

The Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) in Nigeria: Status and Policy Implications

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Abstract: The Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) were first launched in 1972 to increase food production, and to raise the income of small-scale farmers. The success of the pilot schemes led to expansion nationwide by 1984. Today the ADPs in majority of the states stand just as symbols of past glory. The objective of the survey was to assess the performance of the Agricultural Development Projects. All the States' ADPs and the Federal Capital Territory were visited by a multidisciplinary team of scientists. Data was collected through PRA, questionnaire, interviews and focused group discussions with farmers. The ranking shows that 63.6% of the ADPs have weak or very weak funding status. Only 22.7% had good to excellent funding status. In most of the ADPs, the number of extension workers had been reduced drastically due to various reasons, notable among them is poor funding. The problem of funding has resulted into reduced extension activities, and that in turn has pushed some staff to voluntarily leave the ADPs for greener pastures. Despite the funding problems, 89% of the states paid visits to farmers, 68% established SPATs while 54% established OFARs in 2008. Also, MTRMs/QTRM, FNTs/MTs and MTPs were conducted by 86% of the states. It is recommended that a National Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Policy be put in place with the necessary structures and processes that would ensure sustainable agricultural development and improved livelihoods.

Key words: Agricultural Development Projects; Performance; Funding; Staffing.

INTRODUCTION

The Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) were first launched as viable projects in 1972 only two years after the end of civil war, when Nigeria was facing its first food and fibre shock. The project was launched against the background of a Nigerian Agriculture which in the 1950s and 1960s had attained prominent expertise through complete reliance on small scale farmers. The main and first feature of the ADP was its reliance on the small scale farmers as the central focus for increased food production. The projects were to be funded under a tripartite agreement involving World Bank 66%, Federal government 20% and State government 14% in addition to payments of salaries of local staff. The two main objectives of the ADPs were to increase food production, and to raise the income of small-scale farmers. The ADPs started three (3) pilot projects in 1975 covering an LGA in 3 States. The success of the pilot schemes lead to expansion to other LGAs and States in the late 70s and by 1984, all the states of the Federation were implementing the integrated approach,^[2].

The benefits of the ADPs according to Adegboye^[1] were to be realized through:

A re-organized and revitalized agricultural extension system that integrates extension workers training and farm visits and ensure two-way communication between farmers and research;

An effective farm inputs distribution system which operates through a network of farmer service centres (FSC) ensuring that supplying the needed farm inputs are reliable and are in close proximity to their farms; Network of rural feeder roads to assist with farm produce evacuation as well as cost effective farm input distribution;

An autonomous ADP Management Unit that is stripped of the usual civil service bureaucratic procedures and therefore posses flexibility to promptly take management decisions in keep with the demands for timeliness in agricultural operation;

A rigorous monitoring and management system that provides needed management information and ensures that errors in one project are not perpetuated there or in another project;

Joint - State - Federal responsibility both in project formulation and especially implementation and arrangement which has grassroots agricultural programming primarily as a state responsibility.

The ADPs were able to make remarkable achievements up to 1996 the time that the World Bank loan was on and when the Federal and State governments were paying their counterpart funding. However, the situation is not the same today and the ADPs in majority of the states stand just as symbols of past glory. The objective of the survey was to assess the performance of the Agricultural Development Projects as regards its funding and staffing situation and its effects on agricultural technology transfer and adoption by farmers.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The survey was conducted by the National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS) in collaboration with the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA), representatives of the Federal Department of Agriculture (FDA), the Planning Research and Statistics Department (PRSD) and the five Zonal Coordinating Research Institutes, between 24th August and 10th September 2008. All the States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory were visited by a multidisciplinary team of three scientists each for a period of four days per State. The methodology used involved field visits to two ADP Zones and two Local Government Areas in each of the zones. The ADP zones and farmer groups visited were purposefully selected to reflect agro-ecological spread in the State. Data was collected through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), complemented with a structured questionnaire which was sent to each State ADP headquarters two weeks before the team's arrival, formal and informal interviews with ADP officials, and focused group discussions with farmers. Funding of ADPs was scored by comparing the amount received and the amount budgeted and scored as follows: less than 5% = Very Weak; 6-25% = Weak; 26-50% = Fair; 51-75% = Good and < 75% = Excellent. Data on key ADP activities such as Monthly or Quarterly Technology Review Meetings (MRTM or QTRM), Fortnightly or Monthly Training (FNT or MT), Small Plot Adoption Techniques (SPAT), On-Farm-Adaptive-Research (OFAR) and Management Training Plots (MTP) were also collected from the ADPs. On the last day of the visit in each State, wrap up meetings with the ADP management were organized to highlight the team's observations and to agree on possible solutions to solving the identified problems.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1: Funding and Staffing of ADPs: The effectiveness of the Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) like any other organization, hinges on three factors that is,

