Recognize the problem
Banana bacterial wilt disease, commonly known as banana slim, is a new disease in Uganda, and it is easy to confuse with banana Fusarium wilt, which is also called kiwotoka.

Background
Both diseases cause yellow leaves. The difference is that with slim disease, the leaves look burnt, then turn dull yellow. With kiwotoka the leaves turn deep yellow evenly, with some brown or black spots, or sometimes streaks. The leaves of slim die suddenly, sometimes starting with the youngest, while Kiwotoka leaves die slowly, beginning with the oldest leaf.
When you cut a stem infected by the slim, a liquid which looks like pus flows from the cut. Kiwotoka does not have this liquid, but may have a fish smell.
With slim, the banana’s male bud, or empumumpu, dries and eventually dies. With kiwotoka, the whole bunch fails to grow and so there is no empumumpu to observe. Observe the ripening of the fingers in a cluster. With slim, the bunch ripens unevenly, and prematurely. With kiwotoka, the plant steadily dies.
Slim is caused by bacteria, and kiwotoka is caused by a fungus called Fusarium. Both are living things, but too small to see with the naked eye.

Management
There are different ways to manage the two diseases.
• Slim can be prevented by twisting off the male bud, which is often where the bacteria enter the plant. Do not cut it off, since bacteria may be carried on the panga. Rather, twist off the empumumpu with a forked stick. If the banana plant has slim, destroy the plant and bury it, to prevent nearby plants from getting the disease. Always plant clean suckers, from plantations which you know are healthy.
• For Fusarium, or kiwotoka, it is also important to remove diseased plants, and to plant healthy suckers.
• Both diseases can be contained with proper cultural control practices that ensure the garden is clean of weeds, broken stems, excess suckers and no pests.