

# AGRI-FOOD SYSTEM GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN UGANDA

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A Case Study of Tororo District

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Cover Photo: A Sorghum garden in Osukuru Sub-County, Tororo district.

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# List of Acronyms

AASP	Agricultural Advisory Service Provider
ACODE	Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
DEC	District Executive Committee
DNRO	District Natural Resources Officer
DPO	District Production Officer
ENR	Environment and Natural Resources
ENRSCG	Environment and Natural Resources Sector Conditional Grant
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
LC	Local Council

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# Executive Summary

This is a case study of agri-food system governance and service delivery in Uganda. The paper is part of a broader regional collaborative project aimed at making agri-food systems work for the rural poor in Eastern and Southern Africa. The study was conducted in Kisoko, Mella and Osukuru sub-counties of Tororo district. Using Tororo district as a case study, this paper examines some governance aspects of Uganda's local agri-food systems. It analyses Tororo district's major agri-food system institutional mechanisms, resource allocation to the agri-food sector and the sector's budget decision-making processes. The study also highlights some issues concerning the delivery of agri-food services in the district. Data was collected through key informant interviews, focus group discussions and review of relevant literature. The literature reviewed included: the District Development Plan, budget framework papers, Council minutes, the Local Government Act, the National Environment Act and other key policy documents.

Agri-food system governance and service delivery in Tororo, like other districts of Uganda, is spread among political institutions, technical institutions, farmers' organisations and non-governmental organisations. The major political agri-food institution at the district level is the District Council, while the major technical agri-food institutions are the production and natural resources departments. The district Farmer Forum is the major farmers' organisation at the district level. In addition, there are various non-governmental organisations at the district level and many of these also operate at the sub-county level. The major political agri-food institution at the sub-county level is the Sub-County Council, while the office of the Sub-county National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) Coordinator and offices of the Agricultural Advisory Service Providers (AASPs) are the major technical agri-food institutions. The Sub-County Farmer Forum is the major farmers' organisation at the sub-county level.

Tororo's agri-food institutions are confronted with several challenges, many of which are governance-related. They suffer from understaffing, inadequate funding and weak coordination. Further, there are limited opportunities for farmers to influence key decision making processes, and stakeholders to hold their leaders or office bearers accountable. Corruption within the NAADS programme also continues to narrow the farmers' chances of receiving improved agricultural inputs.

The study proposes recommendations that can be implemented at the district and national levels. At the national level, the Ministry of Local Government

needs to fast-track the restructuring of the Production Department to enable recruitment to fill vacant posts. It is imperative that the NAADS Secretariat harmonises the NAADS guidelines for planning, recruitment, reporting and procurement with similar guidelines in the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Public Service which other agri-food institutions under the Production Department follow. It is important that the NAADS Secretariat offers tailor-made trainings to the farmer forums to improve their vigilance in exercising their mandate under the NAADS programme. In addition, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development needs to provide adequate funds to the district and local environment committees provided for in the National Environment Act in order to restore their functionality.

At the district level, Tororo District Council needs to allocate adequate funds, for example a percentage of the revenue generated from its natural resources, to the natural resources department as a key agri-food institution. There is need for the Planning Unit, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and offices of the senior assistant secretaries to improve on the organisation of the budget conferences through deliberately allocating sufficient time for farmers and the rest of the public to input into the sub-county and district budget proposals. The farmer forums need to identify alternative sources of funding for example, through their own income-generating activities or support from non-governmental organisations engaged in similar work. The Office of the CAO should organise trainings on conflict management for the office bearers of both the political and technical agri-food institutions.

# Introduction

More than two decades ago, Uganda adopted the policy of decentralization (1992) according to which strong local government units such as districts and sub-counties were to become the core mechanisms for achieving effective service delivery, planning and local self-governance.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, a decentralised institutional framework including that for agri-food system governance was established. The agri-food institutional framework comprises technical institutions such as the production and natural resources departments; political institutions such as the district and sub-county councils and farmer organisations. This study seeks to provide insights into the organisation of Uganda's local agri-food systems and the governance challenges encountered.

The paper is divided into six sections. Section 1 is the introduction; section 2 deals with the profile of Tororo district; section 3 focuses on Tororo's agri-food system governance; section 4 deals with financing Tororo's agri-food system; section 5 presents general research findings; while section 6 presents the conclusion and policy recommendations.

## 1.1 Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study was to examine governance aspects of Uganda's local agri-food systems. The study had three specific objectives. First, to identify and examine the major existing local agri-food institutional mechanisms. Second, to analyse Tororo district's agri-food budget, budget governance and financing of agri-food service delivery. Third, as a way forward, to provide recommendations that can help to address the governance challenges facing Tororo district's agri-food system.

## 1.2 Definition of the Key Concepts Used

The study employs four major concepts which are interlinked in order to comprehensively understand agri-food system governance and service delivery. These are; agri-food system; agri-food system governance; food security; and environmental security.

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<sup>1</sup> See, Tumushabe, G., et.al (2010), Monitoring and Assessing the Performance of Local Government Councils in Uganda: Background, Methodology and Score Card. ACODE Policy Research Series, No. 31, 2010. Kampala.

An agri-food system comprises all actors, rules, relationships, processes and activities involved in the production, processing, packaging, distribution, consumption and retailing of food.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, agri-food system governance refers to the formal and informal rules and procedures that organise and coordinate the elements of the agri-food system such as food production, processing, distribution, and consumption among the various stakeholders in the agri-food system.<sup>3</sup> The formal and informal rules and procedures consist of institutional policies and practices among others.

Ideally, an efficient agri-food system is supposed to guarantee both food security and environmental security. Food security refers to a state of food availability, physical as well as economic access to food and physiological utilization of the consumed nutrients all of which must be met for one to be considered food secure.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, environmental security is defined as the rational and sustainable use of natural resources, safe disposal of wastes, as well as protection from pollution and abuse, and conservation of biological diversity.<sup>5</sup>

Food and environmental security are closely inter-linked in a way that improving environmental security improves food security and degrading the environment undermines food security efforts. For example, improving environmental security through growing leguminous trees modifies the micro-climate; improves soil structure, soil fertility and the diversity of soil micro-organisms which are critical in improving agricultural productivity, access to food and consequently food security. On the other hand, environmental degradation in form of deforestation accelerates soil erosion and causes adverse weather conditions which undermine efforts to improve agricultural productivity.

### 1.3 Methodology

The study largely employed qualitative methodology. Methods of data collection and analysis included key informant interviews, focus group discussions and review of relevant literature. Triangulation of information from various sources was done to ensure correctness. Due to time and cost limitations, an in-depth study of agri-food system governance and service delivery in the district was not possible. Field work was therefore conducted in July 2012 in Mella, Kisoko and Osukuru sub-counties.

2 Pimbert, M., et al (2001), *Global Restructuring, Agri-food System and Livelihood*, International Institute for Environment and Development, London, p.4.

3 Millstone, E., et.al (2010), *Agri-Food System Governance: An Analytical Framework*, Foresight Project on Global Food and Farming Futures, Working Paper No. 8, p.5.

4 Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (2003), *Trade Reforms and Food Security*, Economic and Social Development Department pp. 27- 28.

5 Westing, A, (1991), *Environmental security and its relation to Ethiopia and Sudan*, In *AMBIO*, Vol. 20. No. 5, Environmental Security, p.168.

# 2

## Profile of Tororo District

### 2.1 Location

Tororo district is located in Eastern Uganda. It is bordered by the Republic of Kenya to the East, Bugiri district to the West, Butaleja district to the North, Busia district to the South and Mbale district to the North-East. The district headquarters are located in Tororo Municipality, which is 214km from Kampala City.<sup>6</sup> Given Tororo's location, sharing a border with Kenya promotes cross-border trade even for agricultural products although statistics for formal and informal cross-border trade were not readily available at the district and sub-county headquarters.

### 2.2 Population Structure

The 2002 national census estimated Tororo district's population at 438,458 with an annual population growth rate of 2.7%.<sup>7</sup> In 2011, Tororo's population was estimated at 487,900.<sup>8</sup> It is important that the district increases its agricultural productivity to a rate that supersedes its population growth rate in order to improve food availability, access to food and, in turn, food security.

