



2<sup>nd</sup> QUARTER MONITORING REPORT

(April–June, 2023)

GRAINS FOR GROWTH PROJECT (G4G)



#LeaveNoVulnerableBehind#

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## 1.0 Executive Summary

In 2022, U3 AGRINET applied and was selected to participate in the **Grains for Growth** Project facilitated by IDH. This partnership will support U3 Agrinet to increase production and supply of Sorghum to Guinness Ghana Ltd, improve the resilience and purchasing power of women, youth and PwD farmers through sustainable, dignified and rewarding jobs in agriculture in the Upper East region of Ghana.

In the quarter under review, U3 Agrinet deepened collaborations with IDH, CATALYST+, Guinness Ghana Ltd and MoFA in different facets of the agricultural value chain, to ensure that our goals and operations remained relevant to the agenda “**Leave No Vulnerable Behind**” in the transformation of families and communities.

In this 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, U3 Agrinet was awarded a two (2) years in-kind grant worth \$150,000.00 by IDH. This was aimed at boosting access to farm inputs and quality ploughing services aimed at shifting the paradigm into sorghum production through the participation of more smallholder farmers to increase yields of sorghum for Guinness Ghana Limited under the G4G Project.

Following the decades of the shift into maize production as a food security crop, U3 Agrinet required extra strategic efforts to convince farmers in the target districts in the region to diversify into Sorghum production. To reduce the fear and risks for food insecurity among these farmers, U3 Agrinet introduced the **Maize for Sorghum** campaign, which turned out to be an effective and successful sensitization strategy. This strategy implies that U3 Agrinet provided support for **1 acre Maize and 1 acre Sorghum** totaling 2 acres for a farmer. This was the best bargain to meet farmers halfway where soils were suitable to revitalize the production of Sorghum after decades of a shift into maize production because maize has become a major food security crop.

U3 Agrinet began sensitizing and onboarding of out-growers specifically for sorghum production. A number of capacity building activities were conducted for both U3 Agrinet staff and Out-growers in management, operation, grain quality, group dynamics and Farming as a business and agronomic practices from IDH, CATALYST+ and MoFA.

At the end of June, U3 Agrinet had onboarded **1,216** new out-growers from 26 communities in Bolgatanga, Talensi and Bongo districts. The breakdown indicates that, **1059 (87%)** are females, **157 (13%)** are males, **478 (39%)** are youth age between 18–35 years and **14 (1%)** are People with Disability who are currently receiving production support for sorghum. In this report, over **1000 acres** representing 100+% of target acres have been ploughed, over **80%** of these farms have received either hybrid Pack 501, Kapala or Dorado and local hybrid maize seeds and planting is ongoing. U3Agrinet has received **1170 bags** of 50kg Falcon NPK Fertilizer from the Supplier and distribution being supervised by U3 Agrinet Field Officers to farmer groups.

It is important to mention that, U3 Agrinet introduced a strategy dubbed **maize for sorghum**, where farmers accepted to produce sorghum only if U3 Agrinet provided support for their maize farms, which is their main staple food crop and food security for families.

## 2.0 Key Activities and Deliverables

### 2.1 Production

#### 2.1.1 2023 Crop Season Planning and Preparation

Management, Field Staff and Farmers participated in couple of planning meetings and workshops to review successes and failures of 2022 Crop season as well as plan for the new season. It was a management decision to add Sorghum into the production stream following the award of in-kind grant facility under the Grains for Growth Project. Management and staff set a target to supply at least 1000 mt to Guinness Ghana Ltd under the arrangement. This informed 2023 Crop budget and site selection for community entry and sensitization of traditional authorities and smallholder farmer groups to participate. U3 AGRINET also secured an in-kind grant from CESOCECO now CATALYST+ under the Agriculture Women Empowerment (AWE) program to build capacity in two areas.

1. Two Weeks training of stallholder farmers and field staff facilitated by Hardy (Technical Advisor Consultant from Canada on Group Dynamic
2. Development of a 5-Year Strategic Plan for U3 Agrinet working with Mrs. Kimberly McCauley (Technical Advisor consultant) from Canada for 2-weeks.

