



**AGENCY FOR INTEGRATED  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

**2023 - 2027**



**A F I R D**

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACSA	Advocacy Coalition for Sustainable Agriculture
AFIRD	Agency For Integrated Rural Development
AU	African Union
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
DEVAW	United Nations Declaration on Violence against Women
EAC	East African Community
FDP	Farmer-led Development Program
FY	Financial Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoU	Government of Uganda
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
NAPA	National Adaptation Plan for Agricultural Sector
NCCP	National Coaching Certification Program
NDP	National Development Plan
NFIS	The National Financial Inclusion Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSYEA	National Strategy for Youth Employment in Agriculture
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PELUM	Participatory Ecological Land Use Management
PESA	Kiswahili word which means Money
PGS	Participatory Guarantee System
PWD	People with Disabilities
ReSCOPE	Regional Schools and Colleges Permaculture
SAP	Systems Applications and Products in Data processing
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SHF	Smallholder Farmers
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities
TFP	Total Factor Productivity
TOT	Trainer of Trainers
UAIS	Uganda Agricultural Insurance Scheme
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNDP	UNDP Human Development
VSLA	Village Saving and Loaning Association
YEP	Youth Empowerment Program

# DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS – AS USED BY AFIRD

**Agroecology.** A holistic and integrated approach that simultaneously applies ecological and social concepts as well as principles to design and manage sustainable agriculture and food systems <https://www.fao.org/agroecology/overview/en/>. AFIRD considers Agroecology as a social movement that will enhance her potential to support smallholder farmers attain socially equitable food systems within which people can exercise choice over what they eat, as well as how and where it is produced.

**Climate change.** “A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.” (Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Article 1). Climate change is a long-term shift in the climate of a specific location, region, and the entire earth. The shift is measured by changes in features associated with average weather, such as temperature, extreme weather events, and precipitation. AFIRD will focus on increasing the smallholder farmers adaptation capacities to the negative impacts of climate change.

**Digital extension.** An extension system with digital tools (such as WhatsApp, agricultural information center and online digital applications) through which farmers or other extension actors share, access or discuss agricultural information or knowledge. AFIRD responds to the previous communication/- knowledge dissemination gaps that emerged during COVID19 lock downs and also the growing geographical coverage in relation to the available staff.

**Farmer-led extension.** A systematically utilization of community leadership and informal communication between farmers. The approach considers the knowledge and research capacities of smallholder farmers to foster an interactive learning process.

**Gender mainstreaming & responsiveness.** Ability to perceive existing gender differences and inequalities, and doing something about it. AFIRD will ensure that the policies and programmes address the differential statuses of all gender and seek to anticipate the balance of power.

**Integrated Land Use Design.** The integrated land use design (ILUD) is a tool used by institutions, e.g. schools, to design productive landscapes. ILUD brings together a number of different tools including permaculture design, Holistic Resource Management and participatory techniques [https://www.seeding-schools.org/ss\\_media/documents/ILUD\\_as\\_a\\_tool\\_for\\_landscape\\_regeneration\\_2.pdf](https://www.seeding-schools.org/ss_media/documents/ILUD_as_a_tool_for_landscape_regeneration_2.pdf)

AFIRD considers ILUD as a key approach to sustainable land used among schools, households, and prisons.

**Organic Agriculture.** “Organic agriculture is a holistic production management system which promotes and enhances agro-ecosystem health, including biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity. [...] Taking into account that regional conditions require locally adapted systems. This is accomplished by using [...] agronomic, biological, and mechanical methods, as opposed to using synthetic materials <https://www.fao.org/organicag/oa-faq/oa-faq1/en/> AFIRD applies organic principles and practices that rely on -

ecological processes, biodiversity, and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic Agriculture practices are used in combination with tradition, innovation, and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and good

**Participatory Guarantee System.** Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) is a local quality assurance system developed in 2004 by International Federation of Organic agriculture movement (IFOAM) that ensures and certifies organic agricultural production. AFIRD adopted the system to enable smallholder farmers to optimally utilize the available domestic markets for organic products while using affordable quality assurance system.

**Permaculture.** This is a design-based framework for creating sustainable human environments with diversity, stability, and resilience of natural ecosystems (Bill Mollison 1991). As an approach to ecological “land management and settlement design it adopts arrangements observed in flourishing natural ecosystems. It includes a set of design principles derived using whole-systems thinking” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permaculture>). AFIRD applies permaculture principles to regenerate degraded landscapes among schools, households and prisons. In addition, the principles are applied in rehabilitation and restoration of prisoners/ex-prisoners.

**PESA-Model.** PESA - a Swahili word meaning ‘money’. PESA-Model (developed by PELUM Uganda in 2012) will be used by AFIRD to empower smallholder farmers to profitably market their commodities through: strengthening farmer-market linkages, building trust and organization among farmers and buyers, equipping farmers with relevant market information in their search for remunerable markets and deeper understanding of value chains of the enterprises they are involved in.

**School community.** This refers to the various individuals, groups, businesses and institutions that are invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school. They include: parents, students, teachers, neighborhood, community leaders, youths and people with disabilities (PWDs).

**Smallholder farmers.** These are producers cultivating crops and rearing live-stock on a limited scale (normally below 1 hectare according to Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS)). AFIRD not only recognizes the smallholder farmer’s contribution to the national food basket but also considers the fact that they are highly vulnerable to issues like climate change, gender inequalities and poverty.

**Sustainable agriculture.** This is a general term implying the management and conservation of the natural resource base and the orientation of technological and institutional change in a manner that ensures the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations (<https://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/indicators/241/en/>) AFIRD promotes sustainable agricultural practices that conserve land, water, plant and animal genetic resources, in an environmentally non-degrading, technically appropriate, economically viable and socially acceptable way.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This strategic document was developed through the active participation of AFIRD Board of Directors, Management team and staff together with representatives from the beneficiaries. A warm vote of thanks is accorded to all of them. AFIRD is also grateful to Tudor Trust for funding the consultative process and technical assistance from Mr. John Wilson in facilitating development of the strategic direction.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established in 1997, Agency for Integrated Rural Development (AFIRD) is a non-governmental organization focusing on fostering integrated and inclusive socioeconomic development through supporting ecological farming among communities.

AFIRD programs are guided by five-year strategic plans that stipulate the strategic direction for that period.

Implementation of the recent strategic direction 2017-2021 ended and AFIRD embarked on the development of a new one.

The current AFIRD's strategy emerges from a systematic consultative process building on lessons, experiences and best practices accumulated over the years. It retained the vision, from the previous period "A society that are free from hunger and disease, living in a peaceful and green environment" with a mission. To empower smallholder farming communities for income, food and nutrition security through sustainable and organic farming systems, and contribution to agriculture and environment policy development and implementation in Uganda".

Geographical focus of program interventions has been expanded from Wakiso, Mpigi and Mukono districts to cover the entire country and the target group now includes displaced persons (refugees and internally displaced).