### 2.3 Natural Resources

Tororo district has a sub-humid climate and bi-modal rainfall with peaks in May and October.<sup>9</sup> The sub-total rainfall lies between 1,130mm and 1,720mm, with temperature between 16.2°C to 28.7°C.<sup>10</sup> Nearly 90% of Tororo's total area is arable land and the district has moderately fertile soils in scattered areas such as Osukuru hills. Unfortunately, Tororo's soil fertility is threatened by clearance of vegetation and cultivation without fallow. In fact, Tororo's soil fertility is below the critical soil organic matter content of 6.8%.<sup>11</sup>

6 Tororo District Development Plan for Financial Year 2010/2011-2014/2015, p.3.

7 Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2002), Uganda National Population and Housing Census Report.

8 Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2011), District Population Profile 2011.

9 Tororo District Local Government (2011), Agricultural Production Status Report. p.1.

10 Action For Development (2005), Gender Budget Analysis of Tororo District, Mulanda and Nawanjofu Sub-counties 2003/2004, p.3.

11 Supra note 6, p.21.

## 2.4 Agricultural Production

Agriculture in Tororo district is mainly subsistence (75%) and takes place on small holdings of approximately two acres, using mainly simple farming tools such as hoes and pangas.<sup>12</sup> The district has two seasons for growing crops, with the first season stretching from January to May and the second season from June to December. The major agricultural enterprises in Tororo District are crops, livestock, poultry and fish farming.

Various food crops are grown in Tororo District including finger millet, cassava, sweet potatoes, maize, sorghum, groundnuts, bananas, beans, cowpeas and rice. Millet, sorghum, cassava, beans and sweet potatoes are grown mainly for food consumption, while maize, rice and groundnuts are mainly grown for sale. Figure 1 shows a sorghum garden in Osukuru Sub-county, one of the project sites.

Figure 1: A sorghum garden in Osukuru Sub-county



Photo: Taken by Julian Barungi on 5 July 2012.

The district grows sufficient food, at least in terms of quantity, as shown by 80% of households in the district having food surplus.<sup>13</sup> In fact, Tororo District is the second largest producer of finger millet, sorghum and cassava in

<sup>12</sup> Supra note 10, p.8.

<sup>13</sup> Supra note 9, p.4.

Uganda with yields of 26,000 mt; 35,000 mt; and 175,000 mt respectively.<sup>14</sup> An analysis of the level of agricultural production in the district reveals that cassava and sweet potatoes are the highest yielding food crops with yields of 16.4 tons/ha and 17.7 tons/ha respectively.<sup>15</sup> Table 1 shows how Tororo’s agricultural productivity, in terms of crop yields, compares with crop yields at the regional and national levels.

Table 1: A comparison of Tororo district’s agricultural productivity with regional and national figures

Crop	Crop yield in Tororo district (tons/ha)	Crop yield in Eastern Region (tons/ha)	Crop yield at national level(tons/ha)
Cassava	16-16.4	3.1	3.3
Groundnuts	1.5-1.9	0.6	0.7
Maize	1.8-2.2	2.9	2.3
Rice	2-2.4	3.6	2.5
Finger millet	1-1.7	1.2	1.1
Sweet potatoes	15-17.7	5.3	4.1
Beans	1.8-2.2	0.9	1.5
Sorghum	2-2.6	1.3	0.9
Cowpeas	0.8-1.5	0.5	0.5

Source: Author’s computation based on data from the Tororo district Agricultural Production Status Report and the Uganda Census of Agriculture 2008/9.

According to Table 1 above, the current productivity of cassava in Tororo district is 16.4 tons/ha (fresh weight) which is five times more than the regional and national average productivity of 3.1 and 3.3 tons/ha respectively. The current productivity of sweet potatoes in Tororo district is 17.7 tons/ha (fresh weight) which is three times and four times more than the regional and national average productivity respectively. Further, the productivity for sorghum in Tororo district is 2.6 tons/ha (dry not threshed) which is twice the regional average of 1.3 tons/ha and almost triple the national average productivity of 0.9 tons/ha. The food crop diversity and productivity in Tororo district is an indication of food availability and access which contribute to food security.

Unfortunately, Tororo’s agricultural productivity is likely to change in the near future since pests and diseases are a huge threat to Tororo’s agricultural

14 Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2010), Uganda National Census of Agriculture 2008/2009. Volume IV. Crop Area and Production Report, pp. 36, 38 and 60.

15 Supra note 9.

production. For example, pests and diseases recently caused a yield loss of 25% of cassava production; 25% of maize production; and 38% of groundnuts production.<sup>16</sup> Other threats to Tororo's agricultural production are over cultivation, soil erosion and leaching of nutrients.

## 2.5 Livelihoods

Like many districts in Uganda, the economy of Tororo is largely dependent on agriculture, which employs over 80% of the total population especially women.<sup>17</sup> The other sources of income are derived from non-farming activities such as employment in the civil service, businesses and services. There is an increasing trend towards non-farming activities and this is explained by the uncertainty and seasonality of agricultural produce and income and also an increase in household demands such as paying for tertiary education and health services.<sup>18</sup>

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16 Supra note 9, p.4.

17 Supra note 6, p.8.

18 Ibid.

# 3

## Tororo's Agri-Food System Governance

This section of the paper focuses on Tororo's major agri-food institutions. It interrogates the governance issues in these institutions and highlights the challenges they are facing and how these affect agri-food service delivery.

### 3.1 Political Agri-food Institutions

Political agri-food institutions exist at both the district and sub-county levels. At the district level, the major political agri-food institution is the District Council while the Sub-county Council is the major political agri-food institution at the sub-county level.

#### 3.1.1 District Council

The district council is the supreme political authority and decision-making body in the district, with both legislative and executive powers. The district council is headed by the district chairperson. Other members of the district council include directly elected councilors and representative councilors for the youth and persons with disabilities. The district chairperson and directly elected councilors are elected by universal adult suffrage through secret ballot. The district council is important in agri-food governance and service delivery in as far as ensuring implementation and compliance with Government policy; monitoring implementation of Government services; making laws that are consistent with the constitution; as well as approval of the district budget are concerned.<sup>19</sup>

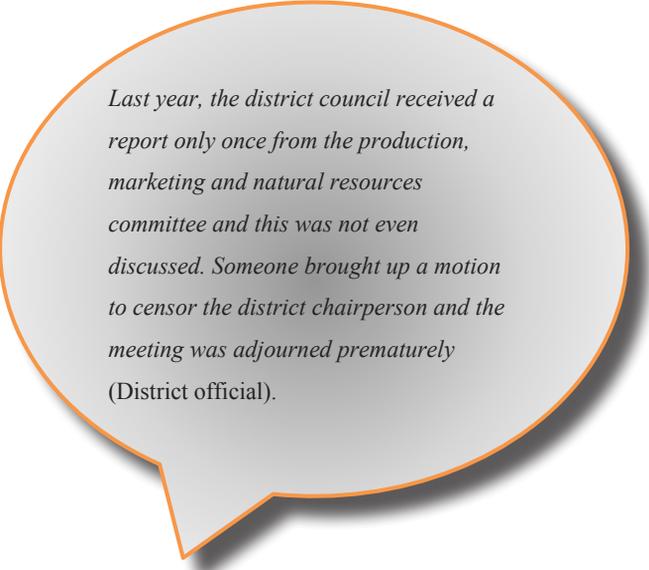
The Tororo District Council conducts its business through five sectoral committees namely; production, marketing and natural resources; community-based services; health and education; finance, planning and administration; as well as the works and technical services committee. Each of the members of the district council is expected to be a member of only one sectoral committee. The production, marketing and natural resources committee is the major sectoral committee mandated to handle issues of agriculture and food security such as reviewing bills presented to council; monitoring sector performance, resolutions and recommending to council; as well as

<sup>19</sup> Uganda Local Governments Act, Cap 243, Revised Edition of the Laws of Uganda, 2000.

scrutinizing monthly expenditure, quarterly reports and recommending to council. It consists of a chairperson and members who are elected by simple majority through secret ballot from the members of the District Council who are not members of the District Executive Committee (DEC).<sup>20</sup> The production, marketing and natural resources committee is required to report to the district council three times in a year.

However, evidence from the research reveals that the committee does not regularly report to the district council as required.

At the time of the study, this was explained by an outstanding conflict between the district chairperson and some district councilors due to differences in opinion and individual interests. This manifested through the collision between the district chairperson and some district councilors especially during council meetings and had diverted the District Council and sectoral committees, including the production, marketing and natural resources committee from their core mandate. The conflict between the district chairperson and some district councilors undermines the ability of the production, marketing and natural resources committee to discuss key issues on agriculture, food security and natural resources and make timely recommendations to the District Council for action.



