AFAAS African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services

**Continental experiences, and lessons learned in implementing
interventions on Nature based solutions**

Accelerating promotion of CSA Approaches through Bundled services

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TP009 -DIGITAL CONNECTORS FOR FARMING COMMUNITIES (DC4FC)

3RD PARTY PROJECT OF

STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM FOR INCLUSIVE RURAL TRANSFORMATION AND LIVELIHOODS IN EASTERN AFRICA

(AIRTEA)

Overview

FUNDERS - UN and OACPS

ADMINISTRATORS – FARA, EAFF and ASARECA

IMPLEMENTERS (TP009) – AFAAS, AgConnectors, KeFAAS

GOAL The main goal is to contribute to sustainable farming livelihoods and rural transformation in Kenya, and Uganda by fostering an inclusive innovation environment.

Objectives:
❖ Empowerment of Youth and Women
❖ Establishment of Agricultural Business Learning Alliances **(ABLAs)**
❖ Inclusive Innovation Environment
❖ Capacity Building
❖ Policy Dialogue and Collaboration

Scope:

Geographical Scope: The project is implemented in two countries: Kenya, and Uganda.

Target Beneficiaries: The project focuses on smallholder farmers, particularly youth and women, who are integral to the agricultural sector in these regions

Core Activities:
• Capacity Building
• Business Development
• Technology Adoption
• Policy Dialogue

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Methodology/Implementation Strategies

Approaches Used

Multi-Stakeholder Innovation Platforms (IPs)- To facilitate the co-creation and co-ownership of innovations.

Agricultural Business Learning Alliances (ABLAs) Business planning, financial management, market analysis, and networking opportunities.

- **Capacity Building:**
- ***Target Groups*** - Youth and women.
- ***Focus*** - Empowering these groups through training and skill development to utilize technological solutions in agriculture and offer extension services.
- ***Methods*** - Workshops, training sessions, and mentorship programs.

Technology Transfer and Adoption

- Approaches- Promoting the adoption of agricultural technologies and innovations.
- Methods - Demonstration projects and extension services.

Collaborative Partnerships

(County government, IPs, TP010, AgConnectors)

To establish and strengthen partnerships among various stakeholders along the agricultural commodity value chains.

Policy Dialogue

Forums, workshops, and policy roundtables to discuss and influence agricultural policies and practices.

Innovative Practice

- Use of digital platforms

- Geospatial Technology and

  Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- Advisory and Market Platforms
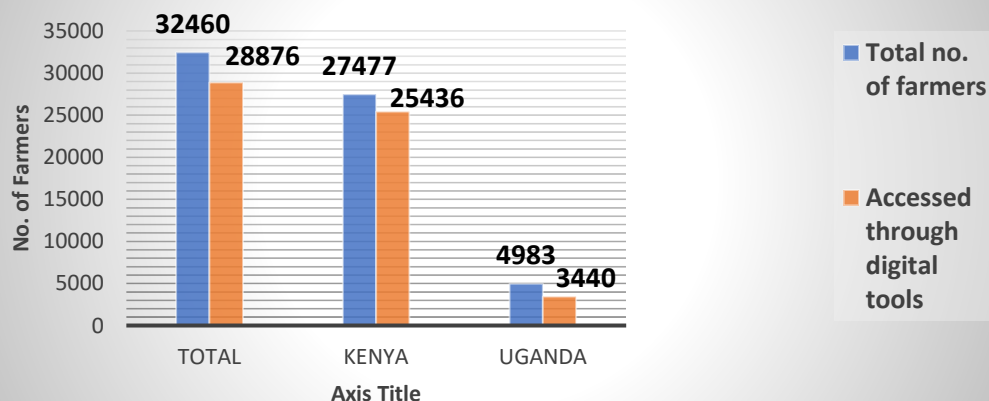
Timeline:

Implementation Phase (2022-2024)
During this period, the selected third-party projects started their activities, focusing on various agricultural innovations and value chain developments, including the use of digital tools to enhance farming practices.

•Final Phase and Completion (2024-2025)
The project is expected to conclude in 2025, with ongoing evaluations and reporting on the outcomes and impacts of the implemented projects.