The two assignments were funded by CATALYST+. U3 Agrinet now has a clearer direction for the next 5-years as an SME



Figure 1: U3 Agrinet benefited from AWE capacity building support in group dynamic and development of 5-years strategic plan through CATALYST+

### 2.1.2 Community and site selection for Sorghum production

Following the addition of Sorghum to our production stream, the technical team discussed the mapping and selection of areas and soils suitable for the production of Sorghum. Most of the moisture areas that cannot produce maize, were ideally suitable site for the sorghum. Areas included the following;

Table 1: Community and Site Selection for Sorghum Production

District	Communities	Estimated Farmers
Bolgatanga	Sumbrungu and Sherigu	1450
Talensi	Balungu,Pwalugu,Pusu-Namoo,Winkogo and Yinduri	1700
Nabdram	Datoko,Shaiga, Kongo and Nangodi	600
Kassena-Nanakane	Naaga	200
Bongo	Adaboya	150
<b>Estimate Total</b>		<b>4,100</b>

### 2.1.3 Onboarding of Smallholder Farmers

In April, U3 Agrinet designed a mobile data collection tool using Kobo Collect App to profile all new farmer groups identified and interested in participating in the G4G Project. A total

of 1,216 Farmers have been onboarded to received support to produce Sorghum.

U3 Agrinet deployed a mobile application to collect and organize farmer profile data. To view the tool, press and hold the control key and click the link– [U3 AgriNET Transformation Project\\_Smallholder Farmer Profile Form \(kobotoolbox.org\)](https://kobotoolbox.org)

**Summary Statistics:** Total 1,216 farmers, Females 1059 (87%), Males 157(13%), Youth 481 (40%) and PwDs 14 (1%) were profiled as new farmers at the end of June 2023 for Sorghum production.

*Table 2: Sorghum Farmers For 2023 Cropping Season*

SORGHUM FARMERS FOR 2023 CROPPING SEASON							
District and Communities	Total Number	Female	Male	Youth (18–35)	Female (18–35)	Male (18–35)	# of PwD
<b>Bolgatanga</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>
Sherigu Bolingo	49	48	1	23	23	0	1
Sherigu kukua	11	11	0	0	0	0	0
Sumbrungu Amogrebiisi	24	24	0	10	10	0	0
Sumbrungu Anateem	49	46	3	11	9	2	1
Sumbrungu Kulbia	47	47	0	20	20	0	1
Tinganbiisi	28	28	0	11	11	0	1
Yenbaasiya	28	28	0	17	17	0	0
Sumbrungu Central	17	17	0	4	4	0	0
Sherigu–Central	66	66	0	36	36	0	3
Sumbrungu–Atoabisi	35	35	0	23	23	0	1
<b>Bongo</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>
Bongo Adaboya–Akutabongo	15	8	7	7	4	3	0
Bongo Adaboya–Seduguro	24	16	8	9	2	7	0
Bongo–Adaboya	61	35	26	18	9	9	0
<b>Talensi</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>6</b>
Kambagre	12	12	0	7	7	0	0
Lubongo Tongo Balungu	30	30	0	2	2	0	1
Pusu–Namogo sabaye	33	31	2	21	19	2	0
Pwalugu	28	27	1	0	0	0	0

Tongo Banlugu	95	63	32	34	21	13	0
Winkogo–Abugbisi	23	8	15	8	3	5	1
Winkongo–Awaradone	218	217	1	75	74	1	3
Winkongo–Dapoore	133	88	45	37	15	22	0
Yinduri–Kpehig	37	32	5	12	11	1	1
Yinduri–Zandoya	12	10	2	8	7	1	0
Yinduri–Zorgbee	22	17	5	10	9	1	0
Yinduri–Central	71	67	4	42	41	1	0
Winkongo–Central	48	48	0	36	35	1	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1216</b>	<b>1059</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>14</b>

#### 2.1.4 Agronomic Training and meetings

Through April and May 2023, U3 Agrinet participated in all IDH trainings including Grains Quality Standards, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning and Good Agronomic Practices. Mr. Albert Zampane, the official Agronomic Specialist assigned to U3 Agrinet, led the ToT on GAPs where 15 staff of U3 Agrinet participated. U3 Agrinet in collaboration with MoFA is currently cascading GAPs trainings to smallholder farmers in all our focused communities. These trainings are being carried out concurrently with production activities to avoid any further delays in the season. Topics and schedule for training below;

*Table 3: Agronomic Training and meetings*

Communities	# of Locations	Scheduled Date	Scheduled Officers	Organization
Sumbrungu & Sherigu	3	20th–23rd, June	David Akurikiya & U3 Field Officer	U3
Pwalugu, Balungu, Pusu–Namoo	3	26th–30th June	Issah Shaibu Wahab & U3 Field Officer	MoFA/U3
Winkongo	3	3rd–7th, July	Simon Abanga & U3 Field Officer	MoFA/U3
Yinduri	1	10–14th July	Doguriba James & U3 Field Officer	U3

#### 2.1.5 Number of farmers trained by district/communities/Gender/Age Class/Disability

At the end of this reporting period 760 farmers (590 females and 70 males) representing 63% of the total number of farmers onboarded participated in Good Agronomic Practices (GAPs) training through our cascaded training program. Topics treated include site



selection, land preparation, planting material and planting. U3 Agrinet in collaboration with MoFA will continue with the training plan as scheduled in the work program. Both Sorghum and Maize farms will benefit from these trainings.

