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APRA brochure: Ghana



Agricultural Policy Research in Africa

The Agricultural Policy Research in Africa (APRA) programme is a five-year research consortium that is working to **identify the most effective pathways to agricultural commercialisation** that empower women, reduce rural poverty, and improve food and nutrition security in sub-Saharan Africa.

What is agricultural commercialisation?

We define commercialisation as a process occurring when farmers increasingly engage with the market, either to procure inputs and resources (such as fertiliser, seeds, hired labour, formal credit, rented land), or to process and sell their produce. Commercialisation may occur through either external investment or market specialisation and farm consolidation, or a combination of the two.

Commercialisation is successful if more people are *'stepping up'*, *'stepping out'* and *'stepping in'*, and fewer people are *'hanging in'* or *'dropping out'* of productive agriculture.

What will APRA do?

APRA researchers are examining how African farmers engage with four different types of commercial agriculture (estate/plantation, medium-scale commercial agriculture, contract farming, smallholder commercialisation) and the effects this has on the livelihoods of rural people, particularly women and young people. The aim is to help inform future policy and investment decisions to promote more inclusive forms of agricultural commercialisation in sub-Saharan Africa.

APRA's goals

- Generate high-quality evidence on pathways to agricultural commercialisation in Africa.
- Undertake policy research on agricultural commercialisation to fill key evidence gaps and define policy options.
- Ensure the sharing and uptake of research by a diverse range of stakeholders.
- Strengthen the capacity of the research team, and associated partner institutions, to deliver high-quality research and advice.

Analysing five livelihood trajectories through agricultural commercialisation

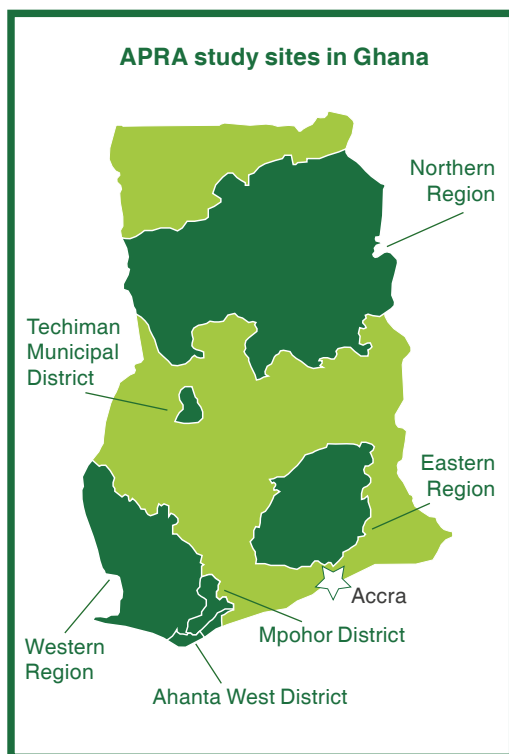
1. *'Stepping in'* – returning/moving into commercial agriculture from a non-farm base; rise of medium-scale farmers.
2. *'Stepping out'* – accumulating, diversifying and creating alternative, non-farm economic activities.
3. *'Stepping up'* – improving and investing in existing agricultural activities.
4. *'Hanging in'* – maintaining subsistence level.
5. *'Dropping out'* – moving away or slipping into destitution due to shocks and stresses.



APRA in Ghana

APRA is working in Ghana (as one of its focus countries) to conduct quantitative and qualitative research to:

1. **Examine the impacts of oil palm commercialisation models** on household welfare in Ahanta West and Mpoohor districts;
2. **An analysis of cocoa production in eastern and western Ghana** via longitudinal studies;
3. **Explore the different pathways young people use** to get themselves started in farming;
4. **Assess key policy issues** associated with changing patterns of agricultural commercialisation through:
 - a. **An analysis of policy incentives for business investment in agricultural commercialisation;**
 - b. **An evaluation of the political economy of tractors and the new state-business nexus.**



For more information on APRA in Ghana

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Impacts of oil palm commercialisation models on household welfare, Ghana

Research objective

This study aims to describe existing oil palm commercialisation (OPC) models in Ahanta West and Mpohor districts. It will aim to discover who participates in the OPC models identified and why, and to examine how participation in different models effects welfare. Of particular interest is whether the study focuses – participation and welfare – exhibit a gendered component, and if so, why.

Study questions

- What categories of farmers (e.g., men, women, and young people) engage with which model of OPC?
- Why do some farmers not participate in or are excluded from the different models of OPC?
- Do the different models of OPC have differing impacts on other farm and non-farm enterprises?
- What are the food security and poverty implications of participation in the different models of OPC, and how do these outcomes differ across different groups?
- How have the different models of OPC influenced synergies or competition in resource allocation to other crops?
- What can we learn from these models of OPC compared with direct state interventions in input and product markets for a crop such as cocoa?

