

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PLANTING FOR FOOD AND JOB 2.0 PROGRAMME
FROM STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVE**



Supported By:

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FINAL REPORT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEA	Agriculture Extension Agent
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCEs	District Chief Executives
DCS	Directorate of Crop Services
FASDEP	Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GASIP	Ghana Agricultural Sector Investment Programme
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
IFJ	Investing for Food and Jobs
MP	Members of Parliament
METASIP	Medium-Term Investment Plan
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
NABCO	Nation Builders Corps
NASTAG	National Seed Trade Association of Ghana
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRGP	Northern Rural Growth Project
PPRSD	Plant Protection & Regulatory Services Directorate
PFAG	Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana
PFJ	Planting for Food and Jobs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Access to basic resources for agricultural activities in Ghana remains a significant challenge, hindering effective and efficient food production and supply. The Planting for Food and Jobs phase one (PFJ 1.0) programme was implemented in 2017 to increase food production and create more jobs by modernizing the activities of smallholder farmers through input subsidies. While the PFJ 1.0 was anchored around five pillars, the implementation focuses more on supporting farmers with subsidized fertilizer and improved seeds. Other critical areas such as access to mechanization services, agrochemicals, extension services, and credit for labour were largely overlooked. After almost six years of implementation, many beneficiary farmers expressed dissatisfaction with the PFJ 1.0. The government also faced some implementation challenges, including high-level budgetary constraints, limited adoption of the value chain approach, restricted access to agricultural credit, low prioritization of national strategic stock and limited focus on the needs of medium-scale and large-scale commercial farmers. The transition from PFJ 1.0 to PFJ 2.0 became obvious to address these gaps.

The PFJ 2.0 marked a strategic shift from direct input subsidy to a smart agricultural input credit system (ICS) linked to structured market arrangements. According to MoFA (2024), PFJ 2.0 will eliminate barriers to credit access, increase productivity and production levels through enhancing the use of improved inputs, stabilise food prices, promote commercial agriculture and ultimately improve food security, resilience and exports. To be implemented over five years, PFJ 2.0 adopts an integrated and comprehensive approach to increase the availability and access to improved inputs, mechanisation services and extension services as well as output markets (MoFA 2024).

After nearly a year of implementation of PFJ 2.0 programme, this study evaluates the extent to which the programme is achieving its objectives. The Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFAG) being the primary beneficiaries of the programme, has contracted a consultant to monitor the initial implementation and provide policy recommendation for government. Specifically, the consultant was tasked to:

- Assess stakeholders' experiences about the effectiveness of changing the PFJ 1.0 to PFJ 2.0) and how such changes impact on the sector's performance.

- Evaluate beneficiaries' involvement in the development and implementation of the PFJ 2.0.
- Identify and document the initial challenges with the implementation of the PFJ 2.0
- Determine the sustainability of PFJ 2.0 and the possibility of its being able to transform the agricultural sector.
- Explore other cross-cutting issues relevant to agricultural development in Ghana.

Methodology

This study was conducted from April to July 2024, strategically timed to coincide with the planting season, allowing farmers to share recent experiences. A mixed-methods approach was employed, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. Additional information was gathered through a review of food and agricultural policies and programmes.

To ensure diverse opinions across geographical and cultural dimensions, a stratified random sampling method was used to select 42 districts across three geographical belts (Northern, Middle, and Southern).

Quantitative data was collected through interviews with 4,160 individual farmers, of whom approximately 45% were female. Qualitative information was gathered through focus group discussions, individual interviews, and stakeholder consultative forums, involving diverse groups across the agricultural value chain. Other key actors, including aggregators, input dealers, mechanization service providers, and officers from both national and decentralized agricultural departments, were also engaged.

The draft report was validated at a forum in Accra, allowing stakeholders to confirm or challenge the findings and provide additional information to enrich the final report.

Key Findings

Stakeholder Perspectives on the Transition from PFJ 1.0 to PFJ 2.0:

According to the data provided in Figure 2, 56% of farmers support the modification of the Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) programme from version 1.0 to 2.0. In contrast, 20% expressed concerns about frequent changes to programmes within the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA). Those in favor of the PFJ 1.0 review cited several challenges, including the poor quality of inputs supplied by the programme, the high cost of subsidized inputs, and poor timing of input

distribution. During individual interviews and stakeholder consultations, most respondents noted that frequent policy and programme changes are costly and waste public resources. They argued that such decisions confuse farmers, disrupt their operations, and negatively affect long-term planning. Respondents expressed a preference for engaging farmers and other stakeholders before revising existing policies.

Stakeholder Involvement:

Although stakeholders were engaged during the development of PFJ 2.0, some of their perspectives were not reflected in the final programme document presented by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA). Of the 4,160 farmers interviewed, 55% reported being involved in the process. However, 33% stated they learned about the programme through the media, and 12% had never heard of PFJ 2.0. Many individuals interviewed expressed concerns about the quality of the consultation process, as their input was not included in MoFA's final report. It is important to note that poor stakeholder buy-in can negatively impact programme implementation, beneficiary ownership, and sustainability.

Initial Implementation Challenges:

Farmers: The primary challenge identified through engagement with farmers was the registration process for PFJ 2.0. As of June 2024, 80% of farmers were not registered. Only 5% had successfully registered and had their farms mapped, while 8% reported being registered without their farms mapped as of June 2024. This indicates that only 5% of farmers were eligible to participate in the programme by June. It is important to note that farmers in southern Ghana and the middle belt usually start their season around March and April, while those in northern Ghana begin in May and June. With only 5% registered by June, the majority of farmers were automatically excluded from the programme. The poor registration was attributed to the limited number of extension agents and inadequate logistical support. Additionally, the complexity of the registration process, the scattered nature of farms, high illiteracy rates among farmers, and poor internet connectivity in rural areas contributed to the low registration numbers.

Aggregators: Aggregators are intended to be the core of PFJ 2.0, acting as a vital link between farmers and other actors within the value chain. They are responsible for receiving inputs and other farm support, supplying them to farmers, and ensuring the recovery of input credit for a master aggregator. Located in the districts, these aggregators have extensive experience working with farmers over time. A major concern for aggregators with PFJ 2.0 was the arbitrary assignment of

operational areas. Many aggregators were not assigned to their established areas, despite specifying them in their proposals to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Aggregators engaged by the research team reported being assigned to areas where they lacked warehouses, had no relationships with farmers, did not understand local languages or cultural dynamics, and needed to recruit support staff. This reassignment poses significant challenges to their operations. According to them, this is a major flaw in the programme, as it risks disrupting existing value chains and undermining the trust built between farmers and aggregators over the years.

Other Stakeholders: Mechanization service providers, fertilizer distributors, seed distributors, agro-chemical suppliers, and financial services providers expressed disappointment over their lack of engagement and unclear roles in the programme. They reported that the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) had not officially involved them in any capacity, raising concerns about the government's neglect of the private sector, despite the programme's premise of being private-sector-led. For example, they were particularly disappointed with MoFA's recent role as the Master Aggregator, which contradicts the programme's initial private-sector-led approach. This shift indicates a lack of focus and clearly contradicts the private-sector-led concept.

Sustainability Concerns:

Most respondents expressed doubts about the sustainability of PFJ 2.0. Stakeholders indicated that PFJ 2.0 was based on input credit and intended to be private-sector-led. However, the exclusion of many private sector actors from the implementation process may lead to their disinterest. There were also concerns about MoFA being designated as the Master Aggregator. Many respondents believed this decision could result in poor input recovery, similar to the situation in 2017 when MoFA led input distribution, which resulted in low recovery rates. Additionally, the transition from PFJ 1.0 to PFJ 2.0 under the same NPP government was cited as a potential cause for failure. The shift occurred when a new Minister of Food and Agriculture replaced the previous one. Many stakeholders feared that the programme changes might happen after the 2024 elections, regardless of the election outcome and who becomes the new Minister of Food and Agriculture.

Grant component of the programme:

The grant component of the programme was designed to support vulnerable farmers by providing three 50 kg bags of NPK fertilizer, a 50 kg bag of urea fertilizer, and a 10 kg bag of maize seeds free of charge. These grants are aimed at helping vulnerable farmers, including female-headed households, elderly farmers, farmers with disabilities, and smallholder farmers with limited access

to inputs. Additionally, the first 200,000 farmers fully registered on the Ghana Agricultural Agribusiness Platform (GhAAP) will receive these grants. Many stakeholders expressed concerns about the lack of transparency in this part of the programme. Key details such as qualification criteria, the quantity of inputs supplied to each district, the names of suppliers, and the total costs involved were not disclosed to the public. Concerns were also raised about the involvement of Members of Parliament (MPs) and District Chief Executives (DCEs) in the selection process, which many respondents feared could lead to favouritism, politicization, hoarding, and corruption. Additionally, many questioned why the Ministry would modify the PFJ 1.0 input subsidy due to cost and the government's inability to pay service providers, yet introduce a grant component.

Cross-Cutting Issues:

Several cross-cutting issues were identified, underscoring the agricultural sector's interconnectedness with other areas of the economy. Excessive taxation on agricultural inputs leads to high costs, while inadequate irrigation systems and limited access to affordable financing hinder productivity. Poor rural infrastructure, particularly feeder roads, impedes the efficient transportation of goods. The lack of modern mechanization services and underinvestment in agricultural research and development stifle efforts to modernize and innovate. Environmental challenges, such as the impact of illegal mining activities on agricultural land and the growing threat of climate change, pose serious threats to the sector's development. Additionally, political interference in agricultural policies was identified as a major obstacle to long-term planning.

Conclusions

While policy changes within public establishments are sometimes necessary to achieve government developmental targets, adopt new technologies, and improve the overall welfare of the population, the routine, non-scientific basis for changing policies and programmes within the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) in Ghana, without considering stakeholder perspectives, is a recipe for failure. This research found that many respondents are seeking medium to long-term agricultural policies and programmes that are collaboratively developed by all stakeholders, including MoFA and the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), as the government institution facilitating the process. Such collaboration would ensure stakeholder buy-in, programme sustainability, and the success of government policy objectives.

Initial challenges identified with the implementation of PFJ 2.0 include limited stakeholder participation, farmer dissatisfaction with the consultation process, poor registration of farmers, and

inadequate logistical support for extension agents during registration. The research also found that some selected aggregators were arbitrarily assigned to unfamiliar districts, causing many to refuse participation in the programme. Additionally, the programme deviated from its private-sector-led focus, with MoFA assuming the role of the private sector by acting as the master aggregator.

In terms of programme sustainability, although most farmers agreed with the need to modify PFJ 1.0 due to challenges with input subsidies, some farmers and other stakeholders were pessimistic about the sustainability of PFJ 2.0 because the main reasons for the review were ignored. For instance, aggregators were not properly treated, the private sector was overlooked, and the input credit concept was completely absent.

