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Workshop Report # 3

Consultation Workshop: Sustaining Capacity for Supplying Evidence for Agricultural & Rural Development Policies

Nigeria Strategy Support Program (NSSP)
Workshop Report No. NSSP 003

April 28, 2008

IFPRI-Abuja

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THE NIGERIA STRATEGY SUPPORT PROGRAM (NSSP)

WORKSHOP REPORTS

ABOUT NSSP/APSF

The Agricultural Policy Support Facility (APSF) is an initiative to strengthen evidence-based policymaking in Nigeria in the areas of rural and agricultural development. Facilitated by the Nigeria Strategy Support Program of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources and funded by the Canadian International Development Agency, APSF supports the implementation of Nigeria's national development plans by strengthening agricultural-sector policies and strategies through:

- Enhanced knowledge, information, data, and tools for the analysis, design, and implementation of pro-poor, gender-sensitive, and environmentally sustainable agricultural and rural development policies and strategies in Nigeria;

- Strengthened capacity for government agencies, research institutions, and other stakeholders to carry out and use applied research that directly informs agricultural and rural policies and strategies; and

- Improved communication linkages and consultations between policymakers, policy analysts, and policy beneficiaries on agricultural and rural development policy issues.

ABOUT THESE WORKSHOP REPORTS

The Nigeria Strategy Support Program (NSSP) Workshop Reports contain a summary of the workshop and the key discussion points raised by the participants. The reports have not been subject to a formal peer review. They are circulated in order to share discussion points and outputs of the respective workshop. The opinions stated are those of the participants and do not necessarily reflect those of their home institutions or supporting organizations.

Capacity for Designing and Implementing Agricultural and Rural Development Policies and Strategies

Ibadan, Nigeria
April 28, 2008¹

¹ Compiled by Dr. Kolawole Adebayo, Senior Lecturer, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta and Valerie Rhoe, Program Coordinator, IFPRI

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Introduction

The Federal Government of Nigeria has demonstrated a strong commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the NEEDS Targets. Recognizing the importance of agriculture, as well as the challenges faced by the sector, in providing evidence for policymaking, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (FMAWR) established the Agricultural Policy Support Facility (APSF), with the International Food Policy Research Institution (IFPRI) as its implementing partner and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) providing financial support. APSF aims to strengthen the capacity of FMAWR to design and implement agricultural policies by addressing the fundamental knowledge, capacity, and communication problems faced by the Government of Nigeria.

In order to support evidence-based policymaking, it is essential to identify the current capacity within Nigeria for providing evidence for policymaking and for creating this capacity for future generations. In collaboration with the University of Ibadan, University of Agriculture-Abeokuta, FMAWR, and IFPRI, a consultation workshop on “Sustaining Capacity for Supplying Evidence for Agricultural Rural Development Policies and Strategies” was held at the University of Ibadan on April 28, 2008. The objectives of this consultative workshop were to identify:

- specific capacity challenges confronting university professors who are teaching the next generation of policymakers, policy analysts, researchers and university professors;

- curriculum gaps within the university programs for building capacity for designing and implementing pro-poor, gender sensitive, and environmentally sustainable agricultural and rural development policies and strategies;

- employment opportunities for the university graduates in agricultural economics and extension and the required skills;

- existing capacity for undertaking agriculture and rural development policy research; and

- current methods used by researchers to convey their results to decisionmakers and other stakeholders.

Presentations

The workshop was officially opened by Prof. Bada, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ibadan. He reiterated the important roles of universities in policy research. He underscored the great limitations in funding and capacity development opportunities, and appreciated the leading roles of IFPRI in addressing these needs.

The representative of the Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Ibadan, Dr. Victor Okoruwa welcomed participants and noted that the workshop was timely and had come at a time when food policy is critical on the national and international agenda.

