



# ASK THE EXPERT ON STRENGTHENING NATIONAL POLICY SYSTEMS: BRIDGING THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN THE EVIDENCE AND ACTION FOR FOOD SECURITY

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CHAT TRANSCRIPT

JUNE 25, 2018

## PRESENTERS

Suresh Babu, International Food Policy Research Institute

Duncan Boughton, Michigan State University

## MODERATOR

Julie MacCartee, USAID Bureau for Food Security

## FACILITATOR

April Thompson, USAID Knowledge Driven Agricultural Development

Charlin Caster: Good morning, everyone!

Charlin Caster: And good evening to some of you as well!

Patty Hill: Good morning!

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Welcome Patty!

Wegayehu Fitawek 2: Good morning

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Hi Wegayehu

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Everyone, as you're joining, please feel free to introduce yourself and say where you're joining from.

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: I'm Charlin joining from Washington DC

Wegayehu Fitawek 2: I am Wegayehu from South Africa

Patty Hill: I'm a MEL specialist from the Washington DC area

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Great to have you both!

JANETH NGILANGWA: I'm Janeth joining from Tanzania

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Hi Janeth!

April Thompson - Agrilinks: Good morning everyone, and welcome to today's Ask the Expert. We'll get started in 15 minutes, but please introduce yourself in the meantime!

April Thompson - Agrilinks: Or afternoon or evening, depending on where you are dialing in from! Let us know where you are based, and your organization.

April Thompson - Agrilinks: We'll go ahead and move to some opening polls.

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Thanks everyone for joining and for answering the polls! Please continue to introduce yourself and let everyone know where you're joining from and your organization!

Wegayehu Fitawek 2: I am a PhD student in University of Pretoria, South Africa

Julie MacCartee (USAID/BFS): Hi everyone! Julie from BFS and Agrilinks here. I'm excited to participate in another one of these 30-minute ask-the-experts

Tom Shaw: Hello everyone - Tom Shaw, CRS, based in Baltimore

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Welcome Tom!

Duncan Boughton: Duncan Boughton, Michigan State University, based in Myanmar

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: good evening, Duncan!

Dick Tinsley: Dick Tinsley from Colorado

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Hi Dick, good to see you!

Dick Tinsley: Julie did you ever get any reply form the material i sent you and you forwarded to Jim

Dick Tinsley: can we get a audio check

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Everyone, we're getting started soon! If you haven't already, please introduce yourself and let everyone know where you're joining from and your organization. Thank you

Julie MacCartee (USAID/BFS): I can hear you well, April!

Duncan Boughton: Hear you clearly in Myanmar

Dick Tinsley: that was loud and clear

Patty Hill: yes, thanks

Wegayehu Fitawek 2: Yes, i can hear you

Duncan Boughton: Hi Dick - we havent met but i appreciated your contributions on the green revolution agrilinks event!

Eric Crawford 2: Eric Crawford, from Michigan State Univ

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Hi Eric, welcome to the Ask the Expert event!

Michael CheKim: Michael CheKim, Washington DC, U.S. Department of State

Duncan Boughton: We can just ask Eric to field any questions we cant answer!!

Julie MacCartee (USAID/BFS): All, please feel fre to post questions here at any time. We have a lot of questions to get through in only 30 minutes, but will follow up with a blog post covering some of the ones we couldn't answer today

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Thanks Michael, welcome!

Eric Crawford 2: I'm not hearing any sound

Eric Crawford 2: OK, fine now.

Lillian Odhiambo: Lillian Odhiambo Karanja - ENN Knowledge Management based in East Africa

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Hi all, as you join, please introduce yourself in the chat and say where you're joining from, location and organization. Thanks

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Hi Lillian, glad to have you join us

Duncan Boughton: Thank you - pleased to be here

Diana McLean: Hello all, this is Diana from the Cornucopia Group, Canada,.

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Hi Diana, welcome

Ron Greenberg: Hello, This is Ron Greenberg, QSL Development Solutions

George Njuguna: Hi All, this is George Njuguna AECF East Africa

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Hi George!

Chris Shepherd-Pratt: Chris joining from Washington DC. Sorry I'm a bit late.

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Please continue to post your questions here. We'll try to get to as many as possible!

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Thanks Chris, and that's okay. Luckily, a transcript will be available as well as a recording of the webinar

Duncan Boughton: Great point - connecting with the policy maker at the beginning of the process...

Maria Cartagena: Maria Cartagena, from Guayaquil, Ecuador

Mary ALLEN: Hi I'm Mary joining from Mali. The connection here is too slow for me to follow the discussions.

