

# CSGA 2.0

# Business Plan 2021

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## What is CSGA 2.0?

CSGA 2.0 is CSGA's response to the pressures for change in Canada's seed system. CSGA 2.0 includes a renewed public-private partnership with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), digital transformation, and a new approach to CSGA governance and its relationships with stakeholders.

This Business Plan is based on these three key ideas:

### CSGA Authority for the Seed Certification System

Delivering a comprehensive seed varietal certification program that reliably assures genetic identity, in partnership with the CFIA for the benefit of Canadian agriculture.

### Digitalization

Transforming the business of pedigreed seed production, marketing, and sales through transparent, digitally enabled, enhanced traceability services that reduce administrative burden, provide additional data, and add value.

### Governance and Partnerships

An inclusive and service-oriented approach, ensuring that stakeholders are engaged in a next generation seed certification system that is professional, resilient, and meets the diverse needs of Canada's agri-food economy.

Bringing together seed sector stakeholders to reliably deliver the leading genetics, traits, and services that will drive the next generation of Canadian agriculture

## How Did We Get Here?

CSGA's current direction is influenced by two key drivers: the [2017-2023 Strategic Plan](#), and the [Seed Synergy Project](#).

The Strategic Plan identifies five Key Result Areas, with sub-objectives under each. These strategic goals remain our focus, and this Business Plan helps provide more detail on what the Key Result Areas mean to CSGA today.

The Seed Synergy Project was a collaborative project of all the major seed sector organizations – CSGA, the Canadian Seed Trade Association, Canadian Seed Institute, Commercial Seed Analysts Association of Canada, Canadian Plant Technology Agency, and CropLife Canada – designed to develop a common vision for the future of the seed sector. Through that project, CSGA helped define a vision – the Seed Synergy White Paper – that is still relevant today, and calls for a seed system that:

- Drives and supports agriculture sector growth
- Attracts investment domestically and internationally, and makes Canada an innovation destination
- Levels the playing field, reducing barriers and streamlining the regulatory system, especially for small and medium sized operators
- Drives the adoption of technology and further traceability, positioning Canada as a safe and secure supplier to the world
- Is efficient and adapts to change on a continuing basis.

This document is the result of extensive consultation with branch directors and staff, the CSGA board, committee members, and CSGA staff who met extensively through the winter of 2020-21 to discuss and confirm these ideas.

## Strategic Plan Key Result Areas

**Trusted, High Performing Seed System**

**Supporting Members**

**Sector Growth**

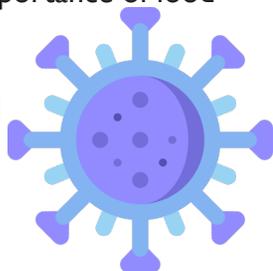
**Partnerships**

**Organizational Effectiveness & Efficiency**



## Drivers for Change Today

**COVID-19** disrupted virtually every sector of the economy and changed work for many. Agriculture proved itself to be particularly resilient, carrying on operations, and delivering vital products around the world, in spite of closed borders and overall trade disruption. The pandemic had a side benefit of reinforcing the importance of food security, and the primacy of domestic agriculture, though it remains to be seen if this perspective will endure and influence agriculture and food policy in years to come.



CSGA adapted well to **working online**, with major business continuing, and services delivered, in no small part because CSGA has been moving to digital service delivery already. The economic effect of the pandemic on governments remains an unknown, but we can expect to see a balance between investment and austerity as governments make targeted spending decisions to stimulate growth, but may be forced to curtail other spending in the face of massive deficits.

**Seed Regulatory Modernization** is actually happening. We've talked about this for years, and have been preparing for some time. The process is now launched, and the future will not look like the status quo. This is our opportunity to put forward a vision for smarter, better regulations that add value and promote competition, revitalizing the public-private partnership and allowing CSGA to play an even greater role.