Methodology

- i. The research questions will be addressed using household survey data and qualitative interviews. Two rounds of survey data will be employed. The first round of surveys, which involved 726 households, was completed in 2017, and will be followed by a second round involving the same households in 2019. This enables us to measure change over time;
- ii. The qualitative data collection will involve in-depth interviews with selected farmers as well as key informant interviews in some of the communities where the household survey sample was drawn. District-level agricultural authorities and policy makers will also be interviewed.

Research contact

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Agrarian change and commercialisation in the Ghanaian cocoa sector

Research objective

Comparing Ghana's Eastern and Western regions, this study explores the historical pathways and dynamics of change in cocoa production, with reference to patterns of migration, accumulation and dispossession. We will examine the different livelihood trajectories in relation to changes in cropping systems, land, labour, natural resources, social relations and outcomes for rural women and men.

Study questions

- How do development patterns in cocoa production differ across space and time in Ghana, and what accounts for these differences?
- What are the class and gender characteristics and profiles of cocoa farmers and how have these changed over time?
- What happens to initial investment and capital accumulation in cocoa? Does capital spread geographically, across sectors or out of the agriculture sector altogether? Or does it decline and dissipate?
- How does the decline of forests affect the cocoa sector and investments in cocoa? Is there a movement towards greater intensification on smaller land areas?
- What impact does cocoa cultivation have on food crop cultivation, and on relations between those who cultivate food crops and cocoa (and/or other cash crops) in the same household?
- What impacts do the global cycles of boom and recession, and the opening up of new areas for cocoa cultivation, have on cocoa production in Ghana?
- What political-economic factors have shaped the emergence, spread and persistence of cocoa production in Ghana?

Methodology

- i. An extensive historical analysis of Ghana's cocoa sector will be carried out, as well as archival studies, an evaluation of past studies and surveys, a short informal survey with a small farmer sample in two study communities to define criteria for qualitative methods, a formal survey and follow-up qualitative interviews;
- ii. Communities will be selected from zones where cocoa has declined, been sustained, and expanded – translating into old, resilient and flourishing areas.

Research contact

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Analysing the pathways young people use to establish themselves in farming, Ghana

Research objective

This study will investigate the pathways young people use to establish themselves in farming and/or in associated economic activities in areas where agriculture is already highly commercialised. Field sites have been selected in Ghana, Tanzania and Zimbabwe as 'hot spots' of agricultural commercialisation. In Ghana, the study area will be Techiman, Brong Ahafo.

Study questions

- What pathways do young people use to establish themselves in farming, and/or associated economic activities, in areas where agriculture is already highly commercialised?
- How do these pathways vary in relation to different crops, commodities, commercialisation models, etc?
- Have these pathways changed over time, and if so, how?
- What are the barriers to entry for young people, and how do they navigate these barriers? How important are family dynamics in this navigation?
- How are these pathways and outcomes affected by factors of social difference like gender?

Methodology

- i. The study will be carried out using detailed one-to-one interviews with young men and women to document the work histories of those who have been engaged in farming and/or associated employment.

Research contact

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Examining the historical linkages between smallholders, mechanisation and commercial agriculture, Ghana

Research objective

This study aims to explore the widespread uptake of tractor services by smallholder farmers, and the emergence of a significant sector of medium-scale farmers using modern inputs and mechanisation in agriculture in northern Ghana.

Study questions

- What are the linkages between the uptake of tractor services by smallholders and the growth of a mechanised, medium-scale agricultural sector? And to what extent are these developments the result of favourable market factors?
- What is the relationship between the availability of farm labour and the uptake of ploughing services and environmental conditions with a focus on the soil?
- What are the historical antecedents to state-supported commercial agriculture and ploughing services, and how have they influenced commercial agriculture in the present?

Methodology

- i. Country case study approach, focusing on private sector and state linkages in agricultural development in the northern region of Ghana;
- ii. Data collection via semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and field observation.

Research contact

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An analysis of policy incentives for business investment in agricultural commercialisation in Ghana

Research objective

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of policies designed to incentivise business investment in African agriculture. The study will be conducted in Ethiopia, Ghana and Malawi.

Study questions

- Which investment policies and incentive schemes successfully influence business investment in African agriculture?
- Which commercialisation pathways have emerged as a result of the investment incentivised by policy?

Methodology

- i. The research will use both primary and secondary data. The secondary data will be collected from relevant institutions in Ghana (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture, Ghana Investment Promotion Centre, and Free Zone Board) on selected policies/instruments intended to incentivise investment in agricultural businesses. In addition, secondary data from selected medium and large commercial farms will be collected;
- ii. The primary data will be collected mainly through qualitative survey using key informant interviews, including with leaders/managers of medium and large agricultural enterprises, officials and experts dealing with investment promotion at different level.

Research contact

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Funded by UK Aid from the UK government, APRA will run until 2021. The consortium – which draws on expertise in sub-Saharan Africa, Sweden, the UK and USA – is based at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), UK, and has regional hubs at the Centre for African Bio-Entrepreneurship (CABE), Kenya, the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), South Africa, and the University of Ghana.

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This material has been funded by UK aid from the UK government; however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.



APRA builds on more than a decade of research and policy engagement work by the Future Agricultures Consortium (www.future-agricultures.org).