Recommendations

- **Focus on Developing Long-term Policies:** Policy and programme development in the agricultural sector should be led by Technical Directors within the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), in collaboration with the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC). The policy initiation and development cycle should involve broad stakeholder consultation to ensure comprehensive input and buy-in.
- **Enhance Farmer Data Management:** Establishing a robust farmer database is crucial for effective policy implementation within MoFA. Efforts should be made to empower District Departments of Agriculture to recruit more Agricultural Extension Agents (AEAs) and provide them with the necessary logistics to operate effectively. Leveraging the skills of unemployed youths after their National Service and the Nation Builders Corps (NABCO) could also aid in registration and digitization efforts.
- **Increase Private Sector Participation:** Creating an enabling environment for private-sector-led growth is essential for efficient resource management. MoFA should play a facilitation role, allowing the private sector to take the lead, which will contribute to programme success and sustainability.
- **Promote Transparency and Impartiality in Agricultural Grant Distribution:** For the grant component of the programme, respondents seek clearer criteria for selecting target beneficiaries to ensure effective participation. The District Departments of Agriculture should oversee input distribution to minimize political interference. Allowing Members of Parliament (MPs) and District Chief Executives (DCEs) to manage input distribution could lead to favoritism and should be avoided.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) has been implementing various agricultural policies, programmes and projects to transform the country's agricultural sector. Key initiatives include the Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP I&II) with the Medium-Term Investment Plan (METASIP), Northern Rural Growth Project (NRGP), Ghana Agricultural Sector Investment Programme (GASIP) etc. These efforts aim to modernize and enhance agricultural performance in Ghana. Despite some modest successes, persistent challenges, particularly for smallholder farmers, continue to hamper progress. To address these issues, MoFA launched the flagship programme “Planting for Food and Jobs” (PFJ) in 2017. The initiative aimed to modernize smallholder farming activities to accelerate growth, ensure food security, create jobs and supply agro-based raw materials to industries. Although the PFJ 1.0 was anchored on five pillars, its implementation primarily focused on the first two pillars, thus, providing farmers with subsidized seeds and fertilizer.

Challenges and Criticism of PFJ 1.0

While PFJ 1.0 led to some improvement in the uptake of improved seeds and fertilizer and created a market for some selected agro-input companies, many beneficiary farmers expressed dissatisfaction with the implementation. The government also faced some implementation challenges, including high-level budgetary constraints, limited adoption of the value chain approach, restricted access to agricultural credit, low prioritization of national strategic stock and limited focus on the needs of medium-scale and large-scale commercial farmers (MoFA 2024).

An assessment of the 2022 PFJ 1.0 implementation by the Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFAG) highlighted several issues. The report found that 71% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the PFJ 1.0 implementation and called for modification to the implementation plan. Additionally, 80% of respondents reported that PFJ 1.0 fertilizers were of inferior quality, while 92% found the subsidized fertilizer and seed prices unaffordable (PFAG 2022). These

factors, among others, led to the revision and subsequent replacement of PFJ 1.0 with PFJ 2.0 in 2023.

Introduction of PFJ 2.0

The PFJ 2.0 marked a strategic shift from direct input subsidy to a smart agricultural input credit system (ICS) linked to structured market arrangements. According to MoFA (2024), PFJ 2.0 will eliminate barriers to credit access, increase productivity and production levels through enhancing the use of improved inputs, stabilise food prices, promote commercial agriculture and ultimately improve food security, resilience and exports. Implemented over five years, PFJ 2.0 adopts an integrated and comprehensive approach to increase the availability and access to improved inputs, mechanisation and extension services as well as output markets led by the private sector (MoFA 2024).

Objectives of PFJ 2.0

The overarching goal of the PFJ 2.0 programme is to transform and modernize agriculture in Ghana by developing selected agricultural value chains with active private-sector participation. The programme has six specific objectives:

- i. *Ensure food availability:* By supporting the production of 11 prioritised commodities.
- ii. *Reduce food price inflation:* Through increased production and improved storage.
- iii. *Promote import substitution:* By increasing production and processing of selected import-substituted crops.
- iv. *Promote exports:* By supporting the production of selected crops with export potential and ensuring that they meet the required standards.
- v. *Create jobs:* Lends itself to the creation of jobs along the entire commodity value chains and provides employment and growth opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises in the agricultural sector.
- vi. *Ensure food security and resilience:* By promoting sustainable agricultural practices and ensuring that the country's food supply is not only sufficient but also resilient in the face of shocks such as natural disasters or pandemics.

Strategic Elements of PFJ 2.0

Strategically, the PFJ 2.0 is anchored on five (5) main elements:

- i. *Inputs Credit System* – Moving from input subsidy to a zero-interest inputs credit system, with payment for the credit being in-kind. Complementary to the credit system, will be assurance of quality fertilizer, improved seed, and support services.
- ii. *Storage and Distribution Infrastructure* – a system of warehouses and logistics for the storage and distribution of produce (produce takeover centres).
- iii. *Off-take arrangements or Commodity Trading* – Guarantees market and price stabilization through improved market access and assured raw materials for processing.
- iv. *Digitized Platform* – Smart farmer, smart farm, digitised agriculture. Development and use of a Central Digital Platform for real-time data capturing, monitoring, and evaluation to keep track of the programme.
- v. *Line of Sight Management and Coordination* – Special Delivery Unit/Secretariat to coordinate activities of all value chain actors and provide real-time technical support to ensure programme effectiveness.

The PFJ 2.0 Model

The PFJ 2.0 model is a market-oriented whole-of-agriculture approach (i.e., covering all value chain activities from farm to fork) driven by an ICS. This model adopts an integrated and comprehensive approach to increase the availability and access to improved inputs as well as produce markets through structured off-take arrangements. The model involves the operations of a number of value chain actors under the guidance of the MoFA as the coordinating ministry. The various actors and their roles are outlined below.

- **Farmers:** The programme will cover small, medium and large-scale commercial farmers as well as organised farmers. Farmers under the programme will be registered biometrically, and their farms will be georeferenced. All individual farmers participating will be linked with aggregators.

- **Input suppliers:** Under this programme, input suppliers will be identified as private input dealers who will sign onto the programme to supply quality inputs such as seeds, fertilisers, and other agrochemicals to farmers operating under a designated aggregator
- **Aggregators:** The aggregator will be assigned to registered farmers under the programme, coordinate input delivery and recover the selected commodities in kind, as indicated in Figure 1. The aggregator will also engage the services of agricultural extension agents (AEAs), AMSECs, transporters and other ancillary service providers to support farmers. This stage will be followed by recovery in kind from the farmer to the value of inputs advanced at the end of the cropping cycle, which will then be deposited at a designated warehouse for a ready off-taker market. **Farmers:** The programme will cover small, medium and large-scale commercial farmers as well as organised farmers. Farmers under the programme will be registered biometrically, and their farms will be georeferenced. All individual farmers participating will be linked with aggregators. **Input suppliers:** Under this programme, input suppliers will be identified as private input dealers who will sign onto the programme to supply quality inputs such as seeds, fertilisers, and other agrochemicals to farmers operating under a designated aggregator.
- **Master Aggregator:** Given the strategic importance of the off-taker arrangements envisaged under the PFJ 2.0 model, a master aggregator will be engaged to play the critical role of manager of both the supply chain and value chain associated with the ICS, thus ensuring a seamless flow of agro-inputs and the management of recovered produce (commodities). The master aggregator will be formally structured as a special-purpose trading entity under a public–private partnership (PPP) arrangement, with the private sector leading the management and operations of the entity and the government creating an enabling environment in which the entity can thrive.
- **Agricultural Extension Agents:** AEAs will provide reliable and programmed technical assistance to ensure that beneficiaries access and experience the full benefits of the promoted technological packages. Extension services will include farm visits, field demonstrations, e-agriculture, farmer field schools, etc.
- **Agricultural Mechanisation Services Centres:** AMSECs will provide mechanisation services, including land development, land preparation, planting, fertiliser application,

weed control, harvesting, threshing, etc., to reduce drudgery and cost as well as improve efficiency and yield.

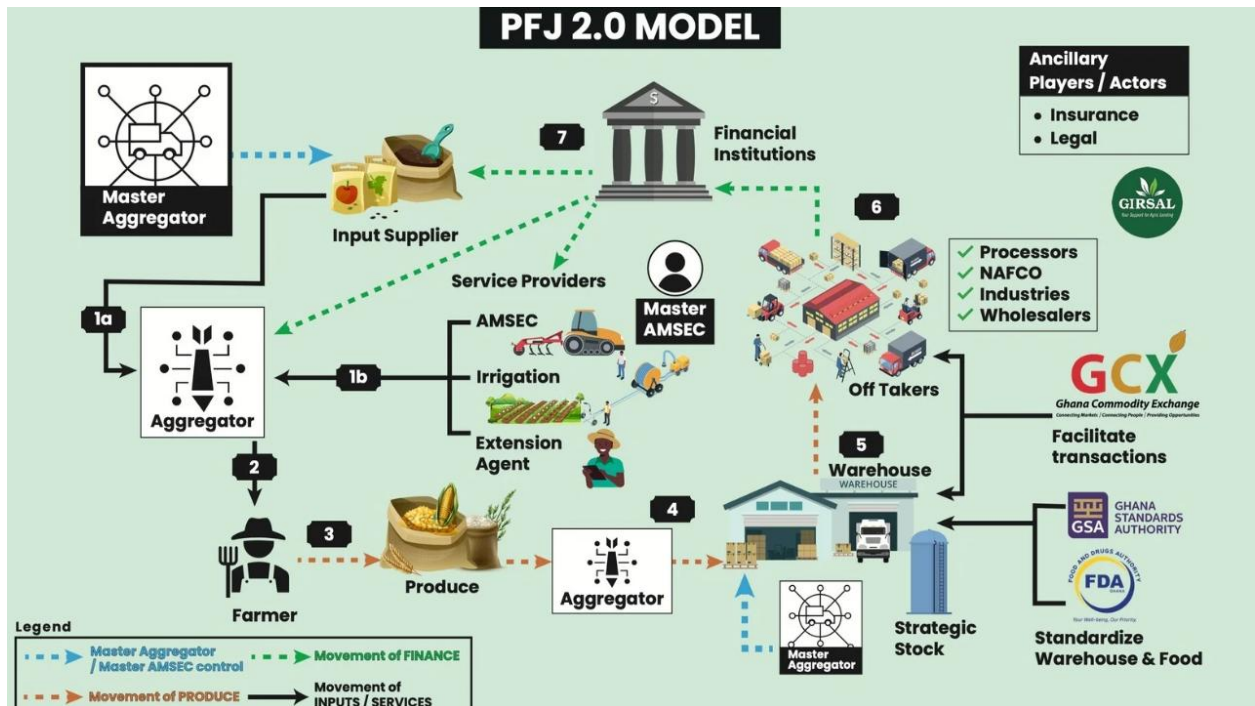


Figure 1: PFJ 2.0 Model adapted from the PFJ 2.0 Master Plan document

Purpose of Assessment

Given the strategic importance of PFJ 2.0, the Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFAG) whose members are key beneficiaries of the programme, has a vested interest in its success. With funding from OXFAM in Ghana, the PFAG engaged an independent consultant to monitor the implementation strategies of PFJ 2.0 and document beneficiaries' experiences, involvement and initial challenges. This information will be used to engage the government in areas needing improvement.

