

AVANTI

Advancing Knowledge
for Agricultural Impact



Summary Report of the Ghana AG-Scan:

Lessons learned and
key areas identified



April 2021

Background

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is funding the Advancing Knowledge for Agricultural Impact (AVANTI) initiative, which provides a self-assessment tool called AG-Scan. The AG-Scan is a facilitated process for an in-depth reflection around the agricultural and rural development sectors' capacities for results-based management (RBM) of specific countries; and to measure the sectors' achievements against the SDGs. This in turn provides information to enable the generation of an Action Plan to improve governments' capacities to measure achievements against the SDGs.



AG-Scan Workshop (27-28 Nov 2019)

25 Participants
19 M, 6 F



6 **Government Institutions:** Ministry of Food and Agric., Ghana Statistical Service, Ministry of M&E, Ministry of Trade and Industry, National Planning and Development Commission, Ministry of Finance

3 **Supporting Institutions:** IFAD, Global Affairs Canada, Civil Society

Findings from the AG-Scan self-assessment

The Ghana AG-Scan self-assessment was held in November 2019. The process adopted a workshop-style approach and explored five broad areas – Leadership, Evaluation and Monitoring, Accountability and Partners, Planning and Budgeting, and Statistics. Each broad area is scored on a scale of 1–4 (1-awareness of the issue; 2-exploring the issue; 3-transition toward full implementation; 4-full implementation).



Leadership was scored 2.75 out of 4. The assessment result showed that sector leaders have been trained in adopting the use of RBM. Leaders also speak about SDG-related policies, which must be

formulated for evidence-based decision making. The **main gaps identified** include the seeming fragmented leadership of non-state actors, which creates a challenge in their engagement with policy development processes. There is limited knowledge on RBM outside the leadership cadre, while leaders that are 'approaching retirement' often feel there is no need for them to be trained. Yet such training is potentially important for succession planning.



Evaluation and monitoring was scored 2.71 out of 4. The assessment results showed that the sector has sufficient M&E staff to perform M&E functions within the institutions. Also there has been

progress in putting RBM into practice, through the

support of the Modernizing Agriculture in Ghana (MAG) project funded by the Government Affairs Canada, which started in 2017. **Main gaps identified** include the lack of an automated data collection system or an M&E database system within the Ministry of Food & Agriculture (MoFA). In addition, whereas MoFA has a standard template and reporting format for sector program areas, there is no harmonized template for donor reporting. Some units often do not utilize information and lessons learned, and most units do not have indicator targets to make meaningful decisions from data collected. There is insufficient funding for data collection activities; and frequency and geographic coverage is limited (i.e. sample sizes quite small). There is inadequate number of agricultural extension agents.



Accountability and partners, was scored 2.42 out of 4. The assessment results showed that there are platforms and other means through which key sector officials account to stakeholders,

for example the annual joint sector reviews and town hall meetings at the regional and district levels. There are other platforms where plans, budgets and results are publicly made available, for example the budget deliberation in parliament and the publication or posting of the annual work plan and budget on the MoFA website. **Main gaps identified** include a backlog of training for key staff especially at the district level whose knowledge of RBM is still lacking. There is also the use of technical language in communicating budget information to stakeholders, which limits the awareness of stakeholders on the specific amounts

of fiscal resources injected or expended, especially at the grassroots level. Access to relevant budget information is still demand driven especially for civil society and faith-based organizations and other groups because of the technical language issues mentioned earlier.



Planning and budgeting was scored 2.56 out of 4. The assessment results showed that there is a National Plan (the coordinated program of economic and social development policies – 2017–24) in

place, and is used for planning and budgeting, with a section of the plan focusing on investment for food and jobs. The agriculture sector also has a Medium-Term Development Plan. However, implementation timeliness is contingent on availability and release of funds to undertake planned activities. **Main gaps identified** include the use of historical cost budgeting methods which limits performance measurement. Some of the priority areas in the sector plan often change during implementation as a result of changes in the priorities of political leaders. A related gap is the fact that while budgeting is done taking RBM into consideration, there are often unplanned changes in focus as implementation progresses and it becomes difficult to track results in a robust way. Furthermore, the lack of a harmonized template for donor reporting makes it difficult to ensure that this happens.



Statistics was scored 3 out of 4. The assessment results showed that there is a Strategic Plan for Agriculture and Rural Statistics (SPARS) 2017–21, and it is being implemented. The Statistical

Service Act (2019) provides the legal and regulatory framework for the production and dissemination of national statistics. Data is disaggregated in line with the 'leave no one behind' principle. **Main gaps identified** include that a comprehensive data quality assessment framework for Ghana is yet to be implemented. There is still limited disaggregation of administrative data, and non-state actors are still not fully aware of the SPARS. Furthermore, while skills and knowledge exist for national level households and key sectoral surveys, resources for

regular data collection are still inadequate, even for censuses and surveys.

Lessons learned

Three critical and interrelated lessons came out of the AG-Scan process, which are highlighted below.

1. Improving data systems

The aforementioned Strategic Plan for Agriculture and Rural Statistics (SPARS) 2017–21 is being implemented; however, non-state actors are still not fully aware of the strategy. At the moment, there seems to be a heavy reliance on data sourced from surveys such as the Statistical Service surveys and censuses such as the Agriculture Census, Living Standard Surveys, Integrated Business Establishment Surveys, Agricultural Integrated Survey. At the sector level, some departments within the MoFA are able to collect, manage and report on relevant management data. However, data collected for some indicators are incomplete and timing often delayed; and MoFA does not have an automated data collection system or an M&E database system.

