



A Word from a Policy Implementer

“With the road network challenges, fuel and the limited number of technical people to reach out to farmers, these digital connectors have bridged the gaps and farmers they are reaching are easily getting access to genuine timely inputs, information, advisory services, and packaging”

“It’s just obvious that the project has contributed to the employment of the youths because it is the youths that are mostly versed with the digital era and more involved in the digitization services. We thank UFAAS so much”

Dr Sarah Majugu, District Production and Marketing Officer, Bugiri District Local Government.



Summary Outputs of the Project in Uganda:

- ⇒ 9 Digital Connectors trained, mentored, and equipped with tablets
- ⇒ Out of 9 enrolled, 6 youth and women managed to establish sustainable businesses; the remaining 3 still need more technical support.
- ⇒ 3,440 value chain actors (mainly farmers) receiving different digitalized advisory services through the DCs
- ⇒ Project reports produced and disseminated
 - ◆ A Baseline survey
 - ◆ Capacity assessment of Digital connectors
 - ◆ Needs Assessment report
 - ◆ A Policy Dialogue on digitalization at the local level
 - ◆ Progress and end-of-project reports
- ⇒ Provision of digital services by DCs to farming communities
- ⇒ Knowledge products developed, produced, and disseminated physically and digitally
 - ◆ Customised branded (T-Shirts, posters and Bags)
 - ◆ A Case Story booklink.....
 - ◆ A Year planner,link.....
 - ◆ A Flyer (this one),link.....
 - ◆ 2 General Videos and 10 for DCs and their farmers)
- ⇒ Commitments of Local Government policymakers and implementers to continue supporting the digitalization of ag-extension in their areas.

Sustainability: Each of the DCs is committed to continuing their businesses. Also, a joint application is proposed, where all the current business models and more can log and operate digitally to connect to farmers and also earn income. **However, this requires more time and resources.**



Disclaimer: "The opinions expressed here are solely those of the project participants and editors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funders."

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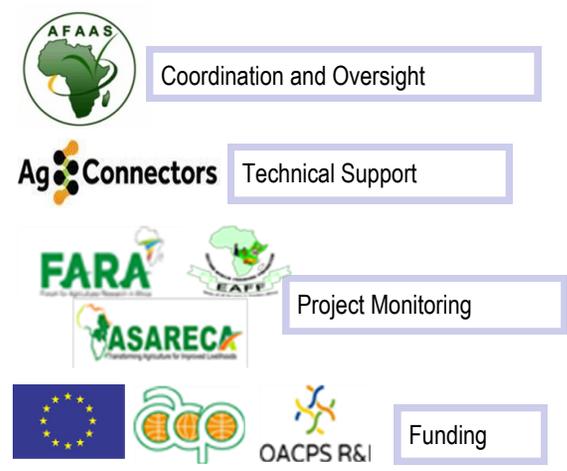


Digital Connectors for farming communities in Uganda

Implemented By
UGANDA FORUM FOR AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY SERVICES



Focusing on: Employment Opportunities for Rural Women and Youth as Digital Connectors (DCs); Digital Delivery of AEAS to Farming Communities; and Evidence-based Information for Policy Makers



Strengthening Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Ecosystem for Inclusive Rural Transformation and Livelihoods in Eastern Africa (AIRTEA)

Introduction

The Uganda Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (UFAAS), in partnership with the Africa Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) and AgConnectors, is implementing the **Digital Connectors for Farming Communities (DC4FC)**. The DC4FC is one of the 11 sub-projects under the Strengthening Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Ecosystem for Inclusive Rural Transformation and Livelihoods in Eastern Africa (AIRTEA) Project. AIRTEA is funded by the European Union through the Organization of African Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) Research & Innovation Programme, coordinated by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and implemented by the Association of Strengthening Agricultural Research in East and Central Africa (ASARECA) and the East African Farmers Federation (EAFF). In Uganda, it is implemented in the districts of Bugiri and Luweero, together with two Farmers' Organisations, that were identified as effective **Innovation Platforms (IPs)** for hosting the project.

Who are Digital connectors?

"Digital Connectors" are individuals who act as local champions within farming communities, utilizing digital technologies to bridge the gap between farmers and agricultural information and services, primarily focused on improving agricultural practices and livelihoods. They bridge the last mile in agriculture extension. They:

- ⇒ Connect farmers and their groups with products, information, or services that add value to smallholder farmers
- ⇒ Their partnerships include agri input companies, non-profit agencies, lead farmers and farmer groups, markets, and equipment providers among others
- ⇒ They prioritize the creation of value for their clients – both farmers and institutions they are linked with.



With AFAAS, FARA and ASARECA M&E Team in Bugiri

Main Focus

The 2.5 years DF4FC project is focused on:

1. Creating employment opportunities for rural women and youth as Digital Connectors (DCs) by:
 - ⇒ Build the capacities of women and youth as Digital Connectors.
 - ⇒ Review and assessment of business models (existing and new) for sustainable AEAS services through digital connectors.
2. Digital delivery of AEAS services to farming communities through:
 - ⇒ Reviewing and assessing existing digital AEAS services available to farmers
 - ⇒ Supporting the DCs to deliver digital services offered through their business models.
3. Provide evidence-based information for policy makers by:
 - ⇒ Review and assessment/ analysis of policies supporting digital AEAS delivery.
 - ⇒ Conducting dialogues to deliberate on district policy environment for the delivery of digitalized agricultural extension services.

Main Activities accomplished

The key activities accomplished were:

- ✓ Selection of two target districts of Bugiri and Luweero and suitable innovation platforms:
 - ◇ Bugiri Institutions and Agribusiness Development Association (BAIDA) -Bugiri,
 - ◇ Zirowwe Agaliawamu Agro-processors and Training Association (ZAABTA)-Luweero.
- ✓ A baseline survey in the two districts
- ✓ Selection, training and mentoring of 9 DCs by Ag-Connectors and UFAAS.
- ✓ Customisation and actualisation of DC business models within the targeted communities and beyond.
- ✓ 2 Needs assessment surveys of existing value chain actors within the selected innovation platforms.
- ✓ Conducting 2 Policy Dialogues at district level.
- ✓ Provision of digital services by DCs to farming communities.
- ✓ Monitoring of the DC activities by UFAAS, AFAAS, FARA, and ASARECA.
- ✓ Developing the knowledge products
- ✓ Capitalisation activities (End line assessment and Workshops)

Name and Gender	Business Solutions
Bugiri District	
1. Kenneth Mwanja (M)	Quick Quality inputs, Finance and weather information
2. Nadia Babirye (F)	Agricultural Insurance
3. Nicholas Wabuyiwa (M)	Genuine inputs, soil testing and extension services
4. Salim Kasamba (M)	Digital Packaging Solutions for Agricultural Produce
5. Zalo Mutesi (F)	Quality Inputs and extension services Provision
Luweero District	
6. Andrew Munyole (M)	Advisory information and market place for farmers
7. Anna Ajwang (F)	Quality Bio-inputs Provision
8. Anthony Kisaakye (M)	Irrigation Management
9. Anthony Ssenyonga (M)	Quality and timely inputs with extension services

The Digital Connectors



Farmer