



CAADP



Report of the Malabo Policy Learning Event on the Biennial Review Report & Process

23rd and 24th April 2018

Libreville, Gabon

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Background and opening session

The 3rd Malabo Policy Learning Event was opened with a set of remarks from representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture in Gabon; ReSAKSS Africa; CAADP Non-State Actors Coalition; NPCA and DREA. Their remarks raised the following points:

- 1) CAADP Biennial Review (BR) process started and ended with clear marker. The continent has now shown that significant tasks can be delivered through concerted action and cooperation
- 2) The Learning Event comes at an opportune time and heralds “data revolution in support of development”
- 3) The BR process seemed impossible until it was done; but has now triggered renewed interest in CAADP
- 4) Mutual accountability is multi-faceted and requires all actors to be accountable to each other and for resources (at their disposal), actions and results.
- 5) The inaugural BR experience is a success. How can we sustain it?
- 6) Governments are expecting much from technical experts in the BR process; hence a need to be organized and committed

The key questions posed for discussion by the opening panel:

- 1) What worked well?
- 2) What could have been better?
- 3) What are we going to do with lessons learned from the BR process and report?
- 4) How do we mainstream the implications of the BR report into policy making, NAIP formulation and implementation?
- 5) How do we improve credibility and integrity of country data systems to ensure data more accurately reflects country reality?

Experiences, Lessons and Perspectives on Biennial Review

The meeting discussed experiences, lessons and perspectives on the BR process. We have divided them by level at which they were learnt – country, regional, continental – and included perspectives from the NSA and Development partners. Just before the discussions, the Director of AUC/DREA presented the BR report and results (annexed separately).

Country Level Lessons & Recommendations from the BR Process

Led by government representatives from the AU Member States present, the meeting discussed country-level lessons derived from the BR process. These are synthesized as follows:

- 1) Using existing structures such as national statistics offices and Joint Sector Reviews (JSR) processes improves efficiency, builds partnerships and speeds up data collection. The meeting recommended that the BR system recognizes that data comes from sources beyond the ministry of agriculture and strengthens country data management systems by integrating BR indicators into country data collection and M&E systems
- 2) The use of proxy indicators to measure parameters that are difficult to measure, or for which there is no data where data makes the process easier and faster.
- 3) Missing or inconsistent data for some indicators did not necessarily mean unavailability. In some cases (e.g. Rwanda) these indicators are defined and measured in different ways from what is proposed in BR technical guidelines. In other countries (examples: Kenya & Malawi) data, though available in different forms, is not centrally-managed and therefore could not be accessed and compiled within limited timelines. In other instances (Burkina Faso) available data was yet to be processed.

- 4) BR experience created good ground for advocating for more and better monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems within countries; M&E officers now feel more empowered because their work has direct relevance and implications beyond the country.
- 5) The persisting socioeconomic and political situation in a country influences performance in BR process (countries going through strife had poor response)
- 6) *Coordination and inclusivity*: the BR process requires significant and concerted support. Mobilizing in-country support (political, technical and financial) was critical to successful implementation. Country teams must recognize that inclusivity and stakeholder ownership in data collection, validation and reporting as a success factor for the BR process
- 7) There is need to enhance coordination mechanisms to involve all CAADP constituencies early and consistently.
- 8) *Timeliness*: Begin future BR processes in time to allow member states to access and report on quality, credible, verified and reliable data
- 9) Countries requested the AU to involve Member States during any redesign and review of indicators
- 10) The use of digital tools and new technology for data collection, collation and reporting may improve accuracy, efficiency and timeliness of reporting
- 11) The use BR results to influence policy must be a part of the BR process design. It was recommended that a direct link be made between the BR process and NAIP reformulation and implementation process so that BR results start to directly influence agricultural investment choices.

Experiences, lessons and recommendations from RECS

A panel discussion drawn from participating RECS (ECOWAS, UMA, COMESA, EAC, SADC & ECCAS) framed the conversation about what had been learnt at the regional level.

