



## MY MEETING NOTES

East Africa Agricultural Extension and Advisory Service (AEAS) Policy Dialogue  
16-18 June 2015, Kampala, Uganda  
African Forum for Agriculture Advisory Services (AFAAS)  
Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS)  
Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services (MEAS)  
German Technical Cooperation (GIZ)



*AFAAS organized a policy dialogue event on the East Africa Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (AEAS) event to assess and strengthen capacity for RAS policy analysis and discussion at the country level in order to support the on-going efforts on AEAS within the region. Md. Hamidur Rahman who participated in this meeting shares his experiences here.*

### CONTEXT

This workshop was organised by the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) in collaboration with GFRAS, MEAS and GIZ. It was an occasion to create awareness on the status of existing policies for extension and rural advisory Services (RAS) in the region and beyond, and engage in a dialogue mainly with policy makers to find ways for improving the status quo.



The policy dialogue was attended by more than 70 participants from 23 countries in Africa and beyond including the AFAAS member countries and representation from Bangladesh and Costa-Rica. Participants included both public and private RAS actors in the East African countries (Burundi, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda); development partners from RAS networks (GFRAS, AFAAS) MEAS, GIZ Green Innovation Centres for Agriculture; knowledge partners on policy (FANRPAN, FAC and RUFORUM); members of the

GFRAS policy working group; and AFAAS Africa-wide Extension Week regional planning committee.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The overall objective of the dialogue was to assess and strengthen capacity for RAS policy analysis, and discussion at the country level in order to support on-going efforts within the region to improve agricultural extension and advisory services provision (Box 1)

### Box 1: Why this dialogue?

“At the core of this policy dialogue were the results of the scoping study on the status of the AEAS policies in Africa and their alignment to the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development (CAADP) agenda. Commissioned by GFRAS and conducted by Prof. Oladele Idowu, the study revealed that out of the 29 countries assessed, only five have fully legislated extension policies, while the majority have only provisional extension policies. Whether as stand alone or embedded in existing agricultural policies, there is a need for thorough review of AEAS policy processes in view of the current challenges.

Source: Hlami Ngwenya and Kristin Davis, GFRAS, 2015

## THE PROGRAMME

The meeting started with a brief opening ceremony, welcome and presentation of objectives of the meeting. The Honourable Tress Bucyanayandi, Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Uganda inaugurated the event as chief guest in the presence of Dr. Silim Nahdy, Executive Director of AFAAS, Dr. Kristin Davis, Executive Secretary of GFRAS and Christian Koenigsperger from GIZ. The chief guest highlighted the evolution of Uganda’s extension system, underlining the challenges it faces to meet the current demands. While welcoming the audience, Dr. Silim Nahdy observed that, “extension service is no longer about promoting how best one draws the lines for planting crops but on how best one can use the available tools and technologies to deliver information on the new farming systems”.

Dr. Kristin Davis, explained the concept of the “New Extensionist” which clearly articulates the role of RAS in the Agricultural Innovation System. She also explained about the core competencies identified for extension personnel by the GFRAS Consortium on Extension Education and Training. Christian Koenigsperger shared the concept of the “Green Innovation Centers” applied by the GIZ One world - No Hunger global project. The project is geared at increasing food supplies and poverty reduction by developing market access in the targeted countries of Africa including Ethiopia, Benin, Burkina Faso, India, Mali, Malawi, Zambia, Kenya, Cameroon, Tunisia, Ghana, Togo and Nigeria. Under this programme, GIZ and GFRAS collaborate to strengthen agricultural extension and advisory services in the implementing countries.

The other major aspects discussed in the meeting are as follows:

*GFRAS Global Good Practices Initiative:* The Global Good Practices (GGP) initiative was initiated by GFRAS partners to provide a knowledge platform for practitioners, in which theoretical and practical experiences is collected and systematized in an easily accessible and usable form as a public good. It is aimed at field extension agents and managers. So far GFRAS has published 7-8

GGP notes on Innovation Platforms, Farmer Field Schools, Mobile based bundled services, Integrating Gender into Rural Advisory Services, Enabling Rural Innovation, Farmer-to-farmer extension and Management Advice for Family Farms to strengthen entrepreneurial skills.

(<http://www.g-fras.org/en/ggp-notes/management-advice-for-family-farms-to-strengthen-entrepreneurial-skills.html>)



*Evaluation of RAS:* Evaluation is important for increasing the interest and demand for more efficient and effective RAS, increasingly contributing to sustainable development; accountability to RAS stakeholders, providing systematic evidence to support advocacy,

policy formulation and learning. The M&E systems of the “New Extensionist” should be inbuilt in RAS programs for ownership and sustainability.

### Closing Session: Towards enabling policies for the –‘New Extensionist’

The three days long event concluded with the closing remark of Dr. Moses Zinnah. He summarized the highlights of the learning and these include:

- a. No country can develop without getting the agricultural sector right and there is a need to get the different stakeholders to believe in the potential for agricultural development in Africa
- b. Without good agricultural sector policies, agriculture cannot be sustainably developed
- c. To address the challenges in agriculture, the New Extensionist should have the core competencies as articulated by GFRAS
- d. There is need to enhance networking among those involved in RAS and GFRAS together with AFAAS should continue championing the cause of extension.

## A Policy Dialogue is NOT....



- A mass meeting
- An event controlled by only one interest group
- An event dominated by formalities and protocols
- A seminar or lecture
- An event for sharing research results with the general public
- An occasion to present pre-prepared resolutions or deliver an ultimatum
- A spur of the moment meeting



The meeting called for more political will and urgency in adopting evidence-based policy processes and for countries to have fully legislated AEAS policies that provide a legal framework for coordination of pluralistic extension services in response to the current challenges, thus providing enabling policies for the *New Extensionist*.

### MY PLANS

I am planning to organize a workshop in Bangladesh to share the knowledge I gained through participation in this workshop and to explore options for organizing a similar Policy Dialogue on RAS policies in Bangladesh with the members of the Bangladesh Extension Network.

### References

Hlami Ngwenya and Kristin Davis. (2015). Taking the 'New Extensionist' to the Policy Dialogue Level Experience from the East African Agricultural Extension and Rural Advisory Policy Dialogue (Available at: <http://www.g-fras.org/en/628-taking-the-new-extensionist-to-the-policy-dialogue-level.html>)

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