

HIV/AIDS and the Agriculture Sector in Uganda:

Networking for Action

Report of the Think Tank and Stakeholder Workshop

Jinja, March 6-8 and 11, 2002

HASNET uganda

**HIV/AIDS and the
Agriculture Sector Network**



**Regional Network on AIDS, Rural
Livelihoods and Food Security**

Organized by:

**National Agriculture Research Organization (NARO) and
International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR)
With the support of the International Development Research Centre (Canada)**

RENEWAL is a regional network of national networks of agricultural institutions, public, private, NGO and farmers' organizations, together with partners in AIDS and public health. The joint purpose of these networks is to show that fresh thinking in agricultural research and development policy and concerted action can help prevent HIV infection and lessen the impact of AIDS. RENEWAL is facilitated by the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and coordinated by ISNAR, with the support of Norway, Canada (CIDA and IDRC), USAID, DfID and WFP.

HASNET is the Ugandan national network that was proposed at the workshop here reported. HASNET and the Malawi network are the founding members of RENEWAL. NAADS, NARO, UNASO, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries and the Uganda AIDS Commission played key roles in its formation.

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Introduction

It is now widely accepted that AIDS is not just a health issue. Its impacts are felt across all sectors of Ugandan society. In recognition of this, the Uganda AIDS Commission was constituted by Parliament in 1992 “to put in place a multisectoral approach to the epidemic and called on all sectors to act”.¹ However the capacity to respond to this call lags behind. In many sectors, policy making still proceeds with little regard to HIV/AIDS. Despite growing efforts and a favourable policy environment, organizations involved in agricultural research and development in Uganda generally have limited understanding of how AIDS affects agricultural systems, and even less of how agricultural development may contribute to the spread of HIV. Weakest of all is often their appreciation of what they can do, feasibly, to contribute to more effective HIV-prevention and mitigation of AIDS impacts.

The Stakeholder Workshop was a key step in preparing Uganda’s participation in and joint ownership of a regional network that addresses these issues. This network seeks to enable agricultural R&D organizations in Uganda and Malawi (Tanzania and Zambia are likely to join in a year or so) to respond effectively to HIV/AIDS, in collaboration with organizations in social development and public health. This preparatory process in Uganda is being conducted under the aegis of the National Agriculture Research Organization (NARO), in collaboration with the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) and with the financial support of International Development Research Centre (Canada). The two elements that preceded this workshop were:

- A background paper², prepared by two Ugandan researchers, critically reviewed what is known about the links in both directions between HIV/AIDS on one side and food security, rural livelihoods and agricultural systems in Uganda on the other. Through interviews with a range of organizations in the sector, the paper also assessed how the institutions are responding and highlighted opportunities for further efforts.
- A Think Tank (Jinja, March 6-8, 2002) brought together 18 researchers and development workers from key Ugandan organizations, public and private and with both AIDS/public health and agriculture/rural development orientations. Two researchers from international research institutes also contributed. Drawing on the background paper and in-depth discussion, the participants identified priorities for action-research in Uganda and made recommendations for the organization and governance of the network in the country.

These recommendations were presented to the Stakeholders in Jinja. The stakeholders comprised some 45 senior level officers of key Ugandan organizations in the public and private sectors, together with a number of their international development partners. In working group and plenary discussions, the stakeholders considered and endorsed the recommendations, after making several helpful suggestions. They also offered their support to the proposed “next steps” that will set the network on its feet in this country³. This report presents the outcome of this extensive consultative process.

¹ UAC, 2000. The National Strategic Framework for HIV/AIDS Activities in Uganda: 2000/1-2005/6.

² Kisamba Mugerwa, W. and D. Nduhura, 2002. Background Paper on HIV/AIDS and Agriculture in Uganda. Draft submitted to NARO and ISNAR.

