



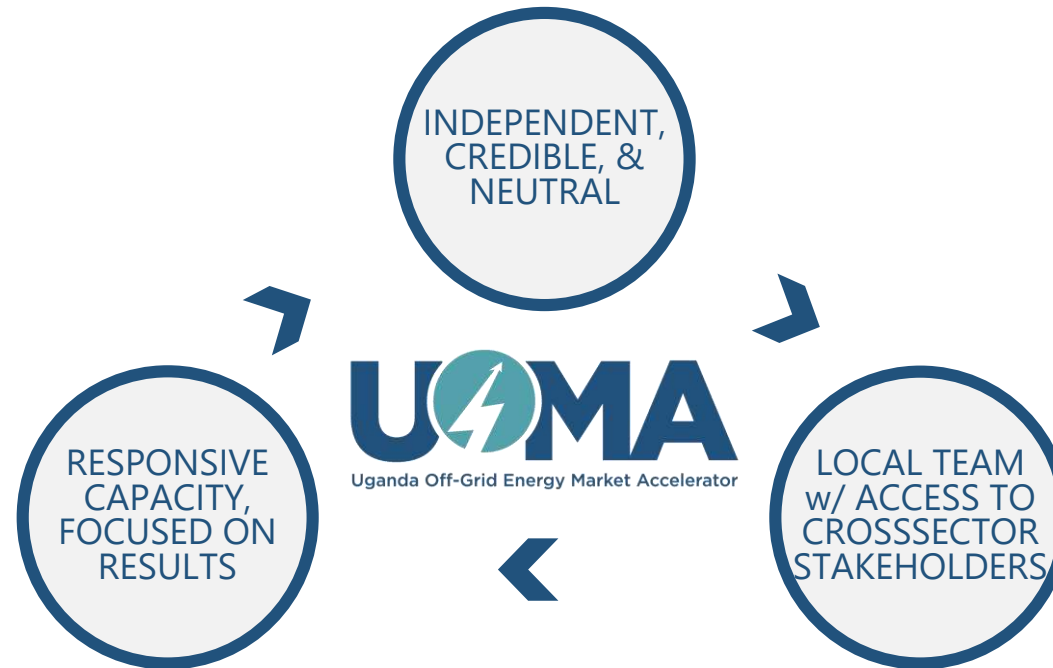
Uganda Off-Grid Energy Market Accelerator

Exploring models to increase consumer awareness

Insights from grassroots pilots with SHS operators

October 2018

Uganda Off Grid Energy Market Accelerator (UOMA) is a dedicated and neutral intermediary, focused on scaling off-grid energy access



We accelerate the off-grid energy market in Uganda through:

- **Research & Insights:** providing data, analysis, and insights to businesses, investors, development partners, and policy-makers
- **Coordination:** coordinating industry actors and resources to increase efficiency; and
- **Direct Interventions:** catalyzing interventions where necessary to reduce barriers to off-grid energy access.

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One of core accelerator initiatives is to analyze unserved populations and determine strategies to reach

UOMA is working on 5 high impact initiatives:

Expanding access to finance

Increase access to local currency debt finance for solar operators, bridging a critical working capital shortfall and currency mismatch and enabling operators to increase affordability of units

Reaching unserved populations

Reduce barriers to better target unserved populations in Uganda, improving access for some of the hardest to reach and most in need communities

Expanding productive use technology

Support industry to test and validate productive use technologies that can achieve economic benefits for off-grid Ugandans while growing energy demand

