1. Introduction

Over the last 10 years, the global production and trade in organic agriculture has been expanding rapidly. Although many factors may be advanced to explain the rapid expansion of the organic agriculture production and export sub-sector, much of it is attributable to the unfolding market opportunities globally. Especially in the developed countries of Europe and North America, shifts in consumer preferences sometimes based on the understanding that organic agriculture products are safe and healthy has made organic agriculture products a highly priced commodity. A combination of market stimuli and targeted institutional and policy reforms is consequently making organic agriculture one of the fastest growing agricultural sub-sectors in many developing countries.

Beyond income and export gains, the organic agriculture sub-sector provides a range of benefits for countries that invest in its growth and expansion. There is growing evidence to suggest that organic agriculture creates significant environmental benefits, is well suited for smallholder farming—a major characteristic of the agriculture sector in many developing countries, and provides opportunities for ensuring food security and reducing poverty among smallholder farming communities. However, optimizing such benefits depends entirely on the nature, organization and planning of the sub-sector within a given country and indeed the extent to which the sub-sector is structured to take full advantage of these multiple benefits.

This background study therefore, is intended to examine the current status of the organic agriculture sub-sector in Uganda. The study is intended to provide a better understanding of the current state of knowledge on the organic agriculture sub-sector, the actors and stakeholders, the status of production and marketing and the key constraints facing the sub-sector. The study will provide a basis and define the scope for a full Integrated Assessment (IA) of the organic agriculture sub-sector in Uganda. The integrated assessment to be undertaken following background study is intended to bridge any identified information gaps and provide the needed information and proposals for an integrated reform of the organic agriculture sub-sector. The reformed architecture of the organic agriculture sub-sector is in turn intended to ensure that Uganda optimizes the economic, social and environmental advantages and benefits that organic agriculture production and trade can offer.

This report is presented in six sections. Section 2 contains a comprehensive review of past studies and assessments of the organic agriculture sub-sector in Uganda and an analysis of the different methodologies that have been applied in conducting these studies and assessments. Without going into detail, this section also highlights some of the key national institutions, international organizations and development partners (otherwise sometimes referred to as donors) that have been involved in these studies and assessments. A more detailed analysis of some of these actors is undertaken in section 4 that contains a discussion on stakeholders and actors. Section 3 examines
the status of organic agriculture production, internal and external marketing, certification and application of standards. In section 5, the report outlines the major constraints to organic agriculture production and marketing as synthesized from the current state of knowledge. This section also proposes specific actions and interventions that are needed to accelerate the growth of and optimize benefits from the sub-sector. Section 6 of the report presents the general conclusions.

2. Review of Previous Studies and Assessments

To date, there is generally very scanty literature on the production and trade in organic agriculture production and trade in Uganda. With the exception of official Government of Uganda policy documents that sometimes contain statements on organic agriculture production and trade, the literature on the subject is scanty, fragmented, largely unpublished and often restricted to the income and export opportunities presented by organic agriculture. There have also never been any comprehensive assessment studies undertaken either for the whole sub-sector or even for selected products. A couple of export market specific studies have been carried out but are also product specific and remain generally unpublished.


In November 2003, the National Organic Agriculture Movement of Uganda commissioned the survey which was undertaken over a six months period. The results of the survey were presented to NOGAMU in June 2004.\(^1\) The survey was mainly based on meetings with selected actors active in the organic agriculture sub-sector in Uganda. These included companies and organizations engaged in production and marketing, and development organizations supporting the sub-sector. The study also relied on interviews with selected farmers and key informants selected in collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that were visited in the different regions.

Although the NOGAMU Survey Report is presented largely in a very summary form, it identifies a number of challenges facing the organic agriculture sub-sector. According to the report, these challenges include: the absence of a specific national policy on organic agriculture; high costs of certification, poor infrastructure, inadequate information on markets as well as inadequate knowledge on production and planning. Among other things, the Report recommends a concerted effort to lobby government to develop and institute policies, regulations and guidelines to

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support and promote organic agriculture production. The Survey Report also recommends a separate elaborate study to derive an accurate estimate of acreage under natural production and the quantities of crops being produced naturally. It describes the different crops being produced organically (certified and non-certified) and identifies the different regions where they are grown in Uganda. It estimates the total acreage of Ugandan land under organic agriculture production at around 122,000ha. The report further observes that approximately 2.179 million hectares representing 85% of the total land under in Uganda is under natural agricultural production where farmers do not use non-organic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers.

