StrigAway™ Maize to Address Striga in East Africa

September 27, 2018
Partnering for Innovation's Results

6 Years of partnerships

94 new agricultural products and services commercially available to smallholder farmers

$65 million in sales

50 partners

More than 1 million smallholder farmer customers

17 countries

BRINGING NEW AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO EMERGING MARKETS
AATF Partnership Background

- January 16, 2014-January 31, 2018
- Originally $4.2 million between USAID funding and AATF’s contribution
- Partnership sought to scale commercialization of imazapyr-resistant (IR) maize seed in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda
- Striga affects 100 million farmers and 1.4 million ha of maize in East Africa, with losses of 30-80 percent
- Private sector seed companies would produce, coat, distribute, and market IR-maize seed to smallholder farmers
- AATF would drive market development, farmer training, and support with IR-maize technology
- Initial goal of 955 MT of sales of IR-maize with country-specific targets
- Produced 688 MT and sold 634 MT, reaching nearly 101,000 SHFs
StrigAway™ Maize Results

This maize plot has been completely taken over by striga in western Kenya.

Maize cobs: IR maize (left) and non-IR maize harvested from the same Striga infested farm (Gospel Omanya)
StrigAway Scaling Plan

- Register imazapyr in Uganda
- Produce and coat IR-maize for commercial sale
- Install seed processing lines with partner seed companies
- Establish demo plots in each country
- Sell IR-maize produced (less a certain percentage lost in processing)
- Carry out postharvest trainings at demo plots
- Hold agrodealer trainings for correct handling and marketing strategies
- Establish agrodealer-led demo plots
- Repeat the cycle over subsequent seasons
Scaling Challenges

• Difficultly in multiplying certified seeds due to agronomic challenges, drought, fall army worm (FAW), conflict, maize lethal necrosis (MLN)

• Equipment needed for seed coating. New technology for most seed companies. Equipment importation/installation delays

• Seed companies struggled to market to SHFs due to complexity of use (e.g., some results after one season but eradication requires 7 seasons of use, handling instructions/gloves) and agrodealers (e.g., safe storage, limited shelf life, explaining technology to SHFs)

• Competition with higher yielding maize varieties, which can outperform StrigAway™ in areas with lower striga infestation

• Big players (e.g., Tanseed, Kenya Seed Co.) felt market was limited and did not prioritize producing and marketing

• Difficult as implementing partner to secure PERSUAP (Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan)
Stakeholder Tensions

- BASF-led registration of imazapyr faced challenges with regulators.
- CIMMYT could not meet seed companies’ demand for breeder seed.
- Seed companies struggled with production and coating of seed, educating SHFs and agrodealers on handling and use of StrigAway™ technology.
- Agrodealers needed help in marketing the technology to SHFs, especially on safe handling and need for several seasons to see good return on investment.
- AATF faced challenges in incentivizing some seed companies to invest time, energy, and money in StrigAway™ technology.
Scaling Lessons Learned

- Smaller seed companies may prefer to scale new and more niche seed technologies compared to larger state seed companies, but face challenges in production and marketing.
- Multiplication of new seed varieties takes time and technical capacity—and entails significant risk for small seed companies with limited resources.
- Agrodealers play a vital role in scaling new seed technology, especially for smaller seed companies, through demo plots or as trusted information sources—but they need incentives to promote a particular product over others.
- In partnerships to scale agricultural technologies, we find it more effective and sustainable for the private sector company to lead with support from NGO partners.
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