



UGANDA MARTYRS UNIVERSITY

AFRICAN CENTRE FOR AGROECOLOGY AND LIVELIHOOD SYSTEMS

**MID-TERM REVIEW (MTR) REPORT OF ACALISE ACE II
PROJECT – UGANDA**

September 2019



Objectives of the report

The following are the objectives of the MTR at ACALISE:

- i. The report is intended to take stock of ACALISE project implementation and an assessment of whether the operation is on track to achieve its development objectives; and
- ii. To evaluate the soundness and relevance of initial project development objectives, design, activities and results framework (including targets), risks, and overall implementation in light of implementation performance and evidence of results for the last 2.5 years, in order to inform action for the remaining project period to enhance project development objectives.

i. Development Objectives

Project Development Objective (PDO)

The Master Project Development Objective of the ACE II Project is *to strengthen Eastern and Southern Africa institutions to deliver quality post-graduate education and build collaborative research capacity in the regional priority areas (namely, industry, agriculture, health, education, and applied statistics, Oil and Gas).*

The Overall objective of ACALISE

The general objective of the Centre is to better streamline ACALISE is to better streamline the production of a high level, well-motivated, and ethically conscious critical mass of Agro-ecology and livelihood systems experts to impact on prevailing agricultural, nutritional, environmental, and livelihood challenges in the region.

To achieve the above objectives in order to enhance development, ACALISE was to carry out the following:

- i. Training of a new breed of M.Sc. and PhDs envisioned to carry out relevant research in Agro-ecology and livelihood systems for innovation in the region and beyond
- ii. Integration of ecological approaches in Agriculture and related disciplines in the region to stimulate sustainable development and better livelihoods
- iii. Initiation of collaborations for strengthening multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral research for development
- iv. Promotion of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) for innovation dissemination and impact enhancement in Agro-ecology for better livelihood strategies.
- v. Enhancing moral-ethical consciousness and accountability by the trainees to ensure sustainable development at local, national, and regional levels
- vi. Equipping of agriculture soil labs with modern equipment, revamping of the teaching farm and establishment of demonstration farms accessible to the local farmers to provide the relevant skills, technologies, agricultural services, and ethical consciousness, to the communities to enhance sustainable development of all.

ii. Implementation Progress

The activities at the Centre have strictly been informed by the PDO, the general objective of ACALISE and the above-mentioned 6 specific ways of pursuing the objectives. In general we are confident to say that project implementation has move on fairly well. The Centre is on track on most of the targets. The Centre has surpassed the projections for some targets, including:

1) *MScs enrollment of local students*: already the Centre has surpassed the overall 5 year target, due to the marketability of our programmes. Currently the total number is 450. The potential of Centre to continue on its own after the end of the project period is quite high since most of the students on Masters programmes sponsor themselves. Moreover, the local students sponsored by the project only receive half of the tuition fees while the other half is paid by the students themselves. Only Regional students receive full tuition support from the project.

2) *National accreditation of programmes*: of the target of 8 programmes, 7 programmes have been nationally accredited and the Centre has reached the ceiling for the DLR on national accreditation. The nationally accredited programmes include 2 PhDs and 5 MScs:

- PhD (Agroecology and Food Systems, and PhD in Business Admin)
- MSc (Agroecology, Development Econ, M&E, Bioethics, Microfinance)

3) *Gender equity*: The objective of the Centre was to raise the female students to at least a third of the overall total of postgraduate students. Indeed currently the females make a third of the students' population, that is, 146 females out of the total of 472 students.

4) *Income generation*: The Centre has so far raised USD 710,000. This this way above the overall five year target of USD 518,000. This points to the potential of the Centre to sustain itself after the 5 years of the ACE II Project since the Centre is doing well in generation of funds from other sources.

5) *Partnerships*: Partnerships with Private Sector/Industry, Civil Society, and Public institutions are already in implementation. We have worked with Private sector to write successful funding proposals, provision of internship placements to our students, provision of hands on training to University Management and administrators in the areas of soft skills, risk management and financial management. Besides, partnerships have assisted the Centre move towards the processing of protein-filled animal feed from the larve of the black solder fly, which in turn, can lead to income generation. Our partners include:

- Private Sector: 1) CRI, 2) BOBO Ecofarm, KVC
- Civil Society: 3) PELUM, 4) CIDE
- Public Sector: 5) COVAB – Makerere University, 6) Wangari Mathai Institute of Environmental Sciences – University of Nairobi

6) *Publications*: At least 30 publications in the relevant areas of agroecology and food livelihood systems have so far been made and others are in the process for publication. Our overall target for the five years is 50 publications.

