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FOSTERING POLICY & PROGRAMMATIC ADJUSTMENTS IN AFRICA'S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR: ReSAKSS' Support to CAADP Mutual Accountability Processes

By Tsitsi Makombe* and Aichatou Laminou**

The Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS) has been pivotal in operationalizing two mutual accountability processes – the CAADP Biennial Reviews and agriculture Joint Sector Reviews. ReSAKSS' support to these critical processes has contributed to policy advancements across Africa.

Introduction

As part of the Maputo Declaration, in 2003, African Heads of State and Government launched the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as Africa's policy framework for accelerating agricultural-led growth, poverty reduction, food security, and nutrition. Through the 2014 Malabo Declaration, African leaders expanded the CAADP agenda with seven broad commitments to transform African agriculture by 2025, including an overarching commitment to mutual accountability by conducting a continental Biennial Review (BR) of progress across all commitments. The pledge to conduct a BR reaffirmed African leaders' longstanding commitment to mutual accountability. Mutual accountability is a key feature of CAADP that emphasizes collective responsibility, shared agendas, joint commitments and accountability among governments, civil society, farmers' groups, the private sector, and development partners.

A program of **AKADEMIYA2063, ReSAKSS** provides data and knowledge products to facilitate CAADP benchmarking, review, and mutual learning processes. In particular, the program supports the operationalization of CAADP mutual accountability processes through agriculture Joint Sector Reviews (JSRs) at country and regional levels and the continental CAADP BR. Agriculture JSRs provide a platform for agriculture sector stakeholders, both state and non-state actors, to assess the performance of the sector, assist the government in setting and implementing sector policy and investment priorities, and assess how well state and non-state actors have implemented their commitments. The CAADP BR process reviews continental progress toward meeting the seven 2014 Malabo Declaration commitments, culminating in an Africa-wide BR report, which is reviewed during the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government.

This brief highlights ReSAKSS' support to the CAADP BR and agriculture JSRs and showcases examples of how the operationalization of these mutual accountability processes has helped trigger policy and programmatic adjustments and promote evidence-based policy planning in some countries.

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Operationalizing CAADP Mutual Accountability through ReSAKSS

ReSAKSS, in collaboration with country stakeholders, the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), and other development partners facilitates agriculture JSRs that are regular, inclusive, comprehensive, and technically robust.

Since 2014, ReSAKSS has conducted assessments of JSRs in 21 countries and two regional economic communities (the Economic Community of West African States–ECOWAS, and the East African Community–EAC) to evaluate both the institutional and policy landscape and the quality of current agricultural review processes to inform the development of a JSR action plan, with recommendations for establishing a best-practice JSR. ReSAKSS and its partners have used outcomes of the assessments to strengthen agriculture JSR processes where they exist (for example, in Ghana and Malawi) and establish new JSRs (for instance, in Senegal and Burkina Faso).

Also, in collaboration with country stakeholders, AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, and other technical partners, ReSAKSS has provided continental support to the CAADP BR process by supporting the (1) development and refinement of BR technical guidelines, tools, and indicators; (2) training of national and regional BR experts; (3) development and management of a web-based data entry and management tool –the electronic BR (eBR); and (4) collection, review, reporting, and validation of BR data as well as the drafting of the continental BR report. Four BRs have taken place to date – in 2017, 2019, 2021, and 2023.

ReSAKSS also provides targeted technical support in 10 countries to improve BR data quality and capacities and fill data gaps. The 10 countries are Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, Togo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. In addition, ReSAKSS promotes the dissemination and use of the BR data and results by publishing BR country, regional, continental, and thematic briefs to highlight BR results and policy recommendations as well as policy and programmatic changes due to the BRs.

CAADP Mutual Accountability Processes Foster Policy and Programmatic Adjustments

JSRs improve accountability, increase multistakeholder engagement, and resource allocation.



Following the assessments of JSRs in 21 countries and two RECs and the implementation of JSR best practices and action plans to improve the quality of the agriculture JSRs, several major improvements have ensued. These include the improvement of accountability standards and the strengthening of multistakeholder engagement. There is also an increase in active inclusion and participation of non-state actors, such as Farmer-Based Organizations and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), in JSR national meetings, including in Eswatini, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia¹. The JSRs have also sparked multistakeholder discussions on the need to direct public projects and resources away from areas with a significant presence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) performing similar tasks and thus avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts². While the inclusion of non-state actors in JSRs has increased, their active participation still requires further strengthening.

JSRs trigger policy and programmatic changes.

The adoption of improved JSR practices and best practices has also helped trigger policy and programmatic changes in several countries. About 70 percent of country JSR focal points interviewed by ReSAKSS reported that JSRs had either a noticeable or significant effect on policy changes in the agricultural sector³. For example, Malawi reformed its Farm Input Subsidy Program (FISP) following JSR deliberations that recommended allocating fewer resources to FISP so that more were available for other uses; involving the private sector in input distribution through contracting; and targeting the subsidy to more productive farmers⁴. In addition, Mozambique has embedded its BR process into its JSR, the Agriculture Sector Coordination Committee (ASCC), by strengthening and expanding it to operate as a decentralized, inclusive, multistakeholder platform that meets at the national, provincial and district levels. Improvements to the ASCC enabled Mozambique to revise its second-generation national agriculture investment plan (NAIP) in 2018 through a consultative process with key stakeholders and align its objectives and targets with those of the BR⁵. The NAIP introduced programs in areas identified in the first BR as needing improvement, including increasing access to improved inputs, developing priority agriculture value chains, and reducing and accounting for postharvest losses.