*Last year, the district council received a report only once from the production, marketing and natural resources committee and this was not even discussed. Someone brought up a motion to censor the district chairperson and the meeting was adjourned prematurely (District official).*

The Uganda National Environment Act provides for the establishment of a district environment committee which is supposed to coordinate all activities of the council relating to management of the environment and natural resources; ensure that environmental plans are integrated in all plans and projects approved by the District Council; assist in the development of bylaws relating to environmental management; coordinate activities of the local environment committees and prepare a district state of the environment report every year.<sup>21</sup> However, at the time of the study, the Tororo district Environment Committee had been non-functional for seven years due to limited funding that could not cater for the sitting allowances of councilors during the committee meetings. This raises serious questions about Government's planning processes and makes one wonder why Government would spend

20 The DEC is the executive arm of the district council. It is discussed later in this section.

21 The National Environment Act, Cap. 153, Revised Edition of the Laws of Uganda, 2000.

money drafting, debating and passing a law whose implementation they are unable to finance seven years later. Some of the interviewees from the natural resources department observed that in order to cope with the limited funding, the district decided to merge the roles of the district environment committee with those of the production committee under the production, marketing and natural resources committee.

The District Council has an executive committee, the DEC, which performs its executive functions. The DEC consists of the chairperson who also doubles as the district chairperson, a vice chairperson and five secretaries representing the various departments within the district. One of these secretaries is the secretary for production who is specifically in charge of issues of agriculture and food security. The vice chairperson is nominated by the chairperson from among the members of the district council and approved by two-thirds of all the members of the district council. On the other hand, the secretaries are nominated by the chairperson from among the members of the district council and are approved by the majority of all the members of the district council.

Prominent among the functions of the DEC is initiation and formulation of policies; monitoring implementation of the council's policies and programmes; evaluating performance of the council; and solving problems and conflicts from lower local government councils. In respect to the agri-food system, the DEC is charged with formulation and passing of local bills into ordinances.<sup>22</sup> The ordinances may relate to key agri-food issues such as control of crop and animal diseases; control of sub-standard agricultural inputs; vermin control; and management of streams, water sources and catchment areas.

However, at the time of the study, Tororo's DEC had not previously passed or even formulated any ordinance which related to agriculture, food security and environment. This raised questions about either the capacity of the DEC to formulate such ordinances or the extent to which the DEC is involved in addressing issues that are relevant to Tororo's agri-food system. A critical review of the minutes for the Tororo District Council over the past two years showed that staffing and funding for the agri-food institutions are some of the issues discussed.<sup>23</sup> Approval of the district and supplementary budgets appears as an agenda item in almost all the council minutes reviewed, while approval of the staffing structure for the production department was an agenda item in one of the council meetings. Surprisingly, major challenges threatening Tororo's agricultural productivity and food security such as sub-standard agricultural inputs and crop diseases were never discussed in the council meetings.

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<sup>22</sup> Supra note 19.

<sup>23</sup> Council minutes are on file.

### 3.1.2 Sub-county Council

The sub-county council consists of a chairperson and directly elected councilors who are elected by universal adult suffrage through secret ballot.<sup>24</sup> Other members of the sub-county council are representative councilors for the youth and persons with disability. Similar to the District Council, the sub-county council ensures implementation and compliance with Government policy; monitors implementation of Government services; makes laws that are consistent with the constitution; and approves the sub-county budget.<sup>25</sup>

According to the local government structure, the sub-county council is supposed to have an executive committee, with the secretary for production at this level as a member, and five sectoral committees whose chairpersons and members are elected in the same way as the district level.<sup>26</sup> However, in Tororo district, the various sectoral committees have not been instituted. For example, Tororo district does not have any local environment committee as provided for under the National Environment Act.<sup>27</sup> The local environment committees are charged with facilitating public environmental education; mobilizing people within its local jurisdiction to conserve natural resources and restore degraded environmental resources; and reporting any key activities which have significant impacts on the environment.<sup>28</sup> Interviewees from the natural resources department attributed the lack of local environment committees to limited funding that cannot cater for sitting allowances of councilors during the committee meetings.

In the absence of the several sectoral committees, there is a general purpose committee which constitutes itself into several sectoral working committees whenever there is need. This is mainly due to limited funds that cannot cater for all the councilors that would be in the various sectoral committees. Members of the general purpose committee are nominated by the sub-county council from the various parishes and must not be members of the sub-county executive committee and neither should they be the speaker or deputy speaker. The fact that the sub-county has only one committee, the general purpose committee, as opposed to five sectoral committees raises serious questions about the capacity and competence of the general purpose committee to adequately discuss agriculture, food security and environmental challenges given that it handles all the other sectoral issues such as community-based services, health, education, finance, planning, administration, works, and technical services.

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24 Supra note 19, Section 23.

25 Ibid, Section 30.

26 Ibid, Section 25.

27 Supra note 21, Section 16.

28 Ibid.

One of the major functions of the sub-county council is to formulate byelaws.<sup>29</sup> With respect to issues of agriculture, food security and environmental security, the sub-county council in Mella is currently developing a byelaw that aims at promoting food security in the sub-county.<sup>30</sup> Some of the provisions within the draft byelaw provide for fines to households which do not grow food crops or sell all their food crops; and to people who cut down trees illegally, actions which are known to undermine food security efforts in the sub-county. Failure to grow food crops actually limits the household's access to food while irrational cutting down of trees enhances soil erosion, destroys important biodiversity, undermines agricultural productivity and, in turn, food availability and access.

Unfortunately, the enforcers of byelaws especially the local councilors, do not enforce them for fear of losing popularity and votes among their electorate. This is because effective enforcement of byelaws that relate to food and environmental security may require arresting people who cut down trees illegally, stopping people from drinking alcohol and gambling during working hours, even when such activities are a source of livelihood for certain people. Drinking alcohol during working hours actually prevents people from actively engaging in farming activities and improving the availability of and access to food within their households.

## 3.2 Technical Agri-food Institutions

The major technical agri-food institutions are the production department and natural resources department.

### 3.2.1 Production Department

The Production Department is headed by the District Production Officer (DPO) who is recruited by the District Service Commission on permanent basis. The DPO is responsible for providing technical guidance and monitoring activities of Agricultural Advisory Service Providers (AASPs), and providing agricultural and market information to farmers. Specifically, the DPO is supposed to provide technical guidance to the district administration and council on matters relating to production and marketing; coordinate the implementation of Government's production and marketing policies, and coordinate the delivery of production and marketing extension services in the district.

At the district level, the production department is divided into seven sectors, namely: agriculture, fisheries, veterinary, entomology, commercial services

<sup>29</sup> Supra note 19, Section 26.

<sup>30</sup> An interview with the Senior Assistant Secretary of Mella Sub-county revealed that the draft byelaw does not have a title yet.

and trade, NAADS, and the district agricultural training and information centre.<sup>31</sup> The various sector heads, with the exception of the district NAADS Coordinator, report directly to the DPO who in turn reports directly to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). The district NAADS coordinator reports directly to the CAO and the NAADS secretariat. The fact that the head of the NAADS, one of the sectors under the production department, does not report directly to the DPO creates an accountability challenge in a way that it makes it difficult for the DPO to hold the district NAADS coordinator accountable. The district NAADS coordinator is recruited by the district service commission on contract basis, unlike all the other sector heads who are recruited by the District Service Commission on permanent basis. This shows lack of uniformity in the terms and conditions of employment for the heads of the various sectors under the production department.

The Agriculture sector deals with all issues related to crops such as conducting rapid pest and disease surveys, demonstrations for small-scale irrigation and inspecting activities of agro-input dealers. Such activities aim at reducing crop yield losses due to pests and diseases; ensuring quality inputs for the farmer and improving agricultural productivity which in turn contributes to food security. The entomology sector handles all issues related to insects such as insect surveillance. This ensures that insect pests that would potentially destroy crops and transmit diseases are controlled. The control of insect pests and diseases improves agricultural productivity, food availability and consequently food security.