³ A similar process was followed in Malawi in late 2001 and will be taken up in other countries of the region within a year or so. Financial support for a 3 year first phase has thus far come from IDRC, CIDA and Norway.

The Network

The network's **purpose** is:

To support institutional innovation contributing to the prevention and mitigation of AIDS' impacts on agricultural systems and livelihoods based on them.

Its more specific **objectives** are:

- 1) To fill critical gaps in understanding of the links, in both directions, between HIV/AIDS on one side, and agricultural systems, food security and rural livelihoods on the other.
- 2) To fill critical gaps in understanding of how agricultural policies and programs can contribute to prevention and/or mitigation of AIDS impact and how this knowledge can be used to support local responses.
- 3) To enable agricultural R&D institutions to act on realistic priorities for responding to HIV/AIDS epidemics in partnership with at-risk and affected communities and institutions in other sectors.

The network will enhance the capacity of agricultural research, development and extension (RD&E) organizations - governmental, non-governmental and private - to contribute to the struggle against HIV/AIDS. It will support their current and planned efforts to mainstream AIDS in their plans and actions.

The network's hallmark will be **action-research**. This means that it will carry out research that is critical to informing more effective action, and it will do this with the participation of those who are implementing action. It will seek to close the loop between the findings of research and evaluation and the planning and revision of actions of all kinds.

The network will strike a balance between work whose benefits will likely begin to be felt in the short (within 2 years) and medium terms (3-5 years). The former involves evaluation of and research on actions themselves, the latter research on issues that, if better understood, would allow more effective action to be mounted.

The network will support innovation in local and national organizations, state and non-state. It will help them to establish partnerships with others that have complementary skills and experience. It will also encourage mutual learning within the national network and with others in the evolving regional network.

Strategy

In order to involve a wide range of agricultural RD&E organizations in the struggle with HIV/AIDS and to ensure that their efforts are aimed at priority themes, the network will establish an Action Research Fund and encourage organizations to submit proposals for its use. Proposals can be submitted by national organizations and may include international partners. Proposals will be assessed by a Steering Committee with multi-partite membership

which will assess proposals against criteria that are clearly described and widely communicated.

Among these criteria are that proposals address one or more priority themes (see below). They will also describe a “theory of action” i.e. a logical connection between the action proposed and the impacts expected, and the means and indicators that will be used to verify progress towards those impacts.

Emphasis will be placed on **adding value** to existing initiatives. This may involve bringing an HIV/AIDS perspective to an agriculturally oriented effort, or an agricultural perspective to one that has been AIDS-oriented. In many cases this can be achieved with relatively small but strategic inputs of skills or money.

A National Coordinator will be named. A principal task will be to stimulate and support proposal development and partnership formation, especially involving local organizations. Together with the partners in the network, the Coordinator will also identify gaps in the skills needed to carry out the work, locate sources of expertise and draw on a variety of means to bring the two together. Priority will be given to in-country and regional sources of expertise.

International partners in the Network will work beside Ugandans. They will contribute directly to the action-research and to the enhancement of skills.

High priority will be placed on building capacity for monitoring and evaluation. To this end, Monitoring and Evaluation Researchers will be identified. Possibly based in partner organizations, they will work with projects on monitoring and evaluating their work in the field, assist the organizations involved to integrate the insights in their further planning and help to make lessons widely available.

A communication and information strategy is central to the network. Partners will share information on their on-going and completed work through a variety of means that will ensure access to those poorly served by information technology. Partners will meet in regular Network Forums where progress is reviewed and new efforts planned. Information will also be shared with the wider stakeholder community primarily through existing networks to which partners contribute.

Outputs

The Network will strengthen the capacity of staff in a range of organizations to review their policies and programs in the light of what is known about the links between HIV/AIDS and rural livelihoods and food security. The evaluated, field-based evidence that the Network generates will provide a more solid basis for them to plan and revise policies and programs so as to enhance beneficial effects and reduce detrimental ones. Policies and programs that contribute more effectively to HIV prevention and AIDS mitigation, and the capacity to continue the process, will be the principal outputs of the Network. They are also the essence of “mainstreaming”.

