ACSA
Advocacy Coalition for Sustainable Agriculture

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

The National Irrigation Policy

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!

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1. The Challenge of Rain-fed Agriculture in Uganda

Agriculture sector has grown at only 2.5% rate of growth per annum over the last decade mainly as a result of decline in factor productivity. There is very limited mechanization and declining soil fertility, an inefficient seed system and very low irrigation application and hence the over-reliance on rainfall.

The above structural bottlenecks have contributed to decline in per capita agricultural production and annual food production deficits. According to the Economic Assessment of Impacts of Climate Change in Uganda (2015), drastic changes in weather patterns have altered crop, livestock and fisheries performance causing unpredictability and un reliability in agricultural output over the last decade.

On average, 800,000 ha of crops are destroyed every year by climate related events. The 2008 drought alone resulted in damage to crops estimated at US$ 47 million while between 2010 and 2013, damages and losses in the agriculture sector caused by rainfall deficit were estimated at US$ 907 million. In 2010, a study by the Office of the Prime Minister estimated a loss and damage of UGX 2.8 trillion to the economy due to adverse effects of climate change for a decade before. Sustained droughts are a threat to agriculture – which is a daily source of livelihood for over 70% of the population.

Rainfall has become more erratic and unpredictable and poorly distributed. Onsets and cessation of rainfall seasons have become more erratic and rainfall has become heavier and more violent in recent years. Landslides, droughts, floods are increasing in frequency and intensity as result of climate change. Ugandan agriculture has progressively been constrained by frequent threats and of actual occurrence of droughts affecting efforts for increased production. Droughts accounted for 38% and 36% loss in production for beans and maize respectively in 2010.

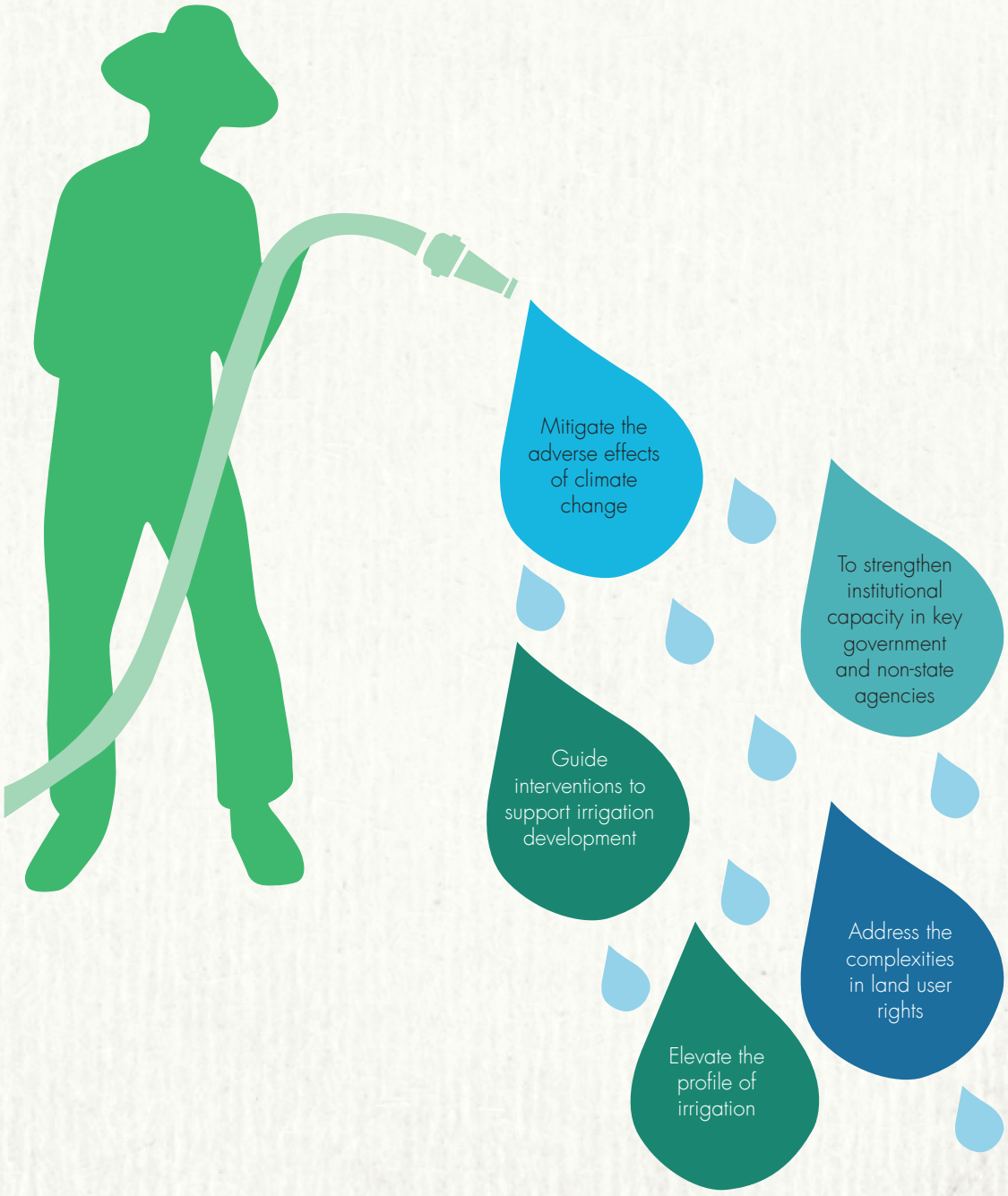
Uganda has over 15% of her surface area covered with fresh water resources and therefore a high but untapped irrigation potential. Human and industrial activity threaten this vital resource. The renewable fresh water resources are declining. For instance, while in 1995, total water endowment was estimated at 66.6m3 it had declined to 43.3m3 by 2013. In Uganda only 1% of renewable fresh water is used for irrigation in Uganda compared to 70% global average.