Objectives of the Assessment

The overall aim of this assessment is to provide recommendations based on field monitoring and stakeholders' experiences for PFAG to use in engaging MoFA for possible policy review. Specifically, the consultant was assigned to:

- Assess stakeholders' experiences about the effectiveness of changing the PFJ 1.0 to PFJ 2.0 and how such changes impact on the sector's performance.
- Evaluate beneficiaries' involvement in the development and implementation of the PFJ 2.0.
- Identify and document the initial challenges with the implementation of the PFJ 2.0
- Determine the sustainability of PFJ 2.0 and the possibility of its being able to transform the agricultural sector.
- Explore other cross-cutting issues relevant to agricultural development in Ghana.

The rationale of the study

The survey is important because the Planting for Food and Jobs 2.0 is linked to the Government of Ghana's Medium-Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP) policy priority areas and emanates from the primary goal of the Government to transform the economy of Ghana through the modernization of agriculture. An empirical assessment of the operational modalities of PFJ 2.0 is essential as it provides primary evidence from sectoral stakeholders to make informed contributions to the initiative and offer a laudable approach to achieving the policy objectives. Secondly, this survey is expected to provide useful feedback to stakeholders, mainly implementing partners on the gaps and target shortcomings of the PFJ 2.0 that need to be rectified and the suggested remedies proposed for programme success. Finally, useful lessons gleaned from farmers' perspectives will influence policy to improve the programme.

Organisation of the report

The report is organised into five (5) chapters including this introduction chapter. The next chapter presents the methodology employed in conducting this study. Chapter three (3) is a presentation of the results based on the analysis of data collected from the field, and it focuses on selected indicators under the PFJ 2.0 policy document. In Chapter four (4), highlights of cross-cutting issues identified from consultations are presented. Chapter five (5) then concludes the report by summarising the key findings, drawing conclusions and offering policy recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This section details the research methods employed to achieve the study objectives. The study was conducted from April to July 2024, strategically timed to coincide with the planting season, allowing farmers to share recent experiences. A mixed-methods approach was employed, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. Additional information was gathered through a review of food and agricultural policies and programmes. The draft report was validated at a forum in Accra, allowing stakeholders to confirm or challenge the findings and provide additional information to enrich the final report. The detailed methodology is organised into subheadings for clarity; Study areas, Sample size, and Research design. The study areas were selected based on the production of the target crops and livestock (maize, rice, sorghum, root & tubers poultry, among others) selected for the Planting for Food and Jobs programme 2.0. Beneficiary households within these regions were randomly selected from the sampled districts. Additionally, stakeholders from the agricultural value chain were included, encompassing individuals such as Agricultural Directors and Agricultural Extension Agents (AEAs), Aggregators, and Input Suppliers among others.

Sample Area Selection

The study employed a stratified random sampling approach across Ghana's three geographical belts (Northern, Middle and Southern) to represent the country's diverse agro-ecological zones. A total of forty-two (42) districts were selected from these belts.

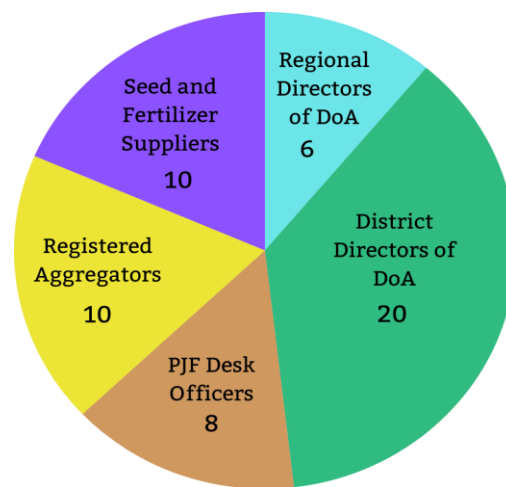
Farmer Respondents

Four thousand, one hundred and sixty (4,160) individual farmers participated in the study as respondents. This sampling ensured representations of both males and females, with 2,268 males and 1892 females represented (as shown in Table 1- Appendix 1).

Other Stakeholder Respondents

In addition to farmers, the study included key stakeholders from the agricultural value chain (as depicted in Figure 1 below). These stakeholders comprised:

- Six (6) Regional Directors of the Department of Agriculture
- Twenty (20) District Directors of the Department of Agriculture
- Eight (8) PFJ desk officers
- Ten (10) Registered aggregators of the PFJ 2.0,
- Ten (10) Input dealers (seed and fertilizers)



Breakdown of Additional Respondents

Figure 2: Authors Construct

Selection Criteria

Study areas were selected based on their production of the targeted crops by the Planting for Food and Jobs 2.0 programme as presented in Appendix 1. Regional Agricultural Directors, crop directors, aggregators and input suppliers were purposely selected based on their expertise within the programme.

The Study Design

To ensure a comprehensive assessment of the Planting for Food and Jobs programme and to capture stakeholder perspectives, the study employed a mixed-method approach utilising both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

Data Collection

Primary data: Primary data was collected from a diverse range of stakeholders directly involved in the programme implementation. This included:

- Potential beneficiary farmers
- Seed and fertilizer dealers
- Registered aggregators of the PFJ 2.0, regional and district agricultural directors
- PFJ 2.0 regional desk officers
- Officials from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture

A combination of data collection methods was employed to gather rich and nuanced information.

- Well-structured questionnaire
- In-depth interviews,
- Focus group discussions with structured guiding questions and
- Face-to-face interviews with other stakeholders: Directorate of Crop Services and the Plant Protection and Regulatory Services Directorate (PPRSD) of MoFA, Fertilizer companies, National Association of Seed Traders (NASTAG) and Retailers.

Secondary Data: Secondary data collection involved a documentary analysis of relevant existing documents, including:

- Agricultural policy documents
- PFJ 1.0 implementation plans from previous years
- Ghana's budget statements
- Economic policy documents

Rationale for Mixed Methods:

Combining robust primary data encompassing all actors within the PFJ chain with a rigorous analysis of secondary data, particularly the PFJ 2.0 policy document, allowed for a multi-faceted assessment. This approach enabled us to:

- Gain a holistic understanding of the program's potential implementation challenges.
- Evaluate the program's feasibility concerning the indicators outlined in the policy document.

Survey Data Collection

The data collection exercise, conducted through organised meetings, in-depth interviews, scheduled focus group discussions and administering of questionnaires spanned three months from April to June 2024. This period was ideal, as most farmers nationwide were awaiting the start of the new season and could allocate time for engagement.

The Individual qualitative interviews

Interviews with farmer leaders and PFAG focal persons dealt with their experiences with the programme and the revisions made. Key informant interviews were conducted with regional directors of the Department of Agriculture, District Directors of the Department of Agriculture, PFJ desk officers, registered aggregators of the PFJ 2.0, and ten (10) input dealers (seed and fertilizers). These interviews aimed to understand their perspectives of the 2024 implementation, particularly regarding the input credit scheme as modified by the revised PFJ 2.0.

Focus Group Discussions

A total of twelve (12) focus group discussions (FGD) were held in three geographical belts: the northern belt (Upper East, Upper West and Northern), the middle belt (Bono East and Ashanti), the southern belt (Eastern, Greater Accra, Western, Volta), covering different agro-ecological zones of Ghana (see; Plate 1, Plate 2, Plate 3 and Plate 4). Participants were selected based on gender, age, length of farming experience, farm sizes (smallholder/large scale) and length of stay in the community. The FGDs were deliberately structured to ensure gender parity focused on gathering information about farmers' awareness of PFJ 2.0, identifying pitfalls, proposing possible

solutions, and assessing the initiative's potential sustainability. Other stakeholders involved in the focus group discussion are presented in Appendix 2.



Plate 1: Meeting with chiefs at Pusiga



Plate 2: FGD at Navrongo



Plate 3: FGD at Sissala East



Plate 4: Stakeholder engagement in Tamale

Validation of the draft report

The draft report was validated by various stakeholders, including participants from the study areas and other relevant individuals to the PFJ 2.0 implementation. The validation of the draft report took place on the 17th of July 2024, at the Airport View Hotel, Accra, gathering farmers, officers from the Districts and Regional Department of Agriculture from the Greater Accra Region, and national level representatives. In addition, stakeholders from the donor community, civil society,

input dealers, media, and private sector players participated in the validation process. Overall, a total of fifty-one (51) people attended the validation workshop.



CHAPTER THREE:

KEY FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings from various stakeholders on the implementation of the Planting for Food and Jobs 2.0 programme. The first part of the chapter focuses on policy changes within MoFA, with emphasis on the PFJ 1.0 & 2.0. The second part explores stakeholders' perceptions of the programme and its potential to transform the agricultural sector. The subsequent sessions examine the involvement of key stakeholders in project design and implementation, as well as farmers' experiences with the 2024 implementation. The final session discusses other cross cutting issues and their relevance to agricultural development in Ghana.

Stakeholders' perception of changing PFJ 1.0 to PFJ 2.0 and how such changes could impact the sectors' performance.

Over the past decades, MoFA has consistently introduced and implemented various policies and interventions aimed at revitalising the agricultural sector, often hailed as the engine of economic transformation in the country. While policy reviews and the introduction of new policies have been routine activities of MoFA, PFAG sought to understand stakeholders' perspectives on these activities, particularly the PFJ 1.0 to PFJ 2.0.

Figure 2.0 below illustrates farmers' perspectives on the transition from PFJ 1.0 to PFJ 2.0. The majority of farmers, approximately 56%, were pleased with MoFA's revision of PFJ 1.0 to PFJ 2.0. Meanwhile, 20% felt that policy changes within MoFA have become too frequent, 15% considered the changes needless, and 9% were indifferent. Proponents of the PFJ 1.0 review highlighted several challenges, including the poor quality of inputs provided by the program, the high cost of subsidized inputs, and the untimely distribution of these inputs. Many stakeholders expressed concern that frequent changes to policies and programs are both costly and wasteful of public resources. They argued that such decisions create confusion among farmers, disrupt their operations, and negatively impact long-term planning. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of engaging farmers and other relevant parties before revising existing policies.

During the stakeholder consultation in Techiman, many participants expressed that PFJ 1.0 had not delivered any significant value to the farmers. A participant indicated “*The PFJ 1.0 failed, the*

fertiliser supplied in 2022 was very poor, prices were high, seeds were of low quality and the government could not even pay those who supplied these inputs. Whether changes or not, the PFJ 1.0 was not going to be sustainable”. It is important to note that the PFAG’s 2022 assessment of PFJ 1.0 revealed similar concerns from key stakeholders. The report highlighted issues such as poor-quality inputs, high prices and corruption. Additionally, within MoFA, there were significant challenges with PFJ 1.0., as the government was unable to pay service providers for supplies delivered in 2021 and 2022.

