



# SUSTAINING MOMENTUM FOR ORGANIC FARMING IN UGANDA

## Introduction

Agriculture has been and continues to be the most important sector in Uganda's economy in terms of food and nutritional security, employment, income, raw materials for industry and exports to regional and international markets. Therefore agriculture in Uganda is given the highest degree of attention in National development planning. As far as organic farming is concerned, it is believed that Uganda is an organic country. The size of certified farms ranges between 0.5 and 4 ha. The number of certified farms represents about 1% of the total number of agriculture-based rural households in the country.

Worldwide, in terms of number of organic farms, Uganda occupies fourth position, after Italy, Indonesia and Mexico. It is estimated that about 231,157 ha of land in Uganda are managed organically, which is about 1.32% of its total agricultural area. There are many factors that favour organic farming in Uganda compared to other East African countries. These includes: (i) adequate land and water for agricultural production, (ii) high potential for increasing production and productivity, and (iii) high export potential for organic products to regional and international markets. This policy brief present a production component of organic farming in Uganda

## Objective and Methodology

Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement (TOAM) in collaboration with the Kenya Organic Agriculture Network (KOAN) and National Organic Agriculture Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU) wish to create an influential joined-up lobbying and advocacy mechanism to tackle policy barriers to trade in organic products, as well as creating a One Stop Shop for the Organic Sector in East Africa.

In conducting this study mixed methods approach comprising of a desk study, key informant interviews as well as borrowing from farmer case studies that were carried out under the baseline study of farmers which has been reported on separately. Primary data for this report were collected in Western Uganda (Bushenyi) and Eastern Uganda (Mbale). Secondary data were provided by NOGAMU



## Findings

- Historically, Ugandans have had a great regard for nature.
- Living in a symbiotic relationship with nature is stressed and cultural totems amongst the Ugandan peoples have meant that Ugandans grow up relating to their role within the natural order of things.
- This has contributed to their predisposition toward the practices of organic agriculture and helped facilitate the successful establishment of NOGAMU, which began in 2001, with 15,000 farmers and by 2012/13 the number grew to 189,610.
- Many of the corporate NOGAMU members have membership in the thousands, meaning that NOGAMU is linked to more than 25,000 stakeholders in the organic sector.
- However, like Kenya and Tanzania organic agriculture has grown outside

	<p>public support – and in some cases despite government antagonism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The major organic products include dried &amp; fresh fruits, cotton, sesame, coffee, vanilla, cocoa, garments, shea butter, fish, dried hibiscus, bird eyes, black pepper, cardamom, dried herbs, coffee, sorghum, cassava, soybeans, bananas and frozen fruit pulps.</li> <li>• These crops are either grown with backing from the farmers group or individually</li> <li>• The majority of farmers are not certified as organic farmers. Only 10% of the respondents had been certified. Out of these, the majority (60%) had been certified as recent as 4 years prior to baseline study (Lwasa and Kiiza, 2015).</li> <li>• Number of certified organic products has increased from 6 in 2000/2001 to 17 in 2013/14 with respective total export value from 4.6 to 44.2 million US\$.</li> <li>• Production is still very low to meet increasing export and local demand for organic products</li> </ul>
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	<p><b>Policy implications</b></p> <p>Results from various studies show that organic agriculture has great potential to improve the livelihood of smallholder farmers in Uganda. Organic production allows access to new markets for farmers to obtain premium prices for their produce (export and domestic) but also to use extra incomes for extra foodstuffs, education or healthcare. Furthermore, evidence shows that organic agriculture can build up natural resources, strengthen communities, and improve human capacity. Thus, OA has great potential in improving food security by addressing many different causal factors simultaneously (Hine &amp; Pretty, 2007). The following policy recommendations are put forward: The Government and partners should facilitate organic farming through providing wide range of training along the supply chain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The policy should ensure access to certification services at proximity and affordable to and by organic producers;</li> <li>• Policy should recognize that properly implemented OA can increase productivity and protect the environment by fostering soil health, human health and reduce environmental degradation;</li> <li>• Access to technical know-how extension services to promote OA not only because it is one of sustainable agricultural practices but also because OA produce has special niche market at local and international market.</li> </ul>
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Hine, R. & Pretty, J. (2007): Promoting Production and Trading Opportunities for Organic Agricultural Products in East Africa – Capacity Building Study 3: Organic Agriculture and Food Security in East Africa. Centre for Environment and Society, University of Essex

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