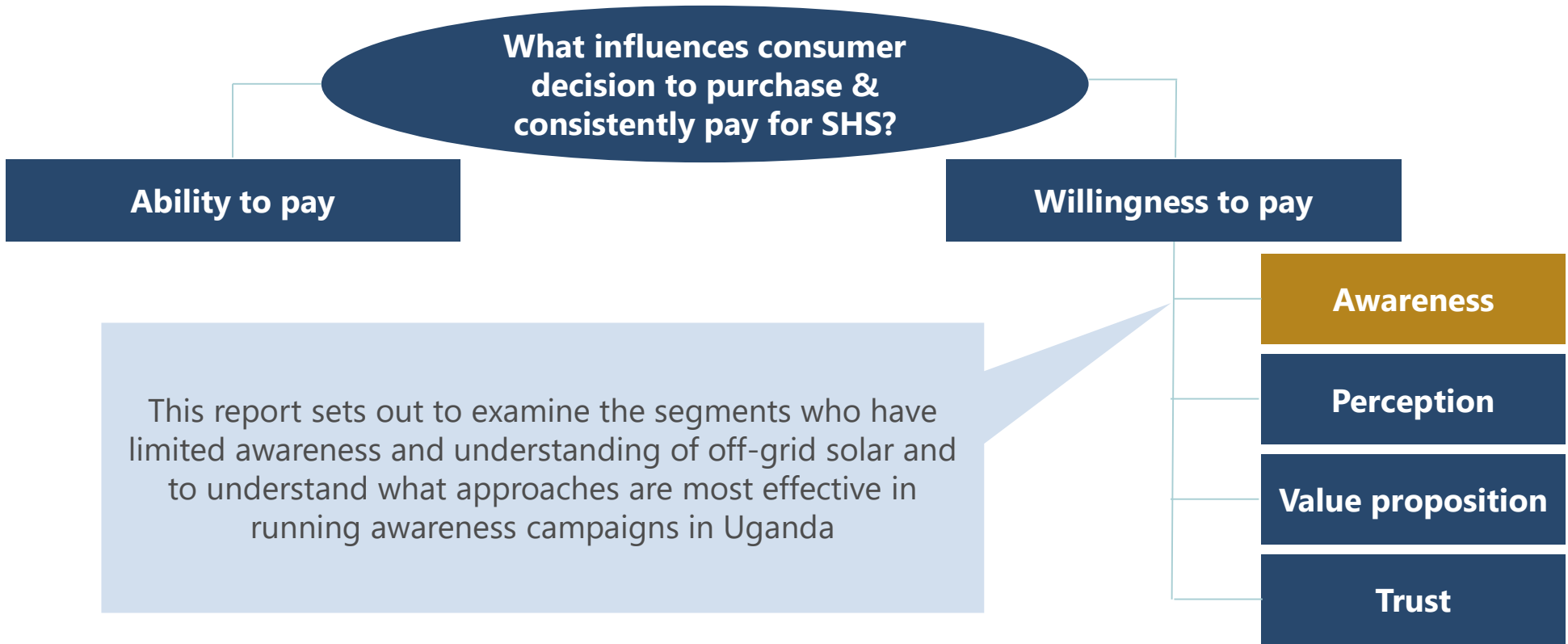
Strengthening government policy & targets

Support public sector to create effective policies and an effective enabling environment to increase off-grid energy uptake in Uganda

