



PEASANT FARMERS
ASSOCIATION OF GHANA



SEND GHANA

Supported by



POLICY BRIEF

FARMER EXTENTION RATIO



Investing in Extension Services to achieve the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP Goals in Ghana”).

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new extension approaches such as the use of the mobile phone and other information and communication technologies to deliver extension messages to both male and female farmers to bridge the extension farmer ratio gap.

WHERE TO FIND THE RESOURCES

- * The Ghana extension services policy can be funded in a variety of ways: as part of the government budget for agricultural development; through industry levies (for example, where farmers or marketers pay a set fee to government each time they sell their produce); or through affordable 'user pay' schemes (where farmers pay for specific services/products provided by extension officers). This will require the intervention of the government to pass laws and exercise their oversight roles to ensure that the right strategic framework and laws, regulations and instruments are in place and functioning effectively. It is important to ensure that funding is aligned to the priorities for the extension service sector.

A FUNCTIONING RESEARCH –EXTENSION - FARMER – LINKAGES - COMMITTEES (RELCS)

- * The ministry of Food and Agriculture should be given the mandate to ensure effective and efficient coordination of the RELC process and as well as all activities undertaken by government, the private sector and NGOs in the sub sector.

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PREFACE

History of economic development in the world shows few countries achieving sustained economic growth without first developing their agricultural sector. In Africa and for that matter in Ghana, the activities of small scale farmers is most significant for the economic as they constitute about 80% of the farming population and contribute more ---to domestic food supply, income, employment and foreign exchange. However, unlike the developed countries where agriculture propelled economy to growth, it is not the case in Ghana due to limited application of technology in farming. This is partly due to inadequate extension agents to transfer new technology to farmers and partly due to perception of farmers about cost benefit of adopting new technology in farming.

When farmers become aware of importance of improved technology in farming and have access, they would adopt to it. This could not be achieved in the current extension farmer ratio in the country.

Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana and SEND Ghana believed this is possible and achievable provided government is open up for discussion with key stakeholders and willing to accept their recommendations. The policy brief provides alternatives to enrich the current extension policy by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

utilized etc. besides, some issues bordering on human interaction cannot be replaced with gadgets. Hence the continuous need to invest in building more agricultural training collages.

MAKING EXTENSION SERVICES PROFESSION AND PROVISION

- * It is important to note that extension service delivery in Ghana's agricultural sector will become effective, efficient, and sustainable if conscious and concerted effort is made to recruit and train women professionals; develop programs for women farmers, specifically target women to provide access to extension services; establish linkages with rural women's groups; and encourage women farmers to participate in extension's program activities. MoFAs should make the strategic decision to develop and implement gender-sensitive recruitment policy that goes beyond the 30 percent allocation of vacancies agricultural. Such a policy is crucial to address the social and cultural factors prevent women from taking up extension service delivery as a profession.

PROMOTING DEMAND-DRIVE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION SERVICES

- * To ensure consistency and coherence in policy implementation MoFA should undertake a participative stakeholder audit every three years to see where government extension services are most needed, and to identify opportunities for collaboration with NGOs and/or the private sector.
- * The same exercise can serve dual purpose by ensuring that there is in a place, regular implementation of a monitoring and evaluation framework for extension services delivery to ensure that they are meeting the needs of smallholder farmers.

SUPPORTING AND RESOURCING THE POLICY FRAMEWORK/IMPLEMENTATION

- * There is the need for government to invest in the training of the private sector to build public and private partnerships in the delivery of extension services and The need to invest in

MAL-FUNCTIONING FARMER-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (FBOS);

- * MoFA should collaborate with NGOs to reorient existing FBOs to bring back the spirit of voluntarism in grassroots advocacy movements.
- * Extension service agents should facilitate access to credit for small scale farmers, especially, those that belong to FBOs, to ensure smallholder farmers take advantage of existing and new technological innovations. Access to credit will also reduce reliance on hand-outs that interfere with the running of the FBOs.

EXTENSION HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

- * The welfare and motivation of extension staff are central to an effective national extension service. Extension officers need clear roles and objectives with appropriate career development opportunities to do their job effectively. Adequate training and resources are vital. When officers are scattered widely, methods must be found to provide interaction, feedback and support, for example, through mobile phone and internet technologies.
- * In the short term extension graduates should be treated the same way policy makes it possible for nurses and teachers to have guaranteed jobs by posting to new graduates to farming communities where they will be focusing on service delivery to smallholder farmers
- * The intention to rely on E-Extension to reach farmers must be pursued cautiously. Ghana has not completely reached a point where E-extension can be regarded as the solution to inadequate human resources for extension service delivery. Mobile penetration is continue to be a challenge due to rising cost of the gadget; poor network connectivity in the rural communities, multiplicity of languages, high illiteracy rate that limit the extent to which mobile phone functions can be

ABOUT PEASANT FARMERS ASSOCIATION OF GHANA (PFAG)

Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFAG) is an apex farmer based organisation with membership in all the ten regions of Ghana. PFAG with the vision of “a life of dignity for the peasant farmer” believed that one hungry soul in a given community should be sufficient enough to strike at the conscience of every civilized man or woman in that community.