adequate funding, competent and stable management and adequate staffing. Table:1 gives a comparison of some randomly sampled ADPs from state to state based on funding situation and adequacy and quality of staff. The ranking shows that 63.6% of the ADPs have weak or very weak funding status. Only 22.7% had good to excellent funding status. In most of the ADPs, the number of extension workers had been reduced drastically due to various reasons. Notable among them is poor funding, which had resulted in retrenchment of staff. The problem of funding has resulted into reduced extension activities, and that in turn has pushed some staff to voluntarily leave the ADPs for greener pastures. No single ADP has the required number of extension workers.

If the country does not invest much of its funds into supporting the ADP system, urban-rural migration will continue, rural development may not improve and the dream of achieving food self-sufficiency and food security in the nearest future will become a mirage.

3.2 Performance Indicators: The ADPs cover between 90,000 farm families in Taraba State to 849,895 in Kano State. It is important to note that many ADPs have not had any Diagnostic Survey for the past 10 years, as such, these figures may not be accurate. In some states data on farm families were not available. In line with the current trend in extension, it is advisable for all the states to have an inventory of all categories of farmers; that is, large, medium and small-scale farmers in their states. Despite the funding problems, the ADPs have been able to carry out some extension activities. These include visits to farmers, conduct of SPATs, conduct of FNTs/MTs, establishment of MTPs and OFARs among others. In about 89% of the states, extension agents paid visits to farmers, 68% established SPATs while 54% established OFARs in 2008. Also, MTRMs/QTRM, FNTs/MTs and MTPs were conducted by 86% of the states. The percentage of states that established OFARs was lowest because apart from funding problem, ADPs complained that packages were not sent to them on time by the respective Research Institutes; as such, they did not establish OFARs for fear of failure.

Some states especially in the North-West and North-Eastern Zones reported that they are de-emphasizing the conduct of SPATs. A few states however could not present any data on these activities because they were not conducted within the year, due to poor funding and other logistic problems. Specifically, Sokoto, Adamawa and Borno States did not carry out activities like SPATs, FNTs, MTRMs, MTPs and OFARs. Other states where these activities were minimal, included: Rivers, Delta, Ondo, Ekiti, Kogi and Niger.

