



INITIATIVE ON  
Diversification in East  
and Southern Africa

## Operationalizing Ukama Ustawi's Learning Alliance for Impact

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## Executive Summary

This report is a comprehensive synthesis of insights, discussions, and recommendations stemming from Ukama Ustawi's (UU's), Learning Alliance's strategic session held during the Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security (ADFNS) and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Partnership Platform event in Zambia. The primary focus of the session was to explore practical strategies for operationalizing the Learning Alliance to achieve meaningful impact.

Key themes highlighted in the report include the importance of alignment among stakeholders, the significance of bottom-up learning, and the promotion of climate-resilient agriculture through indigenous crops. The discussions underscored the valuable role of the Learning Alliance's partnership in optimizing efficiency, aligning with regional priorities, and facilitating impactful knowledge exchange.

The report outlines specific recommendations for operationalizing the Learning Alliance in 2024. These recommendations span various areas, including the organization of regional knowledge-sharing workshops, the development of a robust Knowledge Management and Learning (KML) framework, establishment of a Learning Alliance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework, and the creation of platforms for sharing success stories and showcasing local farmer innovators. These actions aim to propel the Learning Alliance towards practical implementation and positive outcomes in the coming year.



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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>ADFNS</b>        | Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security   |
| <b>AEAS</b>         | Agricultural Extension Advisory Services   |
| <b>AFAAS</b>        | The African Agriculture Advisory services  |
| <b>AR4D</b>         | Agricultural Research for Development  |
| <b>ARM</b>          | Agriculture Risk Management  |
| <b>ARO</b>          | Agricultural Research Organization   |
| <b>ASARECA</b>      | The Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in East and Southern Africa  |
| <b>AUC</b>          | African Union Commission   |
| <b>CAADP</b>        | Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme                               |
| <b>CCARDESA</b>     | Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa |
| <b>CGIAR</b>        | Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research                           |
| <b>COMACO</b>       | Community Markets for Conservation   |
| <b>CORAF/WECARD</b> | West and Central African Council for Research and Development                        |
| <b>CSA</b>          | Climate Smart Agriculture  |
| <b>ESA</b>          | East and Southern Africa   |
| <b>FARA</b>         | Forum on Agriculture Research for Africa   |
| <b>GESI</b>         | Gender Equality and Social Inclusion   |
| <b>KALRO</b>        | Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization                               |
| <b>KAP</b>          | Knowledge-Attitudes-Practice   |
| <b>KM</b>           | Knowledge Management   |
| <b>KM4AgD</b>       | Knowledge Management for Agricultural Development                                    |
| <b>KML</b>          | Knowledge Management and Learning  |
| <b>M&amp;E</b>      | Monitoring and Evaluation  |
| <b>MoU</b>          | Memorandum of Understanding  |
| <b>NARS</b>         | National Agricultural Research Systems   |
| <b>SADC</b>         | Southern Africa Development Community  |
| <b>SDGs</b>         | Sustainable Development Goals  |
| <b>SI</b>           | Sustainable Intensification  |
| <b>UU</b>           | Ukama Ustawi   |

# 1. Introduction and context

## 1.1. Background

Ukama Ustawi's (UU's) Learning Alliance supports learning around diversified maize-based farming systems and innovation (agribusiness, policy, scaling) in East and Southern Africa. It is a demand-led collaborative knowledge sharing network established between the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA) and the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) in East and Southern Africa. It is intended to be a collaboration model to implement the CGIAR-CAADP X4P Knowledge Management Framework. It is centered on building relationships, effective communication, trust, and mutual understanding with regional organizations to create a sustainable and collaborative learning environment.

Strengthening knowledge-sharing networks, investing in research and extension services, creating supportive policy environments, and building capacity for scaling up are essential steps towards overcoming these challenges and promoting sustainable innovation in diversified maize-based farming systems in East and Southern Africa. The Learning Alliance operates through a multifaceted approach aimed at maximizing the impact of UU. It actively links regional and national knowledge platforms to the valuable knowledge outputs generated by UU, ensuring that this knowledge and data are readily accessible in shareable formats. This facilitates seamless knowledge transfer and dissemination across diverse stakeholders, including farmers, researchers, policymakers, and extension services, enabling them to leverage the insights and information generated by UU for practical applications.