The commercial services and trade sector is responsible for collecting and disseminating market information such as prices for agricultural inputs and various agricultural produce in the local markets. This enables farmers to purchase and sell agricultural inputs and produce at an affordable price hence contributing to food access and in turn, food security. The NAADS sector is mainly charged with providing agricultural advisory services, for example, on sustainable agronomic practices which improve agricultural productivity while at the same time conserve the environment. The District Agricultural Training and Information Centre is responsible for conducting teaching demonstrations for agricultural production practices such as small-scale irrigation. This enables demonstration to farmers of improved agricultural practices and gives them hands-on experience in terms of improving their productivity and consequently contributes to their food security.

The production department faces a serious staffing challenge. For instance, at the time of the study, Tororo district did not have a substantive district NAADS

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31 Tororo District (2011), Tororo District Local Government Approved Budget FY 2012/2013.

coordinator. In fact, Tororo district did not have a substantive district NAADS coordinator for close to two years, during which period the senior agricultural officer doubled as the acting district NAADS coordinator. While the duties of the senior agricultural officer may complement those of the district NAADS coordinator, both posts require intensive engagement which may be difficult for an individual to take on and perform effectively. In addition, Tororo District did not have an in-charge for the district agricultural training and information centre; a district commercial officer and a district entomology officer.

In 2005, Government agreed to fund local government institutions in terms of the wage bill up to 62%. Unfortunately, the wage bill to local governments remained constant even when more districts and lower local governments were created, further reducing the available wage bill to 41%.<sup>32</sup> This has made it difficult to recruit and fill all the vacant posts in the agri-food institutions. On the other hand, the on-going review of the structure for the production department has contributed to understaffing through the suspension of recruitment in the department by the Ministry of Public Service for as long as the restructuring is incomplete. It is therefore clear that understaffing in the production department will undermine its capacity to address any complicated challenges facing Tororo's agri-food system.

At the sub-county level, the NAADS structure prevails with the NAADS technical institutions and farmer organisations<sup>33</sup> as the major agri-food institutions. The major technical agri-food institutions are the office of the sub-county NAADS coordinator and the office of the Agricultural Advisory Service Providers (AASPs). The sub-county NAADS coordinator is particularly involved in planning and coordinating the implementation of NAADS activities at the sub-county level as well as providing technical assistance to the AASPs in cases where the latter refer certain challenges that are beyond their control and yet threaten the district's food security. The sub-county NAADS coordinator is recruited by the NAADS secretariat and reports to the district NAADS coordinator, LC III chairperson,<sup>34</sup> senior assistant secretary,<sup>35</sup> chairperson of the sub-county procurement committee, chairperson of the sub-county farmer forum, the CAO, the Resident District Commissioner and the NAADS secretariat, among others. With all these multiple reporting centres, it is likely that the sub-county NAADS coordinators spend a lot of time honoring reporting obligations rather than executing their core mandate.

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32 Ministry of Local Government (2012), Synthesised Report on Staffing Levels, Wage Bill Performance and Funding of Structures in Local Governments, Prepared by the Capacity Building Unit, Ministry of Local Government.

33 Discussed comprehensively in section 3.3.

34 The LC III chairperson is the political head of the sub-county and is responsible for monitoring the implementation of Government programmes within the sub-county.

35 The senior assistant secretary is the administrative head and accounting officer of the sub-county.

There are two AASPs at the sub-county level, one for crops and the other for livestock. The AASPs are recruited by the sub-county farmer forum<sup>36</sup> on contract basis (usually two years) and they report to the sub-county farmer forum executive committee, senior assistant secretary and the district NAADS coordinator. However, the AASPs, especially those in charge of crops, are not required to report to the district agriculture officer<sup>37</sup> and this makes it difficult to coordinate agricultural activities in the district. In addition, the short-term performance-based contracts for AASPs are not conducive for effective agricultural planning which requires a longer time in order to keep AASPs focused on achieving the set objectives and realizing the desired impact in terms of improvement in food security.

The AASPs advise farmers on improved methods of farming, post-harvest handling, and provide specialized trainings and demonstrations of improved agricultural practices to farmer groups. In addition, the AASPs develop work plans with the sub-county farmers' forum for NAADS activities; advise farmers on mobilization of resources; report any outbreak of pests and diseases to the district; perform adaptive research and support collection of agricultural data and production statistics. However, AASPs focus on providing extension services and trainings to farmers that relate to only specific crops within a year as determined by the NAADS farmer organizations at the various local government levels. This means that several farmers whose enterprises are different from the selected enterprises will not easily access extension services and this is likely to affect their agricultural productivity and, in turn, food security.

Worse still, AASPs are inadequately facilitated to undertake their field activities, although in their contracts it is provided that they will be facilitated to do their work. Most of the AASPs interviewed mentioned that they were often unable to provide extension services and trainings to farmers due to lack of transport and field facilitation. Failure to facilitate AASPs to undertake their field activities undermines food and environmental security efforts as farmers continue to struggle with challenges such as pests, diseases, low soil fertility and poor agronomic practices that reduce their agricultural productivity and degrade the environment.

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36 The sub-county farmer forum is a composition of registered farmer groups from parishes within a sub-county. For more information see section 3.3.

37 The District Agriculture Officer is in charge of all agricultural activities in the district such as training farmers in improved farming methods; organising agricultural shows; collecting, analysing and documenting agricultural data and managing demonstration sites.

### 3.2.2 Natural Resources Department

The natural resources department is headed by the District Natural Resources Officer (DNRO) who is in charge of enforcing the implementation of national policies, rules, regulations and council byelaws on sustainable exploitation of natural resources; managing the provision of extension services on natural resources and appraising work plans and technical proposals regarding environmental impact assessment. Other duties of the DNRO include providing technical advice to the District Council on issues relating to natural resources as well as preparing and submitting work plans and budgets for the natural resources sector.

The natural resources department comprises three sectors, namely: environment, land management, and forestry. All the heads of the three sectors report directly to the DNRO.<sup>38</sup> The forestry sector is mainly charged with planting trees in the district, preventing illegal cutting down of trees, and educating the communities about the importance of trees and how to conserve them. Tree planting contributes to both food and environmental security through reducing soil erosion, improving soil fertility, and providing an ecosystem for various species. The environment sector is responsible for ensuring sustainable use of the environment through regular inspection and conducting environmental impact assessments for projects that are potentially harmful to the environment. Such activities ensure that mitigation measures are put in place to reduce the negative effects on the environment such as destruction of the ecosystem, air pollution and soil pollution.

At the time of the study, Tororo district did not have a substantive DNRO to coordinate and supervise all the department's activities. The district service commission had appointed the District Environment Officer to act in this position. The local government structure provides for one to work in acting capacity for six months within which the district is expected to have recruited a substantive staff to fill the position. Intriguingly, the Tororo DNRO had worked under this arrangement for eight years within which the district had advertised the post of DNRO but failed to identify a suitable person. Lack of a substantive DNRO officer complicates leadership and coordination of the department's activities. At the same time, having the district environment officer acting as the DNRO represents a conflict of interest that undermines accountability. This is because the district environment officer is supposed to report directly and account to the DNRO who is himself and the DNRO is supposed to hold himself (as the district environment officer) accountable.

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38 Interview with the Acting DNRO.

At the sub-county level, there are focal point persons who are technical officers in other departments that are appointed on voluntary basis by the CAO and trained to handle environmental issues at this level. They therefore take up this role as an added assignment and provide reports to the DNRO quarterly. This raises serious questions about the competence of such individuals to manage the environment and natural resources given that it is secondary to their other core activities and, worse still, it is conducted on voluntary basis.

While agricultural production, food security and environmental security are closely inter-linked, it is clear that the production department and the natural resources department largely work on different activities and plan for their activities independent of each other. The production, marketing and natural resources committee is the only major forum where the production department and natural resources department meet to discuss key issues within each of the departments and yet there was no evidence of the production and natural resources committee conducting meetings often.<sup>39</sup> Failure to plan jointly for food security and environmental security is likely to make it difficult for Tororo district to concurrently achieve food security and environmental security.

