

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

USTA UPDATES



TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

USTA STAFF EMPOWERED ON STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

By Communication Team

In a major effort to boost accountability, performance and responsiveness within the communication department, staff members from Uganda Seed Trade Association (USTA) from 6th February – 8th February 2024 took part in a capacity building training workshop.



The training held at both the Sheraton and Fairway hotels featured expert guidance from the Rana Labs team which consisted of Miles Sedgwick, the President of Rana Labs, Maurice Lamony and Teni Chitanana, the communication specialists.

Caption: President of Rana Labs (Miles Sedgwick) taking participants at the communication workshop held at Sheraton hotel through a presentation

Made achievable with support from USAID funded Feed the Future Uganda Institutional Systems Strengthening (ISS) Activity, the primary objective of the training was to equip participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance communication within their respective departments.

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This included understanding the importance of communication at both a departmental and organizational level, as well as gaining practical expertise in the areas of graphic design and public speaking.

With a strong interest of elevating the standards and profitability of marketing seeds, USTA understood how important this kind of activity would be in equipping the communication staff with the necessary skills to establish robust communication frameworks with all its stakeholders both internally and externally.

This would therefore necessitate the development of effective communication strategies to enhance implementation and further contribute to the organization's overall success.

During the sessions, USTA staff and other participants at the workshop were engaged in interactive activities to foster hands-on learning experiences.



Above: USTA staff and other participants engaging in a group work session



Above: Participants at the communication workshop sharing a light moment.

From this group-work session, USTA communication staff were not only able to acquire skills in developing strategies for communication but also armed with a deeper understanding of what it means to effectively communicate with the different internal and external publics of the association most especially during a crisis.

As a whole, this capacity building training workshop was not only successful in offering valuable insights and tools to enhance communication within USTA but it also reflects a commitment of USAID funded Feed the Future Uganda Institutional Systems Strengthening (ISS) Activity, in improving the institutional governance, management and market systems that constrain the impact of the country's efforts to achieve an agricultural-led economic growth.