AFIRD's interventions will be realised under four strategic areas, namely: Farmer-led Development Programme, Youth Empowerment Programme, Advocacy & Lobbying Programme as well as Institutional Development that structures the internal alignment of the organization. Implementation of AFIRD's operational programme interventions will be geared at realizing three strategic objectives:

- 1) Improved sustainable farming practices of crop and animal production as well as market access among smallholder farmers for food security, household income, and environment conservation (Farmer-led Development Programme).
- 2) Catalyse mindset change and strengthen the capacity of youth in Uganda to engage in agriculture as a viable livelihood option (Youth Empowerment Programme).
- 3) Promote and advocate for conducive agricultural policies and access to services that affect the livelihoods of smallholder farmers (Advocacy & Lobbying Programme). In addition, the strategic objective of AFIRD's institutional level focuses on strengthening the internal structure:
- 4) To develop a relevant, dynamic and inspiring organization that is increasingly and flexibly living up to its principles (Institutional Development)

There has been a restructuring process from the previous strategic direction to the current strategic direction. The strategic areas were reduced from five to four and realigned. The previous Agriculture & Environment Programme has been renamed to Farmer-Led Development Programme, as "Environment" is also integrated in the other programmes. The previous Agriculture Market Development Program was incorporated into the new programs, as marketing is an important component for both farmers and youth.



# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 AFIRD historical background:

AFIRD is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) formed in 1997 by a group of professionals who realized the need for an integrated approach to rural development and brought their experiences together to develop the country. It was registered as an NGO in 1998 (Registration No: S 5914/2404, Certificate No: 2222). It is authorized to operate in all parts of Uganda. AFIRD has a fully furnished office in Nkoowe (13 miles along Kampala-Hoima Road) and a Training centre with a demonstration site for small-space farming.

Since 2000, AFIRD has implemented 16 projects in the fields of sustainable agriculture focusing on addressing food insecurity, low household incomes, and environmental degradation.

The organization has been able to reach out to 9100 beneficiaries of which 65% (5915) were female and 35% (3,185) were male. This has been achieved through working with 104 farmer groups, 30 schools and 3 prisons.

AFIRD has also played a part in the mitigation of cross-cutting issues that affect agriculture. It brought on board the promotion of the Permaculture approach and sharpened its focus on targeting youth as well as gender-responsive agricultural development projects.

## 1.2 Planning process of this Strategic Direction:

AFIRD's project interventions are guided by five-year strategic direction document with the most recent for the period 2017-2021. Hence AFIRD found it imperative to develop -

a new strategic direction for the period 2022-2026 with one year of transition. In addition, the old strategic direction was evaluated and findings indicated the need for a new strategic direction.

This is the fourth strategic planning process undertaken by AFIRD. It considers the wealth of experience, best practices, and lessons learned during the implementation of interventions in the last 20 years with special emphasis on the last five-year period 2017-2021.

The current AFIRD strategic direction emerges from a systematic consultative process conducted over two months which was enabled with the financial and technical support of Tudor Trust. The planning process was done through face-to-face and virtual engagement of stakeholders to manage Covid-19 restrictions on the number of people at the time. The lead facilitator of the consultative process was Mr. John Wilson from Tudor Trust. It involved the active participation of the AFIRD Board of Directors, management team and staff, farmers' representatives, and some local leaders in pro-gram operational areas.

A total of six virtual meetings were organized via the Zoom platform over a period of two months. This was done to give ample time to the participants to internalize, think through, and respond to the assignments given by the facilitator. The assignments were geared at addressing the following;

- 1) Review of the vision, mission, and core values/principles
- 2) Undertake an analysis of strengths, Weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) based on the following questions:

- a) What do we need to continue doing in the future?
- b) What do we need to emphasize more?
- c) What do we need to start doing that we are not already doing?
- d) What do we need to do less or stop doing?

The discussions generated consensus on the following;

- Maintain the vision as it is.
- Come up with a new mission statement
- Expand the geographical area of operation
- Re-define and refine the principles and merge some
- Re-define and refine the strategic areas

Throughout this planning process, a selected committee was nominated to compile the new strategic direction document. It worked collaboratively with AFIRD management for reviewing progress and also with the Board for approval of this document.

## 2.0 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

This chapter outlays the context within which AFIRD operates. The context analysis considers general aspects and trends in the socio-economic and political environment in Uganda. Including conditions and factors that might have a positive or a negative influence on AFIRD's work and attainment of its objectives. Program planning for the next five years has thus taken into consideration the following factors.

### 2.1 Economic background and poverty in Uganda

Uganda's per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew from US\$ 807 in 2015/16 to US\$ 954 in 2020/21 . However, poverty and uneven development remain a fundamental challenge in Uganda. Poverty levels decreased from 37.7% in 2002/03 to 19.7% in 2012/13, increasing again to 21.4% between 2016/17 and 2019/2020 before dropping slightly to 20.3% in 2020/21. The absolute number of persons living in poverty increased from 7.5 million in 2009/10 to 8.3 million in 2019/20 . Overall, 47% of Ugandan households' experience multidimensional poverty, more than double the 20.3% living in monetary poverty. The problem of poverty in the country is exacerbated by inequality. A higher proportion, 50% of households headed by women experience multidimensional poverty compared with 46% of men-headed households . Income inequality is growing in Uganda with women, youth, and children constituting the highest percentage of those living in extreme poverty. Men's per capita Gross National Income of US\$ 2,671 is much higher compared to the US\$ 1,591 for women . The high incidences of poverty and inequality deprive many people of their potential to contribute fully to society and the economy

The agricultural sector continues to be the mainstay of Uganda's economy, it contributed 24% of GDP in 2020/221 , 34% of Uganda's total export earnings in 2020 , and it's the dominant source of livelihood for most Ugandans . It employs 68% of the working population and women are more likely to work in the agricultural sector (70%), compared to 58% of men.

A majority (84%) of Uganda's population is rural where most of them (80%) are smallholders, farming on units of about one hectare , and 69% of the households rely on subsistence agriculture for a living . The sector is recognized as being critical for catalysing agro-industrialization, and realization of the country's strategic objective of increasing household incomes and improving the quality of life of Ugandans. Uganda's National Strategy for Youth

Employment in Agriculture (NSYEA, 2017) recognizes the role of agriculture for youth unemployment and under-employment. The strategy notes that there are few policy incentives to facilitate youth participation in agriculture. NSYEA calls for changing youths' negative attitude towards agriculture and presenting agriculture as a viable means of employment, creating a favourable enabling environment for youth engagement in agriculture, tailoring agricultural extension services to the unique needs of youths and enhancing the ability of relevant training institutions to produce 'agripreneurs'.

Hence AFIRD will implement interventions geared at influencing youth's positive attitudes towards agriculture such as promoting digital extension to reach out to the youths, build their capacity to productively utilize small-spaces for agricultural production, promote horticulture besides low-cost irrigation systems and

Hence AFIRD will implement interventions geared at influencing youth's positive attitudes towards agriculture such as promoting digital extension to reach out to the youths, build their capacity to productively utilize small-spaces for agricultural production, promote horticulture besides low-cost irrigation systems and other income generating activities. It will also support farmer institution building, promote savings mobilization and credit schemes and facilitate farmer access to input and output markets through collective action.

## 2.2 Political Context

Uganda became a Presidential Republic, with the President as both Head of State and Head of Government in 1966. It has experienced relative peace in most parts of the country since 1986, when the National Resistance Movement came into power, and in the entire country since the end of the civil war in Northern Uganda in 2006. The Fragile States Index for 2016 placed Uganda in the 'alert' category with inequality between regions combined with other potential conflict drivers such as high unemployment, poor governance, weak conflict resolution structures, as well as a massive influx of refugees cited as areas of major risk . Uganda has 1.58 million refugees from over 8 different countries including South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan and others. Over 111,000 of these are urban refugees living and working in Kampala and Wakiso District where they are supposed to support themselves . The refugees increase pressure on available resources in the host communities often engaging in activities that increase environmental degradation. Going forward, AFIRD will target the refugee hosting communities with interventions geared at sustainably improving livelihoods.