### 2.1.6 Tractor Service

JackJeff Company was selected to provide ploughing service to 1000 smallholder farmers under the G4G project. During the sensitization of farmers, site selection was a key activity conducted to ascertain the suitability of sorghum fields. To date, JackJeff company has provide tractor ploughing services on 1000 acres belonging to 630 smallholder farmers of U3 Agrinet in target communities. Below is the pictorial evidence of ploughing activities in



some Sumbrungu and Sherigu. To ensure the we tracked the ploughing services to farmer

*Figure 2: Ploughing Services provided to Sorghum out-grower farmers by JackJeff Company under G4G Project-Pictures by U3 Agrinet*

groups by JackJeff the service provider, U3 Agrinet developed and deployed a mobile tool <https://ee.kobotoolbox.org/x/FYZVPDmy>

### 2.2 Input (Seed, Fertilizer and agrochemical) Support

Adayelsum Meridian Enterprise received 50% payment of grant amount from IDH to provide sorghum seed, fertilizer and agrochemical to support 1000 acres under the G4G grant scheme. To date, 0.8 mt (800 kg) of Sorghum and 270kg hybrid maize seed. Also, 57 mt (1140 mini bags) of fertilizer and 380 liters of pre-emergence and post emergence have



*1000 bags of Falcon Fertilizer being hauled into our warehouse as part of input supply by Adeyelsum Meridian Enterprise*



been delivered to U3 Agrinet warehouse.

U3 Agrinet has taken delivery and distributed 1,070kg of Sorghum seed including (Pack 501=800kg, Kapala=1500kg and Dorado=50kg) and 270kg hybrid maize seed. We also received a full truck load of 1000 bags the 50kg of Falcon NKP Fertilizer which was discharged in our warehouse at Winkogo. In addition, U3 Agrinet earlier received 300 liters of pre and post emergence weedicide as part of the deliverables.



*Sorghum Seed received and distributed to Farmer Groups-Photo by U3 Agrinet*

Distribution of these farm inputs to group smallholder farmers is ongoing in all targeted communities. It is expected that all smallholders will receive their inputs as soon as their fields are ploughed. At the end of the reporting period, U3 Agrinet had distributed 600 kg of Pack 501 seeds, 120kg of Kapala, 30kg of Doroda at the end of June, 2023.



*Anapoka, a women group leader in Winkogo, excitedly carrying her 20kg of Pack 501 Seeds-Photo by U3 Agrinet*



*A group of farmers from Bongo Adebaya receiving Pack 501 Seed from U3 Agrinet Officer*

### 2.2.1 Planting

Following the onset of the rains, farmers are encouraged to plant sorghum seeds as early as possible. U3 Agrinet has selected three sites, ploughed and planted sorghum in Pusu-Namoo and Winkogo to serve as demonstration fields. These are accessible to out-grower groups to serve as main training centers for green and brown field days. Two more demonstration sites are being developed, while five (5) others will be situated in the best practicing farms in Sumbrungu, Sherigu, Bongo and Yinduri. This will give a total of 10 demonstration sites as planned for 2023. It is confirmed that over 80% of beneficiary farmers are planting their fields, especially the very wet areas of our operation as at end of the quarter.



Planting in Adaboya in Bongo District



Women out-growers planting Pack 501 Seed in Pusu-namoo in the Talensi District under G4G-Photo by U3 Agrinet

### 2.2.2 Sorghum trial fields

As part of our learning agenda and the quest to ensure that we adopt the right technology and practices that guarantee increased yields of sorghum, U3 Agrinet rollout three (3) trial fields for Kapala, Pack 501 and Camder varieties in the dry season along the Black Volta in Pwalugu. The ½ acre trial field has been put under strict variety protocols, effective observation and documentation for the three varieties (Hybrid Pack 501, OPV Kapala and Camfer). The difference between the hybrid Pack 501, Kapala (OPV) and Camfer a local variety all at 67<sup>th</sup> day after planting is providing critical insightful information and knowledge that will enhance our decisions and actions to remain competitive. The hybrid Pack 501 which is an early maturing is expected to outperform Kapala, but only time will tell. The evidence and outcome will be significant information to inform production decisions in the next seasons.



