

Alignment of Research and Delivery to Country Strategic Goals in Agriculture

Summary Report on Nigeria Country Consultative Meeting

10–12 April, Ibeto Hotel, Abuja, Nigeria



Group photograph.

The Nigeria Country Consultation on Alignment of Research and Delivery to Government Goals in Agriculture was held on 10–12 April 2018 at Ibeto Hotel in Abuja. The forum was convened under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) and organized by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), in partnership with the Agriculture Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN).

The meeting brought together 90 participants representing the following stakeholder categories: Government (FMARD–Planning Department, and Projects Coordination Unit – PCU;

and Ogun State Ministry of Agriculture); National agriculture research institutions (ARCN, NARIs, universities); CGIAR Centers and Programs (IFPRI/ReSAKSS, CIP/RTB/BASICS, ICRISAT, ICARDA, AfricaRice, TAAT, and IITA); Development partners and donor organizations (AfDB, USAID, FAO, WFP, AFD, BMGF, IFAD, the World Bank, GFAR), Farmer associations (AFAN, NiWAAFA, Fantsuam Foundation, MAAN, Corporate Farmers International); the Private sector (Sahel Capital, Omacron Investment Ltd., Wandieville Media), and other interest groups (e.g., Synergos, AfSIS-NiSIS).

Sponsor organizations



Co-Sponsors: This event was supported financially by the following organizations: AfDB, USAID-Feed the Future, FMARD, IFPRI, RTB, GFAR, FAO, WFP, IFAD, Synergos, and IITA



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Background

The Country Consultative Meeting on Alignment was organized to sensitize towards bridging the gap that often exists between agriculture research and delivery programs and the strategic goals of the government as established through government policy instruments on agriculture. The agricultural priorities of the Federal Government (in partnership with State Governments) are defined in its Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP), and in the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP). The APP or Green Alternative delineates the importance of agriculture, and the expectations for it to be a major driver for economic development. Four priority goals for agriculture have been set: Food security, Import substitution, Job creation, and Economic diversification. Underpinning these goals are a set of 11 guiding principles that include: (i) Agriculture as a business, (ii) Agriculture as a key to long-term economic growth and security, (iii) Emphasis on value-chain approaches for development of the crop, livestock, and fisheries subsectors, (iv) Climate change and environmental sustainability, and (v) Policy integrity.

Objectives

The consultative workshop was convened to provide a platform for reflection on how to bring about the needed mindset and culture change in agriculture research and development (R&D) towards alignment to the strategic goals for agriculture as defined in the country's agriculture policy instruments, for enhanced impact in food security and national economic development.

Specifically, the forum aimed at deliberating on the key issues in aligning research and delivery; sharing perspectives on developing a central framework for aligning research and delivery activities; increasing awareness of ongoing programs and initiatives, enhancing harmonization and synergy across the various initiatives; and improving targeting of agricultural research through enhancing integration, collaboration, and alignment to country goals.

Process

The policy instruments of the Federal Government of Nigeria for agriculture—the Agriculture Promotion Policy, and the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan, were presented by FMARD, along with updates on the Joint Sector Review on agriculture. These were intensively discussed to ensure broad understanding. A concept paper on Improving Stakeholders Alignment to Nigeria's Strategic Agriculture Goals was presented by IITA. This paper

laid out the rationale as well as proposed mechanisms and approaches for its implementation. Representatives of several initiatives and programs shared brief summaries of what they are doing as well as perspectives on the alignment question; specifically in relation to their own work but also generally as a principle for making transformation happen.

Other segments of the program included a Panel Session on the central theme of the workshop, with panelists coming from a cross-section of stakeholder groups. Panelists also addressed/ shared institutional perspectives and experiences in this regard. Working Groups were also constituted for deliberation on identified themes requiring action with regard to implementing country alignment. A professional facilitator engaged for the event ensured smooth interactions and purposeful discussion and conclusions throughout the process.

Key outcomes

Some of the key issues identified from the presentations and discussions were:

- The process of alignment and integration can work if we believe in it and act on it! And there is great opportunity for much greater progress to be achieved if institutions worked better together and generate deliverables that are consistently aligned to government strategic goals.
- There is generally a disconnect between R&D content of initiatives and the strategic goals of the government in agriculture. Specifically, goals and objectives of most projects are often not aligned in technical terms to government strategic goals.
- Institutions and projects are largely working in silos, with inadequate integration across projects, even within same institutions.
- Even where some alignment is achieved, lack of integration is leading to duplication and inefficiencies in resource use.
- The phenomenon of 'policy summersault' and 'shifting goal posts' that plays out following change of governments does make it difficult to ensure alignment to government goals. The fact that the current policy (APP) builds on the Agricultural Transformation Agenda, policy instrument of the previous government, was applauded as a good example.
- Major initiatives of donors pay attention to alignment to government policy goals, but inadequate attention to lateral collaboration (among projects) resulting in missed opportunities and duplication.