Mr. Fadare, Deputy Director, Department of Planning, Policy Analysis, and Statistics (PPAS), FMAWR welcomed participants on the behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and provided a brief overview of the Ministry's policy focus and its challenges. He mentioned that in light of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), repositioning agriculture through directional policies is critical and therefore, FMAWR is currently working on new policy directions with a public-private partnership approach for:

- improving the livelihood of the 40 million farm families;

- farm mechanization;
- improved storage;
- land regularization;
- agriculture development in the Niger Delta;
- targeted subsidies;
- vibrant cooperation;
- monitoring and evaluation;
- cooperation with bilateral and multilateral organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and
- in-town commercial fish farming and development of grazing reserves.

During the previous REKSS consultation workshop held in Abuja, Nigeria on February 27, 2008, there was much debate on what are the national and sectoral policies related to agriculture in Nigeria. Mr. Fadare briefly mentioned some of the national and sectoral policies:

National policy - New Agricultural Policy thrust by FMAWR (2001)

Integrated rural development policy.

Strategy document for Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).

Water resources (this is being reviewed in 2008 and participants are invited to provide input)

Agricultural development policy and each sub-sectoral policy

Although there are national, state, and sectoral policies, these policies are not properly integrated. An observed gap is the lack of capacity for formulating, implementing, and funding the implementation of agricultural policies. There is a lack of capacity for proper strategic planning, programs and project planning, and management; poor data management; widespread corruption; and inadequate communications. These problems are sufficient to show that APSF is timely and should involve all stakeholders. Mr. Fadare thanked IFPRI, CIDA and participants for joining hands in meeting this challenge.

After these words of welcome, Ms. Valerie Rhoe, Program Coordinator, IFPRI provided an overview of IFPRI and the APSF. The details of this presentation are in Appendix E.

Group Discussions

The majority of this workshop focused on two different small group discussions. The discussion in the morning focused on current capacity for providing evidence for designing and implementing agricultural and rural development policies and strategies, while the afternoon group discussion focused on sustaining this capacity.

Current Capacity for Providing Evidence for Designing and Implementing Agricultural and Rural Development Policies and Strategies

The participants were broken in to four groups to discuss the following four topics:

1. Human capacity for undertaking research that supports agriculture and rural development policy and strategy design and implementation;
2. Incentives for undertaking policy and strategy development research;

3. Information and knowledge products for supporting policy and strategy research (data, library resources, etc); and
4. Communication capacity for identifying policy research needs and conveying policy research outputs.

1. *Human capacity for undertaking research that supports agriculture and rural development policy and strategy design and implementation*

There was an agreement among the group that there is human capacity at the federal and state level, and in public and private research institutions, universities, and non-government organizations, but this capacity is limited. There is higher capacity at research institutions and universities than in the federal and state ministries. Some of the challenges that face the research institutions and universities in having sufficient capacity are:

High student to staff ratio. The number of students to academic staff in all Nigerian Universities is large. Very little direct and personal contact takes place between lecturers and students. This is not very good for learning.

Academic staff have limited opportunities for on-the-job training in policy relevant research.

Poor funding. The issue of poor funding is a widely acknowledged problem of the education sector in Nigeria. This issue had been in the forefront of trade disputes between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in the last two decades. There is a shortfall in the amount required for effective functioning of universities, most of which are owned by the federal and state government. In general, university research receives almost no funding from the government. Similarly, training of staff--including participation in local and international conferences--is also underfunded.

The university curriculum lacks content that can prepare current university students to undertake policy-relevant research.

High theoretical aspect of policy. Policy formulation in Nigeria is based mainly on perspectives and opinion of the writers of the policy rather than hard evidence from research or systematically collected data.

Low input of current affairs. This is a follow-on issue. Obtaining data for planning or any other purposes is very difficult in Nigeria. So, the use of the latest data for planning or designing policy is practically impossible.

Brain drain due to poor remuneration. The best experts in the field are moving into other better remunerated sectors such as banking.

