



Terms of Reference to Assess the Functionality of Uganda's Single Spine Agricultural Extension System

Introduction

Uganda's Agricultural Extension System has undergone several reforms since independence. Despite the numerous reforms over the years, agricultural extension in the country has persistently been characterized by diversity in the actors providing the services (both advisory and provision of inputs). The numerous actors include government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), sector businesses and out grower schemes of large farms. Between 2001 and 2015, the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) was the main vehicle for provision of public agriculture extension, advisory services and inputs in Uganda. However, despite the numerous, reforms, agricultural production and productivity has declined in its contribution to GDP over the years.

Against a background of coordination challenges and poor agricultural outcomes, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries introduced a reform dubbed the 'single spine agricultural extension system' in 2016. According to the National Agricultural Extension Policy (2016), the reform was intended to "transfer the extension function from the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) to the mainstream MAAIF and the creation of a Directorate of Agricultural Extension Services (DAES); integration of the NAADS program into the local government production departments and eliminating the parallel institutional arrangements as well as separation of agricultural input supply from the extension service delivery system.

The roll-out of the 'single spine' extension system was envisaged to greatly improve the provision of extension services in Uganda. However, four years into its implementation, many of the challenges that plagued the sector remain. Coordination of the diverse actors remains a challenge along with limitations in non-wage recurrent funding which has persistently constrained the provision of extension services to farmers across the country. Furthermore, some of the critical implementation milestones are yet to be attained. For instance, the transition of the extension function from NAADS to the MAAIF is yet to be legalised with an amendment or repealing of the NAADS Act (2001).

In addition, the extension programme has also faced challenges in transparency and accountability which have constrained delivery of extension services. The Auditor General's report for FY 2018/19 indicates that the NAADS had "no mechanism of informing possible beneficiaries of the support available on value addition facilities intervention. The report also points out that NAADS faced a total of 18 legal claims related to the distribution of agricultural inputs. The report also highlighted procurement inefficiencies with procurement of Value addition infrastructure experiences delays of up to a whole year. Some of the accountability issues highlighted by the report include provision of UGX.7.357bn for the construction of the Yumbe fruit factory without a financing agreement that details the rights and obligations of the parties involved. It is against such a background that ACODE through its Centre for Budget and Economic Governance (CBEG) is commissioning a study to assess the functionality of the single spine agricultural extension system in Uganda.

Rationale of the Study

Fiscal year 2020/21 marks the final of year of the implementation period of Uganda's National Agricultural Extension Strategy. The strategy was envisaged to usher in a knowledge driven revolution of Uganda's agriculture. However, as the country edges closer to the mid-way point of the strategy's final year, many of the challenges that previously plagued extension service delivery persist. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected service provision in all sectors. There has however not been a documentation of how the pandemic has affected agricultural extension in Uganda. It is therefore important to assess the implementation of the single spine agricultural extension system thus far and document how the pandemic has affected the provision of extension services in the country. This assessment is envisaged to inform the design of the new national agricultural extension strategy.

Study Approach

The study will commence with a formulation of a reference group which will comprise experts on agricultural extension provision and financing. These will be picked from relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government, Civil Society, Development Partners and the academia. The reference group will perform an advisory role for the study and also ensure that the study is relevant to key on-going policy processes.

In addition, all the activities under this study will be implemented in strict adherence to the Covid-19 containment measures and the standard operating procedures provided by the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology along with the Ministry of Health.

Objectives of the Study

Overall, the study is envisaged to assess functionality of the single spine Agricultural extension system in delivering Agricultural Extension services to Ugandans. Specifically, the study will seek to;

- Assess the Performance of the system in the attainment of key agricultural extension outcomes as stated in the National Agricultural Extension Strategy
- Assess the effectiveness of coordination among key actors (including clarity of mandates) in the delivery of agricultural extension
- Assess the functionality of the transparency and accountability mechanisms in the single spine agricultural extension system
- Assess the effects of Covid-19 on the delivery of Agricultural Extension Services

Proposed Deliverables and Timelines

The study will result into a study reports, to be published in the ACODE series – out of which the team intends to publish at least two policy Memos addressing key recommendations to selected relevant actors. The study is expected to take 30 working days from the day of commencement.

Expected Competencies

The contributor is expected to have demonstrable policy research and publication skills with at least 10 years of relevant experience. An advanced degree in political science, economics, development studies and other related fields is expected as a minimum. Demonstrable knowledge of the Agricultural sector is an added advantage.

Reporting

The Consultant shall directly report to the Executive Director ACODE

Submission

Interested applicants should submit an expression of interest on not more than two pages to acode@acode-u.org copying in g.bogere@acode-u.org and keith.kisaame@acode-u.org not later than Close of Business on 10th November 2020.