

AHC-STAFF studies expose capacity, capital gaps in AR4D



ASARECA has completed meetings to validate studies aimed at finding lasting solutions to human and institutional capacity and capital challenges that are slowing down the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa.

During the last set of validation meetings held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on June 2, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya on June 6, 2017; and Kigali, Rwanda on June 8, 2017, critical actors from the governments, development organisations and researchers were assembled to challenge and enrich preliminary findings from studies commissioned by FARA and coordinated by ASARECA.

The latest round of papers included: Interpreting existing yield gap atlas data to determine capacity gaps (Kenya); Assessing and forecasting qualitative human capital requirements for agriculture (Ethiopia); Interpreting the existing global yield gap atlas data in Ethiopia to determine capacity gaps; and review of National Agricultural and Food Security Investment Plans and determine implementation capacity gaps in Rwanda.

The studies were initiated under the African Human Capital in Science, Technology and Agri-preneurship for Food Security Framework (AHC- STAFF). AHC-STAFF is a three-year project supported by the European Union to develop country-based and regional investment frameworks to guide domestic and development partner support, to demand-led and forecasted human capital formation in agriculture. The initiative is expected to benefit CAADP implementation across Africa. FARA is coordinating AHC-STAFF at continental level, while ASARECA is responsible for implementation of the initiative in Eastern and Central Africa.

Addressing participants at the opening of the various workshops, ASARECA Head of Human Resources and Administration, Ms Jolly Basemera, underscored ASARECA's commitment to capacity development to improve agricultural productivity.

“By committing to deliver on integrated capacity strengthening alongside developing and scaling up technologies and innovations, policy advocacy, market analysis and knowledge management, ASARECA is strategically

providing technical support to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC), and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to contribute significantly to the implementation of the regional and continental development agenda,” Basemera told participants.

Overall, AHC-STAFF outputs were designed to be delivered through four (4) sector wide studies, which are expected to define the current human capacities and the gaps to achieve the desired pool of resources at sub-regional and continental levels. Within the ASARECA sub region, the following studies have been initiated:

- i. Review the National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans (NAFSIPs) and determine the implementation capacity gaps.
- ii. Assessment of human capital requirements along technology and value chains.
- iii. Assessment and forecast of the qualitative human capital requirements in agriculture.
- iv. Interpreting existing yield gap atlas data to determine capacity gaps.

All in all, the following studies have been undertaken and validated:

Kenya

Interpreting existing yield gap atlas data to determine capacity gaps

The main objective of the study was to interpret the existing global yield gap atlas data for Kenya, with the aim of determining the capacity constraints and interrogating key technological, economic and social factors responsible for the yield gaps of identified cereals in Kenya. The study would also delve into identifying measures to bridge the gaps.

Findings of the study indicate that institutional capacity development should aim at increasing cereals research funding at the national and county governments, strengthening cereals breeding programs, establishing seed processing units at local level, establishing elaborate seed multiplication and distribution programs at the local levels, revitalizing the extension programs at local level and involving both private and government efforts.

The study also recommends making credit facilities available to resource-poor farmers to buy inputs, reducing transaction costs and strengthening monitoring mechanisms of the current credit system. The institutional changes, according to the study, need to be accompanied with human capacity development to implement the reforms and sensitizing farmers on the causes of yield gaps and the strategies to minimize the gaps.

Assessing human capital requirements along technology and value chains

The study on human capital requirements in Kenya noted considerable under-utilization of the existing potential in productivity, commercialization and competitiveness in the dairy sector. The study further recommends more investment in increasing productivity to meet the country's 7% target growth rate stipulated in the Agriculture Sector Development Support Programme (ASDSP).

Review of NaFSIPs and implementation gaps

The study on the National Food Security Investment Plan (NAFSIP) for Kenya notes that the Agriculture Sector Development Support Programme (ASDSP) still faces a host of challenges such as; weak sector coordination and low capacity for policy advocacy. The two ingredients when present are critical in promoting private sector investments in agriculture.

