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INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE FOR FOOD SECURITY POLICY CHANGE: CROSS-COUNTRY STUDY

MARCH 2015

This report was produced for the United States Agency for International Development by the USAID/Enabling Agricultural Trade (EAT) project, implemented by Fintrac Inc.

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ABOUT THE ENABLING AGRICULTURAL TRADE (EAT) PROJECT

The Enabling Agricultural Trade (EAT) project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and implemented by Fintrac Inc., supports the US government's global efforts to create conditions for agricultural growth. USAID established EAT based on substantial academic and field experience suggesting that a sound legal, regulatory, and institutional environment is a prerequisite to economic growth in the agricultural sector. EAT offers a suite of targeted and customizable analytical tools to support the startup and growth of businesses across the agricultural sector.

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CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

BFS	Bureau for Food Security
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program
CARD	Council on Agriculture and Rural Development
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DP	Development Partners
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FPMC	Food Policy Monitoring Committee (Bangladesh)
FPMU	Food Policy Monitoring Unit (Bangladesh)
FPWG	Food Policy Working Group (Bangladesh)
FSP	Food Security Policy
GDCC	Government-Development Partner Coordination Committee (Cambodia)
HARVEST	Helping Address Rural Vulnerabilities and Ecosystem Stability
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
LCG	Local Consultative Group
MAFAP	Monitoring and Analyzing Food and Agriculture Policies
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
RESAKSS	Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System
SAKSS	Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System
TWG	Technical Working Group (Cambodia)
TWGAW	Technical Working Group Agriculture and Water (Cambodia)
TWG-SP&FSN	Technical Working Group on Social Protection, Food Security and Nutrition
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Institutional Architecture diagnostic provides a framework for analyzing a country's capacity to undertake food security policy change. The goal is to provide USAID, local policymakers, and other key stakeholders with information on possible constraints that could stymie effective policy change and highlight areas to improve the capacity and performance of the policy change process. Institutional Architecture assessments examine six components of the policy making process: the Guiding Policy Framework, Policy Development and Coordination, Inclusivity and Stakeholder Consultation, Evidence-based Analysis, Policy Implementation, and Mutual Accountability.

A set of indicators determines the capacity and effectiveness of the overall policy change process and thus informs the analysis of each policy component. (Annex 1 contains the full list of indicators.) To highlight the level of attention required to improve the effectiveness of the component, a three-tier color-coded rating system assesses each indicator. A green (strong) rating means the component is operating effectively, and additional attention is not required. A yellow (average) rating signals partial achievement of conditions needed for the purpose underlying the component and additional attention is required. A red (weak) rating means that significant attention is needed to ensure the component is achieved.

In a partnership between USAID's Enabling Agricultural Trade (EAT) and Africa Lead projects, 16 Institutional Architecture country assessments were conducted between January 2013 and January 2015. Field interviews in each of these countries occurred with key stakeholders involved in agriculture and food security policy reform, including government officials, development partners, civil society organizations, private companies and agribusiness associations, and research institutions. Across these studies, a number of common constraints to effective policy development were identified. This study highlights these common constraints and their root causes, and provides some best practice examples from countries that have effectively improved their policy reform processes. More generally, this study touches upon the strengths and weaknesses of the Institutional Architecture methodology and proposes a number of follow-on activities to ensure sustained stakeholder dialogue on key findings and to improve future Institutional Architecture assessments.

KEY FINDINGS

A cross-sectoral policy coordination mechanism is vital to effective policy reform, but such a mechanism requires sufficient political power to wield enforcement power over line ministries.

While every country maintains an approved, multi-sector food security strategy, the indicator on alignment of food security policy priorities with the work plans of line ministries showed poor progress in translating this coordination on paper into coordination in action. In this indicator, only 19 percent of countries scored strong, while 56 percent scored average and 25 percent scored weak. Unsurprisingly, countries without any inter-ministerial coordination committees scored the weakest. In countries with coordination committees, effectiveness largely depended on the degree of political power and financial resources given to these mechanisms. In Guatemala, for example, despite the existence of a well-developed mechanism for inter-ministerial coordination, lack of authority or budget for implementation resulted in the absence of any enforcement power over ministries.

The absence of administrative and technical capacity for policy implementation is the greatest constraint to policy reform.

The absence of administrative and technical capacity to implement policy change posed a challenge in every country studied. Seventy-five percent of countries scored weak, 25 percent scored average, and no country scored strong – the worst scores of any indicator. The issues most commonly shared included insufficient numbers of staff, poor staff retention, inadequate training in basic project management, and lack of resources. In Ethiopia, for example, the capacity of staff to undertake budgetary planning and process management was found to be a serious constraint to policy implementation. In Cambodia, the technical departments that are the key implementers of agriculture and food security projects were found to lack basic training in project management, budgetary management, and performance monitoring. Similar statements were made in nearly every country assessment.

Both the private sector and civil society require considerable capacity building support to meaningfully engage in policy advocacy.

Beyond governments having the openness to include stakeholders in the policy development process, these stakeholders need to be able to collect and organize the viewpoints of their constituents, develop an informed policy position, and effectively communicate this position. This assessment found considerable capacity gaps across both the private sector and civil society, with only 19 percent of countries scoring strong for private sector capacity and 6 percent scoring strong for civil sector capacity. In Zambia, for example, private agribusinesses noted that agricultural associations lack sufficient financial and human resources to effectively articulate policy stances or provide evidence-based research to propose constructive solutions.

Despite a growing political commitment by governments to evidence-based analysis, country assessments show that the practice of evidence-based policymaking remains limited.

For the indicator showing the usage of evidence-based analysis to develop policy priorities/proposals, 31 percent of countries scored weak and 69 percent scored average. This indicator is one of only three across all policy elements in which no country scored strong. As an example, in Tanzania, lack of quality data, together with limited independent analytical capacity, has led to inconsistent policy development based on broad economic data rather than informed analysis. For instance, the food export ban and the tariff on rice imports caused extreme policy shifts that did not allow markets the opportunity to adjust gradually in a way that would have been possible with a partial, percentage reduction.

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The path and trajectory of policy change is a complex, non-linear process that is unique to a particular country. While no two countries share precisely the same process, effective policy changes can and do share similar features: policymaking that is predictable, transparent, inclusive, and evidence-based. Feed the Future countries share a common concern and commitment to establishing an enabling environment for the implementation of national agricultural investment plans. In support of this goal and recognizing the critical importance of the quality of the policy change process, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Food Security (BFS)[1] has emphasized the need for an understanding of the Institutional Architecture for Food Security Policy Change.[2]

The Institutional Architecture diagnostic provides a framework for analyzing a country's capacity to undertake food security policy change by identifying implementation barriers, designing policy options, and coordinating actions across public and private institutions. Institutional Architecture assessments examine six components of the policy making process:

- Policy Element 1: Guiding Policy Framework
- Policy Element 2: Policy Development and Coordination
- Policy Element 3: Inclusivity and Stakeholder Consultation
- Policy Element 4: Evidence-based Analysis
- Policy Element 5: Policy Implementation
- Policy Element 6: Mutual Accountability

This Institutional Architecture Cross Country Study was written by David Quinn, Industry Adviser, Fintrac Inc.

Institutional Architecture assessments aim to provide USAID, local policymakers, and other key stakeholders with information on possible constraints that could stymie effective policy change and highlight areas to improve the capacity and performance of the policy change process. The reports are rapid assessments meant to clear the underbrush to determine where individual countries are most likely to need support to improve the policy process for agriculture and food security.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

In a partnership between USAID's Enabling Agricultural Trade (EAT)[3] and Africa Lead[4] projects, 16 country assessments[5] were conducted between January 2013 and January 2015. In each of these countries, one to two weeks of field interviews were conducted with key stakeholders involved in agriculture and food security policy reform, including government officials, development partners, civil society organizations, private companies and agribusiness associations, and research institutions. Across these studies, a number of common constraints to effective policy development were identified.[6] This study highlights these common constraints and their root causes, as well as pointing to a number of best practice examples of countries that have been able to effectively improve their policy reform processes.

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[1] Feed the Future defines food security as "when all people at all times have access to safe and sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life. There are four main components: availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability of food." USAID, 2014, Feed the Future Progress Report.

[2] Institutional architecture is the set of partner-country procedures and processes for policy development; data collection and analysis; consultation and dialogue; implementation; and enforcement.

[3] http://eatproject.org.

[4] http://africaleadftf.org.

[5] An additional Institutional Architecture assessment was conducted in the East African Community but is not included in this cross-country comparison study.

[6] Support in writing this study was provided by the Africa Lead project, implemented by DAI.

This study consists of three parts:

Part I: Cross Country Analysis of Policy Change Indicators

The first part involves a cross-country analysis of a country's capacity to undertake policy change. Each of the policy components is analyzed through a set of indicators that determine the capacity and effectiveness of the overall policy change process (the full list of indicators is contained in Annex 1). Each indicator is assessed using a three-tier rating system, which highlights the level of attention needed to improve the effectiveness of the component. A green (strong) rating means the component is operating effectively, and additional attention is not required. A yellow (average) rating signals partial achievement of conditions needed for the purpose underlying the component and additional attention is required. A red (weak) rating means that significant attention is needed to ensure the component is achieved. The cross-country analysis of the indicators is accompanied with a narrative describing key gaps and constraints to the policy change process.