Over and above the DLR-related results above, the Centre has also produced results that have put ACALISE at the Centre of visibility and influence of policy in Uganda as outlined below:

- the Centre has contributed to the drafting of the Organic Policy for Uganda which was approved by Cabinet, after several years of engagement with government.
- the Centre has hosted the first Regional Conference on Agroecology, which drew experts from the continent and internationally
- the Centre was selected to host the African Agroecology Journal to advance research and dissemination of knowledge, innovations, and technologies in the area of agroecology.
- the French government has financed the Centre to host the Organic Demo: the Demo is meant to provide research and training in Organic farming and to demonstrate the social-economic- and environmental sustainability of organic practices in a household setting.
- The Centre, in collaboration with East African Organic Agriculture movement, has published an Organic Cartoon Book to teach teenagers about Organic Farming. The book was officially launched by Uganda's Minister for Higher Education, Dr. J. C. Muyingo in November 2018.
- the Private Sector Foundation of Uganda has financed the Centre's research and training on The use of Black Soldier Larvae as source of Protein in Animal feed.
- The Centre has carried out baseline research in all the agroecological zone of Uganda on the state of Agroecology and Livelihood Systems in Uganda. The findings were launched nationally by the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Hon. Vicent B. Ssempijja in September 2019.

Sustainability focus

With the progress the Centre is making, we strongly believe that after the 5 years of the ACE II Project, the Centre will manage to stand on its own: 1) academic programmes are demand-driven, 2) many students are applying to join, 3) the Centre is generating funds from both students tuition and writing funding proposals, 4) the private sector have come to partner with us to innovate and market the innovations, 5) the Centre is already beginning to influence policy in Uganda and is also attracting international support from the French government to advance environment-friendly practices in agriculture; and 6) the overall governance of the University is steadily improving due to the standard processes and skills development the Centre is advancing. 7) Besides, linkages with Western Africa Countries, particularly Nigeria and Ghana in the area of Microfinance, have greatly advanced the regional dimension of the Centre. Currently students from West Africa make 80% of the regional students. The Centre is working with the LAPO Institute in Nigeria to carry out Microfinance-related trainings in Nigeria for all the Western Africa countries. Meanwhile other regional students have come from East Africa, including Kenya, DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

Implementation challenges

The Centre's bottlenecks have been on 1) limited number of regional students but this is being well addressed in the last one year ; currently we have 69 regional students; 2) limited exchanges of staff and students, and 3) no regional or international accreditation

of programmes.

The main reasons for this state of affairs are two below, but the most critical one is the lack of sufficient funds:

- I. The disbursements from World Bank take so long thereby negatively affecting our operations.
 - a. The Centre received a No Objection from WB to purchase a hostel in order to accommodate Regional students (which is our missing link for now) but the verification of a good number of DLRs in order to pave way to disbursement has taken so long. The following DLRs have not been verified 2.5 years down the road: DLRs 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2 and for DLR 2.7, the verification was only done once in January 2019 and disbursement only made in August 2019.
 - b. The lack of funds has also limited our capacity to finance the exchange of students and staff. The cash flow challenges have also compounded our ability to carry out timely procurements.
 - c. Capital procurements are currently being processed. They could not have been processed earlier due to cash flow challenges. So far the Procurement of some furniture for the offices, consumables, and stationary, has been done. The Procurement of the Tractor and Soil Lab Equipment is in final stages of evaluation. The procurement of Students hostel is also in advanced stages of procurement.
 - d. It should be noted that unlike all other ACEs hosted by Public Universities and therefore receiving additional subvention (support) from government, for example, staff salaries, research and ICT facilities, fully student fledged accommodation etc., ACALISE is hosted by a private University. All the activities of the Project must be absorbed by the Project's budget. So any delay to release funds to ACALISE does gravely affect operation.
- II. Agroecology being a relatively new area, there is no competent authority that can accredit our programmes regionally. In Africa there is only one other University in Ethiopia, that has Agroecology programmes, namely Mekelle University. Therefore ACALISE has failed to obtain any competent body apart from the National Council for Higher Education.

