

# REFSO

Rural Energy & Food Security Organization

Strategic Plan 2002 - 2006



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## PREFACE

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Rural Energy and Food Security Organization (REFSO) was founded in 1996 as a membership Non Governmental Organization based in Busia town. The aim was to strengthen and empower rural communities in food production, processing and marketing, agro-forestry, tree planting, energy conservation and natural resources management in sugar belt and tobacco growing zones in Western Kenya.

Tobacco and sugarcane, being the main cash crops with reliable market, have diverted attention of the rural communities away from food crops. Very little or no land is set aside for food crop production. The two cash crops are also labor intensive and require constant attention at the expense of the food crops. Food self-sufficiency for the rural communities is therefore threatened. Impacts on the environment are also negative considering the fact that trees have to be cut down to cure tobacco or have a uniform stand of sugarcane for mechanized production.

Since 1999 REFSO has been actively involved in promoting cassava, sweet potato and agro forestry activities in Busia, Teso and Bungoma districts of Western Kenya among CBOs and rural communities. The emphasis has been on promoting the wide spread diffusion of tested technologies from research institutions and farmers to increase food productivity. REFSO has been able to reach out over 2000 peasant farmers with such technologies that have proved viable.

The main challenge facing REFSO is to reach out to the wider beneficiary community in Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda with these technologies. This five year strategic plan developed during a workshop from 9<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> April 2001 was a deliberate effort by REFSO to respond to these challenges and to reposition itself so as to remain relevant to its constituencies.

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The plan is a product of consensus on the way forward by representatives from the REFSO Board, Secretariat, CBOs, KARI, ICRAF, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development, other relevant government ministries and partner organizations in Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda herein referred to as key stakeholders. We sincerely thank them for all their contributions. It's development and production was supported by USAID/REDSO through Pact and Mwengo.

This document outlines REFSO's five year plan 2002–2006 and a commitment to mainstream strategic thinking while implementing these intentions. We call upon each and everyone for a sustained partnership and support in implementing this strategic plan. Long live REFSO.

## ACRONYMS

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AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMVD	African Mosaic Virus Disease
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern & Central Africa
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research
IPC	International Potato Centre
EAC	East Africa Community
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
ICRAF	International Centre for Research in Agro forestry
ICRISAT	International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics
KARI	Kenya Agricultural Research Institute
KEFRI	Kenya Forestry Research Institute
ME&R	Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
MWENGO	<i>Mwelekeo wa</i> NGO
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
REFSO	Rural Energy & Food Security Organization

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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Around 840 million people (or nearly one in seven of the world's population) were estimated in 1996 to lack access to the food they needed for adequate and regular nourishment. These constituted 18 per cent of the population in developing countries and 34 per cent of the population in Africa. Most were chronically hungry for much of the year. At least 1.3 billion live on less than US\$1 per day. If the world can't make progress against hunger and poverty, by year 2005, there will be 4 billion people on less than US\$2 per day and more than two billion people living in extreme poverty.

In Kenya 51 per cent of the total population is food poor (Kenya government 1997 Poverty Report). The 1997 report indicated that 61.77 per cent of the total population of Busia district in Western Kenya experienced food deficiency. Among other factors, food crisis is the primary contributing factor to general poverty, which has left a majority of Kenyans, especially the rural folks, hard hit.

In Eastern Uganda the major challenge is household food accessibility for the majority of rural families. This is a backlash from internal conflicts between government and guerrillas and especially the Idi Amin regime. The state of the environment report (1998) states that malnutrition is widespread especially among children and mothers. According to the Uganda Demographic Health Survey (UDHS) of 1995, 43 per cent of children below 5 years of age were found to be stunted as a result of malnutrition. The report states that stunting is more prevalent among rural children in comparison to those in urban areas; about 16 per cent in the rural areas compared to 8 per cent of those in urban areas.

It is such a background that made governments of 186 countries at the World Food summit in Rome in November 1996, pledge to reduce by half the number of undernourished people in the world by 2015. But this target is still far from being met. The number of hungry people is falling by about eight million a year but this is less than half of the 20 million a year required. In October 2000, a report by United Nation's Food and

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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Agriculture Organization (FAO) said that unless extra efforts are made to accelerate progress, the target would not be achieved before 2030, 15 years late. (Panos: Food for all).

Agriculture and rural development are central to the World Bank's poverty reduction mission. One key challenge ahead is to integrate scientific research into agriculture and rural development programs and services including education and health, micro-enterprise financing, agro-processing, and market access. Many research organisations appreciate the significance of a continuing duty to ensure that scientific research serves the cause of the poor and the hungry. "At a time when science is moving at a spectacular pace, it is essential that the new and exciting possibilities for increased agricultural productivity and sustainable natural resources management are realized in the developing countries." (*James D. Wolfensohn, President, The World Bank*).