### 3.3 Farmers' Organisations

Farmers' organisations under the NAADS programme are some of the major agri-food institutions in Tororo district. NAADS is a programme of the Government of Uganda that was initiated in 2001 to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of agricultural extension service. The NAADS Act mandates the NAADS to develop a demand driven, farmer-led agricultural service delivery system targeting the poor subsistence farmers.<sup>40</sup> In order for farmers to benefit from NAADS services, they must be organized in a group and any adult aged 18 years and above in a village qualifies to join a farmer group. A farmer group is a group of individual farmers, an association, cooperative or any legal entity with a common farming interest.<sup>41</sup> All the representatives of registered farmer groups at the village and parish levels form the farmer forums which exist at the village, sub-county and district levels. Registration of farmer groups occurs at the sub-county level and is a pre-requisite for benefiting from service provision under the NAADS.<sup>42</sup> Requirements for registration of a farmer group under NAADS include, engagement in a common farming interest; clear leadership structure; distinct physical address; group constitution; evidence of membership of the group; and evidence of regular meetings.<sup>43</sup>

39 See section 3.1.1.

40 Republic of Uganda (2001), National Agricultural Advisory Services Act.

41 Ibid, Section 2.

42 Ibid, Section 15.

43 MAAIF (2007), NAADS Implementation Guidelines, p.4.

The farmer forums are charged with major decision making that contributes to household food security such as identifying advisory needs for farmers; evaluating the performance of agricultural service providers; determining the allocation of resources and approving annual work plans and budgets for the implementation of NAADS activities at the sub-county level; contracting advisory services; and monitoring household food security.<sup>44</sup> In addition, the farmer forums provide feed-back and feed-forward between farmers and farmer forums at the different local government levels. The farmer groups and forums under the NAADS are part of the many institutions that constitute the NAADS institutional framework for farmers at the local government level. Figure 2 shows the major farmers' organisations under the NAADS programme that are involved in decision making.

Figure 2: Major farmers' organizations involved in decision making under NAADS

Source: Compilation from various NAADS policy documents

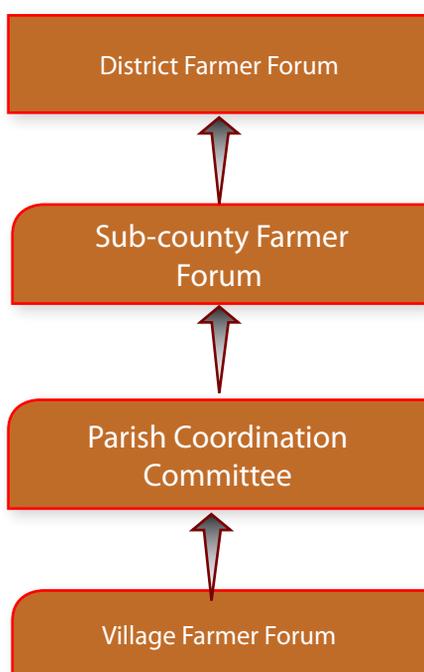


Figure 2 shows the village farmer forum at the bottom of the NAADS farmers' structure for decision making. It consists of all farming households within a village. The village farmer forum is responsible for recruitment of members into existing farmer groups or registration of new farmer groups; selection of food security enterprises and host farmers; following up on repayments by host farmers; overseeing the revolving scheme for the recovered inputs;

44 Supra note 40, Sections 18 and 20.

organising and maintaining records of meetings for the village farmer forum; and monitoring and evaluation of household food security measures.<sup>45</sup> These responsibilities are so demanding and engaging both in terms of executing them and maintaining records. It is therefore doubtful that ordinary farmers will undertake such duties effectively especially if they are not guided.

The executive functions of the village farmer forum are conducted by the village farmer forum executive. These include; publicity and mobilization for the farmer selection process in the village; identifying need for advisory services; overseeing the revolving scheme for technology inputs and verifying production units of selected farmers. Members of the village farmer forum elect seven members from amongst themselves to constitute the village farmer forum executive. The seven members include: a chairperson; treasurer; secretary; four committee members including one youth and one person with disability; the local council chairperson at the village level as an ex-officio and a chairperson of the ruling party in case the local council chairperson is not a member of the ruling party.<sup>46</sup> The ex-officio under the village farmer forum executive, who is also a member of the ruling political party, is not exempted from engaging in any activities of the village farmer forum executive.<sup>47</sup>

A local council chairperson who is a member of the ruling party is provided for as a member of the village farmer forum executive under the NAADS because the NAADS programme is one of the strategies for implementing the ruling political party's<sup>48</sup> policy on Prosperity for All.<sup>49</sup> Some interviewees reported that some local council chairpersons actually disguise as members of the ruling party by buying party cards, in order to stand chances of being members of the village farmer forum executive. Deliberate inclusion of a member of the ruling political party in the leadership of farmer organizations is likely to limit farmers' influence in key decision-making processes at this level, especially those who are not members of the ruling party.

The village procurement committee is one of the major working committees of the village farmer forum. The committee is responsible for procurement of technology inputs for food security farmers.<sup>50</sup> The village procurement committee consists of three farmers from the benefiting farmers in a particular financial year.<sup>51</sup> The fact that members of the procurement

45 MAAIF (2010), NAADS Implementation Guidelines, Farmer Selection and Support for Progression from Subsistence to Commercialization, p.2.

46 Ibid, p.3.

47 Interview with a member of the village farmer forum executive in Mella Sub-county.

48 Uganda's ruling political party is the National Resistance Movement.

49 Interview with an official from the NAADS Secretariat who preferred to remain anonymous.

50 Is a practicing subsistence farmer aged 18 years and above who has access to land or a production unit.

51 Supra note 45, p.8.

committee are benefiting farmers actually points to a governance gap in the design of the programme and poses a likelihood of conflict of interest for example, members of the procurement committee acting in their own favour as benefiting farmers and making irrational decisions that do not conform to the NAADS procurement guidelines.

At the parish level, there is no clear decision making body, given the absence of a farmer forum at this level. However, there exists a parish coordination committee. The parish coordination committee is responsible for the integration of farmer group activity plans at the parish level; mobilizing for inter-group associations; selecting market-oriented farmers;<sup>52</sup> monitoring and evaluating NAADS activities; and mobilizing groups to meet their counter-funding obligations, among others.<sup>53</sup> The parish coordination committee consists of the local council chairperson at the parish level; parish chief; three members of the sub-county farmer forum; a community-based facilitator who acts as the secretary; a chairperson of the ruling party at this level if the local council chairperson is not a member of the ruling party.<sup>54</sup> As earlier pointed out, deliberate inclusion of a member of the ruling political party in the leadership of farmers' organization is likely to limit farmers' influence in key decision-making processes, especially those who are not members of the ruling party.

At the sub-county level, there exists a sub-county farmer forum. This consists of representatives of all registered farmer groups within a parish as elected by the various farmer groups; the sub-county NAADS coordinator, and secretary for production at the sub-county level who are ex-officios.<sup>55</sup> The chairperson of the sub-county farmer forum operates on contract basis and reports to the members of the forum and the district farmer forum. As pointed out earlier, farmer forums evaluate the performance of the AASPs and this is particularly true for the sub-county farmer forum. In fact, the chairperson of the sub-county farmer forum is one of the key signatories for salary payment to AASPs. However, some of the chairpersons of the sub-county farmer forum reported that their role in evaluating the performance of AASPs is sometimes overlooked by the senior assistant secretaries who approve AASPs payment. The senior assistant secretaries only get back to the chairpersons of the sub-county farmer forums for their signatures when the auditors come around so that they complete documentation for accountability.

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52 A market-oriented farmer is an early adopter or innovator who demonstrates to other farmers in the group promising technologies for the market.

53 MAAIF (2007), NAADS Guidelines, pp. 10 and 11.

54 Supra note 45, p.12.

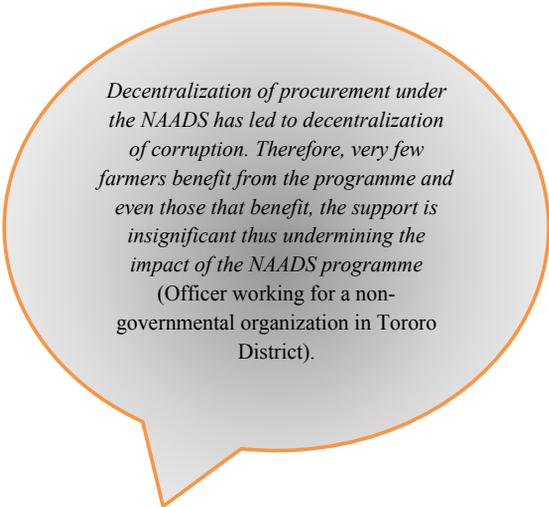
55 Supra note 53, p.7.