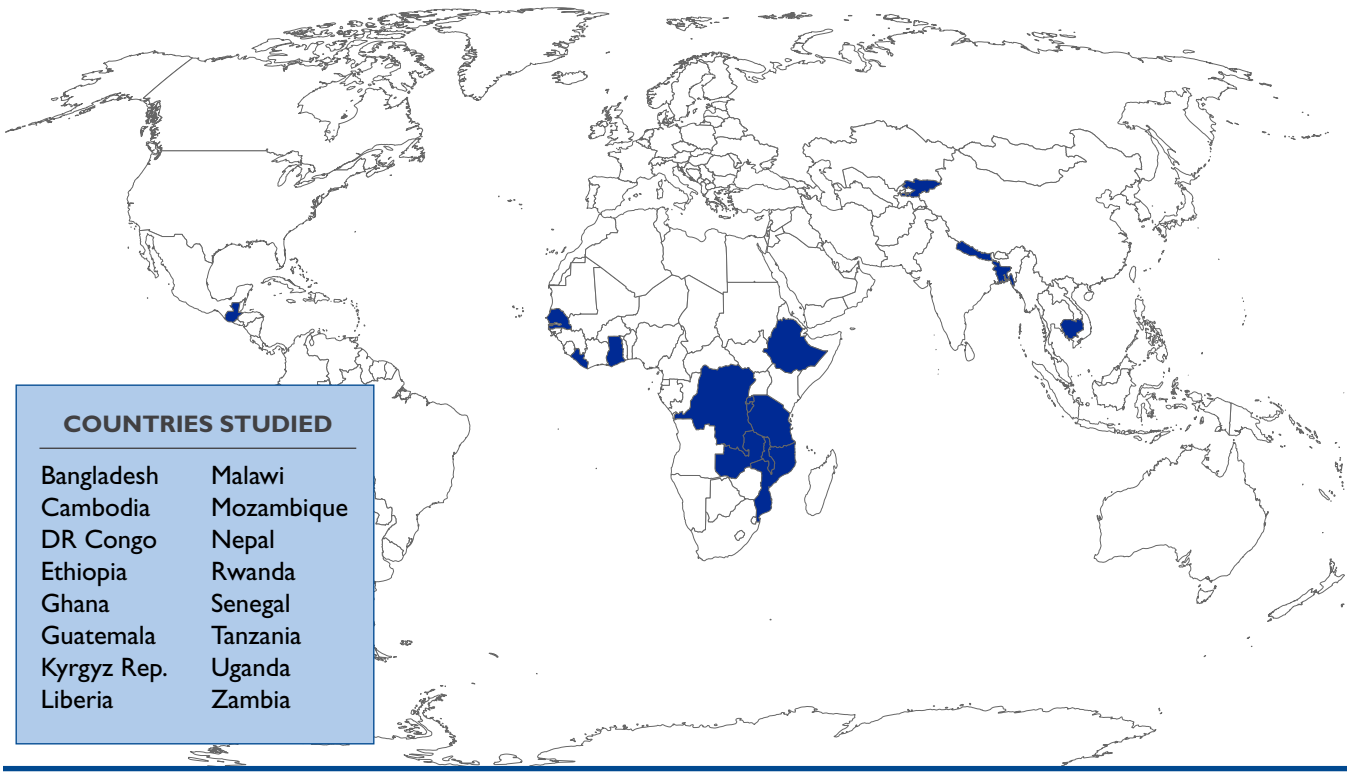
Part II: Analysis of the Methodology

The second part of this study outlines the lessons learned during the country assessment process and highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the Institutional Architecture methodology.

Part III: Next Steps

The final part of this study proposes a number of follow-on activities to ensure sustained stakeholder dialogue on key findings and future iterations of Institutional Architecture assessments.

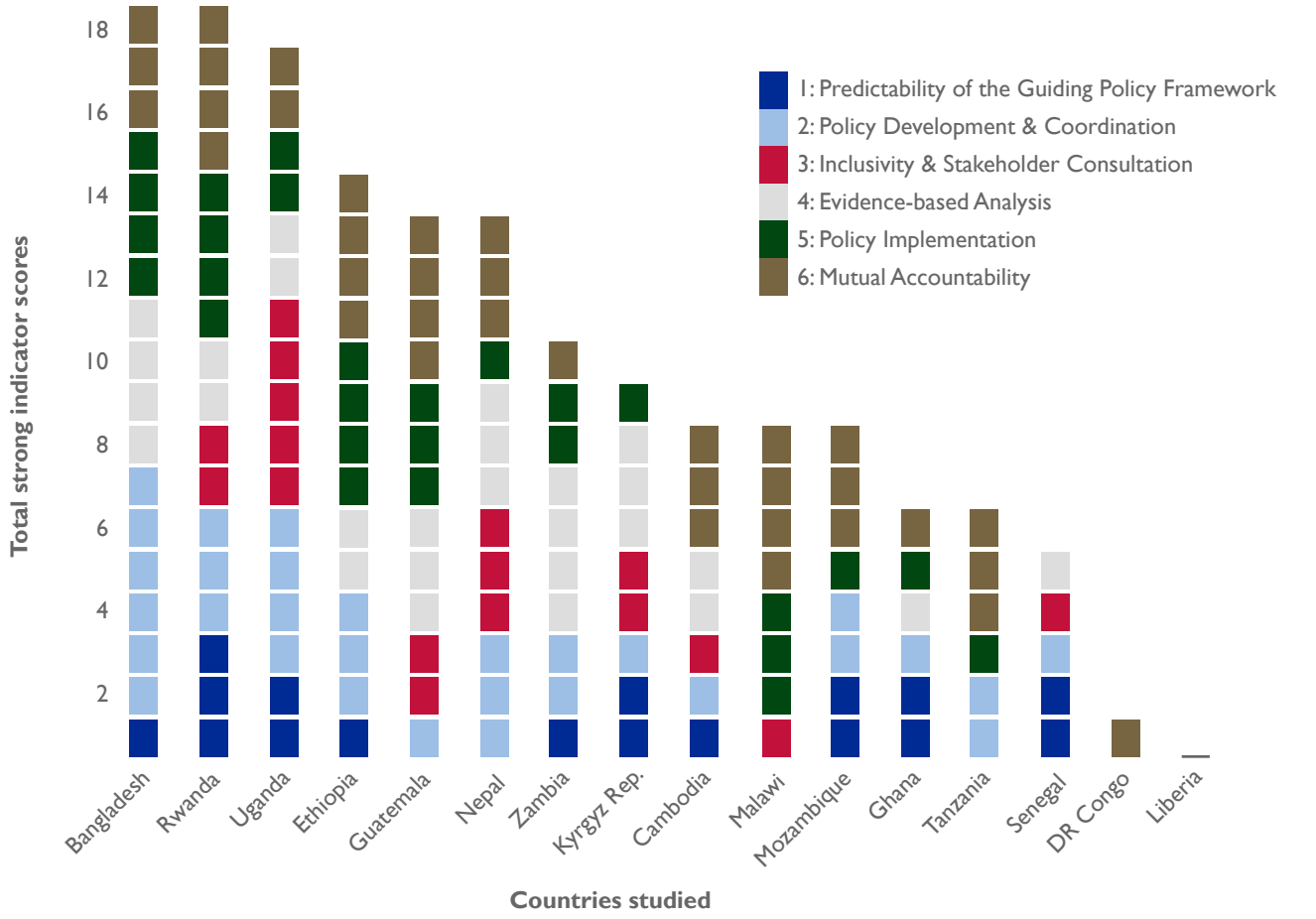
FIGURE 1: MAP OF INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE ASSESSMENT COUNTRIES



PART I: CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

FIGURE 2: TOTAL STRONG INDICATOR SCORES ACROSS COUNTRIES



Overall, the two highest performing countries were Bangladesh and Rwanda. Both countries scored strong in 18 out of 39 indicators. Bangladesh performed the best of any country in Policy Element 2: Policy Development and Coordination, scoring strong in six out of eight indicators. However, Bangladesh scored weak in Policy Element 3: Inclusivity and Stakeholder Consultation, scoring strong in none of the six indicators. Rwanda's results were more balanced, scoring strong across each of the six policy elements. Uganda was the third highest performing country with a score of 17 out of 39 indicators. Uganda performed the best of any country in Policy Element 3: Inclusivity and Stakeholder Consultation, scoring strong in five out of six indicators. However, its score in Policy Element 5: Policy Implementation overshadows this performance, with only two strong indicators out of seven.

Liberia and the DR Congo were the two worst performing countries. Liberia did not score strong in any of the 39 indicators, while the DR Congo only scored strong in one indicator in Policy Element 6 (Mutual Accountability). Asian countries scored strong in an average of 12 indicators, performing better than Africa, which scored strong in an average of only eight indicators.

POLICY ELEMENT 1: THE GUIDING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The purpose of Policy Element 1 is to understand the guiding framework that underpins the policy development process. Policy Element 1 examines whether the overall policy framework is consistently applied and transparent, whether institutional responsibilities are clearly defined, and whether there exists a functional legislative system to manage food security policy change.

COMPARATIVE DATA

KEY FINDINGS[7]

Considerable progress has been made towards ensuring predictability, transparency, and consistency in the policy making process.

Farmers and agribusinesses of all sizes require stable and predictable environments for doing business. Laws, regulations, and institutions affect this environment by influencing the incentives for a farmer, a seed distributor, a fertilizer importer, or any other type of agribusiness to create and invest in starting and growing businesses. A clearly defined and consistent policy framework helps drive economic growth by ensuring stability and certainty for market actors. This certainty provides businesses with the confidence to invest their capital and predict their likely return on investment. Unpredictable or knee jerk policy reactions, such as an export ban in the face of rising domestic prices, damage this confidence, often causing both short and long term damage to the economy.