<https://www.myjoyonline.com/fertiliser-supply-has-ceased-because-government-owes-suppliers-peasant-farmers-association/>

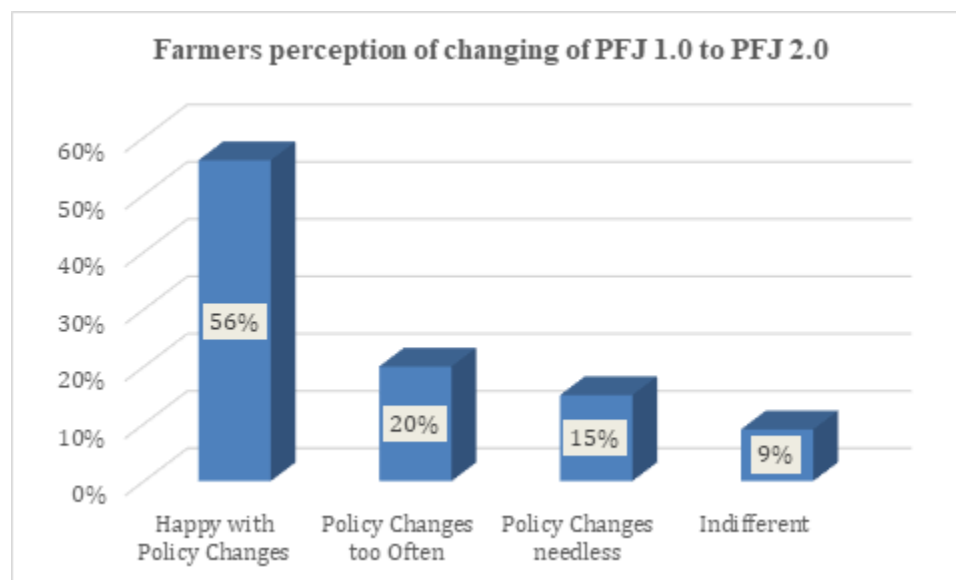


Figure 3: Farmers' Perception of Changing PFJ 1.0 to PFJ 2.0

During FGD, most respondents who opposed frequent policy changes explained that such changes, without corresponding increase in investment, lead to ineffective outcomes and a waste of state resources on meetings, workshops, and consultant fees.

A 42-year farmer from Shai Osudoko narrated. *“Why all these changes in MoFA policies? State resources that can be used for direct capital investment in the farmer are given to consultants and organising workshops which comes to nothing. We used to enjoy a coupon system of fertilizer*

distribution under His Excellency, J.A. Kuffour's regime, this was changed to fertilizer subsidy when NDC took over power in 2009. When NPP came again in 2016, this was changed to PFJ 1.0 and within the same NPP when a new minister took over as a Minister of Food and Agriculture, the PFJ 1.0 was changed to PFJ 2.0. All this, the value is the same, it's just a way to spend state-limited resources".

Another farmer from Nanumba indicated *"We are now fed-up with their jargon, whether PFJ 1.0 or PFJ 2.0, it is only the politicians who benefit. What are we getting as farmers? nothing".* However, it must be noted that these sentiments were primarily expressed by farmers who typically prioritise direct investment and often do not recognise the broader efforts of MoFA.

Also, during the stakeholder consultation in Tamale, a 52-year-old farmer from Saboba had this to say *"Programs developed by the ministry are not well implemented and new policies and programs are always being developed again".* Using the PFJ 1.0 and 2.0 as examples, she explained, *"The PFJ 1.0 being redesigned into phase two is a political decision. Why don't we allow the Chief Director and other good technocrats from the ministries who have expertise in agribusiness to lead in policy design and implementation? That would have ensured continuity rather than being left at the hands of the Minister who is politically elected. I say this because based on the presentation by MoFA officials, the whole policy looks good but the implementation is our problem".*

Another farmer explained *"My perspective is that we have the best of brains, the best of policies, but the implementation is bad. What I think should be done with this PFJ is that the politicians must reduce their interference in the implementation of some of these policies. They should appoint technical people like the directors and give them the needed resources to work and be the face of the ministry. And at the end of the day, these policies will still benefit the political party (government). So, if more farmers benefit, the government will be praised for that".* These sentiments confirm the frustrations of AEAs at most of the districts who were disappointed with the turn of events from the ministry and were pessimistic about the success of the PFJ 2.0.

The narrative shifted during our engagement with officers of the Ministry. From their perspective, policy changes are often necessary as new developments arise. They explained that these changes enable the introduction of innovative practices, new technologies, and modern methods of farming methods.

According to an officer whose name is withheld “the review of PFJ 1.0 to PFJ 2.0 was non-negotiable because we got to a time when the government could not just continue with the input subsidy due to budget constraints. Besides, the PFJ 1.0 did not cover most of the value chains such as marketing, mechanisation and warehousing. But with the PFJ 2.0 all that is captured”. The PFJ 1.0 was anchored on five pillars; Seed Pillar, Fertilizer Pillar, E-agriculture; creation of market opportunities and free extension services (MoFA 2018). However, the actual implementation primarily focused on the Seed and Fertilizer pillars. This narrowed approach resulted in some farmers producing without access to a guaranteed market. Also, due to logistical constraints, E-agriculture and Extension services pillars were either neglected or poorly implemented.

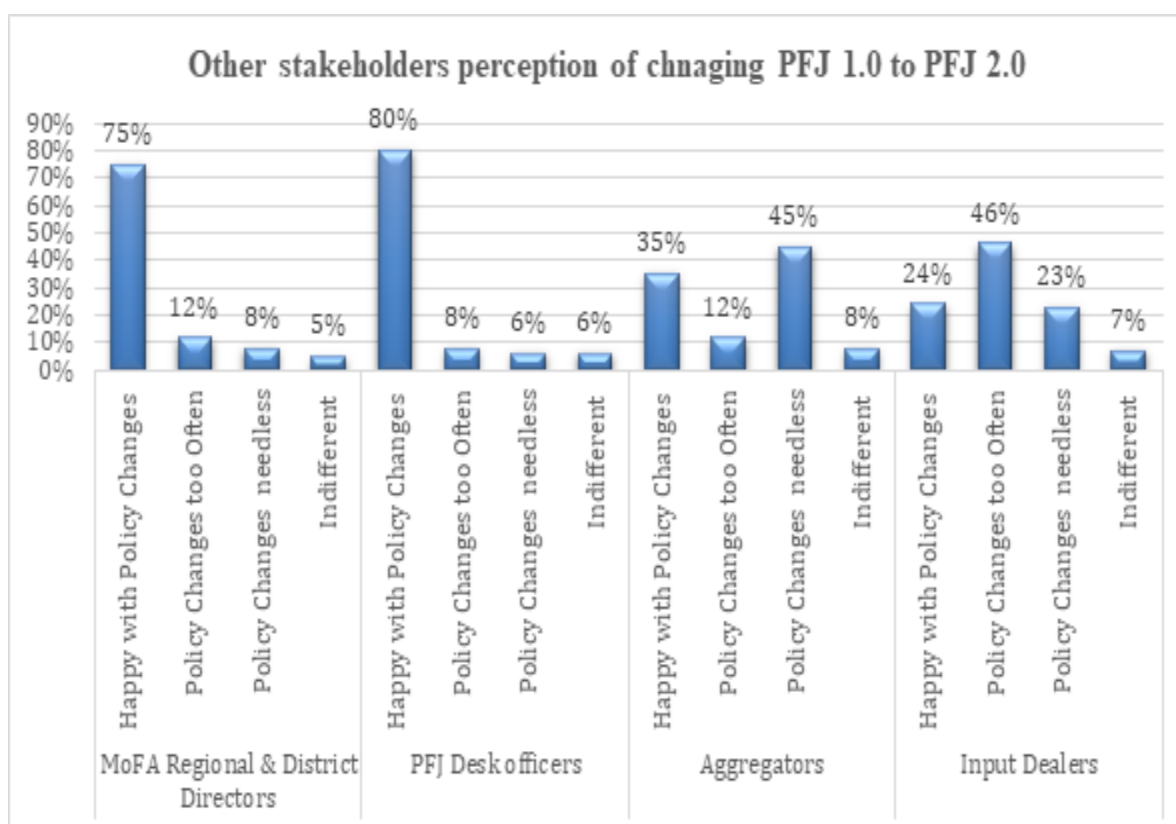


Figure 4: Other stakeholders' perception of changing PFJ 1.0 to PJJ 2.0

Timing of the PFJ 2.0 implementation

Regarding the timing of PFJ 2.0 implementation, responses were mixed. Some farmers felt the timing was appropriate, noting that the review process began in 2023 and included extensive consultations with various stakeholders, including farmer groups. However, others believed that too much time was spent on consultations and stakeholder engagement, leading to a rushed implementation phase.

As a farmer indicated during the stakeholder engagement in Tamale, *“This project was launched in August 2023 in Tamale. Since then, we haven’t heard anything again. Rushing to register farmers within a short period and promising to supply them fertilizer this same season is going to be difficult, but for us, whether PFJ or no PFJ, we will continue with our farming”*.

Many participants in Tamale recommended for the ministry to use 2024 as a pilot year and postpone full implementation to 2025. They argued that most farmers have already planned on their farm sizes, crops, and planting locations for the upcoming season.

“For me, I will suggest that 2024 should be a pilot year. In my community, most farmers could not be registered. There was only one officer, how can he register every farmer? I suggest this year be used as a pilot and full-blown implementation to take place next year”.

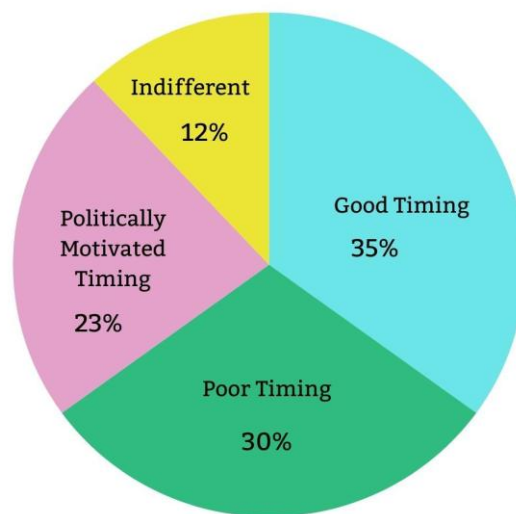


Figure 5: Farmers' view on the timing of PFJ 2.0 Implementation

As shown in Figure 4.0 above, 35% of respondents praised the timing of implementation, while 30% found it inadequate, and another 23% believed it to be politically motivated. These concerns align with a component of the of the PFJ 2.0 implementation that allocates a portion of fertiliser for free to selected farmers. The Executive Director of PFAG expressed concerns about the selective support, questioning the rationale for excluding other farmers.

