

## INNOVATION FUND

### Enhancing inclusive market access for African indigenous vegetable seed and value-added products by smallholder farmers in Uganda

Parent project: Strengthening agricultural knowledge and the innovation ecosystem for inclusive rural transformation and livelihoods in Eastern Africa (AIRTEA)



#### PROJECT COORDINATOR

Uganda Christian University



#### PARTNERS

Uganda National Farmers Federation (UNFFE)  
Syova Seed Uganda Ltd.  
Farmgain Africa Ltd., Uganda



#### LOCATION

Uganda



#### PERIOD

March 2022 – August 2024



#### EU FUNDING

EUR 250,000

#### SECTOR

Agriculture

#### KEYWORDS

African indigenous vegetables, value chains, market linkages, private-led systems, management information system, capacity building, smallholder farmers, seeds



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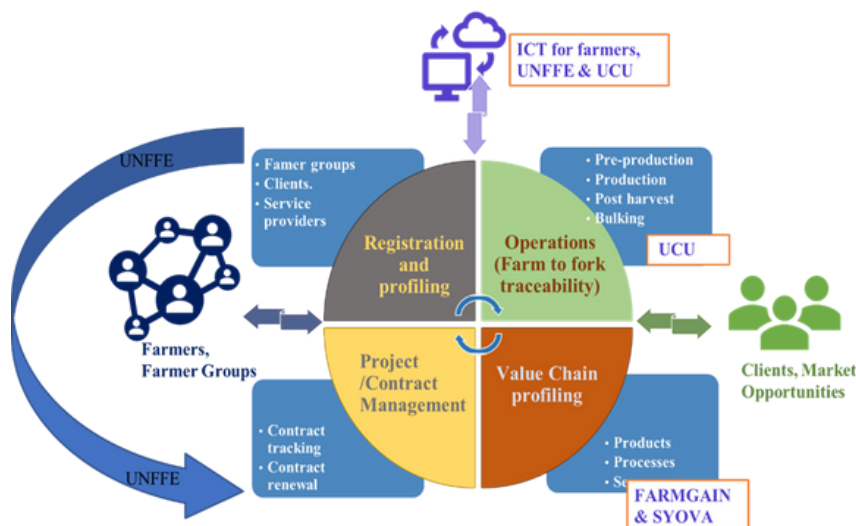
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## CHALLENGE

Over 70 % of Ugandan vegetable producers are smallholder farmers based in rural areas, whose operations are greatly affected by disorganised African Indigenous Vegetable (AIV) markets along vegetable value chains and weak logistics systems. In addition, an inefficient seed system negatively affects downstream value chain activities, such as agro-processing and marketing, having farmers missing out on business contracts.

## JUSTIFICATION

Strengthening private-led systems (seed and vegetable production) to organise and link smallholder vegetable producers and their markets provides the potential to ensure farmers' focus on assured markets for AIVs and value-added products. Strong multi-stakeholder engagements will promote AIVs contributing to achieving sustainable women and youth livelihoods and rural transformation.



Functioning of the Management Information System at UNFFE and interactions with the different stakeholders

## PERSPECTIVES

Over 70 % of Ugandan vegetable producers are smallholder farmers based in rural areas, whose operations are greatly affected by disorganised African Indigenous Vegetable (AIV) markets along vegetable value chains and weak logistics systems. In addition, an inefficient seed system negatively affects downstream value chain activities, such as agro-processing and marketing, having farmers missing out on business contracts.



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### METHOD

Build capacity among UNFFE women and youth members in AIV seed production and value addition as a business, and link them to markets: stakeholder engagement in the AIV value chain through different meetings and workshops; training of producers from vegetable production units (VPUs) or groups on AIV production as a business, covering aspects such as business planning, good agronomic practices, quality management, contractual agreements, and marketing strategies.

Adapt a Management Information System (MIS) at UNFFE to streamline operations in mobilising and information sharing among members in response to market opportunities. Combining computerized and manual procedures, as well as advanced analytical models, planning tools, and database capabilities, the adapted MIS is instrumental in enhancing UNFFE's effectiveness in navigating market dynamics. The MIS offers dual access platforms: a web portal for staff and industry/market partners, and a mobile application tailored specifically for farmers and small producers.

Improve business intelligence in the AIV value chain and broker contracts on behalf of small-scale producers. Addressing the gaps of insufficient business intelligence and limited access to quality markets among small-scale producers, robust linkages

within the AIV value chain will be established by brokering contracts between relevant markets and pre-qualified producers based on criteria such as quality standards and production volumes.

Produce and disseminate information in print, online and audio-visual, conduct regional demonstrations and raise awareness to key stakeholders in the AIV value chain. This multifaceted approach to knowledge dissemination aims to significantly stimulate regional growth in AIV production as a viable business by leveraging various communication channels.



### INNOVATIVENESS

Multi-stakeholder engagements between vegetable producers and other value chain actors in the market is required to render the African Indigenous Vegetable (AIV) value chain efficient and sustainable.



### EXPECTED RESULTS

#### Impact

- Increased market opportunities of African Indigenous Vegetables (AIVs) seeds and value-added products among vegetable value chain actors in East and Central Uganda.

#### Outcome

- Improved quality of AIV seed and value-added products produced by Vegetable Production Units (VPUs).
- Improved market access for VPUs.
- Improved service delivery by the Uganda National Farmers Federation (UNFFE).

#### Outputs

- Strengthened knowledge of members of VPUs on quality production, improved seed and value added products.
- Linkages between small-scale VPUs and vegetable markets established.
- Management Information System established at UNFFE to track performance between its headquarters and district offices.

**AIRTEA** is implemented by FARA in partnership with ASARECA and EAFF. **AIRTEA** fosters an inclusive research and innovation environment towards sustainable agrarian livelihoods and rural transformation, through: strengthening the production, processing and marketing capacities of youth and women in East Africa's multi-stakeholder value chain innovation platforms and women in East Africa's multi-stakeholder value chain innovation platforms and linking them to practical solutions within national, regional and global food systems; facilitating the transfer of technologies, knowledge and innovations, and their uptake through multi-stakeholder learning routes; and improving profitability and employment opportunities along agricultural commodity value chains by establishing national and regional Agricultural Business Learning Alliance (ABLA) platforms, business development services and mentorship.

**AIRTEA** supports 11 projects in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda that focus on agricultural production, processing, marketing, agricultural digital application development, and extension (mainly aquaculture, dairy, and horticulture).