

UGANDA - Improve Capabilities to Facilitate an Enabling Environment for Food Security

1 Summary

The thematic focus of the LGCP Uganda Programme is food security, one of Uganda's greatest development challenges. The responsibility for the realisation of food security is embedded in a complex institutional setting involving several ministries and institutions, both at the national and local government level. Following the decentralisation in Uganda, local governments are mandated to play an important role in facilitating an enabling environment for the various public and private stakeholders active in the food security sector. Yet, they face several challenges that impede on their ability to execute their responsibilities. The LGCP Uganda Programme aims to enable the local governments to fulfil their mandate and to contribute to improving food security at the local level.

2 Context analysis

2.1 Introduction

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of the Ugandan economy. It contributes up to 22.5% of the country's GDP and accounts for nearly half of its exports.¹ Small-scale agriculture constitutes around 75% of total agricultural production and more than 66% of national employment.² Yet, despite the fact that Uganda has an enormous agricultural potential, one out of every five Ugandans is undernourished and two out of every five children is malnourished.³

Uganda has one of the fastest growing populations in the world, with an average growth rate of 3.2%. Currently, the population is estimated at 32.9 million (mid 2011) and is projected to reach 38 million by 2015. Half of the population is under 15 years of age. This high growth rate undermines, or even reverses development progress and puts a strain on service delivery systems. The impediments to a more food secure Uganda are manifold and include the following⁴:

- Limited agricultural productivity
- Weak market functioning

¹ Republic of Uganda, Agriculture Sector Development Strategy and Investment Plan 2010-2014-15 (2010) 7.

² Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Statistical Abstract (2011).

³ USAID, The Analysis of the Nutrition Situation in Uganda (2010).

http://www.fantaproject.org/downloads/pdfs/Uganda_NSA_May2010.pdf.

⁴ Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) in Uganda, *Food and Justice: Investing in Human Security in a Challenging Governance Context. Multi-Annual Strategic Plan 2012-2015* (2012). Republic of Uganda, Agriculture Sector Development Strategy and Investment Plan 2010-2014-15 (2010) 19-32. USAID, *Feed the future, Uganda Multi-year strategy 2011-2015* (2011).

- Inadequate post-harvest storage and processing;
- Limited public knowledge of nutrition and food security.

Food security is being addressed by several government institutions and multiple policy frameworks have been developed that identify the main problems in this sector and propose interventions to overcome them. Yet, the implementation of these plans is complicated due to limited cooperation between the various stakeholders.

Furthermore, due to the often weak performance of local governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) are taking over certain tasks/services, which by law need to be executed/provided for by local governments. The efforts of NGOs and CBOs are commendable, but often not sustainable because they are dependent on donor funding. Besides, some of the tasks of service delivery can only be executed by local governments, like the gazetting and enforcement of by-laws.

This Programme aims to enable local governments to fulfil their potential of facilitating an enabling environment for improved food security, by developing the capacity of local governments to:

- Better analyse the local food security situation and mainstream food security in local development plans;
- Implement prioritised local food security services and monitor service delivery, and
- Align with sector departments and develop functional collaborations with the various public and private stakeholders, and foster accountability, as to enhance the development and implementation process of local food security services.

2.2 Analysis of local government challenges

Uganda has a well-developed legislation base, which defines the tasks of decentralised governments in general and in relation to food security in particular. In fact, local governments have a detailed and rather extensive mandate in the field of food security. This means that local governments could, at least in theory, address the problems in the field of local food security. An overview of several tasks of local governments is provided in table 1.

Table 1: Mandate of local governments regarding food security⁵

- Implementation of the decentralised and devolved agricultural (extension) services
- Ensuring translation of national policies into local development plans
- Agricultural planning (prioritisation of agriculture in the local development plans, drafting budgets and annual actions plans based on local needs) Mobilisation and empowerment of farmers and farmer cooperatives
- Provision of agriculture permits, dissemination of (market) information and capacity building of farmers
- Development, gazetting and enforcement of by-laws to regulate food security

⁵ Republic of Uganda, National Agriculture Policy, Final Draft by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (2011). Republic of Uganda, Local Government Act, Ch. 243 (1997); Republic of Uganda, Agriculture Sector Conditional Grant FY 2004-2005 (2004).

