

**Technical Seminar on Enhancing the Evaluability of
Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG2): End hunger, achieve
food security and improved nutrition and promote
sustainable agriculture**

Position Paper

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1. Introduction

What has commonly been done in Uganda since the 1990s is the monitoring of poverty trends and changes in social sector indices, principally for accountability to donors and the general public. Until recently, the demand for evaluative evidence for learning and improving decision making was relatively low as the focus has been on proving results arising from specific public investments; within the context of output based budgeting. The existing legislation was inadequate for meeting the requirements for effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in the public sector. Most evaluations were undertaken by donors and civil society organisations for accountability purposes.

The status quo changed in 2011 with the introduction of the National Policy on Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the Annual Government Performance Reports and the Government Evaluation Facility (GEF) that was largely donor funded. The increased interest from the Executive and citizens to enhance public service delivery has led to enhanced demand for evaluative evidence to improve decision making and programme implementation.

It is within this context that the MDGs were adopted by the Government of Uganda (GoU) and other non-state actors in the country in 2001. The MDG agenda has been remarkably successful in its central underlying objective of raising the profile of few development objectives. This success reflects a broad consensus on the importance of the end results specified and the simplicity of the time bound targets, which made the framework a popular tool for advocacy¹.

The adoption and integration of MDGs in Uganda was smooth as most MDGs were aligned to the country's national policy objectives, especially reducing extreme poverty, improving access to primary education and health care and reducing HIV/AIDS. The MDGs were in consonance with the dominant views held by the government, development partners and civil society organisations (CSOs). Monitoring and evaluation of most MDGs was thus easier, except for those that were not well captured in the national objectives.

However, their relevance reduced with the evolving economic status and policy landscape in the country. After a decade of focusing on poverty reduction, the government changed course and introduced the first National Development Plan (NDP1) in 2010 and the Vision 2040. Since then, the policy focus is less on poverty reduction and more on sustainable wealth creation, employment and inclusive growth.

Some of the MDG targets were less ambitious than the Government of Uganda (GoU) targets and were achieved much earlier than anticipated. Hence, the government re-directed its energies to other more pressing problems like ensuring peace and security, good governance and infrastructure development which were not necessarily captured in the MDG framework.

A key challenge was that the evidence emanating from the MDG assessments was not well utilised in some cases as it was not a requirement. Many times, this evidence was disseminated late when critical decisions associated with the findings had already been made by the policy makers, some based on flimsy evidence. Timely dissemination of evaluative evidence to key stakeholders is paramount for effective utilisation of the information.

In recent years, six sectors have emerged as most strategic for national development and hence are attracting more investments than the others. These are health, education, water and sanitation, roads, energy and agriculture. The demand for evaluative evidence is highest among these sectors. The country produced its second NDPII 2015/16 to 2019/20 that has to a large extent integrated the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The discussion has just started on how to localise the SDGs to ensure that they are effectively implemented and evaluated.

¹ Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 2015: MDG Report 2015.

2. Dimensions and aspects that are likely to be in demand:

2.1 End Hunger and increased access to food. There is a high correlation between poverty levels and access to food at household level in Uganda. The percentage of people living below the poverty line decreased from 24.3 percent in 2009/10 to 19.7 percent in 2012/13. However, there are significant disparities in poverty levels across regions being highest in post-conflict Northern (44 percent) and Eastern (24.5 percent) regions, rural areas, drought prone regions and among vulnerable categories (poor, orphans, elderly and people with disabilities). The UNHS 2012/13 shows that persons in female headed households, those living in rural areas and Northern Uganda and those in the lowest quintiles were more food poor than other categories.

In the NDPII, the government has committed to reduce the percentage of people living on less than US\$1 from 19.7% in 2012/13 to 14.2% in 2019/20 and 5.0% by 2040. Access to food among all categories of people is expected to improve as poverty reduces. The National Food and Nutrition Policy 2003 commits government to ensure food security and adequate nutrition for all people in Uganda. The aspect of access to food is already being measured at country level and therefore the demand for that information is likely to be high.

2.2 Malnutrition: Uganda is considered to be a food basket for the African continent and to be self sufficient. However, chronic malnutrition remains high. The latest Uganda Demographic Health Survey (UDHS) 2011 showed that nationally 33 percent of children under age 5 were stunted, and 14 percent of children were severely stunted. Children in rural areas were almost twice as likely to be stunted (36 percent) compared to those in urban areas (19%). About half of Ugandan children 6-59 months (49 percent) were found to be anaemic. Twenty-three percent of Ugandan pregnant women aged 15-49 were anaemic. The Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) 2012/13 showed that 2% of Ugandans were food poor and 38% were food energy deficient.

To enhance human capital development, the Government has in the second National Development Plan (NDPII) 2015/16-2019/20 set a target of reducing child stunting as a percent of Under 5s from 31% in 2012/13 to 25% in 2019/20 and 0% by 2040. This is in line with the SDGs. All the indicators and targets are already captured in the UDHS and UNHS. There is a high likely likelihood that evaluative evidence for this SDG will be highly demanded.