A key aspect of the Learning Alliance's strategy is the systematic lesson learning and capitalization of UU activities. This involves packaging outputs and learning derived from UU, such as digitalization approaches, mixed farming systems, gender considerations, and policy-related insights, in a manner that is easily digestible and actionable. Additionally, the Learning Alliance fosters collaborative learning through activities that bridge the knowledge gap between national researchers and UU researchers. The Alliance is dedicated to enhancing the productivity, resilience, and economic prospects of farmers in the region through targeted learning events. By facilitating interaction and knowledge exchange among researchers from various backgrounds, the Learning Alliance stimulates the cross-pollination of ideas and the co-creation of solutions that enrich the overall impact of UU.

During the commemoration of the 14th Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security (ADFNS) and the 19th edition of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Partnership Platform (PP) in Lusaka, Zambia, partners came together for a knowledge exchange session. They shared feedback from the UU's session in a plenary meeting held from October 30th to November 2nd, 2023.

## **1.2. Purpose and objectives of the session**

The primary objective of the session was to foster knowledge exchange among farmers, local implementing and supporting officers, along with national (NARs), regional (CCARDESA and ASARECA) and continental (FARA), research institutions, and UU partners. Additionally, the session aimed to gather insights and solicit advice from farmers regarding their knowledge requirements and identify learning events that would be beneficial for them.

The session objectives were to:

- ▶ Showcase practices, innovations, and success of innovations hosted by farmers.
- ▶ Provide a platform for stakeholders (farmers, NARS, youth) to share experiences and cross-learning.
- ▶ Identify best practices and lessons learned and ways to make Learning Alliance more impactful.
- ▶ Enhance collaboration and coordination among researchers, Agricultural Extension Advisory Services (AEAS) workers, and farmers.



## 2. Panelists contributions and key discussion points

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the discussions held during two panel sessions. The first part focused on insights shared by farmers from Zambia on their experiences with implementing innovations on their farms. They highlighted the importance of lessons learned, crucial support received, and actions necessary for the sustainability of these innovations. In the second part, extension officers, and knowledge experts from various organizations discussed the value-added by UU's Learning Alliance compared to other approaches and suggested practical activities for facilitating knowledge exchange within the UUs Learning Alliance. The discussions emphasized collaborative learning, policy advocacy, effective monitoring and evaluation, and the alignment of initiatives for sustained impact.

### 2.1. Panel Discussion Part 1: Learning from implementation (farmers)

The session began with the first panel discussion, focused on farmers. Each panelist was expected to deliver a concise one-minute pitch about their work during the session. The focus was on sharing lessons learned from the adoption and scaling of innovations. Panelists briefly described the specific innovation or technology they implemented on their farms and discussed the motivations behind their decision to try it initially. Additionally, panelists highlighted the crucial support and resources that played a pivotal role in the successful uptake and scaling of the innovation on their farms. This included financial assistance, technical guidance, and collaboration with relevant organizations. Furthermore, the panel provided insights into the actions the Learning Alliance should take to ensure the sustainability and inclusivity of these innovations. Below are the views from the panelists from the first round of discussions, summarized into bullets.



Figure 1: Panelists of UU's Learning Alliance Session

### *Esther Zulu, Chitetedzo Federation*

Esther leads a federation of 62 cooperatives, with over 190,000 farmers. She supports in identifying markets through Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO) for the farmers and promotes the practice of conservation farming. This involves adopting chemical-free methods, relying on manual labour, and utilizing local innovations such as the multiple-use *Gliricidia* tree for soil fertilization, firewood, and carbon sequestration. One of their greatest needs is time, manpower, and commitment.

