

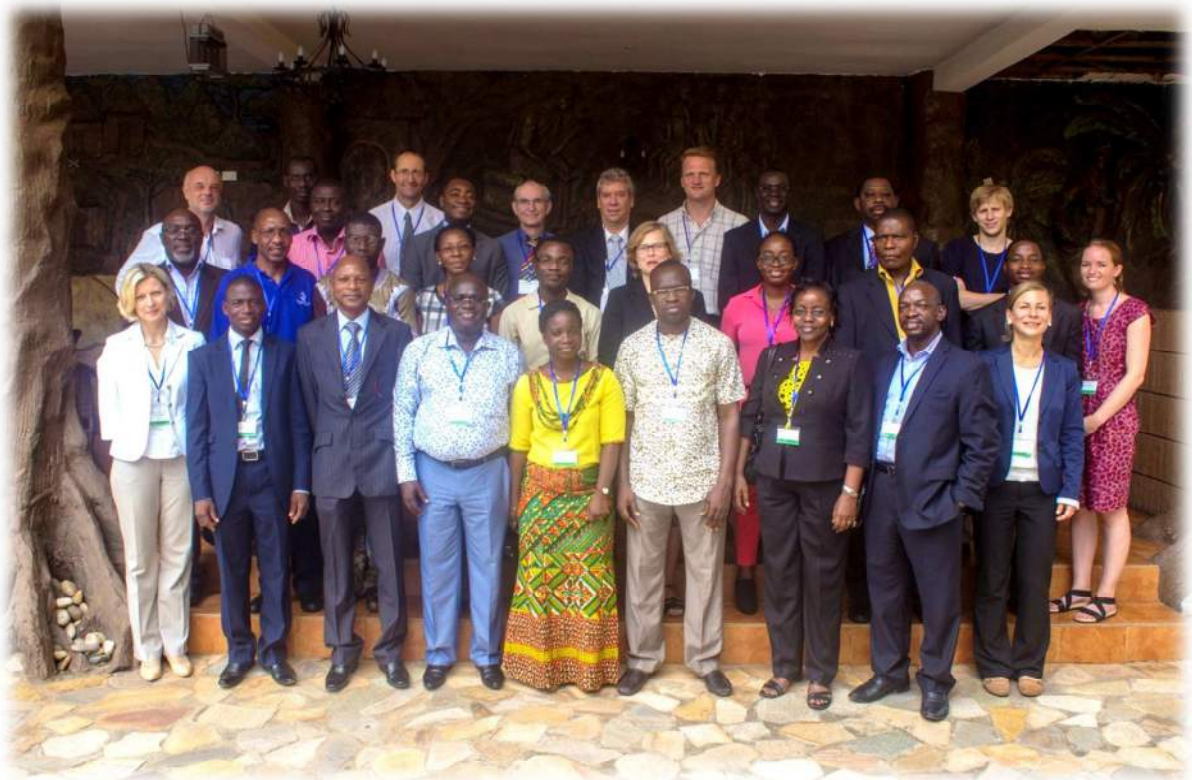
Agricultural Policy Learning Event

The African agricultural policy agenda in practice:
managing processes and improving advisory capacities

11th – 13th of June at Mensvic Hotel, Accra, Ghana



Report



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1 Introduction

The African Agriculture Policy Agenda in Practice: Managing processes and improving advisory capacities

A three-day learning event was held in Ghana, discussing agriculture policy, its impact on agriculture performance and the political economy surrounding African agricultural policy process. From 11 to 13 June 2014, just over thirty people met in Accra for an in-depth, intensive and participatory debate on the contemporary agricultural policy agenda in Africa, illustrated with country cases and participant experiences.

This event was a first of its kind, in the context of the GIZ-ODI collaboration on *Agriculture Development Policy: A contemporary Agenda* undertaken by the Bonn-based GIZ Sector Project Agricultural Policy and Food Security and the Ghana-based Market-oriented Agricultural Programme MOAP in collaboration with the SNRD Africa Working Group “Policy Processes in Agriculture and Rural Development” (PPARD).

