# Potential business partnership models to enhance the seed delivery system in Tanzania and Uganda

## Highlights

- Conducted preliminary discussions with mapped partners to identify common interests and areas for collaboration. The analysis suggests that several types of partnerships have emerged in response to the diverse needs of the various key partners.
- Mapped potential partners who can share resources for a synergistic impact of strengthening the sweetpotato seed delivery system in Tanzania and Uganda.
- Identified mechanisms for implementing partnerships to link public and private actors in the sweetpotato seed delivery system in Uganda and Tanzania.
- NaCRRI and seed producers' cooperative in Uganda (i.e., BUSECO), TARI and the seed producers' association in Tanzania (i.e., CHAWAVITA MB KAZI) identified a common interest and established a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for strengthening the relationship and identified key revenue partnership models for strengthening Sweetpotato seed business.
- Provided the capacity building for NaCRRI (Uganda), TARI (Tanzania), seed producers' organisations and private seed companies to identify key partners for building a partnership through a systematic approach developed by IFPRI.

## What was the problem?

The inefficiency of the sweetpotato seed delivery system in Tanzania and Uganda is the result of inadequate collaboration by stakeholders in the seed value chain. As sweetpotato seed goes through the value chain, the unit value of the seed goes down, but revenue goes up based on the large volume of the seed being handled by a seed multiplier. During this process, every stakeholder in the value chain struggles to present value propositions to their immediate customers. There are various reasons.

First, disconnection between upstream (i.e., Early Generation Seed (EGS) producers and downstream (i.e., certified/QDS producers) of the sweetpotato seed delivery system. This has made it difficult for downstream value chain players to access and have a consistent supply of EGS with appropriate varieties in a timely and affordable manner. Second, a high level of information asymmetry between actors in the seed value chain due to poor links between them. This resulted in a lack of awareness of potential synergies in knowledge sharing among seed value chain actors. Third, inconsistent demand due to poor linkages to the potential market, customer segments and inadequate knowledge about customers on repurchase and replenishment of the quality planting materials. Lastly, the current seed certification process is in its infancy, particularly in the case of roots, tubers and banana crops. The government is making considerable efforts to make the certification process more efficient. For example, digitalization of certification process using Seed Tracker in Tanzania and National Seed Tracker and Tracing System in Uganda, but the government still face challenges to provide affordable seed certification process for the individual seed producers.

These challenges were addressed through the following institutional innovations as part of the project entitled "Sweetpotato Genetic Advances and Innovative Seed Systems (SweetGAINS)". These innovations include a) Facilitating establishment of seed producers associations/cooperative with business objectives; b) identifying and streamlining business partnership with potential key stakeholders; c) Capacity building of seed producers to strengthen their seed business models and relationship with partners.

## What objectives did we set to achieve?

The main objective is to strengthen sweetpotato seed delivery system in Tanzania and Uganda to deliver the value propositions of the seed business to the customers. During this process, it is important to identify and build business relationships among the key stakeholders in the sweetpotato seed value chain.

## Where did we work?

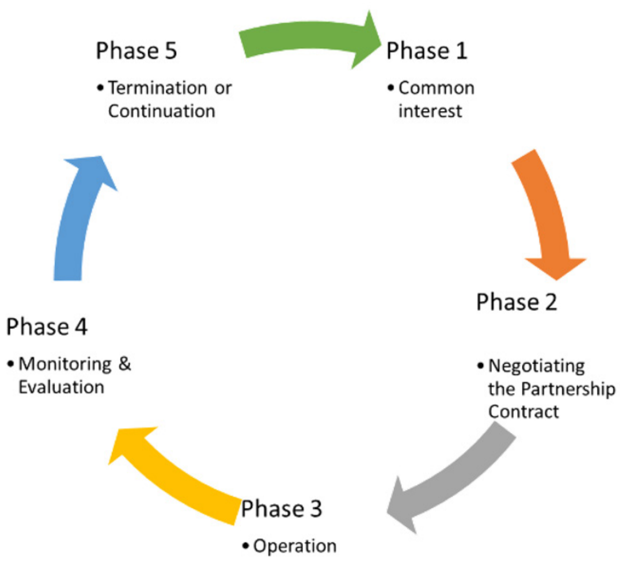
Our intervention mainly in the Lake zone of Tanzania (i.e., Geita, Kagera, Mara, Mwanza, Shinyanga and Simiyu) and Eastern region of Uganda (i.e., Kamuli and Buyende district).

## What did we achieve?

As part of the institutional innovation for strengthening the sweetpotato seed business and delivery system, the International Potato Center (CIP) partnered with NARIs, identified, and trained conventional seed multipliers as a sweetpotato Commercial Seed Producers (CSP) in the project intervention regions. In addition, CIP and its partners, including local governments (LGAs), facilitated the creation of a co-operative and/or association which are commercially oriented. These include "Busoga commercial seed producers and marketing cooperative (BUSECO)" in Eastern region of Uganda and "CHAWAVITA MB KAZI" in lake zone region of Tanzania in 2022. This has enabled strong sweetpotato seed delivery system by connecting actors in the upstream and downstream of the sweetpotato seed value chain. However, these two groups (co-operative and association) will extend their key crops to other potential vegetatively propagated crops.

