

Participatory Rural Advisory Services (RAS) championing Agroecological Transition in Africa

A Case of the “Global Programme for Small-scale Agroecology Producers and Sustainable Food Systems Transformation Project (GP-SAEP)” in Uganda



Presentation outline

- Background: Brief on UFAAS
- Overview of the GP-SAEP Project
- GP-SAEP-Project in Uganda

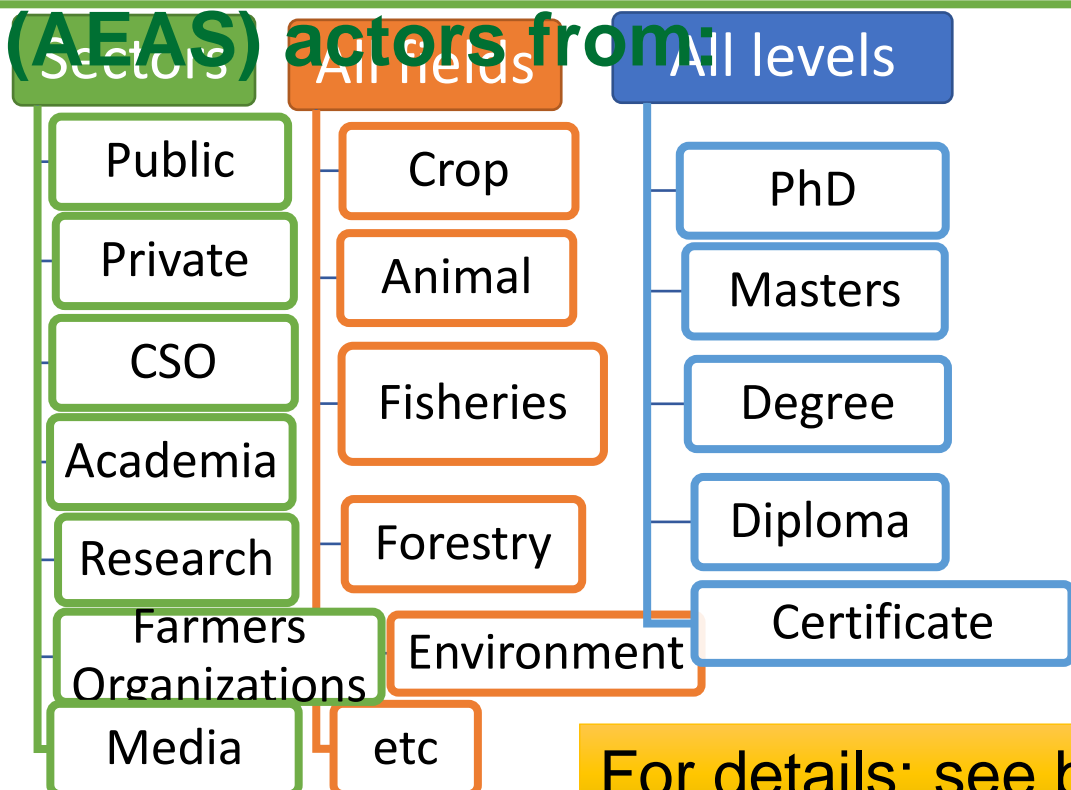
BACKGROUND

UFAAS: At a glance

A National Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (AEAS) Forum Formed in 2011 by AEAS actors and legally registered in 2013

Brings together agricultural extension and advisory services

(AEAS) actors from:



To reach out to reach out to the AEAS actors, UFAAS works closely with

- The Ministry (MAAIF) through:
 - The Directorate of Agricultural Extension services (DAES) at national level
 - The District Production Offices at local level
- Member organizations and other partners in AEAS

For details: see brochure or link to <https://ufaas->

UFAAS support and engagement in NBSs

CURRENT THEMATIC AREAS

Institutional and
Membership
development

Communication, and
Digitalisation

Professionalization
and Advocacy

Resilient and
inclusive Agriculture

Private Sector
Extension

Some of UFAAS, Resilient Agriculture related engagements since inception

1. **Strengthening the digitalization of CSA activities**
(Capacity building in CSA , Hackathon runs, National and regional **Dialogues**, case stories)
2. Organising AEAS Events with elements of resilient Agriculture
3. **Consultancies and studies on**
 1. training needs on climate change adaptation in corridor districts
 2. the scalability of CSA among AEAS actors in Uganda,
 3. Analyzing and prioritizing climate change related capacities and needs of national extension actors in Uganda”.
4. **Current projects**

**Overview of the GP-
SAEP Project**

Implementing Partners

Global Level



Continental Level



National Levels



Overall goal of GP-SAEP



Aimed at improving farmers:

- resilience to climatic, environmental and socio-economic shocks and stressors.
- as well as food and nutrition security and incomes.