Yet, local governments are only to a limited extent capable of fulfilling this mandate. When looking at the tasks of local governments concerning food security, there is a divide between *de jure* and *de facto* capacity of local governments. In recent years, local governments have become increasingly confronted with a series of challenges that obstruct their capacity to deliver quality services to its citizens. These include amongst others the following:

- Lack of (skilled) local government staff, due to, amongst others, the creation of several new districts. The increase in number of districts has not been followed by a sufficient increase in staff. Additionally, it takes time for newly-appointed staff to gain experience, which puts a strain on the capacity of the newly established districts.⁶
- The abolition of several local taxes in 2004/2005 has significantly reduced the financial capacity of local governments to act and has made local governments highly dependent on central government's conditional grants, which currently make up about 90% of their annual budget.

Though restrictive, the above does not fully limit local governments from functioning properly. The inability to deliver quality services, is also based on the fact that staff available within local governments is often insufficiently trained and/ or prepared for the specific tasks.

As mentioned earlier, the food security sector can be characterised by limited cooperation between the various sector institutions and the local governments. Even though the devolved local governments *de jure* have been provided with an extensive mandate in the field of food security, in practice *de-concentrated* line agencies, such as the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), are charged with the implementation of the various government Programmes and are provided with substantial budgets to do so. In this process local governments and sector agencies often fail to align their activities and develop functional modalities for jointly tackling the challenges to food security.

Planning and budgeting processes suffer from a lack of transparency and public participation. As a consequence, citizens are insufficiently aware of their local governments' plans and budgets and only to a limited extent influence the formulation of the local development plans.

The abovementioned challenges illustrate some of the main difficulties for local governments in adequately fulfilling their tasks. Some of these challenges are exogenous to local governments, such as the lack of financial resources and can only indirectly, through lobbying at the central government level, be improved. Other impediments, however, can be – partly – addressed through targeted interventions at the level of local governments themselves, such as the lack of sufficiently trained local government staff.

⁶ Singiza, D. and J. de Visser, 'Chewing More than one can Swallow: the Creation of New Districts in Uganda', *Law, Democracy & Development* 15:17 (2011).

2.3 Analysis of the political environment

In 2011 the presidential, parliamentary and local government elections were held. Museveni, in office since 1986, won the presidential election and will remain in office for at least another five years. Also at the local government level, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) was able to maintain a clear majority of seats.⁷ Continuity of central government policy can therefore be expected.

Over the years Uganda has pursued a policy of devolution, rather than delegation of powers, implying that local governments are not simply extensions of the central government, but both authority and corresponding financial means have been transferred to autonomous local governments.⁸ This has resulted in the development of a full-fledged local government system and local governments have been provided with a wide range of tasks and responsibilities, as well as corresponding budgets. However, since the early 2000s, the central government is leaning more towards increased centralisation, rather than decentralisation. As a result, while by law Ugandan local governments enjoy a large degree of autonomy, in practice, especially in terms of finances, they are dependent on the central government.⁹

Local government structure

The 1995 Ugandan Constitution and the 1997 Local Government Act identify five tiers of local government, as can be seen in the figure below.¹⁰ The city council of Kampala and the district councils are the highest levels of local government. Below these come different types of *lower local governments* (including town councils and municipal councils) and *administrative units*.

As stated above, local government councils are responsible for the planning and budgeting of the five-year local development plans. In order to develop these plans at the local government levels, communities ought to be mobilised and sensitised on planning and budgeting processes by the community development officers and the district planners. Yet, in practice the community involvement in planning and budgeting process needs to improve. Based on the five-year local development plans, three-year development plans, annual action plans and corresponding budgets are produced.

All local governments and administrative units are categorised as either urban or rural. This division between urban and rural local governments is the guiding principle in their representation by Uganda's two local government associations, the Uganda Local Government Association (ULGA) and the Urban Authorities Association of Uganda (UAAU). The former generally covers the rural municipalities and the latter the urban ones.¹¹

⁷ Electoral Commission, *The Local Government Council Election 2011* (2011). http://www.ec.or.ug/Elec_results/2011_District_Chairperson_winners.pdf.

⁸ Aworti, N. *The Past, Present, and Future of Decentralisation in Africa: A Comparative Case Study of Local Government Development Trajectories of Ghana and Uganda* (2010) 626.

⁹ Republic of Uganda, *Constitution of the Republic of Uganda* (1995); Republic of Uganda, *Local Government Act, Ch. 243* (1997).

¹⁰ Mugabi, E. *Uganda's Decentralisation Policy, Legal Framework, Local Government Structure and Service Delivery* (2004).