“We have no problem with the government supporting farmers who cannot afford to buy fertilizer on credit, but we are concerned about the criteria for selecting such deserving farmers. Most of our members are of the view that it is just a way of giving fertilizer to party members”. When inquiring with the District Department of Agriculture about the criteria for selecting beneficiary farmers, officials were unwilling to disclose specific details. They only mentioned that numerous factors are considered in the selection process. Stakeholders, including Agricultural Directors, Aggregators, Input Dealers, PFJ Desk Officers, held differing views on the timing of the PFJ 2.0 implementation as presented in Figure 5.0 below.

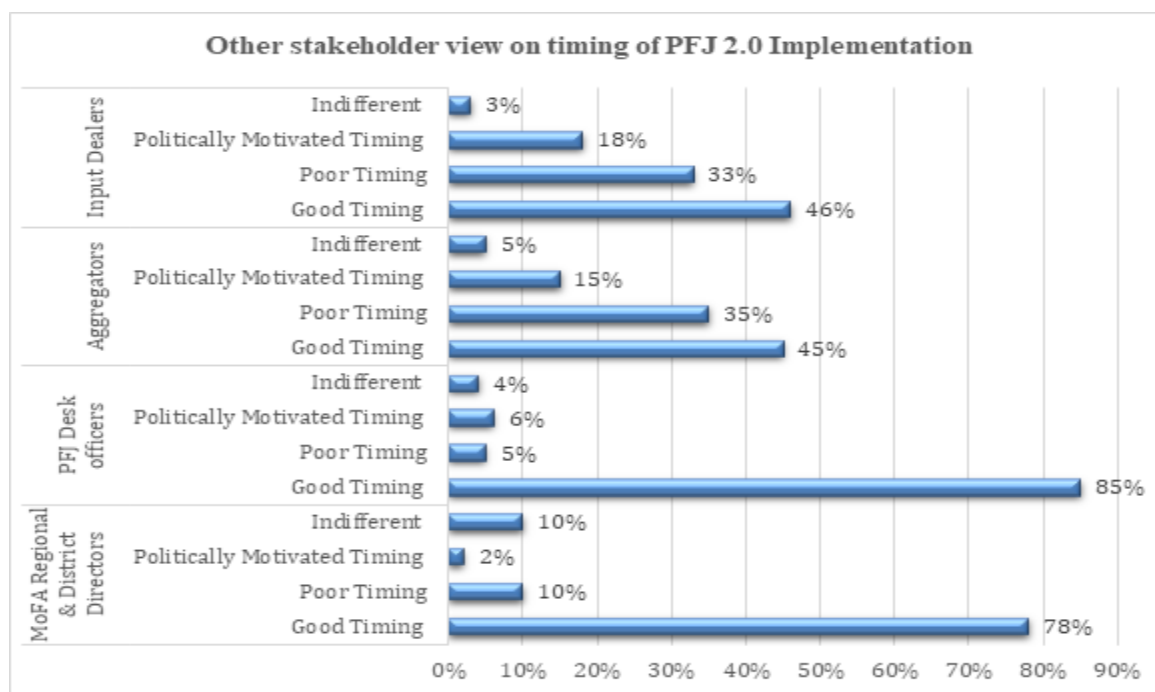


Figure 6: Other stakeholder views on the timing of PFJ 2.0 Implementation

Farmers and involvement in the development and implementation of the PFJ 2.0

The research team were also interested in understanding whether the farmers felt involved in the development of the PFJ 2.0. or not. Out of the 4,160 farmers interviewed, the majority about 55% said they were engaged. Another about 33% said they only heard it on radios and other media, while 12% indicated they were never engaged. The majority (55%) (figure 6) said that even though they were engaged, their perspectives were never taken into consideration in finalising the document.

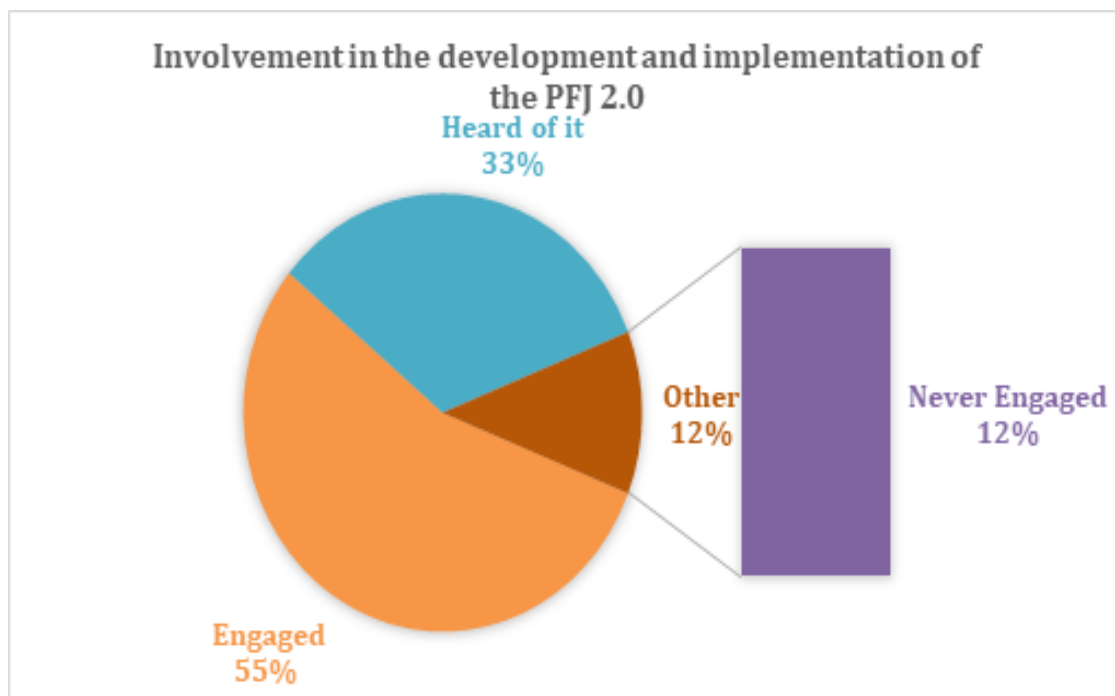


Figure 7: Farmers' involvement in the development and implementation of the PFJ 2.0

Figure 7 below shows other stakeholders' involvement in development and implementation of PFJ 2.0. The results differ from the potential farmers involvement findings. Interestingly, majority of the MoFA regional and district directors (90%) were engaged in the formulation and initiation implementation processes.

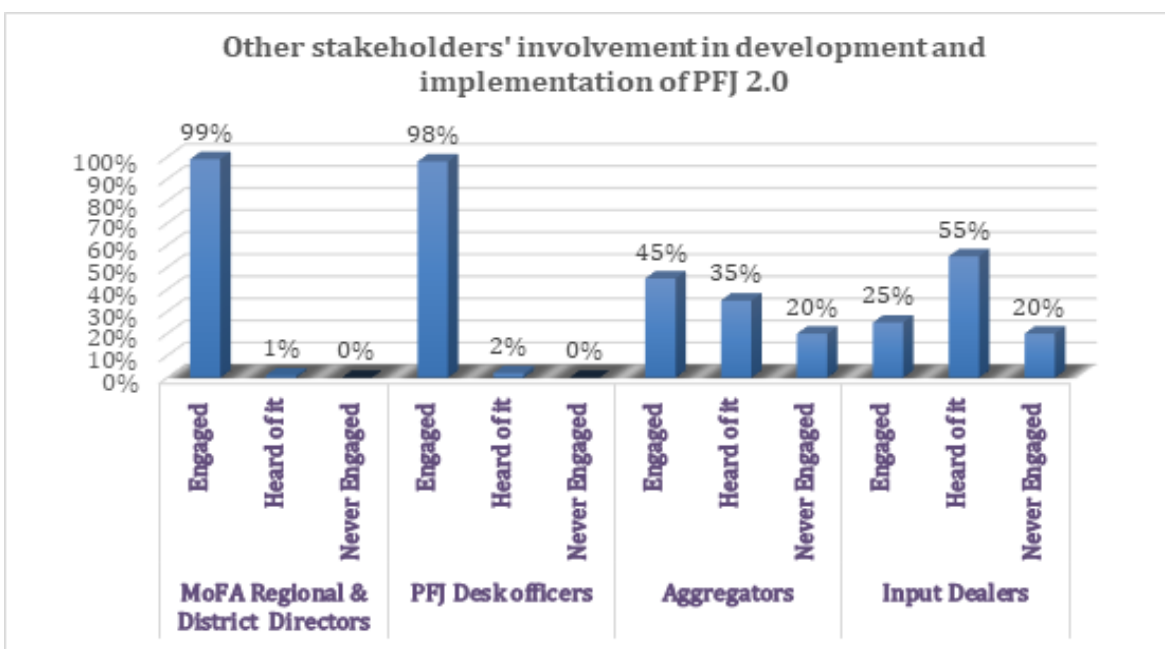


Figure 8: Other stakeholders' involvement in the development and implementation of PFJ 2.0

Challenges farmers face with the implementation

The primary challenge faced by farmers during the PFJ 2.0 implementation was the registration process. Many farmers reported slow registration, while others were unable to register at all. According to Table 3.0 in the Appendix, about 80% of respondents indicated they could not register, while 8% said they were able to register but their farms had not yet been mapped. Only 7% of respondents were able to both register and have their farms mapped.

The poor registration process was common in all the study areas which is worrying as MoFA targeted to register 2 million farmers in 2024. During a FGD in Upper East region, a farmer indicated *"I have three different farms in three different locations about 3 kilometres apart, even though I was registered, I am still wondering how the mapping will be done. Even the officer who registered me is not interested in visiting those farms, claiming the distances are far"*. Another farmer narrated *"The officer who came to our area has a serious challenge with his tablet. According to him, his tablet was not working. He spends the whole day in our community but could not even register five farmers, this whole exercise is boring and waste of our time"*

In conversations with the MoFA officers involved in the registration process, they mentioned that the work is demanding and that the number of officers available was insufficient compared to the

large number of farmers expected to be registered. One of them narrated. “We are not many, we are poorly equipped and lack the logistics to do the work”. Another officer indicated *“The work is demanding and tedious. In my district, the farmer population is about 137,000. So far, we have been able to register just 5,000 farmers. I think our leaders need to deploy more officers to support”*.

Another officer lamented *“All these problems we are facing are due to poor planning. They should have engaged national service personnel or NABCO officers to assist with the registration. With that, they can use the whole year to do the registration and the implementation will start next year. Or they should start with a smaller number as a pilot and when it works, they escalate to other areas”*.

While seeking information from MoFA, we were informed that all listed challenges are being addressed and that the programme is expected to succeed. They further explained that no successful programme has ever been implemented without encountering challenges.