1. Benin, S., et al. 2018. "Mutual Accountability in CAADP and Agricultural Transformation". In *Africa Agriculture Status Report: Catalyzing Government Capacity to Drive Agricultural Transformation* (Issue 6), Pp. 150-181. Nairobi: Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).
2. Matchaya, G., et al. 2022. *Policy and Programmatic Changes resulting from the Biennial Reviews and Agriculture Joint Sector Reviews under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)*. 2021 CAADP Third Biennial Review Brief: Africa-Wide. Kigali: Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS), AKADEMIYA2063.
3. Ibid.
4. Makombe, T., and J. Collins. 2018. *Malawi's Agriculture Joint Sector Review: Fostering Mutual Accountability and Guiding Policy Reform*. Agrilinks Blog Post.
5. Makombe, T., and J. Collins. 2022. *Has the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Biennial Review Triggered Policy Adjustments?* Agrilinks Blog Post.

BRs promote improvements in data reporting and quality.



ReSAKSS' technical support to the BR has helped to improve BR data reporting rates, data systems, and data quality (accuracy, traceability, and validation) with each successive BR cycle. For example, in 2021, BR overall reporting rates averaged 88 percent in the 10 countries that received targeted support from ReSAKSS, compared to 83 percent in the 2017 BR. Furthermore, the eBR platform, alongside the BR critical analyses, data clusters, data validations, and training, have helped fill data gaps and improve data quality and reporting rates. For example, the eBR has introduced data entry cell restrictions to reduce outliers and mandates data sources to be entered to improve traceability.

BRs boost public agricultural sector investments.

Following the low levels of agricultural sector investments revealed by the early BR, several countries increased their investments by subsidizing farm inputs, increasing farmland available to farmers, and strengthening agricultural value chains⁶. For example, Ghana launched several flagship programs in the agriculture sector while Benin exceeded the CAADP 10 percent public budget share target allocated to agriculture, reaching 12.4 percent in 2019. Guinea established a local government financing agency to launch projects across the country, while the government of Mozambique allocated additional funds for its agriculture sector-wide monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system⁷.



BRs promote private sector investments.

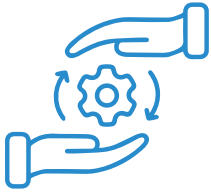
Several countries, including Angola, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Eswatini, Guinea and Niger, have implemented actions and reforms to increase private agricultural investments. In Niger, the first BR in 2017 prompted the establishment of an agency for promoting private investments and the adoption of a public-private partnership law in 2018. Also, following the first BR, Côte d'Ivoire introduced an investment code in 2018 that provides tax incentives to all private sector investments in the agriculture sector⁸. In Burundi, the government implemented a policy to boost private investment in agriculture, while Cabo Verde signed an agreement with Hungary for a credit line aimed at agricultural development and created tax incentives for investments in agricultural equipment.



6. *ibid.*
7. *ibid.*
8. *ibid.*

BRs Trigger policy and programmatic adjustments.

Nearly two-thirds of the countries that participated in the first cycle of BR reported introducing policy and programmatic reforms to accelerate agricultural growth and transformation goals under the Malabo Declaration. For example, in Togo, the BR results prompted the Ministry of Agriculture to introduce several new projects aimed at improving nutrition and promoting organic farming nationwide. Additionally, the Ministry reviewed and modified its national data collection systems, incorporating several BR indicators into national agriculture surveys to ensure regular tracking and reporting⁹. In the case of Mozambique, the significant gaps in its reporting for the first and second BRs prompted the country to add indicators on access to finance, use of improved seeds, and postharvest losses to its agricultural survey, which was used to inform reporting for the third BR in 2021. Mozambique also launched and implemented several programs targeted at youth and women in agriculture, such as a flagship program to empower youth and women in agriculture and a gender strategy to increase women's participation in agriculture. In Kenya, an integrated agricultural management system was implemented to improve agricultural data systems, and the Ministry of Agriculture initiated the strengthening of its monitoring and evaluation framework for the sector¹⁰. In addition, in several countries, the JSR and BR have fostered greater inclusivity and multistakeholder participation in the processes, especially by diverse non-state actor groups.



Conclusion

ReSAKSS' efforts to promote inclusive, regular, and comprehensive JSRs, as well as strengthen BR data systems, capacities, and reporting, have helped trigger significant policy and programmatic adjustments. The policy interventions, ranging from improvements in BR data quality and reporting and increased multistakeholder engagement in the JSR and BR processes by state and non-state actors to increases in public and private agriculture sector investments and input policy reforms, indicate not only the critical role played by CAADP mutual accountability processes but their incredible potential to advance the achievement of desired agrifood system transformation goals.

The program's activities in promoting CAADP mutual accountability processes have highlighted some important lessons learned. For example, it is vital to embed the BR in existing JSR processes in order to avoid creating a parallel process and ensure that BR outcomes and priorities are linked to ongoing agriculture sector planning efforts through the JSR. In addition, each BR cycle has underscored the urgent need to consistently improve data quality and strengthen data systems and capacities at the country and regional levels. These improvements are essential to ensuring reliable data and information needed to accurately plan and track progress toward achieving Africa's agrifood system transformation goals.

9. *ibid.*
10. *ibid.*

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