It is against this background that the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), working with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF)) developed a national policy on irrigation whose goal is to ensure sustainable availability of water for irrigation and its efficient use for enhanced agricultural production and profitability that will contribute to good security and wealth creation

2. Why the Irrigation Policy?

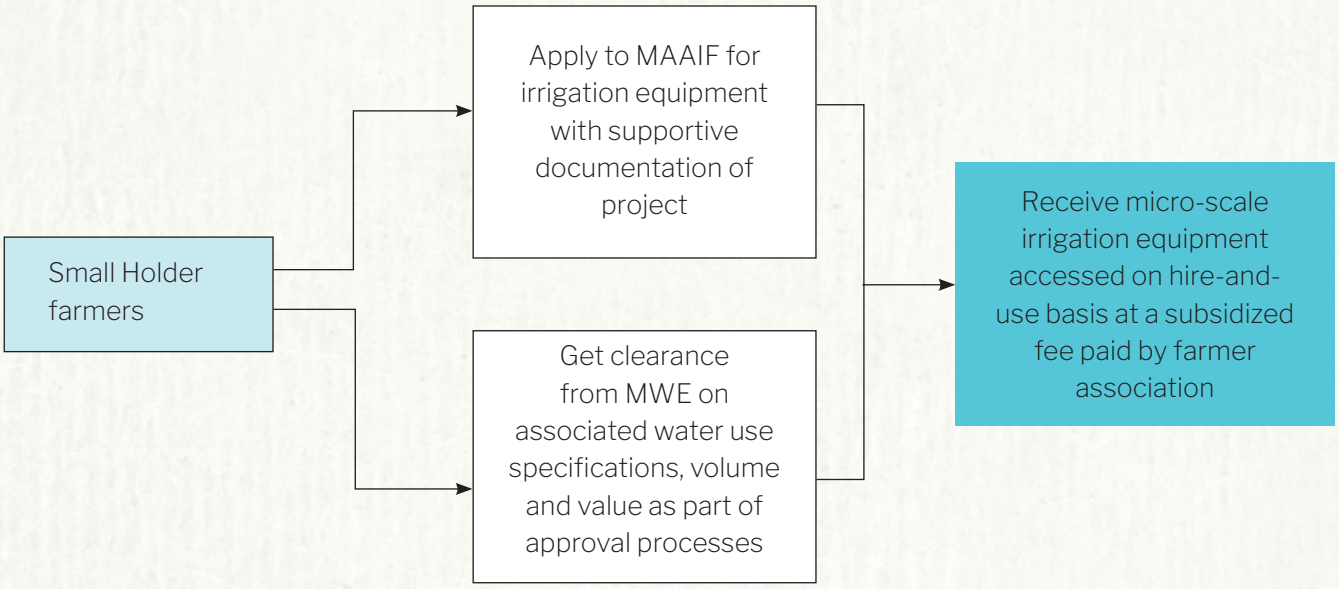
There were mainly six reasons why the irrigation policy was put in place:

i. Mitigate the adverse effects of climate change on agricultural production.
ii. Guide interventions to support irrigation development for all categories of farmers and for various farming commodities.
iii. To strengthen institutional capacity in key government and non-state agencies to for irrigation development and agricultural transformation
iv. Address the complexities in land user rights that have been an impediment to irrigation development especially among small holder farmers
v. Elevate the profile of irrigation by introducing innovative solutions like solar powered micro-irrigation schemes and other subsidies to bring down the cost and enhance access to irrigation technologies for smallholder farmers; and
vi. Boost human, technological capacity and research on irrigation so as to lift productivity through higher irrigation performance.

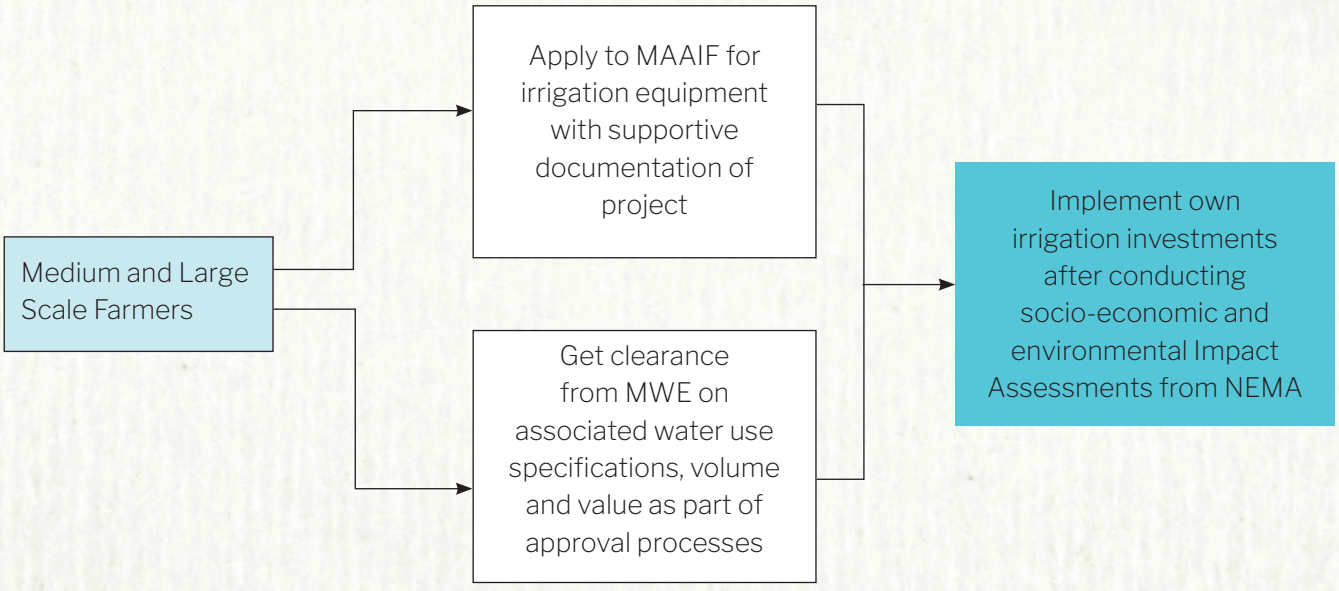


3. How to benefit from the National Irrigation Policy

The following two charts display how famers will access irrigation services under the new policy. On the chart below, micro scale irrigation equipment will be availed to small holder farmers. They will be required to access the use of this equipment after successful approval from MAAIF and MWE authorities which shall be used on a hire-and-use basis at subsidized rates.