The ODI background paper on *Agriculture Development Policy: A contemporary Agenda* ([link ODI paper](#)) provided the framework for this event, with expert contributions on Agricultural Policy (Steve Wiggins, ODI) and on the Political Economy of Agricultural Policy (Colin Poulton, SOAS) interspersed with country case studies presented by participants. Overall coordination was by Heike Hoeffler (GIZ). The event had two main aims:

1. Strengthening the agricultural policy (advisory) capacity of GIZ staff and of counterparts;
2. Informing the German-led work (by SNRD) on development-oriented Agricultural Policy.

About half of the participants were GIZ agricultural policy advisors (programme managers and technical advisers); the other half came from partner government institutions, the private sector or as representatives from regional organisations such as ECOWAS or the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU). The team from Ghana included staff from the Ministries of Finance and of Trade and Industries, as well as from the Ministry of Agriculture. Also represented were SNRD member programmes from Kenya, Togo and South Sudan, as well as the regional programmes African Cashew Initiative and the CAADP Support Programme. About a third of participants were francophone Africans (see Annex 9.2).

The programme (Annex 9.1) had three main components:

- **Agricultural Policy:** Dealing with the ‘technical’ dimension by looking at how policy has influenced performance; what are the basics of good agricultural policy and over which issues there continues to be debate and uncertainty;
- **The Political Economy of Agriculture Policy:** Dealing with the ‘political’ dimension of agriculture policy looking at what drives the policy process and the importance of ‘inclusive’ processes in the agriculture sector;
- A third component addressed the question: **What does this mean for Development Cooperation?** by asking participants to reflect on what is required of an agriculture policy advisor, but also by asking their views on the event itself, whether it should be repeated and in what form.

The technical and political dimensions of agricultural policy, were interspersed during the first two days, with Steve Wiggins responsible for agricultural policy and Colin Poulton for the political economy. Heike Hoeffler led the third component on day three. Country experience was presented by participants, both in plenary (Ghana, Lesotho, Togo) and during parallel Open Space sessions on (i) Managing country processes (South Sudan, Benin, Ghana) and (ii) Trade and Agri-business (Ghana, Kenya, Togo). In response to participants' expectations, it was decided to also include a presentation on the Malawi Input Subsidy programme, presented jointly by Wiggins and Poulton. Boaz Keizire and Ousmane Djibo also presented a feedback from the AU (Meeting of Agriculture Ministers) and CAADP (CAADP Results Framework). This ultimately resulted in a 'core-programme' of eight main content-blocks, interspersed with 10 country case studies and the AU & CAADP inputs.

The evaluation ([link to summary of evaluation](#)) of the event was overwhelmingly positive with a number of constructive hints on how to improve or modify the event in future. Generally, the final round of feedback revealed that in future, the topic should either be dealt with in a more focussed regional manner (e.g. in a francophone version for 2-3 programmes from one region) or even tailor-made for a country-specific application of the concepts presented; which would turn out more than coaching session than a generic learning event.

Participants agreed to continue to discuss the contemporary agricultural agenda in their respective countries; a process that will be happily followed up by the SNRD Working Group PPARD!

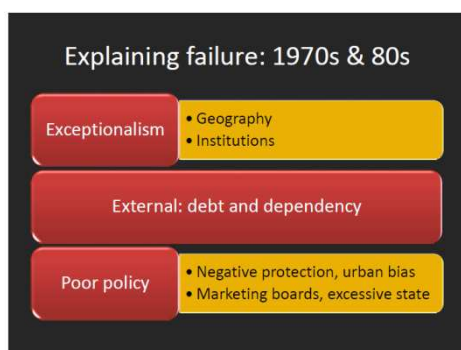


Thank you!!

2 Agricultural Policy

2.1 Setting the Scene by Steve Wiggins

A '**Setting the Scene**' presentation opened by giving a 130 year history of perspectives of agricultural development in Africa, followed by a detailed look at agriculture performance since 1990. This offered several encouraging eye-openers: Steve Wiggins took participants from the promising 1960s, through what he called 'the dreadful 70s' and the mistakes of the 80s, to the signs of hope since the 1990s and the growing optimism of the 2000s.



Poor agricultural policy was one underlying cause, resulting in an agricultural sector that, rather than being supported by public investment, was heavily taxed instead. Poor national policy combined with natural disasters (the Sahel drought) and global market trends (food price hikes) resulted in a series of crises.

