

MINISTRY OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



**DIRECTORARE OF
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION
SERVICES**

**AGRICULTURAL
EXTENSION POLICY
(ABRIDGED VERSION)**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAGDS	-	Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Development
AEA	-	Agricultural Extension Agent
AgSSIP	-	Agricultural Services Sub-Sector Investment Project
AEDF	-	Agricultural Extension Development Fund
AIDS	-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBO	-	Community Based Organization
CSIR	-	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DADU	-	District Agricultural Development Unit
DAES	-	Directorate of Agricultural Extension Services
DDA	-	District Director of Agriculture
DDO	-	District Development Officer
DFID	-	Department for International Development
DOC	-	Department of Co-operatives
FAO	-	Food and Agriculture Organization
FADSEP	-	Food and Agriculture Sector Development Programme
FBO	-	Farmer Based Organization
FFS	-	Farmer Field Schools
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GoG	-	Government of Ghana
GTZ	-	German Technical Co-operation
HIV	-	Human Immune-Deficiency Virus

M&E	-	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoFA	-	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MTEF	-	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NAEP	-	National Agricultural Extension Project
NARP	-	National Agricultural Research Project
NGO	-	Non-Government Organization
PTD&E	-	Participatory Technology Development and Extension
RDA	-	Regional Director of Agriculture
RDO	-	Regional Development Officer
RELC	-	Research Extension Linkage Officer
SAP	-	Structural Adjustment Programme
TOT	-	Transfer of Technology
T&V	-	Training and Visits
UAES	-	Unified Agricultural Extension Services

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FOREWORD

Agricultural Extension Services in Ghana has gone through various things over the year. In the 1980s and 1990s the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) adopted the Training and Visit System of agricultural extension. The concept of Transfer of Technology (TOT) by Agricultural Extension Agents (AEAS) was hinted to reaching farmers with only information. The Ministry also gave up its other function of inputs supply and distribution to farmers. Above all, the removal of subsidies on agricultural inputs took away some of the incentives the traditional extension service depended upon to attract farmers to adopt available technology. Under the current Food and Agricultural Sector Development Policy (FASDEP) the limited access to appropriate technology at all levels in the crop, livestock and fisheries sub-sector is recognized as one of the major obstacles to agricultural development. In addition to all these, the decentralization of MoFA activities in 1997 has also brought its value changes in the structure and management of the agricultural extension delivery service.

MoFA therefore needs to initiate strategies to respond to these challenges and ensure that the effectiveness of the extension system is not only maintained but also improved upon. Financing of agricultural extension services delivery need to be diversified in the face of dwindling public funding. Private sector operators such as Farmer Based Organization and organized farmers and fishermen association need to be encouraged to contribute more to the provision of extension services and also to participate in the delivery process through farmer to farmer exchange of information and experiences.

This raises the need to provide a policy framework to guide demand-driven pluralistic system within a liberalized and decentralized political economy. Whilst the decentralization process will assist to make extension more participatory and demand-driven to respond to the specific needs of the various districts, the private sector needs to be encouraged to fund and deliver services to farmers and fishermen.

It is in response to these demands that MoFA with support from development partners, notably German Technical Co-operation (GTZ) and the British Governments, Department for International Development (DFID), initiated discussions on a new framework for an agricultural extension policy in Ghana. The discussions were held at all levels, district, regional and national with the involvement of major stakeholders including farmers, fishermen, researchers, extensionists, non-governmental organizations, private sector operators and politicians. This document therefore reflects the expectations and aspirations of across-section of stakeholders in the agricultural sector of Ghana.

It is expected that with the implementation of objectives couched from these policies, the agricultural industry will be better served through pluralistic demand driven extension services. This policy document is to be used as a guide for extension services delivery in the country. It should also be viewed as a basis for further discussion aimed at achieving better strategies for extension delivery and management in the country when situations change with time and space.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In June, 2003, the Directorate of Agricultural Extension Services (DAES) finalized the preparation of an agricultural extension policy document and circulated it to a wide range of stakeholders. This document is an abridged version of the policy document. It is meant to be a quick reference to the major issues contained in the policy document.