For the indicator on whether the policy framework was clearly defined and consistent, 38 percent of countries scored strong, 56 percent scored average, and 6 percent of countries scored weak. All six countries that scored strong were in Africa, which is due to the success of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) in guiding countries toward developing transparent and inclusive agriculture and food security strategies. In Rwanda,[8] for example, the Plan for the Strategic Transformation of Agriculture has successfully aligned government ministries, development partners (DPs), and other stakeholders toward a common vision for agriculture. Similarly, in Zambia, the National Agricultural Policy closely aligned with the Sixth National Development Plan and outlines clear objectives for the sector.

Only the Kyrgyz Republic scored weak for this indicator, with organizational dysfunction and high turnover of agricultural officers severely hampering the policy process. In the Kyrgyz Republic, the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)[9] has been restructured numerous times over the past decade, and there have been 18 ministers of agriculture over the past 22 years. This instability results in a lack of consistency and predictability in reforms as each minister looks to create their own mark.

While the institutional responsibilities of individual line ministries are often clearly defined, confusion is common on cross-sectoral food security issues.

In the indicator measuring whether institutional responsibilities are clearly defined, consistently applied, and predictable from year to year, 6 percent scored strong, 63 percent scored average, and 31 percent of countries scored weak. While line ministries were generally found to have clearly defined mandates, a common theme across countries was a lack of clarity over the responsibilities for cross-sector food security issues. In Bangladesh, for example, food security issues cut across sector boundaries, but ministries and agencies are for the most part organized by sector specific concerns. This leads to a fragmentation of responsibilities and frequent duplication. In the area of nutrition, for example, the Ministry of Food, Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, and the Ministry of Health run overlapping and duplicative programs. Similarly, in Mozambique, stakeholders noted unclear institutional responsibilities, such as in the case of licensing private irrigation, with at least four ministries claiming primary oversight.

[7] The indicator on 'Appropriate Dispute Resolution Process/Judicial Framework' was deemed too broad a topic to cover within this assessment. This indicator should be removed in future Institutional Architecture iterations.

[8] Rwanda was the first country to adopt the CAADP Compact in 2007.

[9] For consistency in the report, all Ministries of Agriculture will be referred to as MOA, regardless of the acronym by which they are more commonly known.

Across countries, the absence of legislative capacity and centralization of power has almost exclusively delegated drafting power to the executive branches.

The role of the legislative branch in drafting agriculture and food security policy was found to be limited in a number of country assessments. In the indicator on legislative capacity to deal with food security change, 25 percent of countries scored strong, 63 percent of countries scored average, and 12 percent of countries scored weak. The centralization of power within the executive branches was noted as a common constraint across practically every country assessed. In Ethiopia, for example, the executive branch was found to exert significant influence over the legislative branch, and parliamentary oversight was found to be limited. In Rwanda, the Office of the Prime Minister holds more influence on the policy making process than the legislature. Similarly, in Bangladesh, the executive branch formulates and carries through any particular act of legislation quickly and without much negotiation with the legislature.

This lack of legislative power was also reflected in a lack of capacity. In Senegal, for example, delegates of the National Assembly possessed limited technical and human resource capacity to initiate or amend legislation. In Zambia, inadequate internal capacity obstructed the overall capability of the parliament to undertake independent analysis, while in DR Congo, Parliamentary committees receive little legislative staff support or research capacity.

CROSS-COUNTRY LESSONS

1. The policy framework supporting agriculture and food security in most studied countries is well developed.
2. While line ministries have well-defined functions, there is considerable confusion and duplication in cross-sectoral food security issues.
3. The role of the legislative branch in drafting agriculture and food security policy is limited.

POLICY ELEMENT 2: POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION

Policy Element 2 examines the key components of how agriculture and food security strategies are developed. First, this policy element focuses on whether there is adequate technical and administrative capacity to determine policy challenges, consult key stakeholders, and perform the required support processes of meeting and document management. Second, this policy element explores the functioning of the cross-sector coordination unit. Finally, it assesses the degree to which agriculture and food security strategies are based on specified priorities and objectives.

COMPARATIVE DATA

ANALYSIS

Every country has an approved food security strategy, although these strategies suffer from a lack of prioritization and realism in activities.

One of the strongest positive takeaways from this study is that many countries have completed multi-sectoral food security strategies. As the highest performing indicator, 63 percent of countries scored strong in this policy element, 37 percent of countries scored average, and no country scored weak. Every country has an approved food security strategy with clearly defined objectives, a detailed results framework, and investment plans in various stages of completion. African countries have been particularly successful in developing investment plans (70 percent of countries scored strong in this indicator), which were required through the CAADP Compact.

However, one issue highlighted across many countries was a lack of prioritization of activities within the food security strategies and associated investment plans, with only 19 percent of countries scoring strong in the indicator on the predictability of the policy agenda and development of priorities. Given the political sensitivities surrounding access to food, governments seem to lack any political appetitive for hard dialogue and tough decisions on national priorities. As a result, many food security strategies attempt to satisfy all people and look strong on paper rather than focus on practical application and implementation.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, for example, the food security strategy lacks any realism due to the incapacity within the MOA to oversee and implement such an ambitious program. The MOA also lacks any understanding of the realities of the wider political economy in the country, with proposed policy interventions, including direct producer subsidies for certain crops strongly opposed by the ministries of finance and economy. Similarly, in Cambodia, the food security strategy includes a matrix of current programs and projects related to food security and nutrition, but no clear indication of government commitments to fund such programs, the total financial cost of implementing the strategy, or the remaining funding gaps.

A cross-sectoral policy coordination mechanism is central to effective policy development, but such a mechanism requires sufficient political will to wield enforcement power over line ministries.

The policy coordination indicator measures the existence and subsequent effectiveness of a dedicated coordination unit that meets regularly to discuss, develop, and coordinate food security policy development and cross-sector coordination. In this indicator, 38 percent of countries scored weak, either because of a total absence of a coordination body or a coordination body that solely exists on paper. In Liberia, for example, the MOA should chair the Food Security and Technical Committee, which consists of participants from line ministries, DPs, private sector, and civil society who are responsible for formulation of food security policy, but this committee has not met for over two years.

Fifty-six percent of countries scored average on this indicator. Although a coordination mechanism exists in most countries, this group typically lacks any budget and thus the political mandate for enforcement. In Guatemala, despite the Secretariat on Food Security and Nutrition having the mandate to manage all national food security plans and programs, the secretariat has no role or budget for implementation and thus no incentives to offer line ministries to engage in policy coordination. This inability to influence line ministries diminishes the effectiveness of any such entity. Cambodia encountered a similar problem when establishing the Council for Agriculture and Rural Development as budget constraints and lack of authority for implementation lessened its importance and effectiveness. This issue is discussed in more detail in Policy Element 5: Policy Implementation. Bangladesh is the only country that scored strong in this category. In Bangladesh, effective coordination has been institutionalized through the creation of the inter-ministerial Food Policy Monitoring Committee, the Food Policy Working Group, and technical Thematic Teams with specialists across relevant ministries (see text box on next page).

BANGLADESH'S FOOD POLICY MONITORING UNIT PROVIDES A STRONG MECHANISM FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION.

A comprehensive institutional structure for policy development and coordination guides food security and nutrition policy in Bangladesh. The Cabinet-level Food Policy Monitoring Committee (FPMC) provides overall leadership and oversight in the formulation of policy. The Food Policy Working Group (FPWG) manages cross-sectoral coordination at the ministerial level while Thematic Teams support the technical level. The Food Policy Monitoring Unit (FPMU) offers policy analysis and drafting support; the FPMU receives capacity building assistance from the National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Program, which is implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with funding from the European Union and USAID.

In the development of any major food security policy documents, after the FPMC articulates a new request, the FPMU examines the core components of the request, takes stock of existing policies, and assembles a list of key ministries and departments that should be included in the process. The FPMU then forms a National Committee, which is chaired by the Minister of Food and comprised of relevant ministries, development partners, the private sector, and civil society representatives. Relevant ministries chair a number of technical subcommittees with support from the directors of the FPMU to address specific technical issues. The sub-committees and National Committee draft the components of the policy. After the completion of a draft, the FPMU develops a roadmap for consultation and shares the report with relevant ministries and the Cabinet in addition to online publication.

This process is collaborative and the technical capacity of the FPMU to conduct technical analysis, identify policy issues, and draft policy proposals is high. Where analytical gaps remain, the FPMU often engages external research institutions to conduct independent analysis.

Effective coordination also requires a functioning administrative support unit.

Functioning secretariats can play a vital role in encouraging collaboration around a shared vision and common agenda for change. The secretariat/administrative support function measures whether there is adequate staff capability to perform required support processes, including coordination, meeting management, communication, and document management. In this indicator 50 percent of countries scored weak, 44 percent of countries scored average, and 6 percent of countries scored strong. A common theme across weak and average countries was a lack of resources. For example, both Kyrgyz Republic and Liberia do not have standalone units responsible for coordinating agricultural and food security policy development. In Senegal, although a secretariat exists, inadequate administrative and human resources limit its impact on policy development.

Again, only Bangladesh scored strong in this category. In Bangladesh, the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit, under the Ministry of Food, provides overall technical and administrative support to the policy development and coordination process. This unit monitors the food security situation; stores and disseminates information for food security analysis and policy formulation; and delivers evidence-based policy advice on food security issues. The unit acts as a secretariat for the four national food security committees and also provides support to any ministry in drafting policies related to food security. The Food Policy Monitoring Unit has a full-time staff of over 20 people and receives dedicated capacity building from a USAID funded project.[10]

[10] The National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme, implemented by the Food and Agricultural Organization with funding from the European Union and USAID.