Summary: Role of RECS in the BR process

RECS are perceived to have added value to the BR process and continue to play important coordination roles:

- ⇒ They mobilize important and strong political support for the BR process.
- ⇒ RECS act as an intermediary between AUC/NPCA and member states, convening meetings, and communicating with member states
- ⇒ They coordinated training, follow-up meetings, coaching and some process mentoring
- ⇒ RECS track reporting process and facilitate data validation at regional level
- ⇒ They mobilize development partners to support the process
- ⇒ They create awareness about the BR process and sensitize stakeholders in the region

The experiences and lessons learnt by RECS include:

- 1) The need for dedicated resources - coordination is challenging without resources. RECs support to member states was limited by inadequate funding. For instance, for some RECS, data validation at regional level was compromised by limited funding. In addition to approaching Development Partners at regional level, we recommend measures to attract private sector investment into both process and technical interventions.
- 2) Process ownership is key to BR process and calls for going back to the basic principles of CAADP
- 3) The success of BR process was anchored on pre-existing relationships with countries through the NAIP process and the mandate of RECS that allowed them to interact with countries

- 4) The BR process has emerged as the only point of engagement with some member states on CAADP after a season of inactivity.
- 5) CAADP Malabo-compliant NAIPs are critical to BR process. Countries without Malabo-compliant NAIPs appear to have put the horse before cart. The BR process measures progress in the implementation of Malabo. If there is no Malabo-compliant plan in a country, then what progress is being measured?
- 6) The BR is a good businesslike approach that is also useful for mobilizing financing. RECs need to support member states to take full advantage of the BR process.
- 7) BR process is now helping to rationalize and add value to some of the ongoing M&E efforts in RECS. For example, the BR process has become a standing agenda at SADC secretariat level and as a result, protocols on data collection, analysis and validation are due to be standardized.
- 8) There is urgent need to strengthen networks and relationships with technical partners (Technical Networks) to mobilize support for member states to improve the BR reporting process and the corrective actions implied by BR results.
- 9) The BR report should be strengthened to more closely identify priority interventions both at country and regional level (based on the performance data)
- 10) Missing data – Mainly because some indicators were not understood and consequently not reported by some member states. The RECS recommended a re-examination and review of such indicators together with member states to make them simpler and more applicable across countries with varied agricultural systems and data system capacities
- 11) While JSRs play a seemingly important role both at national level and regional level in west Africa (particularly), their role in the BR process is not clear in some countries. It was recommended that a clear link be made between the BR, JSR and NAIP processes to enhance synergy and eliminate confusion.
- 12) Some countries did not fill in their data in full due to financial constraints. The BR report can point to such countries, which need extra help (financially and technically). Furthermore, it is recommended that stakeholders and the AU system use the BR report to identify countries that need significant NAIP-related technical and financial support.

Lessons at the continental level

Lessons Learnt from the BR process at continental level are summarized below:

- 1) Multi stakeholder approaches are critical to BR process, and countries need to take advantage of existing mechanisms. For example, fewer challenges were observed in countries where JSR is entrenched in processes
- 2) Benchmarking is a critical center piece in the whole exercise
- 3) The BR data must be used to trigger action. Countries are interested in progressing. Processes should be developed to help countries do more to react to the BR data.
- 4) CAADP is a worthy investment: The BR report appears to corroborate other research in offering evidence that investment in the CAADP process pays off. There are some simple, but strong correlations between CAADP process, mutual accountability scores and ultimately economic performance. There are a few countries that show the opposite, therefore more analysis is needed to build support and evidence-based advocacy for NAIP and BR processes.
- 5) BR process has re-energized momentum among member states around the CAADP process
- 6) Good planning and implementation processes gives good results
- 7) Using technology proved effective in communicating BR among stakeholders – for example, trainers on WhatsApp groups has helped share real-time information
- 8) Engaging technical partners in advance was very useful to the country process. Technical experts provided training, ongoing technical support and backstopping.
- 9) Convening by CAADP Champion (Ethiopian Prime Minister) made Heads of States and Government to feel confident in the process and the outcomes