## 2.3 Social Context

Majority (53%) of Uganda's total population of 42.9 million people are below 18 years of age, 76% of Ugandans are of age 30 years and below while more than half (50.9 %) of the population are women . With an annual population growth rate of 3.1%, the country's population is projected to reach 63.8 million by 2030 and 105.7 million by 2050 . Uganda's high population growth rate is unsustainable in light of static natural resources, it offsets economic growth and obstructs its transition to middle-income status, undermines efforts to improve the quality of the population as productive agents, and places pressure on the use of land.

The median age of Uganda is 16.7 years; an indication that the country has a high dependency ratio placing a high burden on the workforce. This notwithstanding, a young population presents an opportunity to take advantage of the 'Demographic Dividend' for national development. However, challenges related to transitioning successfully from education to employment, and finding viable employment and income-earning opportunities remain critical huddles

At least 64% of the total unemployed persons are youth (18-30 years). The proportion of the youth who transited either to stable or satisfactory jobs (based on those in employment) was 27%, showing inadequate stable or satisfactory employment opportunities for the youth in Uganda (UBOS, 2020). Very slow progression in the employment of youth in other stages of the agricultural value chain is attributed to low skill sets

The demographic dividend roadmap recognizes that acceleration of socioeconomic transformation requires empowerment of the young population to be productive. This calls for the implementation of policies and interventions geared at ensuring that the labour force is skilled and economically engaged to reap the dividend. Attracting more young people in decent employment under various stages of the agriculture value chain is therefore imperative

Gender mainstreaming has been high on the agenda of the Government of Uganda (GoU) as it recognizes the need to expand opportunities for men, women, boys, and girls not only as a human right but also as a means for sustainable inclusive development. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 (as amended) provides for affirmative action for groups marginalized based on gender, age, disability, or any other reason and enshrines equality and non-discrimination of all persons in all spheres (Article 21). Vision 2040, which stipulates Uganda's long-term development framework, emphasizes the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment by among others, calling for gender-responsive policies, programs, and actions. Uganda's commitment to equality is further illustrated through its ratification and domestication of international, continental, and regional development agendas. It ratified the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1985, the 1993 United Nations Declaration on Violence against Women (DEVAW), the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), the African Union Gender Policy 2009 and the Global Agenda 2030's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) centred on sustainable inclusive growth and development. It ratified the Africa Union Agenda 2063 whose Aspiration

6 envisages "An Africa where development is people driven, relying upon the potential offered by people, especially its 7women and youth and caring for children," and the principles enshrined in Article 4 (l) of the AU's Constitutive Act: "promotion of gender equality".

Although Uganda promotes gender equality, disparities that are a threat to inclusive growth and sustainable development still persist. Gender inequalities limit the ability of women and girls to fully participate in, and benefit from development programs in Uganda. Women at 67% are less likely to participate in the labour market compared to 73.9% for men, and thus experience higher unemployment of 13% compared to 6% for men. The higher unemployment rate for women alludes to either a skills gap, low education attainment, or limited opportunities in the job market for women for the kind of work they can do. Only 27% of registered land is owned gender by women, and only 28% of women own agricultural land compared to 72% of men. Less than 20% of women control outputs from their efforts, and experience low productivity (plots managed by women produce 17% less per acre on average compared to plots managed by men or jointly by other family members)

There is disproportionate access to technologies, knowledge, agricultural inputs, extension services, and training from government programs between men, women, youth, and people with disabilities (PWD) due to low awareness about programs, long distances to input centres, lack of land and capital, high cost, poor mobilization of the disadvantaged groups, illiteracy and low outreach

In addition, rigid socio-cultural norms (especially the patriarchal system) which prohibit women from ownership of land and participation in certain stages of production in agriculture have continued to undermine women's development in the agricultural sector. Women, older persons, the poor, and PWDs tend to cultivate smaller plots for family livelihood . Thus, AFIRD will be sensitive to the community dynamics, social norms, and values in the communities that are intended to work on. It will intentionally implement gender-responsive programs and projects.

## 2.4 Environment Context

Although Uganda is well endowed with a rich biodiversity of both plant and animal species, which offers a comparative advantage in bio-trade and national development. The high population pressure and economic activities have triggered rapid ecosystem deterioration characterized by soil degradation, deforestation, pollution, drainage of wetlands, and loss of biodiversity putting economic, environmental, and social development at risk . Added stressors from climate change are expected to exacerbate Uganda's development challenges . Inappropriate land-use practices over several years have led to soil infertility and degradation rendering the soils unable to supply crops with the nutrients they need while the changing climate and booming populations have increased demands on the already overworked soils. The low level of soil fertility is reducing farmers' livelihood, increasing hunger, and accelerating environmental breakdown . The GOU recognizes that more effort is needed in the protection and restoration of critical ecosystems

Climate change, weather variability, and environmental degradation, among others, are increasing the vulnerability of Ugandan citizens and their livelihoods . Climate change and hydro-meteorological disasters are challenging the established agricultural-based livelihoods of over 80% of the communities in Uganda (OPM ASDR 2020). The agriculture sector in Uganda is experiencing climate change effects manifested through frequent, intense, and pro-longed dry spells, droughts, floods, increase in temperature, and higher incidence of pests and diseases.

There is disproportionate access to technologies, knowledge, agricultural inputs, extension services, and training from government programs between men, women, youth, and people with disabilities (PWD) due to low awareness about programs, long distances to input centres, lack of land and capital, high cost, poor mobilization of the disadvantaged groups, illiteracy and low outreach

This has resulted into shifts in farming seasons, led to loss and damages, and ultimately contributed to low agriculture performance. These effects are predicted to increase in magnitude and intensity, thus, further constraining agricultural production and people's livelihoods (MAAIF NAPA 2018). In 2019/2020 natural disasters caused Uganda a cumulative economic loss of UGX. 563,239,697,910 (US\$152.2 million) equivalents to 0.42% of the country's nominal GDP with losses in the agricultural sector amounting to UGX 77.4 billion and accounting for 14% of the total. Crops were mostly affected with an estimated loss of about 55.7 billion shillings (OPM 2020).

Consequently, farmer's crop production and productivity has been lowered due to these vagaries of weather coupled with build-up and re-emerging pests and diseases. These have led to reduced or lost income and food and nutrition insecurity among the farming households

Agriculture performance in Uganda fluctuates with changes in climate due to low adoption of climate change adaptation technologies. Only 2% of farmers use irrigation, 21% use agro-chemicals and 23% use improved seeds. There is disproportionate access to inputs and extension services from government programs between men, women, and youth.

For instance, in the FY 2018/19, 63.7% of people who received inputs from government programs were men, 36.3% were women and only 7% and 1.4% were youth and PWDs respectively. Likewise, a higher proportion of men farmers (63%) had been trained in the new farming technologies compared to 48% of women. Women, older persons, the poor, and PWDs tend to cultivate smaller plots for family livelihood. Thus, AFIRD will strengthen the capacities of its staff in promoting climate-resilient technologies for the effective implementation of the programs. It will focus on water for production, effective management of solid waste, use of cheaper irrigation systems, recycling, growing of resilient crop varieties, integrated soil fertility management, and use of fuel wood energy saving technologies.