1.1 The Public Extension System – A Historical Perspective

Agricultural extension activities were initiated in the nineteenth century by the early missionaries and foreign owned companies involved in the production of export crops such as coffee, cocoa and rubber. After independence, Ghana tried various approaches including extension under the farmers' co-operative movement and several donor-assisted projects. In the 1970s and 80s all the departments of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, (MOFA) undertook separate extension services. Agricultural extension was therefore fragmented among the various departments within the ministry. In 1987 however, MOFA established the Directorate of Agricultural Extension Services (DAES) to bring all splinter MOFA extension services under the umbrella.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, DAES adopted the Training and Visit (T&V) extension system nationwide. This extension initiative was supported with a World Bank funding through the National Agricultural Extension Project (NAEP), which was implemented between 1992 and 1999. This project was set up and implemented to help (a) improve the efficiency in the management and delivery of extension services (b) improve the relevance of technology available to farmers land (c) strengthen the technical department of MOFA.

Ministry of Food and Agriculture is also experimenting with various alternative extension approaches such as Participatory

Technology Development and Extension (PTD&E) and Farmer Field Schools (FFS) among others, in collaboration with development agencies like the German Technical Co-operation (GTZ) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The role of the Agricultural Extension Agent (AEA) under these approaches is one of fascinating learning among farmers instead of only transferring technology. The results of the experimental projects have indicated enhanced knowledge and skills among farmers, this has been attributed to the fact that farmers have become part of the decision making process. MOFA is therefore encouraged to continue with such initiatives in order to empower farmers to make better judgment of their own performance.

1.2 Research-Extension Linkage

Most of the agricultural research done in Ghana is under the supervision of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) which is under the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology (MEST) while extension is carried out by MOFA. In 1991, the Research Extension Linkage Committees (RELCs) were formed in the five (5) ecological zones to forge a close working relationship between research, extension and farmers. The responsibility of these RELCs is to assess the adoption of technologies by farmers, review research and extension programmes. Assess their relevance to agricultural development in the various zones and make appropriate recommendations.

The RELCs have played a significant role in staff training and have influenced the quality of research and extension programs by promoting technologies that are relevant to the needs of farmers. However, a major shortcoming of the RELC, which currently based on the five agro-ecological zones, is their inability to respond to the specific needs of the regions and districts.

1.3 Decentralization

Ghana inherited a highly centralized system of government from colonial administration. This has been criticized for its inefficiency and inability to respond to location-specific needs of the populace. The 1992 constitution therefore made provision for the development machinery. The aim was to (a) create a conducive environment within which people could participate in their own development and (b) encourage self-help, local responsibility and ownership of development programme.

In line with government policy, the decentralization of MOFA started in 1997. This has resulted in the transfer of responsibilities including administration and the provision of services to the District Assemblies while at the regional and the national levels, attention has focused on policy planning, co-ordination, technical backstopping, monitoring and evaluation.

1.4 The Role of the Private Sector in Extension Delivery

The last decade has seen an upsurge in private sector involvement in the provision of extension services in the country. Producer organization, buyers, processing and export companies provide extension services for specific agricultural commodities on cost recovery basis, where costs are recovered through service charges deducted from payments to farmers at the time of sale. This extension system however, tends to focus on high value crops, like cocoa, cotton, oil palm, cashew, pineapple and vegetables.

There has also been an increase in the involvement of Non-Government Organization (NGOs) in the funding and delivery of extension services in Ghana. Their services generally address the needs of specific client groups and are often community focused in most cases, the NGOs complement the activities of the public services and work in partnership with the publicly funded extension agents. One of their strategies is to provide commodity specific inputs such as seedlings and credit.

2.0 THE EXTENSION POLICY

2.1 The Need for New Agricultural Extension Policy

Agricultural extension services in Ghana have undergone considerable change in the past decades. Changes in the political economy of the country, particularly the liberalization of the economy, increased private sector participation in service provisions, decentralization of government and the focus on poverty reduction calls for a review of our agricultural development efforts.

In line with government's new objectives, agricultural extension needs to focus on:

- Ensuring equity in the distribution of the benefits from development
- Improving rural livelihood and
- Reducing poverty especially among rural women, the youth and the physically challenged.

Agricultural extension efforts, therefore, need to respond to the needs of the poor and the socially disadvantaged segments of society.