However, the study methodology is not well articulated to provide authoritative validation of the survey findings and recommendations. For example, the study methodology does not indicate how many people were interviewed, and lacks critical information such as gender and age disaggregation. In addition, the methodology does not indicate which regions were visited and the criteria for selecting those regions. Nevertheless, the survey is one of the few pieces of existing literature that provides field-based empirical information on the current and potential products for organic agriculture production and export.


This study undertaken by the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment was published in 2005. The report represents one of the most comprehensive reviews of policies for organic agriculture in Uganda. Among other things, the paper examines major policy trends in Uganda’s agricultural policy and their relevance to organic agriculture, the status and trends in exports of organic products, and the implications of the policy focus on GMOs. The study also proposes strategic policy actions to scale up the performance of the organic agriculture sub-sector in Uganda.

The ACODE study was undertaken to respond to two main objectives. First, it was intended to provide compelling evidence to policy makers that organic agriculture provides the most immediate opportunities for increasing agricultural productivity and enhancing food security of smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa. Secondly,

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2 During the year 2004-2005, there were visible efforts by a combination of Government agencies and civil society organizations to accelerate the development of a national policy on organic agriculture. These efforts which have been supported financially by ACODE and NOGAMU are the clearest indication to date that there is general consensus among the various stakeholders to make progress in this area.

3 This implies that converting current land to certified organic production land would not present a major problem.

The report of the study was also intended to act as an advocacy instrument for ensuring that organic agriculture is put back at the centre of the national and international agriculture public policy debate. In this regard, the paper provides a snapshot of the agriculture sector in Uganda highlighting the importance of the sector to national development and identifying the key issues that require policy attention. It makes linkages between Organic farming, food security, household income and poverty reduction. It generally identifies the major factors influencing the growth of organic agriculture sub-sector in Uganda.

The ACODE Study further examines the status and trends in exports of organic products both in Uganda and globally. It is noted that there is compelling evidence to suggest that the organic agriculture sub-sector in Uganda is growing rapidly as evidenced by the increasing number of certified organic farmers, increase in export of organic agricultural products and the amount of organically certified land acreage. The study makes proposals as to the kinds of strategies needed to promote organic agriculture including: direct support to organic farmers; need for adequate investments in organic agriculture research and development and the need to put more emphasis on the provision of agricultural advisory services to farmers engaged in organic agricultural production. The study further recommends the need to implement actions that stimulate the growth of local certification companies and supporting their accreditation to international organizations; intensifying training in organic agriculture science and practices as well as declaration of GMO production free zones.

The funding for the study was provided by ACODE and NOGAMU under project funding from the Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation (Hivos). In general, the study relied mainly on literature review and unstructured interviews with key actors in the organic agriculture sub-sector. The major weakness of the study is that most of the empirical information and data presented in the report is secondary data based mainly on internet-based literature.

2.3. Background Studies for the Organic Agriculture Policy Development Process

In early 2004, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF0 constituted a Technical Committee to manage the process of formulating a national policy on organic agriculture. Since its establishment, the Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture has commissioned a series of studies and jointly with ACODE and NOGAMU organized a series of workshops and consultative meetings. The background papers covered key areas critical to the development of organic agriculture including the following: organic crop, livestock and fisheries management; research, education and training; review of the current legal framework; soil and soil
fertility management for organic agriculture production; as well as local and international marketing of organic agricultural products.\textsuperscript{5}

Based on the background papers, the Technical Committee prepared a comprehensive concept paper\textsuperscript{6} representing a synthesis of all these background papers. The Organic Agriculture Concept Paper is a comprehensive document covering broad areas relevant to organic agriculture policy in Uganda. Among other things, the organic agriculture concept paper presents comparative analysis of what is happening in the organic agriculture sub-sector in selected African countries, recent developments in the sub-sector in Uganda, the nature of the problems facing the sub-sector and the nature of interventions required to address the problem. The concept paper also attempts to expand on the existing analysis by going beyond issues of income gains to cover other critical benefits such as food and livelihood security especially for smallholder farmers, environmental safety and generally sustainable development.

