



# Operationalisation of the NAADS Natural Resources Strategy

Field lessons, experiences & recommendations sustainable natural resource management for sustained increased agricultural production and improved livelihoods

## Executive summary

### Introduction

NAADS is one of the programs under PMA that were developed to transform natural resource-based communities out of poverty to better livelihoods. It was realized that to sustain an economically vibrant rural population, management of natural resources is a key element for increased food security and improved livelihoods of the natural resources dependent poor. In 2003, NAADS formulated a framework for integration of natural resources management into its market-based activities to ensure sustainable development.

A number of key messages form part of this policy and strategy framework:

1. Sustainable natural resource management is a key principle of NAADS; therefore natural resource issues need to be considered in all NAADS activities, but some interesting challenges are raised in putting this principle into practice.
2. There is some risk that natural resource issues could be sidelined within NAADS without

such action. In particular, it would be a challenge to incorporate sustainable natural resource management in a system which is private-sector services, demand-lead, decentralised, enterprise-focussed and promoting short-term gain. However, if these are recognised and integrated within the whole process of NAADS implementation, natural resource issues could be readily addressed.

3. Ensuring natural resource issues are appropriately considered within NAADS will have potentially massive economic, social and environmental benefits for Uganda.
4. There is a strong policy and legal framework for promoting sustainable natural resource management in agricultural advisory services. However, this framework needs to be put into action.
5. Modernised agriculture and sustainable natural resource management are compatible; sustainable natural resource management is an integral

component of Uganda's vision of modernised agriculture and is an essential component of poverty eradication and profitable enterprises. Modernised agriculture does not necessarily mean large monocultures, less crop diversity, dependence on high levels of chemical inputs and reliance on technical fixes.

6. Agriculture does not just mean crops and livestock; it includes forestry, fisheries, soil management etc. Similarly, farmers are not just crop and livestock producers; they include natural resource use groups such as fishers, and forest and water user groups.
7. Natural resource issues can be divided into on-farm issues which are linked to all farming enterprises (e.g. soil and water management, agrochemical use, etc) and off-farm issues which are linked to natural-resource based enterprises (e.g. fisheries, forestry, bee-keeping, etc). On-farm and off-farm natural resource issues require fundamentally different approaches in order to address them within agricultural advisory services.

8. A range of strategies are outlined for addressing natural resource issues throughout the NAADS programme. In particular, these include actions to increase staff capacity, include marginalized groups and issues, provide effective information, enhance planning processes, and monitor and evaluate impact.
9. NAADS will rely on a wide variety of organisations to support it in implementing and monitoring this strategy, including the NAADS Natural Resources Task Force, the PMA Sub-Committee on Natural Resources, government organisations responsible for specific natural resource areas, and NGOs.

This framework has been minimally operationalised to contribute to effective integration of environment and natural resources in NAADS programme implementation and the nation at large.

Realizing this gap, Environmental Alert (EA) was prompted to review the strategy and identified a number of issues related to factors limiting operationalisation of the NAADS Natural Resources strategy. In order to have a holistic picture about the levels of integration of ENR issues and their contribution to sustainable agricultural production and productivity for improved livelihoods, Environmental Alert decided to conduct a field study to generate more consolidated representative information (field lessons, experiences and recommendations) about levels of integration of the Natural Resources Strategy. These then in addition to the issues/gaps already identified by the review would inform Environmental Alert's continued dialogue with NAADS / PMA as well as design of an appropriate advocacy strategy for effective environment and natural resources (ENR) integration into NAADS programme implementation at all levels.

## Methodology

The evaluation was conducted using several methods including survey of farmers from different groups, service providers and technical staff from three sampled districts of Waksio, Tororo and Moyo. The study was based on randomized farmer groups with diverse characteristics. A stratified random sample was selected comprising of the poor men and women, as well as the youths. The study also benefited from interviews of key informants including community based facilitators (CBF), technology development sites (TDS) host farmers and other innovative farmers to elicit information on experiences for uptake, integration and usability of the ENR knowledge. Since there was no baseline data, the study relied on respondent recall of before and after situation intended to capture information from the farmers on various aspects of ENR integration before receiving the training and after the training which was provided with support services of NAADS selected enterprises. The intention of the before and after design was to assess three issues; Status, level and changes in knowledge on ENR; Uptake, utilization of ENR knowledge and its influence on productivity; Whether farmers had adopted the new technologies integrating natural resource management.