In our view the way forward is twofold, namely a) ensure timely verification of results and timely disbursements to resolve the challenge of cash flow and b) consider re-allocating the funds originally planned for regional accreditation to other DLRs such as publications and income generation since both of these DLIs address the regional perspective/outlook yet many Centres have reached or are about to reach the ceiling on both of these DLRs.

iii. Results framework, key project indicators and intermediate indicators

The results framework is given in Appendix **Table 2**. As already mentioned above, the Centre is on track on most of the DLRs.

iv. Relevance of design

In our view the overall design of the Project is fine because as a results-based project, the design of the Project triggers Centres to work hard in order to trigger disbursements. The demoralizing issue is that verification of results takes so long and then the additional process of approval of the results and provision of a No Objection from World Bank also takes more time. In the end Centres may be forced to underperform for reasons beyond their control. Reference can be made on the DLR mentioned above, namely DLRs 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2 and DLR 2.7.

Besides, the requirement that Centres have to carry out Short Course trainings which fetch in very little funds compared to the effort and resources needed to administer these training both locally and regionally seem not to be fair. Moreover the Project is essentially focused on postgraduate programmes.

The other issue of concern is the amount of money allocated per exchange of Staff/Student. The amount of USD 5000 (national) 10,000 (regional) 8,000 (international) is rather too low compared to the expenditure incurred to send a group of staff or PhD students for exchange for at least 2 weeks outside the country. There is need to revise the allocation.

v. Fiduciary matters

(a) Procurement

Overall, at ACALISE only non-capital intensive procurements have been made so far. Capital procurements have not been procured yet due to the cash flow issues already discussed in the previous sections.

Table 3 in the Appendix provides the Procurement Plan for the remaining procurerables. The timely completion of the procurements is contingent to the timely disbursement of funds

(b) Financial Management and Disbursement

A summary on the state of disbursement is provided in the Appendix Table 1. Overall, so far around 32% of the total budget of USD 6m has been disbursed. On average, every year around 20% of the budget (that is, USD 1.2m) should be disbursed. Therefore averagely by the end of the third year of operation (2019/20), around 60% of the budget should have been disbursed/consumed.

vi. Safeguards – Grievance redress

To address students' grievances there are three ways for redress depending on the nature of the grievance.

- 1) On matters of scholarship award, it is the Central Scholarship Committee of the University that handles the grievances. Grievances are submitted to the Chair of the Scholarship Committee who then tables the grievances in the Committee meeting.

- 2) On students welfare, the grievance go through either the office of the Dean of Students or the regular meetings of ACALISE Team with students, in which the Students' class Coordinator reads to the meeting the issues his students want to be addressed.
- 3) On academic irregularity-related issues there is an Academic Irregularities' Committee of the University that sits to assess the issues.

In all the above, concerned students are given a hearing and proper deliberations and recommendations made to University Management.

vii. Need for restructuring

We think that the requirement that Centres carry out Short Course trainings which fetch in very little funds compared to the effort and resources needed to administer these training both locally and regionally seem not to be fair. Moreover the Project is essentially focused on postgraduate programmes. The suggestion is that either disbursements for each student is raised or the requirement is scrapped and monies are re-allocated.

The other very important activity that requires much money to carry out yet the allocated disbursement is low is the exchange of Staff/Student. The amount of USD 5000 (national) 10,000 (regional) 8,000 (international) is rather too low compared to the expenditure incurred to send a group of staff or PhD students for exchange for at least 2 weeks outside the country. There is need to revise the allocation.

While the requirement for regional accreditation of programmes is very good in principle, in practical terms this is very challenging. Some of the programmes are quite new and unique to the extent that it is impossible to get a regional accreditation body. In our case, Agroecology is a very unique area. In fact in Africa there is only one other institution (in Ethiopia) that has Agroecology postgraduate programmes. For three years now ACALISE has not succeeded in obtaining any competent body to regionally accredit our programmes.