But, Africa and the world have learned from these crises, and agriculture has picked up since the mid 80s. However, whereas some regions like Northern and Western Africa have seen growth rates on a par with Asia, growth rates in Central, Eastern and Southern Africa have only improved in recent years and even then only very modestly.



Thus, he concluded that although there is reason to be optimistic about the future of agriculture in Africa, there is plenty of scope for improvement, and much lessons to be learned within the continent itself (as opposed to always looking to Asia or answers).

2.2 Agricultural Policy: Issues of Consensus and Debate by Steve Wiggins

The presentation on ***Agricultural Policy: Issues of Consensus and Debate*** was based on the ODI-GIZ Paper *Agriculture Development Policy: A contemporary Agenda* as such offered the main conceptual framework for the learning event.

In line with that paper, Steve Wiggins divided agricultural policy into issues of consensus and issue of debate (or uncertainty). Issues of consensus can also be called the basics of good agricultural policy and consist mainly of two types: (i) creating a good (not necessarily perfect) rural investment climate and (ii) investing in rural public goods such as electrification and infrastructure.

He emphasised that these basic have to be tackled first, before governments can move to the more challenging stuff such as trying to correct rural market failure, for example through price control, input subsidies and the like. During lively discussions participants highlighted two challenges in trying to implement this kind of good policy practice: (i) governments find it difficult to prioritise and want to serve multiple agendas all at the same time and (ii) governments often skip over the basics (leaving much to be desired in rural investment climate) and go straight to challenges as fertiliser subsidy, import tariffs and price controls. One of the surprising findings was that Ghana had been among the top 6 countries in terms of agricultural growth, and that for the last 25 years! Especially the Ghana team, struggling with the challenges of managing the agricultural sector, was rather baffled by this finding.

Consensus on Agricultural Growth



Rural Investment Climate

- Doesn't have to be perfect! [Rodrik]



Rural Public Goods

- Roads, Power, Irrigation, etc.
- Education, Health, Water
- [Research & Extension](#)

Debates & Uncertainties

Rural transitions	Small & large farms	Failings in rural markets
Stabilising markets	Land policy	Competitiveness & value chains
Technology	Trade	Climate change
	Environmental sustainability	

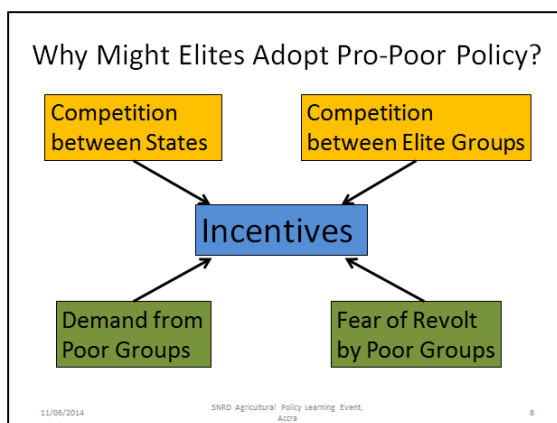
3 The Political Economy

3.1 The Political Economy of African Agriculture by Colin Pouton

After this foundation of what good policy should address, the component on ***the Political Economy of African Agriculture*** looked at which political forces determine the choice of economic policies.

This presentation by Colin Poulton convincingly explained how the political system and the incentives for state action produce (or do not produce) the policy outcomes that translate into performance. The description of the so-called vicious cycle whereby political power results in economic power, which in turn consolidates political power made it clear how difficult it is to break some of the undermining political undercurrents.

Examples, such as from Kenya, where the regionalization of politics since 2008 has undermined the national political incentive to invest in public goods, illustrated the political stronghold over agricultural policy.



Settlement 1: Kenya

- “Champions” gather votes from their regions
 - Often playing on fear of other groups (e.g. land)
- Rewarded with ministries as source of rents
- History of state intervention in agriculture
 - Each region has its commodity and state agency
 - Some local elites obtain substantial benefits
 - High inequality (within and across regions)
- Weak incentives to invest in national public goods
- Crisis 2008: have the rules changed?