2.4 Sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices: The risks associated with climate change weather, landslides and droughts are well known in Uganda as they are main reason for reduced economic growth over the years. The impacts of climate change reduce the benefits derived from the natural resource base with serious negative consequences on agricultural production, food security, forests, water supply, infrastructure, health systems, incomes, livelihoods and overall development. Soil and land degradation contributes significantly to the low production and productivity levels.

Measures to mitigate against these risks in recent years include the rehabilitation of large scale irrigation facilities, promotion of adoption at farm level of water harvesting and small scale irrigation technologies, adoption of a national fertilizer policy and increased distribution of planting and breeding materials to enhance food production. Agronomic practices at farm level remain poor due to limited access to extension and advisory services. The demand for evaluative evidence for this indicator is likely to be very high.

2.5 Maintain genetic diversity: Since 2005, applied and basic research and generation, adoption and dissemination of appropriate technologies, knowledge and practices are undertaken by the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO). Mother gardens of various commodities of national importance have been established on research stations and multi-location trial sites across the country to maintain genetic diversity. The research work involves production of foundation seed,

development of improved crop varieties, animal breeds, aquaculture and apiary; and conservation of indigenous species of domesticated and wild plants, animals, forage.

In addition, the National Animal Genetic Resource Centre and Data Bank (NAGRC&DB) that was established in 2001 undertakes conservation of indigenous animal genetic resources and uses artificial insemination techniques to produce improved breeds. Access to improved varieties by small holder farmers remains low due to weak research-extension-farmer linkages, inadequate extension workers and low seed multiplication. The demand for evaluative evidence for this indicator is likely to be very high.

2.a Increase investment including through enhanced technical cooperation in rural infrastructure, research, extension, technology development: Uganda committed itself to the 2003 Maputo declaration and 2014 Malabo Declaration requiring African governments to allocate a minimum of 10% of their national budgets to agriculture and working towards an annual sectoral growth rate of 6%. However, GoU allocations to the Agriculture Sector have remained low averaging 3% over the past decade. The private sector is a player in financing agriculture interventions. The annual sector growth rate remains low at an average of 2%.

The GoU finances are complemented by several donor projects that support research, extension, technology and infrastructure development, and offer technical assistance. For example, in financial year 2013/14, donor funding accounted for 14% of total expenditure. A study undertaken by FOWODE 2012 found that the agricultural sector attracts less than 10% of the donor assistance in Uganda that is channelled to the development budget. A major challenge is the slow disbursements of donor funds in the sector in turn leading to slow implementation of donor funded interventions. In FY 2011/2012, 74% of the total loan portfolio equivalent to US\$ 341.55 remained undisbursed. Activists in Uganda continue to lobby government to increase public investments in agriculture. Evaluative evidence on this indicator will be highly sought.

2.b Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets: Agricultural products are among the top exports of Uganda, namely coffee, raw tobacco, fish fillets, corn, cut flowers, vegetable products, raw sugar, cocoa, beers, processed milk and milk products and soya bean meal. Any efforts to increase market access opportunities through reduction in tariff barriers and competition from producers in developed countries who enjoy high levels of domestic and export subsidies are welcome at country level. Uganda is exporting most of its products to the neighbouring countries through bilateral and South-South cooperation. Many trade barriers have been eliminated through the East African Union (EAC) Customs Union and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) protocols. The demand will be high for evaluative evidence on trade restrictions and distortions within the regional development blocs.

The European Union (EU) and the EAC countries signed a new comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) in October 2014. Under the agreement, EAC countries will have free and unlimited access to the EU market. The EAC countries committed to ensuring that the share of their duty free imports increases to about 80 percent in the next 15 years. However, currently EAC countries import more from the EU than they export. In 2013, the EU imported goods worth €2.2 billion from the EAC² comprising mainly of coffee, cut flowers, tea, tobacco, fish and vegetables. The exports from the EU into the EAC consisting mainly of machinery and mechanical appliances, equipment and parts, vehicles and pharmaceutical products amounted to about €3.5 billion. Evaluative evidence will be in high demand to track progress in relaxation of global trade restrictions and distortions.

2c. Food commodity markets and access to market information: Whereas Uganda is considered to be self sufficient in food, large sections of the population do not have access to food at all times in sufficient quantities and good quality. Food prices fluctuations are frequent and high. This is due to

² EU Press Release October 2014.

the imperfect functioning of the food production, storage and distribution systems and inadequate access to market information by some sections of the population. The country lacks national food reserves to store surplus produce or cater for deficits. Food storage is handled by individual households and private firms. The NDPII requires Government to establish food reserves and enhance availability of market information.

The government in partnership with different NGOs and donor agencies has made some effort to increase availability of market information. For example Infotrade (project by FIT Uganda Ltd in partnership with Agricultural Sector Program Support [ASPS/DANIDA) since 2008 set up and is managing a self sustainable agricultural market information system that works with farmers and agricultural stakeholders. Infotrade has extended to all regions in Uganda covering a total of 22 major markets countrywide and 46 commodities from all food categories. The market information covers several areas: weather, commodity offers, transporters, bulk traders, input dealers, fuel prices, input prices in Uganda and neighbouring countries. There is likely to be high demand for evaluative evidence for this indicator.

