



**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations**



UGANDA

Strengthening linkages between small actors and buyers in the roots and tubers sector in Africa

Irish potato is one of the most important crops in Uganda, which is the third largest producer of potatoes in East Africa after Rwanda and Kenya. Small scale farmers and food enterprises though strong contenders for regional and domestic market opportunities have difficulties entering the value chain. To unleash their potential, the Roots and Tubers project sought to: (i) increase and intensify sustainable market-led production and (ii) strengthen farmers' cooperatives; (iii) improve access to climate change risk management tools and access to finance; and (iv) develop business models throughout the value chain in which farmers and enterprises play a key role.

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED

Over the period of 2015 to 2017, approximately 3 670 farmers have gained access to improved potato varieties from four seed cooperatives. As such 760 tonnes harvested of high-quality potatoes is testament to the project's contribution to the potato sector, a productivity increase of up to 175 percent. Tapping into the network of 65 Farmer Field Schools (FFS) enabled 1 650 farmers access to: i) market and weather information through the phone app, Infotrade, and ii) rapid profit-and-loss statements with the digitization of 91 farm records. Farmer groups have realized a 65 percent profit increase per package of crisps to USD 0.85 from USD 0.50 from adopting improved varieties.

Farmer groups' improved productivity and profit knowledge have unleashed the regular supply of potatoes to commodity traders. For example, farmer groups in the Kigezi district that supply to traders of the Katiba Producers' Cooperative were able to increase their potato-crisp processing units to 50 bags from 10 bags per week. Ugandan producers' cooperatives now have memoranda of understanding with six urban traders' associations and a weekly supply contract with the Kampala-based restaurant chain, Café Java.

Rural-to-urban market linkages between farmers and traders have been further strengthened, by the operationalization of

15 collection centres that coordinate supply streams between farms and cooperatives, and improved farmer profile to financial institutions. The project also sought the establishment of two traders' associations, and the agreement between two small food enterprise associations to that of four district level, urban trader associations. Packaging and quality control systems adapted by 12 processors have enabled expansion of their sales channels to include both rural and urban food retail markets. Rapid access to small loans that enable the access of short-term capital flows as well as loans without the need for asset collateral are now made readily available to farmers supported by the project. As such 145 new individual accounts and 7 group accounts were opened by members of 12 cooperatives and 4 seed potato associations. The Kirundo Cooperative of Kisoro district in opening both individual and group accounts has been able to reinvest and purchase solar panels, a storage facility and a flock of sheep, accessing its manure as fertilizer.

The National Potato Platform is an important result of the partnership between FAO, German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ), the International Fertilizer

Enid Sayuni, member of the Kirundo Irish Potato Growers, one of the most successful cooperative engaged with the project in Uganda



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Development Centre and the Uganda Agribusiness Alliance. The platform represents a united voice of potato value chain stakeholders to engage with public institutions on policies pertinent to growth in the sector.

HOW IT WAS ACHIEVED

Leveraging the FFS network across the potato production zones and the convening power of sub-county government agricultural officials and local partners, an integrated package of on-farm and off-farm solutions contributed to small farm commercialization. The National Research Agency (Kazardi) and the International Potato Centre (IPC) used the FFS model to disseminate disease-free seed varieties and seed breeding training to seed multiplier cooperatives. Likewise, service provider Excel Hort Consult also used FFSs to introduce group savings schemes for short-term credit. The strategic partnership with information service provider Fit Insights provided a platform for the project to tap into its database of potato prices and weather information, and in turn offered a market of small farmers for Fit Insights to expand its service clientele. Business plans and related-skills development to farmers, traders and small food enterprises were strengthened by the Uganda Agribusiness Alliance and Reign Business Development Limited. Agricultural value chain finance trainings in introducing financial products suited for the potato subsector sensitized the commercial finance sector to the needs of small farmers and food enterprises and led to the granting of additional grace period of six months for agricultural loans.

Babra Kyasiimire, from farmers to prominent potato processor with the support of the project



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AFRICAN ROOTS AND TUBERS PROJECT

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