A refined “HIV/AIDS lens” will be an important element in this process. The lens comprises what is known, generally and locally, about the links between agricultural systems and HIV/AIDS, and how policy and program interventions can modify them, in a positive or negative sense. The lens is “engendered” i.e. takes into account the differential risks and

consequences experienced by women and men, as well as other groups. Action-research that the Network will carry out will help to refine the lens and will make it widely known and available.

A variety of means will be used to ensure that Network's findings are widely shared among partners within Uganda and in the emerging regional network. The Network will also help partners to better access international sources of information.

Innovative approaches will be used to communicate findings to decision makers at grass roots and policy levels. These will include encouraging direct experience.

Impacts

Beginning in the initial time frame of 3 years and expanding thereafter in relation to the level of further support, the following impacts can be expected:

- Rural people in Uganda will face a reduced risk of HIV infection as a result of improved food security and livelihood opportunities;
- Farming households that are already affected by AIDS will have a broader range of agriculturally based options to draw on in their struggles to survive.
- More widely, consumers and others dependent on agricultural production will be better protected from the disruptions and shifts in output that AIDS and related diseases would otherwise cause.
- Agricultural R&D institutions and their personnel will be more aware of what they can do to prevent and mitigate HIV/AIDS' impacts and will take this into account in their decision-making. These institutions and their staff will also be more aware of how they themselves are affected by, and possibly also affect the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Priorities for Action Research

The network will focus on research critical to informing action that contributes to the prevention and mitigation of HIV/AIDS' impacts on rural livelihoods and food security. These actions can be grouped into those that are likely to begin to yield benefits in the short term (within 2 years) and those whose benefits are likely to be felt in the medium term (3-5 years). The Think Tank participants deliberated on the relative priority to be given to the different themes that have been proposed within these two groups, based on the extent to which they were deemed critical to more effective action. These priorities (based on weights summing to 100) are indicated in the list that follows. This is intended only as an initial guide for those deciding the allocation of resources; other factors, such as the quality of proposals, will also have to be weighed. The rankings will also have to be revisited in the light of experience gained.

I. Activities with short term benefits

1) Assessing existing policies and programs and testing modified versions (57)

- Broad development policies and programmes:** On-going and planned processes of mainstreaming i.e. review by staff of programs and policies with the aid of the “HIV/AIDS lens” will be supported through action-research. This will extend to policies and programs of all kinds, developed with or without HIV/AIDS in mind: technology generation and diffusion, decentralised service delivery, natural resource management, nutrition, marketing and trade and pricing. This process will likely reveal that some are having unintended effects, positive or negative, on prevention of HIV infection or mitigation of AIDS’ impacts. To verify whether these effects are actually experienced, a certain number of these programs and policies will be followed intensively in the field, by those involved in carrying them out, and using agreed indicators. Pilot trials aimed at enhancing the positive benefits or reducing the negative effects will also be carried out. This will result in more effective policies and programs, enhanced understanding among staff, as well as focused resource planning and deployment.

Doing good, without knowing it?

AIDS-affected households often turn to cassava since it produces abundant calories for relatively little input of labour. New mosaic-tolerant cassava varieties are showing themselves highly productive in many situations and are being diffused through a number of channels. However, it is not known whether, for example, widow-headed households have in fact been served by these channels and whether they are able to reap the benefits expected.

Doing harm, without knowing it?

In the early 90’s, subsidies were removed on farm implements and inputs. This is thought to have seriously affected some poor farming households and may have contributed to some people falling into situations of heightened risk, what can be termed “survival sex”.

