



THE AGRICULTURE CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT



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Outgoing Permanent Secretary Mr. Pius Wakabi hands over Instruments of Power to the incoming Permanent Secretary Major Gen. David Kasura-Kyomukama. Looking on is Hon. Hellen Adoa, MoSF and Hon. Lt. Col Bright Rwamirama, MoSA. The event took place at the Ministry headquarters on the 20th August, 2021

ACDP holds the second virtual Cluster Review meeting

This year's virtual Annual review meeting was held from the 11th - 12th August, 2021. This meeting brings together all project implement teams from the DLGs and Project Coordination Unit to review the project performance. Due to the prevailing COVID-19 restrictions, the meeting was held virtually for the second year successively. This article gives a brief overview of the project status.

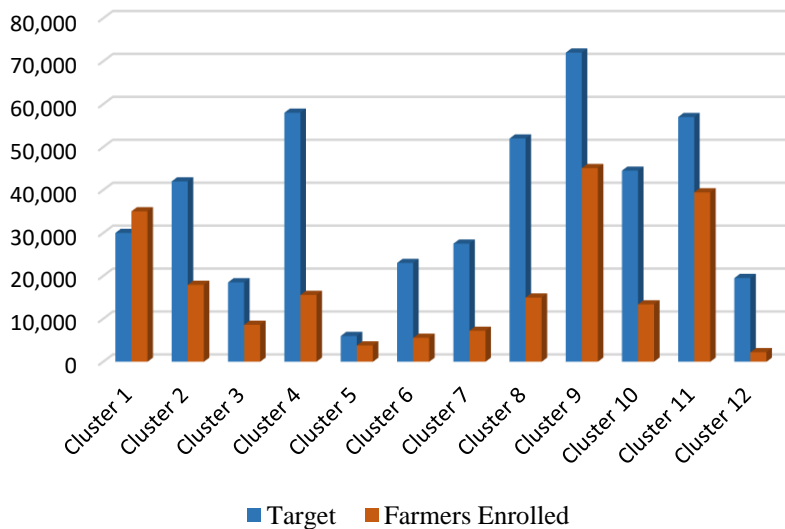
Enrollment by June 2021

Overall, 425,000 farmers have been trained and enrolled into the e-Voucher system, out of the enrolled farmers,

208 829 have redeemed inputs. The cumulative value of inputs provided to farmers is UGX 82 billion. Government contribution is UGX 54 billion and UGX 27 billion is the farmers' contribution.

The average household yield (MT/Acre) for project beneficiaries also increased by 30% for maize, 27% for rice, 19% for beans and 9% for coffee farmers compared to non-project beneficiaries at 1% for maize, 0% for rice, -8% for beans and 0% for coffee farmers by 2021.

Farmers enrolled and supported by 2021



Establishment of a local Agro-input Dealers' Network

The project aims to establish a local Agro-input suppliers distribution network to increase accessibility of inputs to farmers. By the time of the review meeting, 165 Agro-input suppliers had been accredited to supply inputs at the national level. At the local level, 230 local input suppliers were in the process of being enrolled to supply inputs under the project.

Matching Grants disbursed

ACDP supports activities and investments to improve marketing and post-harvest handling of farm produce. By the time of the Review meeting, 362 Grantees with membership of 175,177 farmers had been awarded grants worth UGX 110.5 billion. The awards are UGX 74 billion worth of government contribution and UGX 36.5 billion as co-funding from the farmer organizations.

Total storage capacity expected to be established is 42,714MT. The value addition facilities include 58 coffee hullers, 39 maize mills, 27 rice mills, 15 cassava mills and 7 beans sorters. Other equipment include 58 weighing scales, 64 moisture meters and 27 driers.

Disruptive Digital Technologies for transfer and dissemination of agricultural information

One of the major interventions supported by the project is digitization of Agricultural Platforms. A number of platforms are under development and some that have been deployed include the Financial Inclusion platform. A service provider has been deployed to provide a parallel e-voucher management system. The other is a soil testing solution that offers mobile soil testing services to farmers.

Others under development include; an E-extension system, that is expected to improve delivery of agricultural extension and advisory services to farmers, e-diary, digitizing of agricultural equipment hire, real-time alerts of pest and diseases outbreaks, and early warning systems.

The e- markets solution will offer an online market linkages system for all value chain actors like producers, traders, input suppliers, off takers and processors. A data analytics solution will include Enhancement of National Food and Agricultural Statistics system (NFASS) and development of the Agricultural Water Management information system, Agricultural Mechanization Technologies and ACDP Management Information system.