For medium and large scale farmers, they will be supported with subsidies to undertake their own investments in irrigation projects having completed socio-economic impact and environmental impact assessments certified by National Environment Management Authority. Just like small holder farmers, they will be required to apply to MAAIF for the importation or use of irrigation equipment based on approved specifications. They will also need clearance from MWE on associated water use permits as per the Water Act.



4. Who are the Winners and Losers?

The table below shows the winners and losers from the implementation of the Irrigation policy

Category	Anticipated Positive Impact	Possible Negative Impact
Farmers	▪ Less dependency on rain-fed agriculture and broader adoption of irrigation technologies ▪ Increase on-farm productivity due to irrigation (measured by more output per acre)	▪ There are elevated on-farm costs related to acquisition of irrigation equipment. ▪ In the short run allow of awareness creation and sensitization will be required to change mind-sets which is an added cost to government
Farmer organizations and Groups	▪ Working in farmer forums, groups and associations will ensure that organized smallholder and other middle-income farmers attract government subsidies for jointly irrigated projects which reduced individual access cost per farmer	▪ There are additional management and O&M costs for irrigation development and equipment.
Local governments	▪ Improvement on agriculture service extension to reach more farmers with knowledge on irrigation ▪ District councils and other Lower administrative bodies empowered to make ordinances that support enhancement of irrigation	▪ Some districts will require back-up and technical capacity since use of irrigation is a new phenomenon in Uganda and for some instances need specialized mechanization and technologies.
Researchers	▪ Policy is to be a mobilization tool for resources including for research institutions about irrigation.	▪ None
Community Level	▪ Capacity built for community members on how to efficiently benefit from irrigation and enhanced capacity to monitor progress made.	▪ Increased effort and related cost imperatives for community mobilization in sensitizing the public about the possible benefits of irrigation
Marketing and Exporters	▪ Increased use as a result of rise in demand for irrigation related equipment.	▪ None

5. Know your Role in Policy Implementation

1. **Office of the Prime Minster:** Chair the Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee on Water for Production to enhance synergies between implementing sectors led by MWE and MAAIF

2. **Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries:** formulate and review appropriate regulations and irrigation standards and implementing guidelines on agricultural water use and management and train extension workers on various irrigation techniques and applications.

3. **Ministry of Water and Environment and its Agencies:** Undertake national water resources assessment, water control, water resource planning, allocation and regulation; Carry out monitoring, evaluation and compliance standards; and demonstrate and promote irrigation technologies that are efficient, cost effective and affordable.

4. **Farmers:** Embrace and actively participate in all planned interventions and activities; ensure proper use and maintenance of irrigation equipment and self-monitoring; and engage in gainful and progressive agriculture by utilizing micro and macro scale irrigation technologies.

5. **Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development:** Mobilize and allocate public financial resources for implementation of irrigation schemes and coordinate foreign direct investment and aid support to irrigation development.

6. **Ministry of Local Governments:** Coordinate LGs and support efforts to ensure farmers and their groups and associations access irrigation services and report on progress per enterprise per year.

7. **Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives:** Promoting marketing trade, value addition of products and mobilize cooperatives to embrace and support irrigated agriculture.

8. **Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development:** Deal with issues related to land ownership as well as property rights in irrigating schemes

9. **District Local Governments:** Participate in planning and development of irrigation infrastructure; provide auxiliary extension services, Technical Assistance to WUAs, Farmers and other stakeholders; support the acquisition of land for construction of communal irrigation facilities; provide backup support for operation and maintenance of established infrastructure and equipment for irrigation; support and monitor implementation of Irrigation policy; participate in data collection, validation, storage and use of irrigation information for planning and management; Mobilize and allocate resources for irrigation planning, development and, Operation and Management.

10. **Non state Actors and Development Partners:** share good practices and alternative approaches to irrigation development; provide advocacy, financial and technical support for irrigation development

For Details contact ACSA, Ministry of Water and Environment as well as Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry ad Fisheries on addresses at back of document.

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