Most countries suffer from severe organizational and personnel constraints in the technical capacity to develop policy.

Most countries studied suffer from common organizational and personnel constraints in the policy development process. The primary unit for policy analysis and development is usually the department of policy and planning within the MOA. In the majority of focus countries, these units are severely understaffed and under-resourced. In this indicator, only Zambia scored strong, with 56 percent of countries scoring average and 37 percent of countries scoring weak. In Nepal, the policy analysis unit within the MOA only employs three full time analysts, while in Uganda the policy analysis unit has two staff. In the Kyrgyz Republic, no unit within MOA has a clear responsibility for policy development and coordination. Similarly, in Tanzania, no unit with policy analysis and development capacity was identified. Country assessments found that DP-funded independent consultants often fill this capacity vacuum. In Liberia, for example, DP funding was found to heavily drive policy formulation with the MOA demonstrating insufficient ownership of the process.

CROSS-COUNTRY LESSONS

1. National food security strategies are largely in place, and while they are strong on paper, a lack of prioritization of activities and poor recognition of the implementation capabilities of line ministries means that these strategies risk being unimplementable.
2. Despite increasing DP support for policy development, 37 percent of countries studied did not possess internal capacity for policy analysis and coordination, and 50 percent of countries lacked administrative support function.
3. A cross-ministerial coordination unit is key for ensuring alignment between ministries on food security policies, although such units commonly lack any enforcement power when it comes to implementation.

POLICY ELEMENT 3: INCLUSIVITY AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Policy Element 3 examines the degree of inclusivity and stakeholder consultation involved in the policy development process. It looks at the private sector and civil society from two angles: 1) meaningful opportunities to participate in policy formulation and strategy discussions, and 2) capacity to constructively contribute to policy dialogue.

COMPARATIVE DATA

ANALYSIS

The private sector has a greater opportunity to participate in the policy development process than civil society.[11]

All countries studied faced a lack of inclusion within the policy coordination units. No country scored strong in this indicator, with 81 percent scoring average and 19 percent scoring weak. The private sector was found to have a greater opportunity to participate than civil society in the policy development process since governments generally treat civil society with a degree of mistrust. Thirty-one percent of countries scored strong for private sector participation compared to 0 percent for civil society. The Ethiopian government, for example, expressed an unwillingness to work with advocacy organizations. In Bangladesh, civil societies organizations (CSOs) usually align with political ideologies, and as a result, the government regards these groups with suspicion. In Cambodia, CSOs are broadly represented in a number of key policy development committees, but there is a high level of mistrust and suspicion from the government.

FIGURE 3:
OPPORTUNITY FOR PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION

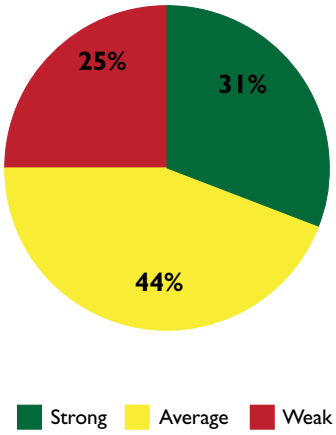
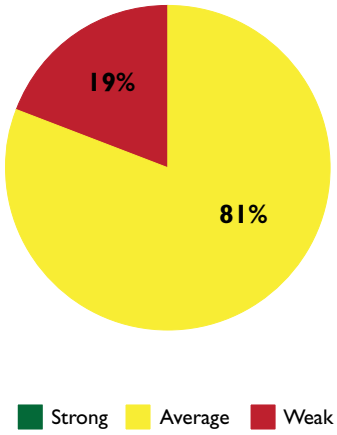


FIGURE 4:
OPPORTUNITY FOR CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION



In contrast, governments are increasingly accepting of the role of the private sector. In Rwanda, the Public-Private Sector Development mechanism allows for the private sector to participate in policy formulation. In Nepal, all major coordination bodies related to agricultural development includes private sector representation. However, stakeholders also noted a need for greater consistency in private sector inclusion. The issue of ad-hoc and inconsistent consultation came up in multiple countries, including Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Guatemala, and Tanzania.

[11] In the context of this report, private sector refers to both public and private companies and organizations working for profit, while civil society refers to both public and private organizations working as a non-profit.

Both the private sector and civil society require considerable capacity building support to meaningfully engage in policy advocacy.

Beyond the openness of governments to include stakeholders in the policy development process, these stakeholders need to collect and organize the viewpoints of their constituents, develop an informed policy position, and effectively communicate this position. This assessment found considerable capacity gaps across both the private sector and civil society, with only 19 percent of countries scoring strong for private sector capacity and 6 percent of countries scoring strong for civil sector capacity. In Uganda, for example, private agribusinesses noted insufficient financial and human resources for agricultural associations to effectively articulate policy stances or provide evidence-based research to propose constructive solutions. Similarly, in Zambia, the private sector had no policy analysis capacity of its own.

FIGURE 5:
CAPACITY FOR PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION

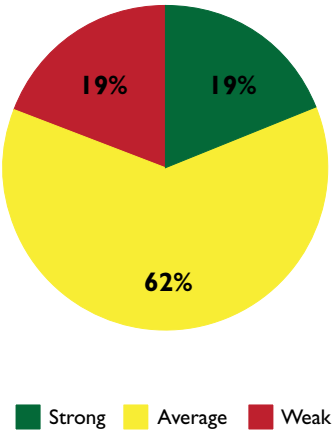
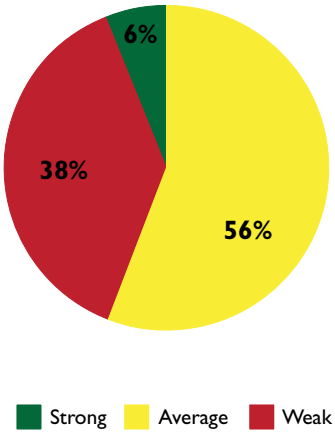


FIGURE 6:
CAPACITY FOR CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION



Countries that scored strong in these indicators have strong public or private umbrella organizations that can bring together the multitude of private sector actors and civil society groups into cohesive entities. In 2013, for example, the National Small Farmers Association of Malawi successfully lobbied the government for the removal of an export ban on agricultural crops. In Uganda, civil society has organized itself into the 62-member Food Rights Alliance, which provides capacity building and advocacy support to help its members engage in policy change. The Food Rights Alliance consists of seven working groups that gather evidence on policy formulation, monitor policy implementation, and evaluate how policies affect farmers.

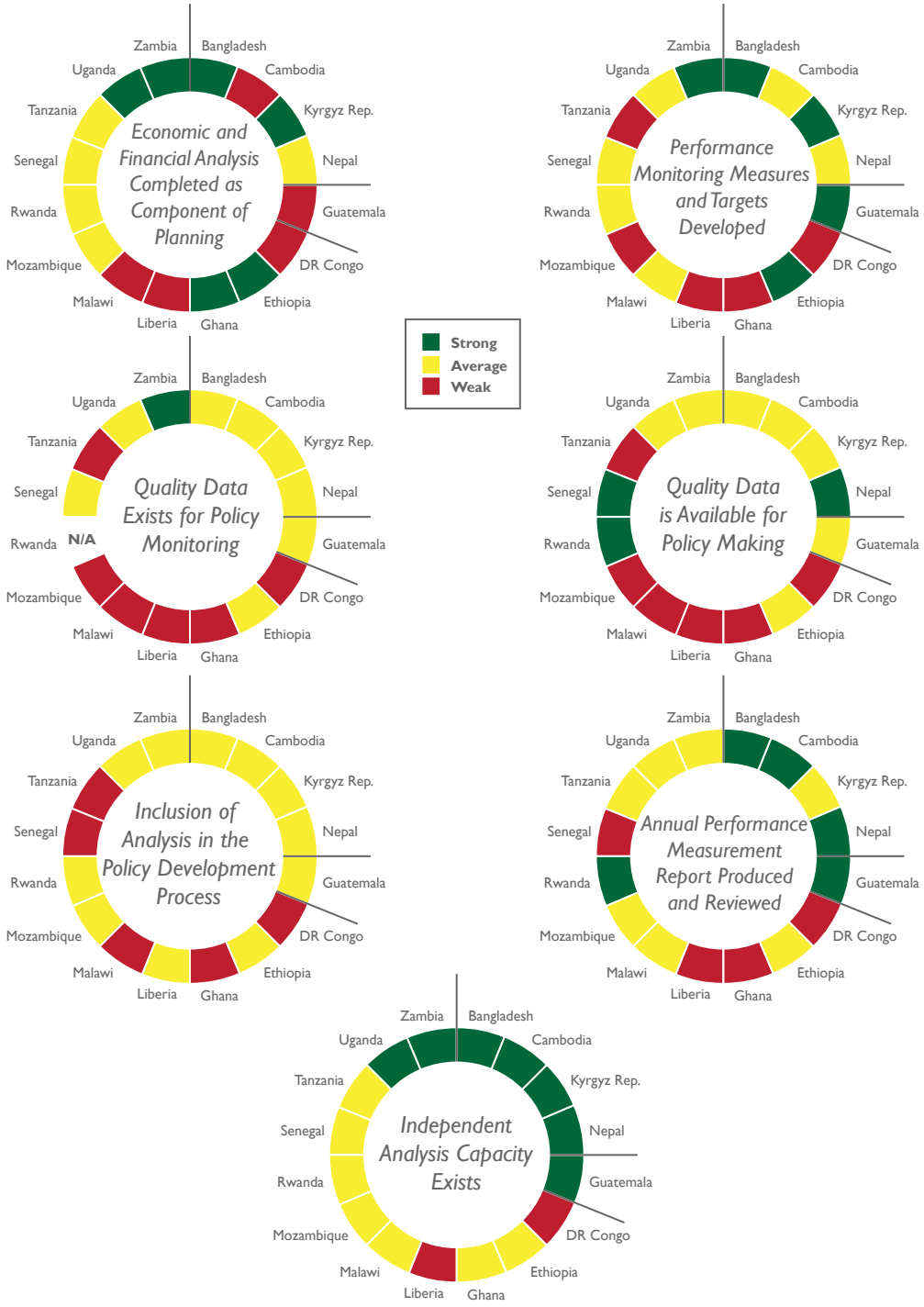
CROSS-COUNTRY LESSONS

1. Despite greater government commitments, the private sector and civil society remain marginalized in the policy development process.
2. The greatest private sector and civil society impact has been achieved through umbrella organizations that bring together all actors under a common voice.
3. Associations require capacity building to articulate their policy positions, provide some level of evidence-based analysis to support their views, and offer constructive recommendations for reforms.

