The Grain Farmer Development Association (GFADA) is an initiative that grew out of the Grain Value Chain Network. It was initially an informal network of grain producers and agribusinesses in the extended value chain, which have met since 2005 to create an opportunity for round table discussions on the agricultural sector in an era of transformation.

During 2015, representatives of the Maize Trust, Sorghum Trust, Winter Cereal Trust, and the Oil and Protein Seeds Development Trust discussed the transformation imperatives and experiences within their respective industries. They resolved to work together to avoid duplication of effort and to work towards the optimisation of the existing resources.

It was recognised that to achieve the organisation’s objectives, a more concerted effort was required to address the recruitment of donors and administer the applications and the funding of the various farmer development projects. This approach could ensure that the trusts become important catalysts for transformation in the country.

Strategic intent
Accordingly, as of 2016 the sole owners of GFADA are the Maize Trust, Sorghum Trust, Oil and Protein Seeds Development Trust, and Winter Cereal Trust. These trusts are the voting members of GFADA and are represented on the board of GFADA by two directors and one alternative director from each trust.

GFADA’s vision is to establish “successful, competitive, black grain and oilseeds commercial farmers”. The mission of GFADA is “to coordinate, facilitate, monitor, evaluate, advise and support the commercialisation of black grain and oilseeds farmers in South Africa”.

Farmer support and development
Black smallholder farmers are the core target group for GFADA. The association works with service providers along the grain and oilseeds related value chains that provide implementation capacity, with the objective to seek opportunities that will add value to the growth and development of black farmers.

GFADA uses its experience in the field to engage with government and contribute to the creation of an enabling policy and regulatory framework for the attainment of its vision. While the four trusts provide the base funding for the organisation, GFADA seeks to leverage additional funding support for the transformation projects from government at all levels, as well as the related private sector entities.

As a result, engagement with the Eastern Cape Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform led to the association receiving additional funding, amounting to R8 064 million, to support farmers in the Matatiele area for the 2017/18 season.

Support in the 2017/18 season
The Oil and Protein Seeds Development Trust and OilSeeds Advisory Committee approved the total funding amounting to R728 800 and R657 500 for sunflower and soya bean, respectively, for farmers supported through GFADA in respect of the 2017/18 season.

The funding is for crop insurance, soil correction and mentorship. Total area planted by all approved farmers for soya bean and sunflower is 797ha and 1 917ha, respectively. It is worth noting that the membership of the Oil and Protein Seeds Development Trust in GFADA will accelerate the commercialisation of black farmers due to the benefits of crop rotation.