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2.4 The Political Economy of African Agriculture by Colin Poulton

The second part under this component looked at ***the Policy Process*** and on how to make these processes more inclusive. Nevertheless, much as the insistence on an inclusive process is justified, Poulton warned that even this is just a means to an end: A study of PRSP policy processes had shown that the inclusive process had not really changed what was in the PRSP documents and that what was in the documents did not make much of a difference to what happened on the ground.

Instead he advised to make use of ‘coalitions for change’ and to look for ‘windows of opportunity’. Such windows for real change are difficult to predict, but open, for example, after a crisis or soon after an election.

Participants liked his suggestion to get as much done as possible between such windows, while at the same time to making sure to be ready for change (“have your coalition”) for such time as and when a window of opportunity opens.

“Inclusive” Policy Processes

- Requiring consultation with civil society and private sector groups during
 - Preparation of PRSPs, CAADP compacts *etc*
 - Joint sector reviews
- Often “token” so far
 - State “holds all the cards”
 - Invited late, not given full access to information, heard then ignored
- But possibly useful for gaining policy experience?
- Little or no leverage over policy makers!

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Windows of Opportunity

- Existing policies are often backed by interest groups
- Stable equilibrium (hard to change) until:
 - Crisis: old policy is not working!
 - Change of leadership, where this represents significant shift in power
- India GR, China 1979, Malawi FISP, Kenya SRA, 2008 food price crisis
- Backers of existing policy are (temporarily) on the defensive, although they will regroup
 - Be ready with arguments, evidence, proposals

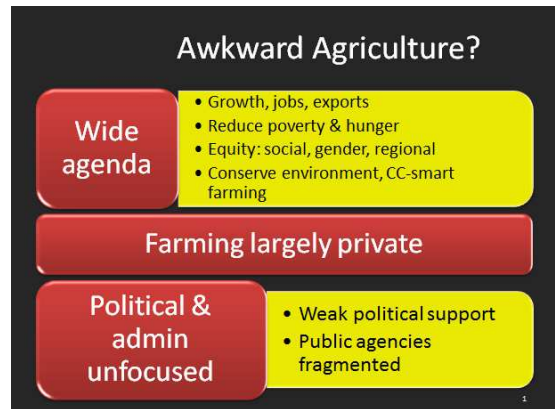
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Accra

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4 The Awkward Sector *by Steve Wiggins*

The Awkward Sector looked at the fragmentation of the agricultural sector. The different objectives that the sector policy has to serve (from a growth to a social agenda), the many actors involved (beyond the ministry of Agriculture and outside the government) and added to this, not only a complicated, but steadily shifting institutional landscape with components such as livestock, fisheries, cooperatives, rural development, often changing from one ministry to the next or from ministerial to sub-ministerial levels.



This situation made Wiggins wonder if there weren't too many challenges in the sector. Interestingly, findings by the group work under this session pointed predominantly to the fragmentation between countries' and donors' agendas as the key challenge in the sector. There appeared to be two reasons for this, so keenly felt, fragmentation: (i) donors may align to policy priorities, but their continued insistence on using their own systems and procedures means that donor coordination is still often next to impossible; and (ii) the fact that so many government budgets are nearly completely spent on recurrent costs, such as salaries, means that what actually happens on the ground in agriculture is funded with by donors, and where this investment is donor funded, it also risks to be donor driven, thus emphasizing any donor-government conflict of interest.

5 Rural Transformation *by Steve Wiggins*

The final presentation under the Agriculture Policy component discussed **Rural Transition and Transformation** and the different scenarios between the extremes of a brutal transition away from smallholder farming (as in England’s history) and a more benign transition of rural livelihoods (as happened in France).

Steve Wiggins divided the rural smallholder population broadly into three groups: (i) Those with assets and the potential for commercial production; (ii) those whose farms and assets tie them to a subsistence level of production and (iii) those who are barely scraping by. For policy purposes, he sketched a feasible scenario for these three groups as follows: (i) stepping up (commercial potential); (ii) stepping out (towards a rural non-farm existence) and (iii) hanging in (for the current generation of those scraping by).