## 2.5 Policy Context for sustainable farming in Uganda

In 2017 Uganda developed the Uganda Green Growth Development Strategy to operationalize green growth planning into the country's development plans. Priorities are focused on increased adaptation for key sectors of agriculture, water, energy, and health, specifically to increase sustainable agricultural and livestock production, improve forestry management, improve infrastructure, and continue to strengthen its disaster risk management activities. The Government of Uganda adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which among others aim to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice and reverse the effects of climate change by the year 2030. The 17 SDGs and indeed climate and disaster concerns have since been incorporated into Uganda's Vision 2040 and National Development Plan III (NDP III) 2020/21-2024/25 through targets and interventions towards their achievement. In 2018, the National Adaptation Plan for the Agriculture Sector was developed to guide actions aimed at reducing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and building adaptive capacity for resilience as stipulated in the NCCP (Republic of Uganda, 2018).

Subsequently in 2019, the National Environment Bill was enacted into law to provide for emerging environmental issues including climate change; management of hazardous chemicals and biodiversity offsets; establishment of an environmental protection force; and to provide for procedural and administrative matters, among others.

## 2.6 Pandemics and Epidemics

Pandemics and epidemics are on the increase in recent times. These include Covid19 that brought the world to a standstill. This encompassed lock downs and slowing of economies. During lock downs, extension was slow or non-existent, the cost of reaching beneficiaries also became exorbitant as meetings were not allowed.

In future, we shall use the social media to continue reaching farmers when such problems are confronted. We will also promote local markets to ensure that farmers continue to earn even when motorized transport is at a stand-still.

## 2.7 Donor Funding

With Covid19 effect on world economies, it is expected that Donor funding will dwindle. To make matters worse, there is also more competition for funds especially from the Western countries as poverty has increased. AFIRD will endeavour to work more effectively and efficiently to ensure value for money. In addition, it will create a social business to increase non-conditional funds.

## 2.8 Alignment with Uganda's National Development Plan III

The strategic direction recognizes that AFIRD's vision and mission are instrumental in orienting its goals and objectives towards the objectives of the NDP III (2020/21-2024/25). This is to ensure that AFIRD aligns her strategic objectives to the relevant government policies and frameworks with particular emphasis on contributing to the achievement of Uganda's

Vision 2040 and NDP III goal of Increased household incomes and improved quality of life. Specifically, AFIRD envisage to contribute:

1. To the rate of growth of the agricultural sector estimated at to grow at 7% that focuses on enhancing value addition in key Growth Opportunities;
2. To NDP III target of reduced youth unemployment from current 13.3% to estimate to 6.6%;
3. Directly contribute to the reduction of hunger by reducing the percentage of population suffering hunger from current 40 to 20%.
4. To increasing productivity and well-being of the population to achieve the NDP III estimated growth rate of 6.6%.



# 3.0 VISION, MISSION AND PRINCIPLES

Total Factor Productivity (TFP) in Ugandan agriculture has been negative for the last two decades implying that the country is now getting less for equal or greater effort. As a result, Uganda's agricultural output has grown at only 2% per annum over the last five years compared to 3-5% in other EAC Partner States. Only 4% of all Ugandan farmers use a package of production enhancing technologies and supportive services. Farmers lack the skills for maximizing land productivity like proper spacing, planting of high-yielding crops, soil fertility improvement, irrigation, soil and water conservation, water harvesting, timely planting, integrated crop disease, and pest control . Agricultural is constrained by; (i) low agricultural production and productivity; (ii) inadequate storage infrastructure; (iii) limited market access and low competitiveness for products; (iv) low-value addition; (v) limited access to agricultural financial services and inputs, (vi) inadequacy of skills, and (vii) disjointed coordination and inefficient institutions for planning and implementation of agro-industrialization

The new strategic direction stipulated in AFRID's vision, mission, principles and strategic objectives is our responses to addressing some of the above weaknesses. They embody continuity with the past best practices as well as provide new solutions in the next five years.

## 3.1 Vision



AFIRD envisages a society free from hunger and disease living in a peaceful and green environment.

## 3.2 Mission



Empowering smallholder farming communities for income, food and nutrition security through sustainable farming systems and contributing towards organic agriculture and environment policy development and implementation in Uganda.

## 3.3 Slogan



Connecting People with Nature.

### 3.3 Principles



AFIRD will continue to employ a principles'-based approach in its work. These principles mirror AFIRD's core values. These principles will also be used for evaluation purposes to ensure that AFIRD take stock of the work against what is most important and also stay within the boundaries of the objectives. The principles will serve as main compass guiding AFIRD's overall work. These are not new principles to AFIRD. What is new is that they were reviewed and re-focused. AFIRD will rigorously and regularly assess itself against our principles. AFIRD has a new determination to walk its talk even more.

The principles are as follows;

<p><b>TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY</b></p> <p>Always being transparent, open and accountable to the people we work with</p>	<p><b>TEAMWORK</b></p> <p>Working as teams with clear roles and responsibilities both inside AFIRD and with stakeholders</p>	<p><b>QUALITY WORK</b></p> <p>Continually striving to improve the quality of our services and products</p>
<p><b>WORK WITH NATURE</b></p> <p>Working creatively with nature as we conserve and protect the environment in all our work</p>	 <p><b>AFIRD PRINCIPLES</b></p> <p>AFIRD</p>	<p><b>GENDER EQUITY</b></p> <p>Being gender responsive, fair and just regarding to the benefits and needs of all genders in all our work</p>
<p><b>CARE FOR PEOPLE</b></p> <p>Promoting approaches that ensure human health, welfare and protection of rights with special emphasis to vulnerable people</p>	<p><b>DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION</b></p> <p>Ensuring accessible, evidence-based documentation of our experiences and activities towards learning, influencing policies and inspiring others</p>	<p><b>CULTURAL INTEGRATION</b></p> <p>Recognizing and respecting local and cultural knowledge and practices.</p>

# 4.0 STRATEGIC AREAS

Through this Strategic Direction, AFIRD shall focus on three operational programmes as core strategic areas (Farmer-led Development Program, Youth Empowerment Program, and Advocacy & Lobbying Program). The fourth strategic area, Institutional Development, covers administrative matters and supports the programmes.

The programmes with their respective strategic objectives are outlined below.

## 4.1 Farmer-led Development Program (FDP)

The strategic areas from the previous strategic direction on Agriculture Production and Environment as well as Agriculture Market Development were merged now into the Farmer-led Development programme. Thus, the focus was sharpened on people and their interaction with the environment as we promote sustainable use of natural resources and market access. In the next five years, AFIRD's interventions will also target hosting communities such as refugees and internally displaced persons with the aim of improving their livelihoods and mitigating effects of human activities on the environment. This category was not part of the target group in the previous five years.

**Strategic Objective:** Improved sustainable farming practices of crop and animal production as well as market access among small holder farmers for food security, household income and environment conservation.