- ▶ Through forging collaborations with market-oriented initiatives like Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO), the Learning Alliance could help farmers tap into wider markets, enabling them to increase their income potential and improve economic resilience.
- ▶ The Learning Alliance could advocate for the adoption of conservation farming practices, promoting methods such as chemical-free techniques and the integration of local innovations like the *Gliricidia* tree. This advocacy could contribute to sustainable agricultural practices that benefit both farmers and the environment.
- ▶ Through tailored capacity-building programs, there is an opportunity for the Alliance to equip farmers with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement sustainable farming methods effectively. These programs could empower farmers to adopt environmentally friendly practices and enhance their resilience to climate change.
- ▶ The Alliance could play a key role in mobilizing communities to actively participate in sustainable agriculture initiatives. By fostering partnerships and promoting community engagement, the Alliance could cultivate a sense of commitment among individuals towards environmental conservation and livelihood improvement.

### *Abel Hangoma, Organic Farm7*

Abel operates Organic Farm7, a leading force in Zambia promoting sustainable agriculture through local innovations. The focus is on ensuring food security by disseminating knowledge and providing training on climate-smart agricultural practices. They address challenges such as heat waves by implementing water retention techniques and adapting to a changing climate. Abel's farm prioritizes resilient, high-value crops like raspberries, pomegranates, bananas, papaya, and passion fruit. Conservation agriculture, employing local mulching techniques, is practiced, and aromatic herbs are utilized not just for processing but also as pesticides.

One notable innovation is the introduction of fermented cowpea and alfalfa into their irrigation system, collectively termed 'fertigation'. Through web-based knowledge sharing, they have reached three million people globally. Abel highlighted several key points:

- ▶ Collaboration can enhance information dissemination across countries involved in UU.

- ▶ Institutions and farmers should collaborate, leveraging trusted local farmers to spread beneficial innovations and knowledge for improved practices and yields.
- ▶ Farmers require practical knowledge to address climate change, informed by both local experience and science. Technical scientific knowledge should be transformed, reorganised, and repackaged into simple, implementable language, incorporating indigenous knowledge.
- ▶ The Learning Alliance should organise knowledge exchange study tours and site visits for farmers, local supporting partners, and NARs to facilitate learning and better support farmers, aiding in national upscaling.
- ▶ The Alliance can play a role in identifying, sharing, and upscaling innovations, particularly in identifying international markets, such as in the beneficiation of aromatic herbs.
- ▶ Farmers are affected by policies, but they are often excluded from policy formulation processes. There is a concern that government regulation of produce prices does not consider input prices, and there are no standards for organic fertilizers.
- ▶ Policies are inaccessible to farmers due to inappropriate language and lack of communication. Policies should be transformed into simple guidelines for farmer understanding and implementation.

### *Maanda Sianga, Agro Queens*

Maanda is an agronomist, advocating for aquaculture and horticulture and has successfully trained over 10,000 farmers in Zambia. Her key messages included:

- ▶ Markets show instability, and farmers require support in diversifying along their value chains.
- ▶ Local integrated Water-Energy-Food (WEF) projects have proven efficient and highly beneficial for local farmers. Examples include projects where biogas and solar, coupled with cattle and poultry waste, serve as inputs for practices like fish farming. These projects illustrate the WEF and circular economy initiatives on the ground. The Alliance could collaborate with farmers utilizing these approaches to aid in proposal development for donors that speak WEF and circular economy language. This collaboration presents an opportunity to pool resources for local action through effective partnerships.

Once the farmers concluded their discussions, Ms. Chileya Kasuba, a Consultant at Mediae, a social enterprise dedicated to addressing informational needs in East and Southern Africa (ESA), introduced the participants to a reality TV show aimed at supporting small-scale farmers in Zambia.