The executive functions of the sub-county farmer forum are conducted by the sub-county farmer forum executive. The sub-county farmer forum executive consists of the chairperson of the sub-county farmer forum, two farmers elected from among the members of the sub-county farmer forum, sub-county NAADS coordinator and the secretary for production at the sub-county.<sup>56</sup> The sub-county procurement committee is among the working committees of the sub-county farmer forum and is responsible for the procurement of inputs at the sub-county level. The sub-county procurement committee consists of three members of the sub-county farmer forum elected from the members of this forum, the sub-county NAADS coordinator and chairperson of the sub-county farmer forum.

Unfortunately, procurement of inputs in Tororo district is associated with a lot of corruption involving both farmers and service providers. Farmers are reported to connive with service providers to the extent that the farmers claim to have received inputs that were actually never supplied by the service providers, undermining efforts to avail farmers with improved inputs and improve their agricultural productivity and, in turn, food security. When payment is made to the service providers, farmers are given a percentage of this payment as earlier agreed upon by both parties.

Corruption within the procurement process complicates provision of improved inputs to farmers in order to improve their productivity. In addition, this kind of corruption raises serious issues about the integrity of selected service providers and the farmers, as well as the effectiveness of the selection and monitoring processes for service providers and delivery of inputs respectively. An official working with a non-governmental organization in Tororo explains more about corruption in the NAADS programme.

The fact that corruption within the NAADS programme involves even farmers probably explains the lack of ownership for inputs provided under NAADS. Findings from the study actually revealed that farmers attach less value to inputs and livestock provided under NAADS compared to others acquired through their own means. This is manifested through, for example, their own livestock being grazed first and on the best pastures before the “NAADS livestock”, as they popularly refer to



*Decentralization of procurement under the NAADS has led to decentralization of corruption. Therefore, very few farmers benefit from the programme and even those that benefit, the support is insignificant thus undermining the impact of the NAADS programme*  
(Officer working for a non-governmental organization in Tororo District).

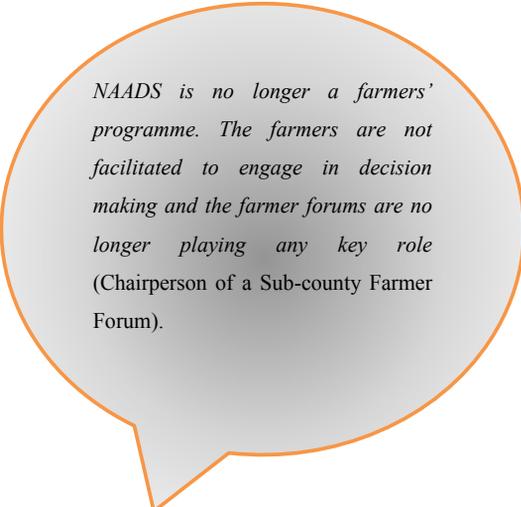
<sup>56</sup> Supra note 53, p.8.

them. This attitude among farmers is likely to inhibit proper management of inputs provided under the NAADS programme and undermine efforts to share best practices and inputs which are critical in improving agricultural productivity and food security.

At the district level, the supreme decision-making institution for farmers is the district farmer forum. The district farmer forum plays an oversight role over the implementation of the NAADS activities within the district. It consists of chairpersons of all sub-county farmer forums; the secretary for production at the district level and the district NAADS coordinator as ex-officios.<sup>57</sup> The district farmer forum is mandated to meet at least quarterly. However, evidence on the ground reveals that this forum does not meet quarterly as required. Quite often, they met twice a year at the most. This is mainly due to limited funding that cannot cater for facilitation for the chairpersons of the sub-county farmer forums all over the district to attend meetings of the district farmer forum as explained by the chairperson of one of the farmer forums.

### 3.4 Other Agri-food Institutions

In addition to the technical, political and farmer institutions, there are other agri-food institutions in Tororo district that are mainly involved in agricultural service delivery. These include but are not limited to non-governmental organizations such as the Tororo District Farmers' Association, Plan-Tororo and Africa 2000 Network. These organizations mainly provide farmers with agricultural inputs and build their capacity to improve agricultural production and food security through tailor-made trainings. In addition, they facilitate district technical officers to



*NAADS is no longer a farmers' programme. The farmers are not facilitated to engage in decision making and the farmer forums are no longer playing any key role*  
(Chairperson of a Sub-county Farmer Forum).

provide extension services to some communities and participate in the development of parish, sub-county and district development plans by providing funds, skills and ideas to facilitate the processes. While there were many non-governmental organisations operating in Tororo district, their activities were not well monitored and, as a result, food and environmental security efforts were duplicated, whereby the same farmers were often targeted under many initiatives or interventions, making it difficult to consolidate impact on food security.

<sup>57</sup> Supra note 40, Section 19.

# 4

## Financing Tororo District's Agri-Food System

This section highlights the budgeting process and budget allocations to the major agri-food institutions.

### 4.1 The Budgeting Process and Agri-Food Institutions

Ensuring that local needs and priorities inform the national budget is one of the strategies for enhancing resource allocation for development goals that are in line with local priorities.<sup>58</sup> Just like in other local governments, the budgeting process in Tororo district is informed by the budgeting process at the national level. A national budget workshop is organised annually where district leaders involved in planning and budgeting discuss indicative planning figures for each district and sector. Sector working groups then use indicative planning figures to make intra-sectoral allocations based on past performance and future targets within the budget framework. The intra-sectoral allocations agreed upon are then sent to the sub-counties, parishes and villages after which the district prepares draft budget estimates.

The planning process in Tororo district begins at the village level based on indicative planning figures received. The parish development committee<sup>59</sup> facilitates meetings for identifying priorities in agriculture, food security and natural resources within the villages in each parish.<sup>60</sup> The parish development committee further prioritizes the funding priorities and concerns from the various villages and comes up with priorities at the parish level which are forwarded to the sub-county council.<sup>61</sup> The sub-county council discusses priorities from the parishes and integrates them into the sub-county budget.<sup>62</sup> The sub-county budget is debated at the sub-county budget conference which is chaired by the Senior Assistant Secretary. The sub-county budget conference

58 The Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (2008), Budget Processes and Financing Instruments in Uganda: Towards Increased Financing for the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. P.9.

59 The parish development committee is the formal institution charged with overseeing the budget consultation process at the parish level.

60 Uganda Water and Sanitation Network (2012), Advocacy Budget Tracking and Monitoring Manual for Water and Sanitation Sector: Expenditure Tracking for Sustainable Water Resources Governance.P.14.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

is a one day event attended by various stakeholders in the sub-county including farmers, civil society and the public. For example, Osukuru Sub-county held its recent budget conference in June 2013 and it was attended by over fifty people.<sup>63</sup> The revised sub-county budget is submitted to the district technical planning committee for integration into the district budget and development plan.

The district also organises a budget conference as a one-day event where all the departments in the district present their activities, sources of income, achievements and failures in the previous financial year as well as their budget plans for the new financial year. The district budget conference is the main forum where local government leaders at the district, including those in the agri-food institutions, account to the citizens and also doubles as an avenue for citizens to hold their leaders accountable. The district budget conference is organized by the planning unit and chaired by the CAO. It brings together different stakeholders within the district such as members of the District Council, technical staff at the various local government levels, non-governmental organisations, business community, and the general public to dialogue on the budget plans presented and agree on the district's priorities. For example, Tororo district organised a budget conference in January 2013 which was attended by nearly two hundred stakeholders.<sup>64</sup>

The presentations at the budget conference and proposed amendments from the other stakeholders amalgamate into a budget framework paper which is forwarded for further scrutiny at the regional level. A revised version of the budget framework paper is then sent back to the district, specifically to the District Council for review. The District Council reviews the budget with particular caution to ensure that any amendments are in line with the indicative planning figures initially sent by the central government after which it approves the budget.

While the sub-county and district budget conferences seem to provide an excellent opportunity, at least in theory, for the local leaders to account to the citizens and the latter to hold their leaders accountable, evidence on ground shows a different story. The majority of the interviewees noted that much focus is put on the district and sub-county leaders presenting their plans to the people with very little time left for the other key stakeholders such as farmers, representatives of farmers, non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations to comment on the draft budget proposals. It is indeed difficult to receive meaningful contributions from each of the participants at a budget conference organised on one day with only eight hours at the most, available for discussions from over fifty participants. Generally, the manner

63 Interview with an official from Osukuru sub-county.

64 Interview with an official from the district.

in which the budget conferences are organised provides limited opportunity for farmers to hold their leaders accountable. It also prevents feedback from farmers and their representatives who are actually key recipients of agri-food services as well as key stakeholders in agri-food system governance. Such feedback would have otherwise provided options for more effective service delivery within the agri-food institutions.