### 4.1.1 Background

According to the Uganda National Housing Survey 2019/20, employment reduced from 60% of the working population in 2016/17 to 52% in 2019/20. However, the working population in agriculture increased from 36% in 2016/17 to 47% in 2019/20. Low dietary diversity and hidden hunger are key -

problems in the country where 34% of Ugandan households have low dietary diversity. With 53% of children under five years mal-nourished and anaemic, 29% of them stunted; and 32% of women of reproductive age being malnourished and anaemic, malnutrition is a key development challenge in Uganda affecting the quality of life of children and mothers .. Agriculture remains the main source of livelihood for majority of the Ugandan population, of whom 80% live in rural areas. It is central to the country's economic growth and enhancing household incomes, thus the springboard for socio-economic transformation

Over the last 21 years AFIRD has promoted sustainable agriculture farming practices targeting smallholder farmers in rural and Peri-urban areas in the selected districts of central Uganda. Its interventions focused on capacity building of smallholder farmers to better manage their natural resources, increase household food production and incomes. Consequently, 70% of the target households reached improved their living conditions. They adopted sustainable agriculture practices on household level on technologies including: water harvesting, soil conservation, soil fertility management, integrated pest and disease control and proper crop management. Target farmers increased diversity of crops cultivated, engaged in seed selection and saving for indigenous food crops, thus enhancing their access to quality seeds. They also acquired -

improved breeding animals with high genetic potential in their communities, and there was increased productivity of animals kept. These changes contributed to increased food and nutrition security as well as resilience of the target households (AFIRD SAP evaluation report, Kayoby, 2016).

In the last five years, AFIRD used the farmer-led extension approach among the 'medium farmer groups' with the members nominating those trained as Farmer Trainers or Trainer of Trainers (TOT). The TOTs trained other farmers on SAP practices with backstopping from AFIRD staff. AFIRD also piloted ICT based extension and participatory monitoring through use of smartphones for capturing activity implementation and practice adoption at farmer level, communicating with market actors and accessing market information, as well information sharing through WhatsApp groups. AFIRD introduced the making and using of organic fertilizers for soil fertility improvement, organic pesticides as an option in integrated crop pest and disease management, as well as mixed farming through integrating small stock such as rabbits, rats, and earthworms in crop production in small spaces. Additionally, farmer-led research on beans was carried out, coupled with community managed seed systems with a clear concept on seed saving and banking. This experience was subsequently used as a case study by the Advocacy Coalition for Sustainable Agriculture (ACSA) in the advocacy strategy for seed banking at national level

The successes notwithstanding, AFIRD realized that promotion of sustainable farming practices placed overwhelming emphasis on increasing agriculture

production and enhancing environment conservation through organic farming but failed to strike a balance to also focus on people and their interaction with the environment. Programmatic shortcomings during the last five years were: lack of systematic processes for identifying and documenting indigenous knowledge, promoting local breeds varieties and breeds with researchers, capturing of data on livestock farmers and their production activities as well as inadequate mechanisms for exploiting synergies and sustaining tripartite collaboration between AFIRD, farmers, and research. A number of lessons were drawn during this period.

- Developing farmer trainers as model farmers in their communities can empower them delivering services to other farmers and that follow up visits are essential to keep farmers on track
- There is a lot to learn from the cooperating farmers themselves Farmer preferred seeds can compete favourably well with those from research
- It is critical to document farmer's local knowledge by carrying out and validating the research with them
- Farmers learn better and more when they see and experience certain practices by themselves.
- Animals are an integral part of smallholder farmers where they increase farm output by providing manure while the plants/or crop residues supply the animal nutritional requirements
- The biggest percentage of the beneficiaries are women (65%), 35% are men. There is therefore need to design interventions that will encourage gender balancing and active participation in all programme activities

## 4.1.2 Key result areas

Basing on the lessons from the previous strategies, the next five years will focus on three major result areas (RAs) with different activities detailed below:

### **i. Increased Crops, Animal Diversification and Production**

Conventional agricultural practices have failed to deliver inclusive social economic development and resilience, deter ecosystem degradation while inappropriate use of agro-chemicals is leading to contamination and poisoning. A study by Misereor in Uganda (2017), revealed that sustainable agriculture offers more viable alternatives to smallholder farmers than conventional agriculture. Programme interventions will focus on strengthening farmer capacity in the making and use of organic fertilizers and organic pesticides; farm planning and integrated land use design; soil and water conservation measures such as mulching, agro-forestry and cut off drainage; household level water harvesting; growing on indigenous food crops varieties including vegetables, spices and herbs.

The programme will also support farmers with start-up planting materials and seeds of indigenous vegetables, herbs, spices, yams, other root tubers and bananas. AFIRD will promote seed banking for grains and vegetatively propagated crops at community level, vermiculture, confined space farming technologies and mixed farming notably integration of small stock animals with crop production. It will also support farmers with start-up inputs such as breed stock to kick start mixing of crop and livestock enterprises. We will also strengthen farmer capacity in livestock housing, feeding and nutrition notably dry season feeding -

technologies, making and use of indigenous micro-organisms, as well as integrated livestock health management.

Capacity building will be done through hands-on practical trainings at demonstration/farmer learning sites established at farmer's premises. Farmer participatory action research will also be supported with emphasis on farmer-led trials.

#### **Related activities**

- Support farmers with start-up planting materials and seeds of indigenous (vegetables, herbs, spices, yams, root tubers and bananas).
- Promote seed banking for grains and vegetative propagated crops at community level Promote vermiculture, confined space farming technologies and mixed farming notably integration of small stock animals with crop production.
- Support farmers with start-up inputs such as breed stock to kick start mixing of crop and livestock enterprises.
- Strengthen farmer capacity in livestock housing, feeding and nutrition notably dry season feeding technologies, making and use of indigenous micro-organisms Livestock integration and health management.
- Capacity building, hands-on practical trainings at demonstration/farmer learning sites

## ii. Environment conservation

Over the years, forest cover in Uganda reduced by 58.9% from 49,337.5 km<sup>2</sup> in 1990 to 20,254 km<sup>2</sup> in 2017. The area under wetlands decreased by 6.3% from 8,385.4km<sup>2</sup> in 2000 to 7857km<sup>2</sup> in 2017. An estimated 791km<sup>2</sup> of wetland is lost annually in Uganda, with projections indicating that all wetlands in Uganda will be degraded by 2046 if no stringent measures and enforcement is made to conserve and manage wetlands .

Majority (94%) of households use wood fuel (firewood 73%, charcoal 21%) for cooking; while wood fuel accounts for 93% of Uganda's energy needs for cooking, lighting, and heating (UBOS 2021). The foregoing trends are associated with pressure resulting from high population growth, with a significant proportion of the population dependent on natural resources for livelihoods

Activities under this result area will focus on agro-forestry and biodiversity conservation, waste management, the use of labour saving and energy efficient technologies (e.g Rocket Lorena energy saving stoves) and domestic as well as personal hygiene and sanitation. We will support farmers with seeds for agro-forestry trees and strengthen their capacity in establishment and management of tree nurseries.