In today's world, which is hungry for both food and peace, the vital role of agriculture, food production and supply cannot be over-emphasized. In seeking for solution to hunger and poverty, there was a need to strengthen the capacity of the producers of food in Ghana and give them voice to demand for their rights and contribute to development in the country, hence the birth of PFAG in 2005.

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ABOUT SEND GHANA

SEND-GHANA was established on August 4, 1998 with the maiden name Social Enterprise Development Foundation of West Africa. The organisation has evolved into a reputable and credible national Non-Governmental Organisation with specialty in policy research and advocacy focusing on pro-poor policy and development programme monitoring in Ghana.

We also deliver services through the promotion of livelihoods security. Small scale farmers being largest in the venerable group, SEND Ghana developed interest in working with the Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana to help address the needs of these venerable groups.

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FUNDING

Adequate funding is critical for the delivery of an effective extension services. At the moment funding for the implementation of the policy is woefully inadequate and characterised by untimely releases. The implementation of planned field activities including training of AEAs, laying of demonstrations, payment of transportation for field staff, servicing of vehicles among other things, is badly affected. This situation continues to negatively affect the performance of extension advisory services thereby threatening the realisation of the strategic objectives of the Extension Service Policy.

WEAK INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION:

Although MoFA and the DAES are performing satisfactorily well in the face of resources constraints, uncoordinated extension programming and limited networking has resulted in the duplication of effort and wastages in the delivery of extension services. A lot more can be achieved should the challenges be resolved or removed.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS: CLARITY ON STANDARDS FOR PRIVATE EXTENSION SERVICE DELIVERY

- * There is need for MoFA to develop standards and guidelines for the implementation of extension services for all actors in the sector. The guidelines for extension delivery should focus on code of ethics and standards for extension providers; and establishment of regulatory body for registration and accreditation of extension providers and practitioners.
- * MoFA should also build the capacity of private sector to operate;

EXTENSION ACTIONS FOR GENDER EQUITY:

In Ghana, women are major participants in agricultural production, especially, in the food crop sector. Thus, the activities of women farmers and agricultural professionals such as extension agents have a major impact on Ghana's health and nutrition. Research has shown that there is a positive correlation between the provision of extension services by women for efficiency and sustainability in extension service delivery. Although, there is a 30 percent allocation of vacancies for women in agricultural colleges, women have not found it attractive to take up profession in extension services delivery. This is largely because of the existence of discrepancies between government policies related to extension programs for women and actual extension programs. The effect has been that there is lower number of women in the extension service delivery profession. The concomitant result has been that women smallholder farmers lack access to extension services and are often bypassed by extension, especially, in the case of services delivered by men extension agents. The situation has not facilitated an atmosphere conducive to address challenges associated with the dual socioeconomic systems that in turn foster gender duality operating in the agricultural sector. There is therefore the need for specific strategies for extension profession to attract more women so that services will be provided by women to reach more women smallholder farmers.



BACKGROUND

In Ghana, smallholder farmers dominate the agricultural sector and they account for between 70 to 80 percent of the total labour force in the sector. Suffice it to say that most smallholders are found in the food crop sector with women farmers constituting the chunk of the subsector. Although, their contributions to the national economy, and specifically the food basket, have received widely acclaimed recognition, Ghanaian smallholder farmers are continually faced with a number of challenge for which reason their socio-economic status does not reflect the general progress the country has made on poverty reduction.

These challenges *inter alia* include; fragmented landholdings; low input use; declining soil fertility; poor access to both financial services and inputs and output markets. In addition, macroeconomic instability and conditions such as market liberalisation, removal of agricultural input subsidies and high interest rates have combined to push smallholder farmer to eke out a living on the fringes of agricultural production across the country.

A fundamental challenge that has persisted to keep smallholder farmers on the periphery of agricultural production in the country *is case of inadequate access to quality extension services. The persistence of this problem has resulted in the inability of smallholder farmers to improve their productivity, thus the characteristic low income status associated with farmers.*

KEY MESSAGE 1: STATE OF EXTENSION SERVICE DELIVERY TO SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

Available statistics show that the national farmer-extension ratio stands at 1 Agricultural Extension Agent (AEA) to 3,000 farmers. In the Brong Ahafo and the Northern regions, some districts are recording instances where just one Extension Agent attending to about 5000 farmers. Across the country, the few Extension Agents do not have the right combination of logistics to discharge their duties. Besides, they are ill-incentivised, especially those working in very deprived and hard-to-reach communities resulting in demoralised, scarce and 'unproductive' extension service agents.