Extension delivery is still constrained by a number of factors such as cost of agricultural inputs, inadequate credit to farmers, poor rainfall distribution, inadequate processing and marketing facilities and high incidence of pests and diseases among others. There is a need to develop strategies to support farmers to respond to these challenges.

2.2 A Vision or the Future of Agricultural Extension Services.

In the short to medium term (2.10 years), an efficient and demand-driven extension service in a decentralized system would be established through partnership between the government and the private sector. It is envisaged that clients (farmers and other users of services) would participate in

extension program formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to ensure that their needs are met.

The extension delivery system will not only be concerned with technological issues, but will also deal with general livelihood issues of importance as farming communities including marketing, health (HIV/AIDS), Guinea-worm etc), equity in services delivery and poverty.

2.3 Mission Statement

Ministry of Food and Agriculture will work with the regional and district administration to ensure that extension services contribute in an effective and efficient way towards the social and economic development of Ghana through:

- Addressing the specific needs of farmers, especially the rural poor in the effort to reduce poverty.
- Ensuring that farmers adopt environmentally sustainable methods
- Raising agricultural productivity and
- Creating an enabling environment for private sector participation in the funding and delivery of extension services.

2.4 Guiding Principles

In order to realize the vision stated above, extension services delivery will be guided by the following set of principles:

- Extension Services will be more demand-driven and client-focused
- Agricultural extension services in Ghana will be pluralistic, flexible and responsive to the changing socio-economic environment of the rural sector.
- The national agricultural extension system will ensure the provision of adequate extension services to small-scale and poorly resourced farmers, with special attention to women, the youth and the physical challenged.

- Public sector funding of extension services will aim at establishing a high degree of financial sustainability through enhance planning and prioritization of commitments.
- Agricultural extension will be open to new funding mechanisms.
- With the devolution of government functions to the District Assemblies, the ultimate responsibility has decisions on the nature of publicly funded extension services will be determined by the District Assemblies in consultation with MOFA farmers and other stakeholders.
- The private sector will be encouraged to finance and engage in agricultural extension services delivery to a greater extent.
- Extension services will be made more pro-active in developing business and marketing skills of farmers.
- Delivery of extension services will be monitored by the District Assemblies in conjunction with MOFA and farmers to ensure high quality service.
- Human resource development will be made a continuous process and will be intensified at all levels.

2.5.0 Policy Objectives and Strategies

The new extension policy is based on nine objective. These policy objectives have been grouped under four main categories as follows:

- Promoting farmer demand-driven extension
- Promoting efficient and effective management and operational of agricultural extension
- Promoting capacity building for extension
- Incorporating emerging topical issues into agricultural extension.

2.5.1 Promoting Farmer Demand-Driven Extension

Objective 1

To promote farmer driven extension and research to ensure that services provided are relevant to farmers. Strategies to be adopted are;

- Strengthening linkages among farmers, extension workers and researchers.
- Involving clients planning and evaluation of extension activities.
- Establishing functional RELCs at the zonal and regional levels.
- Encouraging the RELCS to source funds from the private sector including farmers, farmer organizations and other institutions to support research activities.

Objective 2

To empower farmers through the formation and development of FBOs in the areas of marketing and agro-processing in collaboration with the Department of Cooperatives (DOC). This objective will be supported by MOFA through:

- ✦ Establishing the institutional framework for FBO Development
- ✦ Collaborating with other agencies in facilitating the formation, sustenance and management of new FBOs,
- ✦ Strengthening the capacities of all FBOs particularly in leadership and managerial skills.
- ✦ Providing appropriate information on credit land acquisition and marketing among others.

Objective 3

To promote best agricultural practices. Strategies to be used are:

- ✦ Collating documenting and assessing, existing technologies (from research institutions and indigenous practical)
- ✦ Ensuring strong research-extension farmer linkages.

- ✦ Ensuring the participation of all stakeholders in technology generation, adaptation and dissemination
- ✦ Ensuring human resource development at all levels.

