



# Agricultural Policy Research Network

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*Bridging Research, Policy and Practice in Nigeria*

## ANNUAL REPORT 2012

## INTRODUCTION

APRNet represents stakeholders' strategic response to the weak linkages and obvious disconnect between research and policymaking in the country. The goal of APRNet is to promote evidence-based policies for agricultural and rural development. Its key function is to enhance linkages and build bridges between research, policy and practice. APRNet is aimed at facilitating the conduct of research and as well as the communication and utilization of research results to end-users including agricultural policymakers and practitioners. APRNet's primary object is to promote the uptake of research outputs into policy and practice and thereby making research work for end-users. Our value proposition is to build bridges that connect research, policy and practice in the agricultural and rural development sector.

The objectives of APRNet are as follows:

- promote the exchange of existing research information (methods, data, publications, etc);
- mobilize a pool of financial resources for independent policy research; encourage mentoring of upcoming policy researchers;
- provide peer review for researchers;
- create channels for linking research with policy process;
- encourage the use of research results in the policy process.

APRNet programmes/projects are structured along the following thematic areas:

- Policy research and policy analysis;
- Research communications and policy dialogue;
- Capacity building for linkages of research, policy and practice;
- Public enlightenment and stakeholder engagement.

Underlying the programmes of APRNet are critical functional value-creating products and services:

- Facilitator of policy research and policy analysis;
- Policy advocacy;
- Network loop;
- Agent of information and learning;

- Services provider.

## **KEY ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY APRNET IN 2012**

### **APRNet FIRST-EVER MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY LAUNCHED**

During the year, the Agricultural Policy Research Network (APRNet) developed a medium-term strategic plan known as APRNet's Strategy and Programme Framework (SPF) 2012-2016. The SPF is essentially a policy and operational document that mirrors the priorities, direction, strategies and programme thrusts of APRNet over the next 5 years. It also provides the methodology and guiding framework for achieving our programmatic activities within the given timeframe. The strategy formulation workshop was held on March 15 2012 in Abuja. It was based on the participatory approach involving key stakeholders. The Strategy and Programme Framework is designed to become the basis for annual operating work plans and budgets.

### **APRNet EXECUTIVE COUNCIL BOOSTED WITH THE TAKING-UP OF SLOTS BY FEDERAL MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (FMARD) & NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (NPC)**

During 2012, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) and the National Planning Commission (NPC) assumed their statutory slots in the Executive Council of the Agricultural Policy Research Network (APRNet). Nominations were made by the respective Honourable Ministers. APRNet Constitution provides for the official representation of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) and the National Planning Commission (NPC) in the Executive Council.

The representative of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is *Dr. Umar F. Hussaini*, Director, Planning, Research and Statistics while the representative of National Planning Commission is *Mr. Ola Shogbuyi*, Assistant Director (Agriculture).

In line with the constitutional provision of APRNet, the official nominee of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Director, Planning, Research and Statistics becomes the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of APRNet. This development is a significant boost to the functioning and impact of APRNet as it would engender more effective collaboration and partnership between APRNet and government

particularly with regard to the strategic role of evidence-based research in the realization of the GoN Transformation Agenda.

### **CRITICAL CONSTITUENCIES DEVELOPED IN RELEVANT INSTITUTIONS**

In 2012, there was considerable achievement in promoting closer links between agricultural sector research and policymaking in Nigeria. The sensitization visits during the year created critical constituency for APRNet in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, National Planning Commission, All Farmers Association of Nigeria, Association of Small-Scale Agro Producers in Nigeria, National Agricultural Research Institutes, Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria and States' Agricultural Development Projects.

### **CLIENT-BASED TRAININGS & CAPACITY BUILDING ACCOMPLISHED**

One manifestation of the critical constituencies that have been developed in relevant stakeholder institutions is demand for services offered by APRNet. During 20-23 March 2012, the Agricultural Policy Research Network (APRNet), under the auspices of the Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria, organized an Executive Course on "Methodologies and Tools for Agricultural Policy Analysis". The participants included 34 research officers of 17 national agricultural research institutes from across the country. The Course covered several conceptual and empirical topics and issues in agricultural policy analysis. It was aimed at instilling better understanding and applications in solving policy-decision problems about competitiveness, viability and social-economic impact of agricultural technologies in given policy contexts. The analytical approaches treated include Policy Analysis Matrix (PAM), among others.

The feedback from the participants showed that they appreciated very much the direct relevance and practical usefulness of Policy Analysis Matrix model in their functions and responsibilities at the research institutes. However, participants expressed the need for an intensive more targeted follow-up activities on key aspects of the training. The main reason is that there was insufficient time within the previous training timetable to conduct in-depth hands-on transmission of the skills, aptitudes and competencies for an independent application of PAM. It was therefore recommended that special follow-up intensive training, post-training exercises with an underlying technical assistance will be required to consolidate upon the knowledge given by the training.

## **ATTEMPTS TO CARRY OUT BUDGET REVIEW AND ADOVACY**

The Agricultural Policy Research Network – APRNet – attempted to contribute to the review of the Federal Government's 2013 budget with respect to agriculture and rural development. The budget review was intended to provide independent assessment, insights and recommendations for final consideration of the federal government 2013 budget with respect to agriculture and rural development. The review was to be channeled as inputs into the legislative deliberations and appropriation functions of the National Assembly Committees on Agriculture. However, the full implementation of the activity was constrained by coordination and logistics challenges. It is expected that this initiative will be re-launched in 2013.