POLICY ELEMENT 4: EVIDENCE-BASED ANALYSIS

Policy Element 4 examines the research, data, and statistics needed to support government policies related to agriculture and food security. Reliable and timely information allows policy makers to understand key policy issues, develop informed policy analysis, identify the most appropriate policy direction, and review the effectiveness of the intervention.

COMPARATIVE DATA



KEY FINDINGS[12]

Despite growing political commitment by governments to evidence-based analysis, country assessments show that the practice of evidence-based policy making remains limited.

The development community at large regards evidence-based analysis as a central pillar in policy making. In June 2014, the African Union signed the Malabo Declaration and reaffirmed its commitment to the principles and values of the CAADP process, which include the "application of principles of evidence-based planning, policy efficiency, dialogue, review, and accountability."[13] However, in the indicator on the consideration and usage of evidence-based analysis to develop policy priorities/proposals, 31 percent of countries scored weak and 69 percent scored average. This indicator is one of only three across all policy elements in which no country scored strong.[14]

In Tanzania, the absence of quality data combined with limited independent analytical capacity has resulted in a policy development process that reacts in knee-jerk movements based on broad economic data rather than informed analysis. For example, the food export ban and the tariff on rice imports demonstrated an extreme shift in policy. According to the Tanzania assessment, a partial percentage reduction could have had the same intended effects while still providing markets the opportunity to adjust gradually. Similarly, in Malawi, the economic and financial viability of the "One Household: One Cow" policy[15] was not addressed before or after the policy was promulgated. Even in Bangladesh, a country with the strongest policy development and coordination framework, inclusion of analysis is mixed. While the institutional structures for food security and nutrition policy provide a strong foundation for evidence-based analysis through the Food Policy Monitoring Unit, the centralization of power within the executive branch often leads to top-down management.

Evidence-based data is constrained not only by the availability of timely and reliable data, but also the systems that allow access to this data.

The availability of quality statistics to inform evidence-based analysis posed a problem across practically every country. In this indicator, 38 percent of countries scored weak, 50 percent of countries scored average, and only Zambia scored strong. Across countries, funding was cited as the primary deterrent to improved data collection and availability. In the DR Congo, for example, limited funding and trained staff at the national and provincial levels contribute to grossly inaccurate agricultural statistics. In Uganda, agricultural data is outdated and of poor quality; as an example, the last agricultural census was conducted in 2008. Similarly, in Tanzania, district-level agricultural extension officers are missing the training and tools to collect accurate data. In Zambia, the only country to score strong on availability of data, the Central Statistics Office run a robust and reliable crop forecast survey each year in addition to a rural agricultural livelihoods survey that includes income and agricultural production.[16]

In addition to the availability of data, the systems that allow access to this data were also highlighted as a major concern, with 38 percent of countries scoring weak, 44 percent scoring average, and 18 percent scoring strong. Most national statistics agencies publish national statistics on food security online, with varying degrees of sophistication. However, a common constraint across countries was a lack of a centralized, easily accessible hub for all agricultural and food security data from across government agencies, DPs, and civil society. In Uganda, stakeholders noted over 650 documents related to coffee alone, many of which were not easily accessible. In the Kyrgyz Republic, stakeholders also noted difficulty in finding and accessing many of the agricultural studies conducted by various government agencies and international organizations.

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[12] This cross-country assessment observed that two indicators in this policy component overlap substantially with an indicator in Policy Element 2: Policy Development and Coordination. Namely the indicator on 'Economic and Financial Analysis Completed as a Component of Planning' overlapped with the indicator 'Approved Food Security Strategy/Investment Plan' while 'Performance Monitoring Measures and Targets Developed' overlapped with the indicator on 'Predictable Policy Agenda and Priorities Developed.' As such, these issues are discussed together in Policy Element 2, and should be removed from Policy Element 4.

[13] http://www.au.int/en/content/malabo-26-27-june-2014-decisions-declarations-and-resolution-assembly-union-twenty-third-ord.

[14] The other two indicators are: 'Inclusive Participation in the Policy Coordination Entity' (Policy Element 3) and 'Capacity of Staff to Implement Policy Change' (Policy Element 5).

[15] This policy provides poor households with a dairy cow. The cow not only supplies milk, which offers an important source of nutrition and income to families, but also manure, which serves as fertilizer for crops.

[16] Results from ReSAKSS Capacity Needs Assessment for Zambia suggests that the Central Statistics Office also suffers from a shortage of funding and trained staff, and may more accurately be scored average.

Bangladesh represents a good example of a centralized data hub. The FPMU has developed a Documentation Centre and Electronic Repository that offers a large collection of hard copy and electronic resources related to food security. Most documents can be downloaded directly from their website.[17] However, stakeholders raised concerns over the capacity of the FPMU to regularly update the website. Cambodia also had a strong food security database, but scarce funding led the system to go offline (see text box).

THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY IN DATA COLLECTION SYSTEMS

There are strong information and knowledge management systems for agriculture and food security in Cambodia. In 2004, the Food Security and Nutrition Information System (FSNIS) was established to provide a single government platform for food security and nutrition. The mandate of FSNIS is to support improved policy formulation and analysis by disseminating existing food security and nutrition information, facilitating the exchange of information among stakeholders, and providing a repository for relevant documents. A quarterly Food Security and Nutrition Bulletin offered regular analysis of the national food security situation.

Stakeholders regard FSNIS as a successful dissemination tool. However, as of September 2014, the FSNIS web portal is offline due to the closure of the FAO project supporting the system. There is no clear indication of where continued funding will come from.

Progress in producing annual performance reports is mixed, but a number of countries demonstrate best practices.

The performance of countries in producing annual reports is mixed, with 31 percent of countries scoring strong, 44 percent of countries scoring average, and 25 percent of countries scoring weak. Broadly speaking, countries scoring weak had no formal review system in place whereas countries scoring average produced annual work plans but did not include annual targets or indicators to track progress. A number of countries, namely Bangladesh, Cambodia, Guatemala, Rwanda, and Nepal, performed strongly in this indicator. In Cambodia, monthly meetings track progress towards completion of the food security strategy, and the Deputy Prime Minister presides over an annual national food security conference. Similarly, Rwanda has a joint sector review mechanism that brings together key development partners, CSOs, and the private sector to review policy implementation and draw recommendations for subsequent plans. In Bangladesh, findings from monitoring reports are circulated and discussed in multiple stakeholder forums.

A common theme across countries was the strong capacity of independent research institutions to conduct policy analysis.

The strongest indicator in this policy element was the capacity for independent research institutions to conduct policy analysis. Forty-four percent of countries scored strong, 44 percent of countries scored average, and only Liberia and DR Congo scored weak. Research institutes generally have the capacity to undertake independent analysis of policies and effectively lobby government. In Uganda, for example, a collection of research institutions and CSOs had come together to review progress in implementing the food security investment plan. Across all countries, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and CGIAR, as well as DPs, are engaged in supporting the development of independent research facilities. IFPRI's Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support Systems (SAKSS) is expected to further boost analytical capacity but was still in the development phases across countries during the assessment period.

CROSS-COUNTRY LESSONS

1. While there are clear data gaps in countries studied, given the depth of the analysis, it was difficult to determine any causation between the availability of evidence-based analysis and an improved policy making process.
2. While it would seem the absence of suitable research and data leads to poorly informed policy decisions, the inverse is not always true: sound technical analysis does not equate to better designed policies or improved policy outcomes as policy makers may not necessarily hear or accept this analysis.

17 http://fpmu.gov.bd/agridrupal/about-library.

POLICY ELEMENT 5: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Policy Element 5 examines the capacity of the government to execute commitments made in national food security strategies. This assessment includes whether implementation plans have been developed, whether food security policy priorities align with the work plans of line ministries, and whether a system is in place to review the effectiveness and impact of policy changes.

COMPARATIVE DATA

KEY FINDINGS

The absence of administrative and technical capacity to implement policies in the technical departments poses the greatest constraint to policy reform.

The absence of administrative and technical capacity to implement policy change was a problem in every country studied. This indicator contained the worst scores with no country scoring strong, 75 percent scoring weak, and 25 percent average. All countries faced issues around insufficient numbers of staff, poor staff retention, inadequate training in basic project management, and lack of resources. In Ethiopia, for example, the capacity of staff to undertake budgetary planning and process management seriously constrained policy implementation. In Cambodia, the technical departments, who are the key implementers of agriculture and food security projects, lacked basic training in project and budgetary management, and performance monitoring. Every country assessment reported similar findings.