Moreover, CIP has found several potential business partnerships between sweetpotato seed value chain actors. One of the key partnerships is between the newly established commercial seed producers' association/cooperative and NARIs. Therefore, CIP has followed a guideline developed by Hartwich et al., (2007) to build a public-private partnership between NARIs (i.e., TARI in Tanzania and NaCRRI in Uganda) and the commercial seed producers' cooperative/association. The guideline contains the sequence of steps or phases necessary to establish a business partnership. There are five phases. The first phase focuses on identification of common interests between key partners. The second phase covers the negotiation of the partnership contract and the drafting of terms and references. The third phase involves the development of a contract or memorandum of understanding among the partners. The fourth stage is devoted to monitoring and evaluation activities agreed upon by the partners. Finally, if activities proceed smoothly in accordance with the contract or MOU, the agreement will be maintained or the agreement will be terminated. It is a continuous process (Figure 1). In this process the CIP has acted as a broker between NARIs and the cooperative/association.

**Figure 1:** the cycle of partnership formation.




**Source:** *Hartwich et al., 2007 (IFPRI)*

## The cycle of partnership formation in Tanzania

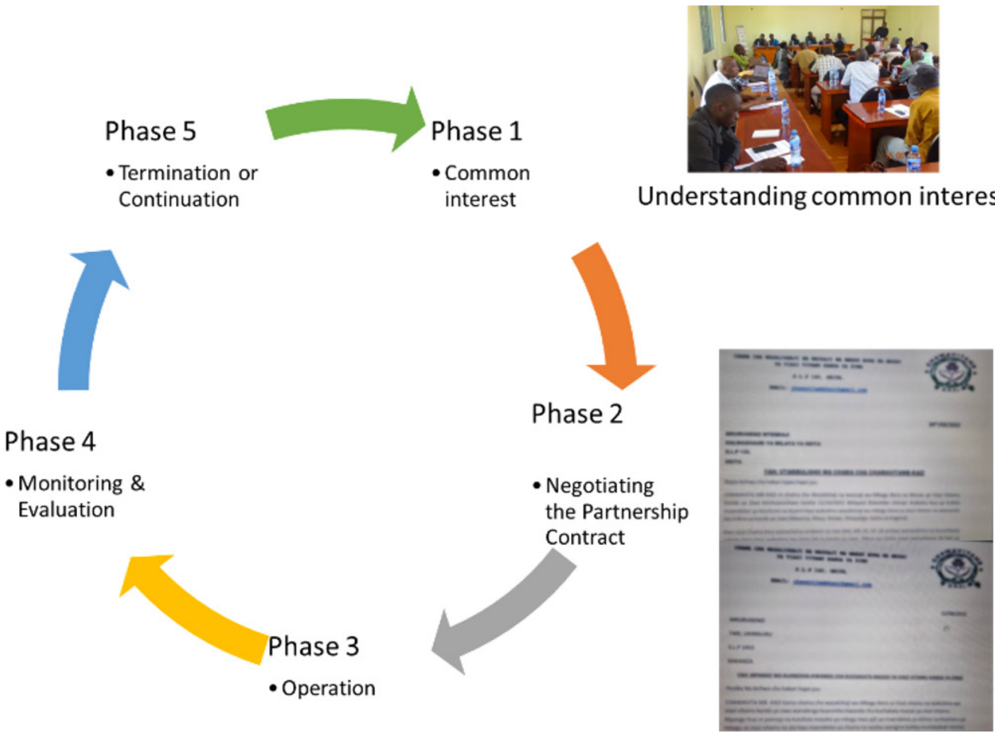
First, CIP partnership with TARI initiated negotiations between public and private institutions in Tanzania. Discussions with different partners were held to identify common interests and potential monetary and non-monetary benefits which are of paramount importance to strengthen seed delivery system in Tanzania. Involving partners at every stage of a partnership-building process creates an environment for building trust among partners. Moreover, CIP attended a panel discussion facilitated by AGRA (Photo 1) on increasing the consumption of bio-fortified crops. A number of institutional partners such as the Rockefeller Foundation, WFP, GAIN and SMEs participated in the discussion. This was an important step in widening the scope of ensuring that a road map for potential sweetpotato seed business partnership is set between institutional consumers and seed producers.

**Photo 1: Key stakeholders' meeting to build a partnership among actors in the sweetpotato value chain.**

Second, TARI has partnered closely with a regulatory authority namely Tanzania Official Certification Institute (TOSCI) and the Local governments in the lake zone to train CSPs through the association on quality seed production techniques. A collaboration was established between the association, TOSCI and local governments to help fast track the seed certification process.