¹¹ USAID, *Comparative Assessment of Decentralisation in Africa: Uganda Desk Study* (2011).

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/pdfs/uganda_in_country_assessment.pdf.

ULGA and UAAU are responsible for providing their members with a platform for exchange of experiences, ideas and best practices, and articulating their collective interests and making these heard by government, civil society and donors, through lobbying and advocacy.¹² Especially when it comes to addressing the need for better coordination between the various levels of government and sector agencies, the associations have a natural role to play.

2.4 The defined target group

The LGCP target group in Uganda is comprised of eight local governments and two local government associations.

The LGCP Uganda Programme focuses primarily on the institution and staff of the local governments or those directly related, i.e. civil servants, council members, senior management and politicians, and staff and board of the two associations. The eight local governments and two local government associations are the following:

Local government	Local government level	Population ¹³
Bukomansimbi	District Local Government and Town Council (LCV & LCIII)	District LG: 150,400 TC: 8,036 ¹⁴
Bushenyi-Ishaka	Municipal Council (LCIV)	MC: 73,388 ¹⁵
Kalangala	Town Council (LCIII)	TC: 5,200
Kamuli	District Local Government and Town Council (LCV & LCIII)	District LG: 741,100 TC: 15,200
Kasese	Municipal Council (LCIV)	MC: 74,300
Lira	Municipal Council (LCIV)	MC: 108,600
Local government association		Members
Uganda Local Government Association (ULGA)		Rural Local Governments
Urban Authorities Association of Uganda (UAAU)		Urban Local Governments

2.5 Analysis of other relevant actors

2.5.1 Policies and actions of the national government

The two main government actors in the field of food security and relevant for the local government sector are the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) and NAADS.

¹² L. Romero, *The Role of Local Government Associations in Promoting Developmental Local Governments* (2010) ICLD, Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy.

¹³ Uganda Bureau of Statistics, *2010 Statistical Abstract* (2010).

¹⁴ Uganda Bureau of Statistics, *'Bukomansimbi Town Council Population', CIS Results 2009* (2009).

¹⁵ Bushenyi-Ishaka Municipal Council, *5-Year Development Plan 2011/12 – 2015/16*.

MAAIF is responsible for the formulation and implementation of national agriculture policies. With regard to local governments, MAAIF is charged with capacity building of district local governments to enable them to gather statistical data, increase farmer access to improved technologies, and empowering farmers to demand for advisory services and technologies.¹⁶ In practice, the link between MAAIF and the districts is considered weak, which according to the Ministry is mainly due to the limited number of staff at the districts that are capable of implementing MAAIF policy at the local level.¹⁷

NAADS on the other hand is a parastatal organisation, linked to the MAAIF. Through the district and lower local councils NAADS provides extension services to selected poor farmers. NAADS coordinators are placed at district and lower local governments and charged with the tasks of putting together NAADS annual action plans based on priority needs of the farmers and ensuring full participation of farmers in implementation of NAADS activities.

Given the fact that several government institutions are occupied with complementary and sometimes even overlapping tasks, merely supporting local governments would not be effective. Therefore, this Programme will push hard on getting the local governments, as well as MAAIF, NAADS, the two local government associations and the MOLG to cooperate, align their activities and inform each other about relevant developments in the sector.

At national level the main policy framework for strengthening the agriculture sector and improving food security is the Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA), which was developed in 2000 and reviewed in 2005. The PMA is part of the Government of Uganda's broader strategy of poverty eradication contained in the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP)¹⁸ and key to enabling the rural population to improve their livelihood and ensure food security through changing subsistence agriculture into farming as a business.¹⁹

Furthermore, in 2010 MAAIF published the Agriculture Sector Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP). The DSIP "aims to raise rural household incomes and improve food and nutrition security of all Ugandans".²⁰ It recognises the decentralised nature of government and focuses on strengthening it. In fact, the majority of the actions stipulated in the DSIP will be implemented at the local government level.

In sum, in the past decade Uganda has developed an impressive body of policies, which in detail describe what actions should be taken by a range of public and private stakeholders to strengthen the agriculture sector and improve food security. However, there remains a significant divide between theory and practice. The problems such as lack of alignment between sector departments and local governments, limited capacity of local governments and insufficient accountability mechanisms needed to fulfil their mandate, continue to manifest themselves, despite almost every policy paper referring to the importance of increasing the capacity of local governments.