It is important to note that both the background papers and hence the Organic Agriculture Policy Concept Paper were mainly based on the review of existing literature. Given the limited Uganda specific literature available, these papers generally are less comprehensive in both the general background information and analysis. Indeed, none of these papers have either been peer reviewed or published either in Uganda or elsewhere. To that extent, while they provide a starting point for further analytical and more empirical work in this area, they are less authoritative as critical points of reference that may be needed for the future development of the organic agriculture policy in Uganda.

Two final observations can be made as far as the methodologies adopted for the various studies and assessments described above are concerned.

First, a number of individuals who participated in the studies are active in the production and marketing of organic agricultural products. Many of them have accumulated hands-on experience on the different issues affecting organic agriculture production and trade in the country. Consequently, other than the traditional methodologies described above, these personal experiences and knowledge contributed significantly in enriching the contents of these studies.

Secondly, the organic agriculture sub-sector is a complex one. It spans different areas of public policy including trade, food security, rural livelihoods, standards setting and environmental sustainability and safety. This complexity is epitomized in the ongoing

\textsuperscript{5} Copies of these unpublished papers are available in the ACODE Library of Law and Public Policy, Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) [www.acode-u.org; library@acode-u.org]

controversy on the debate about the relationship between organic agricultural production and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). The methodologies applied in the studies described above have major limitations in the sense that they were lacking especially in broader multi-stakeholder participation, limited field-based empirical data and a more detailed rigorous analysis of the nexus between organic agriculture, trade, environment, poverty eradication and other social considerations such gender, etc.

3. Status of Organic Agriculture Production in Uganda

3.1. Background

Although the debate on the utility and strategic multiple advantages of organic agriculture are increasingly being appreciated and are being fairly articulated in government policy and planning, the exact definition of what constitutes organic agriculture is still a subject of much debate. In the existing literature, there is a strong tendency to confuse agricultural production based on the principles that underpin organic agriculture with the principle of certification. Yet, this approach may lead to substantial policy distortion by failing to recognize certain elements of organic agriculture that is not certified in accordance with globally “accepted” organic agriculture production standards and principles. For purposes of proper policy and planning, it is essential to draw the distinction between agricultural production that espouses principles of organic agriculture production and organic agriculture production that is generally certified as such.

The generally accepted definition by the International Forum for Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM) suggests that organic agriculture is a holistic production management system that promotes environmentally, socially and economically sound production of food and fibres. In this context, Organic agriculture production systems emphasize the use of good agronomic and management practices in preference to the use of off-farm inputs. The system is founded on the application and use of natural properties of plants, animals and the landscape and is opposed to use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. At present, an agricultural production system is considered to be organic if it espouses and adheres to globally accepted principles and practices (see box 1) which are implemented in specific social, economic, geo-climatic and cultural contexts.

7 IFOAM definition
When considered in the context of the principles outlined in box 1 above, a big percentage of agriculture production especially by rural smallholder farmers can be considered organic. Indeed, Uganda in this regard enjoys a huge and strategic comparative advantage on the African continent in the production of organic agricultural products. This is largely because of a number of factors. First, Uganda is considered to have very conducive weather conditions that can support organic agriculture allowing increasing agricultural production without having to resort to non-organic agricultural inputs. Secondly, Uganda currently has one of the lowest agro-chemical usage in Africa estimated at less than 2%. This figure is substantially less than the African average of 9kg/ha or the East African average estimated at less than 5%.

However, it is important to recognize that certification has increasingly gained increasing global acceptance as the critical decision point for organic agricultural products to enter into the global organic agricultural production and marketing system. Beyond the application of the organic agriculture principles enumerated above, certification is becoming an important policy and marketing instrument for promoting organic agriculture production and trade. The global organic agricultural production and marketing system requires that certain elements of the system such as the land, the farmers or the products be certified as organic before they are marketed as such. Consequently, understanding the state of play of organic agriculture from this perspective needs a clear articulation of the hitherto existing levels of organic agriculture certification.