Even Bangladesh, with its consistently strong performance in policy development, coordination, and mutual accountability, shows a considerable skills gap at the project implementation level. Departments lack basic project management skills, as well as the capacity to examine the cost of proposed projects, which results in substantial budgetary inflation (stakeholders interviewed reported as high as 40 percent for agricultural projects).

An underutilization of existing capacity and poor human resource skills management often exacerbates the skills gap.

Another common theme across countries was staff members who had received training but had not been given the scope or opportunities to put their skills into practice. In Cambodia, for example, the Cambodia Agriculture Productivity Improvement Project sent over 100 MOA employees on international projects. Similarly, the Cambodia HARVEST project has supported trainings for hundreds of MOA employees. The challenge is that these gained skills are not fully utilized within the MOA system. Trained staff are not given the opportunities to apply their skills, with incentives and promotions often more closely tied to political connections than performance. As a result, staff are often attracted to higher paid jobs within the private sector and DPs.

Despite the existence of cross-sectoral food security strategies, coordination of implementation by line ministries remains limited.

One of the greatest challenges to effective implementation identified during the country assessments was the lack of effective cross-ministerial coordination in executing activities in the food security strategy. As mentioned in Policy Element 2, all countries now have on paper a food security strategy with jointly agreed cross-ministerial activities. Yet, the indicator on alignment of food security policy priorities with the work plans of line ministries showed poor progress in translating this coordination into action. In this indicator, only 19 percent of countries scored strong, while 56 percent scored average, and 25 percent scored weak.

Unsurprisingly, countries without any inter-ministerial coordination committees scored weak. In Liberia, for example, the absence of a high-level steering committee negatively affects line ministries awareness and the alignment of activities under the food security strategy. In countries with coordination committees in place, the degree of political power given to these mechanisms largely determines its effectiveness. Rwanda and Ethiopia both scored strong on this indicator, reflecting a firm political commitment to food security policy and a centrally coordinated government. In Rwanda, the Office of the Prime Minister coordinates all actions by sector ministries.

However, it would appear that political commitment alone is not enough. Both Bangladesh and Cambodia received strong scores for policy commitment in Policy Element 2, and yet received average scores for alignment of food security policy. The difference between Bangladesh/Cambodia and Rwanda/Ethiopia lies in the mandate of the cross-ministerial coordination body. In Cambodia, the Cabinet-level Council for Agriculture and Rural Development develops food security policies but does not oversee implementation. Consequently, implementation of projects by line ministries and DPs is largely uncoordinated, leading to weak complementarity among programs. Implementation is often siloed; DPs usually work directly with technical or provincial departments without coordinating with the central MOA structure.

This problem was also identified in Guatemala, where despite the existence of a well-developed mechanism for inter-ministerial coordination though the Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition, project implementation by line ministries is largely uncoordinated, leading to overlapping and weak complementarity among programs. This poor implementation was also attributed to the committee having no role or budget for implementation, and thus no incentives or enforcement power to encourage ministries to cooperate.

Despite established monitoring and evaluation frameworks, limited resources and staff diminish the impact of these systems.

In the indicator measuring the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation systems, 12 percent of countries scored strong, 38 percent of countries scored average, and 50 percent of countries scored weak. While many countries had a monitoring and evaluation framework in place linked to their food security strategies, constrained resources and a scarcity of qualified staff obstructed the ability of the government to review the effectiveness and impact of policy changes. In the Kyrgyz Republic, no unit within the MOA solely dedicates itself to monitoring and evaluation; instead, only one specialist manages monitoring implementation in over 40 districts. Similarly, in Tanzania, a monitoring and evaluation framework exists for the Agriculture Sector Development Plan, but the unit responsible has only two working computers and works without any software capabilities to manipulate raw data from the National Bureau of Statistics.

Only Bangladesh and Guatemala scored strong in this indicator. In Guatemala, the monitoring and evaluation system of the Secretariat of Food Security and Nutrition was found to allow the government to effectively monitor and analyze the performance of implementing ministries and secretariats. In addition, the government has contracted IFPRI to conduct annual monitoring reports for the national food security strategy. In Bangladesh, the Food Policy Monitoring Group tracks progress on implementation and publishes an annual monitoring report, which is discussed in multiple stakeholder forums. In addition, the Ministry of Planning's Monitoring and Evaluation Division reviews project performance and publishes monthly implementation reports.

CROSS-COUNTRY LESSONS

1. Limited institutional capacity for implementation is the greatest barrier to effective policy change across all countries studied.
2. Cross-sectoral implementation of food security strategies must be supported by a coordination committee with both high-level political support and some degree of authority and/or financial resources that it can leverage to ensure cooperation from line ministries.
3. Training is needed to address the lack of technical capacity within the departments responsible for project implementation. Training should be tailored to each technical department and in line with a human resource capacity development plan, but should include project management, proposal writing, budgetary management, and performance monitoring.

POLICY ELEMENT 6: MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Mutual accountability is the process by which multiple partners agree to be held responsible for voluntary commitments they have made to each other.[18] Policy Element 6 measures the effectiveness of countries' mutual accountability systems, namely whether there are regularly scheduled DP-government meetings, whether joint policy priorities are developed, and whether performance commitments of the government and DPs are adequately monitored and reported.

COMPARATIVE DATA

[18] OECD, 2009, Mutual Accountability: Emerging Good Practice.

KEY FINDINGS

Structures for mutual accountability are in place across most countries, although the frequency of meetings and administrative capacity of the secretariat constrains their impact.

Mutual accountability is the process by which multiple partners agree to be held responsible for voluntary commitments they have made to each other.[19] The High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness in Paris (2005) and Accra (2008) enshrined mutual accountability as a key principle and recipient countries agreed to meet performance targets in return for budget support. The indicator on the existence of regularly scheduled government-DP meetings was the joint highest performing indicator across all policy elements. Sixty-three percent of countries scored strong, 31 percent of countries scored average, and only the Kyrgyz Republic scored weak. Reflecting the centrality of mutual accountability to the CAADP process, African countries performed better than the rest of the world, with 73 percent of African countries scoring strong in this indicator, compared to 40 percent in non-African countries.

The Kyrgyz Republic scored weak in this indicator as no government-DP meeting on food security had taken place since 2007. Countries scoring average on this indicator had mutual accountability frameworks in place, but did not meet regularly. In Bangladesh, mutual accountability has been institutionalized through the Local Consultative Group (LCG), composed of 48 development partners and government agencies. A high-level LCG Plenary maintains responsibility for overall supervision of external aid, and 18 individual working groups provide sector specific coordination and monitoring. The working groups are expected to meet quarterly, but this schedule is rarely the case. In 2013, the Aid Effectiveness Working Group met only twice, while the Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food Security Working Group did not meet. Similarly, in Zambia, the Agriculture Sector Advisory Group was supposed to play a central role in delivering feedback on policy development, but it meets infrequently and with little or no advanced notice.

The administrative capacity of the secretariat supporting the mutual accountability framework also influences effectiveness. In Cambodia, for example, stakeholders cited the lack of a functioning secretariat for the Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Water as the primary reason for the poor functioning of the group (see text box on page 31).

Performance on implementing joint monitoring systems has been mixed.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness stipulates the use of mutually agreed performance targets and joint monitoring and evaluation metrics for aid effectiveness. Performance was mixed with 44 percent of countries scoring strong, 25 percent of countries scoring average, and 31 percent of countries scoring weak. The weak countries, including DR Congo and Liberia, did not perform an annual sector review for agriculture and food security.

One strong example of a joint monitoring system was in Nepal, where the Ministry of Finance produces the Nepal Portfolio Performance Review Action Plan every quarter, with input from relevant line Ministries and DPs. In addition, an annual Development Cooperation Report includes progress on technical assistance and alignment of programs. Another strong example was in Malawi where the MOA coordinates Joint Sector Review meetings to track the progress in implementing the country's National Agriculture Investment Plan. These meetings occur twice a year and include line ministries, DPs, private sector, and civil society who review progress made in implementation.

There is a consistent lack of private sector and civil society inclusion in mutual accountability forums.[20]

Two indicators examined the degree that private sector and civil society participate in government-DP mutual accountability forums. Ninety-four percent of countries scored either weak or average in this category for both private sector and civil society inclusion. Only Cambodia scored strong for civil society inclusion, with full representation in the joint government-DP Technical Working Groups,[21] as well as inclusion in a monthly National Food Security Forum to share lessons learned from on-going programs

[19] OECD, 2009, Mutual Accountability: Emerging Good Practice.

[20] During the review of country assessments as part of this cross-country study, a lack of consistency across countries in how this indicator was addressed was discovered. It was found that a number of assessments focused on the general inclusion of the private sector and civil society in policy development (which is duplicative with Policy Element 3), instead of whether these groups have representation in the mutual accountability process. These indicators should be reworded to clarify this issue in future iterations.

[21] The private sector, in contrast, did not have any representation in the Technical Working Groups, although dialogue between the government and the private sector is provided through the annual Government Private Sector Forum.

(see text box below). Only Guatemala scored strong for private sector representation as its monthly National Council for Food Security and Nutritional Security includes private sector actors. However, given the dearth of analytical capacity from the private sector and civil society as highlighted in Policy Element 3, the challenge involves more than just inclusion. A significant degree of support is also needed to build the capacity of these groups so that they can meaningfully participate in mutual accountability forums.