- Impacts and responses in the workplace:** Several R&D organizations are implementing programs to enhance understanding among staff of their own susceptibility to HIV and vulnerability to AIDS and of the workplace factors that contribute to this. Some are also considering changes in institutional policies and practices that would reduce the risks staff face and improve security. However, much more could be learned from these efforts if they were implemented as action-research i.e. with clear objectives and well-described methods, and with adequate provision for monitoring and evaluation. Such experiences and best practices would be useful for scaling up in organisations that have not yet started on such programmes.

2) Identifying and supporting innovation in AIDS-affected farm households (43)

Beyond Coping

In Zimbabwe, a woman whose deceased husband used to plough using an ox found herself with only a donkey, an animal not generally employed for traction. She designed and built a light yoke that has been taken up by many women in similar situations (Ncube, 1998). Near Mwanza in northern Tanzania, a group of orphans are pooling their labour to produce tomatoes on a well-watered patch of land and selling them in town at a good profit (Rugalema, *pers. comm.*).

There are as yet only scattered accounts of the innovations that AIDS affected households and communities have made in technology and social organization. There is bound to be much more that has not yet come to wider attention, and

much that could be of use to others similarly affected. A concerted effort might be made to identify such innovations, especially those by women and young farmers, assess them and promote the most promising. Media like rural radio might be drawn on and means such as contests might be used to increase the incentives for innovation.

II. Activities with medium term benefits

1) Developing new options for and with HIV/AIDS-affected communities (37)

- **Exploring new social forms, including cooperative arrangements.** What scope is there for new approaches to pooling labour and resources in communities where mortality has hit many households hard, but where young adults may also be underemployed? Can win-win approaches be found? Can communities find ways to protect the entitlements of affected households, enabling them to exchange on fair terms what they have (e.g. land they can no longer cultivate) for what they need (e.g. food)?
- **Assessing the contribution of enhanced livelihood and food security to HIV prevention.** Can efforts aimed at enhancing food security and livelihood options of susceptible groups make a cost-effective and timely contribution to preventing the spread of HIV? Can we identify options that are economically and environmentally sustainable, that make use of local opportunities?
- **Assessing the contribution of enhanced livelihood and food security options to mitigation of AIDS' impacts.** Can we identify options that allow the most vulnerable groups to make optimal use of their limited resources? This includes nutritional options using local food sources for people living with HIV/AIDS, whose protein, calorie and micro-nutrient needs are increased.

2) Feasibility of targeting actions at the system level (25)

- **Identifying agricultural systems that make people particularly vulnerable or resilient to AIDS** People who depend on certain agricultural systems may be particularly vulnerable or resilient to the indirect consequences of AIDS-linked mortality because, for example, of pre-existing labour scarcity or the presence of low labour-demanding crops in these systems. A key question is whether these systems can be reliably identified beforehand or whether contextual factors are so varied that they make prediction impractical.
- **Identifying agricultural systems that make people particularly susceptible or resistant to HIV** It is also likely, though it has not been well established, that people who depend on certain agricultural systems may be particularly susceptible or resistant to HIV. This might be due, for

AIDS among Pastoral Groups

Very little is known about how pastoralists are faring in the face of HIV/AIDS. Some East African pastoral societies have features that may increase susceptibility, for example seasonal movements by men separately from their families. Other features, such as stock partnerships and labour exchange, may promote resilience.

example, to their proximity to major trade routes or to a diversity of livelihood opportunities within them that reduce the pressures on young adults to migrate.

In both cases, should identifying these systems prove feasible, research and development efforts can be targeted at the systems where the risks of infection or impoverishment are the greatest, thus making more efficient use of scarce resources. Research and development workers can also collaborate with communities on altering those features that are increasing their risks or enhancing features that promote resistance and resilience.