Julie MacCartee (USAID/BFS): Hi Mary - we're sorry about that! Good for us to know. This is being recorded and the recording and transcript will be emailed to you

Dick Tinsley: my concern with policy and the information going into policy is the basic economic environment that is the common feature of developing countries, which i describe a financially suppressed. this results in virtually not tax base on which to provide services. thus the governments ae financially stalled and civil servants are more looking at informal supplemental income than good governances. Please review the following webpages: <http://smallholderagriculture.agsci.colostate.edu/financially-suppressed-economy-2/> ; <http://smallholderagriculture.agsci.colostate.edu/financially-stalled-governments/> ; <http://smallholderagriculture.agsci.colostate.edu/informal-income-opportunities-seed-fertilizer-voucher-program-of-afghanistan/> ; <http://smallholderagriculture.agsci.colostate.edu/impact-of-financially-stalled-government-limited-variety-improvement-seed-certification/>

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Welcome, Mary

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Welcome Maria!

Chris Shepherd-Pratt: What are one or two of the most common misconceptions about getting countries to adopt and implement evidence-based policy, or 'mistakes' that stakeholders make in advocating for evidence-based policy change? What has surprised you about the research you've undertaken in this space?

Dick Tinsley: when you talk about capacity are you thinking technical capacity, administrative capacity or financial capacity.

Duncan Boughton: Hih Chris - a common perception is that policy makers will "buy in" to our conceptual frameworks and best practices. We need to start from where they are not where we are. We need to understand their policy beliefs and work from there.

Carlos A. Zelaya: Carlos A. Zelaya CRS Honduras

Duncan Boughton: Hi Dick - all the dimensions of capacity building are relevant. We tend to focus on human capacity, but organizational constraints and administrative constraints are often more binding, especially at the policy implementation stage

Matar Gaye: Government authorities tend to reject research-generated evidences that can be interpreted as indicators of their own failure. How could we deal with such a problem?

Dick Tinsley: but the lack of a tax base and finances trumps the whole process

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Welcome, Carlos

Destan Aytekin: Hi, since I was late to join, I have not introduced myself: Destan Aytekin from IFPRI, DC.

Duncan Boughton: Hi Dick - yes the tax base issue is very relevant - we see examples of this in Local Government Taxes in Tanzania (Dave TSchirley is on the line and can send you a link) but progress can be made while the tax base issue is being addressed. Always multiple constraints to be overcome and thanks for raising the point

Elisabeth Paymal Kushigian: HI Its Elisabeth Paymal with FSP: here is the article on the Tanzania cess reform

Elisabeth Paymal Kushigian:

[http://foodsecuritypolicy.msu.edu/resources/agricultural\\_produce\\_cess\\_in\\_tanzania\\_policy\\_options\\_for\\_fiscal\\_reforms](http://foodsecuritypolicy.msu.edu/resources/agricultural_produce_cess_in_tanzania_policy_options_for_fiscal_reforms)

Dick Tinsley: thanks for the link

Biniam Iyob: Two questions: a) what are your suggestions to enforce the implementation of existing policies and related metrics of success? Any specific examples?; b) In your experience, what kind of policies (if you have specific examples that would be great) are best approached at the local level versus at the national level?

Duncan Boughton: Hi Matar - excellent point. My approach in Myanmar is to always tell officials how well they are doing under the constraints they face. And its true!! There are amazing reformers among government officials and the role of outsiders like myself is to encourage them, to ask "how can we support you" rather than "here's what you need to do to shape up" !

Duncan Boughton: Hi Biniam - great question!! There needs to be accountability from all stakeholders in the implementation process (which is why buy in is so important) and that requires a SPECIFIC set of milestones and metrics for the objectives of the policy and the critical steps in implementation. Implementation is the hardest part and it requires context specific metrics (informed by other country / region experiences)

Matar Gaye: Thanks Dun. Great to read from you!

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Thanks for answering the polls, everyone

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: We appreciate your feedback

George Njuguna: Quick questions; what are some of the challenges of implementing policies in fragile countries like South Sudan that are a deterrent to investments in agribusiness food

Duncan Boughton: Hi George - tune in to Jeff Hill's upcoming Agrilinks seminar!!

Biniam Iyob: Thanks, Duncan and Suresh!

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Thanks for answering questions about your takeaways and providing feedback. Please continue to post!

Chris Shepherd-Pratt: Thank you, everyone and particularly Suresh and April. This was outstanding!

Tom Shaw: Thanks Suresh and Duncan - very interesting.

Chris Shepherd-Pratt: Thank you also, Duncan! Cheers

Duncan Boughton: Suresh and I are both happy to follow up on your great questions today!

Elisabeth Paymal Kushigian: Thanks Agrilinks for organizing this informative event and thanks Duncan and Suresh for these great insights on the policy process!

Carlos A. Zelaya: Thanks

Wegayehu Fitawek 2: thanks Agrilinks

Duncan Boughton: Thanks team Agrilinks - better than the World Cup!!

Biniam Iyob: Thank you, April and All.

Charlin Caster - Agrilinks: Thanks for attending everyone!

Julie MacCartee (USAID/BFS): Thanks for joining! Keep your eye out for the transcript and recording in your inbox!

Mywish Maredia: Thanks to the organizer and presenters for a great Q&A session.