### Related activities

- Conduct an assessment of how climate change has affected farmers and their agricultural production. In addition, farmers will share their experiences on how they are coping up and decide on further interventions.
- Agroforestry and biodiversity conservation among smallholder farmers

- Waste management
- Promote the use of labour saving and energy efficient technologies (for example Rocket Lorena energy saving stoves)
- Water hygiene and Sanitation promotion
- Strengthen farmer capacity in establishment and management of tree nurseries

## iii. Improved access to produce markets

Limited value addition due to poor post-harvest handling techniques, inadequate bulking and shortage of standardized storage facilities, limited market information and capacity of the primary producers to meet the standards required in export markets constrain market access and incomes of value chain actors . Likewise, limited access to agricultural finance that disproportionately affects women and youth farmers remain a key constraint to increasing production and productivity. Access to financial services is compounded by low financial inclusion with only 18% of the adult population saving in formal institutions, while 5% use formal credit. Low incomes, low awareness, lack of understanding and lack of access to financial institutions in their locality are key barriers to financial inclusion of small holder farmers, the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) was launched in October 2017 with a vision that "All Ugandans have access to and use a broad range of quality and affordable financial services which helps ensure their financial security"

Interventions under this result area will be geared at catalysing agricultural market development with a focus on value chain development as well as quality and standards to facilitate farmer access to remunerative markets.

Focus will be on training farmers in farming as a business, strengthening farmer institutions to engage in collective input and output marketing; market analysis and establishment of linkages and trusting relationships with market actors. We will also promote the PESA model (a marketing model that is based on group and household structure strengthening), Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) and certification, impart knowledge and skills on post-harvest handling technologies/practices as well as value addition. We will also train farmers on accessing market information, create advertisement platforms, and market promotion through participation in exhibition and trade fairs as well as use of ICTs in product marketing. AFIRD will also promote SHF financial literacy, address barriers to financial inclusion, strengthen farmer institutions to engage in and sustainably manage village savings and loan associations with a view to enhance their access to agricultural finance services including those provided by the Uganda Agricultural Insurance Scheme (UAIS).

**Related activities:**

- Support farmer groups in value chain development
- Support farmers in farming as a business
- Strengthen farmer institutions in collective input and output marketing (market analysis, linkages and trusting relationships with market actors).
- Promote and integrate the PESA model, (that supports farmers access premium markets for their agroecological products)
- Support farmers in Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) and certification

- Deepen work on post-harvest handling technologies/practices and value addition to cater for the challenge of decreasing arable land in urban areas.
- Train farmers on accessing market information, create advertisement platforms, and market promotion
- Participation in exhibitions, trade fairs as well as use of ICTs in product marketing.
- Promote SHF financial literacy to address barriers to financial inclusion,
- Strengthen farmer institutions to engage and sustainably manage village savings loan associations (with a view to enhance their access to agricultural finance services including those provided by the Uganda Agricultural Insurance Scheme (UAIS)

## 4.2 Youth Empowerment Program (YEP)

This program emphasises strengthening the capacity of in school and out of school youths, including those in prisons and refugee camps to appreciate and engage in agriculture as a viable and profitable source of livelihood. AFIRD will impart skills on the use of permaculture approach, embrace use of information and communication technology (ICT) enabled extension to enhance youth access to agricultural related information, and enlist support of actors such as parents, teachers, youth leaders and role models to positively change attitudes of the youth towards agriculture. Efforts will centre on concretization and finding possible solutions to the factors and conditions which impair meaningful youth participation in agriculture.

**Strategic Objective:** Catalyze mindset change and strengthen capacity of youth in Uganda to engage in agriculture as a viable livelihood option.

### 4.2.1 Background

Uganda's economy relies heavily on the agricultural sector which employs about 65% of the working population, of which 63% are youth. However, such meaningful workforce is still grappling with unemployment rates. Over 92% of the youth in employment are poor and they represent some of the biggest cohorts when it comes to extreme poverty (ILO, 2015a).

Three quarters of working youth are in vulnerable employment where they are not in decision making positions, cannot negotiate own wages and most do not hold own bank accounts.

Most of the youth in Uganda drop out of school without meaningful life skills hence keeping them unemployed. Even those who resort to farming as a cheapest option, get frustrated by the negative results due to limited knowledge and skills as well as access to key production resources such as land, finance and water. They register low production which compel them to shun agriculture engage in alternative activities such as cultivating in wetlands, charcoal burning, and brick making that increase risk of environment degradation

Mindset change to promote focus on development is one of the strategies for realizing aspirations in NDP III. In line with the NSYEA 2016 which calls for strategies to enhance youth participation in agriculture, AFIRD will continue to implement the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) which was initiated in 2006 with the aim of imparting -

ecological farming skills to young people in and out of schools, prisons and refugee camps. The skills enable the youths to appreciate the locally available resources so as to practice profitable farming.

Since then, AFIRD has implemented a number of hands-on projects including:

- Nutrition project (fruit tree planting and breakfast clubs) among schools
- Youths Scholarship project
- Permaculture project for schools Environmentally friendly production project for schools and prisons
- Sustainable Agriculture project for schools, mother and youth groups

These projects were implemented in the three districts of Mukono, Wakiso, and Mpigi. The interventions have enabled the young people to grow and develop their skills with ecological farming skills, which skills help them to live a better life.

During this new strategic direction, the YEP shall address unnatural behaviours in the underprivileged youths (in and out of school, prison and refugee camps) and provide them with opportunities to learn ecological farming skills and gain experiences that contribute to more positive lifestyles and enhance their capacity to make healthier life choices.

In order to implement the YEP effectively, AFIRD will work with relevant stakeholders including; teachers, mothers, local leaders, and prison officers. In addition, relevant institutions such as: schools, farming groups, prisons, refugee camp management, as well as like-minded partners and government agencies will also be engaged. Permaculture, Integrative Land Use Development (ILUD), and restorative prisoner rehabilitation approaches will also be deployed in execution of the work.



## 4.2.2 Key result areas

### **i. Powerful examples of ecological land use established in the target institutions:**

Interventions will focus on strengthening the capacity of the youth in the permaculture approach. AFIRD will also enlist the support of relevant stakeholders such as mothers, teachers, local leaders as well role models who influence the youth

#### **Related activities:**

- Establishment of powerful examples of permaculture at schools, households, refugee camps and prison land
- Exposure visits
- Use of ICT to support extensions/digitalisation platforms

### **ii. Youths in prisons rehabilitated and facilitated to integrate with their communities:**

Inmates will be trained in permaculture and business skills. Furthermore, inmates will be facilitated to demonstrate the knowledge gained among their communities.

Counseling dialogue meetings will also be conducted with the inmates as well as community members so as to facilitate smooth reintegration process.

#### **Related activities:**

- Training inmates in permaculture
- Support inmates in business skills.
- Support and facilitate inmates to demonstrate the acquired knowledge gained among their communities.
- Counselling and dialogue meeting with the inmates as well as community members so as to facilitate smooth reintegration process.

### **iii. Diversified income generating enterprises among the youth**

Youth will be imparted with skills to engage in green businesses, they will be trained and coached on entrepreneurship skills including identification of business ideas, starting and managing a business, formulation of business plans, sourcing of funds to invest in the business as well as resilience. Their capacity will also be built on branding, packaging and promotion of marketable products.

#### **Related activities:**

- Training youths in green businesses
- Capacity building of youths on entrepreneurship skills and farming as a business in general
- Capacity building on branding, packaging and promotion of marketable products.