TABLE 1: DISBURSEMENTS TO ACALISE TILL SEPTEMBER 2019

DLR 1 Institutional Readiness	Amount allocated	Amount disbursed/being processed
DLR 1.1 Completion of Effectiveness Conditions	600,000	600,000
DLR 2.2 Approved Implementation Plan	500,000	500,000
DLI 2: Excellence in education and research capacity and development impact		
DLR 2.1. Timely annual implementation of the plans	500,000 (100, 000/year)	Not yet verified
DLR 2.2. Newly enrolled students in the ACE of which at least 20% must be regional (African) students.	1,200,000	* 169,583
DLR 2.3. Accreditation of quality of education programs.	600,000	300,000
DLR 2.4. Partnerships for collaboration in applied research and training	200,000	-
DLR 2.5. Peer-reviewed journal papers or peer-reviewed conference papers prepared collaboratively with national, regional or international co-authors	300,000	40,000
DLR 2.6. Faculty and PhD student exchanges to promote regional research and teaching collaborations	500,000	-
DLR 2.7. External revenue generation	900,000	268,237
DLR 2.8. Institution participating in benchmarking exercise	100,000	-
DLI 3: Timely, transparent and institutionally reviewed Financial Management		
DLR 3.1. Timely Withdrawal applications supported by interim unaudited financial reports for each ACE	75,000 15,000 per year	*15,000
DLR 3.2. Functioning audit committee under each Eastern and Southern African Higher Education Institutions	75,000 15,000 per year	*15,000
DLR 3.3. Functioning internal audit unit for each Eastern and Southern African Higher Education Institution	75,000 15,000 per year	* 15,000
DLR 3.4. Transparency of financial management (75,000 15,000 per year	*15,000
DLI 4: Timely and audited Procurement		
DLR 4.1. Timely procurement audit report for each ACE	150,000 30,000 per year	Not yet verified
DLR 4.2. Timely and satisfactory procurement progress report for each ACE	150,000 30,000 per year	Not yet verified
Total	6,000,000 (100%)	Disbursed 1,708,237 *Withdraw application 169,583 *No Objection being Awaited 60,000 Total 1,937,820 (32%)

Table 2: RESULTS FRAMEWORK FOR ACALISE 2016-2019

CUMULATIVE Targets vs Actual RESULTS			2016/7 2017/8		2018/9		2019/20	2020-21				
			Indicators			Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Target	Achievement on targets
			Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Target	Achievement on targets			
PDO	1. Regional students enrolled in ACEs: (i) Masters (No. of Female) (ii) PhD (No. of female)	Masters (Total)	5	6	36	67	50	60	Numbers of regional students are steadily increasing			
		Masters (Female)	3	1	12	23	15	18	Almost on target			
		PhD (Total)	3	4	6	8	7	7	Above target			
		PhD (Female)	2	3	4	5	5	7	Above target			
		Short-term courses (Total)	10	0	30	13	35	60	Below target			
	2. Students (national and regional) enrolled in ACEs: (i) Masters (No. of female) (ii) PhD (No. of female)	Masters (Total)	120	294	180	450	240	300	Surpassed 5 year target			
		Masters (Female)	40	97	60	141	72	100	On target			
		PhD (Total)	16	9	24	22	30	30	Almost on target			
		PhD (Female)	5	4	10	7	12	10	On target			
		Short-term courses (Total)	120	36	180	143	240	300	Below target			
	3. MOUs on partnerships for collaboration in applied research and training entered into by the ACEs		7	6	7	6	7	7	On target			
	4. Accredited education programs offered by the ACEs	Total	8	6	8	7	8	8	Surpassed respective DRL ceiling			
		National	5	5	8	7	8	8	On target			
		Regional	2	0	2	0	2	2	Below target			
		International	2	0	2	0	2	2	Below target			
	5. Direct Project Beneficiaries (of which female)	Total	256	339	384	615	510	630	Far above 5 yr targets			
		Female (%)	90	101	120	210	153	190	Above target			
	Total	12	0	15	4	20	30	Far below target				

