THE FEED THE FUTURE NIGERIA AGRICULTURAL POLICY PROJECT

Overview

Successful implementation of any government policy requires credible evidence in monitoring progress and revising approaches as priorities shift with changing policy concerns on emerging issues. This means having sufficient capacity to conduct policy analysis and research to fill key knowledge gaps. It also requires a demand for such research (by policy makers) to inform the national policy process and to improve the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the policies. Nigerian agriculture policymaking has evolved and the capacity to make and implement policy has improved over time. However, shortfalls in human and institutional capacity remain which limit the potential to support the efforts of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) in implementing their policies and programs. The Nigeria Agriculture Policy Project is designed to address this need for policy research and capacity building, and to ensure that Nigerian institutions are equipped to respond effectively and in a timely manner to the increasing capacity, knowledge and information needs of FMARD. The Feed the Future Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project is a five year, $12.5 million initiative. It is a joint effort between Michigan State University (MSU) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)'s Nigeria Strategy Support Program (NSSP) funded by USAID-Nigeria.

Project Goal

The goal of the Project is to promote inclusive agricultural productivity growth, improved nutritional outcomes, and enhanced livelihood resilience for men and women through an improved policy enabling environment. This goal will be achieved through increased national capacity of Nigerians to generate and analyze information and to formulate evidence-based policy options for considerations by decision makers and stakeholders, and to improve policy processes that are driven by empirical evidence and based on active dialogue among relevant stakeholders.

Farmers gather around a demonstration plot in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria to discuss the differences between a urea deep placement (UDP) cultivated parcel and a non-UDP parcel during a field day as part of a randomized controlled trial to test the productivity of UDPs.

Objectives

The Project has three principal integrated objectives:

1.   To strengthen the **national capacity** for greater evidence based policy processes in agriculture by increasing the capacity of Nigerian analysts to undertake and make widely available relevant evidence-based policy analysis.

2.   To promote and foster informed **policy dialogue** among all stakeholders in the agricultural sector through an inclusive, transparent, and sustainable process at the country level, building blocks for a well-integrated and developed national policy system.

3.   To support federal and state government efforts to improve their **capacities to plan and implement** effective policy analyses and programs, and demand and absorb policy research in their policy process.

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Key Project Components

The Project will undertake **a three component approach** that will enhance Nigeria's policy capacity, fill the knowledge gaps in the policy process, and improve the policy dialogue process in order to achieve the project's objectives.

A Strategy for Enhancing National Agriculture and Food Security Policy Capacity

This Project takes a robust approach to enhance skills, training, and institutional capacities for meeting the demands for policy analysis by FMARD and the national food security and agricultural policy process. The Project will organize and institute a direct training collaboration between researchers at MSU and IFPRI with graduate student researchers and their supervisors at Nigerian Universities. There will be periodic training workshops on policy analysis methods and tools to reach a broader set of promising graduate students and young research professionals. Periodic conferences and stakeholder workshops will be held during five years of the project to promote the visibility of the policy research and analysis being undertaken.

Policy Driven Collaborative Research and Analysis

The policy driven collaborative research and analysis is intended to directly support the knowledge needs of the policy process. Research teams composed of researchers from IFPRI, MSU, and Nigerian research and academic institutions will be built to strengthen local capacities and dialogue by undertaking policy research and analysis. Priorities on the research topics will be carried out in consultation with FMARD, development partners, and other key stakeholders. In addition, the project will have a strong analytical component that will be more focused on demand driven and shorter-term policy analyses that originate from requests of FMARD and other key stakeholders. The Project will actively engage and collaborate closely with policy analysts at FMARD and other government institutions charged with informing the policy process.

Strengthening Evidence-based Policy Process and Promoting Impact

This component will ensure that the project addresses policy impact through increased and targeted policy communications. Strategies will include *inter alia*: directly contributing to the donor-government policy dialogue on agricultural policy; launching a policy brief series for the project to serve as an outlet for early results of ongoing research, policy analysis, and outcomes from roundtable discussions and/or policy dialogues sponsored by the project; and promoting a "think tank" culture within the agricultural policy process through organizing various seminars and events targeted at all the actors in the process. The overall aim is to strengthen the visibility and credibility of local research networks.

Project Implementing Team

Michigan State University (MSU) - Department of Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics, Food Security Group (FSG) is experienced in country-level and cross-cutting policy research, outreach and capacity building.

International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) is well known for identifying and analyzing national and international strategies and policies to achieve food security in the developing African, Asian and Latin American countries.

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