- Mapping of institutions and initiatives in ARD is a crucial step and we need to have tools for doing this as part of the alignment process.
- The mega initiatives presented were generally clear and emphasized how they aligned with Government policy, but not how they align with each other, that is, there seems to be consciousness and action with regard to vertical alignment but not with lateral integration.
- We need to strengthen alignment between institutions along the value chains and there should be more collaboration between producers and the private sector.
- In the absence of a rigorous framework and mechanism for alignment and integration, loose statements on “alignment to national goals or priorities”—taken as such without objective interrogation appear to meet the requirement.
- How do we bring about the mindset change that is required in institutions for better integration across projects and alignment to government strategic goals? This question led to the suggestion that explicit action will be needed to identify and develop initiatives that support and facilitate this process. This was termed “pull factors” for alignment.

Identified work packages

Participants identified some key principles and work areas necessary for alignment and integration: Mindset orientation and culture of alignment, Strong endorsement at institutional level, Common vision and goals (guided by prevailing government policies), Inclusiveness, Collaboration, Focus on impact, Coordination and harmonization, Effective communication, Developing a culture of sharing, and Transparency and accountability.

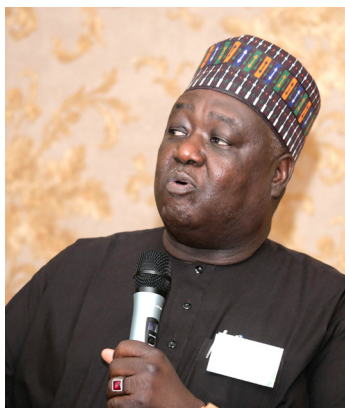
The following project areas in support of alignment were discussed through Working Group sessions and key proposals and recommendations made for driving the process:

- Data and knowledge management: It needs to be clear what data content and processes are required for ensuring and providing evidence on alignment. This includes use of existing data sets.
- M&E system to facilitate alignment: There needs to be some identified indicators considered as key indicators for alignment to specific government goals. This should relate with indicators drawn from government policy and program instruments.
- The role of the Agriculture Research Council on Nigeria (ARCN): ARCN should be facilitated to play key role in supporting alignment orientation among the NARIs
- Ministry-level actions and mechanisms in facilitating ARD alignment: FMARD should facilitate the necessary engagement with other government ministries for alignment.
- Private sector: There can be no proper alignment, especially as it relates with scaling and impact, without involvement and/or leadership of private sector.
- Framework and tool for mapping projects and initiatives: This is needed at two levels – (i) within institutions and (ii) across institutions / country level
- Mindset and culture change within institutions: The Pull factor—creating an environment where there are consequences or incentives for being aligned, collaborative, and laterally integrated—and mechanisms for facilitating this.

Various Working Groups deliberated on these issues and provided recommendations.



Panelists representing stakeholders: Left to right - Gideon Adeoye, K. Babangida, Nndi Nwuneli, Aiminwu Osagien, Lizzy Igbin, John Aburgu.



Dr Audu Grema, BMGF.



Dr Aliyu Madugu, ARCN.



Dr Auwal Maidabino, Director, Planning & Policy Coordination, FMARD.



Dr Andrew Kwasari, Snr. Tech. Adviser to Hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Key Recommendations and Proposed Actions

On the way forward, specific institutions and stakeholder groups were given various roles to support the process of alignment and integration:

FMARD: Given its critical role in the alignment and integration process, FMARD will champion alignment to government strategic goals (APP, ERGP) and to establish clarity of roles of relevant ministry departments and establish appropriate technical capacities that can effectively guide partners in the alignment and integration process—including coordination with ARCN. FMARD should also facilitate the necessary engagement with other government ministries for alignment.

ARCN: Should take on role to promote, facilitate, and coordinate alignment culture development within the constituent NARIs and agriculture colleges. It however needs to be facilitated to be able to play this role. Completion of the on-going reform of ARCN and strengthening its capacity are critical for it to deliver on this role.

A Task Group consisting of **FMARD, IFPRI, and IITA** was formed to work towards driving the change required to enhance capacity and legal standing of ARCN (including the Bill on ARCN). This group is a facilitating group and will engage other relevant actors as needed.

IITA: Continue efforts in building the culture and mechanisms for country alignment and systems integration (including supporting the recommended change processes), and to play its lead CGIAR role in facilitating integration and alignment within and among CGIAR centers and other partner institutions in the country.

Donors and investors: Donor organizations are called upon to provide support for integration across projects and for alignment of donor funded projects to country goals. Through the Agriculture Donor Working Group (ADWG) they should support the process and research leading to enhanced integration and alignment. Donor-funded projects should be developed with alignment (and lateral integration) in mind and with budgets in support of alignment activities.

Data and KM: A Task Force was formed to advance the development of a realistic framework and process for establishing the data and KM instrument/unit. Membership is to be determined.

All stakeholders should work towards initiating, facilitating or promoting integration across projects and alignment to government goals. They should also participate actively in the sector-wide JSR steering committee to enhance research needs and the sharing of other important information that support the alignment of stakeholder activities to sector goals.

Conclusion: Overall facilitation for Action

It was agreed that FMARD (Planning and PCU), ARCN, and IITA will work together to ensure implementation of the meeting agreements, and specifically work out a process through which agriculture research and delivery organizations / institutions working in the country can be sensitized and facilitated to align their R&D projects and programs to government goals.

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