

# Mainstreaming NAADs in MAAIF Vs Remaining Semi Autonomous: what is the ideal state of affairs for effective and efficient extension services in Uganda.

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# Presentation outline

- Autonomy—definition and rationale
- Fundamental issues in Uganda's extension services
- Analysis of the issues
- Recommendation.

# What is autonomy?

*...the degree to which a government department or agency is able to operate independently from government, in terms of legal form and status, funding and budget, and financial, human resources and administrative practices (Crandall 2010)*

## Rationale--effectiveness and efficiency:

- (i) As a single purpose agency, it can focus its efforts on a single task;
- (ii) As an autonomous organization, it can manage its affairs in a businesslike and flexible way, free of bureaucratic interference in day-to-day operations; and
- (iii) Being outside the civil service proper, it can execute its own human resources strategy - recruiting, retaining (or dismissing) and motivating staff

(iv) Accountability—it is easier to hold a particular organization and its leadership accountable rather than hiding behind the larger organization.

- Examples of areas for increased autonomy and accountability:
  - (i) Human resources (recruitment, training, remuneration, hiring and firing);
  - (ii) Organization and planning;
  - (iii) Budget management;
  - (iv) Performance standards.

- Semi-autonomous structural arrangements are not a panacea to resolve all ills.
- There is need to pay attention to fundamental issues affecting extension—without this, even semi-autonomy won't work. In the case of NAADS this is what happened.

# What are the fundamental issues in Uganda's extension system?.....

1. Staffing --Inadequate staff numbers (extension staff: farmer ratio), un qualified staff
  
2. Funding—Inadequate levels and misallocation—
  - (i) Roles left in MAAIF (disease control, quality assurance, regulation, policy development ) not well funded
  - (ii) Different remuneration levels for NAADS and Local govt extension staff
  - (iii) Within NAADS most funds spent at the top in salaries vis-à-vis the grass root
  - (iv) Very low operational budget for service providers



# What are the fundamental issues in Uganda's extension system?.....

3. Political interference at all levels
4. Erratic changes in policy, structures
5. Lack of a clear shared vision to which all interventions are aligned—i.e Zoning was a step in the right direction but interventions both NGOs and GO etc...not harmonized and aligned towards the same direction.

# What are the fundamental issues in Uganda's extension system?.....

6. Inadequate capacity—the few staff deployed at all levels lack some key requisite competencies, e.g.....Some positions were filled with unqualified staff
7. Inappropriate methods used i.e only those in groups reached—inadequate use of radio and other ICTs that can reach the masses more cost effectively
8. Mix up of roles—extension staff diverted into procurement, input distribution to the neglect of their core function—extension and advisory services
9. Other support services necessary for optimum benefit from technology not supported—e.g micro-finance, market access, input supply, agro-processing and value addition

# What are the fundamental issues in Uganda's extension system?.....

10. Conflict between MAAIF and NAADS undermined harmonized action (disparity in funding levels)
11. Distorted reporting structure-- NAADS reporting to donors, Min of Finance, State house rather than MAAIF)
12. Political interference—NAADS was used by politicians.
13. Monitoring and learning though catered for in the design not fully operationalized

# What are the fundamental issues in Uganda's extension system?.....

14. Inappropriate government philosophy—  
Instead of making deliberate efforts to strengthen public service delivery, there was a thinking that the private sector will drive extension services which are a public good

# Analysis of the root causes of the problems.....

- Issues in MAAIF--Public sector mindset with traditions, culture that lack results-orientation

# Analysis of the root causes of the problems.....

- Analysis of the issues reveals that:
  - (i) A vast majority stem from flawed implementation and inappropriate distribution of resources. They are not structural and therefore do not call for a structural intervention per se.

# Analysis of the root causes of the problems.....

- Mainstreaming agricultural extension into MAAIF or not is not the issue; Rather, we need to diagnose the root causes of the fundamental problems in extension as listed above and fix them for any of these structures to work.
- Constant policy changes without reflection and learning is not good. There are no guarantees that removing the semi autonomous status by taking extension back into MAAIF away from the public scrutiny it has enjoyed since 2001 will yield better results.
- There are other semi autonomous agencies of government that are performing reasonably well such as the URA from which MAAIF can draw lessons.

# Recommendations

- Maintain semi-autonomous status for NAADS because of the flexibility and other advantages it offers; and to build on gains and lessons
- Hold MAAIF central government accountable for performing its oversight role over NAADS by removing all interferences to effective execution of this function.
- Public service reforms for MAAIF headquarters to improve organizational culture--characterized by setting targets and performance indicators.



# Recommendations

- Ensure harmonious relationship between NAADS and the mother ministry MAAIF through removal of causes of conflict e.g. different staff remuneration and parallel structures at national and local government levels.
- Address all implementation and structural issues listed above.
- As long as the fundamental issues are addressed, extension can be effective wherever it is located

Thank you