2. *Incentives for undertaking policy and strategy development research*

The discussions highlighted the challenges facing the research community in undertaking policy and strategy development research, and identified economic, human, political and institutional incentives that could increase research in policy and strategy development. Before delving into the challenges, the group discussed how research topics are determined. Public research institutions are mandate-based and they base their research on an agenda determined by the institution's senior management and approved by the federal government. Universities are not based on an agenda but based on the specialization of the universities. The group stressed the need for short, medium and long-term research agendas. The challenges identified in the discussion groups were:

The federal government is the main source of research funds for universities and research institutes, and the funding is very low. Furthermore, federal government

counterpart funding is often low, making it difficult to receive external funds, which are dependent on government counterpart funds.

The skills for undertaking policy analysis are weak.

Skills in communicating research results are limited.

The cost of publishing research output for international readership is high.

The working environment favors ministries more than universities and research institutes. There is a perception that workers in ministries on similar ranks with workers in universities have greater perks of office.

There is corruption in the use of limited resources.

The quality of research on development problems is questionable because of the "publish-or-perish" mentality with universities and research institutions.

The incentives raised during the group discussions that can increase researchers in undertaken policy and strategy development research are listed below based on the type of incentives: economic, human, political, and institutional.

Economic incentives

- o Increase the availability of funds from both internal and external sources such as government, private entrepreneurs, and grants and loans from bilateral and multilateral agencies such as the International Foundation for Science, the MacArthur Foundation, etc.
- o Improve access to infrastructure, equipment, and laboratory.
- o Improve access to land and good roads.

Human incentives

- o Increase human development through training and re-training of local researchers in problem identification, research methodology, and report writing.
- o Establish intra- and inter-stakeholder networks.
- o Provide training on communicating policy research.
- o Improve access to materials to increase local researchers' skills in local languages.
- o Enhance skills in information and communication technology.

Political incentives

- o Enhance stability and continuity in government.

Institutional incentives

- o There is a need to strengthen formal and informal institutions.
- o Increase cooperation from local and community leaders to facilitate local level inputs into policy and strategy research.
- o Encourage team work, especially across disciplines, to enhance development research.
- o Recognize and appreciate the relevance of each institution.
- o Provide commensurate rewards for undertaken development-related research as opposed to purely academic research.

- o Improve facilities to make effective contribution to policy and strategy research, which are low, even at institutional levels.
- o Increase understanding of the policymaking process and how policy research can be shared to enhance this decisionmaking process.

3. Information and knowledge products for supporting policy and strategy research

There was a very active discussion on the challenges that researchers face in undertaking policy and strategy research due to poor information and knowledge products. Some of these challenges are:

The cost of accessing information and knowledge products is very high. In institutions that do not have funds, the information available is often obsolete. However, in institutions that have access to up-to-date information, the researchers do not have the capacity to sort through the information.

Data collection agencies receive too low funding to allow for adequate data collection. Therefore, data that is available is often inadequate and/or outdated. Also, there are several Nigerian and non-Nigerian agencies collecting the same data, which is conflicting. If researchers must collect primary data for their research the cost is very high and the amount of funds is low.

The lack of a consistent and adequate power supply to run computers and other equipment.

Poor internet facilities.

Inadequacy of e-learning materials.

4. Communication capacity for identifying policy research needs and conveying policy research outputs

This discussion group focused on the communication approaches currently used by researchers, and ways to enhance communications with key stakeholders. The approaches currently used by the researchers at this consultation include policy memos, dissemination workshops, policy roundtables, publications such as journals, proceedings, and extension bulletins, and interviews on the radio and television. However, there are often times when the researcher does not take the research beyond the donor requirement.

Even using the approaches above, the researchers found it difficult to communicate research findings to government; and when there is an opportunity to communicate, the policy recommendations are often watered down. The participants mentioned four challenges in communicating research:

1. poor enabling environment for communicating research between researchers and end users of research;
2. lack of legislators' interest in communicating with stakeholders;
3. the absence of top government officials during the technical sessions of workshops; and
4. reluctance to disseminate policy research because the results counter the desires of the funding.