Component 1	1. Faculty and PhD students exchanges to promote research and teaching (No. of female)	Female	7	0	7	2	10	12		
	2. Amount of externally generated revenue by the ACEs		88,000	268,000	188,000	456,000	488,000	518,000	Far above target	
	3. Internationally recognized research publications in disciplines supported by the ACE Program and with regional coauthors	Total								
		No. co-authored with regional collaborators		10	10	30	3	40	50	On target
4. No. of institutions hosting ACEs participating in the PASET benchmarking exercise			0	0	1	1	1	1	Participated in PASET benchmarking as planned but was not considered for disbursement because the University does not have the required numbers: it is a young and small University	

Table 3: Summary of Draft Procurement Plan 2019-2022

SN	Description of items	Quantity	Estimated Costs in USD for current year /per Year and quarter	Cost in USD for 3 years	Procurement Method	Authority to initiate process	Remark
1	Marketing and Visibility of Programmes at ACALISE- Production of souvenirs/ newsletters, leaflets & other marketing products-	Several	25,000(q1-q4)	75,000	RFQ	Head/PI	
2	Flights	Several	20,000 (q1-q4)- WB/IUCEA meetings, 30,000 (q1-q4)-Other official meetings , Visiting Professors 6,000 (q1-q4) PhD students placement 15,000 (q2-q4) International conferences	60,000 90,000 18,000 45,000	RFQ/Prequalified supplier	Head/PI	Prequalified supplier shall be contacted wherever air tickets are needed
3	Project Vehicle – double cabin	1	42,645 (q1-q2 of next year)	42,645	OB		
4	Tractor – full set with equipment	1	105,074 (q2-3)	105,074	OB	Head/PI	
5	Fuel for the vehicle and Generators	Several	25,000 (q1-4)	75,000	DP	Head/PI	
6	Servicing of vehicle	01	5000 (q2-4)	15,000	RB	Head/PI	

7	Insurance: people/property		5,000(q2)-Vehicle, others 8750 (q2)	15,000 26,250	DP	Head/PI	
8	Chicken house works and restocking	1	30,000	30,000	RB	Head/PI	
9	Computers Laptops	25 10	18,000 4,000	36,000	OB	Head/PI	
6	Multi-purpose Printer	1	5000(q2)	5,000	OB	Head/PI	
7	Servicing for office equipment	several	2000 (q1-q4)	6,000	DP	Head/PI	
8	Sanitation/ cleaning materials	several	4000 (q1-4)	12,000	DP	Head/PI	
9	Office Fridge	2	400 (q1)	400	DP	Head/PI	
10	Tonnors –and Stationery	several	11,500 (q1-q4)	34,500	DP	Head/PI	
11	Servicing of Fire Fighting Equipment	20	1000(q1-q4)	3,000	RB	Head/PI	
12	Renovations and stocking of chicken house	1	40,000 (q2-q3)	40,000	RB	Head/PI	
13	Post graduate Hostel (i.e completion and furnishing)	1	273,691 (q1-q2)	300,000	RB	Head/PI	Already won bid for hostel -Centenary Bank
14	Electricity generator-	2	5,000 (q1)	5,000	OB	Head/PI	
15	ICT Items:	1 1 5	5,600 (q2) router/switch 800 (q1-q2) Servicing Solar system 1,400 (q2) Digital projectors 2,000 (q2-q4) ICT Servicing and maintenance	5,600 32,000 1,400 6,000	RFQ RFQ RFQ DP	Head/PI	
16	Soils analysis software-	1	3000 (q2)	9,000	RFQ	Head/PI	

17	Soil Lab equipment	1	50,000 (q3-q4)	150,000	RB	Head / PI	
20	Digital Cameras	2	1,400 (q3-q4)	1,400	DP	Head/PI	
21	Rudimentary Farm tools, equipments	several	4,000(q1-q4)	4,000	DP	Head/PI	
22	Payroll software/Accounting Software	1	2,500 (Q1)	2,500	RFQ	Head/PI	
23	Weather station	1	40,000 (q1-q2)	40,000	RB	Head/PI	There is only one supplier in the country
24	Farm facilities and stocking	several	10,000 fishpond (q3) 160,00 cattle, feeds, facilities (q4)	170,000	RB/Partner KVC	Head/PI	Work with partner with livestock expertise