Accepting this diversification allows a more informed decision about policy choices, with respect to which policies would work and for whom. An important statement here is that the ‘basics’ (i.e. a favorable rural investment climate and rural public goods) benefit each of these groups across the board. The correction of market failure may help those stepping up their production, while those hanging in or stepping out might not be able to reap the benefits of such a policy. Capital transfers have no benefit for those stepping up, and only questionable benefits for the rest. Social protection may be needed for those hanging in, whereas it has little use for the rest.

Who needs what?

	A: Step Up	B: Step Up	C: Step Out	Chronic Poor: Hang In
Rural Investment Climate				
Rural Public Goods				
Correct Market Failures	Private Sector Approach		??	??
	Institutions, Collectives or State?			
Transfer Capital	X	X	??	??
Social Protection	X		??	

Participants appreciated this more qualified view on policy choices taking in the realities of (various degrees of) ongoing transitions in rural economies everywhere.

6 Malawi Fertilizer Subsidy Programme by Steve Wiggins & Colin Poulton

The presentation on the **Malawi Fertilizer Subsidy** brought both the agriculture policy and the political economy components together in a seamless narrative about political incentive leading to policy choices, and their effect on agricultural performance.

An interesting finding here was that although the fertilizer subsidy did lead to an initial peak in productivity, this effect tapered off as distribution of fertilizer became less broad-based and less transparent. This should be taken into account together with an acknowledgement of the enormous pressure on the national agriculture budget caused by the fertilizer subsidy and the lack of an exit strategy.

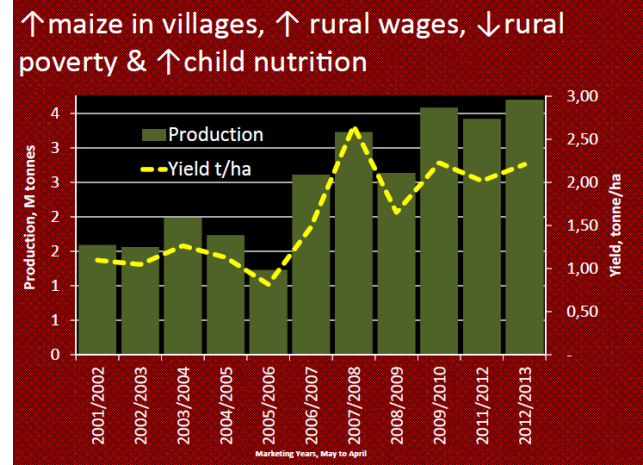
However, Wiggins noted that special allowances must be made for Malawi as a landlocked country where a high percentage of smallholder producers is unlikely to ever be able to acquire fertilizer at free market prices.

Programme

- Not universal or unlimited:
 - Targeted SF
 - 2 bags fert + 1 bag seed; 28% cost