The Seeds Canada **amalgamation vote** was an important moment in the history of CSGA, and generated heated debate and differences of opinion. Moving forward, we must ensure that CSGA members and stakeholders see themselves and their issues represented in the agenda of their association. This means investing more in engagement, national-branch coordination, and clearly communicating CSGA's goals and achievements. In addition, it will be vital to maintain close coordination with Seeds Canada and collaboration on issues of mutual interest.



**Capacity and prioritization** will be of critical importance for CSGA over the next two years. Bringing together many of the points raised above, CSGA has been running at full steam – in terms of its staff, board, and member engagement – for three years. The organization has been dealing with massive technological change, a once-in-a-generation amalgamation process, and a major regulatory renewal, simultaneously. CSGA has a need to settle some of its major directional questions and move forward, allowing the board, staff, and members to focus on their core roles.

## Key Elements of CSGA 2.0

To define the elements of CSGA 2.0 the CSGA board established six different sub-committees tasked with developing recommendations on various aspects of the organization and its vision for the future. Based on the recommendations from these committees, which included CSGA directors, members, and provincial directors and staff, we have developed the major areas that define CSGA 2.0. These areas are:

1. Seed Policy
2. Digital Business Model
3. Professional Development
4. Governance
5. Partnerships and Government/Stakeholder Relations
6. National-Branch Coordination
7. Promoting the Value of Certified Seed

And all of that supported by a strong financial foundation. The next few pages talk about our direction in each of these important areas. In some cases we have specific plans already in motion, and in other areas we have big ideas that will be worked on over the coming year, and will mature as we get deeper into the details. In either case, this set of directional ideas is a clear statement about who we are and where we want to go.



## BENEFITS AT A GLANCE

*CSGA-led, government-enabled national seed certification system*

*Responsive to stakeholder needs*

*Inclusive and promoting diversity*

*Efficient, user-friendly processes*

*New service offerings*

*More reasons to choose Certified seed*

## I. SEED POLICY

Seed Regulatory Modernization is happening now, with the CFIA undertaking a full-scale review of the Seeds Regulations, excluding Part V. Our position is that the seed certification system is a critical part of the agricultural value chain, delivering high-quality, trustworthy seed products that underpin Canadian agriculture. Now is the time to advocate for a vision of a seed system that enhances traceability and transparency, is digitally enabled, and that provides added value. It is the time CSGA, based on its extensive track record as a reliable regulatory partner, to do more on behalf of Canada. Therefore, we have 14 key recommendations for the future:

1. The CFIA should continue to be ultimately responsible for the seed certification program.
2. The CSGA's delegated authority should be expanded to include certification of Foundation, Registered and Certified seed.
3. The Seeds Regulations should be amended to remove all technical requirements for seed certification and to incorporate by reference a CSGA normative document for seed certification purposes.
4. The seed certification system should be digital end-to-end to facilitate a single-window approach to regulatory services delivery.
5. The CSGA should administer the Variety Profile Platform in support of enhanced transparency for the agri-food system.
6. The current requirements concerning use of variety names should continue.
7. Variety registration should be maintained and the CFIA should continue to be responsible.
8. Schedule III to the Seeds Regulations should be incorporated by reference, with the CFIA as the responsible authority, and updated.
9. Part IV of the Seeds Regulations should be incorporated by reference.
10. Common seed of agricultural field crops listed in grade tables I to VI should either be 1) sampled, tested, and graded by authorized persons like pedigreed seed or 2) not labelled with a grade name, but the seed lot should still be required to meet minimum standards for purity and germination.
11. Common seed of small seeded agricultural crop kinds in grade tables VII to XII, principally forage grasses and legumes, should be sampled, tested, and graded by persons authorized to do so like pedigreed seed.
12. The CFIA should increase its investment in science support for the Seed Program.
13. The CFIA should commit to continued engagement in international standards development organizations including ISTA, AOSA, OECD Seed Schemes, AOSCA and AASCO.
14. The CFIA should commit to succession planning to ensure that appropriate and adequate human resources are available for the Seed Program.