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9 MFPRD, 2001
3.2. Organic Agriculture Marketing and Trade in Uganda

As already alluded to above, marketing and trade of organic agriculture in Uganda and globally is considered in the context of organically certified traded organic agricultural products. Indeed, certification is a major element of marketing and trade in organic agricultural products and hence an important measure of the market value in terms of quantity and monetary value of traded products. Consequently, understanding the status of marketing and trade of organic products requires us to explore a number of parameters including the following: the extent of organically certified products, the key actors and players in marketing and trading chain, the major market destinations, etc. For purposes of this paper, the constraints faced by the sub-sector are discussed together in section 6.

Uganda is currently estimated to have the largest amount of certified organic land in Africa. By 2004, organic agriculture certified land was estimated to stand at 122,000 ha.\(^{10}\) For the period 2002-2004, the number of certified organic agriculture farmers increased to 39,000 representing a percentage increase of 38%.\(^{11}\) Although still small and far below the increasing global demand, Uganda’s export of organic agricultural produce has been growing steadily and the organic agricultural production and trade sub-sector has been expanding rapidly. For example, current statistics show that between 2001-2003, the number of companies exporting organic agricultural products grew from 5 to 15 while the value of organic exports increased from approximately US$4.6 million to 7.7 million representing a percentage growth in the value of export of organic agricultural products of 67%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Project Started</th>
<th>District Products</th>
<th>Export 00/01 Tonnes</th>
<th>Export 01/02 Tonnes</th>
<th>Export 02/03 Tonnes</th>
<th>Expected Exports 2003/04</th>
<th>Number Registered/Certified 2001</th>
<th>Number Registered/Certified 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suntrade / Africa Organic / Amfri - Farms</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Luwero, Mukono, Rakai masaka Mpiji Mulende, Mbarara</td>
<td>Fresh Fruits &amp; Veg 356.6</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dried Fruits</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lango CU / LOFP / Boweevill</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Lira and Apac</td>
<td>Cotton Lint 240</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sesame 140</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outspan Enterprises Ltd</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Soroti / Apac</td>
<td>Cotton Lint 22</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>no longer dealing in Cotton</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>6,330</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sesame 450</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{11}\) NOGAMU, 2003
This trend is also validated by the increasing queries on organic agricultural products from different countries in Europe and the United States of America. These queries largely represent un-met demand and therefore the degree of elasticity that exist in the organic agriculture export market. The diversity of the products on demand clearly present tremendous opportunities for ensuring that the different dimensions of sustainable development are fully integrated in a strategy to respond to this demand.

At the moment, the largest market for organic agriculture products is the European Union and the North America. However, the available data is generally inconclusive at least in three broad aspects. First, the studies do not provide any general or conclusive information on organic agriculture trade data between Uganda and her major market destinations. This information is important in market development because it facilitates in making decisions on matters...
of potential market concentrations given the extent of demand elasticity in those existing markets. Secondly, the studies tend to generally focus on already existing markets and do not put adequate emphasis on identifying potentially new markets and developing strategies for market penetration. Thirdly, the studies also seem to focus mainly on currently traded products and put less emphasis on identifying new and potential products. These three elements of marketing are important in designing marketing strategies and maintaining market competitiveness for organic agriculture trade.

3.3. Policy Framework for Organic Agriculture Production and Trade

It is often fashionable for background studies of this nature to provide a review of the existing policy framework that provides the context for addressing any problems being experienced in that particular sector. However, before proceeding with that review and analysis, it is important to reflect on the relevance of Government policy in a given sector or sub-sector. In other words, why should there be policy for organic agriculture production and trade? It is also important to bear in mind that policies for a particular policy may be found in a specific policy document or may be scattered across a series of Government policy documents including ministerial policy papers, budget instruments, speeches of senior politicians and civil servants, etc. What is important for the policy analyst and the practitioner is whether those statements represents a pattern of coherent and consistent articulation of what Government positions are on the particular subject of inquiry.

In general terms, and without being exhaustive, it is important to recognize that a clearly articulated government policy serves at least – specific objectives. First, a clear articulation of government policy helps to mobilize the different components of government towards an agreed common objective and purpose. A government’s articulation of policy therefore restrains government agencies from engaging in uncoordinated activities that could sometimes undermine the common and shared objectives of government. Secondly, policy statements of Government on a particular issue are intended to communicate the policy and political profile of a given direction within the overall government strategy. By communicating the importance that government attaches to a particular issue such as organic agriculture, it is able to mobilize other actors including private sector, civil society and development partners to channel their resources to support the proposed governmental actions.