Research institutions like CGIAR where ICRAF falls have realised that for scientific research to successfully serve the poor, they have to closely work with implementing organizations. One such organization in Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda is REFSO.

REFSO's area of operation has been affected by reduced soil productivity and the spread of African Cassava Mosaic Disease (ACMD) which has affected the production of cassava in the region. The incidence of this disease was initially very high in Uganda and later spread to Kenya. Over 60 per cent of cassava in Kenya comes from Western Kenya. Due to the Cassava Mosaic Disease coupled with cassava green mite and bacterial blights, the production has reduced drastically on acreage production. Studies carried out indicated that sweet potato production in western Kenya has reduced drastically due to lack of improved seed material, poor soils especially in Busia(K) and poor agricultural practices mainly characterized by continuous cropping with little or no use of

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fertilizers. The population growth rate, sugar cane and tobacco growing have worsened the situation. These problems in combination pose a big threat to trees, leading to deforestation.

Though REFSO together with various research institutions have been intervening in this area, the problem of hunger and food insecurity has persisted. Moreover, the number of people requesting for assistance has also been increasing. With the above developments, REFSO's activities and the increasing demand of its services, REFSO realized that it needed to systematically rethink its focus so as not to be derailed. This strategic plan is a product of this rethinking process.

## **2.0 VISION, MISSION, & CORE VALUES**

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To give REFSO focus, future direction and purpose it was necessary to formulate its vision, mission and core values.

### **2.1 VISION**

REFSO's vision is "a food secure population in a friendly environment".

### **2.2 MISSION**

REFSO's mission is to mobilize, sensitize and empower communities to enhance sustainable household food security in Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda.

### **2.3 CORE VALUES**

REFSO shall endeavor to promote and maintain the following core values

- Honesty and integrity.
- Transparency and accountability.
- Participation/teamwork.
- Gender sensitivity.
- Commitment and professionalism.
- Environmental friendliness.
- Obedience to the laws of the land.
- Sensitivity to traditional and cultural values.
- Non-partisan (non-political) approach to development.

## 3.0 STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

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Strategic analysis helps in clarifying the conditions within which the organization operates, an overall view of the organization and the factors that affect the organization. The results of this analysis provide a good indication of what the objectives and strategies of the organization will be. The following were identified as REFSO's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

### 3.1 STRENGTHS

REFSO has established cordial working relations with its collaborators. They are drawn from government, national and international NGOs, CBOs and the private sector e.g. KARI, KEFRI, ICRAF, Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources (Forest Department) and Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development.

CBOs are key players in REFSO's work at the grassroots level because REFSO mainly works through them. Penetration to the community is through CBOs. A majority of the CBO members, who are farmers, act as technology dissemination agents, to and from REFSO, and enhance faster adoption. Other contact farmers who are not CBO members are also actively involved in technology dissemination and sharing of experiences.

REFSO has also developed information and communication systems. This has led to improved communication between the REFSO secretariat and its stakeholders.

### 3.2 WEAKNESSES

REFSO has limited staff to effectively monitor and evaluate REFSO's programs. Other weaknesses include; inactivity of some board members, inadequate skills in CBOs and contact farmers, limited office equipment, limited transport facilities and limited resources. REFSO has also had difficulties reaching the poorest of the poor. These have hampered effective project implementation, monitoring and evaluation and public relations.

## **3.0 STRATEGIC ANALYSIS**

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### **3.3 OPPORTUNITIES**

The opportunities to REFSO are increasing levels of depleted soil fertility due to mono cropping, leaching and soil erosion. The high rate of Vitamin A deficiency which leads to Xerophthalmia (night blindness) and the high incidence of the African Mosaic Virus that wiped out the cassava plant in Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda in the late 80s and 90s have also availed opportunities.

High rate of deforestation in Western Kenya associated with tobacco and sugarcane farming, charcoal burning and brick making is another opportunity for REFSO to introduce a natural resource management programme. These are enhanced by the increasing costs of accessing modern medicine making REFSO's high value trees domestication (medicinal) programme highly attractive.

The East African Cooperation opened doors for cross border activities. This is an opportunity for REFSO to implement its regional activities (Eastern Uganda and Western Kenya).

### **3.4 THREATS**

Shifting donor priorities, competition from other NGOs, unpredictable government policies on regional agricultural programmes pose threats to REFSO. In addition, there are erratic weather patterns, shared natural resources, culture and superstitions especially in tree planting and land ownership rights.

## 4.0 KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

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From the analysis of REFSO's operating environment, the following strategic areas have been synthesized for REFSO to focus on the next five years. Objectives and strategies will be formulated around these key issues.

### 4.1 INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

REFSO is a nascent organization whose services are in high demand both in Eastern Uganda and Western Kenya. Community organizations and contact farmers look to REFSO to facilitate self-reliance and sustainable development in food security in the region. In order to respond to these demands and challenges it is necessary that REFSO's institutional capacity is developed and sustained. REFSO will endeavor to meet these by focusing on development and efficient utilization of human and non human resources.