## 4.2 Budget Allocations to Key Agri-Food Institutions

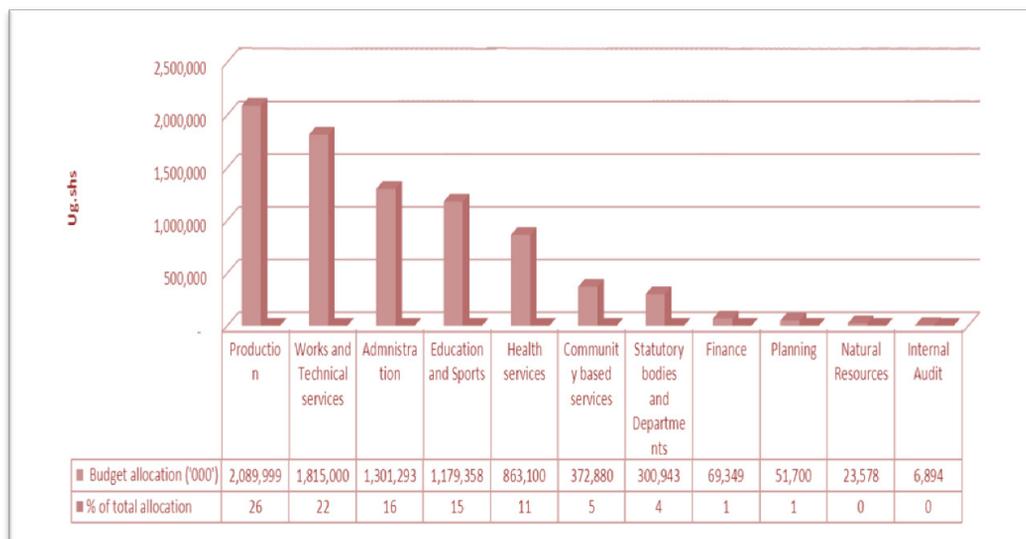
Tororo district's agri-food institutions, just like in other local governments, depend almost entirely on government for their funding. The bulk of government funding to Tororo district is in form of conditional grants with the unconditional grants accounting for a negligible percentage. This has the effect of greatly limiting flexibility in terms of the way the district plans and implements the budget, as well as undermining accountability to the electorate and the citizens.<sup>65</sup> The production department is funded through the production and marketing grant from the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries; the NAADS grant from the NAADS Secretariat and locally-generated revenue from the district although the latter's contribution is negligible. The NAADS grant which comprises the bulk of the funding to the production department, targets only the NAADS sector while the production and marketing grant caters for all the other sectors under the production department. This affects agri-food service delivery in a way that the funds available for agri-food activities in the majority of sectors under the production department are limited.

A review of the Tororo District budget allocation for FY 2011/12 reveals that slightly more than a quarter (26%) of the budget was allocated to the production department. Out of this, the NAADS sector received 85%; veterinary received 10%; agriculture received 1%; entomology received 1%; the office of the district production coordinator received 2%; and the district agricultural training and information centre received 1%. Intriguingly, commercial services and trade, and the fisheries sector received 0%. Limited funding to the commercial services and trade sector is largely due to the fact that the commercial services and trade sector is not well catered for in the production and marketing grant and the NAADS grant. At the national level, trade and commercial issues fall under the ambit of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives and yet the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives does not provide any funding for such activities within the production department.

65 Tumushabe, G., et.al. (2010), Uganda Local Government Councils Score Card Report 2008/09: A Comparative Analysis of Findings and Recommendations for Action. ACODE Policy Research Series, No. 32, 2010, Kampala, p.37.

The natural resources department is mainly funded by the district's local revenue, government and donors although donor funding comprises the bulk of the department's funding. Prominent among Tororo district's donor funding to the natural resources department is the Farm Income Enhancement and Forestry Conservation Project which accounted for 68% of the department's funding in FY 2011/12. However, this project targeted only the forestry sector. Government provides funding to the natural resources department in form of the Environment and Natural Resources Sector Conditional Grant (ENRSCG). Unfortunately, the ENRSCG targets only wetlands and ignores other important natural resources such as forests, land and the environment at large. In fact, the ability of the ENRSCG to adequately address the many challenges facing the environment and natural resources has previously been contested first because it ignores other key natural resources and, second, because it has been decreasing over time with the increasing number of districts.<sup>66</sup> Figure 3 shows Tororo district budget allocation to the various departments.

Figure 3: Tororo district budget allocation to the production and natural resources departments in 2011/12 in comparison with other departments



Source: Compilation from the Tororo district budget framework papers

A critical look at Tororo's 2011/12 budget allocation reveals that the natural resources department hardly receives any funds from the district compared to other departments. Worse still, certain sectors such as land management and the environment hardly receive any funding. One of the reasons that

66 Mugenyi, O., et al (2011), Marginalisation of Environment and Natural Resources Sub-sector: Undermining the Economic Base and Entrenching Poverty in Uganda. ACODE Policy Briefing Series, No.24, 2011, Kampala, p.14.

may be contributing to inadequate funding to the environment sector is the fact that it is considered a cross-cutting sector and therefore environmental issues are funded across multiple sectors with the sector heads having the discretion for such funding. It is, of course, difficult to imagine a scenario where other sectors will allocate funds to the environment sector while their core activities equally need the funds. Consequently, some critical activities under the environment sector such as regular inspection, for example, of the industries in the district and environmental impact assessments are often forfeited due to limited funds to cater for transport, field facilitation as well as report writing.

The farmer forums are exclusively funded by the NAADS secretariat which sends NAADS grants directly to the sub-counties. However, most of the chairpersons of the sub-county farmer forums interviewed observed that funding to the farmer forums is inadequate and cannot take care of major activities of the farmer forums such as frequent monitoring visits to farmers, assisting farmers in negotiation processes with agricultural input suppliers and meetings of the farmer forums. The fact that the NAADS farmer forums exclusively rely on the NAADS secretariat for their funding raises questions about their sustainability on one hand. On the other hand, it poses a challenge to the farmer forum leaders to account to the members of the farmer groups and the latter to hold the leaders accountable especially when funding from the NAADS Secretariat is inadequate or not forthcoming. Other agri-food institutions such as the non-governmental organisations are not allocated funds by the district.

# 5

## General Research Findings

This section of the paper highlights the major governance challenges facing Tororo district's agri-food system and these are presented in two broad categories, i.e. challenges relating to institutional mechanisms and challenges relating to budget governance and financing.

### 5.1 Institutional Mechanisms

#### 5.1.1 Weak coordination among agri-food institutions

Despite the fact that the production department is mandated to handle food security and the natural resources department is in charge of environmental security, the production and the natural resources departments rarely meet and plan jointly; and yet food security and environmental security are closely related. In fact, there is only one major forum, i.e. the production, marketing and natural resources committee that brings together the production department and marketing department to discuss issues relating to food security and environmental security, and yet there is no evidence to show the extent to which the committee has engaged with such issues.

#### 5.1.2 Weak coordination within agri-food institutions

Unlike all the other sectors under the production department, the NAADS has a unique recruitment process, planning process and reporting structure. For example, the district NAADS coordinator does not report directly to the DPO and the AASPs at the sub-county level do not report directly to the district agriculture officer. This makes it difficult for the DPO and the district agriculture officer to coordinate NAADS activities and hold the staff under the NAADS programme accountable.

#### 5.1.3 Non-existence of key agri-food institutions

Key agri-food institutions such as the district environment committee and local environment committees, which are provided for in the National Environment Act are non-existent in Tororo district. Interviewees attributed the non-existence of environment committees to inadequate funding from central government to support the activities of these committees.

#### 5.1.4 Weak Farmer Forums

The farmer forums under the NAADS programme are not vigilant in exercising their mandate. Quite often, their mandate is undermined by other agri-food institutions and office bearers. Further, some farmer forums, such as the village farmer forum, provide a position for a member of the ruling political party on their farmer forum executive, a situation that is likely to limit leadership opportunities for interested competent farmers who are not members of the ruling party.