This design enabled garner evidence of whether the ENR strategy implementation has achieved its intended outcomes. But the study was also designed to examine possible future trajectory of ENR integration and sustenance. From a user perspective and based on the technical information, policy, market information and natural resources available to a farmer, the users were able to assess the extent to which they have mainstreamed ENR and its sustenance.

## Major Findings and Conclusions

Results show that:-

1. Institutional capacity for implementing and promoting mainstreaming of ENR is low and there are some critical issues including the following;
  - The national natural resources task force at NAADS secretariat is non-operational which means that at national level, ENR issues are not being mainstreamed to adequacy
  - Capacity in terms of human resources and technical knowledge in ENR is still low for the technical staff and Farmer Fora. This is at district and sub-county level.
  - Institutional performance in regard to ENR is influenced by action taken on work plans at the sub-county and district levels but despite work plans integrating ENR, prioritization for funding at sub-county and district levels is still very low
  - It's not clear what the roles of the FF, Technical staff and Political leaders in decision making are, even in Tororo district where NAADS activities have been implemented since its inception. The findings indicate that 88.9% of the technical staff are knowledgeable in ENR and 50% had integrated ENR issues in the work plans but 61% of the technical staff indicated that the implementation is very low due to lack of prioritization
  - Guidelines for ENR issues related to the different enterprises are unavailable. It's assumed that with the expertise of the service providers, ENR will more or less automatically be integrated into the training. From the findings, only one sub-county indicated that ENR issues are integrated into the Terms of Reference for the service providers
2. Evaluation of the service providers, their capacity and integration of the ENR issues in the services provided also indicates that it is still low requiring improvement.

- Emphasis in service provision is still largely market-based enterprises with less consideration of linkages with natural resource management.
- Knowledge of natural resources management by service providers is still considerably low. There is also low capacity of service providers in natural resource management skills. Only 35.7% of the services providers interviewed indicated that they had training orientation with ENR issues. 50% rated the training by NAADS as low and very low in imparting knowledge and skills.

### 3. Evaluation of farmer group formation, functionality and sustenance shows that;

- The NAADS program in general has not clearly succeeded in distinguishing itself from other development interventionist programs. The outlook from the end-user perspective is such that, it should provide resources to solve development problems of communities.
- Capacity of groups to sustain themselves is weak and there is concern that if NAADS was phased out, these groups will cease to exist. Findings indicate that 25.6% of farmers rated functionality as low to very low 51.9% as average and 22.4% as high to very high.
- Information exchange, networking and collaboration among farmers is progressing though it needs to be up scaled further through capacity building of group sustenance. Findings show that 52.5% of farmers rated information exchange as low and very low, 32.1% as average and 15.4% as high to very high which implies possibilities for non-sustenance of groups

### 4. Farmer knowledge, attitude and practice

- Farmer knowledge in ENR is high and this increased from levels before and after receiving training. 17.9% of farmers never had ENR knowledge

before and after training 38.5% had high level of ENR knowledge.

- Knowledge use is mainly for productivity increase and less for natural resource management and sustainability. Rating of increase in productivity was high by 94.5% of the farmers 89.1% of whom have utilized the knowledge on on-farm activities.

### 5. ENR sustainability

- NAADS is only contributing to promotion of ENR and if anything invigorating sustainable management of natural resources at national scale.
- There are other organizations and actors that have been involved in ENR and its sustenance. It's thus more of a contribution than attributing ENR knowledge increase or sustainable natural resource management to NAADS ENR strategy implementation.
- Sustainability by farmers is also promising since farmers have accumulated a wealth of knowledge but it would have to couple with opportunities including the Community Based Facilitators(CBF's). 69.9% of the farmers rated as high and very high for continued integration of ENR in their livelihood strategies while 25% as average which shows that sustainability from farmer perspective is promising

### **Policy recommendations for effective integration of ENR in NAADS programme**

- NAADS through its implementing agencies need to continue with the commendable institutional building for ENR but should vigilantly move a step ahead of establishment to consider issues of functionality and sustenance. This requires revitalizing the interest groups at different levels of ENR implementation technical personnel on ENR at the

NAADS secretariat and all levels of NAADS institutional structure for implementation. A national task force needs to be revitalized as well.