Right: Pawpaws grow readily and provide a Vitamin C source. Here it is under Agroforestry with *Sesbania Sesban* (for fodder and fuel wood) in the background.

## 4.0 KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

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### 4.2 TECHNICAL PACKAGES

Recent development approaches focus on initiatives that are likely to bring greater benefits to local, poor and disadvantaged communities. Among the options that will lead towards increased food security are interventions that will increase access and availability of food reserves. Such innovations include agricultural technical packages, research institutions and communities' innovations/best practices. REFSO is committed to repackage technical packages by identifying, capturing, and disseminating them to communities and other stakeholder for wider adoption.

Right: *Calliandra Calothyrsus*, a Nitrogen fixing shrub also used for fodder because of it's high protein content. It provides fuelwood when allowed to grow without cutting back.



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### 4.3 NETWORKING AND LINKAGES

Networking is key to REFSO realizing its mandate. Technology transfer, REFSO's core business, is not possible without the willingness to share information, experiences, best practices and resources. As a development partner, networking and collaboration will help minimize any duplication of activities and efforts and augment one another's work with several other development partners. REFSO will also use this avenue for credibility building, skill banking and advocacy.

Since challenges are almost inevitable in networking and linkages, REFSO will put in place mechanisms to overcome them. Examples are keeping a calendar of events, having clear goals and objectives in external relations and signing memoranda of understanding with collaborating partners. REFSO will draw a network map with its stakeholders and interested parties. This can only be possible and effective through development of a networking strategic document.

## 5.0 OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

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### 5.1 OBJECTIVE: INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Strategy	Activity
<p><b>1.1</b> Develop and implement REFSO'S Organizational systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop basic organization policies in a participatory manner.</li> <li>• Mentor REFSO partners on REFSO policies and development of their own group specific policies.</li> <li>• Implementation of the developed policies.</li> <li>• Follow up on policies implementation</li> <li>• Development and documentation of processes used by REFSO in the implementation of its activities.</li> <li>• Implementation of the same.</li> <li>• Feedback.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.2</b> Develop REFSO's infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct infrastructure needs assessment.</li> <li>• Acquire and put in place necessary infrastructure.</li> <li>• Maintenance and improvement of equipment/infrastructure.</li> <li>• Acquire land for demonstration.</li> </ul>

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Indicators	Budget (US\$)	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy documents in place.</li><li>• Improved performance resulting from policy implementation.</li></ul>	5,000	Executive Director
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Infrastructure needs assessment report.</li><li>• Demonstration site.</li><li>• Functional infrastructure in place.</li></ul>	44,731	Executive Director

**5.1 OBJECTIVE: INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING**  
(continued)

Strategy	Activity
<p><b>1.3</b> Resource mobilization and efficient utilization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop resource mobilization strategy.</li> <li>• Develop strategic resource allocation plans to ensure prudent utilization.</li> <li>• Implement the strategy and monitor its impact.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.4</b> Develop leadership and management capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership and Management needs assessment.</li> <li>• Recruitment of competent and committed personnel based on the needs assessment.</li> <li>• Mentoring of REFSO CBO partners on leadership and management.</li> <li>• Follow up on leadership and management.</li> <li>• Development of REFSO's Human Resource.</li> </ul>
<p>Personnel Administrative Expenses</p>	
<p><b>Sub-Total for the Activity</b></p>	

Indicators	Budget (US\$)	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous monitoring, evaluation and revising the strategy.</li> <li>• Resource mobilization plans.</li> <li>• Improved performance and results on resource utility.</li> <li>• Increased level of resource base.</li> </ul>	5,000	Executive Director and Board Chair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved organization performance.</li> <li>• Increased CBO and partners organization capacities.</li> <li>• Number of sustainable community organizations.</li> </ul>	75,000	Executive Director and Board Chair
	306,167	
	<b>435,898</b>	

## 5.2 OBJECTIVE: TO ORGANIZE & DISSEMINATE TECHNICAL PACKAGES

Strategy	Activity
<p><b>2.1</b> Identification of appropriate technical packages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and sustain contacts/relations with research institutions and schools.</li> <li>• Selection of appropriate agricultural technologies.</li> <li>• Capturing, organizing and documenting communities innovation/best practices.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.2</b> Promote and disseminate technologies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On farm trials for each crop planted at the multiplication sites.</li> <li>• Distribution of planting materials from the primary sites to the on farm blocks (Secondary sites)</li> <li>• On farm trials for the promoted Agro-forestry technologies.</li> <li>• On farm tree nursery establishment</li> <li>• Distribution from primary and secondary sites to individual farmers and the community as a whole.</li> <li>• Gather and document planting, harvesting distribution data for bulked seed material from multiplication sites, secondary sites and individual farmers.</li> </ul>