Challenges of aggregators with the implementation

According to the project design, the aggregator is central to the PFJ 2.0, acting as a link between the farmer, other actors, and the government. Aggregators are responsible for receiving inputs from input suppliers and delivery to the registered farmers, and monitoring and recovering inputs from suppliers. Speaking with some selected aggregators, some said they were engaged and had even signed contracts. However, some stated they were offered contracts but chose not to sign. Consequently, these aggregators claimed they were assigned to regions and districts with which they have no prior experience. As an aggregator indicated *“I submitted a proposal indicating the number of farmers I work with and the districts I have been working with. I was surprised they rather assigned me to districts where I didn’t have experience; I don’t know the farmers and I don’t have an office or warehouse and they expect me to deliver. I cannot be part of a system like that”*. Another aggregator indicated *“I am so nervous about this project. Even though I signed the contract, nothing is happening and farmers are calling me for input. What is going on? I am more confused with the whole PFJ 2.0”*.

During the regional consultation, many aggregators expressed concerns that the final document presented by MoFA differed significantly from what was discussed and jointly developed. An

aggregator indicated *“During the stakeholder engagement, it was agreed that PFJ 2.0 was going to be private sector led and the Minister on several platforms explained that this was a private sector led programme. This issue of the Master aggregator, being MoFA, was not part of the picture. If MoFA is now leading in giving out inputs and receiving repayment from aggregators, where is the private sector? This is another scam to spend our money”*. Another respondent expressed *“We all know when MoFA leads in input distribution, repayment becomes a problem. In 2017, when inputs were supplied through MoFA, repayment became a problem and they turned to accuse farmers for their poor recovery. Why have they ignored the private sector? What is the role of the banks, the mechanisation service providers, the seed suppliers and fertiliser suppliers? I am more confused than before”*.

Some aggregators have refused to sign the contracts. They stated that their proposals clearly indicated their operating areas, yet MoFA reassigned them to different districts without explanation. Additionally, other aggregators complained that the incentives for their role were neither captured nor explained to them.

This was a narration from an aggregator in the Northeast Region *“We were told the aggregator is the centre of the programme. The aggregator serves as a link between the farmer and other service providers. They further indicated that aggregators will be paid a certain percentage of the recovery. This implies that when the recovery is bad, the aggregator has nothing. Meanwhile, the aggregator will spend resources to supply inputs and monitor the performance of farmers as well as do all the recovery. Yet they failed to explain clearly how much an aggregator will be getting. For me, I can’t be part of this arrangement”*.

Many of the aggregators reported that although MoFA contacted them to sign contracts, they were assigned to locations where they had no prior operations, making it challenging for them. This is what one aggregator had to say *“I am still wondering whether MoFA intends to recover inputs to be given to farmers or not. I applied to districts where I operate, but they rather decided to allocate different districts in different regions for me. In the new districts they gave me, I don’t have my warehouses there, I don’t know the farmers and none of my officers operate there. How do they expect me to operate? I spoke to them and they are not willing to reassign me. For me, I can’t be part of this mess”*.

From the literature and engagement of key informants, there are several successful examples of out-grower schemes being led by aggregators that MoFA could adopt and improve upon. Typical

examples are the Guinness Ghana Brewery Plc aggregator system and Masara N' Arziki maize outgrower schemes. These are successful programmes that stand alone without government interference. In our opinion, care must be taken by the government to ensure that they don't distort the existing value chains that are being operated by farmers and aggregators. Similar concerns were expressed by aggregators who said assigning other aggregators to their operational areas might distort their activities since farmers will rush and take inputs from the government and stop dealing with them.

Challenges of service providers with the implementation

According to the PFJ 2.0 document, farmers were going to get mechanisation services, fertilisers, agrochemicals, and seeds on credit. However, discussions with service providers revealed they were unaware of the programme's details. Many reported that the government had not yet engaged them, leaving them uncertain about their expected roles. They mentioned having limited tractors, planters and combine harvesters. Speaking to a mechanisation service provider he said *"We import most of our equipment outside Ghana and as we speak, the government is yet to communicate to us what we are expected to do. When they even asked us to deliver service today it will be difficult because we have limited machines. As we are yet to be engaged, when can we import them? Maybe they are looking at next year"*.

Given the critical role these actors play in the programme's success, failing to deliberately involve them could negatively impact the programme outcomes. Similar experiences go for fertilizer suppliers and seed suppliers. One of the fertilizer companies indicated *"As for our company, I am not sure we will be part of this whole arrangement. As it stands, we have not been engaged. Our current stock is not even enough for our clients, what allocation can we give to the government? If the government meant it, they should have given us a contract three months earlier to plan"*.

We were also interested in understanding other challenges confronted by the aggregators and these are a few quotes. *"Our challenges are a lot and the government itself is the biggest among them. How can a government impose so many taxes on farm machinery, agro-inputs and medications and expect farmers to be able to produce at a low cost? I currently have a 40-foot container, but I can't clear it because the cost of clearance is much higher than the cost of the product. Previously, there was a waiver on duties on agro-inputs, but today, everything is tax, tax, tax"*.

Another person complained. *The solution to the problems of farmers is not what our government tries to do. They should just give a tax waiver, and rather increase taxes on imported competitive*

products such as rice, poultry and other food concentrates and see how Ghanaian farmers will perform. You can't continue to tax farmers so much, allow and expect your agriculture to grow". From our engagements, the high cost of production emerged as major concerns, with many respondents attributing the high costs to excessive taxes. Taxes are a crucial and sustainable source of income, serving important economic and social functions. They impact production, consumption, savings, investment, and employment. Reassessing taxes on agro-products could significantly reduce production costs and food commodities prices.

Feasibility and Sustainability of PFL 2.0

To determine the feasibility and sustainability of PFJ 2.0, both the officers and the farmers across the study areas expressed their pessimism. Although many stakeholders were anxious of the success of the programme, their hope was eroded by the slow pace of implementation, poor planning, and limited logistics for registration, which they feared could significantly hinder its success. As shown in Appendix 4- Table 4, approximately 72% of respondents doubted the programme's sustainability, 17% remained optimistic, and 11% had mixed feelings. Upon further inquiry, those doubting its sustainability suggested that after the 2024 elections, the new agricultural minister, whether from within or outside the current government, might change the programme. As one of them indicated.

"In Ghana, we don't have a long-term policy within MoFA for every government to implement, any Minister who comes does whatever they like. Even within the same NPP government, when Hon. Dr. Owusu Afriyie Akoto was appointed, he introduced PFJ 1.0, and when Hon. Dr. Bryan Achampong took over, he reviewed PFJ 1.0 and also introduced PFJ 2.0. It is so disappointing that the technical people within MoFA are not given a freehand to work".

Others also felt that the PFJ 2.0 was meant for political foot soldiers. as a key informant indicated. *"Last week, fertilizer was brought to our district for farmers for free. Unfortunately, a list was generated and used for the distribution. The criteria for being selected is only known by the MoFA people".*

Officers at MoFA have indicated that they view PFJ 2.0 not as a standalone policy: FASDEP I&II and the current Investing for Food and Jobs (IFJ). They explained that PFJ 2.0 is seen as a means to implement and sustain the goals of IFJ. However, some within MoFA, including one officer,

expressed confusion about PFJ 2.0, noting that many of his colleagues share the same uncertainty regarding the project's implementation.

Our analysis, based on feedback from most stakeholders, indicates that excluding many private sector actors from the implementation process may result in their disinterest. Additionally, the transition from PFJ 1.0 to PFJ 2.0 under the same NPP government was identified as a potential cause of failure. By not learning from previous experiences and designating MoFA as the Master Aggregator, the project risks failure due to possible poor input recovery. Furthermore, the lack of focus and limited support to only fertilizers and seeds make PFJ 2.0 indistinguishable from PFJ 1.0. Therefore, the reasons for PFJ 1.0's failure may also apply to PFJ 2.0.

Grant Component of the PFJ 2.0:

The grant component of the program was designed to support vulnerable farmers by providing them with three 50 kg bags of NPK fertilizer, one 50 kg bag of urea fertilizer, and a 10 kg bag of maize seeds at no cost. This initiative aims to assist vulnerable groups, including female-headed households, elderly farmers, farmers with disabilities, and smallholder farmers with limited access to inputs. Additionally, the first 200,000 farmers fully registered on the Ghana Agricultural Agribusiness Platform (GhAAP) will receive these grants. The grant component also includes a special initiative to support farmers affected by the Akosombo Dam spillages in the Volta and Eastern Regions, under the US\$40 million Food Systems Resilience Program. This support will include inputs such as fertilizer, agrochemicals, seeds, and other essential agricultural products.

Many stakeholders expressed concerns about the lack of transparency in this part of the program. Key details, such as the qualification criteria, the quantity of inputs supplied to each district, the names of suppliers, and the total costs involved, were not disclosed to the public. Concerns were also raised about the involvement of Members of Parliament (MPs) and District Chief Executives (DCEs) in the selection process, which many respondents feared could lead to favouritism, politicization, hoarding, and corruption. Furthermore, there were questions about why the Ministry would modify the PFJ 1.0 input subsidy due to cost concerns and the government's inability to pay service providers, yet still introduce a grant component.

Talking to some of the farmers, they were worried of how the grant component was being implemented. For example, a 55-year-old farmer in Kintampo shared his frustration: "*The minister*

is not being sincere with farmers; we all know this is an election year, so they want to give this to party members for votes. If they say the first 200,000 farmers registered will be supported, is it our fault that we were not registered? I have visited the agric office many times for registration, but they say the officer will come to our area. The officer only came on June 25th and couldn't even map my farm. Also, how will they know who is a vulnerable farmer? In Ghana, majority of farmers are vulnerable."

A farmer in Mamprugu Moagduri indicated *"they are using this grant component to buy votes, even though they said is for the poor, in our area, is rather the big men who are getting it. To be able to get it, you have to pay GHS40.00 for them to bring it from Tamale. Even with that, if the DCE doesn't like you, he will never add your name"*

The Executive Director of PFAG emphasized the importance of grants in alleviating the suffering of poor and vulnerable populations, particularly in rural farming households. He acknowledged the potential of such initiatives to reduce poverty, promote sustainable incomes, and enhance access to basic needs. However, he also expressed concern about the use of vulnerable groups' names to justify spending taxpayer money without proper accountability measures.

According to him *"No part of the strategy spoke about grants and the involvement of politically exposed persons in the selection of beneficiary farmers and distribution of fertilizer and seeds. However, what we are currently experiencing is the involvement of MPs, NPP parliamentary candidates and DCEs, who have been given quotas of fertilizers and seeds to distribute. The farmers are asking. What is the role of the DCEs and Parliamentary Candidates in input distribution? Are they replacing the work of aggregators and the district department of agriculture and which criteria are they using to distribute the fertilizers? Would the beneficiaries pay back, if they will, who are they paying to? If they are not paying back, why must it be the role of politicians to be involved in inputs distribution?"*.

These concerns among others are worrying and serious threat to the sustainability of the PFJ 2.0.