¹⁶ MAAIF, *Districts* (2012). <http://www.agriculture.go.ug/index.php?page=districts>.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ PMA Secretariat, *What is PMA?* (2012) <http://www.pma.go.ug/page.php?tb=aboutus>.
The PEAP functions as *Uganda's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (PRSP).

¹⁹ G. Muzinda, *Report On The Assessment Of Core Intervention Areas In The Uganda Municipal International Cooperation Of The Local Government Capacity Building Program* (2012) 10. This research has been conducted for VNG International.

²⁰ Republic of Uganda, *Agriculture Sector Development Strategy and Investment Plan 2010-2014-15* (2010) 7.

2.5.2 Policies and actions of the Dutch government / Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Food security is one of the four spearheads of the Netherlands' development cooperation policy.²¹ The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs defined five specific objectives on food security. Two of these are particularly relevant to the work of local governments, namely:

1. to provide better access to good nutrition for the poorer population and increase sustainable food production, and
2. to create an enabling environment for producers by removing obstacles, supporting farmers' organisations and providing financial services.²²

This LGCP Uganda Programme focuses on support to selected local governments to fulfil their role in the food security process. This thematic focus corresponds with the focus of the Multi-Annual Strategic Plan of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Kampala.²³

2.5.3 Relevance

The Ugandan government recognises the grave problems in the Ugandan agriculture sector and has developed several policy frameworks and action plans aiming to overcome the many challenges. The responsibility for the realisation of food security is embedded in a complex setting involving both the private sector, as government institutions at the national and local government level.

As part of the decentralised system of governance local governments are mandated to play an important role in facilitating an enabling environment for the various public and private stakeholders involved in the food security sector. However, the local governments and their associations need capacity development at both political and staff level, if they are to contribute to the enabling environment for food security. The complex institutional framework calls for a comprehensive approach in which various stakeholders participate.

Consequently, by focusing on capacity development of local governments to improve the provision of food security services, public accountability and cooperation with external stakeholders, this Programme not only addresses crucial capacity gaps in the sector, it also fits the broader framework of Uganda's sector policies.

By building upon the existing local government development plans, developing strategic collaborations with external stakeholders and allocating Dutch local government expertise, this Programme seeks to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of its intervention.

²¹ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Letter to the House of Representatives presenting the spearheads of development cooperation policy* (2011).

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ EKN in Uganda, *Food and Justice: Investing in Human Security in a Challenging Governance Context. Multi-Annual Strategic Plan 2012-2015* (2012).

3 Tailor-made LGCP Uganda Programme

3.1 Uganda specific Programme objective

Increased capacity of eight local governments and two local government associations in Uganda to create an enabling environment for improved food security.

3.2 Programme results

The three results to be achieved in the LGCP Uganda Programme are presented below. How these results and the *results attributable to LGCP* relate to the five capabilities underlying the LGCP framework is also explained.

Result 1: *Increased capability of eight local governments to identify and agree on local food security priorities as part of their local government development plans (this includes five-year local development plans, three-year development plans and annual action plans).*

Support will be provided to the selected local governments to collect and analyse information of the local food security situation, such as on agricultural production, local food supply and prices, household income and expenditures. The identification of food security service priorities will be done in consultation and collaboration with the beneficiaries. Furthermore, support will be given to the local governments to help interpret the information, define the problems and explore options to use the data, and on the basis of this, to formulate tangible action plans that are complementing NAADS activities. Finally, the local governments will be supported in the process of gazetting by-laws on food security, for example on food safety, transport and storage. Together, this contributes to the capability of the selected local governments *to act and commit*.

This leads to the following *results directly attributable to LGCP*:

Participating local governments have:

- 1.1 Improved their capacity to translate relevant national policies and regulations for food security to the local context;
- 1.2 Improved knowledge of their information needs regarding food security for planning purposes;
- 1.3 Improved understanding of the use of participatory methods for the development of annual action plans;
- 1.4 Improved capacity to develop and gazette by-laws on food security issues.

Result 2: *Increased capability of eight local governments to implement local food security priorities identified in the local government development plans (this includes five-year local development plans, three-year development plans and annual action plans).*

Support will be provided to the local governments to increase their capacity to deliver on the identified food security priorities in relation to its three dimensions: food availability, food access and food use. This can include improved processing of waste into manure, the development of (school) demonstration gardens, and road reconstruction to improve access to markets, according to what the local governments have committed themselves to in their local development plans and annual action plans, thereby ensuring that the activities complement NAADS activities. Furthermore, local governments will be supported to enforce the gazetted by-laws. Thereby, the capacity of local governments *to deliver on development objectives* is developed and/or strengthened.