CROSS-COUNTRY LESSONS

1. Mutual accountability systems are in place and working relatively successfully across most countries studied, although further work is needed to ensure regular meetings and secretariat support.
2. Implementation of joint sector reviews is mixed. A number of countries lack any annual performance review.
3. Further progress is needed to ensure private sector and civil society representation in countries' mutual accountability systems.

MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN CAMBODIA

Cambodia has a strong mutual accountability framework for agriculture and food security. A number of active coordination mechanisms have been introduced and the government has assumed greater ownership. As a result, coordination between the government and DPs has been increasing, particularly in the formulation of agriculture and food security projects.

Dialogue between the government and DPs occurs at three formal levels: the Cambodia Development Forum, the Government-DP Coordination Committee (GDCC), and the Technical Working Groups (TWGs). The annual Cambodia Development Forum provides a national platform for discussion of high-level policy direction and achievements between government, DPs, private sector, and civil society. After setting priorities, the GDCC provides overall leadership and coordination in the development and implementation of national strategies, including agriculture and food security. At the technical level, TWGs provide expert advice on sector specific policies. TWGs are accountable to their host ministries and agencies, and are chaired by the lead government representative, who holds primary decision making authority. Two TWGs directly relate to agriculture and food security. The Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Water (TWGAW) is co-chaired by the MOA and Ministry of Water, and facilitated by the Food and Agricultural Organization. TWGAW is responsible for coordinating and implementing policies related to agriculture, irrigation, and water resource management. The Technical Working Group on Social Protection, Food Security and Nutrition (TWG-SP&FSN) is co-chaired by the cabinet level Council on Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) and the Ministry of Planning, and co-facilitated by UNICEF and the World Food Program. It is responsible for coordinating, formulating, and implementing policies across the areas of food security, nutrition, and social protection.

The Development Cooperation and Partnership Strategy 2014-2018 outlines overall priorities for development cooperation. Each of the TWGs must set out an annual work plan and agenda to support achievement of these goals; a results framework links priorities with sector programs and external funds. In 2014, the TWGs selected Joint Monitoring Indicators that will remain in place for the five-year implementation of the NSDP. These indicators are subject to annual progress review as part of the TWG work program and are then presented to the GDCC.

Comparing the effectiveness of the TWGAW and TWG-SP&FSN provides useful insight into the key elements necessary to ensure an effective mutual accountability system. Stakeholders regard the TWG-SP&FSN as well functioning, owing to the role played by CARD as secretariat in leading the process and the high-level support provided by the Deputy Prime Minister as chair of CARD. The TWGAW has been less successful for several reasons. First, the two co-chairs of MOA and Ministry of Water coordinate poorly. Second, the working group does not possess a clear mandate and terms of reference, particularly related to irrigation and water resource management. Third, a government transition in 2013 led to the temporary loss of both co-chairs and a change in secretariat staff. Finally, financial support for the secretariat has declined. At the moment, with assistance from the European Union, the working group will recruit a full time technical expert to support the secretariat.

PART II: ANALYSIS OF THE METHODOLOGY

The Institutional Architecture diagnostic is most successful as an innovative and valuable point of stakeholder engagement, not as a traditional and comprehensive institutional assessment.

Traditional institutional assessments can be detailed, time consuming, and costly affairs. The Institutional Architecture assessment is unique in its design as a rapid, low-cost tool. Each assessment is completed with a two-person team (one expatriate and one local) over a two-week period in country. As a result, certain limitations exist for the amount of data collected, the stakeholders who can be interviewed, and the depth of analysis achieved. However, the limitations of the Institutional Architecture assessments also present a distinct advantage as they map out a complex system in a simplified manner and clearly point to a number of key constraints to the policy making process. This clear presentation provides a valuable point of engagement among USAID, host governments, the private sector, and civil society. It serves as a great starting point for a discussion of required reforms in the agriculture and food security policy development process among various stakeholders during a validation workshop or other forums. In Malawi, for example, the 2014 Agriculture Joint Sector Review used the Institutional Architecture assessment as one of two central resources. Similarly, in Kyrgyz Republic, the Institutional Architecture assessment was completed at the same time as the country investment plan and helped highlight key gaps in the investment plan and inform USAID's engagement and investment strategy with the MOA.

USAID Missions are at different points of engagement in the policy development process and, as a result, the Institutional Architecture assessments have distinct uses for different Missions. In some countries where the Missions are not deeply engaged in policy reform, the Institutional Architecture assessments have been used to inform the Mission engagement strategy and set reform priorities. In countries where USAID is more deeply involved in policy reform, Missions remarked that the unique and easy to follow presentation of the material helped to guide discussions. Importantly, the purpose of the Institutional Architecture assessments is not only to identify constraints, but also to share positive lessons learned across countries. In Bangladesh, for example, the Institutional Architecture assessment did not offer new insight to the Mission due to its position on the forefront of the policy reform process through its full-time USAID-funded policy support project; however, the Bangladesh Institutional Architecture assessment added considerable value to other countries as a best practice example.

The Institutional Architecture diagnostic has limited scope as a cross-country comparison tool.

While analysis across countries has shown the prevalence of a number of recurring issues and themes, a direct comparison of each indicator by country is less useful. Detailed analysis of the indicators shows a degree of inconsistency in scoring across countries, which is largely due to the subjective nature of the policy change process. The tendency for the country teams was to rank indicators in country against each other, rather than against a global standard for each indicator, as such a benchmark does not exist. The main way to limit this inconsistency would be to have the same consultant conduct all assessments, which would be logistically difficult across countries and languages. Alternatively, all scoring could be verified with a central individual knowledgeable of all assessments. However, even without the inconsistency, it remains to be seen whether direct cross-country comparison would be optimal or useful. Set against a global benchmark, Bangladesh might score all strong (green), while DR Congo might score all weak (red). In this case, the analysis may miss the comparative weaknesses in Bangladesh's institutional architecture (which might be better than DR Congo, but still an area where Bangladesh should improve). Similarly, the analysis may miss the comparative strengths in the DR Congo.

The Institutional Architecture diagnostic shows promise as an in-country comparison tool over time.

Analysis of the Institutional Architecture assessments demonstrates that the tool would be more useful as an in-country comparison tool to measure reforms over time. Each Institutional Architecture assessment has set a benchmark of the state of a country's policy development and implementation process. Subsequent follow-up assessments would be able to build off these benchmarks by identifying areas of progress. Since the mapping of key institutions has already been completed, time and cost savings in follow-up assessments would be expected, especially if the initial Institutional Architecture assessment has been debated and validated by a cross-section of stakeholders. There is also less risk of subjectivity with in-country assessments, as opposed to cross-country comparisons. Even with a new consulting team, they would be expected to justify any changes to the scoring (i.e., as a result of an improved policy step), thus ensuring a measure of consistency.

There is a need for greater clarity on how the Institutional Architecture diagnostic fits with USAID activities.

One area of difficulty in interacting with Missions and host governments was a lack of clarity over follow-on activities. While clear from the outset that these assessments represent a first step in a wider engagement process, it remained difficult to get Mission and host government buy-in to participate in the initial assessment process without concrete details of the next step. Moreover, the connection of the Institutional Architecture framework with the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy (FSP) must be clarified. FSP is a project run by Michigan State University, IFPRI, and the University of Pretoria to help USAID-supported countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America fight hunger, reduce poverty, and improve nutritional outcomes through better food policy. FSP aims to address critical evidence gaps for informed policy debate and formulation, and to foster credible, transparent, and sustainable policy processes at the country level. Given the clear complementarity between the FSP and the work of EAT and Africa Lead, the Institutional Architecture should explore how it can best align with FSP activities (see next section for further discussion).

PART III: NEXT STEPS

As discussed in the previous section, the Institutional Architecture assessments are rapid, low-cost studies meant to map the policymaking environment and determine where individual countries are most likely to need support to improve the policy process for agriculture and food security. Accordingly these studies should be viewed as a first step in a review and report process that involves multiple forums and different stakeholders. The following bullet points highlight ongoing or planned policy making mapping and support work that draws on or overlaps with Institutional Architecture studies to date:

- **The Food Security Policy (FSP) Innovation Lab**, implemented jointly by Michigan State University, IFPRI, and University of Pretoria, is developing a unified theory that draws on existing theoretical concepts (including the Institutional Architecture model) to explain why and how food security policy change happens or does not happen. This unified theory is expected to inform USAID, donors, and Feed the Future countries about the conditions under which certain types of agriculture and food security policy can be implemented most effectively.
- USAID/BFS is planning a **weeklong training course on food security policy** in mid-May 2015 for USAID Mission staff from around the world, including expatriate and Foreign Service National staff. A half day of the weeklong training agenda will be devoted to the Institutional Architecture model, including a conceptual introduction, findings from country assessments, and group discussions on how the Institutional Architecture model can be adapted or improved for use in the country where each training participant works.
- The **ReSAKSS and SAKSS initiatives,** supported by IFPRI, seek to strengthen the ability of Regional Economic Communities and individual countries to collect data and develop metrics, respectively, for more robust measurement of policy and program outcomes and impacts on agricultural productivity and food security. RESAKSS country-level capacity needs assessments overlap considerably with the Institutional Architecture assessments in terms of the gaps and challenges identified.
- FAO is also providing agriculture and food security policy support in the form of its **Monitoring and Analyzing Food and Agricultural Policies (MAFAP)** program. Under MAFAP, and similar to the objectives of ReSAKSS and SAKSS, the FAO is working with national partners to set up a sustainable system for monitoring the impact of food and agricultural policies in Africa. MAFAP has developed common indicators for monitoring key commodities and public expenditure in agriculture. These benchmarks assist policy makers and donors in understanding if policies have a positive impact and allow for a comparison of results across countries and over time. Africa Lead is reaching out to MAFAP staff to learn about near-term program plans and explore possible areas for future collaboration that may involve building on Institutional Assessment efforts.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

In addition to the ongoing and planned work discussed above, this study recommends two further action items to be conducted in partnership between Africa Lead and the upcoming follow-on to the EAT project, the Enabling Environment for Food Security (EEFS) project.