Facilitating communication & coordination

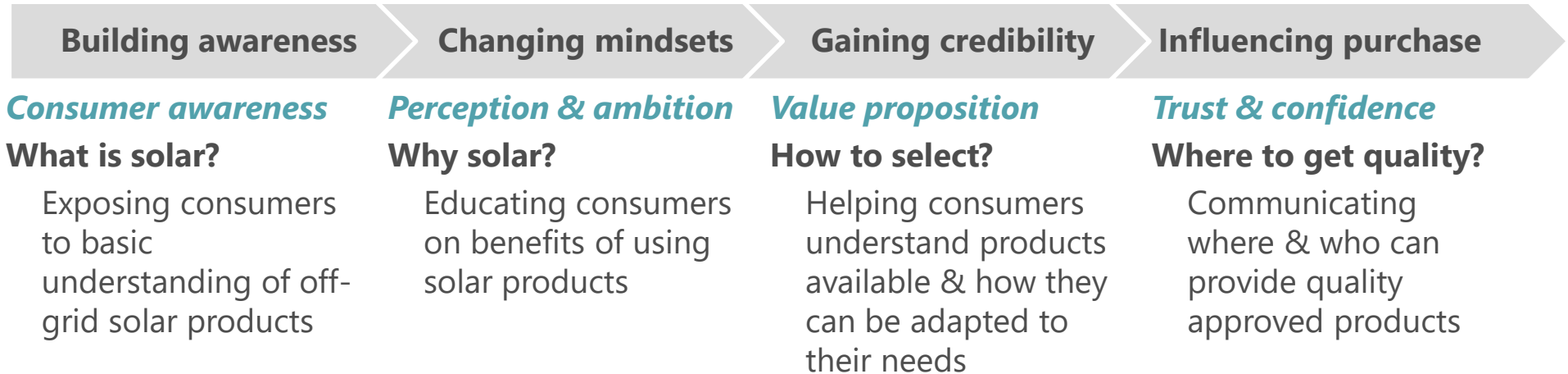
Enable more effective communication and coordination in the off-grid energy sector in Uganda, resulting in better resource allocation and accelerated progress in achieving universal access

Recall: This report is one in a series of insights shared based on our framework to segment unserved populations



Recall: Previous research shows important to understand consumer behavior towards solar in order to improve perceptions

To influence consumer decision-making and increase solar uptake, effective communication is needed across 4 key areas:



Initial research showed that:

- Purchases were made through mainly direct marketing and referrals but traditional advertising & social media have not been very effective
- Road shows & sessions are informative but consumers need to speak to an agent more than once before making a sale

Hypothesis then was that in order for marketing & awareness campaigns to gain more traction, operators should leverage a more grassroots approach

UOMA set out to test hypothesis using grassroots approach to leverage existing trust structures to increase awareness & uptake

Building awareness

Identify influencers and leaders to partner with in the community

- Leverage trust and confidence already existing with community influencers and use them as champions of awareness

Changing mindsets

Set up “info sessions” with existing community groups (faith based, savings, gov’t)

- Use already existing groups with support from “champions” to educate people, allowing them to ask more questions, hear about benefits & understand quality

Gaining credibility

Exhibit products and run demos to help consumers understand the products

- Showcase products during info sessions to help understand use, how it can be adapted to needs and how to identify good quality ones

Influencing purchase

Tailor marketing & advertising to the community culture

- Adapt brand awareness strategies to the local people; for example incorporating local dialects & culture in advertising campaigns
- Follow-up with potential users with calls or in-person visits in order to answer questions on their individual use and benefits

UOMA partnered with private sector operators to test hypothesis on awareness

Set out 3 key criteria to identify potential sites for consumer awareness pilot

- Limited grid access & distribution of SHS
- Strong presence of local government or other grass roots structures
- Dense enough population that key influencers can be effective

Awareness campaigns run through training existing community groups



Identify community influencers to partner with as champions of awareness



Organize community info sessions leveraging existing groups like churches, SACCOs



Mobilize attendance through advertising, word of mouth and rallies



Follow-up with potential customers to discuss individual needs



Run info sessions with operator training team and community leader



Partnerships: In order to gain trust and credibility, operators leveraged community groups and external mobilisers

1 Consumer perceptions were largely framed by community influencers

- Political and religious leaders mobilized large numbers for the info sessions
- However, attendees did not always understand the purpose for the meetings in advance and did so out of trust and loyalty for the leader

2 Existing groups and meetings were efficient for running info sessions

- Savings and self improvement groups like Village Savings & Loan Associations (VSLAs) and Savings & Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs) were most responsive during info sessions and provided easy follow up on potential and actual sales

3 Partners expected compensation for their support in awareness campaigns

- While a number believed that off-grid energy would help their communities, they still required incentives to support awareness campaigns

4 External mobilisers were not as efficient as operators own team

- Some pilots utilized the use of external mobilisers to bring people together for the info sessions
- In some cases, external mobilizers didn't market info sessions in advance and when they did bring together large numbers, they did not have interest