Chileya presented a short video with the following highlights:

- ▶ Shamba Shape Up Zambia, also known as Munda Make Over, is a reality TV show designed to assist small-scale farmers in Zambia in aligning their challenges with solutions available in the market. The aim is to support smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa to adapt to changing weather patterns across key value chains, ultimately increasing their yields, incomes, and improving their livelihoods despite climate changes.
- ▶ The first series reached an estimated audience of over 650,000, reaching three times through three broadcasts, demonstrating extensive reach.
- ▶ Collaboration with the Learning Alliance enhances the TV show's impact. Through the Alliance's resources and knowledge, farmers can access relevant and timely information and technologies presented in an engaging format and in a language they can understand.
- ▶ Monitoring changes in farmers' behaviour is crucial, and Knowledge-Attitudes-Practice (KAP) assessments are conducted before and after iShamba interventions.
- ▶ The new series, set to commence on November 13th, will share information in four languages, further expanding its accessibility and impact.

Speakers from the first panel discussion highlighted several key areas for the Learning Alliance to tackle. They emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts in disseminating knowledge and upscaling innovations, as well as facilitating international market access for farmers. Concerns were raised about the impact of policies on farmers, urging for greater farmer engagement in policy formulation. The transformation of scientific knowledge into easily understandable language and the need for support in diversifying farmers' value chains due to market instability were also emphasized. Additionally, the monitoring of behavioural changes in farmers through assessments was underscored as crucial for effective interventions. In essence, the Learning Alliance could address these multifaceted challenges to enhance the resilience and prosperity of farmers in the changing agricultural landscape. The next section shares insights from the second panel discussion.

## **2.2. Panel Discussion Part 2: Value Add of UUs Learning Alliance (extension officers and knowledge experts)**

The second panel discussion delved into the value add of UU's Learning Alliance, focusing on extension officers and knowledge experts. Each panelist shared what their organization is doing regarding knowledge sharing/knowledge management relevant to UU's Learning Alliance. Ideas were shared on the primary value-add of the Learning Alliance compared to other collaborative approaches, emphasizing its unique aspects in knowledge exchange. Suggestions were made for practical activities to ensure

bottom-up knowledge exchange within the Learning Alliance. Recommendations were extended to the CGIAR, NARS, and other institutions, outlining their roles in fostering effective learning. Below are the perspectives shared by the speakers of the second panel discussion, summarized into bullets.

*Bridget Kakuwa, CCARDESA*

- ▶ The Alliance aligns with the Knowledge Management for Agriculture initiative of CAADP XP4 and CGIAR, showcasing mutual support and collaboration for a strengthened partnership.
- ▶ Building the capacity of National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in Knowledge Management and Learning (KML) is crucial, and CCARDESA provides platforms for disseminating innovations and knowledge.
- ▶ NARS play a vital role in implementing and upscaling innovations, and support from Learning Alliance partners is essential in these efforts.
- ▶ Strengthening NARS' linkages with national mandated institutions on regional and continental commitments is important, and the Alliance should assist in influencing national budgets for agriculture and food security programs.
- ▶ Encouraged knowledge exchange among farmers, emphasising the importance of sharing both successes and mistakes to avoid repetition.
- ▶ Co-creation of knowledge among farmers, NARS, and the Alliance partners is identified as an opportunity and value-add of the Alliance.
- ▶ Advocated for resource mobilization and collaboration in proposal development, leveraging the knowledge of NARS and regional research institutions along with farmers' on-the-ground experience.
- ▶ Highlighted the Alliances' role in facilitating continuous improvement and learning among alliance partners, emphasizing the importance of bringing everyone together.

*Moses Odeke, ASARECA*

- ▶ UU's Learning Alliance plays a crucial role in saving time and costs through its partnership arrangement, increasing the likelihood of sustaining knowledge-sharing practices beyond specific project timeframes. The collaborative and networked nature of the Alliance provides a holistic understanding of challenges and solutions, contributing to its value-add.
- ▶ The Alliance facilitates farmer-to-farmer learning and strengthens linkages with partners at national and regional levels, enhancing capacity development and defining Knowledge

Management Strategies as part of the KM4Ag initiative. Continuous monitoring of these strategies' implementation is crucial.