(See project summary https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Tq5q-h3M_4 for more details).

Focus of GFRAS within GP-SAED

GFRAS and its partners are responsible for Component 3- referred to as **AERAS** (Accelerating Agroecological Transformation via Rural Advisory Services)

AERAS focuses on “*Increasing Access to knowledge and Empowering 10,000 Small-Scale Farmers in the Agroecological Transition through Participatory Rural Advisory Services /approaches .*”

Sub-Components

- **Subcomponent 1:** Strengthen the capacity of RAS for Agroecology
- **Subcomponent 2:** Generate and disseminate

Targeted Implementers at GFRAS level

2 regional networks, AFAAS and RELASER c 4 Country Fora (CF) in **Uganda, Madagascar, Ecuador and Costa Rica**



Country Fora in Madagascar, Uganda, Costa Rica, and Ecuador

AERAS Goal, Objectives & Period

The **Goal** is to strengthen and support rural advisory services (RAS) providers (public, CSOs, FOs and agroecology based MSME input providers) towards **co-creation with and empowerment of** small-scale producers

The **objectives** are aimed at increasing the numbers of:

• **RAS providers workers and organisations**

- ✓ applying mechanisms of continuous learning and co-creation among themselves and farmers;
- ✓ that have increased competences in delivering Agroecology centred extension services,
- ✓ that have increased capacity to integrate digital tools in their work,
- ✓ actively promoting agroecology

• **Small-scale producers**

- ✓ reached by RAS, farmer-to-farmer /co-learning approaches;
- ✓ adopting improved agroecology practices

Project Period
From July 2023 to June 2026,
though effective
implementation at Country
level started in January 2024

Different Strategies and approaches

Promoting agroecology with changed approach of extension geared more towards:

- Co-creation of knowledge , while taking the local conditions and realities into consideration

The two approaches being used are

- The Farmers Field School (FFS)
- The Farm Family learning Group (FFLG)



Then:

Access Agriculture integrating in the use of Farmers Video for training

YPARD- Generating and disseminating knowledge on best practices for agroecology

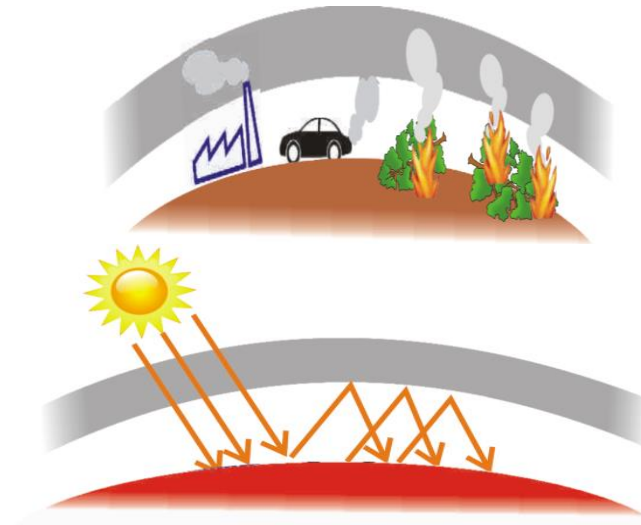
**GP-SAEP Project in
Uganda**

Country Context for Agroecology

Why is AE important ?

- Population growth rates (3.4%) dependent on static resources
- Climate change has increased the vulnerability of farming communities threatens to undo the poverty alleviation gains
- Clash of terminologies; CSA RA,EOA,OA,SA etc

- Land degradation is very high costing over 10% of GDP



- Inappropriate use of chemicals leading contamination and poisoning
- Limited financing to agroecology intervention internationally and nationally

- Agroecology still not well understood and contested by some stake holders

Country Context for Agroecology...