Table 1: Ranking of ADP based on Funding and Staffing

State	Funding situation	Adequacy and quality of staff	Observations/Recommendations
Jigawa	Weak	Fair but have to recruit more staff.	State and Local Government Councils should sustain and increase their financial support
Yobe	Very weak	Fair. Recruited more EAs in 2006	The 2003 – 2007 administration supported the ADP strongly. The present administration is yet to support the ADP
Borno	Very weak	Lost most of the staff to State Ministry of Agric due to inactivity in the ADP	Need to appoint substantive Programme Manager. Acting Permanent Secretary who was formally Director of Admin is the current Acting Programme Manager. The management has great problem of having audience with the chief Executive of the State.
Bauchi	Excellent	Staff situation is fairly adequate. There is need for more EA's or enumerators	Deduction from source for funding is commendable and should be sustained. The ADP is performing its functions effectively.
Gombe	Weak	Staff situation is fair, need more EA's and Enumerators	Current funding has not allowed for ADP to effectively perform its activities.
Adamawa	Very weak	Fair	State has skill acquisition activities centres which is commendable but should not replace ADP Extension activities
Katsina	Weak	Inadequate but qualified, need to recruit Ext. Agents	Most lower cadre staff e.g. Extension agents transferred service to Local governments, so more need to be recruited.
Sokoto	Very weak	Inadequate, and poorly motivated.	Grossly inadequate and untimely disbursement. A committee should be constituted to visit Sokoto state Government to sensitize them to adequately fund the ADP. Also, there is need for recruitment of more extension staff.
Kebbi	Good	Staff situation is fairly adequate	There is need to increase the funding by the state government to enable the ADP perform better. Also more frontline extension officers should be recruited to reduce the E.A: farmer ratio.
Zamfara	Very weak	Inadequate	ZACAREP should be merged with the ADP and work together for the benefit of the farmers (especially small scale farmers) instead of duplicating efforts
Kano	Very good	Good and qualified but more extension agents need to be recruited	Kano State ADP is getting funds but the only major problem is late release which needs to be improved.
Kaduna	Fair	Good but need more incentives to encourage service delivery	The staff are ready to work but lack of enough fund crippled their effort.
FCT	Very weak	Good but need more commitment on their part	Should have a more sustainable arrangement for timely funding
Niger	Very weak	Good but needs a competent substantive Managing Director	Niger state Governor needs to meet with ADP Management on sustainable funding and utilization of ADP Staff and structures
Kwara	Weak	In stability of management and poor staffing at EA level overlapping of MANR and ADP roles not conducive for optimum use of ADP.	Government should restore funding and autonomy to ADP for effective functioning polices. An Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Policy to sustain the ADP and the new Government initiatives such as New Nigerian farmers should be enacted into law by State Assembly.
Kogi	Good	Very good	Government should sustain and improve on funding and staff quality. ADP should have full responsibility to facilitate farmers access to fertilizer, credit and other inputs.
Ondo	Weak	Inadequate field staff	Need to emphasize to Ondo state Government about the independency of ADP rather than merging with MOA
Ogun	Weak	Inadequate field staff	Government need to pay some attention to ADP funding
Lagos	Very Good	Inadequate field staff	Lagos State Government should sustain ADP funding and improve on it.
Anambra	Fair	High turn over of frontline staff such as VEA and BES. The directorate and intermediate Cadre witnessed fair stability	Inadequate funding and high turn over of frontline field staff is worrisome and calls for urgent attention

Table 1: Continue

Abia	Very weak	Staffing situation is worrisome	Inadequate funding and high turn over of frontline field staff is worrisome and calls for urgent attention
Imo	Weak	There exist serious shortages of field staff, particularly EAs	The staff subvention to the ADP were on the decline compared to previous year. More funding support and recruitment of EAs needed. Source: Field Work 2008

3.3: Technologies Evaluated under OFAR, SPAT and MTPs: Three extension methodologies were used by the ADPs to evaluate/disseminate technologies on crops and livestock. These methodologies are OFAR, SPAT and MTPs. It is important to note that despite the funding constraints, some ADPs were able to carry out these activities. Other important problems militating against the conduct of these important extension activities include high cost of inputs, logistic problems, lack/poor supervision, poor staffing and low morale of extension agents due to non-payment of salaries and allowances. Also, lack or non-delivery of packages, late conduct of in-house review meetings and OFAR workshops, and non-supervision by the Coordinating Research Institutes were the problems that affected the conduct of OFAR.

