

# STAK's New Program Partnership: Bringing Innovative Marketing Insights to Members

## Introduction

We are excited to announce that STAK has partnered with Resourced to implement the Seed Marketing Innovations for Africa (SMIA) program. Resourced is a non-profit organization that aims to increase access to more nutritious foods and diverse, productive crops and transform the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and agricultural value chain entrepreneurs. The SMIA program, also implemented in partnership with CIMMYT and AgNexus and supported by agencies such as GeoPoll and 5DM in Kenya and Uganda, aims to transform maize and bean seed marketing practices across the continent. The program runs till September 2025.

## Program Overview

The SMIA program will conduct a series of marketing experiments in Kenya and Uganda to gather data on the effectiveness of innovative marketing strategies for boosting the sales of new seed varieties. The program operates on the premise that farmers' decisions to purchase seeds are influenced not only by the seeds' performance but also by how they are marketed, promoted, and made accessible to them.

## The Importance of SMIA

For many seed enterprises, marketing investments seldom lead to immediate or easily attributable increases in topline revenue. Moreover, even when enterprises seek to scale up their marketing efforts, uncertainty persists about which investments will yield the highest returns. This challenge is particularly significant for small-scale seed enterprises, where marketing costs are certain, but the benefits are uncertain due to a lack of compelling evidence on effective interventions.

Weak marketing strategies can result in less successful product launches, slower growth for seed enterprises, and, ultimately, limited access for farmers to the right seeds.

CIMMYT's research, conducted through large maize breeding projects in East Africa, Nepal, Mexico, and beyond, echoes these challenges. While the need for solutions that promote faster adoption of new cultivars is widely recognized, there has been limited effort to provide practical, field-level guidance on how to best support seed companies and retailers in increasing sales of new varieties in challenging environments.

## SMIA's Goals

SMIA's goal is to enhance the effectiveness of marketing strategies that accelerate seed sales and variety turnover in Africa. The program will generate evidence on the success of various marketing approaches and share these findings with seed sector stakeholders. This evidence-based approach will help members in promoting the uptake of improved seed varieties.

## Experiments and Insights

The SMIA program will assess a range of public and private marketing efforts aimed at generating demand for new seed varieties. Below is a brief overview of the planned experiments across four pilot areas:

### 1. Variety Performance Data:

The objective of these experiments is to evaluate how providing variety performance data to farmers influences their seed purchase choices. Data on yield and other parameters will be presented through various formats, ranging in complexity to ultimately assess impact through awareness levels, consideration, and seed sales.

# STAK's New Program Partnership: Bringing Innovative Marketing Insights to Members

2. **Social Marketing Campaigns** (public brand agnostic approaches which focus on favorably influencing farmer behavior for them to adopt the right seeds for their farms):  
The focus will be on how STAK-led social marketing campaigns, such as billboards, radio, social media affect farmers' decisions. These campaigns, like Uganda and Malawi's "Newer is Better" initiatives, aim to raise awareness of the benefits of planting certified seeds of newer varieties. SMIA will generate data on the cost-effectiveness of these interventions in driving seed sales.

3. **Point-of-Sale:**  
The third set of experiments will explore the

effectiveness of point-of-sale marketing tools including trial packs, discounts, commissions, and in-dealership advertising. The results will be particularly relevant to SME seed companies and agro-dealers/retailers looking to understand the cost-effectiveness of these tools.

4. **Digital Marketing:**  
These experiments will examine the impact of digital marketing tools on seed purchases. This will include interactive SMS, social media advertising, pre-ordering options, and digital customer services. The findings will be especially valuable for SME seed companies aiming to accelerate sales and promote new varieties.

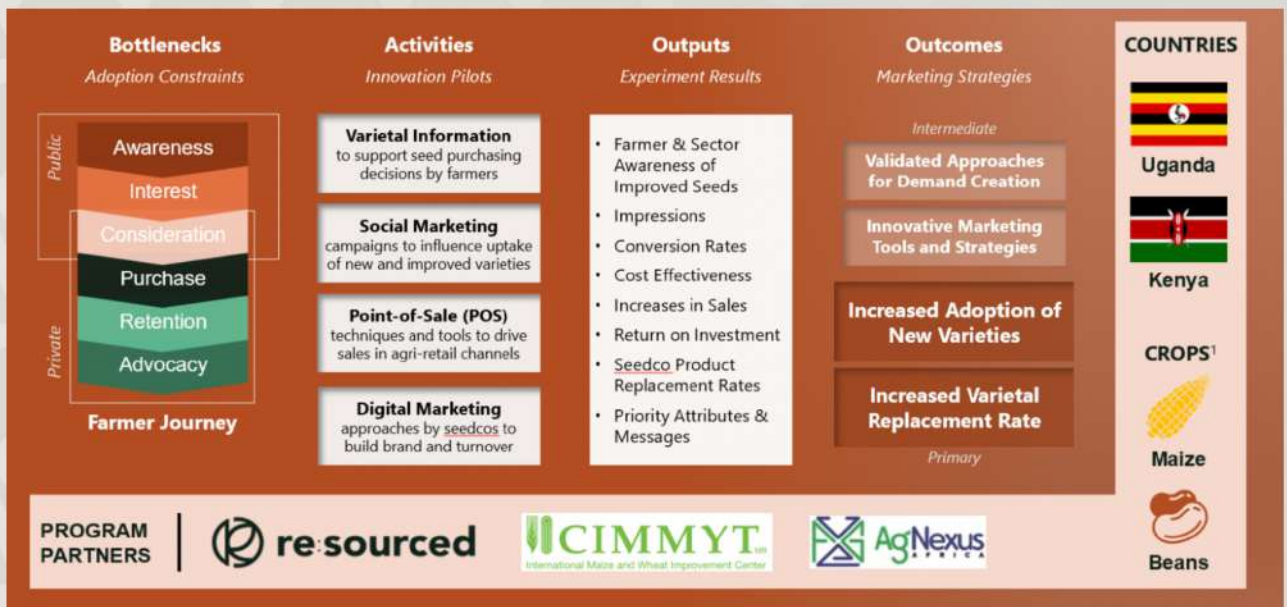


Fig 1: SMIA Pilot areas, experiment results, outcomes, and how they tie to the farmer journey

## Member Engagement and Updates

STAK is committed to regularly share insights from the SMIA experiments. We believe these findings will provide valuable guidance for increasing farmers' uptake of the right seed varieties. Notifications will be sent out when new presentations and reports are uploaded to our website. We will also share insights through our partner websites during regular stakeholder meetings and workshops.