

Bayer unveils Maize Seed Facility in Zambia

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Bayer announced the opening of a new maize seed facility in Kabwe, Zambia. Through the 32-million-euro facility alongside further investments in organization and the grower network, Bayer triples its existing capacity for high-quality maize seed production in the country in 2025. This capacity ultimately converts into annual maize consumption of approximately 30 million people in the region.

The seed output is expected to further increase in the coming years. The high-yielding seeds will reach 6.4 million smallholder farmers in Zambia and other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa this year and up to 10 million by 2030. To date, the investment is the second largest private investment by a German company in Zambia.

“The new facility will help us improve food security, empower smallholder farmers, and support communities in numerous countries on the African continent.” said Chief Executive Officer Bill Anderson, who inaugurated the site alongside his excellency Hakainde Hichilema, President of Zambia.

“Millions of people around the world, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, suffer from severe food insecurity. Ending hunger is central to our mission at Bayer. With our new seed facility in Zambia, we want to make a meaningful contribution to that crucial goal,” said Bill Anderson.

Facility to Benefit Smallholder Farmers Who Are Essential to Food Security

Despite its vast arable land and significant agricultural potential, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, one in five people on the continent face food and nutrition insecurity. Key reasons for this include limited agronomic knowledge and access to modern

technology. With its new site, Bayer is helping to address these challenges by increasing both the quantity and especially the quality of available certified seeds, offering higher yields and enhanced resilience to climate and disease. Alongside stewardship and agronomic training, these conventional hybrid maize seeds empower farmers in Zambia and neighboring countries to produce more food more efficiently, thereby increasing their productivity and contributing to food security.

This particularly accounts for smallholder farmers, who on average cultivate crops on less than 10 hectares and produce up to 70 percent of the food consumed on the continent. “Enhanced productivity not only increases food security, but it makes a tremendous difference for the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, their families, and even their communities,” said Debra Mallowah, Head for Bayer’s Crop Science Division in Africa. By addressing up to 10 million smallholder farmers, the investment significantly helps to advance Bayer’s goal of reaching 21.5 million smallholders in Africa and 100 million globally by 2030.

Investment Is an Important Pillar for Bayer’s Growth Strategy in Africa

While addressing food security challenges in the region and supporting smallholder farmers, the investment also represents a significant business opportunity for Bayer. Africa is one of the fastest-growing markets with substantial agricultural potential. The demand for Bayer’s Dekalb brand hybrids has shown considerable growth over the years, surpassing supply. As such, the site is a key component of Bayer’s growth strategy for Africa, with the aspiration of doubling the Crop Science Division’s business on the continent by 2030.

To this end, another 35 million euros until 2028 are earmarked for further expansion of the seed production network across Sub-Saharan Africa. Bayer’s expertise in maize seed breeding and production holds particular potential because it is a staple food crop in Africa; for instance, in Zambia, a maize meal known as “nsima,” constitutes a significant part of the daily diet, providing 60 per cent of caloric needs.

Bayer to Support the Economy and Local Communities in the Kabwe Area

The new facility is anticipated to stimulate economic growth in the region by creating jobs and business opportunities. Bayer plans to employ 80 permanent staff members and over 100 seasonal workers and contractors at the site. Additionally, approximately 15,000 seasonal on-farm jobs will be generated through Bayer’s field operations and those of contract growers to produce the seeds.

Bayer is committed to being an active member of the communities it operates in. As such, two initiatives to support the communities around Kabwe are underway. The neighborhood next to the new facility will benefit from improved water accessibility and storage through a revived borehole for water supply, a new tank, and pipes, funded by Bayer.

As a life science company, Bayer is also supporting the local healthcare system. Currently, residents living near the site must travel up to 20 kilometers to access the nearest health facility, disproportionately affecting women and children. Based on a Public Private Partnership model in collaboration with Zambia’s Ministry of Health, the Municipality of Kabwe, the NGO Project Concern Zambia, and the local community, Bayer will fund the establishment of a new health center, which aims to provide essential healthcare services to more than 10,000 residents, including Bayer employees and their dependents.