3) Impacts at the household and community levels (13)

- **Clarifying the effects of AIDS on labour availability and capital accumulation** Massive liquidation of assets to care for the chronically ill and pay for funerals is a common phenomenon and adds to the loss of skilled adult labour. Better understanding of the capital and labour endowments of affected households and communities would support the development of new technical and social options (see no. 1 above).
- **Clarifying the effects of AIDS on off-farm economic activities and vice versa** Off-farm employment is often crucial to rural households and to sustaining their farm enterprises. The effects of AIDS on these links have hardly been investigated. It is also not understood to what extent non-farm livelihoods contribute to households' resilience to AIDS' consequences.

4) HIV/AIDS and access to and management of resources (12)

Little is known about the extent to which AIDS affected households may be excluded from resources critical to their survival such as common property grazing lands, forests or fisheries. This may be due to labour scarcity and/or stigma. Where upkeep of resources is seriously affected by the withdrawal of labour, the effects can add to the spiral of impoverishment. The impacts may be felt widely, for example when failure to properly maintain banana groves leads to the spread of insect pests and fungal diseases to neighbouring farms.

5) Long term and aggregate effects of AIDS on rural society and the agricultural economy (9)

AIDS has led to massive orphaning and household breakdown. Surprisingly little is known about the long-term social consequences, which may already be visible in the areas where the epidemic was earliest entrenched. As well, there is still little known about the overall impact of AIDS on communities and districts, and on the food security of consumers and those dependent on downstream processing, commerce and trade.

6) AIDS and agricultural knowledge among the young and other vulnerable groups (6)

Children and young adults in AIDS-affected households may be cut off from the usual apprenticeship in agriculture, though they may be heading households. They may also be obliged to drop out of school. New approaches to agricultural education will have to take account of these realities, and of the needs of women and especially widows heading households who are often poorly served by conventional extension and local information networks.

Methods, Skills and Ethics

Methods

Proposals supported by the Network and its Action Research Fund will detail the methods to be used in addressing specific themes. In reviewing proposals, the Steering Committee will ensure that the methods proposed are adequate and appropriate. Among the criteria they will apply:

- Research will address issues that are locally relevant;
- Research will be gender sensitive and conducted in a manner that assures maximum participation of the population meant to benefit from the research;
- Research will be based on a clearly described “theory of action” i.e. a logical connection between the action proposed and the impacts expected, and the means and indicators that will be used to verify progress towards them.
- Researchers will have access to necessary skills and experience. Partnership e.g. between agricultural and public health or between public sector and NGO/CBO institutions may be an effective way to ensure this.

Work on several of the priority topics will be coordinated among the countries participating in the regional network. Among other aspects, this will include agreement on methods and indicators, as well as coordinated analysis and review of findings.

In general, research supported by the Project will use appropriate qualitative or quantitative methods, likely in combination. These may include:

- Longitudinal studies drawing on social, agricultural, or epidemiological information and if possible triangulating information obtained by different methods (for instance, studying the relationship between changes in agricultural practices and social organisation on one side and changes in mortality in a community on the other).
- Cross-sectional studies using quantitative or qualitative methodologies including nutrition surveys, HIV prevalence surveys, behavioural surveys, social mapping, focus group interviews, and other participatory methods of obtaining information on the current status of issues related to AIDS and agriculture.
- Retrospective or historical studies to establish events and trends in a community, including verbal autopsies, constructions of memory books, and other participatory methods to help communities reconstruct their past. These methods can also provide greater spatial and temporal resolution on patterns of illness than existing monitoring e.g. at HIV sentinel sites.
- Field trials that develop and assess specific interventions, usually through comparison among communities. Interventions may involve technology (e.g. disease-tolerant cassava varieties or low labour-demanding agroforestry practices), enhancement of local management capacity (e.g. innovative extension/adult education approaches) and/or support to local institutions (e.g. improving access to information and skills).

- Trials of technology in controlled environments (“on-station” trials) focusing on the development of agricultural technology with potential benefit for AIDS affected communities.
- Evaluative research. This is research that uses a variety of methods to ascertain the benefits of a given policy or programme.
- Socio-economic and Gender analysis (SEAGA), environmental impact analysis, and similar specialised methods to examine specific aspects of a programme or policy.