CHAPTER FOUR

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Introduction

Several cross-cutting issues must be addressed during the preparation and implementation of Planting for Food and Jobs 2.0. The research team identified these issues as critical based on feedback from various stakeholders involved in the study. While these concerns may be incorporated into different aspects of the initiative, they require special emphasis to ensure the successful execution of PFJ 2.0.

- 1. Policy Literacy:** Awareness and understanding of PFJ 2.0 are notably limited at the regional, district, and community levels. Stakeholder consultations revealed a lack of familiarity with key national documents related to PFJ 2.0, such as FASDEP I & II and Investing for Food and Jobs. Additionally, PFJ 2.0 documents were often unavailable at the district and community levels, leaving major stakeholders, including farmers, without access to crucial information.

It is essential for stakeholders to be well-informed and sensitized about PFJ 2.0 to fully understand its contents and benefits. The effective implementation of national policies relies heavily on the knowledge of those involved in the policy cycle. Public officers, including those in regional and district Departments of Agriculture, as well as farmers, traditional authorities, and Assembly members, need comprehensive knowledge of national policies to support successful implementation.

Policy literacy is critical for addressing the impacts of major agricultural initiatives like PFJ 2.0. The National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) and the Department of Agriculture play pivotal roles in disseminating information. However, the current situation with PFJ 2.0 indicates that these efforts have been insufficient. It is crucial to package PFJ 2.0's key highlights and content into local languages and broadcast them regularly on the radio, especially in rural areas with high illiteracy rates, to improve understanding and engagement.

2. **Excessive taxation on agricultural inputs and equipment:** The Tax Exemptions Act 2022 (Act 1083) was designed to regulate tax exemptions and establish a framework for the importation of goods into Ghana. However, its implementation has effectively eliminated tax exemptions for agricultural inputs. As a result, importers of essential agricultural items—such as seeds, fertilizers, chemicals, and vaccines—are now required to pay full import duties at the ports. This situation exacerbates issues related to the availability, accessibility, and affordability of these inputs for smallholder farmers.

The high port fees incurred by importers are passed on to farmers, raising their production costs. This increase in expenses impacts the quantity of produce cultivated and contributes to higher food prices. Consequently, the removal of tax exemptions for agricultural inputs has intensified the financial strain on farmers, affecting both their livelihoods and food security.

Insights from our stakeholder engagement point out that, “*a pesticide importer and distributor who used to pay about GH 63,000.00 for fifteen containers now pays close to Ghc180,000.00 for ten (10) containers for the same pesticides*”. Several importers have become reluctant to make shipments due to recent changes, leading to noticeable shortages for farmers. During stakeholder engagements, many importers of agricultural products and equipment have requested exemptions from the Ministry of Finance through the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. However, numerous requests remain unapproved, resulting in importers continuing to face exorbitant port charges.

With the transition from PFJ 1.0’s input subsidy to PFJ 2.0’s credit support model, the entire cost of production—including inputs like seeds, fertilizers, chemicals, and services such as mechanization and harvesting—will now be borne by farmers, though payment will be deferred until the end of the planting season. Analysis of the current surge in input and service prices, driven by high import duties, indicates that PFJ 2.0 is unlikely to reduce food prices. Farmers will need to pass these increased production costs on to consumers, maintaining high food prices despite the policy shift.

3. **Inadequate irrigation systems:** Access to and availability of water for farming have been major challenges hindering agricultural productivity in Ghana. In response, the Government of Ghana launched the One Village, One Dam (1V1D) initiative. According to our documentary analysis and secondary sources, the initiative has successfully led to the construction of approximately 576 dams across various communities in Northern Ghana, aimed at providing year-round water for agricultural activities.

However, our stakeholder engagement uncovered several issues with some of the 1V1D projects. While the initiative has made significant strides, some dams were poorly constructed and others exhibited structural defects, diminishing their effectiveness for smallholder farmers. These problems are attributed to limited budget allocations and insufficient resources for proper monitoring and maintenance.

A key stakeholder from the Upper East region had this to say: *'His Excellency Nana Addo Danquah Akufo Addo undertook the sod-cutting ceremony for construction activities of the Pwalugu Multi-Purpose Dam (PMPD), which was expected to bring a perpetual end to the perennial drought and flooding crises as a result of extensive rainfall associated with climate change and the opening of the Bagre Dam. Unfortunately, citizens and residents in the region and other surrounding communities are in the dark about the progress of construction, the state of compensation, and resettlement, which began after the sod-cutting exercise'*. To compound matters, the incidence of drought and flooding continues to devastate lives and properties within the catchment area, affecting the economic activities of the people. With the rollout of PFJ 2.0 expected soon, there must be a constant supply of water across all farming districts in the country to ensure continuous agricultural production. It is also important that irrigation infrastructure is not only limited to Northern Ghana but spread across all farming districts in the Volta, Oti, Central, Western, and other regions plagued with continuous reliance on rain-fed agriculture with little or no investment in irrigation.

4. **Limited access to affordable financing:** A significant challenge facing potential beneficiaries of PFJ 2.0 is the limited access to affordable credit, particularly from mainstream financial institutions. Although the revised initiative plans to incorporate an input credit approach, our survey indicates that farmers may be disadvantaged since input and material costs will be set by the government.

Affordable financing is crucial for farmers as it allows them to save, invest, access inputs in a timely manner, and adopt new technologies, which can ultimately boost their incomes. However, farmers face several barriers, including limited access to collateral (especially land), high interest rates, a shortage of financial institutions in rural areas, and cumbersome loan processing procedures.

Despite the establishment of the Agricultural Development Bank and the Ghana Incentive-Based Risk Sharing Agricultural Lending (GIRSAL), these measures have not sufficiently addressed the issue of agricultural financing. As a result, farmers continue to struggle with funding constraints.

5. **Postharvest losses, market constraints and dumping:** PFJ 2.0 aims to boost agricultural yields and ensure year-round food security. However, this commendable initiative could face significant challenges if key constraints identified through our stakeholder engagement are not addressed. Small-scale farmers often suffer from post-harvest losses as high as 30%, particularly during bumper harvests, due to inadequate handling, processing, and storage facilities.

The lack of sufficient drying platforms and storage infrastructure for crops like maize, rice, soybeans, and vegetables compromises produce quality. Furthermore, the absence of appropriate storage solutions leads to substantial price differences between harvest time and planting season, causing income instability for farmers. Efficient storage facilities are crucial for stabilizing income by mitigating excessive price fluctuations.

The outdated and insufficient post-harvest infrastructure in Ghana presents a major bottleneck to agricultural growth. Farmers are often forced to sell their produce immediately after harvest to meet urgent cash needs, resulting in lower prices. Key factors contributing to post-harvest losses include inadequate warehouses and pack houses, limited

agro-processing centers, poorly structured markets, and inconsistent standards for weight and measures. Addressing these issues is essential for enhancing agricultural productivity, stability and PFJ 2.0 success.

6. **Substandard rural infrastructure, particularly feeder roads:** Potential members of PFJ 2.0 across the country have noted a significant decline in infrastructure, which is hindering agricultural development. The deteriorating condition of roads, including those in farming communities, is a major concern as it impedes the transportation of agricultural inputs and produce to and from the markets. Recent heavy rains and extreme temperatures have exacerbated this issue, rendering some roads impassable and leaving communities unable to receive necessary inputs, while produce is left to spoil on the farms.

Our stakeholder engagement revealed a severe shortage of storage facilities, making it challenging for farmers to store their produce. Additionally, many existing storage facilities are in poor condition and vulnerable to the elements, resulting in their underutilization. Addressing these infrastructure issues is critical for improving agricultural productivity and reducing post-harvest losses.

7. **Lack of modern mechanisation services:** Farmers across the country continue to face significant challenges in accessing agricultural equipment and mechanization services, despite government efforts to promote mechanization. Of the 89 private companies and institutions supported by MoFA to establish Agricultural Mechanization Service Centres (AMSECs) between 2007 and 2011, only about 50% remain operational, and even those have limited capacity to provide effective mechanized services (MoFA, 2016).

The underperformance of these AMSECs can be attributed to several factors, including low utilization of machinery, restricted access to services for farmers, frequent breakdowns of tractors, poor management, and high costs for spare parts. These issues have led to poor repayment rates for machinery allocated to beneficiaries, perpetuating a cycle of low productivity in the agriculture sector. Currently, smallholder farmers are forced to seek mechanization services at prohibitive prices due to escalating fuel and energy costs. As a result, many farmers are discouraged from expanding their farms or have abandoned farming for more profitable ventures.

The newly launched PFJ 2.0 initiative highlights mechanization services as a key component provided by lead anchors under the program. However, it is clear that the existing AMSEC model is ineffective in meeting farmers' mechanization needs and cannot accommodate the demand anticipated under PFJ 2.0. Additionally, relying solely on privately owned mechanization centers is insufficient to bridge this gap.

8. **Growing impacts of climate change:** Numerous studies have documented a gradual rise in temperatures and increased variability in rainfall across Ghana's agro-ecological zones. These changes, along with extreme weather events and rising sea levels, are impacting various sectors, including agriculture, forestry, health, water, and energy. The effects of climate change are intensifying and are expected to worsen, posing a significant threat to development unless efforts are made to enhance resilience and manage associated risks.

In response, the Ghanaian government has developed and is implementing several national policies, strategies, and regulatory frameworks aimed at protecting natural resources and strengthening the country's resilience. The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) serves as the cornerstone for these sectoral policies and implementation strategies. Additionally, the National Adaptation Plan and the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy guide adaptation efforts in line with the NCCP's overarching policy goals.

Despite these policies and plans, interventions to support resilience have been limited and slow to roll out. Addressing this gap is crucial for effectively managing climate risks and safeguarding the country's development prospects.

9. **Underinvestment in agricultural research and development:** In Ghana, underinvestment in agricultural research and development is a significant issue that challenges the effectiveness of initiatives in the nation. Smallholder farmers in Ghana often fail to invest in their farms, even when it may be profitable to do so. Stakeholders have highlighted that the lack of adequate funding and resources for agricultural research in the country hindering the development of innovative solutions needed to boost productivity, enhance crop resilience, and reduce postharvest losses. This gap in research and development limits the ability of programs to effectively address the pressing challenges faced by Ghanaian farmers, ultimately impacting the long-term success and sustainability of the agricultural sector.