Strengthen youths in Village saving and loan association (VSLA)

### **iv. Water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH) introduced across the target groups with special focus on gender, PWD and HIV/AIDS:**

Climate resilient water harvesting technologies will be demonstrated, concretization on domestic and person hygiene and sanitation will be done and capacity strengthened on the recommended practices as well as construction of appropriate structures. Furthermore, HIV/AIDS and gender will be mainstreamed among the interventions.

#### **Related activities:**

- Promote climate resilient water harvesting technologies
- Promote domestic, person hygiene, and sanitation best practices
- Promote proper waste management
- Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS and gender-related issues among the interventions

## 4.3 Advocacy & Lobbying Program (ALP)

AFIRD will continue to strengthen capacity of community members to generate consensus on issues related to agricultural policies and development programs that affect their lives, supporting them to come up with positions and unified voice at grass roots level, build their confidence to engage relevant office bearers and uplifting their voice at the national level through partnership with other like-minded network organizations working in this domain.

**Strategic Objective:** Promote and advocate for conducive agricultural policies and access to services that affect livelihoods of small holder farmers.

### 4.3.1 Background

Government of Uganda is committed to improve labour productivity through, among others, boosting effective participation of communities in the development process, and improving resilience and productive capacity of vulnerable groups for inclusive growth.

Internal allocations within the agricultural sector are biased towards supplying agricultural inputs in a top-down approach and supporting government extension service delivery. Majority(63%) of the small holder farmers had never received any funds and or services allocated to the agricultural sector through government programs. Poor access to agricultural inputs, extension services and training from government programs is attributed to low awareness about the programs, long distances to input centres, poor mobilization of the disadvantaged groups, illiteracy and low -

outreach. This points to the need to strengthen capacity of small holder farming communities to actively engage duty bearers in demand for services.

Uganda's high population growth is placing significant pressure on the use of land. Land is a key resource for agricultural production in Uganda. Land tenure systems determine how easily farmers can obtain access to and control over land to expand their agricultural production and productivity. Yet land related conflicts and abuses have been on the rise over the years due to land grabbing, contested land transfers, disagreements over boundaries of customary land owned by different families/-clans/tribes, and growth in the land market hence land lords taking over parts of the land formerly used by tenants.

Strengthening land management was identified among the development fundamentals for harnessing opportunities towards realizing Uganda's Vision 2040.

Land management in Uganda faces a number of challenges including: increasing landlessness and land poverty; under utilization and scrambling over communal lands; discrimination of women and youth in accessing land; underutilization of land owned by cultural and religious institutions; and inadequate land administration services - especially land dispute resolution.

During the previous strategic direction, AFIRD interventions focused on strengthening farmer capacity to secure their land rights, creation of awareness on the national budgeting process, capacity building on local seed saving and information sharing on land policy and nutrition. AFIRD developed information materials on land rights and an -

indigenous food manual for use to learn about indigenous foods of Uganda

Achievements of the previous five years notwithstanding, some agricultural policy and service delivery related issues that affect smallholder farming communities persist. There is continued prevalence of counterfeit and adulterated inputs on the market, poor access to sufficient and healthy food, land conflicts, gender-based violence, and limited access to affordable agricultural financing services. Ignorance about the agricultural policies and rights continues to hamper farmer access to government programs and services.

Therefore, in light of the above AFIRD program interventions will be geared at increasing agency and voice of the small holder farming communities, men and women (adult and youth)

To take charge of their situations by actively participating in influencing policies that affect them and ensuring better services delivery from the duty bearers in executing activities under this program, AFIRD will employ the Human Rights-based Approach to Development as well as evidence-based advocacy. At the national level, AFIRD will actively seek partnerships and work with various like-minded partners such as Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM), Advocacy coalition on sustainable Agriculture (ACSA), The Southern and Eastern Trade Negotiations Institute (SEATINI), Food Rights Alliance, CSBAG and the government to uplift voices of the farmers and advocate for the development and implementation of conducive agricultural policies to support sustainable agriculture and use of the natural resources.

## 4.3.2 Key result areas

### i. Engagement in government programs and policies

Small holder farming communities from the intervention areas have understood, participated, influenced and benefited from the agricultural government programmes and policies. Farmers supported by AFIRD have provided working examples and were instrumental in passing the National Organic Agriculture policy.

Interventions will focus on facilitating communities to take action by establishing community-based mechanisms for identifying and addressing of policy and service delivery concerns. Facilitation of farmers to have a more unified voice at district, sub-county and parish level.

This will be achieved through sensitisation and training of small holder farming communities in advocacy skills, strengthening their capacity to develop advocacy strategies, and lobbying committees for participation in public affairs in the areas of their interest.

AFIRD will also support establishment or strengthening of paralegals and local committees to supervise local development initiatives.

#### Related activities

- Establishing community-based mechanisms for identifying and addressing problems for policy and service delivery
- Empowering farmers to have a unified voice at district, sub-county and parish level
- Capacity building of small holder farming communities in advocacy and lobbying -

development of advocacy strategies, formation and establishment of local advocacy committees for participation in public affairs and in the areas of their interest.

- Participate in government budget processes at all possible levels
- Support establishment or strengthening of paralegals and local committees to supervise local development initiatives.

## **ii. Enhanced access to advocacy information**

AFIRD is intensively connected with the prioritized advocacy target groups and partners and has made remarkable progress in promoting the above-mentioned advocacy issues. Interventions will include undertaking studies on topical issues, such as involvement of women, and youths in agricultural value chains – with a view of generating information for evidence-based advocacy.

Emphasis will also be placed on enhancing access to information to support the farmers and office bearers to make informed decisions. Activities in this regard will include translation and dissemination of agricultural-related policies (such as the National Organic Agriculture Policy, National Youth Policy (NYP), National Child Policy, Infant and Young Child feeding policy, etc.) into local languages, as well as publishing current information on AFIRD's advocacy activities on digital platforms and documentation on advocacy case studies.

### **Related activities**

- Translation and dissemination of agricultural related policies into local languages

- Publishing current information on AFIRD's advocacy activities on digital platforms
- Documentation on advocacy case studies

## **iii. Enhanced networking with government and other institutions for increased visibility**

Organic agriculture and permaculture have got more attention in the governmental programs; including district agricultural activities and implementation in farming communities like schools, prisons, farmer households and refugee camps. Activities will include conducting dialogues and meetings with responsible local government officials, as well as leaders and management of the target institutions including schools, prisons and refugee settlement camps. AFIRD will also be engaged in networking at all governmental levels and NGO partners including participation in public agricultural events as well as continued feeding of information from the grassroots level to the national level.

### **Related activities:**

- Conducting dialogues and meetings with responsible local government officials, as well as leaders and management of the target institutions including schools, prisons and refugee settlement camps
- Networking with governmental agencies/institutions and CSOs
- Participation in public agricultural events such as agricultural trade shows, symposiums
- Working in coalitions such as ACSA that deals with seed issues and partners such as FIAN Uganda on land issues.

## iv. Enhanced advocacy for children's right to food

Education on children's right to access food has been promoted in schools and households. Sensitization trainings on nutrition and children's rights to food organised among the beneficiaries with emphasis derived from Infant and Young Feeding Policy, National Child Policy.

### Related activities

- Trainings on nutrition and children's rights to food
- Using schools as advocacy tools for improved children's nutrition

## 4.4 Institutional Development (ID)

The strategic planning process has integrated the Institutional Development as a forth strategic area mainly focusing on developing internal capacity for organizational sustainability.