The full design of the budget review and advocacy initiative is given as follows:

Ex Ante Budget Analysis (At the Call Circular Stage): This stage of budget analysis will involve examining what should be the bases, requirements and priorities for the upcoming budget cycle. The analysis will be based on assessment of present year's budget performance and public spending to date in relation to the performance, needs and challenges of the agriculture sector. The results and findings of ex ante budget analysis will be channeled to the PPAS of the FMARD to guide the budget proposals in response to the Call Circular issued by the Federal Ministry of Finance. The output of ex ante budget analysis and review is the Budget Advisory Papers (BAPs) which will be addressed to the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. Before finalization and presentation of the Budget Advisory Papers, they will be subjected to validation by stakeholders using the auspices of the Stakeholder Consultative Contact Group (SCCG)

Budget Analysis and Scrutiny (at the Appropriation Stage): This stage of budget analysis and scrutiny is an assessment of the budget proposals presented by Mr. President to the National Assembly, for appropriation. The analysis will be guided by the extent to which the budget measures and allocations meet the requirements and prescriptions from ex ante budget analysis reported in the Budget Advisory Papers. This stage of analysis will be directed at the NASS Committees through oral presentations, seminar sessions, special memos and briefing papers. The aim here is to inform and influence the NASS Committees to align appropriations with the prescriptions of the Budget Advisory Papers, as validated by the stakeholders.

## **APRNet WEBSITE LAUNCHED**

In order to promote the communication of information within APRNet and between APRNet and its stakeholders, the website was developed and launched during the year. The website is [www.aprnetworkng.org](http://www.aprnetworkng.org). It is expected that the website will become the primary medium for interaction, networking and information flow with the Network, and thereby enhance membership participation.

## **COLLABORATION WITH FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION (FAO)**

As part of its efforts in building strategic collaboration and partnerships, APRNet held several meetings with FAO Country Representative, Ms. Louise L. Setshwaelo and visiting FAO Consultant, Mr. Lorenzo. The meeting featured discussion of collaboration opportunities between FAO and APRNet and APRNet participation in FAO's agricultural policy analysis capacity building program titled "Supporting Evidence-Based Decision Making through Impact Analysis of Policy Options for Sustainable Development, Food Security and Inclusive Growth".

The program was aimed at building the capacity for analysis and formulation of agriculture, sustainable rural development and inclusive growth policies. The purpose was to produce and establish core teams carrying out policy analysis and providing advice on sustainable agriculture and rural development and food security to government and other stakeholders and carry out training and support on policy analysis and formulation in agriculture, sustainable rural development and inclusive growth.

FAO invited APRNet to the training programme.

## **APRNet PARTICIPATED IN IFPRI RESEARCH CONFERENCE, 13-14 NOVEMBER 2012**

APRNet was among the stakeholders in Nigerian agricultural research who participated in the IFPRI Nigeria Strategic Support Programme (NSSP) Research Conference, held 13-14 November 2012, at Abuja. The Research Conference was convened to disseminate and discuss recent policy research done by IFPRI and its scientists and to foster the use of the research findings by policymakers and practitioners. APRNet was represented by the President and Program Officer. The President made a presentation titled – "APRNet: Mission Progress and Forward-Looking". The presentation traced the origin of APRNet and progress till date. It reiterated APRNet vision, mission, and the accomplishments so far, as well as the challenges that need to be tackled.

## **PROPOSED ACTIVITY NOT REALISED**

During the year, APRNet responded to the call for proposals by the DFID- supported Federal Public Administration Reform (FEPAR) Programme. The subcomponent was the Civil Society Organisation Grants Programme. APRNet prepared and submitted a proposal for Agriculture Policy and Budget Support to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The objectives of the FEPAR Program as contained in the call for proposals are to strengthen the role of CSOs in catalyzing agriculture development in the country by supporting them to scale up analysis, advocacy and oversight of budget planning, implementation and review and sector performance including service provision.

The aim is to scale up civil society engagement with the NASS, MDAs and the media on agriculture development issues using analysis, advocacy and oversight activities. Also, it is aimed at making the agriculture budget process more inclusive, effective and reflective of the priorities of Nigerians. APRNet submission did not get the final approval of the programme authorities. During 2013, the proposal will be reviewed for presentation to other potential sponsors.

## **MEMBERSHIP GROWTH**

During the year, APRNet membership witnessed tremendous increase! Between January 2012 and December 2012, the number of registered member increased from 51 to 92. Efforts to ensure steady increase in the membership profile will remain a continuous process.

## **APRNet SECRETARIAT STRENGTHENED**

The Secretariat was strengthened from two perspectives. One is continued funding and office support of IFPRI for the Secretariat. The other is engagement of a new Program Officer, Mr. Obasi, Basil Jacob. Mr. Obasi holds a Bachelor degree in Economics from University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

## **NEWS FILE**

- During the year, APRNet appointed Mr. Ndaya Mohammed as Mobilisation Officer. Mr. Ndaya Mohammed who also doubles as the North Central Zonal Liaison Officer of APRNet has distinguished himself as a committed and trustworthy member of APRNet.

- During the year, APRNet Secretary, Dr. Victor Oboh, joined UNDP as National Economist.

## **CHALLENGES IN 2012**

The critical challenges relate to resource mobilisation, membership participation and coordination difficulties. Desired levels of resource mobilisation were not achieved, due to paucity of proposals and inability to members to attend joint proposal writing sessions. The Network could not find the resources to finance members' working trips. The website is not adequately utilized for communication, interaction and information exchange between members. Members' demand for APRNet web-based information and related services remained below expectation. To overcome this problem, the website will be reconstructed and enriched, just as members will be sensitized on an ongoing basis about the amenities in the website.

## **PROSPECTS FOR 2013**

APRNet has a very promising outlook for 2013. With the successful of APRNet Strategy and Program Framework (SPF) 2012-2016, there is high optimism that the year 2013 will witness the fruition of collaborative programs in capacity building, research networking and policy dialogue.