Lesson 1 is the need for a robust administrative data system that will enable the generation of timely, accurate and reliable data. With adequate disaggregation, this can provide evidence for the design of targeted interventions. There is thus a need for the country to move away from heavy reliance on survey data, due to the issue of timeliness (as they are published on a five-year interval), and increase the focus on the generation of administrative data.

Lesson 2 is the importance of orienting non-state actors on the existence of SPARS to enable them to align their data collection or generation with the Strategy. This can be done through capacity building or feedback sessions.

Lesson 3 is the need for improving data collection systems that will be timely and comprehensive. It will thus be important to develop an automated data collection system for MoFA to improve timely data collection and reporting. This should include building capacities to develop databases in Regional and District Agricultural Departments at the Metropolitan and assemblies.

2. *Harnessing the latent capacity in RBM*

Currently, RBM trainings are being provided to staff of MoFA under the MAG program and there is evidence that this is leading to improved results-based reporting. The establishment of a dedicated ministry of M&E in 2017 has been helpful; and there are tools introduced to work on an RBM basis, but they require expansion to the subnational and district levels. There are plans to integrate RBM training across all levels within the ministry and across districts, and to package budget information in simple language for other key stakeholders to understand and have easy access to.

Lesson 1 is the need for further expansion of RBM tools and awareness to all government staff and levels (district, regional, national).

Lesson 2 is the need for developing skills for packaging budget information in simple language and developing platforms to share such information to ensure easy access for stakeholders.

3. *Enhancing knowledge management and lesson learning*

MoFA has a knowledge-sharing platform called the Agriculture Sector Working Group (ASWG), established in 2006 as a platform for policy dialogue between government and development partners to ensure effective implementation of policies, programs and projects.

Lesson 1 is the need to expand the scope and improved running of the ASWG platform for better donor alignment. This alignment will ensure that donor programs and reporting are more in sync with government processes and timelines, with the attendant improvements in lesson learning.

Lesson 2 is the need to deepen RBM implementation by ensuring that sector stakeholders and leaders undertake

documentation of lessons or recommendations from the implementation of programs/projects/interventions. This should then be disseminated to stakeholders.

Conclusions and way forward

The AG-Scan workshop provided the opportunity for stakeholders to take stock of the critical issues concerning M&E and SDGs using RBM lenses while also situating these within the agriculture sector. There are success factors in place in Ghana, for RBM and AG-Scan follow-up processes, especially with the existence of M&E in the ministry and the collaborative work among MoFA, the National Planning and Development Commission, the Ministry of Finance and the Statistics agency.

The follow-up to the action planning will be critical and the core team; working with the AVANTI team, is well equipped and capable of taking on the task of further developing the Action Plan and look for ways of mobilizing it. The draft Action Plan¹ derived at the end of the workshop needs to be costed and mechanisms put in place to ensure that it aligns with government processes, especially in terms of funding.

The next step should then be a robust costing exercise for the remaining aspects, and to determine the funding sources. A corresponding implementation plan should then be derived after agreeing on funding sources.

The IFAD country office can play a dual role in ensuring the implementation of the Action Plan. First, it can work with MoFA as part of streamlining the activities in the Action Plan to determine areas that are being implemented already and where IFAD can provide funding support. Second, IFAD is well placed to help explore the support of other development partners given its convening power within the agriculture sector.

¹ Please see full report at:

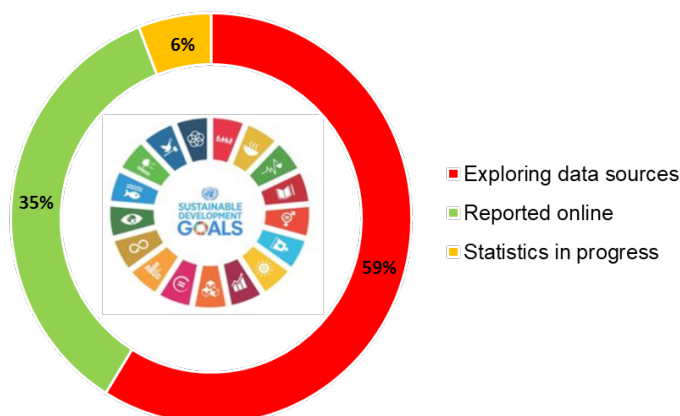
SDGs in Ghana

The SDGs have been consistent with Ghana's development targets and about 70% of the SDG targets were reflected in policies and strategies of the just ended Medium-Term National Development Policy Framework (2014–17), which preceded the 2030 Agenda.

The government of Ghana has strong commitment toward tracking SDGs. For example, it is the second country in the world (after Mexico) to conduct an *SDG Baseline Report*², it is the first country to completely change how its government *budget*³ is built and spent and it is tracking public expenditure toward the SDGs; and it is one of the first African strategic partners alongside Rwanda to copy the UK website⁴ to track Ghana's progress toward achieving the SDGs.

A total of 17 SDG indicators have been identified, however only 35% of them have data verified and reported in the online platform. And for 59% of them, the government is exploring data sources to capture the information (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Reporting status of relevant SDGs in Agriculture



² NDPC and GSS (2018) Ghana Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Indicator Baseline report, available at: https://www.gh.undp.org/content/dam/ghana/docs/Reports/UNDP_GH_IGC_SDGs_%20Indicator_%20Baseline_Report_2018.pdf

³ MoF (2018) Ghana's SDG budget Baseline Report, available at: <https://www.mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/news/Ghana's-SDG-Budget-Baseline-Report-Aug-09-18.pdf>

⁴ See <https://sustainabledevelopment-uk.github.io/>