TARI and the Seed Producers' Association (CHAWAVITA MB KAZI) have initiated negotiations to discuss terms of reference that could be implemented to ensure a sustainable supply of EGS to commercial seed producers. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between TARI and CHAWAVITA will be applied to set terms and ensure trust among partners (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: The cycle of partnership formation between TARI and CHAWAVITA MB KAZI.**



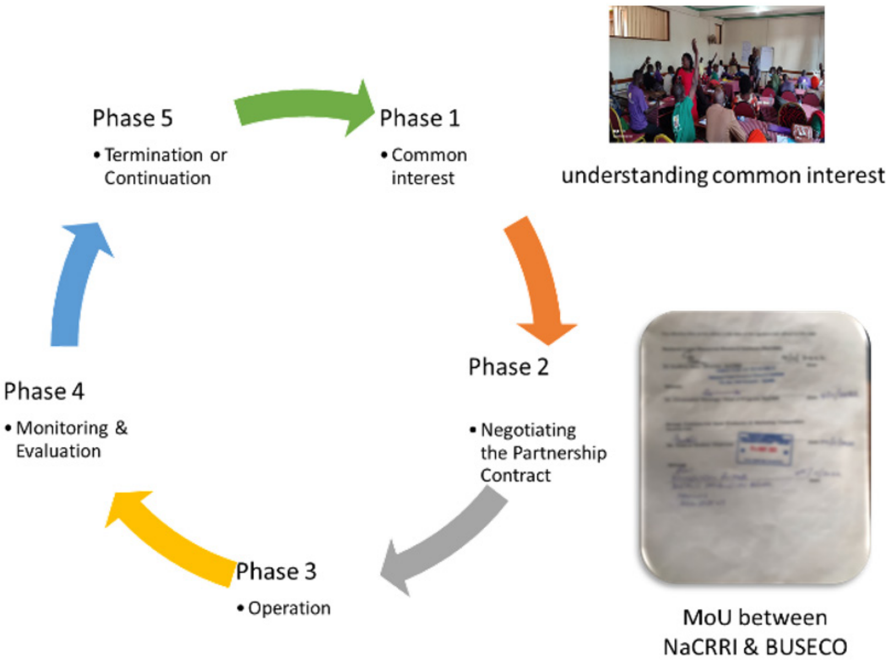

Concurrently, TARI has initiated discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture and institutional clients on how they can partner to enhance availability of clean planting materials to sweetpotato farmers. TARI is eager to find more partners to share knowledge, experience and resources to strengthen seed delivery to farmers.

## The cycle of partnership formation in Uganda

Partnership building in Uganda is similar to that in Tanzania (Figure 3). The CIP initiated a discussion between NaCRRI and BUSECO to understand their common interest (Photo 2). After the identification of the common interest, the partners enter into the 2nd phase of the partnership formation cycle. The terms and references were drafted based on negotiations between the partners. Lastly, the Memorandum of Understanding was signed between NaCRRI and BUSECO in December 2022. Although two parties have established the partnership, they need capacity building to strengthen administrative, marketing and governance activities, particularly for the co-op side.

**Photo 2:** Key stakeholders' meeting to build a partnership between NaCRRI and BUSECO (Photo credit: S. Rajendran)

**Figure 3:** The cycle of partnership formation between NaCRRI and BUSECO.



In both countries, the association/cooperative had started negotiating with the service providers to enhance access to services such as inputs, loans, training and certification on behalf of CSPs. This includes the linkage of CSPs with institutional clients (WFP, FAO, World Vision), local governments, financial institutions and input suppliers that may be difficult to access individually. In Tanzania, through the linkage between the association, TARI, IITA and CIP the commercial seed producers managed to access different trainings such as e-certification and market linkages through the seed tracker. Similarly, in Uganda, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) has established an e-certification process. Currently MAAIF browsing options for incorporating sweetpotato and other vegetatively propagated crops in the process to reduce the cost of seed certification and improve quality assurance for producing sweetpotato seed.

## Challenges or lessons learned

- Limited awareness among partners on the synergistic impact of collaboration
- Long turnover of contacted partners to show interest in discussions.
- Policy interventions are needed to create an enabling business environment to build partnership between key partners, particularly on public and private partnership, cost-effective seed certification process, and enhance contract farming.
- Building the association/cooperative provided opportunities for CSPs to establish partnership with NARIs and other key partners to access and multiply affordable improved sweetpotato varieties.
- Building partnership with business service providers such as financial institutions, and insurance providers will strengthen the value proposition for the cooperative/association.
- Innovations have been made by associations to enhance group cohesion and sustainability (for example, funeral insurance).

## Next Steps

- Facilitate partners to complete the stages of partnership formation by moving into the next stages.
- Providing capacity building to TARI and the association/cooperative in implementing agreements of the partnership to strengthen the foreseen business relationships with other key stakeholders.
- To streamline and address challenges encountered in implementing partnership agreements to foster trust and sustainable relationship between partners.

Partners

Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI), Tanzania; National Crops Resources Research Institute (NaCRRI), Uganda; Busoga commercial seed producers and marketing cooperative (BUSECO), Uganda; Sweetpotato seed producers' association (i.e., CHAWAVITA MB KAZI), Tanzania.

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