Context

- Rural transformation and poverty reduction in Ethiopia require increased agricultural productivity.
- Limited availability of quality seed to smallholders is a roadblock on the way to productivity growth.

Innovation

Under the Direct Seed Marketing (DSM) program, public and private seed enterprises were authorized to sell seed directly to farmers in the selected woredas, promoting:

- Competition among seed producers for customers
- Multiple seed marketing channels at last mile (cooperatives, individual agents, seed producers’ own outlets, etc.)

Future steps

- better assessment of seed demand
- capacity strengthening of seed producers
- further assessment of the program’s impact

Promoting adoption of improved seed through the Direct Seed Marketing approach

Results of the pilot program evaluation indicated that the DSM approach could propel wider and more effective distribution of seed to farmers, and informed the scale-up of the approach.

- **By 2018**, the DSM covered 228 woredas and reached 1.4 million smallholder farmers with quality seed of multiple crops
- **In 2018**, about 64% of the seed is marketed through DSM and seed carryover reduced to as low as 2% in contrast to 30-40% by the conventional supply system
- The DSM reduced the Government of Ethiopia expenditures to deliver quality seed to farmers by over ETB1.2 billion

Source: ATA

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The Direct Seed Marketing program is implemented by the Ethiopian ATA, which partners with the Ministry of Agriculture, regional bureaus of agriculture, and seed companies to implement at scale. The program draws on lessons learned from a pilot phase led by ATA in 2013-15 and supported by AGRA and BMGF; an operational evaluation of that pilot phase that was conducted by IFPRI in 2013-14 with support from BMGF and PIM; and initial work on direct seed marketing introduced by the Integrated Seed Sector Development (ISSD Ethiopia) in 2011-13 that was supported by the Embassy of the Netherlands.

Partners

- Ethiopian ATA
- ISSD Ethiopia
- ESA Ethiopian Seed
- International Food Policy Research Institute
- Government of the Netherlands
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- AGRA
- CGIR
- Research Program on Policies, Institutions, and Markets led by IFPRI
- CGIAR

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