On Farm Adaptive Research (OFAR): Technologies were evaluated under OFAR across the country in 2008. In the North-Eastern Zone different varieties of cereals, including maize, millet, cowpea, groundnuts and sorghum were evaluated. Complementary use of organic and inorganic fertilizers on cereals/legumes was being evaluated in Bauchi State. In the North-Western states, varietal trials of cereals and legume technologies were conducted in most states. Also, chemical weed control on rice, chemical pest control and different planting dates on water-melon were being evaluated in Kebbi and Jigawa States respectively. Likewise in the North Central States, varietal trials on cereals were conducted. In addition, fertilizer trials, storage trials using neem extract, and intercropping of tubers with cereals were conducted. Alternative feeding of ruminants using dried poultry manure, and dried cassava peels were conducted in Benue State. In the South-Western and South-Eastern states, on-farm evaluation of different varieties of crops (tubers and cereals) were conducted. Intercropping of tubers with cereals, use of alternative local sources of feed for animals, and alternative local sources of organic fertilizers on crops were evaluated by farmers across the two zones. Fish farming technologies were also evaluated in Ekiti, Ondo, Oyo and Osun States. The practice of sole-cropping of tubers was also evaluated in some states in this region.

Small Plot Adaptive Techniques (SPAT): Most of the states in the North-East and North-West do not

disseminate technologies using SPAT presently. However, Bauchi, Zamfara and Kaduna states conducted SPATs on cereals and livestock. Specifically, Bauchi state promoted poultry up-grading, vaccination against PPR and parasite control in sheep/goats. Also, control of endo-parasites, breeding of sheep/goats, and preservation of fish using salt were practised using SPAT in Zamfara state in 2008. In the North Central, South-East and South-West, promotion of crop varieties (cereals, legumes and tubers) were conducted. Promotion of storage facilitates, housing/vaccination of livestock, local and modern bee-hives in bee-keeping, poultry production, homestead fish farming, and pest control in crops and livestock. Also, fertilizer usage in crops, intercropping of tubers with cereals and vegetables were promoted in some states in the region.

Management Training Plots (MTP): Management Training Plots (MTPs) is a methodology that is widely used by almost all the ADPs for the promotion of crop production and to a lesser extent livestock. This is a situation where a farmer provides the land, and all the inputs needed to produce the choice crops. The technologies which are usually a total package of improved agronomic/livestock production practices is taught to the farmer on his field. In all the zones, 60% of the MTPs planned for 2008 for different varieties of crops (tubers/legumes/cereals) were conducted. Also management of livestock, poultry and bee-keeping were conducted in a few states across the country.

3.4: Problems of Extension Services: The most common problem of extension services reported by 73% of the ADPs is poor funding from their respective State Governments (Table II). Fund allocation from State Governments were grossly inadequate and often disbursed lately. However, a few ADPs: Kano, Bauchi, Kebbi, Lagos and Kogi reported that the funding they received from their State Governments was good and sufficient for the conduct of the basic extension activities (Table I). Low funding in addition to other factors, has led to the ADPs' inability to meet their required logistics and manpower development needs. It has also resulted in the widespread problems of low E.A; farmer ratio.

Other problems of extension services as reported by 59% of the ADPs include: inadequate qualified extension staff and lack/inadequate serviceable

Table II: Problems of Extension Services

S/No.	Problems	Freq.	%
1.	Poor funding	27	73
2.	Inadequate qualified extension staff	22	59
3.	Lack/inadequate serviceable vehicles/equipment	22	59
4.	Lack of payment of allowances/motivation of extension staff	18	49
5.	Inadequate/late delivery of farming inputs to farmers	14	38
6.	Lack of staff training	7	19
7.	Lack/late delivery of inputs for SPAT/OFAR	7	19
8.	High cost/adulteration of inputs	7	19
9.	Lack of access roads to communities for farm produce to markets	5	14
10.	Lack of appropriate extension approach	5	14
11.	Unstable pricing of farm produce to the disadvantage of farmers	5	14
12.	Lack of processing equipment, cottage industry for the farmers produce	5	14
13.	Unavailability of new production packages	3	8

Source: Field work 2008

vehicles/equipment. Lack of payment of allowances/motivation of extension staff was reported by 49% ADPs. Inadequate/late delivery of farming inputs to farmers, poor communication facilities and other problems are reported in Table II