2006/07: 3M Fert + 2M Seed vouchers

2008/09: 1.5M households, 2/3rds of all SF

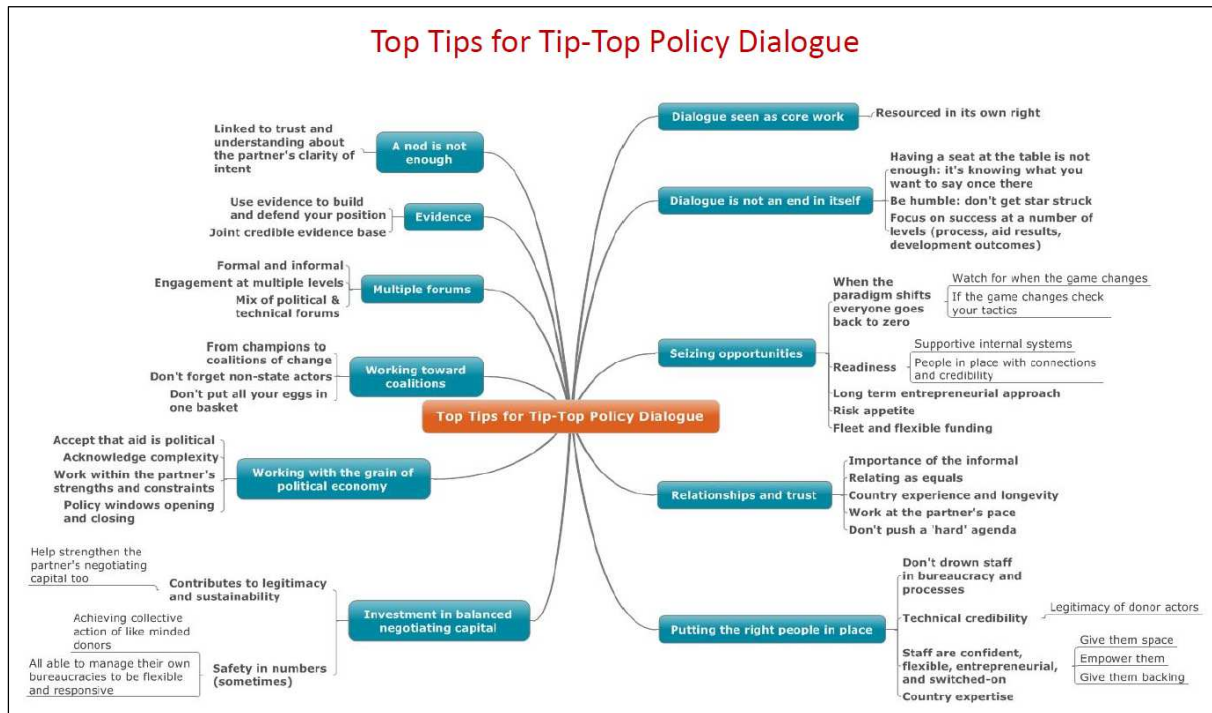



7 What does this mean for Development Cooperation by Heike Hoeffler

The final day tried to gauge **What does this mean for Development Cooperation?** Heike Hoeffler presented a framework for the required skills of an 'ideal' Agricultural Policy Advisor divided into three broad pillars of Technical, Political and Process skills, underpinned by general skills such as being able to listen, be moderate and no 'know it all'.

The Capacity Agenda for Contemporary Agricultural Policy		
General Advisory Skills		
Technical Capacities	Process Management	Political Understanding
1. Rural Development, Transformation and Poverty Trends	1. New Aid Architecture / Harmonisation and Alignment	1. Political System, Budgeting, Decision Making Procedures
2. Basic Economics	2. Planning in Complex and Dynamic Systems	2. Political Economy of the Agricultural Sector
3. Agricultural Economics: Markets, Marketing and Failures	3. Multi-Stakeholder Policy Dialogues	3. New Public Management / Public Choice
4. Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change	4. Public-Private Partnership Moderation	4. Political Instinct

She also distributed Top Tips for policy dialogue (Bazeley et al. 2013: "Thinking and Working Politically" Evaluation for AusAID, Canberra) and asked participants to reflect on this as well as on the framework of skills (which is also the last chapter in the ODI background paper).



This gave rise to a very lively discussion: The perspective of those on the receiving end of advisory services was that, although technical skills make a person seem more knowledgeable in the topic, these tend to also be the skills that trained professionals in the host country are most likely to have and therefore are least likely to need support with. Counterpart staff would be happier if advisors could bring process and political skills to the table, as these are crucial areas where available (domestic) skills tend to fall short.

8 Conclusion and Evaluation

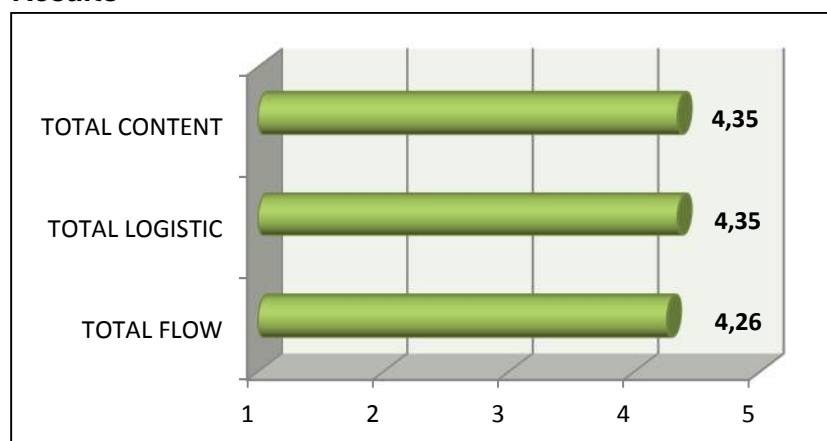
With respect to the learning event itself, participants offered their view during discussions in plenary, a ranking along a sliding scale (done anonymously) and their feedback in evaluation forms. All in all the following can be concluded:

- The event was highly appreciated; participants made a lot of new insights and gained a conceptual framework for agriculture policy and politics;
- But, participants did not find it easy to translate these insights, ideas and inspirations to their day-to-day work;
- Nevertheless, they would recommend this learning event to colleagues and participants from francophone Africa advocated for a French version of this event.