The group recommended the following to enhance communications:

identify all stakeholders along the process and engage them from the beginning;
have frequent dialogue with lawmakers and policymakers to facilitate use of evidence in policy formulation and use;

- provide short policy memos;
- strengthen agricultural extension;
- improve urban advocacy;
- disseminate research output in local language;
- hold stakeholder workshops to help identify upcoming research needs; and

Directly contact the program officer responsible for implementing the policy or program within FMAWR to provide research

Sustaining Capacity for Designing and Implementing Agricultural and Rural Development Policies and Strategies

There was much discussion on how to sustain capacity for designing and implementing policies and strategies. The group discussed the employment opportunities for upcoming graduates in agricultural economics and forestry, and the skills needed for these opportunities.

Upcoming graduates in agricultural economics and extension work within the bank system (loans appraisal and advice to bank as lending agency), petroleum industry (EIA Units); social work (NGOs, health institutions), ministries, international organizations (IFPRI, the World Bank, etc.), communication specialists for media (especially agricultural extension), agro-allied companies, private entrepreneurs, etc.

Those with degrees in forestry can undertake employment in manufacturing paper pulp; ethno forestry and soil management (termitarium for use in meeting health needs).

The required skills include:

- entrepreneurship skills development,
- demand driven technology development,
- support for training and retraining of staff and students, and
- exposure to international opportunities and industry practices.

Curriculum Gaps

Another group of faculty and researchers discussed the curriculum of the two universities present and identified gaps in their curriculum for building capacity in policy analysis. The discussion highlighted that the gaps are more glaring in undergraduate rather than postgraduate courses. When teaching agricultural policy at the undergraduate level, environmental issues are underplayed. Gender mainstreaming and sensitivity analysis are not currently taught at undergraduate level, and it needs to be integrated even for staff. Skills in entrepreneurship and computer literacy need to be integrated into the university curriculum as well as practical orientation towards available analytical tools. It was observed that, although the trends are changing, there is male dominance in some courses, e.g. forestry has a gender imbalance. It is important to involve policymakers and industrialists as guest lecturers to bring in practical experiences. This will improve the opportunities for students to relate with policy issues and industries. This discussion highlighted some of the curriculum gaps, but the group agreed that a wider group discussion is needed to address these gaps and that the curriculum needs to be tailored to the local cultural environment, not wholly imported without cultural compatibility.

Practical opportunities for students to engage and learn were also discussed. It was observed that practical experience had not been a part of the university curriculum, but that a 6-month industrial experience is now being made compulsory in some universities. Practical exposure in farming is being required for students to help them empathize with field practitioners. However, one area for practical experience that is being overlooked is within ministries, where students can interact in the policy process.

Other opportunities to provide students with practical experience are:

- involving students as enumerators and field workers in research project;
- supporting students and providing funding for them to participate in workshop and conferences;
- encouraging faculty members to become mentors to allow students to grow along with their teachers; and
- reinstalling the farm settlement scheme to encourage economic students to take up jobs in rural areas.

Next Steps

The participants did not want the discussion to end with this workshop. Therefore, the next step is to identify ways to ensure the discussion continues. Furthermore, Mr. Fadare noted that the ministry requires the brains, knowledge and contributions of the participants, and encouraged them to relate with the Department of Planning, Policy Analysis, and Statistics, FMAWR.

