
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



Regional office / cluster: East-Africa, UGANDA

Title evaluation report: Mid-term impact assessment report for Grain and Horticulture Food Systems

Date of the Management Response: 19/05/2020

Staff involved in the Management Response: David Leysens

Cleared by: Chris Claes

The appreciation for our new regional M&E manager his work is shared. Francis arrived in a very challenging period for our organization and was confronted with a problematic track record with regards to the functioning of our M&E work in Uganda. Despite this challenging situation he managed to acknowledge very fast with the DGD programs and engaged with program staff (to the extent of the possible due to corona lockdown) in order to get a first indication on our mid-term performances. I am convinced, despite the challenges raised on the quality of this MTR report, by engaging with a senior M&E manager like Francis Odada, we will tackle these M&E issues structurally in the coming years. I consider this structural intervention to deal with M&E problems, that have existed for many years in Uganda, more important than the quality of the MTR document on the short term.

Furthermore, I appreciate the fresh view that Francis brings in to critically assess the way how Rikolto EA is managing M&E activities, and think some important reflections are to be made and translated in other ways of dealing with our M&E activities. The management response to the Uganda MTR review might therefore give us more action points and feedback with regards to the functioning of the M&E system within our organization than on specific, program related action points.

1. Historically M&E seems to have been a task that is outsourced from program managers to junior M&E staff. This clearly creates problems with regards to data collection, analysis and evaluation. Agribusiness advisors need to be the first and most important owners of our M&E system. They need to use M&E data to evaluate the impact of their work, M&E data needs to guide them in their decisions. Francis will take a role as a coach to program staff with regards to the management of M&E data, not as a data collector. This has been the wrong way of M&E management in the past and will change with the appointment of Francis Odada.

2. Our M&E reporting structure, toolkits and guidelines are too complex. Simple data, used for strategic guidance, are difficult to obtain. Previously, the East-Africa M&E team often seemed to lose overview due to the numerous and very complex M&E procedures. This makes it difficult to focus on measuring and evaluating the key information that matters. As an anecdote: when I arrived in August 2019, I asked M&E officer in Uganda a simple question: how many farmers did we reach via our interventions last year. I saw the look in the eyes of the M&E officer becoming blurred... After 2 weeks I received a 3-page e-mail as response. It is my hope that the reflection work on M&E's new system will lead to a simpler, more strategic and lean system that can guide management more in the decision-taking procedures.
3. More focus on setting result indicators during baseline, and once this is done stick to them. Uganda M&E framework has been changing a lot in my opinion. This makes M&E colleagues focus too much on the process and not enough on the content.

Evaluation recommendation / point of attention 1	Organise an internal reflection session to reflect on sustainability and exit scenario issues			
Management response	Accepted			
Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible	Tracking	
			<i>Status</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1.1 organise a session on exit scenario at next regional reflection meeting	By December 2020	Francis Odada		