Skills and capacity enhancement

The research to be supported by the project requires a variety of different types of expertise. These skill sets can be achieved through the collaboration of professional experts from different fields. Each research will have its own distinct skill requirements. The main sources of skills will be drawn from the following academic and professional fields:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| • Agricultural sciences | • Economics |
| • Epidemiology and Public Health | • Nutrition |
| • Sociology | • Counselling and Psychology |
| • Rural livelihoods and Community Development | • Statistics |
| • Anthropology | • Gender and Development |

Research will include an element of capacity building and skills transfer from experienced researchers to less experienced researchers, from national and international research organisations to community-based organisations, and from strong and well organised communities to communities that have difficulties in coping with the impact of AIDS.

The network will explore the potential for medium term capacity building based on needs assessment among partners.

Ethical Considerations

Nationally and internationally accepted standards of ethical conduct in research will be applied to the research supported under the project. These include reviews of research protocols and publications to prevent research fraud and plagiarism and to ensure the respect for the three main principles of ethics in research: autonomy, beneficence, and justice. In practice this means that all research protocols will be reviewed to ensure that:

- All study participants are fully informed about the nature and implication of the research, and voluntarily consent to participate and to disclose information in the form specified in the research protocol. Confidentiality will be respected.
- The research must have the primary goal to improve the well-being of study participants and their communities, and should not cause harm to the participants. Stigmatisation of individuals, families, or communities is the most common form of harm caused by research in AIDS, but even the energy and time required to

participate in research may be a form of harm as it may prevent the pursuit of other means of gaining a livelihood. All research protocols must include a strategy of feedback of information to the study participants and their communities as one means to ensure that benefits of the research can be realised by research participants.

- According to the principle of justice, the benefits of the research must be made available to the persons or communities being researched. This cannot always be fully realised, but in general, it is expected that the researchers will assure that priority needs in essential health, social, and agricultural support services uncovered by their research will be met by appropriate institutions and organisations.

Information and Communication

Information exchange and communication will be important components of this Network. The Network will develop a strategy aimed at improving the flow of information among the different institutions that work within it (“horizontal” flows) and with other stakeholders (“vertical” flows). The strategy will identify the critical information needs of the institutions involved and the opportunities for communication among them. It will take account of their differing access to and capabilities with respect to information technology.

Information needs and capacities

The key stakeholders and partners of the network and their information needs will be identified and assessed. The communication channels available to partners (web, email, phone, fax, post, etc.) will be identified. Relevant information on e.g. accomplished researches, case studies, surveys, best practices, proposals etc. will be gathered and presented in a reader friendly manner.

Communication linkages with Uganda AIDS Commission in particular will be strengthened. As a means to improve capacity to communicate, focal points and individuals as effective linkages amongst partners will be identified. The functions and roles of these focal points will be defined and where necessary and possible facilitated.

Mechanisms and channels

Among the means that will be used to enhance horizontal flows, are:

- Periodic forums where partners can present their work, overall progress can be reviewed and new efforts planned. Some of these forums will involve regional partners;
- Smaller meetings and study visits among institutions working on related areas;
- Exchange visits among partners;
- Newsletters and reports diffused by mail, e-mail and the internet and at local resource centers e.g. community libraries and
- Directories/catalogues describing who is doing what and where.

Vertical flows of information, between Network institutions and stakeholders, at different levels, who are not directly involved in the action-research, will draw on several means including:

- Field Agriculture shows;
- Drama, music and other evocative means to convey information and promote reflection, live and on radio and television;
- Documents and brochures printed in selected local languages;

- Local and national workshops for dissemination and feedback;
- Visits by key decision makers to Network activities;
- Strategic campaigns and
- Material for college, secondary and primary school curricula.