- ▶ Identifying opportunities in the Alliance for policy advocacy and influence is essential, addressing challenges such as lack of awareness, consultation gaps, and issues related to market access, subsidies, and insurance.
- ▶ Moses emphasised the critical role of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for UU's Learning Alliance to track meaningful indicators for effective knowledge exchange and impact. Incorporating M&E for knowledge management and learning into various program packages at different levels is vital for coordinating rollout, monitoring, and reporting to track outputs to outcomes and impact.

#### *Sila Chalwe, NARS*

- ▶ The Learning Alliance should persist in fostering bottom-up learning and exchange.
- ▶ Farmer field schools offer opportunities for learning and program expansion and should be supported.
- ▶ Support for local farmers in agribusiness is crucial, focusing on market assistance and identifying crops in demand, necessitating market surveys.
- ▶ Promotion of indigenous crops and organic local resources is vital for climate-resilient agriculture, leveraging crops adapted to local conditions and readily available resources like garlic, chili, pawpaw for protection, and land improvement.
- ▶ Capacity building efforts for local leaders, grassroots communities, and especially youth should be prioritized. Conducting a baseline assessment of farmer needs is essential to inform local support actions.
- ▶ Sila emphasized the multifaceted nature of farming, highlighting the need for credit facilities and transparently organized insurance systems to address farmers' financial needs beyond food production.

#### *Benjamin Abugri, FARA*

- ▶ Partners have long been engaged in prioritizing KML efforts through developing frameworks, approaches, and tools. There is a call for harmonizing and integrating KML partner efforts at various levels to ensure sustained impact.
- ▶ Emphasis is placed on connecting the efforts and Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with entities like AUC, CAADP XP4, FARA, AFAAS, CORAF, ASARECA and the CGIAR. AFAAS's role in driving research to extension is highlighted.

- ▶ Stressing the importance of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) at national and regional levels, there's a need for robust M&E systems to ensure knowledge is effectively utilized and has a tangible impact.
- ▶ Advocacy for the development of national Knowledge Management (KM) strategies, collaborating closely NARs, and mainstreaming KM in national agricultural sectors is crucial.
- ▶ The Learning Alliance's role in providing exposure and knowledge sharing for farmers on broader platforms should be continued and supported.
- ▶ The Alliance is seen as a vehicle to assist partners, including farmers, in expressing, documenting, and cascading knowledge for outreach and scaling.

Panelists from the second round of discussions emphasised UU's Learning Alliance's role in fostering collaborative learning, policy advocacy, and effective monitoring and evaluation. Key themes included the alignment with CAADP XP4 & CGIAR's KM for agriculture initiative, the benefits of the Alliance's partnership in saving time and costs, the importance of bottom-up learning, and the promotion of climate-resilient agriculture through indigenous crops. Harmonizing KML efforts across different levels and entities and connecting various initiatives were also highlighted as critical aspects for success. Discussions also centred around measuring and evaluating the impact of a learning alliance, including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or metrics. Specific examples were shared on how Learning Alliances have led to measurable outcomes like improved decision-making, innovation, and problem-solving. The broader impact of these alliances on organizational or community development was a focal point, showcasing their potential to drive positive change. Below are key takeaways from both panel discussions.

### **2.3. Key highlights, lessons, and messages**

The section provides key takeaways from the discussions, presented in bullet points. These highlights cover insights from both farmers and partner institutions, emphasizing the importance of indigenous knowledge, knowledge exchange, capacity strengthening, policy advocacy, language communication, and institutionalizing knowledge management. Additionally, it discusses the benefits of UU's Learning Alliance, research-to-policy linkages, access to indigenous knowledge, capacity building, sustainability strategies, and monitoring and evaluation systems.

