Savelugu/Nanton Extension Delivery Improvement Project (SNEDIP) - Ghana

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Project Duration
October 2014 to June 2015

Implementing Partner(s)
Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services Project (prime); Engineers Without Borders Canada

Funding:
$168,928 (spread among two projects)

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Background
In 2012 USAID’s centrally funded Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services (MEAS) project conducted a Rapid Scoping Mission of Ghana’s extension system that found that significant challenges remain in operationalizing these transitions. Farmer-based organizations were often poorly coordinated, faced financial management challenges, and struggled with inadequate capacity in market-driven agriculture and high post-harvest losses (MEAS, 2012). At the same time, MOFA suffered from capacity deficiencies, logistical challenges, and funding constraints.
that affected the availability and quality of services it was able to provide to farmers. In particular, agricultural extension agents (AEAs) lacked the means to consistently interact with farmers but also had very low capacity in market-driven agriculture. Finally, district-level MOFA personnel faced new challenges in operating more autonomously and required higher ability to collaborate with district-level decision-makers and other extension actors in an increasingly decentralized and pluralistic system. This process is unfolding slowly and, at present, there is evidence of adverse effects on the availability of public resources to sustain the efforts of district-level Departments of Agriculture to carry out their local agricultural development agendas. One of the primary challenges facing Ghana’s extension system remains how to enhance the efficiency of investments in extension to maximize their impact at the farm level.

Addressing these gaps required greater investment in developing the capacity of MOFA extension officers and strengthening the delivery of market-oriented extension training to farmer-based organizations (FBOs) in order for farmers to have the information and support required to improve their livelihoods, resiliency, and productivity. Therefore, the USAID-Ghana mission requested that the MEAS team undertake a series of activities aimed at strengthening extension service delivery in the Feed the Future Zone of Influence (ZOI) in northern Ghana.

**Project Summary**

The Savelugu-Nanton Extension Delivery Improvement Project (SNEDIP) was created in response to the 2012 MEAS scoping mission and subsequent requests by USAID-Ghana to address identified gaps in extension service delivery. The project sought to investigate and demonstrate a model for effective district-level agricultural extension capable of leveraging existing resources to better serve farmers. SNEDIP was a nine-month pilot project under the MEAS project in Savelugu-Nanton municipality in Ghana’s Northern Region, within the Feed the Future ZOI.

Many extension service providers are active in Savelugu-Nanton. The public Department of Agriculture employs 15 Agricultural Extension Agents responsible for carrying out the municipality’s agricultural development program. These include public extension agents lack capacity and are under-resourced and challenged to carry out field-level extension activities. These factors undermine the quality and consistency of services available to farmers to improve their productivity and livelihoods. In response, MEAS worked with Engineers Without Borders Canada (EWB) to implement the SNEDIP project at the field level due to EWB’s years of experience working embedded with district-level government in Savelugu-Nanton. Through EWB, the SNEDIP project also partnered with the Municipal Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the Municipal Assembly (MA) in Savelugu-Nanton.

The overarching purpose of SNEDIP was to strengthen farmer livelihoods, resiliency, and productivity in Savelugu-Nanton through targeted investment in the municipality’s public extension services and institutional support to the local government. More specifically, the SNEDIP project increased farmers’ access to quality extension services and developed farmers’ capacity in market-driven agriculture, post-harvest loss prevention, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT)-based extension. Similarly, SNEDIP built the knowledge in and capacity of agricultural extension agents in market-oriented extension, post-harvest loss management, and ICT use in extension delivery. The project also improved coordination between Municipal Assembly and Municipal Department of Agriculture representatives under a
decentralized extension system. Finally, as a pilot project SNEDIP generated results, relevant lessons, and best practices that can be shared broadly but also allow scalability to other districts in the USAID Ghana Feed the Future ZOI.

Goals

1) Improved extension services received
   - 360 visits by AEAs to FBOs
   - 986 farmers served through FBOs involved in SNEDIP
   - 2,000 non-participant farmers receive extension information through FBOs involved in SNEDIP
   - 50% increase in contacts, as reported by farmers
   - 20% increase in quality of services, as reported by farmers

2) Increased FBO functioning
   - 20 (of 30) FBOs reach stage 4 (of 4) by the end of SNEDIP timeline
   - 1 weekly meeting per FBO, as reported by AEAs
   - 20 (of 30) FBOs develop a market-based business plan by the end of SNEDIP timeline

3) Increased farmer capacity in market-oriented agriculture
   - 20% increase in knowledge, as reported by farmers
   - 20% increase in skill, as reported by farmers
   - 20% improvement in attitudes, as reported by farmers
   - 20% increase in the intention to adopt newly-learned techniques, as reported by farmers

4) Improved post-harvest loss prevention
   - 20% increase in knowledge, as reported by farmers
   - 20% increase in skill, as reported by farmers
   - 20% improvement in attitudes, as reported by farmers
   - 20% increase in the intention to adopt newly-learned techniques, as reported by farmers

5) Increased agricultural yields and incomes
   - 80% of farmers believe involvement in SNEDIP will increase agricultural yields
   - 80% of farmers believe involvement in SNEDIP will increase agricultural incomes
Selected Activities

1) Improved extension services received
   - 384 FBO visits
   - 1,067 farmers directly served
   - 1,898 farmers indirectly served
   - 22% increase in farmer contacts
   - 6% increase in perceived quality of public extension

2) Increased FBO functioning
   - 30 (of 30) or 100% of FBOs reached AAB stage 4 (of 4)
   - 1 weekly meeting for 87% of FBOs
   - 30 (of 30) or 100% of FBOs developed market-based business plan

3) Increased farmer capacity in market-oriented agriculture
   - 24% increase in knowledge
   - 10% increase in skill
   - 55% increase in intention to adopt practices learned

4) Improved post-harvest loss prevention
   - 11% increase in knowledge
   - 32% increase in intention to adopt practices learned

5) Increased agricultural yields and incomes
   - 99% of farmers expect higher yields
   - 98% of farmers expect higher agricultural incomes