Data collection: Through out process, data was collected to inform next steps and track success

	Pre pilot	During pilot	Post pilot
Data required	<p>Planning data such as info on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing groups Community culture and dynamics 	<p>Customer data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of solar Energy needs and ambitions 	<p>Customer data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of sales made Maintenance needs
Data tools used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-person meetings with community leaders Interviews with community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance sheets & questionnaires Notes taken on observed responses during session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up calls, visits & info sessions by agents Sales dashboards to track customer success
Outcomes & use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helped test key criteria for potential pilot sites Determined potential community groups & influencers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported analysis of consumer preferences Highlighted pilot challenges and learnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed follow up strategies for particular groups Enabled targeted outreach to potential customers

Brand awareness and marketing: Aggressive marketing ensured consumer interest and continuity of program



Increased visibility and brand presence influenced success of pilots:

- Consumers were responsive to sessions tailored to fit their culture & norms for example adverts in native languages
- Training materials with operator branding and demos were most effective in leading to sales

Pilot data enabled key learnings on how to run efficient awareness campaigns that increase uptake of off-grid solar

1

Partnerships

- Influencers & mobilisers should be selected based on pilot targets and requirements
- Targets and KPIs should be clearly communicated
- Incentivizes should be aligned to key milestones, for example compensation only after targets are met

2

Internal capacity

- Build team capacity to reinforce mobilization efforts, run pilots & collect data efficiently
- Merge internal team & community based trainers to maintain company control over mobilization
- Hold weekly assessments to track progress

3

Data tools

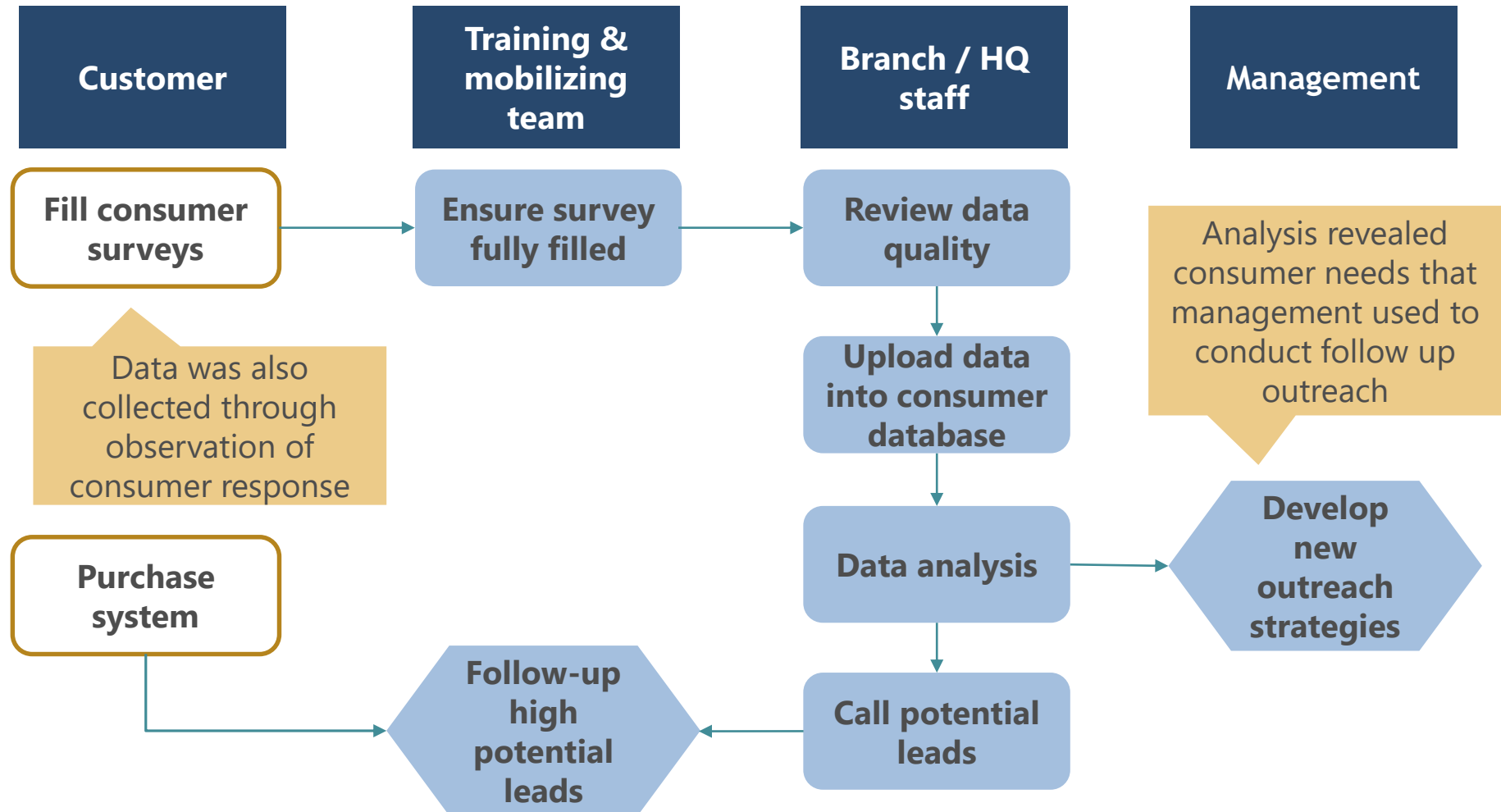
- Questionnaires should have more targeted questions*
- Articulate data flow within departments to ensure efficiency in data collection & use*
- Define roles for key personnel to ensure efficiency in data collection and use