Challenges at national level



1. Low production & productivity



2. Low levels of investments



3. Inadequate Research



4. Limited knowledge about AE



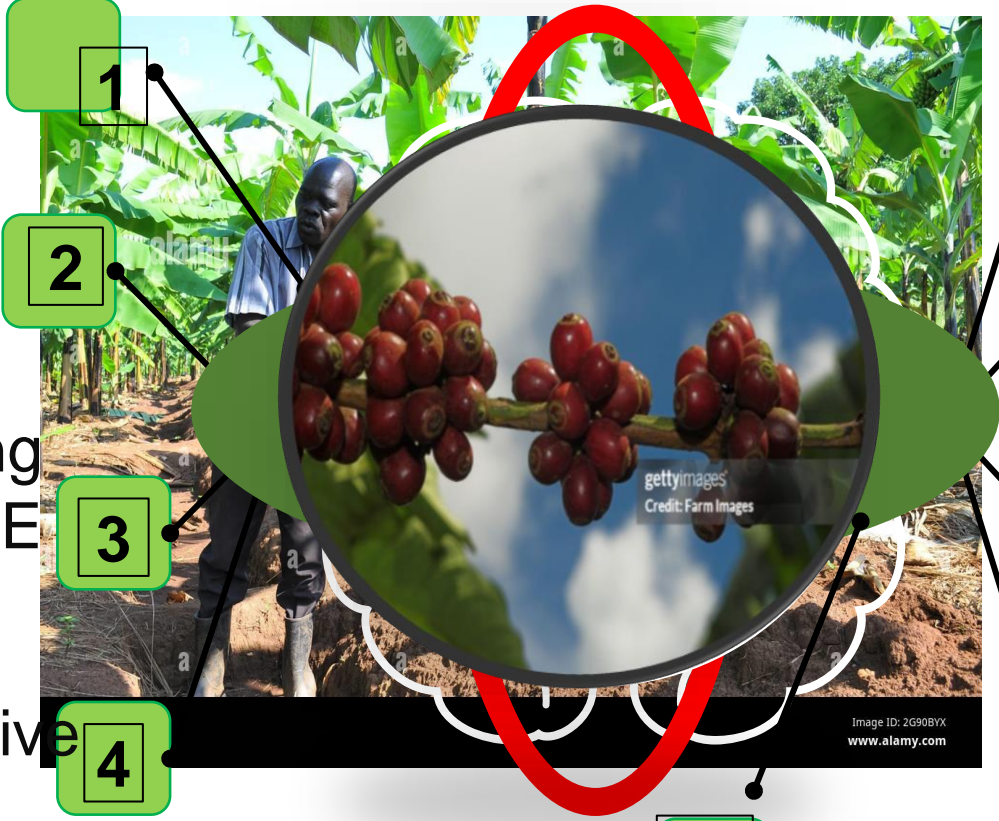
5. Inadequate regulatory framework

Country Context for Agroecology...

Existing opportunities

Strong Will at policy level.
Approved National Organic Agriculture Policy (NOAP).

Favorable Enabling Environment for AE investment in Uganda.
Vibrant and responsive AE Civil Society and Private Sector.



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Supportive Academic Institutions- UMU, MUK, RUCID.

Increasing Research Prioritization

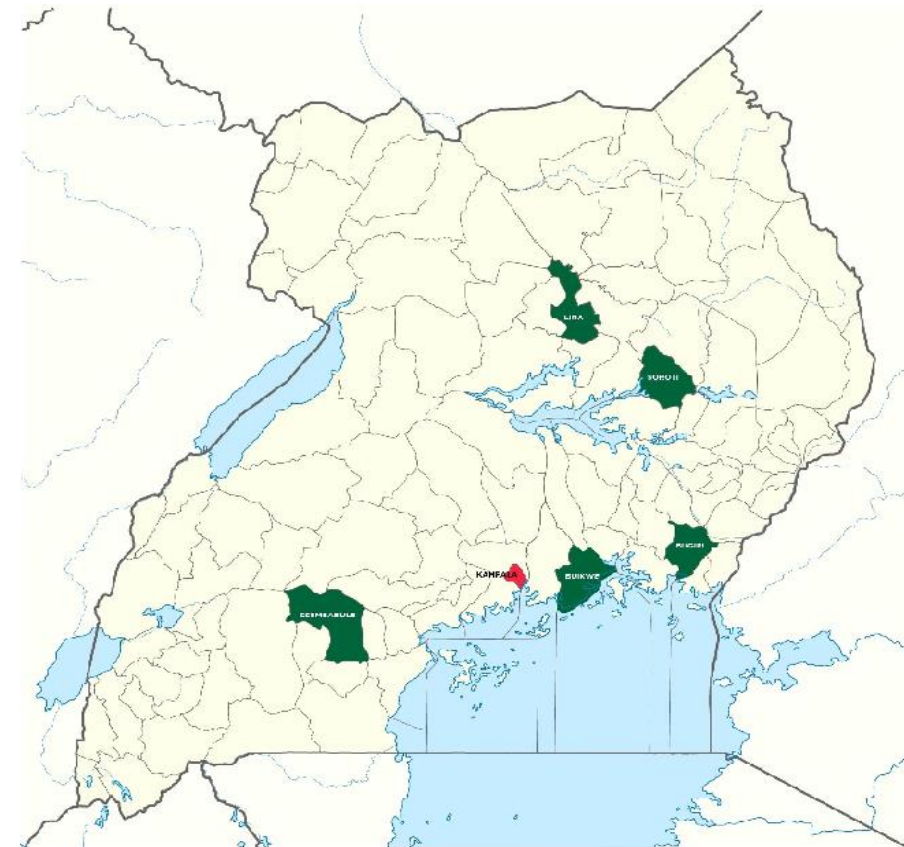
Increasing Investments in Manufacturing of Agro-inputs and Products.