**This is the future of the seed regulatory system, and we are ready, willing, and able to play an even larger role.**

## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP RENEWAL

### INDUSTRY-LED SEED CERTIFICATION SYSTEM WITH CFIA OVERSIGHT

### CSGA SINGLE WINDOW FOR SEED CERTIFICATION SERVICES

### SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PLANT BREEDING

### GOVERNMENT RESOURCES FOCUSED ON SCIENCE, COMPLIANCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## 2. DIGITAL BUSINESS MODEL

CSGA's vision is for a digital end-to-end seed certification system. We are an organization built on and around information, and in the 21st Century, that means digital and mobile – connected to customers and value chains, and offering enhanced traceability and risk mitigation measures to domestic and international buyers and regulators. Our business plan has two phases:

### Phase One: Go Digital

- Moving all of our process and documents to digital platforms.
- Delivering a Single Window for all seed services
- Digital seed crop certificate
- Digital pedigreed seed declaration
- Seed grading reports
- Consolidate our forms
- Digital seed tags, and more!

*This phase is to a large degree about confirming and accelerating the direction we're already moving in. CSGA has done a lot of the groundwork for a digital future already, and we continue to build on this success, and to lower the administrative burden for our clients.*

### Phase Two: Value From Electronic Information

- Building on our electronic processes and information assets, we will be able to offer growers and other clients even more value
- Electronic platform to market seed for all interested growers, to help smaller operations compete on a national and global scale
- Offering enhanced traceability to buyers
- Harmonizing with the OECD electronic strategy for seamless global integration
- Online Variety Profile to give all users complete, transparent information on varieties to inform their choices
- Seizing opportunities to create value that emerge as we go forward

*This phase is about building on digital service provision and going even further to offer services and information to the entire value chain. Canada's competitive advantage in international markets is our quality and reliability, and we can use digital platforms to push this advantage even further as the world leader in traceability and quality assurance.*

## Digitization

*Converting paper to digital*



## Digitalization

*Using digital technologies to change a business model and create new value-producing opportunities*

### 3. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The seed grower of today and the next generation is a knowledgeable, well-regarded professional, who plays a critical role in seed varietal certification. Being a CSGA seed grower is about much more than just a name on a form, it's about the competencies and professional development that makes the CSGA brand, and the reputation of Canadian growers, a world leader. We will work to support growers and stakeholders, inclusive of the many different types of seed businesses, with the tools and development resources they need to navigate the system, and bring their expertise to bear.

CSGA will support the training, learning and professional development of seed growers and sector stakeholders through a voluntary eLearning Professional Development program. The program will support the development of:

- **New seed growers and employees on pedigreed seed crop production;**
- **Experienced seed growers and stakeholders by furthering their understanding and compliance with regulatory requirements and best management practices;**
- **Probation growers working towards a CSGA-accredited plot grower status on roguing and plot production; and**
- **Plant Breeders on Breeder seed production**

**OUR GOAL IS TO SUPPORT THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF GROWER  
SKILLS TO THE BENEFIT OF  
CANADIAN AGRICULTURE**

## 4. GOVERNANCE

1. Permanently establish the Inter-branch Coordinating Committee as the key vehicle to share information, coordinate activities, and bring a branch perspective to national issues
2. Restructure our committees to bring in branch-nominated growers as members, so that more growers who want to make a contribution can do so, and to build a wider network of engaged growers across Canada
3. A new Multi Stakeholder Advisory Committee for provincial government officials, scientific advisors, value chain representatives and others to consider issues and provide advice; this would have a direct link to the Board
4. A new Governance Committee focused solely on making sure that CSGA governance is well managed and aligned to our needs and priorities
5. Regular governance training for national and branch directors, and definition of the skills we are looking for in our leadership: industry knowledge and expertise, and enthusiasm for the seed business
6. Post pandemic: moving to more online meetings, to make it easier for everyone to participate and reduce travel expense, with key face-to-face meetings throughout the year
7. Membership: CSGA membership structure based on individual, professional seed growers, along with ways for people and companies who want to engage with CSGA to do so