The strategic area will build on progress made in the last five years to further strengthen the organization's management systems, notably revising the governance policies, human resource development, financial management, resource mobilization, knowledge management, monitoring, learning and evaluation to ensure institutional sustainability.

**Strategic Objective:** Being a relevant, dynamic and inspiring organization that is increasingly and flexibly living up to its principles

### 4.4.1 Background

In the previous strategic direction (2017-2021), the AFIRD institutional development focused on six key result areas, namely: Governance, Human Resource Development, Planning, Monitoring and evaluation, Resource mobilization, Logistics, financial management and Knowledge management. Several successes have been registered, among others, medical insurance and workman's compensation were introduced, salary structure was reviewed, and knowledge management was strongly emphasized.

However, several hiccups were also registered, including COVID 19, limited funds to finance the implementation of activities planned by the Institutional Development team (e.g., recommendations made on salary structure, recruitment of resource mobilization staff, boost the staff welfare, and among others were not executed). Apart from logistics which has been integrated into other key result areas, the other result areas have been retained. However, this time each result area has been defined with clear activities as below;

### 4.4.1 Key result areas

#### i. Governance structures are functional and effective at all levels

In the previous strategic direction (2017-2021), the AFIRD institutional development focused on six key result areas, namely: Governance, Human Resource Development, Planning, Monitoring and evaluation, Resource mobilization, Logistics, financial management and Knowledge management. Several successes have been registered, among others, medical insurance -

AFIRD is determined to improve the functionality of its governance structures to adhere to national and international basic practices.

#### **Related activities**

Ensure setting up of governance structures as guided by the constitution

- Ensure conducting of regular and periodic board meetings and functional sub-committees
- Develop, review and monitor the implementation of: governance board charter, partnership policy, Finance and management policy, gender policy and Safeguarding policy, HIV policy, etc

### **ii. Human resource development strengthened to ensure an adequate supply of competent and well motivated staff with clear roles and responsibilities**

Human resource is the blood of any successful organization. For that reason, AFIRD will continue to build a competent and well-motivated team through the following activities;

#### **Related activities:**

- Review and implement Human Resource Policy.
- Develop clear description of staff roles and responsibilities
- Carry out regular periodic staff appraisals
- Develop a competent, well motivated and equipped team, remunerated competitively based on the economic situations at a time
- Setting up a staff development scheme to boost staff personal development

### **iii. Planning, monitoring & evaluation are strengthened to enable data-driven decisions making**

Through periodic planning, achievable miles stones will be set for pursuit. Monitoring and evaluation will help to track the successes, failures, or deviations in the planned activities.

#### **Related activities:**

- Streamline planning, monitoring, and evaluation department
- Recruit a full time M&E staff
- Intensify the use of data-driven decision making
- Carry out long and short-term planning
- Regularly and periodic review of strategic plans and activities
- Intensifying external information sharing
- Develop the standard operating procedures for project planning and implementation
- Develop more manuals and IEC material to support the project implementation within the programs
- Increase the use of digital technology in information generation, processing, publications, storage, and dissemination of knowledge

### **iv. Financial management systems strengthened for effective and efficient management of resources**

AFIRD finance department well streamlines to ensure statutory compliance, finance planning and analysis, as well as providing strategic guidance among others to the organization.

#### **Related activities:**

- Review and implement the financial management policy

- Strengthen the finance department in both capacities and infrastructures
- Periodically create financial projections for both short and long-term
- Improve proficiencies in the finance department
- Build an impeccable reputation as an organization to attract more public trust and funds both locally and internationally
- Ensuring all funds received are fully accounted for and audited

### **v. Resource Mobilization is intensified for adequate and regular supply of resources from diversified sources**

AFIRD will endeavour to diversify its resource base to ensure reliable source of funds to sustainably implement the organisation plans.

#### **Related activities:**

- Develop and operationalize resource mobilization strategy
- Develop a social enterprise business (Resource Centre) to enable AFIRD tap the available business opportunities Intensify fundraising drive through grants writing and individual subscription.
- Work in close partnership with the social enterprise (Resource Centre) to secure financial support Develop, share and implement an organisation's reserve policy

### **vi. Knowledge Management strengthened to increase staff knowledge, improve efficiency and retention of critical information**

AFIRD recognizes the need to share its perspectives, ideas, experience, and information and will ensure that they are available to both internal and external users.

#### **Related activities:**

- Develop and operationalize a knowledge management strategy
- Intensifying external information sharing
- Activities documented and shared through increased use of digital technology in information generation, processing, publications, storage, and dissemination of knowledge content

### **vii. Public relations are strengthened with publishing and sharing activities done within networks in order to build its brand reputation.**

In order to build and maintain a reputable brand image.

#### **Related activities:**

- Develop and implement a public relations and communication strategy
- Enhance AFIRD's online presence through regular updates of the website and social media platforms
- Create and maintain media relations
- Develop and effectively manage functional network and partnership frameworks e.g in schools, prisons and farmer communities.
- Enhance the use of official communication channels like branded AFIRD-email addresses
- Periodic and regular development of publications like annual reports, case studies, success stories, etc.
- Engage in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities organised within our network
- Develop and maintain healthy partnerships with other organizations through periodic updates
- Strategically participate in national and local annual events like exhibitions and workshops to showcase

# 5.0 WORKING APPROACHES

In order to effectively deliver the plans and aspirations set in the period 2023-2027, the following working approaches will be embraced:

1. Human rights-based approach to development
2. Farmer Institutional Building: group formation in events that are not in place though emphasis will be on building on and strengthening the existing community structures as opposed to creating parallel structures.
3. Gender responsive programs: Designs and implementation of interventions will mainstream gender as well as cross cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS to ensure inclusive and transformative change within the target communities.
4. Participatory research and innovations development
5. Farmer-led extension and hands-on training through demonstration sites and creating potential examples to showcase sustainable and organic farming practices in communities
6. Documentation and knowledge sharing
7. Permaculture and Agroecology as field approaches to promote and implement organic farming among the target groups



# 6.0 CONCLUSION

Having worked for 25 years promoting organic agriculture as a strategy for livelihood improvement, AFIRD has gained a lot of experience and looks at the next 5 years with optimism.

The five-year strategic direction for AFIRD covers a period of 2023-2027. It is based on contextual analysis of the political, economic, social, and environmental dynamics shaping AFIRD's operations, and responds to the global SDGs. The new strategic direction builds on the previous one for 2017-2021.

Through this strategic direction, AFIRD will enable smallholder farmers in different parts of the country to be food and nutrition secure and have increased income. Further on, AFIRD will contribute to policy development and implementation towards sustainable farming in Uganda.

The strategic objectives have been developed in order to establish the activities to be implemented. The vigorous principles will guide the organization to remain focused and relevant. The organization will expand its geographical scope from Wakiso, Mpigi, and Mukono districts and will strive to improve the livelihoods of disadvantaged communities, primarily targeting smallholder farmers, school communities, youths, prisoners, refugees, and disabled persons. In the next five years, AFIRD shall promote interventions in four strategic areas: Farmer-led development, Youth Empowerment, Advocacy, and Lobbying, as well as Institutional Development.

This strategic direction was approved on 23rd December 2022.

Signed by

Joseph Kasule,  
Chairperson, AFIRD Governing Board

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