Overall there were 28 participants from 12 different countries of work and of 12 different nationalities. The written evaluation forms state that participants were very happy with the general content, logistics and flow of the event:

☺☺ = 5 very much	☺ = 4 much	☺ = 3 more or less	☹ = 2 little	☹☹ = 1 very little
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Results



The final wrap-up meeting between organisers and facilitators of the event concluded with different proposals for a future role and format of such events along the following lines:

- **An event at regional level** (such as this one), which offers participants an overarching conceptual framework illustrated by country examples, but not tailored to a specific country situation. Participants to such regional events would need to have a robust understanding of the policy process in their country to be able to adapt the various concepts and theories to their particular situation.
- **An event at country-level**, with a focus on an in-depth discussion of existing policy bottlenecks with country (state and non-state) stakeholders. Such events would have a coaching or a ‘troubleshoot’ character, aimed at assisting people with their day-to-day work. For facilitators to fulfil this coaching role, they would need to become familiar with ongoing concerns prior to the event, either through correspondence and a close reading of documents; through in-country interviews, or a combination of both.

9 Annexes

9.1 Programme



Programme

Agriculture Policy Learning Event

The African Agriculture Policy Agenda in Practice:

**Managing processes and
improving advisory capacities**

Accra, Ghana, 11 to 13 June 2014

Wednesday 11 June 2014		
<i>Understanding & Analysing Agricultural Policy</i>		
08:30 – 09:00	Registration	
09:00	Welcome and opening remarks by MOAP Ghana	M. Fynn, P. Schuetz
09:15	Introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Objective of the Agricultural Policy Learning Event - Round of Introduction 	Heike Hoeffler & Desiree Dietvorst
10:00	Setting the Scene <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brief history of views of agricultural development in Africa - Agriculture performance in Africa since 1990 - Discussion 	Steve Wiggins
11:00 – 11:30	Tea / Coffee	
11:30	Presentation of learning event programme: What is on offer? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agriculture policy: A contemporary agenda - The political economy of agriculture policy in Africa 	Desiree Dietvorst Steve Wiggins Colin Poulton
12:15	Participants' interests and expectations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the particular challenges are you dealing with? - How do you expect this event will support you in your work? 	Round table discussion
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00	Agriculture Policy: Issues of consensus and debate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agriculture development debates: A case of high demands and expectations? - The basics, or issues of widespread agreement - The complication, or issues of (heated) debate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overcoming market failure: the big challenge Enabling rural investment and rural public goods Questions & Comments Reflection: issues of debate and uncertainty in our countries	Steve Wiggins Plenary Round tables
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break	
16:00	Political Economy of African agricultural policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ideas and inspirations - Incentives and drivers of agricultural policy change - The influence of democratisation on policy making Questions & Comments	Colin Poulton Plenary
17:00	Discussion: Policy aspirations and state capacity	Round tables
17:30	End of day 1	
19:00	Dinner at the Mensvic Grand Hotel Terrace	