3. Dimensions and aspects of SDG2 that may be controversial to be evaluated

2.1 End Hunger and increased access to food. Whereas Uganda has the Food Nutrition Policy that promotes this SDG, there are no internal mechanisms in place at country level to assure that the food is safe and nutritious and the poor and vulnerable groups or persons will have access. The targets have not been set at country level for this indicator as there are significant variations in the types of foods that are eaten across the country. Statistics on the food access by the poor and vulnerable persons are not readily available. The target of reaching all by 2030 may be unrealistic given the rapid expansion of population in Uganda. This may make the measurement of this indicator difficult.

2.2 Malnutrition: The controversy may arise on the due dates for achieving the set targets whereby at country level, all forms of malnutrition are to be eliminated by 2040 whereas under the SDGs, the expectation is to achieve the targets earlier by 2030. It is planned in the country's Vision Document that all will have access to quality food by 2040.

2.3. Double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers: Measurement of this indicator may be controversial because it does not tally well with the national policy and strategy. Increasing agricultural production and productivity is one of the key intervention areas of Government under the NDPII. In Uganda, this will be achieved by focusing on all categories of farmers, small scale and commercial farmers. The aim is to contribute to wealth creation and employment along the agricultural development value chain. At country level, no goals and targets are stated on the level of agricultural productivity and incomes that will be achieved over the medium to long term.

The target of doubling of agricultural productivity by 2030 may be unrealistic and controversial given the past negative trends. The growth in yields at farm level has remained modest when compared to research station results (Table 1) due to declining soil fertility, erratic weather, low application of improved inputs and technologies and poor agronomic practices. The UBOS household panel data for 2011/12 shows that the proportions of farmers in Uganda using the recommended inputs were as follows: improved seed (9.5%), manure (13.0%), inorganic fertilizers (4.1%) and pesticides (10%).

The proposed strategy of ensuring equal access to land may be controversial given the cultural underpinnings of the Ugandan society and low economic status of women. Uganda's society is patriarchal in nature, with most of the land owned by men.

Table 1: Change in Yields of selected crops in Uganda 1999-2006

Crop	Average yield on farmer fields (kg/ha)	Change in average yield	Yield on research	Yield gap between
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	1999	2006	(%)	station (kg/ha)	farmer fields and research station (%)
Maize	1,399.50	551.40	-61	5,000-8,000	807-1,352
Beans	988.36	358.30	-64	2,000-4,000	458-1,017
Bananas	8,593.96	1,872.10	-78	4,500	140
Ground nuts	679.55	635.90	-6	2,700-3,500	324-450

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries DSIP, 2010.

4. Location of demand for evaluation of SDG2 and the roles of different stakeholders

An area of controversy might be who and where to locate the SDG evaluation work within Government. Different actors have a plethora of reasons why they should be the ones to spearhead the evaluation of SDGs. The reasons range from prestige and influence, access to additional budgetary resources, international linkages, learning from evidence and for accountability purposes.

At country level, there are likely to be several institutions/stakeholders that will demand for evaluations for SDGs especially for tracking government performance and accountability. Within Government, the demand is likely to be highest in the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED), Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Office of the President (OP) and National Planning Authority (NPA).

1. MFPED – for accountability purpose and ensuring that programmes are being implemented as planned and are achieving expected outcomes.
2. OPM – Tracking government performance and reporting to the Executive and Parliament as the ministry in charge of coordinating government business.
3. OP – Ensuring that the political and national programmes as embedded in the Presidential Manifesto, NDP and Vision 2040 are being implemented.
4. NPA: Ensuring that the SDGs are integrated in national, sector and local government planning and implemented.

The Parliament are likely to demand for evaluative evidence on SDGs to improve allocation of resources and oversight over implementation and achievement of results. The CSOs are likely to play an important role of lobbying and advocating for policy reforms, improvement in budget planning and resource allocation and effective implementation of SDGs. To do this, they will also require to have evaluative evidence on all the Government programmes.

5. Key Challenges to Evaluation

1. The M&E systems in the agriculture sector in Uganda are not well developed. The last comprehensive agriculture survey was undertaken in 2008/09. The evaluation culture is absent in the sector.
2. Localising SDG2 in agricultural policies and strategies and developing concrete targets may take a long time to be realised.
3. Capacity and resource constraints in the country – Government, CSOs, private sector – to deliver good evaluations on the SDG2 and ensuring that they are meaningfully utilised.
4. Inadequate awareness among key stakeholders with regard to SDG2. This is likely to slow the pace of adoption of the SDG at country level.
5. Decentralized approach to decision making and service delivery. Most evidence is utilised at Central Government level whereas implementation is largely undertaken by local governments that may not be aware of the SDGs and have rudimentary M&E systems.
6. Use of evaluative evidence mostly for accountability purposes and less for learning and improved decision making. There are no institutionalised foras where learning takes place.