Results/Achievements/ Success

No. of Farmers Reached

Bar chart showing No. of Farmers (y-axis) versus TOTAL, KENYA, UGANDA (Axis Title, x-axis). Legend: Total no. of farmers (blue), Accessed through digital tools (orange).
- TOTAL: 32460 (total), 28876 (digital)
- KENYA: 27477 (total), 25436 (digital)
- UGANDA: 4983 (total), 3440 (digital)

Businesses established

Bar chart of No. of Businesses: Kenya = 7, Uganda = 9

- **Community Benefits:**
- Farmers easily accessing EAS
- Extension to farmer ration reduced
- Farmers adopting practices like silage making and agroecology
- Job creation directly to 16 youths and females
- Increased productivity and profitability by coffee and avocado farmers
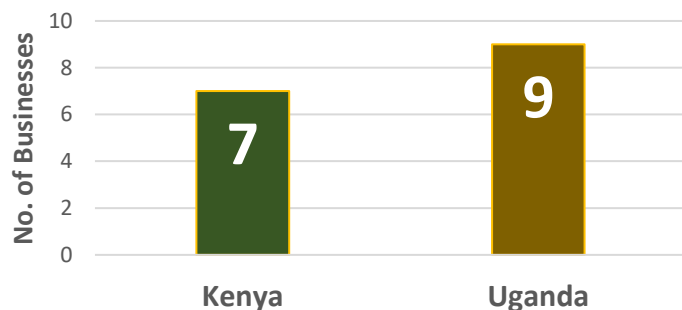
- **Key Outcomes:**
- 32,460 farmers reached with extension and advisory services
- 28,876 farmers reached through digital platforms

Limitations/Challenges faced

- **Implementation Challenges:**

- Farmers in rural areas often have limited access to advanced technologies and digital tools.

- Some youths and women dropped off the program (3 in Kenya and 1 in Uganda)

- Changes in county government office bearers

- High expectations from DCs

- There was limited cross-learning between the two countries

- **Adaptation Measures**:

- Youthful family members to access and transfer extension information

- Replacements were done when the project was still in inception

- Formation of new working relationships with the new office bearers

- Continuous engagement with the youths to mange their expectations

- Use online tools to share experiences and knowledge

Lessons Learned

Key Insights

Digital Inclusion - Digital tools bridge the divide among farmers, enabling access to information and services.

Enhanced Communication - Digital tools facilitate real-time communication between farmers, extension agents, and experts.

Data-driven Decision Making - use of data analytics to tailor extension services, ensuring they meet the specific needs of farmers based on local contexts and challenges.

Scalability and Accessibility through digital platforms

Capacity Building enhances the ability of DCs to effectively use and disseminate information through digital channels

Best Practices

- Documentation and Review
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Innovation and Adaptation
- Impact Assessment
- Scalability and Replicability
- Capacity Building
- Sustainability
- Feedback Mechanisms

Unexpected Outcomes

- High adoption of digital tools in extension
- The county government of Murang'a has shown keen interest in the approach and is actively scaling it up.

Stakeholder Engagement

Community Involvement

- Local IPs incubated the DCs

- Other local partners like Geospatial and KOPART contributed in capacity building DCs

- The county government fully supported the initiative

- The community embraced the DCs and their work

Collaboration and Partnerships

- Public extension staff backstopped the DCs

- Recognition and acceptability of DCs with county government extension framework

- Capacity building on different areas in extension from different partners like geospatial and KOPART

- Successful business establishment as a result of capacity building by KeFAAS and AgConnectors

Capacity Building

- County government to train more youths (82) as DCs

- DCs are training other youths

Sustainability and Scaling

Long-Term Sustainability

- DCs act as ToTs to train other youths

- DCs earn from extension services they provide ensuring sustainability

- County government is scaling up the activities

- DCs have been linked with other partners like KOPART, Geospatial, I-Cow among others

- Backstopping by the public extension staff

- IPs have incorporated DCs in their extension framework

Scalability

- In partnership with Nakuru tubers, the project will be scaled in Nakuru County

- The DCs will the key in mentoring youths and women to become DCs

Policy and Advocacy

Policy Support

- ASTGS- Agriculture Sector Trans -formation and Growth Strategy.
- Vision 2030
- National Agricultural Sector Extension 2012- NASEP
- Kenya Agricultural Sector Extension Policy-KASEP.
- Big 4 Agenda
- Kenya Youth Agribusiness Strategy.
- Kenya Climate change Act-2016.

Advocacy Efforts

Local Level

- Community Engagement
- Policy Advocacy
- Partnerships

National Level

- Policy Development:
- Legislation and Incentives
- Research and Innovation

International Level

- Global Advocacy
- Funding Mechanisms
- Capacity

Recommendations

Expand Digital Connectivity: Ensure robust digital infrastructure and connectivity.

Enhance Stakeholder Engagement: Foster deeper engagement with stakeholders to tailor digital solutions to their needs and enhance adoption rates among farmers.

Scale-Up Training Programs: Expand training to build capacity in using digital tools effectively for agricultural extension.

Customization to fit Local Contexts i.e for specific agroecological and socio-economic contexts of different regions, ensuring relevance and effectiveness.

Rigorous monitoring and Evaluation

Policy Advocacy: Advocate for supportive policies and funding mechanisms at national and local levels

Partnership Expansion: Strengthen partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, private sector entities, and research institutions to leverage resources and expertise

Sustainability Planning: Develop a sustainability plan that ensures long-term viability

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