Finally, a clearly articulated policy by Government serves as a “political” instruction to the relevant government organs to allocate the necessary financial resources to support the implementation of the stated actions. In practice, the existence of a policy for a given sub-sector is sometimes irrelevant unless adequate financial resources have been provided to support the implementation of the stated policy actions. It is against this background the status of the policy framework for organic agriculture in Uganda should be examined.
The Uganda Government does not have an explicit policy focusing on the development of the organic agriculture sub-sector. However, what would seem to be Government policy on organic agriculture can, but with great difficulty, be deciphered from the general agriculture policy framework, a series of statements by the President and some of the actions of MAAIF. For example, the decision to constitute the Technical Committee on organic agriculture policy may be considered to impute policy commitment on MAAIF to promote organic agriculture production and trade in the country.

The general policy framework for agriculture development in the Uganda is embedded in the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) and further articulated in the Plan for Modernization of Agriculture. In particular, the PMA sets out to ensure the eradication of poverty “through a profitable, competitive, sustainable and dynamic agricultural and agro-industrial sector” with the overall vision of “transforming subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture.” The key guiding principles of agriculture policy which must provide the foundation for the organic agriculture policy therefore are: profitability, productivity, marketability and competitiveness. But perhaps most surprising is the fact that the new policy documents coming out of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries do not contain any specific policy statements or policy actions on organic agriculture. For example, the MAAIF Development Strategy and Investment as well as the National Agriculture Zoning Scheme are conspicuously silent on the role of organic agriculture in the process of sustainable development.

Beyond the national agriculture policy, all the policy documents in the environment and social sector are silent on the importance of organic agriculture in achieving their sectoral and national development objectives. However, isolated initiatives on organic agriculture are currently ongoing largely supported by donors on a project-by-project basis. In addition, the statements published by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development constituting elements of a rural development strategy point to the potential significance of organic agriculture production and trade in the overall national economy. It is therefore apparently clear that efforts need to be scaled up to put organic agriculture firmly on the agenda of the relevant key agencies.

4. Organic Agriculture Stakeholder Analysis in Uganda

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14 In the environment sector, NEMA is taking the lead on the issue of organic agriculture. However, it may be important to note that given the mandate of NEMA, it does not seem to be the most appropriate institution in the environment sector to champion the integration of organic agriculture in the sector.
As already alluded to in the foregoing section, it is apparent that organic agriculture sub-sector spans a broad spectrum of policy issues in the three domains of sustainable development: economic development, social development and environment protection. Indeed, a comprehensive and integrated policy framework for the sub-sector must of necessity create a policy and operational platform that brings together actors across the three policy domains. At the moment, the sub-sector is heavily dominated by the environment-agriculture and trade discourse with apparent emphasis on trade and environment considerations. That platform needs to be enlarged to ensure effective integration of equity and social considerations in the current and future discourse on organic agriculture.

In figure... below, stakeholders in the organic agriculture sub-sector are identified along six broad areas of action or intervention. These include stakeholders that are either engaged in or are responsible for: (i) policy development and monitoring of policy implementation; (ii) organic agriculture production and marketing; (iii) quality assurance and certification; (iv) independent policy research and advocacy; (v) export strategy and market penetration; and (vi) research and development.

4.1. Policy development and monitoring of policy implementation;

At the moment, there are at least four key ministries whose policy development and policy monitoring mandate relate to the development and functioning of the organic agriculture sub-sector. These are: the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry (MTTI), Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment (MWLE) and the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries is currently taking the lead on the development of a national policy on organic agriculture. In this regard, MAAIF has been responsible for initiating the process and convening specialized policy working group meetings and stakeholder workshops. MAAIF has worked closely with other actors especially the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) and the National Organic Agriculture Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU). However, beyond the enthusiasm demonstrated by MAAIF staff commitment to the policy development process, the Ministry has not demonstrated clear commitment to the process by way of allocating funding towards the completion of the policy.

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16 The later two have provided most of the financial resources and other forms of technical support necessary to move the process.
It is also important to point out lack of an adequate statistical base at least within the national statistical framework of UBOS. This is one of the reasons for lack of government’s commitment. The database at UBOS never singles out organic exports. They are submerged in agricultural exports.