Ethiopia

Assessing and forecasting qualitative human capital requirements for agriculture

Preliminary findings indicate from this study show that to achieve the 8% targeted output in Ethiopia's five-year investment plan, human capital should increase at the rate of 7.5 percent to 22 percent. This means that government needs to invest heavily in building human capacity.

The study also shows that number of extension workers needs to grow at average annual rates of about 7.5 percent to 22 percent, while the capacity of existing training institutions need to be boosted to produce the number of personnel required to attain the national targets. The study also underscores the need to raise the capacity of less educated farmers through informal training to adopt new information given by extension workers.

Interpreting the existing global yield gap atlas data in Ethiopia to determine capacity gaps

The study was meant to interrogate key location-specific, bio-physical and socio-economic factors responsible for yield gaps in Ethiopia and identify measures to bridge the gaps. According to the study, Ethiopia has registered a slight improvement in total national crop production doubling to 2.3% per year (below 4.4% of CAADP target, but bit higher than the 1 per cent is Sub-Saharan Africa rate).

The global yield gap atlas (GYGA 2014) estimates show that the actual yield as a percentage share of the potential yield for maize for Ethiopia is 29 per cent, wheat 47 per cent, sorghum 50 per cent and finger millet 55 percent. The low levels of yield are caused by relatively low levels of use of agricultural inputs, low levels of irrigation, soil degradation, inadequate agricultural research and extension, poor market signals and limited agricultural water.

According to the study, narrowing the gap remains the only feasible option through intensification of agricultural production using modern scientific management practices. For the country to feed projected 130 million populations by 2030, it would need to close the gap to double national aggregate production. Closing yield gap requires investment in irrigation infrastructure, agricultural research, removing barriers to global and regional trade, strengthening human and institutional capacity.

Review of NaFSIPs and implementation gaps

The study on the National Agricultural and Food Security Investment Plans (NAFSIPS) for Ethiopia indicated that significant economic development was achieved during the past decade, which included a steady increase of production in agriculture.

he report also notes that Ethiopia's rural population is still highly vulnerable to effects of drought affecting almost 1 million food insecure small-holder farmers, agro-pastoralists and pastoralists. This was attributed to institutional capacity gaps and low investments in Agricultural Research and Development, which is as low as 0.22% of the total GDP share.

Rwanda

Review National Agricultural and Food Security Investment Plans and Determine Implementation Capacity Gaps in Rwanda

The objective of the study was to review the Rwanda National Agricultural and Food Security Investment Plans (NAFSIPS) with a focus on delineating pertinent issues to the development of an overarching human capital development framework, to support CAADP implementation. According to the study, Rwanda's key investment areas are intensification and development of sustainable production systems, support to the professionalization of producers, promotion of chains and development of agribusiness, and institution development. The study recommends deepening of institutional capacity development for critical skills for each value chain and more hands-on skills training for the agricultural population.

Assessing human capital requirements along technology and value chains

Preliminary findings from the study in Rwanda show that there are significant gaps in terms of human capital requirement along technology and value chains. For example, the gap in the required number of personnel in the banana value chain was estimated at 66 % for the technology development level and 51 % for the processing level.

Uganda

Review of NaFSIPs and implementation gaps

The draft report for Uganda observes that the development of the agricultural sector Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP-2010/11 – 2014/15) was a participatory and inclusive process. However, the report suggests that the DSIP does not provide for capacity development as a necessary component for a successful Monitoring and Evaluation system and that the fiduciary capacity of the Ministry for Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries is ill prepared for handling large development projects.

Assessing and forecasting of the qualitative human capital requirements in agriculture

The draft report for Uganda states that the annual supply of agricultural human resources is currently growing at a rate of 12% and stands at 1,714 graduates mainly from Agricultural Universities and Colleges compared to Kenya which needs to graduate 3393 agricultural graduates per annum for the next 10 years to meet the demand that will be created by the projected growth in agriculture.

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