Installation of a bridge at Kyenjibubu-Kakanena Road in Ntungamo District. The first picture shows the bridge that was washed away during floods

562 Community Based Facilitators trained to collect Routine Monitoring Data in 33 ACDP Roll-out districts



Community based facilitators of Kibaale district role play during the training to collect routine monitoring data

Correct data collection forms the basis for good monitoring, evaluation and learning systems. It is against this background that the Monitoring and Evaluation unit of ACDP conducted training of the Community Based Facilitators (CBFs) in the 33 roll-out districts to collect routine project monitoring data.

The training was aimed at equipping the participants with knowledge and skills on how to collect data from Farmer Organizations and farmers using Computer Assisted Personal Interviews.

The training was conducted in two phases, the first phase was held in clusters 3,4,5, and 7 and the second phase focused on Clusters 8,9,10. A total of 562 Community Based Facilitators have so far been trained from the roll out clusters.

Prior to the training, a manual was developed to guide the training and to assist the enumerators in the process of data collection.

The routine data is being collected from ACDP farmer beneficiaries who have enrolled, ordered and redeemed at least one of the critical inputs for one season and from lower-level beneficiary Farmer Organizations who undertake production, bulking, storage, processing, marketing and savings as a group.

In each of the districts, training was conducted for a period of three-days. Community Based Facilitators were also taken through the training objectives, purpose of the study, and the possible outcomes.

During the training, roles and responsibilities of the CBFs were

including the survey protocols to ensure collection of high data quality.

The training methodology was participatory and included using mock interviews, pretesting of the questionnaires to reduce measurement errors and respondent burden, and to determine whether or not respondents were interpreting questions correctly. Also pre-testing was to ensure that the order of questions were not influencing the way a respondent may answer.

Each of the 33 districts were given computer Tablets based on the number of CBFs. The DAOs and DPOs also received personal tablets to enhance their capacity to ease timely monitoring and reporting on project progress.

District Extension officers trained in data collection to support development of a GIS knowledgebase for MAAIF



GIS Training for Extension workers in Kitagwenda district

Policy, Regulation and Institutional support is one of the objectives ACDP is mandated to deliver. Under this objective, ACDP supports institutional frameworks for key MAAIF functions like strengthening policy formulation and regulatory functions of various technical departments of MAAIF including Agricultural Statistics

Through ACDP, MAAIF has been establishing a Geographical Information System (GIS) knowledge base to store and create access to all information on agricultural investments in the country. In order to achieve this, trainings and field data collection have been a continuous exercise undertaken to ensure validity and reliability of the data collected.

In August 2021, Agricultural extension officers from 25 ACDP districts were trained on data collection using pre-loaded Computer Aided Personal Interviewers (CAPIs) or tablets. Data collected includes information on agricultural infrastructure, community Agro-input dealers and ACDP matching grants beneficiaries.

Such geo tagged data include location, type of agricultural infrastructure, commodities, functionality status, capacity of the infrastructure and source of funding, among others.

Agricultural infrastructure mapping includes collecting information on, valley tanks, fish ponds, landing sites, milling plants, green houses, milk collection centres, bulking centres, storage facilities, hatcheries, abattoirs, beef processing facilities, honey collection centres, cattle ranches, business incubators, and mechanization centres.

In addition, community mapping exercises are also undertaken and this includes mapping community agro-input dealers. Geo tagged information collected includes; type of business, registration by MAAIF, training on pesticide use and handling, type and quantities of agro inputs sold, crop varieties sold in the different districts, key customers, access to credit and market information.

The mapping exercise is carried out using three pre-designed and deployed tools in the ACDP Routine Monitoring Tool data collection app which was developed by Data Care (U) Ltd for MAAIF. This app is freely available on google play store and can be downloaded on a mobile device or computer.

Such well harmonised geo-tagged information is intended to guide future planning during project development and provide a basis for monitoring and evaluation. It also allows for traceability of project beneficiaries. Through this knowledgebase, performance indicators for the agriculture sector will be easier to access through online platforms like the National Food and Agricultural Statistics system and the ACDP Management Information System.

Success Stories from the Field

Monica Higenyi a model farmer is an inspiration to other farmers

Introduction

Monica Higenyi is a model farmer in Butaleja district, she started farming by growing vegetables and vending the greens. She also used to make and sell herbal medicine. Mr. Weere Stephen, the DAO says,

“This is when I noticed her and gave her 10 bags of cassava cuttings to plant

Then we came back and bought the cuttings from her. I noticed she was very hardworking farmer and was eager to grow and learn”



Monica in her cassava garden, Butaleja district

Monica Higenyi enrolled in the ACDP late in 2019. To enroll in the e-Voucher program, she paid a membership of UGX 148, 500 and was trained on good agronomic practices

Benefits

According to Monica, they were taught how to plant a maize variety called ‘Bazoka’. “Maize is usually sold at a low price but because of the variety I planted the produce is of high quality and I was able to sell at a high price. I used to plant maize before but the profits were not high This has earned us a lot of money”.