The effectiveness and impact of information and communication efforts will be monitored and evaluated for purposes of improving the system.

Governance

Management Structure

Steering Committee

The overall responsibility for oversight of the Network will be vested in a Steering Committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries. Given the multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder dimensions of the HIV/AIDS issue, the Committee will have broad-based representation from within and outside the agricultural sector. The proposed membership of the committee will include:

1. Permanent Secretary/MAAIF
2. The Director General NARO
3. The Executive Director - NAADS
4. Director General Uganda Aids Commission
5. Representative of Development Partners- Donor Sub-Group on Agriculture
6. Representative of Civil Society Organizations working on care & support to orphans & People Living with HIV/AIDS.
7. Representative of Vulnerable Groups (3) - (Pastoral groups, fisher folk, plantation workers)
8. Makerere University (2)
9. National Farmers Forum
10. Representative of International Agricultural Research Institutions
11. Project Coordinator (Secretary to the Committee).

Stakeholders suggested two additions to the list: the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and agriculturally oriented NGOs, which are increasingly taking on HIV/AIDS issues in their work. While representation of key stakeholders is vital, a Steering Committee of more than 15 will not be functional. At an early date the Task Force charged with overseeing the establishment of the Network (see below) will consider means to ensure both broad representation and efficiency.

Responsibilities of the Committee

The committee will give direction, provide support and oversee the implementation of the Network activities through resource mobilization, resource allocation, setting the agenda for action-research, reviewing and approving proposals and reviewing and evaluating research.

Technical Committee

Conscious of the fact that the Steering Committee is constituted mainly of chief executives with little time to spare and given its roles of reviewing and approving proposals, reports,

workplans and budgets, it will need information that is already processed and presented in a form suitable for decision making. Hence a technical committee will be set up to review submissions and make recommendation to the Steering Committee. The technical committee will be chaired by the Coordinator and will include six other members drawn from the institutions represented in the Steering Committee and others, assuring a range of expertise and perspective.

In reviewing proposals, the Technical Committee should involve the Regional Network to ensure that methods are shared and cross-fertilized. This will be done through the information and communication channels established under the Network.

Coordination Arrangements

Key considerations

In determining the location of the Network Secretariat, the Think Tank took into account five key criteria. The institution:

- Should be within the agricultural sector;
- Should have limited bureaucratic impediments but allow for easy access to key decision centres;
- Should be guided by principles that are consistent with those of the proposed initiative;
- Should not only have a mandate but a strong commitment to tackle the HIV/AIDS problem and
- Should have linkages with the grassroots and partners organization engaged in poverty eradication especially amongst the poor and most vulnerable.

Based on these considerations, the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) emerged as the organization that qualifies on most of these points.

The Network will have a small Coordination Unit within the NAADS Secretariat with a full time Coordinator reporting to the Executive Director of NAADS for administrative purposes and to the Steering Committee on technical issues. The Coordinator will have relevant knowledge and experience on issues of HIV/AIDS, food security, gender, rural livelihoods and research. The Coordinator will ensure that the following functions assigned to coordination unit are efficiently and effectively executed.

- Coordinating, developing and linking partners;
- Mobilizing and managing project resources;
- Refinement of proposals;
- Identifying and facilitating skills enhancement among partner and participating institutions and groups;
- Facilitating information sharing;
- Supporting and servicing the Steering Committee;
- Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process and
- Developing linkages with other sectors involved in HIV/AIDS initiatives.

To effectively carry out these functions the Network will employ two additional staff - a research officer to assist the Coordinator with technical aspects and an administrative assistant to handle accounting, office and financial management. The Steering Committee will ensure that among the staff in the Coordination Unit there is at least one with experience in information and communication.