Uganda now seen as Reg. Centre of Excellency in AE

Increasing global demand for organic products

The Scope and implementers of the project

- In Uganda, the project is **being implemented in 5 districts**, namely: Bugiri (Eastern Uganda), Buikwe (Central), Lira (Northern), Sembabule (Southern) and Soroti (Eastern).
- The co-implementing Rural Advisory Services Provider Organizations (**RASPOs**) in these districts are:
 - Buikwe and Sembabule - **District Local Governments**
 - Bugiri - Bugiri Agribusiness Institutions Development Association (BAIDA)-**FO**
 - Lira and Soroti - Facilitation for Innovations and Sustainable Productivity (FINASP);-**NGO**
- **Project launched**
- **Work teams recruited and oriented and**



Targeted beneficiaries

Note: Project targets are:

- 5 MTs, 5YF, 5ERAs, 60RASFs, At least 3,000 farmers (600/district), 120 groups (24/district)
- 40% women, 30% Youth

Current Uganda Targets

At trained Persons level

- 5 Master Trainers ,
- 5 RAS Organisation (RASPOs),
- 30 RASFS (Rural Advisory Services Facilitators),
- 5 YPARD Young Agroecology Youth Fellows (YF),
- 15 AA-ERAs (Entrepreneurs for Rural Access (ERAs)

Overall- 55 (29% females, 93% Youth Extension: Farmer Ratio for RASFs =1:130

At Farmers level

District	Groups	Total No of Farmers	Males	Females	Male Youth	Female Youth	Total Youth
Buikwe	38	738	351	384	87	122	209
Soroti	24	839	155	587	53	200	253
Lira	24	751	279	472	96	179	275
Sembabule	24	882	217	370	135	181	316
Bugiri	23	698	288	398	97	112	209
Totals	133	3,908	1,290	2,211	468	794	1,262

Overall-57% Female, 32% youths, av. Famers/group 29

The Peer Learning process

The Farmers learning & interactions at a site level



For moral support, joint planning, sharing of knowledge and experience, sharing of resources and use of collective wisdom

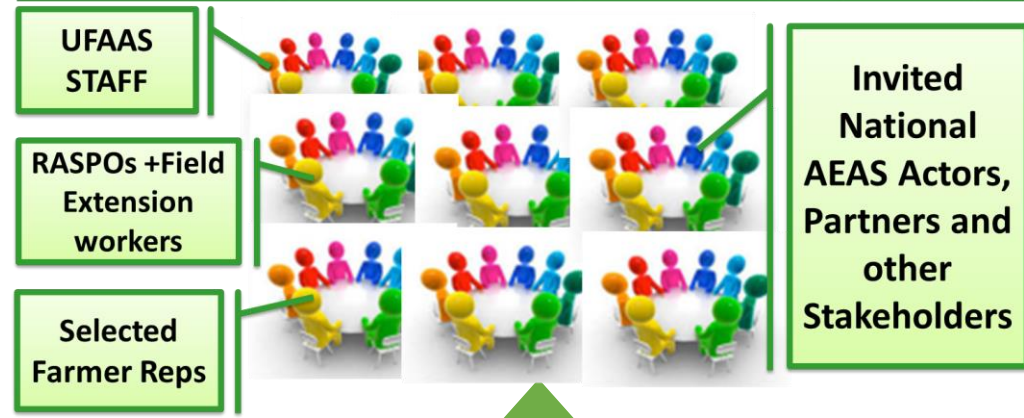
The Peer Learning Team (3 in a cluster)