Pack 501 @ 67 days

19:27



Kampala. @67 Days

19:31



Camder @67 days

19:26

Figure 5: Sorghum Trial Fields





*Sorghum Trial fields invaded by birds- photo by U3 Agrinet Officers*

### 2.3 Regenerative Agriculture Trails

The role of SMEs is critical to the global response to the threat of climate change. Regenerative Agriculture (RA) is an outcome-based food production system that nurtures and restores soil health, protects the climate and water resources and biodiversity, and enhances farms' productivity and profitability. In the quarter under review, U3 Agrinet begun sensitizing and training of out-growers and in-growers on regenerative agricultural using



*A practice of Regenerative Agricultural (RA) at U3 AGRINET In-Grower Farm Estate in Tongo-Balungu-Photo by U3 Agrinet*

1/8 each of maize and sorghum practice fields in the Balungu Farm Estate. U3 Agrinet is committed to increasing the area under regenerative agriculture for maize and sorghum progressively on our 248-acre in the Balungu Farm Estate. It is expected that smallholder farmers will adopt and practice of regenerative agriculture at least on an acre of their farmland for maize or sorghum in the subsequent seasons.



## 2.4 Advocacy and Communication

### 2.4.1 Community entry on Sorghum production

At the beginning of the season a number of community entry engagements were conducted by both Management, Technical Advisors, Field Officers and Chiefs. The objective was to increase awareness of sorghum demand and production streams in our zone of influence. In January and May 2023, Mr. Hardy and Mrs. Kim Macaulay who are both Technical Advisor Consultant from CATALYST+, conducted some engagements with traditional Authorities and Farmer Groups.

Forming part of their assignment, the two consultants under the Agricultural Women



*Figure 7: CATALYST+ Consultants engaging with traditional authorities and women out-grower groups*

Empowerment (AWE) initiative awareness creation and build capacity to advocacy for increase support to vulnerable societies including access to fertile lands for women, youth and People with Disability (PwD). Through these engagements and sensitization of traditional Authorities, U3 Agrinet has been able to developed additional 110 acres, fenced and allocated 17 acres of fertile land for youth and PWDs in the Balungu community for the 2023 Cropping Season. These beneficiary farmers have received support for tractor ploughing services, Pack 501 seeds, fertilizer, and weedicide for free.

### 2.4.2 Update on Website and Social Media Handles

To ensure that our operations are visible and effectively communicating and engaging with our stakeholders on our activities, U3 Agrinet continue to update the website as well as new social media handles such with videos and pictures. Visit any of our mass media accounts to interact and leave your comments.

- ❖ Website: <https://u3agrinet.net>
- ❖ Instagram: u3agrinet
- ❖ LinkedIn: u3agrinet
- ❖ Facebook: u3 three Agrinet
- ❖ WhatsApp Group (internal)

## 2.4.3 Access to financial credit to support production and aggregation

### 2.4.3.1 Update on Absa Credit Scheme

Following the introduction of U3 Agrinet to Absa by IDH under the Young African Works Initiative, we have exchange communication and documentation with Absa to enable U3 Agrinet access a loan facility to aggregate excess Sorghum from smallholder farmers in 2023 cropping season. The facility which promises to be a critical resource is quite cumbersome in process and may result into delays. U3 Agrinet is has presented audited account 2019, 2020 and 2021 fiscal years as part of the application process. Audited account report for 2022 is yet to be prepared by U3 Agrinet which is a key requirement.

### 2.4.3.2 Contract with Guinness Ghana Ltd

U3 Agrinet was onboarded by Guinness Ghana Ltd as a supplier of Sorghum grains after a successful application onto the Diegeo platform. Correspondence between the Guinness Ghana team and U3 Agrinet has been progressive and productive. However, Guinness Ghana Ltd is yet to sign a contract with price per kilo of Sorghum for 2023 season.

As part of the onboarding requirement of the Coupa Supplier Platform, U3 Agrinet has developed and submitted the following organizational policies as part of the Coupa membership requirement;



1. U3 AGRINET Code of Business Conduct and



2. U3 AGRINET\_Code of Conduct for Suppliers

### 2.4.3.3 Investing in Land Development for Women in Agriculture

U3 Agrinet in May, 2023 invested an amount of **GHS 195,000** to developed additional **100 acres** at the Balungu Farm Estate. Upon a successful engagement with traditional authorities and landlords of the Balungu community, U3 Agrinet secured the additional 450 acres but was only able to develop 100 acres to support women, youth and PwDs with access to farm lands for the 2023 crop season.