- 10. Negative effects of illegal mining activities (Galamsey):** Activities of illegal miners (galamsey) currently threatens food security in Ghana. Galamsey activities have taken over the land of the farmers in some parts of the country and have polluted and poisoned the water bodies along surrounding communities. Investigation from PFAG farmers in such communities revealed that most of the water bodies were full of arsenic and actually some of the food stuff and vegetable produce have traces of arsenic in the food which is a threat to nutritional security. Efforts to combat hunger and ensure food and nutritional security depends heavily on the environment, hence key attention should be paid to ensuring safeguarding it. The Government “galamstop” campaign should be intensified at such locations and practices of land recovery from activities of illegal mining operators should be prioritized to achieve a holistic development agenda.
- 11. Political meddling in agricultural initiatives, policies and programs:** Political meddling in agricultural initiatives, policies, and programs stands as a critical issue in Ghana, potentially undermining the objectives of endeavours. Stakeholder feedback has pointed out that undue political influence can lead to the misallocation of resources, favouritism, and the implementation of short-term strategies aimed at gaining political capital rather than achieving sustainable agricultural development. Such interference compromises the integrity and effectiveness of programs, eroding trust among beneficiaries and stakeholders. To ensure the successful execution and long-term impact of governmental initiatives, it is imperative to establish transparent governance structures that insulate agricultural policies and initiatives from political biases and manipulation.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

While policy changes within public establishments are sometimes necessary to achieve government developmental targets, adopt new technologies, and improve the overall welfare of the population, routinely changing policies and programs within the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) in Ghana without considering stakeholder perspectives is a recipe for failure. This research found that many respondents seek medium- to long-term agricultural policies and programs collaboratively developed by all stakeholders, including MoFA and the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), the government institution facilitating the process. Such collaboration would ensure stakeholder buy-in, program sustainability, and the success of government policy objectives.

Initial challenges identified with the implementation of PFJ 2.0 include limited stakeholder participation, farmer dissatisfaction with the consultation process, poor registration of farmers, and inadequate logistical support for extension agents during registration. The research also found that some selected aggregators were arbitrarily assigned to unfamiliar districts, causing many to refuse participation in the program. Additionally, the program deviated from its private-sector-led focus, with MoFA assuming the role of the private sector by acting as the master aggregator.

Regarding program sustainability, although most farmers agreed on the need to modify PFJ 1.0 due to challenges with input subsidies, some farmers and other stakeholders were pessimistic about the sustainability of PFJ 2.0 because the main reasons for the review were ignored. For instance, aggregators were not properly treated, the private sector was overlooked, and the input credit concept was completely absent.

Moreover, the literature on PFJ 2.0 lacks clarity regarding the government's investment efforts to fulfil its commitments under the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP). The literature suggests that the government has shifted its investment responsibilities to the private sector without providing a clear explanation of how the allocated budget for MoFA will be utilized. Respondents noted that critical areas such as marketing, mechanization, and irrigation development appear to be neglected in the program.

Regarding the digitization of farms and farmers, most farmers reported significant difficulties with the registration process. Key issues include a shortage of extension agents, inadequate logistical support, and challenges in mapping their farms. As a result, many farmers have been excluded from participating in the program. By June 2024, when the data was compiled, fewer than 10% of farmers had successfully registered to participate in the program. The research also revealed that MoFA has taken a more hands-on approach in project implementation by assigning aggregators and acting as the Master Aggregator, contrary to the initial concept of PFJ 2.0 being focused on the private sector. Many respondents expressed concern that this approach might disrupt the value chains established by the private sector over the years and potentially hinder effective input discovery.

Among the commodities considered under PFJ 2.0, the inclusion of staple crops and vegetables is commendable for addressing food security, nutrition, and job creation. However, it is recommended that high-value crops, such as horticultural varieties, be considered for inclusion in the medium term. These crops could further enhance job creation and nutritional security.

Regarding the grant component of the PFJ 2.0, numerous stakeholders raised concerns about the lack of clarity regarding the intended beneficiaries and the transparency of input distribution. They also strongly oppose the decision to allow politicians to oversee the distribution process. Stakeholders argued that prioritizing the first 200,000 registered farmers seemed like an attempt to favour political allies for rent-seeking purposes, especially since some farmers registered late through no fault of their own.

Furthermore, they expressed disagreement with the decision to include support for victims of the Akosombo spillage under the US\$40 million Food Systems Resilience Programme as part of PFJ 2.0. Finally, concerning the sustainability of PFJ 2.0, most respondents expressed a lack of confidence in the program's long-term viability. Many viewed PFJ 2.0 as a political initiative that might be discontinued after the 2024 elections, regardless of the victorious party. Respondents preferred the development of a non-partisan, long-term agricultural policy led by Technical Directors within MoFA in collaboration with the NDPC. Such a policy would be better positioned to ensure continuity and sustainability beyond political cycles.

Recommendations

This section outlines key recommendations based on the experiences shared by key stakeholders in the study:

- i. **Focus on Developing Long-term Policies:** The current practice of frequently reviewing policies and programs without a scientific basis undermines stakeholder confidence and the effectiveness of these policies. While PFJ 2.0 was welcomed by many due to the shortcomings of PFJ 1.0, the research recommends developing a long-term policy and investment plan free from political interference. This plan should be spearheaded by Technical Directors within MoFA, in collaboration with the NDPC, and involve broad stakeholder consultation. To ensure sustainability and continuity, PFJ should be integrated as a sub-component within this overarching policy, rather than operating as a standalone programme.
- ii. **Increase government expenditure on agriculture:** Research indicates that a 1% increase in public spending on agriculture is linked to at least a 0.15% rise in Ghana's agricultural labour productivity. However, the literature on PFJ 2.0 does not clearly illustrate how government investments align with its commitment under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) to allocate at least 10% of public expenditure to agriculture. To enhance the quality and efficiency of public spending in agriculture, the research recommends prioritizing expenditures and focusing on areas such as marketing, mechanization, and irrigation development. These areas are crucial for achieving substantial short- to medium-term gains and returns for the sector. Relying solely on recurrent expenditures without substantial investment in infrastructure and direct support for farmers could hinder the sector's development and exacerbate existing challenges.
- iii. **Enhance Farmer Data Management:** A primary concern among respondents is the difficulty associated with digitizing farmers and their farms. Complaints include a shortage of Agricultural Extension Agents (AEAs) and inadequate logistical support. To address these issues, the research recommends adopting innovative approaches, such as engaging National Service Personnel and NABCO (Nation Builders Corps) staff to assist with the digitization efforts. Additionally, leveraging aggregators and lead farmers in various communities for step-down training, capacity building, produce mobilization, and distribution could effectively

alleviate the logistical burden on AEAs and enhance the overall efficiency of the digitization process.

- iv. **Increase Private Sector Participation:** The government should avoid directly organizing agricultural production or handling procurement and input distribution, especially in scenarios where public involvement crowds out private sector activity. When public investment targets a specific value chain, it should complement, not replace, the ongoing development driven by the private sector. Creating an enabling environment for private-sector-led growth is essential for efficient resource management. MoFA should play a facilitation role, allowing the private sector to take the lead, which will contribute to the programme's success and sustainability.
- v. **The inclusion of staple crops and vegetables in the program is commendable:** In addressing food and nutrition security and for creating employment opportunities the inclusion of staple crops and vegetables is necessary. Additionally, incorporating high-value crops, such as horticultural varieties, offers a faster route to job creation. These crops are typically three times more labour-intensive than cereals and have greater potential for post-harvest value addition.
- vi. **Sustainability of PFJ 2.0:** Regarding the sustainability of PFJ 2.0, most respondents expressed doubts about the project's long-term viability, viewing it as a politically driven initiative. Many believe that the program may be discontinued after the 2024 elections, regardless of which party—NPP or NDC—comes to power. Instead, respondents favoured the development of non-partisan, long-term agricultural policies led by Technical Directors within MoFA. Such policies would ensure greater continuity and sustainability, beyond political cycles.
- vii. **Promote Transparency and Impartiality in Agricultural Grant Distribution:** For the grant component of the programme, respondents seek clearer criteria for selecting target beneficiaries to ensure effective participation. The District Departments of Agriculture should oversee input distribution to minimize political interference. Allowing Members of Parliament (MPs) and District Chief Executives (DCEs) to manage input distribution could lead to favouritism and should be avoided.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: Breakdown of farmer respondents

Geographical Belt	Regions	Districts	Number of Respondents		
			Male	Female	Total
Northern Belt	Upper West	Daffiama Bussie Issa	60	40	100
		Sissala East	55	45	100
		Wa East	40	50	90
		Jirapa	70	30	100
		Lambussie	40	60	100
		Sub Total			490
	Upper East	Kassena Nankana East	70	80	150
		Kassena Nankana West	70	30	100
		Pusiga	80	70	150
		Tempani	40	60	100
		Zabila	43	57	100
		Bawku West	50	50	100
		Sub Total			700
	Northern	Kumbungu	30	70	100
		Sabuba	40	30	70
		Mion	30	30	60
		Nanumber North	40	50	90
		Gushiegu	40	60	100
		Yendi	90	60	150
		Sub Total			570
	North East	Mamprugu Moagduri	80	20	100
		Cheriponi	70	30	100
		West Mamprusi	60	40	100
		Sub Total			300
Middle Belt	Bono	Sunyani west	70	30	100
		Sub Total			100
	Bono East	Techiman Municipal	80	20	100
		Techiman North	40	60	100
		Kintampo South	40	30	70
		Kintampo North	40	40	80
		Nkoranza Municipal	40	60	100
		Sub Total			450

Southern Belt	Ahafo	Goaso	70	30	100
		Sub Total			100
	Ashanti	Offinso	50	50	100
		Ejura Sekyere Dumasi	80	40	120
		Sub Total			220
	Greater Accra	Shai Osudoku	60	40	100
		Ada East	60	40	100
		Adenta Municipal	30	20	50
		Sub Total			250
	Eastern	Fanteakwa North	40	50	90
		Nsawam-Adoagyire Municipal District	30	40	70
		Yilo Krobo District,	70	40	110
		Kwahu South Municipal	60	40	100
		Sub Total			370
	Western Region	Jomoro Municipal	50	50	100
		Shama Municipal	60	40	100
		Sub Total			200
	Central Region	Gomoa East Assembly	40	30	70
		Gomoa Fetteh	50	40	90
		Sub Total			160
	Volta	Hohoe	70	80	150
		Jasikan Municipality	40	60	100
		Sub Total			250

Source: Authors Construct

Table 2: Breakdown of Focus Group Discussion Participants

Region	Location of FGD		No. of Participants	Male	Female
Upper West			12	6	6
Upper East	MoFA	Regional Office, Tamale	12	6	6
Northern			12	6	6
North East			12	6	6
Bono			12	6	6
Bono East	Regional Coordinating Council, Techiman		12	6	6
Ahafo			12	6	6
Ashanti			12	6	6
Greater Accra			12	6	6
Eastern			12	6	6
Western Region	UDS Quest House Conference Room, Accra		12	6	6
Central Region			12	6	6
Volta			12	6	6

Table 3: Challenges farmers face with PFJ 2.0 implementation -Registration

Registration Challenges Encountered	Number	Percentage
Not Registered at all	3,328	80%
Registered but farms not mapped	333	8%
Registered, farms were captured but data was not found according to the officer	291	7%
Successfully registered and my farms mapped	208	5%
Total	4160	100

Authors Construct, 2024

Table 4: Feasibility and Sustainability of PFJ 2.0

Concerns on PFJ 2.0 Sustainability	Number	Percentage
Doubted the programme sustainability	2,995	72%
Optimistic about the programme sustainability	707	17%
Mixed feelings	458	11%
Total	4160	100

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