Conclusion and Recommendations: The Agricultural Development Programs from Sokoto to Calabar and Maiduguri to Lagos, are becoming shadows of their past. This is indeed a sad story for Nigerian Agriculture because the ADP system has been the most tested and most viable Agricultural Development initiative in Nigeria. Across the nation, less than ten ADPs have Chief Executives that have direct access to their Governors and therefore are actively supported to perform their functions. Poor funding and inadequate staffing are perennial problems. Bayelsa State has only 13 Extension workers inclusive of the three Zonal Managers. Niger State has a satisfactory complement of extension workers but very poor funding for Extension work and the ADP management has been shielded from meeting directly with the Governor of the state since he came into office in May 2007. In Borno State, many ADP staff have moved back to the Ministry because the ADP has been neglected by Government. In Kwara State, ADP Chief Executives are changed at will and the demarcation of responsibilities between Ministry of Agriculture and ADP has been greatly eroded. In Ondo State the ADP has been converted into a Department in the Ministry of Agriculture. In Zamfara State a high percentage of the ADP staff have been transferred to the State own

Zamfara State Comprehensive Revolutionary Agricultural Programme (ZACAREP) which is performing the functions of the ADP. The ADP has no Chief Executive and is only kept to facilitate existing linkages with Federal and International Agricultural development initiatives. One of the most active ADPs is Bauchi State ADP and it is so because the Bauchi State Government supports the ADP by direct deduction of funds from source. This is a recommendable practice for adoption by other states. In spite of all these sad tales, the ADPs are managing to maintain basic Research, Extension and Farmers Input Linkages (REFILS) activities based largely on Management initiatives and internally generated revenue.

These REFILS activities are very crucial to the success of agricultural development in any state because it is through REFILS that the State Extension Services are linked to Research Institutions on a regular basis. It is the channel by which improved technology is sourced and farmers reactions to new technologies are harnessed as feedback to Research Institutes to enhance appropriate technology development. All the ADPs have over two decades of experience and have developed the capacity for facilitation between farmers and all other stakeholders in the agricultural and rural development sector, in addition to their capacity for Monitoring, evaluation and documentation of agricultural production data. ADP Extension Agents are very much in close contact with farmers. This was confirmed by all the twelve teams of researchers as the ADPs mobilized farmers at

very short notice to meet with the teams. In some states the ADPs facilitated the procurement of farm inputs from commercial suppliers at no cost to Government and no extra cost to the farmers. Given the fact that the ADP services about 70% of the population of any State, the role of the ADP cannot be overemphasized.

A decision has to be taken nationally on the fate of the ADP. The present situation where ADPs are left to the vagaries of the politics of current Governments at Federal and State levels is very bad for Nigerian Agriculture. The sorry state of the ADPs is a reflection of the erratic and frequent changes in the policies of Governments. The authors are recommending the following:

1. The establishment of an Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Agency (AERDA) in each State.
2. Funding of AERDA should be by direct deduction from source from the three tiers of Government and at the level of not less than 15% of the annual budgets of Federal, State and Local Governments (15 – 15 – 15). It is important to note that countries such as Malaysia that currently use pipelines to transport palm oil at one time spent up to 20% of their budget on Agriculture to reach their present level of development
3. Specify agencies at the Federal level that will coordinate budgets, funding, international linkages and quality assurance of the services rendered by State AERDAs, should be put in place.
4. Specify a structure that will rectify some of the weakness of the present ADP structure, such as the nominal presence of the non-crop commodities and provide for creation of a Department responsible for facilitating the development of commercial agriculture and private public partnerships for accelerated agricultural and rural development. The structure should also have flexibility to accommodate local initiatives tailored towards meeting the specific needs of each state.

5. Specify the role and modus operandi for the participation of Local Government Councils in AERDA.
6. Specify the process for appointment of Chief Executives and Management staff of AERDA to ensure that only competent personnel are appointed to such offices. This will minimize the tendency by new Governments to change AERDA Chief Executives and Management staff at will.

The need for an Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Policy is critical and urgent. Agriculture is the primary occupation of over 70% of Nigerians thus critical to the survival of Nigeria.

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