**Government of Uganda Agencies Responsible for Organic Agriculture Development**

**Lead Ministry**

**Ministry of Agriculture**
- Crop Production Dept.;
- Animal Production Dept.;
- Fisheries Resources Dept.

**Autonomous Agencies**

**National Agricultural Advisory Services**

**National Agricultural Research Organization**

**Indicative Action Areas**

- Agricultural Policy
- Advisory Services;
- Planning/budgeting;
- Policy monitoring
- Marketing development
- Research and

**Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment**

**District Forestry Services;**
- Wetlands Inspect Division

**National Environment Management Authority**

**National Forestry Authority**

- Environmental Policy
- Extension services;
- Planning/budgeting;
- Monitoring environmental parameters;
- Demonstrations

**Ministry of Trade**

**Uganda Export Promotion Board**

**Uganda National Bureau of Standards**

- Trade policy
- Market identification;
- Marketing and market information;
- Supply-side capabilities.

- Budget planning and allocation;
- Standards setting and accreditation of organic certification companies;
- Policy monitoring.
On the other hand, it is not possible at the moment to clearly analyze the role of the other ministries outlined above. Issues of organic agriculture policy are largely handled by specialized agencies such as the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), the Uganda Export Promotion Board (UEPB) which has particularly brought the organic sector into activities of another important policy advisory group, The Presidential Investor’s Roundtable (PIRT) and the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS). This background study did not find any evidence of inter-ministerial level discussions or decisions to provide political leadership and guidance to the process. This perhaps, partly explains why, in spite of the acknowledged Uganda’s strategic global position in organic agriculture production and trade, the policy development process is proceeding at a painfully slow pace and has limited government support in terms of appropriate budgetary allocations.

4.2. Production and marketing of organic agriculture products.

In spite of the apparent policy vacuum, the organic agriculture sub-sector is one of the fastest growing sub-sectors of the economy. For example, NOGAMU estimates that for the last two years, the sub-sector grew at an average of [60%] per annum even when the overall growth of the agricultural sector stagnated. Key actors in organic agriculture production and marketing include individual farmers, farmer groups and organic agriculture farmers’ networks such as NOGAMU. Within Government, the Uganda Export Promotion Board and the Office of the Presidential Advisor in Charge of Poverty Eradication have placed particular emphasis on the production and trade in organic agriculture products. Uganda Export Promotion Board has on several occasions brought the organic sector into the limelight through the annual President’s Export Award. With the exception of the Uganda Export Promotion Board which focuses mainly on market identification, the rest of the actors in this area invest in identifying and organizing organic agriculture farmers, providing them with advice, assisting them address issues of certification and linking them with potential markets nationally and internationally.

4.3. Quality Assurance and Certification of Organic Agriculture Products

As already alluded to, quality assurance of organic agriculture products is currently an essential feature of organic agriculture production and trade. In the organic agriculture sub-sector, quality assurance covers a number of elements such as certification, technical standards, sanitary and phytosanitary issues, etc. Certification is a process whereby an organic production, handling, processing, or retailing enterprise is certified as following organic production and handling practices. In practice, the certification process is regulated by private, independent certifying agencies that are in turn regulated by designated government agency. Generally, the requirements for certification may vary from country to country. However, at the very minimum, they
According to Wikipedia Encyclopedia, a decision to secure organic certification of a farmer ordinarily requires a farmer to engage in new activities in addition to ordinary farming operations. These activities include, inter alia,

- **Studying** the organic standards- these standards normally cover in specific detail what is and is not allowed for every aspect of farming, including storage, transport and sale;
- **Compliance**- farm facilities and production methods must comply with the standards, which may involve modifying facilities, sourcing and changing suppliers, etc;
- **Documentation**- extensive paperwork is required, detailing farm history and current set up, and usually including results of soil and water tests;
- **Planning**- a written annual production plan must be submitted, detailing everything from seed to sale: seed sources, field and crop locations, fertilization and pest control activities, harvest methods, storage location, etc;
- **Inspection**- annual on-farm inspections are required, with a physical tour, examination of records, and an oral interview;
- **Fee**- an annual inspection/certification fee is paid;
- **Record keeping**- written, day-to-day farming and marketing records, covering all activities, must be available for inspection at any time.