- There is need to support service providers in form of training and materials for integration of ENR in enterprises and training as well as farmer support activities
- ENR is by no doubt an important basis for livelihoods enhancement. But the role of women also needs to be recognized. In this context empowering women to have access to land through linking up with organizations dealing in land issues including sensitization on the land law will promote the implementation of ENR for livelihood enhancement.
- Harmonizing institutions responsible for ENR implementation is crucial. This requires guidelines that define roles and responsibilities for the different institutions. Likewise the ENR issues need to be defined clearly and how they relate to the various enterprises. This would enable uptake by the different stakeholders and implementation.
- Intensify training and sensitization of CBF's FG's and FF's so that they are empowered to adopt new technologies can go a long way in ENR implementation.
- It is important and appropriate to increase the costs per farmer group or per farmer by shifting resources from administrative items to technology development. This should increase resources for demonstrations and improve the quality of TDS's for implementation of ENR strategy.
- It is important to carefully establish the trade-offs between cash expectations and knowledge and skills by the farmers. This characteristic view by farmers needs to be changed through sensitization, transparent procedures and demonstrating on the part of NAADS offices that there is no influence what so ever of any kind in the process of resource allocations.

- For sustainability of ENR it is important to identify some specific ENR issues which can be handled with the different enterprises so that they are fully integrated into the work plans, TOR's and enterprise designs. Some of these include nutrient recycling with piggery, trenching for soils water conservation which can be integral parts of many enterprises.

- NAADS also requires to re-invoke the Natural Resource Strategy so that the program is approached in a holistic manner
- There is need for collaboration as indicated in the evaluation, most farmers have had training by other organizations other than NAADS related training. Collaborating with the CSO's operating in the districts and whose work is largely

natural resource management will pay off and is likely to speed up the integration than if NAADS started it all by itself

Some of the specific natural resources management activities are indicated in the table below;

#### Summary of Natural resources activities for integration into NAADS

Natural resource issue	Specific activities
Environmental management	Use of fertilizers, use of pesticides, guidelines for utilization of specific eco-units for different uses, biotechnology
Water resources	Watershed management, water for irrigation, surface water protection, underground water protection, water for aquaculture-livestock
Wetland management	Guidelines for wetland use, promoting wetland productive roles, promoting wetland regulatory roles
Wildlife	Protecting wildlife, protected area management, managing crop-raids
Biodiversity	Agro-biodiversity, conservation of biodiversity
Climate	Accessing meteorological information, climate variability information, climate change information, agro-climatic zones, agro-climatic linkages
Fisheries	Fish farming, conservation of aquatic biodiversity, management techniques of aquatic resources, fish handling, cross-border management issues, common pool resource management approaches
Forestry	Agro-forestry, agriculture-forestry linkages, forestry advisory services, forestry conservation, forestry products
Soils management	Soil fertility management, water conservation for sustained production, erosion hazard management, soil mining, off-farm soil degradation effects
Land	Land resource access and rights, ownership, managing common property and trans-boundary resources, land markets

NAADS envisions promoting sustainable natural resource management through mainstreaming the ENR in the farmer identified enterprises across a range of areas.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ALERT (EA)** is a Non Governmental development Organisation born out of the need to address the alarmingly low levels of agricultural productivity in the country, high levels of food insecurity and low incomes in both rural and urban poor communities, in addition to protecting against rapid degradation of natural resources on which community livelihood depends.

Environmental Alert is also a 1<sup>st</sup> prize winner of one of the most prestigious awards for environmental sustainability in the world, The Energy Globe Award.

#### **Our Mission:**

To contribute to improved livelihoods

of vulnerable communities by enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainable natural resource management

#### **Our Vision:**

We envisage communities free from hunger and managing their natural resources sustainably

Our core business is therefore pursuing

- An enabling natural resources policy and practice environment

- Increased civic expression of vulnerable communities

- An enabling policy framework for food security and nutrition

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