In addition to the 148 acres already developed at a cost **GHS 180,000** from 2019 to 2021, U3 Agrinet now has a combine total of 248 acres of farm land to support expansion of the in-grower farm model in the production of maize and sorghum.

With the additional acres, more women, youth and PwDs will have access to fertile and secured land to participate in our agricultural transformation agenda through the Grains for

## Growth Project.



*Figure 8: U3 Agrinet invest in the development of additional 100 acres of land to support vulnerable groups under the in-grower programme. Photo- U3 Agrinet*



## 2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

### 2.5.1 Summary statistics of smallholder farmers distribution

#### 2.5.2 Indicator Tracking Table (As at end of June, 2023)

Theme	Indicator Name	Annual Target	Q1 Actual	Comments
Smallholder Farmer Engagements	Number of smallholder farmers registered with company sourcing database	2000	1216	Ploughing service still ongoing in target communities with farmer groups
	Number of SHFs who participate in trainings in good agricultural practices to produce high-quality grains	2880	760	Training was mainly on; Site selection, etc. 15 communities have received these trainings
	Number of SHFs who participate in trainings on climate smart or regenerative agriculture	450	380	Regenerative agriculture
	Number of SHFs that participate on trainings on financial and business literacy.	225	670	Group Dynamics, FaaB by Catalyst+
	Number of SHFs with improved access to high-quality seeds, agrochemical and mechanization as a result of project support)	1000	630 SMFs 1000acres	Pack 501 seeds Kapala seeds Dorado seeds Hybrid Maize
	No. of demonstration farms setup to demonstrate good agricultural practices, climate smart agriculture, regenerative agriculture	5	5	3 plots planted 1 Regenerative agriculture 1 in Sumbrungu
	Number of Extension Officers engaged in facilitating agricultural production and technology	10	11	U3 Field Staff=8 MoFA extension officers=3

	New land acquired and developed for in-grower farmers	200 acres	110 acres	Balungu Farm Estate=100 acres model farms=10 acres
Production	Number of Persons with Jobs created		47	Only U3 field staff and tractors operators under JackJeff Company were countered
	Number of farmers who have been allocated farm lands	TBD	116	Women=80 Youth=20 PwDs=16

*Table 4: Summary statistics of smallholder farmers distribution*

## 2.6 Key Issues and Mitigation

- Effect of forex on input supplied
- Unpredictable rains
- High demand of smallholders
- High cost of inputs
- Delay in supply of inputs
- Inadequate and high cost of tractor service (More tractors)
- Birds invasion on Sorghum farm (spread risk among out-growers)
- Reluctance of farmer to switch to sorghum production (Maize for Sorghum strategy)
- Uncertainty in pricing of sorghum

## 2.7 Plan for Next Quarter

- Request for 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche payment to suppliers
- Complete planting of both Out-grower and in-grower fields
- Set-up the Spraying Gangs
- First and second fertilizer application
- Continued training of Farmer Groups
- Monitoring of farm practices in all model farmers and communities
- Reporting of quarter activities

## 2.8 Recommendations and Conclusion

The season is very promising, however the challenge of high cost of input, absence of subsidy, price uncertainty, risks in sorghum production continue to affect the production capacity and willingness of farmers especially women, youth and PwD to switch from maize to sorghum.

Following the high cost of forex, especially the dollar, the quantity of input and mechanization estimated numbers during the planning were all affected. Delay in the release of grant allocations to Adeyelsum Meridian Enterprise also affected the timely supply of fertilizer especially. In addition, and more importantly the uncertainty on food security should farmers switch to sorghum against maize was a difficult change management process to deal with. Eventually, management had no option than to accept the **maize for sorghum initiative**. This implied that a farmer will be supported an acre each for maize and sorghum. This was the only way farmers with suitable sorghum lands were willing to participate in the G4G Project.

Overall, the G4G Project has been a great relief to SMEs and Smallholder farmers in the Upper East region. It is expected that production volumes of sorghum in 2023 crop season will increase in both volume and value to encourage more farmers to enroll in coming seasons.

## 3.0 Telling Our Story

- **Success Stories (Stories to be developed in Q2)**
  - Increased access to quality tractor services, seed and fertilizer for Women, youth and PwD smallholder farmers in Upper East
  - Sorghum trial fields to facilitate training adaption among smallholder farmers in upper east
  - Supporting Persons with Disability (PwD) to contribute to food security and earn income

Report Approved by: Ussif William Ayinga (CEO)

Signed: U.W.A

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2023