1. **Institutional Architecture workshop:** An Institutional Architecture workshop would be valuable in bringing together the different actors involved in analyzing food security policies to seek a consensus on what has been learned from the Institutional Architecture assessments and how that can most effectively shape future efforts to improve food security through policy change. This workshop should include USAID, FSP, FAO, ReSAKSS, SAKSS, Africa Lead, and EEFS.
2. **Update to Institutional Architecture methodology:** Based on the lessons learned from the country assessments, this cross-country study, and the workshop, the Institutional Architecture indicators should be updated.

ANNEX I: CAPACITY FOR POLICY CHANGE INDICATORS

CAPACITY FOR POLICY CHANGE INDICATORS

POLICY ELEMENT 1: PREDICTABILITY OF THE GUIDING POLICY FRAMEWORK
Clearly Defined and Consistent Policy Framework: The policy framework impacting food security policy making is clearly defined, and consistently applied and enforced from year to year.
Predictability and Transparency of the Policy Making Process: The policy development process is transparent in accordance with the rules contained within the country's constitution, basic law, and elsewhere in the formal legal framework.
Clear and Functional Legislative System: There is a legislative capacity to deal with food security policy change, and the legislative requirements are clearly defined and predictable.
Appropriate Dispute Resolution Process/Judicial Framework: The judicial system is perceived as fair and effective, and there is an appropriate system for dispute resolution where conflicts arise relating to food security policy.
Clearly Defined Institutional Responsibilities: Institutional responsibilities are clearly defined, consistently applied, and predictable from year to year.

POLICY ELEMENT 2: POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION
Approved Food Security Strategy/Investment Plan: There is an approved/official multi-sectoral, multi-year food security plan developed, which specifies priorities and objectives, and addresses the roles of various contributors, including across government, the private sector, and CSOs. The vision and strategy to improve food security is clear.
Predictable Policy Agenda and Priorities Developed: The policy items required to achieve the national food strategy have been identified and documented, i.e., specific policy objectives exist.
Work Plans: There is an annual work plan that identifies objectives and activities in regard to policy development.
Coordination Process: There is an entity, such as coordination unit or task force, that has defined membership and meets regularly to discuss, develop, and coordinate food security policy development (and oversee cross-sector coordination).
Secretariat/Administrative Support Function: There is an adequate staff capability to perform required support processes, including coordination, meeting management, communication, and document management. This may be a stand-alone secretariat, or a responsibility within an existing entity.
Technical Capacity: There are work groups, or technical committees, that have the authority and capacity to perform the following functions: identify policy and technical challenges/issues; develop sector- or project-specific policies/strategies; consult within the sector; and draft funding proposals. There should be active participation by the private sector and CSOs on the technical work groups (as appropriate).
Political Support and Approval: There is a line of authority/participation by high-level decision makers above the ministerial level so as to enable efficient political support for the passage and development of new policies, e.g. involvement of prime minister's office (especially for policies that cut across sectors, e.g. trade and agriculture).
Engagement of Parliament/Legislative Body: There is engagement from the country's legislative entity to debate and engage on food security issues, and to sponsor and advocate for the required legal/policy changes.

CAPACITY FOR POLICY CHANGE INDICATORS

POLICY ELEMENT 3: INCLUSIVITY AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Inclusive Participation within the Policy Coordination Management Entity: The main coordination entity has: a) clear goals and participation from key government ministries (beyond just Ministry of Agriculture) and; b) some representation from non-government entities, particularly from donors.

Outreach and Communications: There is a process for interacting with stakeholders and sharing information. This could include regular public "forums," a website of key information, and other mechanisms.

Private Sector Participation – Opportunity/Space: The private sector is provided meaningful opportunity to participate in policy formulation and strategy discussions. This could be through participation in the management/steering committee, in technical work groups and/or through other forums. Communications and interactions should be two-way, and access to key information should be readily available.

Private Sector Participation – Capacity to Participate: Some organizations representing the private sector have the capacity to participate in government-led discussions on food security policy. This is to say they are able to represent their members, they are able to articulate and communicate policy positions, and they are able to provide some level of evidence-based analysis to support their viewpoints.

Participation of CSOs – Opportunity/Space: The CSO sector, including representation from women's associations and farmers associations, is provided meaningful opportunity to participate in policy formulation and strategy discussions. This could be through participation in the management/steering committee, in technical work groups and/or through other forums. Communications and interactions should be two-way, and access to key information should be readily available.

Participation of CSOs – Capacity to Participate: Some organizations representing civil society, including representation from women's associations and farmers associations, have the capacity to participate in government-led discussions on food security policy. This is to say they are able to represent their members, they are able to articulate and communicate policy positions, and they are able to provide some level of evidence-based analysis to support their viewpoints.

POLICY ELEMENT 4: EVIDENCE-BASED ANALYSIS

Economic and Financial Analysis Completed as a Component of Planning: National food security priority policy initiatives/investment plans are based on economic and financial analysis, including independent policy analysis. The analysis is available for public review.

Performance Monitoring Measures and Targets Developed: The national food security policies/plans include specific objectives, performance indicators, and targets exist to monitor the accomplishment of the objectives.

Quality Data Exists for Policy Monitoring: There is a database of quality statistics that is used to routinely report and analyze progress in achieving objectives. (Analysis to be conducted by USDA – and not as part of this assessment framework.)

Quality Data is Available for Policy Making: Data on the performance of the agriculture sector and the food security are publically available and shared in a timely manner. This information is available for others to use and analyze.

Inclusion of Analysis in the Policy Development Process: Evidence-based analysis is considered and used to develop policy priorities/policy proposals.

Annual Performance Measurement Report Produced and Reviewed: Evidence-based analysis is produced to review policy effectiveness (for implemented policies). A formal review session is held, and includes key development partners (including principal donors and multilateral partners, such as FAO and IFPRI). Recommendations are developed as a result of the review and incorporated into subsequent plans.

Independent Analysis Capacity Exists: There exists an independent capacity to analyze food security data and use the analysis to make policy recommendations and engage in policy discussion and advocacy. A research institute, university or similar non-governmental/objective organization could conduct such an analysis. This capacity should be engaged in the government's policy development and review process as, for example, through papers, forums, or participation introduced in official policy review and discussion meetings.

CAPACITY FOR POLICY CHANGE INDICATORS

POLICY ELEMENT 5: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation Plans Developed: The overall food security strategy has been broken down into programs and projects that have: a) a sufficient level of detail to permit implementation; b) have been "packaged" into priority projects that can be managed by ministerial units; and 3) "packaged" priorities can be translated into funding proposals to gain support for projects/programs from development partners (to address financing gaps).

System in Place to Analyze Implementation Capacity Constraints: An analysis of institutional, workforce, system and financial constraints is conducted. Critical implementation constraints are identified; a work plan is developed to address constraints; and implementation actions are moved forward (and periodically reviewed).

Food Security Policy Priorities Aligned with Work Plans of Line Ministries: The priority policy and associated objectives of the national food security strategy are broken down into specific programs and projects (with a sufficient level of detail) so that line ministries can implement policy actions. The plans of individual ministries, and units within ministries, align with overall national strategy and its policy objectives.

Policy Implementation Budget Committed by Host Country: Resources are committed by the host country to implement the identified policy agenda. Over time, the country's budget is adjusted to provide adequate financing for the implementation of actions required to implement policy priorities. Budget documents, including budget proposals, are released fully and in a timely manner.

Supplemental Implementation Funds Secured: Proposals can be submitted, and funds secured, to address financing gaps. Funds may come from multilateral funds (such as GAFSP), regional organizations, bilateral donors and the private sector.

Administrative and Technical Capacity of Staff to Implement Policy Change: Administrative and technical capacity exists within the government to effectively manage the implementation process. There is a system to coordinate implementation across departments.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Capacity exists within the public sector, private sector, or civil society to review the effectiveness and impact of policy changes. Sector reviews are performed and other research evidence is collected. There is a system to share, store, and access the findings from these reviews.

POLICY ELEMENT 6: MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

A Forum Exists for Regularly Scheduled Donor-Government Meetings: These meetings discuss policy and programs and set priorities. Meetings may include, for example, Joint Sector Reviews, sector working groups, or other similar arrangements.

Joint Policy Priorities Developed: A document exists that articulates the shared policy objectives between the government and the donor community.

Monitoring System Exists: Performance measures exist (for the performance commitments of the government and for the performance commitments of the donors). There is a schedule for reviewing and documenting progress – at least on an annual basis.

Donor Coordination – Alignment and Harmonization: There is a process for donor participation in the food security policy process and for aligning government and donor objectives and priorities. Donor programs should contribute directly to host country strategies, plans, and objectives. This may include the signing of cooperation frameworks that indicate a joint commitment to specific policy change goals.

Private Sector Accountability: The government provides feedback to the private sector on the performance of the food security program (including the private sector's role) and provides an opportunity for dialogue on the program and its performance.

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