

## WP4 APCCO short story

### APCCO – Crafting tailored climate solutions enabled by a listening ear

My memory of the last two weeks April is full nostalgia. I reminisced about my experience in Mukono and Nakaseke districts during the reconnaissance visit at the start of the APCCO (Agroforestry Paradox Climate-Clever Coffee) project. The primary aim was to gather preliminary data and insights to inform the design of the research in work package 4 regarding ecosystem services-based business models for smallholder agroforestry coffee.

Under the shade of trees and amidst lush agricultural fields, farmers, four PhD students, their supervisors and other project partners gathered to share insights, discuss challenges, and explore the way forward for seamless project implementation.

Specifically, the reconnaissance sought to give an insight into the environmental, socio-economic, and agricultural context of the study areas, collect baseline data to guide the formulation of research design and methodology. It also served to introduce the research project to stakeholders in the study area including district officials, farmers and organizations working with the farmers and assess logistical and practical aspects of conducting extended research in the area.

While enjoying nature's generous giving of fresh air and gentle breeze, farmers passionately voiced their experiences and needs. Seated in a circle, each participant contributed their unique perspective, creating an atmosphere of inclusivity and mutual respect. This exchange provided valuable groundwork for understanding local practices, resource access, and overall production and marketing context of coffee.



*Reconnaissance meeting in Nakaseke district, April 2024*

We also explored farms, farmer agroforestry knowledge, practices, and challenges, cultural significance of agroforestry trees, farmer and stakeholder understanding of carbon trade, coffee certification and European sustainability laws, and farmer registration status.

The farm site visits brought us face-to-face with farmers working in the coffee fields. With pens, notebooks and phones in hand, we eagerly listened as farmers discussed sustainable practices and the importance of soil conservation. This immersive experience allowed the APCCO team to observe firsthand the farmers' resilience and innovative approaches to managing crop diversity in the face of climate challenges.



*Farm field visit in Nakaseke, April 2024*

These initial interactions with the farmers and the support organisations continue to shape and direct the implementation of the APCCO project to tailor interventions that respect and build upon the knowledge and practices of farmers. By actively listening and involving communities in shaping sustainable ecosystem services-based business solutions, the APCCO project seeks to contribute to a resilient and inclusive agricultural future in Uganda.

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