

**Title** Presidential Initiative for Banana Industrial Development (PIBID): status of banana production, marketing and utilization in Uganda, the case of Bushenyi district

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**Keyword** banana; production

### **Abstract**

The first objective of the PIBID was the establishment of benchmarks for starting a rural based pilot banana processing industry in Bushenyi district. To start with, a rural rapid appraisal (RRA) was conducted, where data was collected using a qualitative participatory approach including focus group discussions and key informant interviews. A case study design was adopted to identify and examine key factors driving rural women's and men's participation (or lack of it) in the export-oriented banana industrialization process. Thereafter a baseline survey was conducted to establish benchmarks in the following categories: socioeconomic status of farming community's households; food security and banana value addition status, banana production with respect to land use, production trends, agronomy, agroforestry and water requirements. Data was collected using a questionnaire consisting of six parts: household characteristics, food security and utilization, banana production, banana marketing and utilization, banana product development and value addition, and microfinance access. A three stage stratified sampling was used according to sub-county, parish and household. Ten out of 56 sub-counties were selected. From each sub-county four parishes were chose and from each parish 14 households were sampled. The RRA results showed that women's sentiments towards the banana industrialization initiative were linked to concerns for household food security and increased work burden out of which they feared they may not realize independent dividends. On the contrary men were skeptical due to their distrust for government policies out of previous experiences. The questionnaire tool revealed farmers' dependency on matooke for food security and nutrition, with no other significant food source. The nutrition status of children particularly between 6-12 months was below the recommended standard. The predominant processing activity involved beer cultivars and these included local beer, juice and wine, and some pancakes. Matooke was virtually traded as a fresh commodity. The land tenure in the area in customary or freehold and is predominantly under matooke cultivation. Farmers generally preferred increasing farm productivity to increasing acreage. There was one peak of annual banana production. Over 37 cultivars are grown in Bushenyi, although only five were listed under the most preferred cultivars. Key quality attributes included bunch compactness, tolerance to pests and diseases, size of fingers, taste, bunch size, and the most determining, market preference. Majority of respondents use locally available inputs, with virtually any agrochemicals,

where tree planting was practiced, it was limited to eucalyptus (95%), and irrigation was not practiced. There were many perceived factors affecting marketing of matooke but predominantly lack of value addition and low farm-gate prices, where the farmer received only 44% of the market share, with the rest going to middle men were reported. Over 50% of banana harvested per month is consumed by the respondent households. There was also wide fluctuation in farm-gate prices between the peak and low production season (between 800-4000 U. Shs, for large bunches). Most common (41%) financing of production activities is through local savings and credit co-operative societies, which were the easiest to access. Loans were otherwise only accessed against land or salary. Either way, only about 50% of the loans obtained are used to boost banana production. Therefore PIBID is setting ground to commercialize the production and value addition of a largely food cropping system with poor marketing functions, fragile food security and disenfranchised target beneficiaries of the project with evident gender disparity of access to resources.