This leads to the following results directly attributable to LGCP:

Participating local governments have:

- 2.1 Improved the capacity to implement the annual action plans (incl. prioritised food security services) in a participatory manner;
- 2.2 Improved their ability to enforce gazetted by-laws on food security.

Result 3: *Increased capability of eight local governments and two LGAs to identify and relate to external stakeholders on food security*

Support will be provided to the selected local governments and the two local government associations to improve their capacity to engage with other levels of government within their institutional framework, like the Ministry of Local Government, relevant line ministries such as MAAIF (vertical engagement), as well as with private stakeholders in the field of food security, like individual farmers, cooperatives and private businesses (horizontal engagement).

More specifically, the local government associations will be assisted in improving their liaising capacity with their members, in order to identify needs, define areas of support to local governments and to collect important lessons learned and good practices. In this way, the capability *to relate to external stakeholders* is developed and/or strengthened.

This leads to the following results directly attributable to LGCP:

Participating local governments have:

- 3.1. Improved understanding of the division of roles and responsibilities in the national and local food security sector;
- 3.2. Improved capacity to communicate with and to stimulate dialogue between various external stakeholders in the field of food security;
- 3.3. Collaborated with external stakeholders with regard to local food security initiatives.

The local government associations have:

- 3.1 Improved lobby and advocacy capacity for addressing food security challenges encountered by their members (incl. disseminating of information to external stakeholder such as NAADS and other local governments).

3.3 Programme activities

The LGCP is built on VNG International's colleague-to-colleague approach, in which expert-practitioners exchange knowledge and experiences. The essence is that experts have experience in the same job or in a comparable position as the beneficiaries. The practitioners exchange vision, views and work together.

Colleagues might come from the Netherlands, but also from neighbouring countries or even from Uganda itself. This approach is also reflected in the activities designed to reach the results anticipated; colleague-to-colleague learning takes place mainly in coaching-mentoring trajectories, on-the-job training, workshops and benchmarking. VNG International will prepare activity work plans annually, which will be submitted to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs for approval. These activity work plans present a concrete description of the activities foreseen.

For all three Programme results a series of activities has been formulated. Below a brief description of the activities that fall under each Programme result is given. Depending on the results of the baseline study the exact scope and planning of the activities will be adjusted so that the activities tailor-fit the current capacity and absorption capacity of the participating local governments.

Result 1: *Increased capability of eight local governments to identify and agree on local food security priorities as part of their local government development plans (this includes five-year local development plans, three-year development plans and annual action plans).*

Activities under Programme result 1 are directed towards creating an understanding of the complex institutional and policy framework of local government in combination with food security. A baseline study will be conducted in order to assess the capacity gaps in the field of food security for fine-tuning interventions. Thereafter the activities will aim to enhance the capacity of local governments to collect, analyse and interpret the data, in order to fully map the local government challenges, prioritise local food security services and develop tailor made interventions (based on information needs and food availability assessment). The development of by-laws and participatory methods receive specific attention.

Result 2: *Increased capability of eight local governments to implement local food security priorities identified in the local government development plans (this includes five-year local development plans, three-year development plans and annual action plans).*

The activities under Programme Result 2 focus on the implementation of the local food security services, identified within the annual action plans as defined by the participating local governments. Activities are designed to enhance the capacity of local governments for example to process collected waste into manure, manage markets (accessibility, hygiene) and implement an information strategy. Activities in this result are characterised predominantly by expert practitioners' input in the technical field of by-law enforcement. A benchmark will be conducted on identified implementation priorities, possibly public participation and accountability.

Result 3: *Increased capability of eight local governments and two LGAs to identify and relate to external stakeholders on food security*

The activities under Programme Result 3 are aimed at facilitating the interaction between the eight district, municipal and town council local governments, two local government associations and the key external stakeholders, and at supporting functional collaborations for the development and implementation of local food security priorities identified in the local government development plans. This will be done through organising network events where external stakeholders such as the MAAIF, the MOLG, development agencies, CBOs and farmer cooperatives are invited. Additionally, local governments will be provided with tools to enhance communication with external stakeholders. This will, together with the organisation of yearly platform meetings and study visits allow them to cooperate with the external stakeholders, align their activities and inform each other about developments in the food security sector. Lastly, the two local government associations will be trained to improve their lobby and advocacy skills.