly supports** the European Commission's proposal to have a focus on Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture, which is a major research challenge that deserves dedicated budget over the coming years.

In this framework, ESA considers of utmost importance to fully address the joint issues of **plant breeding and crop production research**, both in the Industrial Leadership and Societal Challenges pillars of the proposal.

ESA therefore calls for the European Parliament and Council to:

- **Support plant breeding and crop production innovation** under the "Sustainable Agriculture" part of Horizon 2020;
- Ensure that all the **key technologies** of direct relevance to the agricultural and crop production sector will be covered in the scope of Horizon 2020;
- Fully take into account that the **agricultural and crop production sectors** are direct beneficiaries from biotechnology research.

For these reasons, ESA is putting forward 7 amendments to the Regulation establishing Horizon 2020 (ESA_12.0311) and 14 amendments to the Specific Programme Implementing Horizon 2020 (ESA_12.0312). Both these documents are annexed to this position paper.