#### *Farmers*

- ▶ **Indigenous knowledge and farmer innovations:** Farmers possess a wealth of indigenous knowledge and are innovators, providing efficient and empowering learning opportunities.
- ▶ **Knowledge exchange and uptake:** Strong support for farmer-to-farmer exchanges, interactions with local institutions, and support services is crucial for the effective uptake of innovations.

- ▶ **Capacity strengthening:** Knowledge-sharing events contribute to capacity strengthening at individual, organizational, and community levels through shared experiences and interactions.
- ▶ **Relevance and implementation:** capacity building is essential for stakeholders to capture, package, disseminate, and implement knowledge, emphasizing the importance of relevance for farmers and end-users.
- ▶ **Local involvement and understanding:** Local involvement is critical, as individuals on the ground understand the local context and can navigate challenges for increased impact.
- ▶ **Policy advocacy:** Farmer perspectives should be considered in policy development, and knowledge dissemination provides an opportunity to engage with policymakers to influence agricultural policies.
- ▶ **Language and communication:** Simplifying language in policy documents is necessary for farmer understanding, and efforts are needed to bridge the gap between policy and practice. Multilevel linkages, from local to national, should be established.

### *Partner institutions*

- ▶ **Benefits of UU's Learning Alliance:** The Learning Alliance offers a suite of benefits, serving as a vehicle for collaboration and networking, sharing knowledge for farmers and research institutions, providing a holistic understanding, reducing costs, and offering a platform for joint capacity development, policy influence, and advocacy.
- ▶ **Research to Policy (R2P) and budget advocacy:** The Alliance partners can strengthen the research-to-policy link, influencing national budget allocations for knowledge management, learning, and upscaling. There's a need to raise awareness of existing agricultural policies for farmer compliance and benefit.
- ▶ **Access to indigenous knowledge and knowledge products:** The Alliance provides a platform for accessing indigenous knowledge and disseminating Knowledge Products (KPs) for wider use by farmers.
- ▶ **Institutionalizing knowledge management:** The Alliance should assist in institutionalizing KM within countries to make it easily accessible to stakeholders.
- ▶ **Capacity building for national research organizations:** Institutional capacity is crucial for KML, particularly in NRO's, to facilitate dissemination, capacity development, and uptake of research and innovations.
- ▶ **Sustainability strategies:** Sustainability of KM interventions can be achieved through stakeholder engagement in co-creating projects, mainstreaming successful farmer pilots into government planning processes, and linking farmers to markets.



- ▶ **M&E Systems:** Robust M&E systems are essential to ensure research outputs lead to outcomes and impact on the ground. Conducting KAP assessments before and after interventions is vital for tracking behavioural change and impact.

Overall, Section 2 has presented insights, perspectives, and recommendations put forth during two panel sessions. The first panel centred on farmers' experiences with implementing agricultural innovations, highlighting lessons learned, support received, and actions necessary for sustainability. The second panel focused on the value-add of UU's Learning Alliance, with extension officers and knowledge experts sharing their organizations' contributions and suggestions for enhancing knowledge exchange within the alliance. Throughout both discussions, themes of collaborative learning, policy advocacy, and effective monitoring and evaluation emerged as crucial drivers of agricultural development. The section concludes with key messages summarizing the main takeaways from the discussions, emphasizing the importance of indigenous knowledge, capacity building, and sustainable strategies for fostering agricultural resilience and prosperity.

### 3. Operationalizing UU's Learning Alliance for Impact

This section outlines several actionable points derived from key messages and lessons presented in the previous discussions. These points are elaborated within the context of UU and the Learning Alliance, aiming to stimulate further discussion among organizing partners on essential KML activities for 2024. The suggestions encompass practical tools for implementation, such as organizing study tours and exchange visits for farmers, creating opportunities for stakeholders to voice their perspectives, enhancing capacities for documenting success stories, disseminating success stories, leveraging networks for optimizing the adoption and scaling of innovations, harmonizing partner initiatives, formulating comprehensive KML and Learning Alliance M&E frameworks, and facilitating regional knowledge-sharing workshops. These suggestions are represented below.