The consequences of poor extension services delivery to smallholder farmers has brought in its trail characteristic poor agronomic practices; post-harvest management challenges; inefficient use of inputs; abuse of pesticides; low adaptive capacity for research and technology uptake; and inadequate access to auxiliary information that could help increase agricultural productivity in Ghana.

Inadequate human resources and operational deficiencies in providing public extension services is a threat to the realisation of the strategic objectives of the Food and Agricultural Sector Development Programme (FASDEP). The interconnectedness between FASDEP and the Medium Term Agricultural Sector Investment Programme (METASIP) is further threatened as value for money is not guaranteed in an atmosphere of weak complementarity between extension service delivery and programme investment.

So far approaches aimed at solving the problems with extension service delivery have not been contextualised properly. At best, one can describe it as not being demand-driven. For instance, though commendable, government's effort aimed at accelerating electronic extension (e-extension) to modernize agriculture is being implemented without due regards smallholder farmers' ability to adopt and adapt to e-extension. Our research thus far shows that farmers prefer face-to-face contact with 'human agents' in the delivery of agricultural extension service. Besides, majority of small scale farmers are not able to access e-extension since they either do not have the necessary apparatus or are unable to use them to access e-extension



CLARITY ON STANDARDS FOR PRIVATE EXTENSION SERVICE DELIVERY:

NGOs and private sector's participation in the delivery of extension service is becoming increasingly relevant in the provision of specialized skills, knowledge and dissemination of information on high value commodities. This is even more crucial in the face of dwindling government funding for extension services provision and the need to expand the geographical coverage of extension services. However, coordination and management of the multiple service providers is proving a daunting challenge. Moreover, the absence of clear standards and guidelines in the delivery of extension services makes it difficult for the alignment and harmonization of the activities of private extension service providers.

sustainability and predictability. RELC activities have come to a halt after project life cycle. Funds released through the Government of Ghana funding mechanism have been woefully inadequate, irregular and unpredictable. This situation distresses the implementation of RELC activities; thus affecting the efficient and effective dissemination of relevant technologies to farmers.

Malfunction Farmer-Based Organizations (FBOs); MoFA's strategic decision to rely on groups as an approach to delivering extension services is commendable. The policy intent is to accelerate the dissemination of effective and efficient technology to farmers; and to address challenges associated with low Agricultural Extension Agent (AEA) farmer ratio. However, due to insufficient budgetary allocation, progress towards the formation, nurturing and sustenance of formidable grassroots farmer-based organizations has been slow. As a country we have not succeeded in enhancing the voice of FBOs to demand improved service delivery from government. Undue political interferences in the development and provision of support to FBOs have impacted on the extent to which they can become self-reliant. Besides, the FBO's orientation on voluntarism has been weakened by the practices of offering them 'hand-outs' and this has implication for sustainability.

information. The need for the human extension officer is essentially informed by the cultural and socio-economic milieu that the smallholder farmer finds him/herself. Addressing challenges in the socio-cultural context is important for tackling the issues that prevent farmers' uptake of research and innovations in the sector.



KEY MESSAGE 2: WHAT THE POLICY DOES NOT SAY AND DO

The Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) has an agricultural extension policy that promotes active participation of the private sector, NGOs and Faith-based organisations in extension service delivery. These actors bring complementarity to bear on the delivery of extension services by augmenting the government of public delivery mechanisms, thus contributing to improvement in agricultural extension coverage in the country. This notwithstanding, extension service does not reach the segment of farmers who require attention most and the existing delivery system is threatened by ageing and dwindling staff numbers; weak linkage between the National, Regional, and District Agricultural Development Units; and poor logistics support for both management and field level staff.

Having implemented the current agricultural extension policy for some time now, a number of issues have been identified as restraints to the realisation of the strategic objectives of Extension Policy.



THE RESEARCH –EXTENSION - FARMER – LINKAGES - COMMITTEES (RELCS) IS NOT FUNCTIONING AS ENVISIONED.

RELCS is a platform created to promote demand-driven research and extension services delivery. However, the effective functioning of this platform has been hampered by poor coordination. This is due to lack of clarity as to which of the two implementing institutions is responsible for providing leadership and harmonising the activities of the platform. The implementing institutions are the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research of the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation; and the Directorate of Agricultural Extension Services of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Poor coordination of this platform is as a result of the fact that the two implementing agencies fall under two separate ministries. This administrative set up of these ministries is affecting how the agencies are coordinating and managing the RELCS. There is thus, no clear ownership of the RELC process.

This has affected planning; budgeting; implementation; and monitoring and evaluation of the programme. Lack of ownership of the platform has occasioned limited budgetary allocation for the implementation of the RELC process. Funding for RELC activities have been largely project-based and this has implications for