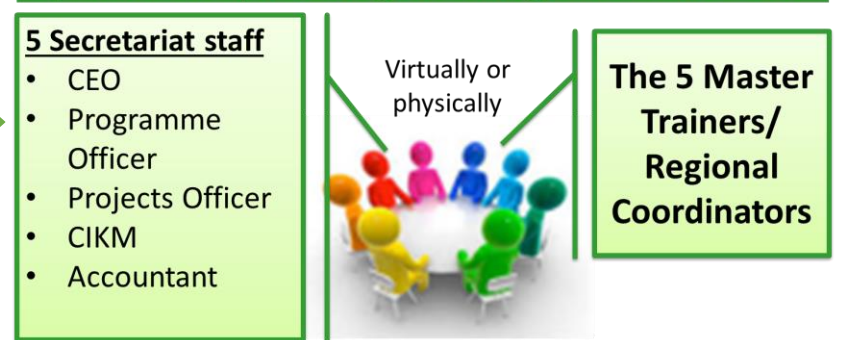
The cluster at District Level



National Experience sharing workshops (Annual)



Update and planning meetings at Staff level



AE innovations/ practices for implementation

Note: For sustainability the project

- Work through the existing RAS system other than build up unsustainable parallel system
- Identifies gaps within the existing RASPOs interventions for AE integration.

Examples of some of the possible AE innovations /practices AE discussed

- Improved Pasture integration for animal feeding
- BSF rearing to improve on piggery, poultry and fish farming
- Vermiculture for nutrient-rich vermicompost for crops and feeding of poultry and Fish
- Make floors for poultry houses that attract termites to provide a source of proteins
- Introducing composting and minimum tillage technologies in a banana planting initiative

More will be identified after the Farmers assessment process



Key Success and Achievements so far

- The **rich training/ grounding of MTs and RASFs** in AE principles, elements and Participatory approaches
- The **selected team of MTs, RASFs, Youth Fellows and ERAs, who are all professionals** has eased the trainings and delivery of content at all levels of implementation
- The **careful selection and formal engagement of member organisations as RASPOs** has created a strong sense of ownership at that level. The Project is viewed as a contributor (with an agroecology element) to their existing work
- The **recruitment of Master trainer (contract) and RASFs (on agreement)** has greatly widen UFAAS' national scope and visibility of UFAAS
- **The launch of the project both at national and district levels** strengthened links with both national and local government stakeholders plus identification of opportunitthe project at both levels



Key Success and Achievements...

- **The gender mainstreaming emphasis** within the project design has ensured the involvement of : 29% females, 93% Youths and 57% and 32% youth at implementation and beneficiary levels respectively.
- The **selection 200 farmer Videos** by the field persons for **translation into 5 local languages** . Once the translation is complete, more videos will be available for farmers in their own languages
- The ordering of **6 smart projectors** for the district ERAs and UFAAS
- **Good collaborations** with and participation of national partners (AA and YPARD) and district level partners (RASPOs),
- All districts have promised **free radio-space** sharing opportunities allocated to te distrist production office
- The **learning and experience sharing** that has already



Challenges faced and feared Risks /threats

- The **misconceptions/ misunderstanding / mixing of the different terms and principles**. For example confining Agro-ecology to only refer to organic farming, doubts of whether EA can achieve food security,
- Given that AE interventions need to be longer term, the **short period of the project** (3 years / 2 ½ effective) is likely to affect the results.
- **Delayed M&E component** plus the **late on boarding of the YPARD Fellows**
- The **knowledge management component not incorporated** at the field level, yet the Master trainers and RASFs are going to manage and share a lot of information

RISKS/ THREATS

- Due to **limited stipends** , the project may lose the technical staff, MTs and RAS facilitators if they leave for other greener pastures
- Most of the RASFs are **public workers** who can be laid unavailable for the project if the government comes up with **competing programmes**

Addressing the challenges/ Threats

- Organising continuous capacity building trainings and engaging professionals in the area of AE
- Strengthening the engagement with the RASPOS and Local governments.
- Fast-tracking M&E processes
- Incorporating the knowledge management component

RISKS/ TREATS

- Looking for opportunities of more projects in the target areas that will enhance the stipends and facilitation to the MTs and RASFs

Lastly: Invitation to our key coming event

Event: Uganda National Extension Week 2024 (UGNAEW2024)

Dates -28th October–1st November 2024

Main Theme: *“Making Extension Count for Robust, Resilient and Competitive Agri-Food Systems”*

Sub-themes

1. Catalysing and **rebuilding a valuable AEAS system** within a dynamic market-oriented agricultural sector
2. **Enhancing resilience and inclusivity** along agricultural value chains
3. **Addressing the challenges in food safety and agro-export trade:**
The Role of AEAS
4. Promoting **Private Sector Agricultural Extension Services (PSAES)**



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THANK YOU