#### 3.1. Practical tools for implementation

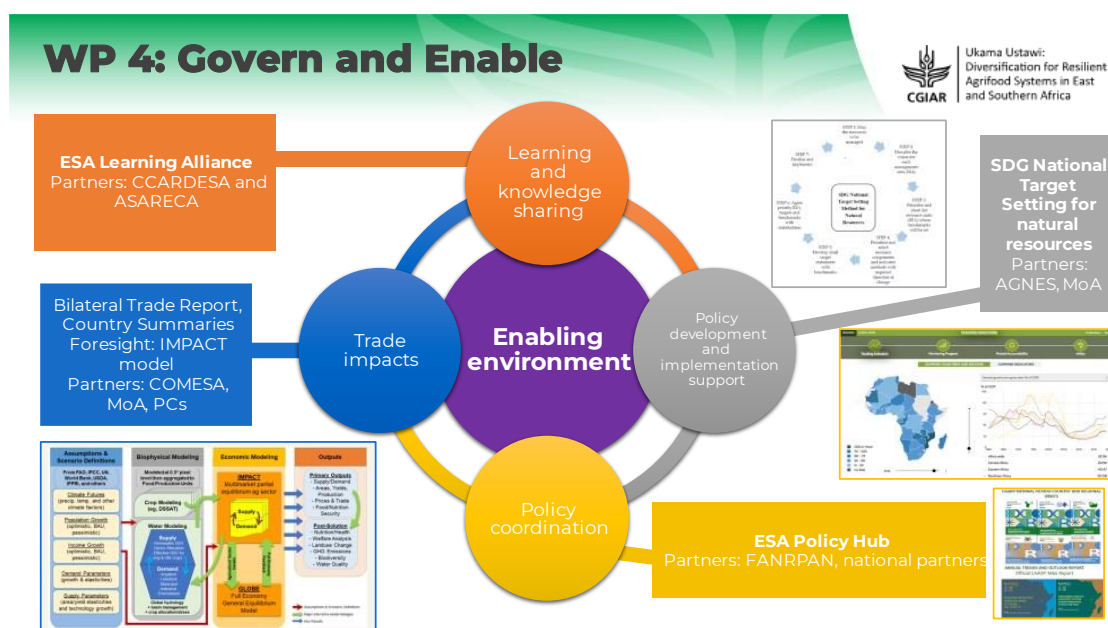
- ▶ **Organize study tours and exchange visits for farmers, as seeing firsthand enhances learning.**  
*Facilitate cross-learning and joint action by selecting a key hub of farmer activity in each of the two regions (ESA) among the 12 countries involved in UU. Align these tours with various Work Packages (WPs) and themes such as Climate, Farming Systems, Diversification, Sustainable Intensification, and Supporting Agribusiness for scaling climate adaptation. Respond to farmer needs identified through UU and knowledge-sharing events. An effective approach would be to showcase the experiences of Zambian farmers Esther, Abel, and Maanda on-site through a well-informed capacity-building study tour. Additionally, facilitate a national institution exchange involving relevant mandated local and national institutions, including government, extension support, and trade and market support, engaging with farmers and NARS. Collaborate with the CGIAR, CCARDESA, and ASARECA to co-create such study tours with key local farmers. Consider hosting a national KML and/or R2P workshop in Zambia and another East African country actively involved in UU related activities.*
- ▶ **Create opportunities for stakeholders, particularly farmers, to voice their perspectives and provide spaces for sharing and mutual learning.**  
*Implement targeted interventions to disseminate knowledge in formats readily usable by farmers to facilitate the adoption of promoted technologies. Consider incorporating a day-long capacity development session during a week-long study tour, as mentioned earlier, or organize it separately in each country involving UU affiliated farmers across the 12 countries. Engage various media organizations to assist in packaging knowledge through graphics, TV, radio, and other channels to enhance accessibility and dissemination.*
- ▶ **Establish opportunities to enhance both individual and institutional capacities for documenting success stories, including those that may not have been as successful, along with**

other pertinent and valuable Knowledge Products (KPs). Consider conducting a practical capacity development workshop specifically focused on KPs related to UU activities. Simultaneously, generate KPs emerging from the work of UU Learning Alliance partners across various WPs through a capacity development write shop. Discuss the coordination among the Alliance partners to determine the most meaningful level for this initiative. Engage in dialogue with key partners to strategize the implementation of this capacity-building effort.