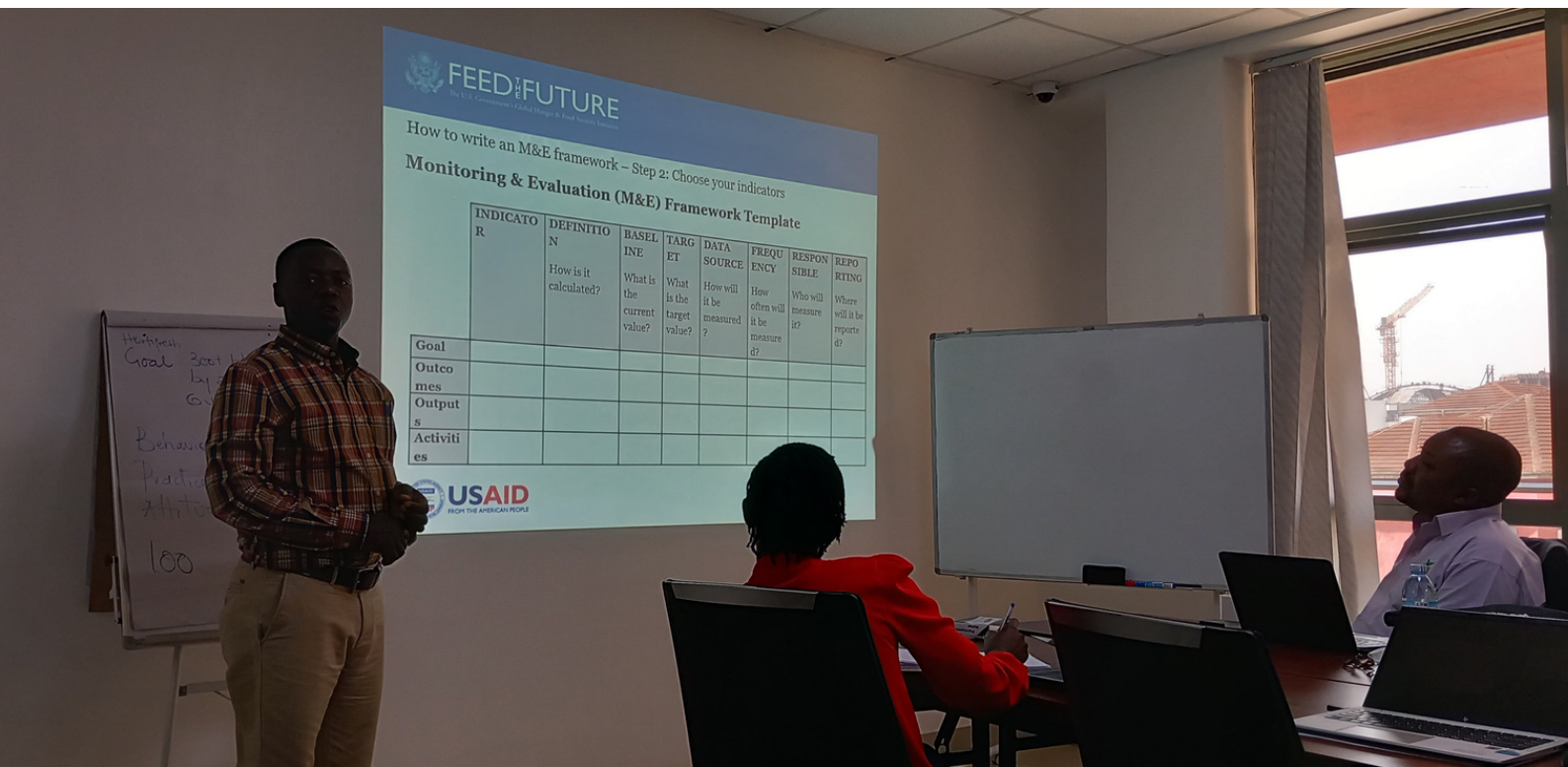
USTA STAFF TRAINED ON DRIVING RESULTS THROUGH EFFECTIVE M&E EVALUATION

At a pivotal meeting held at the USAID Feed the Future Uganda Institutional Systems Strengthening (ISS) headquarters, staff members from USTA and other Industry Apex Organizations (IAOs) participated in a purposeful training session on how to drive results through effective monitoring and evaluation on 20th February.

The training took place in the ISS boardroom and included expert guidance from Alex Bbaale, the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager.

During the session, he led participants in understanding how to effectively measure the success of their strategic programs.

Participants at the training had the opportunity to engage in a group work activity, which enabled them to practically utilize an M&E framework table for systematically gathering data and information.



Above : Monitoring and Evaluation manager (Alex Bbaale) taking participants at the workshop through the M&E framework

MEMBER COMMITTEE CONVENES TO DISCUSS STRATEGIC PLANS

In a purposeful gathering held at the USTA head-quarters, the member service committee and communication staff convened to carefully examine the strategic actions and activities that will be prioritized in 2024.

The committee serving in an advisory capacity, comprises of a distinguished group representing the various seed companies tasked with identifying and addressing capacity gaps impacting the industry.

Presently USTA boasts a membership of 44 individuals, comprising 39 ordinary members and 5 associate members. But among these, 23 actively engage in the various facets of seed production, processing, marketing, and distribution within the association.

During the discussion, the committee also reviewed a questionnaire designed by the Executive Secretariat of USTA, Nelson Masereka. With the aim of soliciting their input on potential refinements before its distribution to the seed companies.

The discourse also veered into the matter of the labels which has been a pertinent issue for USTA that has been on the forefront of it for some time now. In regards to engaging the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) in refining the certification process by establishing a voluntary authentication system that would help solve the problem of counterfeit seeds on the market. This system would empower seed companies could to conduct their own inspections and label seeds independently.



Above: Executive Secretariat (Nelson Masereka) engaging committee members at the meeting.

As the deliberations came to a close, the committee used the opportunity to discuss the budget and what activities should be given priority and adequate resources within the seasons when they would be carried out.

The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange ideas, deliberate on internal capacity gaps, develop strategies and also strengthen collaborations between USTA and its members.

EXPERTS IDENTIFY GAPS IN SEED ACT

In a bid to foster open engagement and address pressing issues within the Seed and Plants Act 2007, the Uganda Law Reform Commission (ULRC) organized a review meeting on 22nd February at Omnomi hotel.

Participants at the meeting included different stakeholders within the seed industry that is researchers and private sector actors who were called upon to raise various issues within the Seed Act.





Above: Participants at the Plants & Seeds review Act sharing a light moment

The purpose of the review was to bring the Act in conformity with the National Seed Policy 2018 and other relevant agricultural policies and laws as well as to fulfill the dynamic needs of the various sector players.

With the mandate to review the law, ULRC presented a concept note that offered justifications for the amendment of the Act.

Some of the justifications that the ULRC brought up within the concept note included the need for government to increase the productivity of the seed industry, the need to liberalize seed regulatory frameworks and reconcile the Act with the policies and laws years after they are enforced.

After the concept-sharing session, participants were allowed to react and identify gaps of their own in the Act.

Key issues of discussion raised by the experts included the need for more research to address the issues of seed shortage, linking the seed systems to food security, making seed information more accessible, authenticating seed data used by researchers and the need to do a stakeholder analysis to allow the laws and policies to become implementable after addressing the challenges.

Going forward, it was agreed upon that there will be more technical meetings and consultations in the future with the purpose of refining the document to make it more representative of all Ugandans before putting out the final product in May.

Additionally, USTA requested for some time for its members to identify gaps of their own within the Act and make a proposal that could be shared with ULRC at a later date.