Indicators	Budget (US\$)	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functional partnerships</li> <li>• Selected technical packages.</li> <li>• Documented innovations/best practices.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On farm trial sites.</li> <li>• Distribution records from primary to secondary sites and beyond.</li> <li>• Agro forestry technologies (Biomass transferred, improved fallows)</li> <li>• On farm tree nurseries.</li> <li>• Audio and Visual cassettes, photographs.</li> <li>• Trainings records.</li> <li>• Documentation of distribution data.</li> </ul>	35,750	Programme Manager

**5.2 OBJECTIVE: TO ORGANIZE & DISSEMINATE TECHNICAL PACKAGES (continued)**

Strategy	Activity
<p><b>2.3</b> Germplasm preservation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance and renewal of multiplication sites.</li> <li>• Harvesting and storing of dried seed free from pests/ diseases for subsequent plantings.</li> <li>• Increase number of multiplication sites.</li> <li>• Development of a seed bank.</li> <li>• Renewed multiplication sites.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.4</b> Monitoring, Evaluation and Feedback on Technical packages promoted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop ME&amp;R tool and feed back procedures.</li> <li>• Document results as guided by the ME&amp;R tool.</li> <li>• Use of feedback information to redesign the programme.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sub-Total for the Activity</b></p>	

Indicators	Budget (US\$)	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stored certified seed for high value trees, legumes, sorghum, millet.</li> <li>• Increased number of functional multiplication sites.</li> <li>• Functional seed bank.</li> </ul>	21,895	Executive Director
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ME&amp;R tool-kit, and ME&amp;R reports</li> <li>• Documentation of technical packages promoted.</li> <li>• Organic programme that responds to the needs of communities.</li> </ul>		Executive Director
	<b>57,645</b>	

**5.3 OBJECTIVE: TO STRENGTHEN THE EXISTING LINKAGES & NETWORKING AND DEVELOPING NEW ONES WHERE APPROPRIATE.**

Strategy	Activity
<p><b>3.1</b> Formation and expansion of networks and linkages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping of existing networks and institutional linkages.</li> <li>• Develop consensus for collaboration.</li> <li>• Develop collaboration protocols and implement them.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.2</b> Develop information and communication systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop strategies for information collection, processing and sharing.</li> <li>• Gather, process and share information.</li> <li>• Act on the information shared and feedback obtained.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.4</b> Develop and use Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting tools for REFSO's programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop ME&amp;R tools and plan.</li> <li>• Implement REFSO ME&amp;R plan.</li> <li>• Report to various stakeholders at an appropriate time.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sub-Total for Activity</b></p>	

Indicators	Budget (US\$)	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant networks and linkages mapped for REFSO.</li> <li>• Availability of collaboration protocols.</li> <li>• Functional networks and linkages</li> </ul>	750	Executive Director
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and information strategy in place and implemented.</li> <li>• Improved communication between REFSO and partners.</li> <li>• Improved communication within REFSO secretariat.</li> <li>• Improved knowledge management and timely utility in decision making by REFSO and its partners.</li> <li>• Fora held and content of information shared.</li> <li>• Increased Level of adoption of technical packages.</li> <li>• Appropriate ICTs used that are friendly to communities.</li> </ul>	25,250	Executive Director and Programme Officer
	<b>26,000</b>	

## 6.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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REFSO will focus on enhancing sustainable household food security by targeting CBOs and contact farmers. To realize the intentions of this plan REFSO will develop yearly operational plans and set monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress and provide valuable feedback.

Given that technical package transfer is central in achieving REFSO's mandate, a deliberate effort will be made to develop and sustain partnerships with research, farmers and learning institutions for obtaining and testing the packages before releasing to farmers and community groups. Moreover, REFSO will also obtain innovation from farmers and CBOs to be tested in research institutions and provide viable technologies for adoption in the region. Likewise, networking will also target institutions with similar visions and purpose. The development of a strategic information system is planned for to enhance these linkages.

Sustainability of the programmes outlined in this document is a major challenge. Towards this end REFSO will develop a resource mobilization plan and studiously implement it. Emphasis will be given to the local resources and wise and optimal utilization of the acquired resources.

REFSO recognizes the importance of human resource development to keep abreast with the demands of its constituency. Therefore, human resource audit of REFSO and its partners will be a continuous process to guide its human resource development plans. In addition, requisite organizational systems, structures and infrastructure will be developed and constantly reviewed in line with REFSO's mandate. All these will be guided by REFSO's policies and constitution under the strategic leadership of REFSO board members.

Back cover: Map showing Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda. The challenge facing REFSO is to reach out to the wider beneficiary community in these areas to ensure food security and mobilize resources for the same.



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