## 5. PARTNERSHIPS AND GOVERNMENT / STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS

CSGA has delegated regulatory authority, but is also the voice for seed growers. What does this mean in practice? It means that CSGA is a strong voice as the steward of the pedigreed seed system and that CSGA works with partners to represent grower interests. Because of the large role we play in the system we have many key partners: government (the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada), industry (the new Seeds Canada), and the larger agricultural value chain (the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, other crop groups).

1. CSGA remains a non-partisan, non-political organization, whose principal focus is maintaining and defending the integrity of the seed system.
2. Working with branches: branches are best positioned to work with their respective provincial governments on provincial issues, and CSGA will increase coordination to help branches play this vital role, remove overlaps, and enable coordinated national approaches where appropriate.
3. Seeds Canada will continue to be a valued partner, and CSGA will work to negotiate a mutually beneficial agreement that allows both organizations to share information, collaborate on issues where there is alignment, and coordinate at both the board and staff levels within the bounds of defined roles & responsibilities.
4. CSGA will seek to enhance its partnerships with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and other key crop groups and value chain representatives. We want to reach out, build relationships, find common interests, and help better integrate seed growers into the value chain.



## 6. NATIONAL-BRANCH COORDINATION

CSGA and its branches work together on behalf of growers and the seed system, but this has been an informal arrangement without clear direction on roles and responsibilities. CSGA 2.0 involves formalizing these arrangements, working closely, and exploring new ways to share resources and cooperate to the benefit of all seed growers across Canada.

1. Establish clear roles & responsibilities for CSGA and the branches
2. Inter-branch Coordinating Committee to bring all branches and the national association together to talk through issues, raise concerns, and present a united front
3. Commitment to joint work planning and collaboration on communications and advocacy efforts
4. Working together to share resources like IM/IT infrastructure, HR supports, training tools, and more to help every organization operate as efficiently and cost effectively as possible
5. In the future, exploring opportunities to harmonize or align by-laws, membership criteria and other policies, and find ways to share resources so that smaller branches can still play a large role on national issues



Eight Seed Grower  
 Organizations  
 Connected,  
 Communicating and  
 Collaborating

## 7. PROMOTING THE VALUE OF CERTIFIED SEED

There is a compelling case for Certified seed. A national, internationally recognized traceability framework that provides reliable variety and seed quality verification benefits agriculture and the agri-food system – it provides producers and the value chains they supply with third party assurances of the identity and quality of crops; it facilitates the adoption of innovative, higher value plant genetics leading to more profitable and sustainable crop production; and it enables a diversity of businesses – small and large, major crops and minor crops – to co-exist and contribute to a resilient, widely dispersed seed supply system for Canadian producers.

**We need to tell the story of Certified seed, and create simple, shareable products that can help spread the word about why Certified seed and the pedigreed seed system, with its reliable assurance of genetic identity, are so important to Canada.**

**This includes supporting policies that reinforce the benefits of Certified seed and drive investment in our world-class seed system.**

**Ultimately it's about driving interest and increasing the percentage of producers who choose Certified seed because they see the value it brings them.**



# Certified seed is an effective and efficient way to deliver plant breeding innovation

## **CSGA FINANCES**

CSGA 2.0 is based on a sound and sustainable financial future for the association, its branches, and for the seed system at large.

**CSGA is committed to sustainable budgets and operational efficiency.**

**CSGA will review its fees and develop proposals in consultation with stakeholders that sustain its governance, stakeholder relations, standards development and certification services.**

**CSGA will explore options for innovative service offerings that create value and help grow Canadian agriculture.**