2.5.2 Promoting Efficient and Effective Management and Operations of Agricultural Extension

Objective 4

Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) will increase the efficiency and cost effectiveness of publicly funded extension services. Options for improving the effectiveness and efficiency will include:

- ✦ Providing a clear definition of target beneficiaries, types of publicly funded extension they should expect to receive and the cost of providing those services.
- ✦ Placing more emphasis on working with farmer groups
- ✦ Encouraging private sector participation in extension delivery and funding.
- ✦ Exploring the possibility of cost sharing power (where a proportion of the cost of services is charged to the users of those services)
- ✦ Supporting the setting up of an Agricultural Extension Development Fund to promote private sector participation extension
- ✦ District level planning/implementing plans
- ✦ Setting Research Agenda in participatory manner

Objective 5

To broaden extension services delivery to include other extension approaches. Strategies to be adopted to achieve this shall include:

- ✦ Reviewing various extension approaches with the view to assessing their suitability
- ✦ Developing and maintaining links with local and international organizations to identify the most appropriate approaches.

- ✦ Supporting the development and piloting of various approaches in collaborating with private sector providers.
- ✦ Encouraging a range of organizations/agencies including NGOs, private sector companies and public organizations to provide extension service
- ✦ Elaborating extension indicators and quality standards to service providers
- ✦ Ensuring that activities of all service providers are coordinated and monitored to ensure effectiveness of service
- ✦ Training all staff (including other service providers) in the use of alternative extension approaches.
- ✦ Disseminating information on appropriate approaches to all extension services providers.

Objective 6

To ensure that appropriate institutional structures and capacity are developed at all implementation levels to operate the new Agricultural Extension Policy. Ministry of Food and Agriculture will operationalize the roles and responsibilities of the various levels of governance (national, regional and district) is defined under the decentralization process. To achieve this objectives. Ministry of Food and Agriculture will:

- ✦ Revise its decentralization handbook to ensure all categories of staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- ✦ Enhance human resource capacity at the district level
- ✦ Monitor extension activities at the district level to ensure conformity with national extension policy
- ✦ Ensure the financial decentralization becomes operational
- ✦ Ensure that all service providers are well informed on the provision of the new extension policy.
- ✦ Encourage the formation of operationalization of stakeholder fora at the regional and district levels to ensure the participation of all agricultural service providers in the planning implementation, monitoring and evaluation of extension.

Objective 7

To design and implement an effective monitoring and evaluation system for agricultural extension services.

Strategies include:

- ✦ Develop and implement an extension M&E system based on the MTEF framework by involving major stakeholders in planning, monitoring and evaluation of activities.
- ✦ Link M&E systems of the different levels (national regional and district).
- ✦ Undertake baseline survey of performance of the Agricultural Extension System.
- ✦ Develop capacity of staff in M&E activities.

2.5.3 Promoting Capacity Building for Extension

Objective 8

To attain a broad based human resource development programme by ensuring continuous capacity building of agricultural development workers. This objective will be achieved by:

- ✦ Enhancing career development through in-service training professional skills upgrading and managerial skills development.
- ✦ Training of agricultural extension workers (public and private) in areas of group formation and dynamics, gender issues, programme planning and alternative extension approaches to enable them work more effectively with farmer groups.
- ✦ Re-orientating the curricula of Agricultural Training Colleges and Universities to take into account the development of skills for the private sector NGOs, FBOs and CBOs who will be engaged in extension service delivery. Areas to be considered will include group formation, principles of financing credit administration and marketing. The curricula will also address emerging topical issues such as health, gender in agriculture and the environment.

2.5.4. Incorporating Emerging Issues into Agricultural; Extension

Objective 9

To respond to the emerging issues of HIV/AIDS pandemic, environmental degradation and poverty reduction. Extension efforts will also focus on the areas of gender, equity and client empowerment as they relate to sustainable agricultural production. To achieve this objective, Ministry of Food and Agriculture will:

- ✦ Develop and implement activities that would respond to the national poverty efforts:
- ✦ Collaborating with relevant MDAs (e.g. Health, Education, Social Welfare) to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic.
- ✦ **Hi**p between natural resource management, poverty reduction, increased food supply and income.
- ✦ Ensure equity in agricultural services delivery by improving access to vulnerable groups, including women, the youth and the physically challenged.
- ✦ Promote environmentally friendly agricultural production activities.