**Example tools added to Case study in Appendix section*

Evidence shows that consumer perceptions framed by community influencers and increases success of awareness campaigns. However, important for operators to utilise their own teams for continuity and offer technical support.

Appendix

Case study: Supported operator pilot where data was collected, analyzed & shared with management to make strategic decisions



Case study: Refined questionnaires to collect relevant information from attendees and potential customers

Initial data collection tools only tracked basic contact information

First name	Last name	Phone number	Solar kit

UOMA team designed new templates to collect more detailed info for analysis

Personal details
Full names:
Phone number:
Gender (Male/Female)
Age:
Prior experience with solar
Have you had any experience / heard of solar before today? (Yes/No)
Are you interested in having solar at your home? (Yes/No) Give two reasons why
Do you currently have a solar system? (Yes/No)
If you have a solar system, what encouraged you to make this purchase?
If you have solar, what system are you using and who is the provider?
If you don't have solar what energy alternative are you using?
Solar training
From the training what solar kit do you think you need?
What solar system do you think you will need in the future? (Upgrade)
Financial information
What is your main source of income?
Do you belong to any savings group or SACCOS? (Yes/No)
If yes, how much do you save per month in your savings group or SACCOS?

- New templates enabled assessment of:
 - Group / consumer characteristics
 - Solar awareness and energy use
 - Knowledge of solar brand and products
 - Affordability trends
 - Potential and interested customers

Case study: **Data metrics enabled more in depth assessment of consumers through targeted questions**

Some of the targeted questions included:

What are your full names, age & gender?

Information supported analysis of gender & age behavior; in some areas, women made less purchases as men were considered decision makers

Have you had prior experience with solar and are you interested in owning a kit?

Data helped analyze consumer experience, solar awareness, perception and interest; this enabled stakeholders identify potential and interested customers

What encouraged you to make a solar purchase and who is your provider?

Surveys revealed major driving factors of solar purchase decisions; also showed that majority of solar users did not have information of their providers

What kit do you think you need? Would you upgrade your system?

Information enabled stakeholders understand needs & preferences of consumers both now and in the future; products were adjusted to suit consumer needs

What is your main source of income? Are you part of any savings group?

Data enabled stakeholders understand main income generating activities in different communities and assess affordability trends and comparisons



Thank you

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