Appendix A: Agenda

Sustaining Capacity for Supplying Evidence for Agricultural & Rural Development Policies

University of Ibadan, Ibadan

April 28, 2008

9:30-3:30

- 9:00 Registration
- 9:30 **Prayer and Introductory Remarks**
*Chair: Dr. Falusi, Head of Department, Agricultural Economics,
University of Ibadan*
- Dr. S. Obafemi Bada, Dean, School of Agriculture, University of Ibadan*
- Mr. Fadare, Deputy Director of Policy, Planning, Policy Analysis, and
Statistics, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources*
- 9:45 **Overview of IFPRI and APSF**
Ms. Valerie Rhoe, Program Coordinator, IFPRI
- 10:15 **Small Group Discussions: Current Capacity for Providing
Evidence for Designing and Implementing Agricultural and Rural
Development Policies and Strategies** (tea break available during
discussion)
- Dr. Kolawole Adebayo, Senior Lecturer, Department of Agricultural
Extension and Rural Development, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta*
- Human capacity for undertaking research that supports agriculture
and rural development policy and strategy design and
implementation
Incentives for undertaken policy and strategy development research
Information and knowledge products for supporting policy and
strategy research (data, library resources, etc)
Communication capacity for identifying policy research needs and
conveying policy research outputs
- 11:45 **Report out from small group Discussions**
- 12:30 Lunch
- 1:15 **Small Group Discussions on Sustaining Capacity for Designing
and Implementing Agricultural and Rural Development Policies
and Strategies**

Chair: Prof. Anthony Ikpi, Professor, Policy Analysis and Agribusiness Management, Department of Agriculture Economics, University of Ibadan

Curriculum gaps for building capacity for designing and implementing pro-poor, gender sensitive, and environmentally sustainable agricultural and rural development policies and strategies;

Employment opportunities for the university graduates in agriculture economics and extension and their required skills

Practicum opportunities for university students

2:30 Report out from small group Discussions

3:20 Closing Remarks

Dr. Falusi, Head of Department, Agricultural Economics, University of Ibadan

Mr. Fadare, Deputy Director of Policy, Planning, Policy Analysis, and Statistics, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources

Ms. Valerie Rhoe, Program Coordinator, IFPRI

Appendix B: Participants List

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Appendix C: Key Informant Questionnaire

POLICY PROCESS AND INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE MAPPING IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN NIGERIA

Key Informant Questionnaire

Position..... Highest degree obtained
 Grade level: Years in Job:
 Gender Ministry
 Current Agency/Department/Unit.....
 Previous Agency/Department/Unit.....

Policy Process

Name the key Agricultural Policies in Nigeria and the Agency/Department/Unit /Institutes/University at Federal or State levels responsible for implementing them

Agricultural Policy	Agency/Department/Unit responsible

Please, provide the following information on ONLY ONE of the Agricultural Policies mentioned in (1) above.

a	Name of policy	
b	Common acronym	
c	What is its origin?	
d	How did it get legislative approval?	
e	How did it get executive approval?	
f	When was it implemented?	
g	How was/is it implemented?	
h	How was/is its planning, monitoring and evaluation done?	
i	Who was/is it accountable to?	
j	How was/is it funded?	
k	Who were/are the clients?	
l	Who were/are the main stakeholders?	
m	How were the stakeholders consulted?	
n	Do you consider the policy a success?	
o	Explain your answer in (m) above	

Institutional Performance

Place the Agency/Department/Unit/Institute/University mentioned in (1) above in the following framework with respect to your perception of their performance (Write out the acronym of the Agency/Department/Unit in the spaces provided)

Perception of performance	High	Low
Incentive system		
Specificity of tasks		
Absence of political interference		
Meeting client demand		
Clarity of mission		
Supportive and transparent recruitment criteria		
Meeting performance expectations and evaluation		
Positive use of employee sanctioning/rewards		
Positive use of employee discretion and autonomy		

What other factors you would consider important for delineating between high performing Agency/Department/Unit/Institute/University and low performing Agency/Department/Unit in the agricultural and rural development sector in Nigeria? (Place the most important factors first).

Rank	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Thank you.

Appendix D: Pictures



Group Picture



Group Discussions



Group Discussions

Appendix E: Presentation

IFPRI at A Glance and Overview of APSF by Valerie Rhoe, Program Coordinator,
IFPRI