



# Unlocking the Bottom of the Pyramid

Developing a comprehensive Go-To-Market strategy to reach smallholder farmers

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**Company:** KAPI Ltd  
**Sector:** Biopesticides  
**Location:** Kenya  
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Smallholder farmers (SHFs) are the backbone of Kenya's agricultural sector, comprising an estimated 7.5 million individuals. For businesses selling agricultural inputs, this "bottom of the pyramid" (BOP) demographic represents a substantial market opportunity. Furthermore, equipping SHFs with affordable, high-quality products – such as innovative and/or climate-friendly agricultural inputs – is critical for driving improved productivity, overcoming systemic food insecurity, and unlocking the full potential of the broader agricultural value chain.

However, successfully reaching and selling to smallholders is notoriously difficult and risky for agribusinesses. The farmer base is highly fragmented and widely dispersed across remote rural areas, leading to challenging "last-mile" economics for product distribution and extension services – this is often the key focus of agriSMEs operating BOP models. However, businesses also face demand-side barriers, including farmers' lack of working capital liquidity to purchase inputs, and historically low adoption rates for new products or practices. This requires a different strategy – one that drives product awareness and demand.

Targeted technical assistance (TA) can help address these challenges by providing critical support to absorb costs and de-risk commercial trials. The following case study illustrates how CASA Kenya provided bespoke go-to-market support to KAPI Ltd, a biopesticides producer, in their efforts to tap into the smallholder farmer market segment. Unlike many other BOP-focused TA initiatives, this TA was centred on demand-generation, helping KAPI develop a comprehensive strategy to coordinate last mile distribution initiatives in line with their marketing activities to drive product uptake.

## KAPI Ltd

KAPI Ltd, a Kenyan manufacturer of agricultural and household pesticides founded in 1964 and based in Nakuru, has historically produced *pyrethrum*-based organic pesticides that meet stringent export standards, including EU Maximum Residue Levels. These products are almost exclusively sold to large commercial farms, accounting for ±90% of its sales.

To address the health and environmental risks of chemical pesticides, KAPI developed an affordable organic alternative to their pyrethrum-based line, which was previously too expensive for SHFs. After eight years of R&D, testing, and regulatory approval, the company launched AgriPest in February 2024 – Kenya's first broad-spectrum biopesticide derived from seeds of the [Croton Tree](#).

Croton is sourced via EcoFix, an organisation that works with SHFs harvesting from trees naturally occurring on their farms, as well as in nearby forests. Designed for the SHF market, AgriPest is sold in smaller pack sizes and priced competitively with synthetic pesticides, offering a safe, effective, and accessible alternative.



# The Challenge



While the new organic pesticide addressed a clear social, environmental, and agronomic need, KAPI lacked a structured go-to-market strategy. The company had grown its commercial business largely through word-of-mouth and product reputation, had limited experience developing a formal marketing strategy – including planning or budgeting – and lacked understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses of different media channels or promotion strategies.

As they prepared to enter the SHF market, the scale of the challenge became clear. Beyond pricing and brand awareness, KAPI realised that success would also require education and behaviour change – addressing preconceptions about organic inputs being expensive and ineffective, and building awareness of the health risks associated with chemical pesticides.

## CASA Kenya Support

CASA Kenya moved beyond traditional BOP last-mile delivery support, delivering targeted TA to help KAPI develop a comprehensive go-to-market strategy for AgriPest – aligning distribution efforts with its marketing calendar. This included:



Support for hiring a **Go-To-Market Manager** to design and manage the overall Go-To-Market strategy for 2025, and design a comprehensive sales and marketing strategy for 2026-2028.



Financial support for a **marketing agency** to develop a campaign focused on radio advertisements and participation in talk shows. This included an ROI assessment to establish proof-of-concept and inform KAPI's own future investment in this channel.



Funding for a **partnership with the Shamba Shape Up TV programme** – the most watched agricultural TV show in Kenya – to raise brand awareness and educate prospective customers on the benefits of using organic pesticides.



Support for hiring a **Social Media Manager** to develop training content for social media channels, test channel effectiveness and assess ROI, and explore proof-of-concept for sustained investment from KAPI.



# What Changed for the Business?



While the CASA TA support is still ongoing, KAPI has already identified clear and positive changes to their business that can be directly linked to the support provided:

## Insights on marketing channel effectiveness:

KAPI confirmed that radio is the most effective medium for reaching smallholders and identified priority stations for future campaigns. Testing different formats showed that talk shows outperform traditional advertisements in building brand awareness, and should be prioritised going forward. Talk shows are also significantly cheaper and faster to set up.

The company also strengthened its approach to social media – learning how to work with influencers, recognising the limits of sustaining engagement around a single product over long campaigns, and shifting toward shorter-term partnerships. The campaign further highlighted the importance of agrovets as influential actors on platforms like Facebook, and clarified the potential of channels such as TikTok for reaching younger farmers.

## Internal organisation and coordination:

KAPI highlighted the value of a structured annual marketing calendar to align field teams and head office, and to support onboarding of new staff.

The company also plans to introduce a regular internal newsletter to improve communication and visibility across teams. With support from the Go-To-Market Manager, KAPI reports significantly greater confidence in designing, planning and coordinating marketing activities.

## Value of continuous self-evaluation and strategic adjustments:

KAPI report that CASA's support has taught them the value of regularly measuring progress to identify which strategies are working and to quickly take corrective measures when they are not. A key example of this is their approach to Smallholder Farmer Trainings. KAPI realised that while these sessions are crucial for farmer education, they are inherently slow, costly, and rarely result in 'on the day' purchases. To ensure trainings are both beneficial and cost-effective, KAPI has learned that it is crucial to conduct the sessions in direct collaboration with a nearby agrovet, and to ensure that this agrovet is sufficiently well-stocked ahead of time, so that when farmers are ready to buy, there is ready supply. Furthermore, KAPI have learned that to keep training cost effective, farmer trainings should only be run with groups of at least 50 farmers.

## Strengthening KAPI's position as a technical expert:

Through the TA support, KAPI recognised the value of active social media engagement and now has a dedicated resource responding to farmer queries on crop management and pesticide use. This direct interaction has strengthened KAPI's reputation as a trusted technical expert – not just a supplier – and has driven strong customer conversion rates.

## Launch of new marketing activities:

KAPI introduced social media campaigns as part of its new brand awareness strategy, leveraging influencers to boost visibility – an approach it would not have considered pre-TA. Early insights suggest this has helped build KAPI's credibility with farmers through practical, problem-solving focused content. KAPI also developed targeted training for agrovets and distributors, equipping them with knowledge on the benefits and correct application of AgriPest. Early feedback from retail staff has been strongly positive.



Building on TechnoServe's experience implementing the Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusinesses (CASA) Technical Assistance (TA) Facility, the CASA Kenya buy-in programme supports emerging agribusinesses as engines of Kenya's economic development. The programme's objective is to drive inclusive and green growth among Kenyan agriSMEs by providing targeted packages of support, combining technical and financial assistance, to help the businesses progress along their growth journey.

The CASA Kenya portfolio includes agriSMEs across different value chains and operating a range of different business models. Some of these businesses are early-stage companies still proving their concepts, while others are more established SMEs seeking to test new models, enter new markets, or reach different customer segments as they move into their next phase of growth. The underlying principle of CASA is to support agriSMEs not only to grow, but to grow inclusively, engaging more effectively with smallholder farmers – either as suppliers or customers.

This case study forms part of CASA Kenya's broader learning agenda, which aims to generate practical, evidence-based insights from portfolio experience to inform investors, policymakers, and of course, other agriSMEs operating in this space.

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