Climate resilience needs a route to the farmer

Climate, environment & resilience

Retrospective · early-2023 IAM experience | Published 17 November 2026

Retrospective learning edition: the period above is the experience discussed, not an earlier publication date.

A useful technology can remain out of reach if nobody can supply it reliably or help a farmer use it. This edition examines the service connections behind climate-smart agriculture.

IAM’s last-mile services in Karamoja

Dorothy Najjingo’s DAI article describes IAM working with agro-providers and village agents to reach farmers, connect services and broker relationships with businesses. Demonstration gardens and radio programmes complemented distribution and extension.

The article discusses seeds, locally suitable inputs and other climate-smart services as part of a wider market approach. Its early-2023 account is an implementation perspective, not an independent test of long-term resilience or a measurement of greenhouse-gas reductions.

What the Activity did

1. Partnered with agro-providers to test last-mile distribution arrangements.

2. Used village-agent connections alongside complementary advice and demonstrations.

3. Linked farmer needs with business relationships and context-specific technologies.

Evidence boundary

An author’s programme account. Access or uptake does not by itself establish sustained welfare gains, adaptation under future shocks or reduced emissions.

What this means for future design

UMSDN editorial interpretation

UMSDN's interpretation is to examine the full route from an appropriate technology to a useful outcome. A product has to fit local conditions, reach the user at the right time, come with credible information and make sense within the household's resources and risks. Supply and demand should be investigated together.

A future design can compare the farmer's transaction with the provider's business. What is the cost of a small delivery? How predictable are orders? Who carries inventory and default risk? What happens if advice is poor or a product fails? Those questions may reveal a distribution or accountability problem that an awareness campaign cannot solve.

Resilience claims need a longer view than a sales report. Record repeated use, affordability, recovery after a relevant shock and whether different groups can access the service. Define what climate risk the intervention is intended to address. Avoid describing every higher-yielding input or digital service as climate-smart without showing the mechanism.

Commercial demand also needs interpretation. A temporary subsidy may produce purchases that do not recur, while an unaffordable service can exclude the people most exposed to climate risks. Test financing and delivery options openly, compare alternatives and identify the public role. Keep the provider's continuation and the household's benefit as distinct outcomes to verify.

The question for discussion

Which missing connection most often prevents a useful climate-smart service from reaching a smallholder farmer?

Try this with your team

Draw the route for one proposed service: supplier, last-mile provider, advice, payment and user. For every link, state one assumption and one practical check. Then identify who carries the loss if the service fails.

Read the source. Share your view.

A market systems approach to climate-smart agriculture in Uganda

Dorothy Najjingo / DAI Developments. Uses historical programme experience, including an early-2023 reporting reference; it does not describe present coverage.

https://dai-global-developments.com/articles/a-market-systems-approach-to-climate-smart-agriculture-in-uganda/

Read and contribute directly: https://umsdn-learning-hub.vocalapron1.chatgpt.site/resources/newsletters/?issue=06