QDS – filling the gap between formal and informal seed: the case of Uganda

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Outline

- Ugandan seed policy and certification process
- Quality Declared Seed and its quality assurance
- Comparing certified seed and QDS
- Potential of QDS in Uganda
- Take away lessons
Ugandan Seed Policy

- Vision of the (draft) seed policy: a competitive, profitable and sustainable seed sub-sector where all farmers and other seed users have access to affordable quality seed.

- Mission: to create a well-regulated seed sector that ensures availability of and access to safe and high quality seed under a pluralistic seed sector.
Seed classes in Uganda

- Uganda has two recognized seed classes for marketing quality seed:
  - Certified seed produced by seed companies
  - Quality Declared seed (QDS) produced by farmers and farmer groups
Quality Declared Seed (QDS):

- produced by farmer groups and sold in their communities
- for locally demanded crops and varieties
- quality assured
- filling a gap for crops and varieties not served by the seed companies
Crops under QDS scheme

- Millet
- Simsim
- Potato
- Sorghum
- Beans
- Soybeans
- Groundnut
- Pigeon peas
- Cassava

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QDS quality assurance procedure

- Produced from foundation/basic seed
- Like certified seed, QDS producers submit planting return to district agricultural officers (DAO) and request for inspection
- Inspected twice in the season by DAO on 10% of the fields. QDS producers pay inspector
- DAOs are accredited by National Seed Certification Service
- After harvest, 1 seed sample is taken for testing at the national lab
- If the seed sample passes the test, green coloured government issued labels are placed in the seed packs.
Comparing QDS and certified seed

Sales price and cost price for 1 kg of beans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sales price seed</th>
<th>Cost of production seed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certified seed</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QDS seed</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local market (potential) seed</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$/kg

Source: EGS report; ISSD DATA
Comparing QDS and certified seed

Certified seed, QDS and local market prices ($/kg)

- **Common beans**
  - Certified seed: 1.11
  - QDS seed: 0.76
  - Local market (potential) seed: 0.57

- **Groundnuts**
  - Certified seed: 1.31
  - QDS seed: 0.83
  - Local market (potential) seed: 0.75

- **Soy beans**
  - Certified seed: 1.25
  - QDS seed: 0.75
  - Local market (potential) seed: 0.51

Note: groundnut prices for unshelled seed
Source: EGS report; ISSD DATA
Comparing QDS and certified seed

- Seed purity, germination and moisture content standards for QDS are the same as certified seed
  - 13 bean seed samples tested in the National Lab show:
    - 99.8 – 100% physical purity
    - 90 – 99% germination (standard is 80%)
- Yield verification plots (QDS versus home-saved seed show an increase of 670 kg/ha (280 kg/acre)

The return to investing $3 extra in QDS seed is $23
1. Potential of QDS: more quality seed available

**Volume of QDS seed produced (MT)**

- **Beans**
  - 2014: 300 MT
  - 2015: 150 MT
  - 2016: 225 MT

- **Groundnut**
  - 2014: 10 MT
  - 2015: 65 MT
  - 2016: 35 MT

- **Soybean**
  - 2014: 20 MT
  - 2015: 20 MT
  - 2016: 20 MT
Potential of QDS: customer segment

Farmers sources of seed (2013)

- Home saved: 46%
- Neighbours: 2%
- Local market: 2%
- LSBs: 3%
- Agro-dealer: 2%
- Government: 2%
- NGO/project: 2%

Certified quality seed: 2% (potential)

Low quality seed: 43%

Source: ISSD Uganda Access to seed household survey, 2013
Potential of QDS: climate resilience

Farmers access to bean seed during normal and stress periods

Source: Kansiime & Mastenboek, 2016
2. Potential of QDS: shift from using seed from the local market to silvers standard QDS

- Market segmentation
  - targeting the local market segment so that farmers buy quality seed instead of grain.
    - Those farmer are already in the habit of buying seed. Especially during stressed seasons.
Making the system sustainable

1. Challenge: QDS producers still few and not well spread in the country
   → Potential solution: working with like-minded partners

2. Challenge: Limited capacity of Ministry of Agric for field inspections
   → Potential solution: accreditation of DAO’s to conduct field inspections

3. Challenge: QDS labels have to be obtained from Kampala, which is far for many groups
   ➡ Potential solution: Decentralization to zonal level
Making the system sustainable

4 Challenge: Access to foundation seed is hampered by distance and availability

→ potential solution: production of foundation seed within the zone and by several seed producers, depending on the crop

5 Challenge: with increased number of QDS producers, coordination of seed inspection and foundation seed is becoming more important

→ formation of QDS producer associations in each zone to coordinate quality inspection, booking of foundation seed and ordering for the certification labels.
Conclusion & take away

QDS is filling the gap because:

1) It is quality assured (silver standard)
2) It is affordable – a) reduced cost of certification, and b) reduced transport costs
3) It can provide quality seed during climatic stresses and replacing farmers buying seed from the local market.
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