- ▶ **Generate opportunities to disseminate success stories and offer expanded visibility platforms for local farmer innovators.** Plan to showcase and share the innovations of high-performing farmers at regional, continental, and international events where UU is participating. Consider sponsoring these farmers, potentially through incentive-based arrangements, to attend such events, providing them exposure beyond their home country. This approach aims to amplify the recognition of successful local innovations on a broader scale.
- ▶ **Leverage established networks to optimize the adoption and scaling of innovations.** Clearly define the roles and value-add of each level and type of partner within the Learning Alliance. Organize knowledge management and learning activities to maximize benefits and impact on the ground, as well as at national, regional, and continental levels. This strategic approach ensures that each partner's contribution aligns cohesively, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Learning Alliance.
- ▶ **It is crucial to harmonize, align, and integrate Partner initiatives within the Learning Alliance.** UU is currently underway in 12 Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) countries: Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. While KML initiatives can be considered for the entire ESA region, there is merit in categorizing the countries into ESA groups. This segmentation can aid in identifying priority learning themes for exchanges, co-creation of knowledge products, and capacity development based on country and sub-regional contexts.
- ▶ **Formulate a comprehensive KML and a Learning Alliance M&E framework involving all WPs and partners.** Given the Research for Development (R4D) nature of UU, it is imperative that research and implementation lead to tangible action and impact. Emphasize the integration of capacity development, KPs and the institutionalization of knowledge within WP and project activities. Consider the roles and mandates of partners, as well as the end users of knowledge such as farmers, SMEs, and government entities at the national, catchment, and local levels. Assess

technical and process outputs across all 12 ESA countries, ensuring integration and coordination among them and within groups of countries implementing activities under the same WP or thematic focus area. Clearly identify which activities and outputs contribute to specific outcomes and monitor the transformation of outputs into outcomes and impact. Carefully track the utility, uptake, and institutionalization of KPs, leveraging this information to guide the planning and establishment of meaningful learning exchanges at local, national, and regional levels.

- ▶ **Facilitate regional knowledge-sharing workshops that unite participants from various countries and organizations, aligning with regional priorities and agendas.** With a pronounced focus on policy matters, particularly under WP4 (refer to Figure 2), the policy teams, KML (Learning Alliance) teams should collaborate to create a purposeful event. This initiative could follow the R2P approach, framed from local to Regional Economic Community (REC) levels under the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and East African Community (EAC), with support from CCARDESA and ASARECA.



**Figure 2: Overview of Ukama Ustawi WP4**

### 3.2. Concluding remarks and next steps

This report provides a summary of the main highlights, key messages, and lessons derived from the UU’s Learning Alliance side session held during the ADFNS-CAADP event on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, in Zambia. The suggestions outlined in the report propose actions for the Learning Alliance to pursue through informed KML initiatives at local, national, and regional levels. These recommendations are an extension of key suggestions originating from the FARA event in June 2023 and integrate crucial inputs from

partners and farmers at the ADFNS-CAADP session. It is recommended that CGIAR partners arrange further discussions with key the Learning Alliance partners, particularly CCARDESA, ASARECA, IITA, and FARA, to refine, plan, and budget for these suggested activities, facilitating their potential implementation in the upcoming year of 2024. The collective efforts and insights shared during these sessions reflect a commitment to fostering collaborative learning, policy advocacy, and effective monitoring and evaluation within UU's Learning Alliance for the benefit of farmers and agricultural development in the region.