Monitoring and evaluation

By its very principles and methodology, action research requires strong and on-going monitoring and evaluation to ensure reflection and refinement of methods, data and interpretations of earlier cycles of action and inquiry. To achieve this, a number of strategies will be adopted. First, monitoring and evaluation will be inbuilt into every proposal submitted by partner organizations. Secondly, partners with experienced evaluation researchers will be requested to share their skills with other members of the network and will be reimbursed for their time. Should it not prove possible to obtain the required skills and time commitment from within the network, the Steering Committee will consider recruiting full time evaluation researchers..

Financial Management

The Project Coordinator and the Executive Director of NAADS will manage the project finances and other resources based on workplans and budgets approved by the Steering Committee. The Unit will prepare final accounts at the end of each operational year for auditing by a competent and reputable firm appointed by the steering committee. Final accountability will rest with the Executive Director.

National and Regional networking

The success of the proposed initiative will depend largely on the establishment and maintenance of effective partnerships between institutions/organizations. To this end a national network will be formed to among other things enhance skills among the partners, share experiences and best practices and encourage mutual learning.

As indicated earlier, the Uganda Network will be part of a multi-country network in East and Southern Africa. In addition to on-going communication and information sharing, members of this wider network will meet regularly to reflect on the action and research processes and outcomes and plan the next cycle joint work.

Relationship with ISNAR

The Network will establish and maintain close linkage with ISNAR through a formal Memorandum of Understanding. The MOU will spell out the roles of both parties, which, on ISNAR's part, will include advising on the direction and key aspects of the action and research processes as well as ensuring access to international source of skills and information. The Network for its part will share proposals and research outcomes and keep ISNAR informed of the implementation progress. It will also render accountability for all the funds it receives from ISNAR and other donors.

Interim Arrangements

In order to ensure that the momentum gained through the Think Tank and the Stakeholders' workshop is sustained until project effectiveness, it is vital that a team of core individuals from institutions with interest in this initiative continue to develop and oversee the project.

The team, to be known as the Taskforce, will operate until the Steering Committee and Project Coordinator are in place and its terms of reference would include finalizing the project document including developing criteria for assessing the proposals. The Taskforce will also develop the terms of reference for the Steering Committee as well as the draft job description and terms and mode of employment for the Coordination Unit staff. The following are the persons proposed to constitute the Taskforce.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Dr. John R.W. Aluma | NARO |
| 2. Dr. Francis Byekwaso | NAADS |
| 3. Ms Rhoda Tumusiime | MAAIF |
| 4. Dr Zainab Akol | MOH |
| 5. Dr Lucy Korukiiko Ndyomugenyi | UAC |
| 6. Ms Catherine Barasa | ASPS/MAAIF |
| 7. Mr. Richard Wamimbi Wotti | UNASO |

NARO and NAADS will jointly lead the Task Force. For it to be effective, the Taskforce will require some funding to facilitate its operations. Soon after the Stakeholders' Workshop, the Taskforce will therefore meet to prepare a budget for submission ISNAR.

Proposed name

The Network will be called "HIV/AIDS and the Agriculture Sector Network" or HASNET.

Next Steps

Proposed action plan for setting the Network on its feet in Uganda.

ACTIVITIES	TIMING	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Preparation of Background Paper	January – February 2002	Consultants
2. First Draft of Paper	February	Consultants
3. Think Tank	6-8 March 2002	DG NARO & ISNAR
4. Stakeholders Workshop	11 March 2002	DG NARO & ISNAR
5. Establishment of Taskforce	15 March 2002	DG NARO
6. Fundraising from national sources	15 March 2002 >>>>>	Taskforce/Steering Committee/Coordinator/Partners
7. Finalize Terms of Reference for Steering Committee and Coordination Unit Staff	15 April 2002	Taskforce
8. Finalize Project Document	30 April 2002	Taskforce
9. Establish Steering Committee	30 April 2002	Minister – MAAIF
10. Put out Call for Proposals	15 May 2002	Steering Committee/ Taskforce
11. Recruit Project Coordinator	15 May 2002	Steering Committee/ Taskforce