

NaSARRI to strengthen the seed delivery system for dryland Cereals and Legumes in drought-prone areas of Uganda

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Access to quality seeds has been a major challenge hindering agricultural production especially among Uganda's small holder farmers. This coupled with the influx of fake seed on the market and poor post harvest handling practices have left farmers helpless.

Some farmers experience 100 percent loss yield after planting poor quality seeds where some fail to germinate.

To address this challenge the National Semi-Arid Resources Research Institute (NaSARRI), one of the public agricultural research Institutes under the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) under the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) in Uganda, has secured funding from the European Union to implement a project codenamed the "Cluster Granary Seed Project"

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The project that is to be piloted in Kumi, Amuria and Kitgum districts will make it easier for farmers to access quality seeds within their localities basing on the Cluster Granary Seed Delivery (CGSD) Model.

This area was considered for the project due the history of insurgency that ravaged the Northern and Eastern regions, where the seed was looted, abandoned in the fields, or burnt granaries and the seed lot depleted

Climate change effects such as long dry spells and floods in some places have retarded agricultural activities amongst people here.

The project which initially targets 600 farmers directly and eventually 9000 farmers indirectly is funded by the European Union at a tune of about U.S\$ 300,000, for three years.

Implementation of the project has involved an inception meeting, assessing the current situation in this area with a baseline survey, germplasm collection, assembly, evaluation and conservation and later training of the mobilized farmers into quality seed production and storage.

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The project will as well build 33 granaries to improve storage and post harvest handling to ensure availability, easy access and safety of the seed throughout.

Access to seed will be ensured through the cluster seed granary delivery model where a diverse base of local and improved plant genetic resources for the target crops adapted to drought prone areas will be easily accessible by the farming and research communities.

Initial seed will be availed to farmers by the project, and subsequently, farmers through seed loan approach will borrow and save seed in their community seed banks.

According to Mr. Joseph Wandulu the project coordinator, availability of quality seed for small holder farmers will enhance food security and adaptation to climate change since some of the varieties are tolerant to drought, resistant to diseases and pests and high yielding suitable for the drought prone areas of Uganda.

The project target crops include; sorghum, finger millet, pearl millet, cowpea, pigeon pea and groundnuts to be circulated within the project areas.

The three year project funded by the European Union will be implemented in partnership with World Vision Uganda (WVU), Operation Wealth Creation (OWC), the National Plant Genetic Resources Center (PGRC), the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Local governments, and the farming communities in the project area