Until recently, most of the certification services in Uganda have been provided by international companies or their local subsidiaries or representatives. However, the current trends suggest that there are efforts to develop and obtain accreditation of local certification companies. Ugocert for example represents such effort at developing local certification companies. The major challenge at the moment is that all these efforts are taking place in a glaring policy vacuum and Government has no strategy or plan of action to support and promote these local certification companies as a means of reducing the current impediments to organic agriculture production and trade.
In addition to the poor development of certification and accreditation standards, there is still no clarity on whether the standards being developed whether at the national or regional level should be voluntary and some biding code of practice among certifying companies in the country. There is still need to explore in more detail the legal basis for the existence of particular standards of certification or accreditation and the potential implications of the absence any such legal basis or of an entirely voluntary certification mechanism for organic agriculture.

In addition to these private initiatives, the Uganda National Bureau of Standards has firmly placed issues of organic agriculture on its development agenda. However, this good will is still undermined by the inadequate allocation of financial and other resources to the Bureau.

4.4. Export Strategy and Market Penetration

Although Uganda currently maintains a significant comparative and competitive advantage in the production and trade in organic agriculture products, this advantage could be easily be wiped away by other countries that adopt better strategies and deliberate actions to promote their organic agriculture sub-sectors. This is why export strategy and market penetration and dominance must become an integral part of any national policy and strategy on organic agriculture production and trade.

At the moment, there are a number of stakeholders that are involved in some aspects of export and marketing of organic agricultural products. The most visible of these
are the organic farmers’ networks such as NOGAMU and EPOPA. These networks have played a major role in linking up organic agriculture farmers or producers with key organic products market globally. They provide market relevant information or buy produce from farmers which is then exported to these markets. In a bid to develop the local market for organic products, NOGAMU has also established an organic agriculture products shop which is now fully operational.

In addition to these private efforts, Government agencies such as UEPB and the Africa Growth Opportunities Act (AGOA) office in the Office of the President have been making attempts to promote the export of organic agriculture to selected markets around the world. Unfortunately, there is apparently no clear platform for all these actors to plan together and strategize on how to increase the global market advantages of organic agriculture for Ugandan products. The Government initiatives which receive funding from the national budget and the civil society efforts which receive funding from donors seem to be largely disjointed. Consequently, future policy actions should target to creating a forum or platform where these actors are able to plan jointly and develop a shared sense of purpose and direction.

4.5. Independent Policy Research and Advocacy

The organic agriculture sub-sector has benefited tremendously from the work of institutions engaged in independent public policy research and advocacy. In particular, since 2003, ACODE has played a catalytic role by providing analytical information and intellectual support to the policy development process. By convening multi-stakeholder national and regional meetings, undertake independent policy reviews and generally supporting the Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture Policy of MAAIF, ACODE has been able to put positive pressure on the policy process which is currently under way.

At the moment, a number of other actors such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have come in to support the organic agriculture sub-sector through research, multi-stakeholder consensus building and integrated assessment of the organic agriculture sub-sector. Indeed, these actors have created the opportunity and expand the planning and policy development horizon beyond organic agriculture trade which has hitherto dominated the current policy discourse.

4.6. Organic agriculture Research and Development (R & D), training and education

The continuing viability and competitiveness of the organic agriculture sub-sector needs to be assured by a strong R & D programme that focuses on such essential elements such as technology development, product development, nutritional improvement, market research, and the social economic and environmental impacts
of organic agriculture production, etc. Unfortunately, Uganda has not put any particular emphasis on this aspect of organic agriculture. Indeed, most of the R & D activities are being undertaken as independent initiatives by research institutions without any policy guidance or targeted financial support by Government.

The most highly developed organic agriculture training programme is currently run by Nkozi University. The University also conducts short-term training courses supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). A review of the current National Agricultural Research Policy as well as programmatic documents of the Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) Secretariat or National Agriculture Organization (NARO) reveals no particular focus on organic agriculture R & D activities. Indeed, it is important to emphasize that competitive and comparative advantages are secured and maintained through rigorous Research and Development activities that enables a country maintain technology leadership in the particular production and marketing system.
References