Thursday 12 June 2014

Managing Agricultural Policy

09:00	Recap of day one – Introduction to day two	Desiree Dietvorst
09:15	Outcome of the AU Ministers of Agriculture Summit	Boaz Keizire
09:40	Sustaining the CAADP Momentum: Insights from the NPCA	Ousmane Djibo
10:00	Discussion: African Responses to Policy Challenges	Plenary
10:30 – 11:00	Tea / Coffee	
11:00	Political Economy: The policy process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From agriculture policy to agriculture performance - Finding and using ‘room for manoeuvre’ to influence agriculture policy processes Questions & Comments	Colin Poulton
11:45	Case Study: Lobbying by Regional Farmer Organisation	Mohlalefi Moteane
12:00	Agriculture: the “awkward and fragmented” sector: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple goals, multiple players, multiple strategies, programmes, projects and donors 	Steve Wiggins Colin Poulton
12:15	Country Cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghana • Togo 	Mark Fynn Pascal Ndimira
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00	Discussion: How to deal with “awkwardness” in our countries?	Round Tables
14:30	Opinions & Statements: Reasons to be cheerful!	Steve Wiggins Colin Poulton
15:15 – 15:45	Coffee break	
15:45	Rural transformation and its implication for agricultural policies Questions & Comments	Steve Wiggins Plenary
16:30	Rural transformation in our countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scenarios for smallholder farming in the next generation What policies do we need to avoid the dangers of brutal transition, to seize opportunities for gentle transition and to produce the best outcomes for your transition?	Country Group Work
17:00	End of day 2	
19:00	optional: joint public viewing of FIFA World Cup Opening Match at Afrikiko	

Friday 13 June 2014		
<i>Advising Agricultural Policy Processes</i>		
09:00	Recap of day two – introduction to day three	Desiree Dietvorst
09:15	Experiences with Input Subsidy Programmes	Steve Wiggins & Colin Poulton
10:00	What does this mean for Development Cooperation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the roles, opportunities and challenges for donor engagement in agricultural policy reform processes? 	Heike Hoeffler Group Discussion Plenary
11:00 – 11:30	Tea / Coffee	
11:30	Open Space for 2 parallel Sessions:	
	Open Space 1: Managing Agricultural Policies at National Level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Case of South Sudan - The Case of Benin - Experiences from Ghana 	E, Minari / K. Schuster Soule Manigui P. Schuetz
	Open Space 2: Agribusiness and Public-Private Dialogue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trade Rules and Agricultural Policy - The Case of Togolese Grain Markets - The Case of Kenyan Fisheries Policy 	F. Zegowitz K. Dessah S. Imende
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00	Agricultural Policy Advisory Service for the Future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What capacities are needed to plan policies, to implement instruments and to monitor progress? - What next within and beyond this Agricultural Policy Learning Event? - Round of Feedback & Evaluation 	Heike Hoeffler Desiree Dietvorst
15:15	Closing Remarks	Paul Schuetz
15:30	Coffee break	
	End of Learning Event	

9.2 Participants List

No.	Title	Name	Surname	Institution	Job Title	Country of Work	Nationality	Email contact
1	Mrs.	Heike	Hoeffler	GIZ Sector Project Agricultural Policy and Food Security	Advisor	Germany	German	heike.hoeffler@giz.de
2	Mr.	Fabian	Zegowitz	GIZ / Sector Project Agricultural Trade and Private Sector Cooperation in Rural Areas	Advisor	Germany	German	fabian.zegowitz@giz.de
3	Mr.	Kolade Arnaud Benjamin	Kouazoude	National Federation of Cashew Producers in Benin	Permanent Secretary	Benin	Beninese	kouazz11@yahoo.fr
4	Mr.	Soulé Abdoulaye	Manigui	African Cashew Initiative	Head of Information Unit	Ghana	Beninese	soule.manigui@giz.de
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10	Mr.	Emmanuel	Minari	JIICA	Consultant	South Sudan	South Sudanese	emmanuel.minari@gmail.com
11	Mr.	Ousmane	Djibo	GIZ CAADP Support Programme	Programme Coordinator	South Africa	Burkina Faso	ousmane.djibo@giz.de
12	Mr.	Boaz Blackie	Keizire	African Union Commission - Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program	CAADP Technical Advisor	Ethiopia	Ugandan	boaz.keizire@giz.de

No.	Title	Name	Surname	Institution	Job Title	Country of Work	Nationality	Email contact
13	Mr.	Ernest Patrick	Mallet	CAADP ATVET	Project Manager	Ghana	Ghanaian	ernest.mallet@giz.de
14	Mr.	Wouro Aurélien	Tchemi Tchambi	ECOWAS Commission	ECOWAP/CAADP Advisor	Nigeria	Togolese	wtchemi@yahoo.com
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27	Mrs.	Patricia	Boateng-Bannor	Ministry of Trade and Industries		Ghana	Ghanaian	
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