“ACDP gave me pesticides, fertilizers and sacks to put in the maize when it is harvested”, says Monica.

“I used to get six bags of maize from an acre but now I get close to 14 bags from an acre especially when the weather is favorable”



Monica's maize harvest being packed into bags for the market

Local seed producers

According to the DAO, Monica and her husband Patrick are now local seed producers. The family was supported with the ‘NAROCASS1’ cassava variety from the district and have been able to multiply and supply cassava cuttings to the district, OWC and to other farmers in the project.

We used to plant the ‘nigeria’ variety but it was not yielding as well as the NAROCASS1, We no longer sleep hungry and we are happy with the change in our lives, says Monica.

Scaling out

According to Mr. Weere, the DAO, the district has recruited farmers who have taken up farming as a business and want to grow in farming. We have farmers like Monica, who can be emulated in the district.

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Mukongoro Area Cooperative members embrace use of improved technologies

Introduction

Mukongoro Area Cooperative Enterprise Limited started as a savings group in 2000, and was registered as a cooperative in 2013. The cooperative is currently composed of four rural producer organizations with 850 members, out whom 250 are enrolled in the e-Voucher system, and have redeemed and acquired inputs.

Mr. Okodos Charles the chairman, stated that since they started using these inputs, their cassava yield improved from *three bags an acre to almost 10 bags of cassava tubers per acre.*

Mukongoro Area Cooperative aims at increasing their acreage for cassava production so as to be able to meet the demands of the cassava processing facility under construction. Collectively the group currently has 800 acres under cassava production.

Benefits

Mr. Okello one of the members said, NAROCASS-1 was the best cassava variety they have ever got, because it was high yielding, and early maturing compared the “nigeria” variety, they have traditionally been planting that takes more than one year to mature. NAROCASS-1 was also resistant to the notorious cassava diseases like brown streak and mosaic, and made them food secure. He also said their incomes had also improved from sales of cassava.

After the training from Enterprise Uganda, the group came back and diversified their enterprise,

“ personally I set up 60 beehives and planted green grams as cover crops in the orchard” said Charles, the chairperson.

Charles also narrated that, as a cooperative they were also bean and groundnut seed multipliers and they sold these seeds to other farmers in the community.



A Coop member harvests their 8 months cassava to demonstrate the expected type of yield

Ben Itemat, a member of the cooperative and a farmer grows WITA-9 rice variety and managed get nine bags in this first season yet the weather conditions were not favorable. With the other rice varieties he used to get less bags.

“Since I started farming, I have never got this type of rice, it is drought resistant and also resistant to diseases” says Ben.

Matching grant

In 2021, the Cooperative applied for and received a matching grant worth UGX 223,880,597 with government contribution of 150 million and the farmer organization co-financing of UGX 73,880,597. This funding is for the acquisition of a cassava processing machine and for the construction of a storage facility which was at roofing level by August. This facility is expected to be a source of employment to the community.



Mukongoro cooperative cassava processing facility at roofing level

Implementing Partners

Ministry of Agriculture,
Animal Industry and
Fisheries.

Fifty-seven District Local
Governments.

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Doho Irrigation Farmers' Cooperative Society upgrades their rice processing facility



A Member of Doho irrigation Farmers' cooperative winnowing rice. in the background are the cooperative old storage facilities.

Introduction

In 2021, DIFACOS became beneficiaries of a ACDP/MAAIF matching grant of UGX 373,134,328 with government contribution of 250 million and the cooperative co-financing of UGX 123,134,328. This funding will be used to acquire a modern rice mill for production of high quality rice, that will later be branded and packaged for the local and export market.

Mr Wasika Yubu, the chairperson stated that, the cooperative had already commenced work on improvement of the storage facility where the rice milling machine would be housed.

“We have been longing for this machine because we had started the bulking process but because of the poor quality of the machines, we could not produce good rice that would enable us compete favorably in the market”, says Mr Wasika, the chairperson

Dalson, Malingahaperi, a farmer and member of the cooperative re-echoed that, since he started farming in 1976, and joined the association when it was still a group he has never looked back. ACDP has given me the seed for planting, fertilizer, and tarpaulin for drying rice.

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SLM best practices- Trenches dug in rice fields in Laura Parish, Oyabu village, in Madi Okollo, district