#### 5.1.5 Understaffing within agri-food institutions

At the time of the study, Tororo District did not have some substantive staff in the NAADS sector; entomology sector, commercial services and trade sector; and the natural resources department. The staff who are formally requested to act temporarily in the vacant positions have other core duties and therefore take on additional roles assigned as secondary tasks. Quite often, the staff fail to strike a balance between their core duties and additional roles assigned, hence undermining their effectiveness. Understaffing within the agri-food institutions is mainly attributed to the small wage bill from central government and the ongoing restructuring of the production department by the Ministry of Local Government.

#### 5.1.6 Conflicting roles and responsibilities

In some cases, employment status presented a conflict of interest in roles and responsibilities of agri-food office bearers especially in terms of accountability. For example, the district environment officer who doubles as the acting DNRO is expected to report to the DNRO who is himself. Similarly, the DNRO is expected to hold the district environment officer accountable on any duties assigned. Another case of conflicting roles and responsibilities is manifested through the members of the village procurement committee under the NAADS programme, being beneficiaries of a particular financial year. This poses a risk of members of the village procurement committee acting in their own favour and prioritising their own procurements without necessarily following the procurement guidelines under the NAADS programme.

#### 5.1.7 Corruption within the NAADS procurement process

There is corruption within the procurement process under the NAADS programme. Quite often, farmers connive with service providers and claim to have received inputs that were actually never supplied. When payment is made to the service providers, farmers are given a percentage of that payment as earlier agreed upon by the farmers and the service providers. This has

undermined efforts to provide improved agricultural inputs to farmers and improve their agricultural productivity.

## **5.2 Budget Governance and Financing**

### **5.2.1 Inadequate funding**

Major agri-food institutions such as the natural resources department and the farmer forums are inadequately funded and as such are often unable to undertake field activities such as monitoring visits, needs assessments, environmental impact assessments and provide support to farmers which comprise the bulk of their work.

### **5.2.2 Poor organisation of budget conferences**

The sub-county budget conferences and district budget conference are organized as one-day events and yet they are attended by various stakeholders who are all expected to input into the draft budget proposals. Quite often, the budget conferences focus on presentations from various departments including key agri-food institutions leaving limited time for other key stakeholders such as the farmers, farmers' representatives and the rest of the public to input into the draft budget proposals.

# 6

## Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

This study set out to examine the governance of Tororo district's agri-food system. While there are various key agri-food institutions in Tororo district, it is clear that there is weak coordination among these institutions and certain key agri-food institutions provided for in the national agri-food laws are non-existent in the district. Worse still, Tororo's major agri-food institutions have limited capacity, in terms of staffing and funding, to confront serious challenges within the district's agri-food system. Further, conflict of interest in the duties of agri-food office bearers undermines accountability and corruption within the NAADS programme narrows down on farmers' chances of receiving improved agricultural technologies. Unless these challenges are addressed, it is unlikely that Tororo's agri-food system will guarantee both food security and environmental security.

In order to address some of the major governance challenges identified in this study and improve on agri-food service delivery in Tororo district, the following recommendations are important.

1. The CAO should improve coordination within and among major agri-food institutions. Some of Tororo's major agri-food institutions such as the production and natural resources departments rarely work and plan together despite the close relationship between food security and environmental security which each of them handles. There is therefore need for the office of the CAO to create opportunities such as regular inter-departmental planning meetings involving these two departments if significant improvements in food and environmental security are to be realised.
2. The office of the CAO should organise trainings for district officials on conflict management. One of the major agri-food system governance and service delivery issues identified in this study is a conflict that the council is confronted with which has greatly affected agri-food service delivery. In order to address this, the office of the CAO needs to organise trainings on conflict management for district officials in both the political and technical agri-food institutions.

3. The Ministry of Local Government should fast-track restructuring of the production department. The on-going restructuring for the production department is partly responsible for the understaffing in the department. It is therefore important that Government through the Ministry of Local Government fast-tracks the restructuring of the production department to enable recruitment to fill vacant posts.
4. The NAADS Secretariat should harmonise NAADS guidelines on reporting, recruitment and planning with similar guidelines in the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Public Service. The NAADS institutions operate like autonomous institutions unlike the other agri-food institutions under the production department, making it difficult to coordinate and control their activities and staff. In the on-going restructuring of NAADS, the NAADS Secretariat needs to harmonise the guidelines for planning, reporting and procurement under the NAADS programme with similar guidelines under the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Public Service which other agri-food institutions under the production department follow.
5. The NAADS Secretariat should strengthen farmer forums. Given the importance of the farmer forums in decision making within the agri-food system, the forums need to be empowered for effective participation in decision making and policy processes. This can be done through the NAADS Secretariat organising trainings for the farmer forums to enable them be more vigilant in exercising their mandate under the NAADS programme. Further, the farmer forums need to lobby for additional funds from other sources to enable them undertake all their key activities. Possible sources of funding could range from non-governmental organisations engaged in similar activities to income-generating activities established by the farmer forums. In addition, the NAADS Secretariat needs to remove political party affiliation as a criterion for certain leadership positions on the village farmer forum executive and the parish coordination committee in order to provide equal opportunities to interested parties regardless of their political party affiliation.
6. Tororo District Council needs to allocate adequate funds to the natural resources department. One of the factors undermining the effectiveness of the natural resources department and specifically the environment sector is limited allocation of funds by the district and overreliance on other sectors for funding. It is therefore imperative that the district council allocates funds to the natural resources department as a key agri-food institution to cater for all its sectors including environment.

Locally-generated revenue from the district's natural resources for example forest tax, sand mining tax, and survey fees are some of the possible sources of such funds.

7. Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development needs to provide adequate funds to restore functionality of environment committees. Limited funding was the major reason for the inoperative environment committees in Tororo district. Since the district and local environment committees are provided for in the National Environment Act, it is important that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development provides adequate funds to cater for their operations.
8. The planning unit, office of the CAO, and offices of the senior assistant secretaries should improve organisation of the budget conferences. A budget conference at the district or sub-county level should be organised at least as a two-day event given the nature of deliberations. The planning unit, office of the CAO and offices of the senior assistant secretaries should deliberately allocate ample time for the farmers, farmer representatives, non-governmental organisations and the rest of the public to provide input into the sub-county and district budget plans and raise any key issues at the budget conference. This will contribute to improving the effectiveness of Tororo's agri-food institutions.

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## ANNEX

### Annex 1: List of People Interviewed in Tororo District

1.	NAME	DESIGNATION
2.	Aisha Sekindi	Deputy Resident District Commissioner
3.	Akware Veronica Ronnien	AASP Livestock, Kisoko Sub-county
4.	Ali Mawanda	Field Extension Worker, Africa 2000 Network-Tororo district
5.	Apio Jackline Florence	Parish Chief, Koitangiro Parish, Mella Sub-county
6.	Apophia Auma	Sub-county Chief, Mella Sub-county
7.	Christine Aceng	Clerk to Council, Tororo district
8.	Daniel Pakasi Nalapa	Sub-county NAADS Coordinator, Mella
9.	Emmanuel Osuna	District Chairperson
10.	Eva Musenero Wandera	District Production Officer
11.	Geofrey Opendi	Acting District NAADS Coordinator
12.	John Gongo	Acting District Natural Resources Officer
13.	John Ochwo	Chairman, Kisoko Sub-county
14.	Lawrence Emojong	Chairperson, Sub-county Farmer Forum, Osukuru
15.	Leah Higenyi	Acting NAADS Coordinator/AASP Crop, Osukuru Sub-county
16.	Nathan Ahimbisibwe	Deputy CAO
17.	Okoth Kitong	Senior Assistant Secretary, Osukuru Sub-county
18.	Ongala Matayo	Community Based Facilitator, Osukuru Sub-county
19.	Onyango Ochwo	AASP Crop, Kisoko Sub-county
20.	Orlando Othieno	Sub-county NAADS Coordinator, Kisoko
21.	Patrick Okware	District Agricultural Officer
22.	Peter Olira	L.C.III Chairperson, Mella
23.	Selina Amoit	Farmer, Osukuru Sub-county
24.	Shapil David	Speaker/Youth Councillor, Mella Sub-county
25.	Simon Peter Opaye	Chairperson, Mella Sub-county Farmer Forum
26.	Suzan Asemenye	Senior Assistant Secretary, Kisoko Sub-county
27.	Wilberforce Esike	AASP crop, Mella Sub-county
28.	Zaituna Asio	Programme Unit Manager, Plan Uganda, Tororo district

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