Communicating the outcome of the BR process can be done best through:

- 1) Inclusivity – Bring all CAADP constituents together, to identify, share and package key messages appropriate for different clients based on their needs; and engage NSAs including media to disseminate
- 2) Invest in tools to guide countries on the BR process – from design to communication of results
- 3) Integrate results and actionable areas of the BR report into NAIPs during NAIP reviews.
- 4) Advocacy and communication through:
 - Sharing thematic briefs for each country and regional summary
 - Make the process people oriented – as opposed to being technically-driven
 - Communicating and popularizing then current BR report (results)
 - Organizing BR learning events at REC or regional levels
 - Taking advantage of every convening to sensitize on BR

Changes that must be implemented to improve the BR process were identified as:

- 1) Member states to drive the CAADP Malabo processes, ensuring ownership and domestication of country strategies to Malabo
- 2) Strengthen coordination and promote the Malabo spirit of inclusivity
- 3) Improve transparency and credibility by managing country expectations. In other words, help countries to plan on what is achievable and realistic
- 4) Only accept data that is credible and from reliable and verifiable data sources
- 5) Introduce weighting of scores, and demonstrate that better action translates to better scores and improved livelihoods
- 6) Support countries to develop coherent and consistent results frameworks and prioritize interventions that are directly linked to anticipated results
- 7) Make the BR process simpler and people-oriented. Ensure that the content of BR reports is useable
- 8) Bring on board other technical networks to support the process
- 9) Be prescriptive in presentation of results, to not only explain results, but also to give directions on how to achieve better outcomes to foster change
- 10) Build on the outcomes of the report, push for right changes based on evidence and hold governments and RECS accountable for any commitments made
- 11) Make good policy and invest mutual in accountability actions and processes

Perspectives from the Non-State Actors and Development Partners

Two input presentations by the NSA coalition and the DPCG, respectively, set the stage for a discussion; “*NSAs Experience with the Inaugural CAADP BR Process: Perspectives for the Future Processes*” and “*Development Partner experiences - thoughts on how the BR report and process can be used to trigger additional support to countries*”. The key highlights of the presentations were:

NSA’s perspectives:

- 1) The BR was a learning process that needs to be appreciated and results used
- 2) The BR process was of value to all CAADP constituents and NSAs are satisfied with its success and great achievement.
- 3) Though not involved as expected at the onset of the process, NSAs were engaged in part of the validation. More engagement is necessary in future process
- 4) NSA’s could have done more at the methodology design stage. For example, NSA’s feel there is need to review methodologies and presentation of BR results to take care of qualitative data

- 5) NSA's have knowledge to share and would like to be given more consideration in the next phase
- 6) Would like to have more constructive engagement in defining problems and providing solutions
- 7) NSAs are positioning themselves to add value to BR process by seeking partners to work with in driving the agenda (by engaging more) and communicating results of BR report

The Development Partners observed that:

- 1) Achievement of the BR is an incredibly good results and partners want to be associated with it.
- 2) Quality data will help Development Partners to have a vision and clarity for their support to national, regional and continental processes.
- 3) Development partners have opportunity to use BR report to prioritize interventions based on country needs
- 4) The BR report presented quantitative, empirical evidence in a compelling format that can move things around and trigger transformation
- 5) Inclusivity in internal country validation processes showed evidence of mutual accountability
- 6) On data coverage: DPCG recommends the harmonization of the BR indicators and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- 7) Analytical quality of data builds support and better buy-in by partners
- 8) Communication tool: invest in some complementary tools beyond the scorecard (*two other tools were subsequently presented*)
- 9) Development partners commit to show interest and support in moving this agenda forward

The Scorecard and the Dashboard as instruments for Mutual Accountability

The Scorecard consists of the entire set of BR indicators and contains an overall score for each country. It allows one to see the entire result in one document. The Dashboard is a subset of the Scorecard that contains 18 indicators. The Dashboard pulls out this set of indicators for each country and presents them on a spreadsheet for ease of comparison, communication and peer review. Both instruments are useful for communication at different levels to different audiences depending on the depth of information required and the necessity to trigger mutual accountability. After some discussion it was agreed:

1. That both the Scorecard and Dashboard be used as communication tools as appropriate to create awareness, mobilizing stakeholders and trigger in-country policy reforms.
2. That the set of indicators contained in the Dashboard may be reviewed as appropriate for relevance and impact (*an earlier technical meeting had come up with the initial 10 indicators*). In addition, suggestions on design improvement would be welcome.
3. That whereas there is a need to plan for the 2020 BR data collection and reporting; there is still significant need to popularize the 2018 BR report and ensure it is generating improvement action and policy changes. (*To this end, a sub-group was formed to consider communication of the BR report*).
4. To identify and discuss how to increase the utilization of the BR in the NAIP development process and policy reformulation. (*To this end another sub-group was formed to discuss how to trigger in-country reforms*).

Meeting participants were also introduced to a Country Dashboard and Communication App (*developed with support of USAID*) which can be used to diagnose challenges and take appropriate action to improve results. The application, which is still under development, allows countries to identify the highest priority actions – those that would cause significant improvement and those that are hindering progress – based on the BR data. The app was positively reviewed, and participants felt it should be

rolled put as part of BR processes in countries. Screenshots of the app are attached to this report as annexes.

High priority actions to take the BR process to the next level

Participants, finally split into four groups to discuss some high priority actions based on the lessons gathered so far. The groups first reflected on key lessons in their subject area (related to the BR) before discussing the possibilities for improvement going forward. We report on each of these groups below:

ACTION AREA 1: Linking BR to policy and programmes: How to use the 2018 BR report to trigger changes at country level

What went well in the concluded BR process:

- 1) High level political support (Head of States and Governments!) that has renewed the impetus for CAADP implementation
- 2) Good buy-in by countries (country level ownership/leadership) that resulted in 47 out of 55 submitting BR data
- 3) Good partnership and working relationships between AUC/RECs/Member States/Technical partners and development partners
- 4) BR process had a sense of multi-stakeholder approach at country level
- 5) BR process revealed and exposed areas (indicators) that require more investment in data collection and management

What can be improved

- 1) Even more inclusivity is required at country level (to merge the technical processes with wider stakeholder involvement). This would help provide the 'stories' behind the numbers
- 2) More discussion, dissemination and communication at the country level to dispel the feeling that the BR process was 'top-down' rather than 'bottom-up'
- 3) Regional level implications of the BR report are not very clear (for instance, what are the implications for the Regional Agriculture Investment Plans (RAIP)?)
- 4) Most of the social outcome indicators were reported as 'not having data' for many countries. Examples include data on Youth & Women participation. What exactly is the implication of this result? Does it imply that countries ignore these important areas?
- 5) The BR process was rushed at the country level (there is need for more qualitative analysis to better understand the quantitative indicators).
- 6) At the country level, the BR process was led by very few people who were 'overwhelmed' by the amount of work necessary. We need to build capacity for more people at the country level (cross-ministerial teams and other stakeholders to ensure broader data area coverage)
- 7) For some countries that performed well on the CAADP process, the economic indicators and outcome indicators (e.g. poverty level) were not impressive. There is poor or weak correlation between process indicators and outcome indicators. There is need to weigh the outcome indicators more heavily to avoid a situation where countries are ranked as being on track despite poor performance on the outcome indicators.
- 8) Some important indicators especially for food security may have been missed (e.g. those related to forestry and fisheries)

Opportunities for cross-fertilization to link BR to policy and program include:

- 1) BR report should inform on-going NAIP formulation process in the countries (to use it as a planning tool not just a performance monitoring tool)
- 2) BR reporting should be linked to the JSR
- 3) Explore link between the BR and SDG indicators

Suggested actions to improve future BR process were outlined as follows:

- a) At continental level
 1. AU to synthesize key messages and lessons arising from the BR and create programmes around them
 2. AU working with Technical Networks to lead discussions on the revision of indicators
 3. Consider harmonizing the score card and dash board – both are useful.
- b) At Regional Level
 1. Undertake political mobilization in support of BR process at regional level (i.e. at the ministerial committee levels):
 - EAC (planned for July 2018)
 - COMESA (in September 2018)
- c) At Country level
 1. Organize a platform to discuss BR and its policy implication for the country
 2. Incorporate BR into JSR process
 3. Organize a meeting of technical networks and institutes to discuss technical issues around data, indicators, reporting & policy implications
 4. Undertake further analysis at country level on the policy implication of the BR

ACTION AREA 2: Strengthening Country Level Systems

The lessons learnt on strengthening country-level data systems were as follows:

- a) Data
 1. Missing data for key variables (e.g. Most countries – average 70% - not reporting on 9 indicators)
 2. Specific indicators require special studies (e.g. women empowerment in agriculture index)
 3. Governments are not investing resources in data collection
 4. Data coordination, harmonization and synergy with existing M&E systems
 5. Data scattered in different agencies – it needs to be centralized and publicly available
 6. Data credibility is an issue in some cases (need for verification)
 7. Levels of disaggregation need to be agreed (by sex, age, commodity etc.)
 8. Consultations with all national stakeholders (private sector, academia, farmer organizations)
- b) Document each variable before inclusion in national statistical systems. Some issues noted include:
 1. Infrequent surveys for some indicators
 2. Some data is considered politically sensitive and was withheld. (e.g. current disaggregated data on poverty levels and public health in some countries)
- c) Need for strategies to build statistical and M&E capacities
- d) Need for collaboration at continental, regional and national levels on agriculture statistical systems and knowledge management

The policy messages were identified as:

- 1) Advocate for BR results beyond the aggregated scores
- 2) Hold country dialogues among sector stakeholders to reflect (& validate) on the data and results
- 3) Hold inter-ministerial dialogues around the Malabo Declaration and performance of countries hence highlighting the need for better data systems

To effectively link to other processes while strengthening country level data systems, the following are key considerations:

- 1) Use the JSR process to generate the BR and allow consideration and alignment to other processes (SDGs, AU Agenda 2063, AU/regional commitments, other national priorities)
- 2) Avoid duplication of data collection efforts
- 3) Technical and Development Partners should provide more support the BR process to strengthen capacities and efficiently use resources
- 4) Call for data analysis through analytical networks (academia, research centers, think tanks, country SAKSS, among others)

The actions that must be put in place to strengthen country-level data systems are:

- 1) Developing briefs to support national dialogues among national stakeholders
- 2) Assessment of statistical systems related to BR requirements at country level. This includes institutional mapping of statistical systems with regard to BR requirements
- 3) Have an Agriculture Sector Working Group (or equivalent) with the support from technical partners
- 4) Form technical review committees to review the quality of data before releasing them
- 5) Pursue alignment of BR to national planning processes to build greater ownership
- 6) Need for peer learning across countries!
- 7) Build a bridge between data producers and users
- 8) Build capacities at institutional, organization and individual levels (for data collection, collation, dissemination, analysis and utilization)

ACTION AREA 3: Communicating BR and enhancing visibility

To use the BR report in communicating better, help (re)position Africa's agriculture and strengthen Mutual Accountability, it is important to note that – (1) *The report (product) is out, and it needs to get out to the different constituencies. This means a need for strategy to take out the report to different audiences for their use; and (2) There is a huge demand for the product. But our communication and advocacy needs to be cautious on its use noting the quality and credibility of issues raised*

The questions at hand are therefore:

- a) What are we trying to solve, noting that there are discussions on data quality and process?
- b) What do we want to see different?
- c) What do we want to communicate?

The process should therefore be inclusive and smooth; aimed to address and draw attention to data challenges and generate attention to agriculture transformation in a very specific way.

To effectively communicate, it is critical to:

- 1) Organize communication working groups [AUC/AGRA] - which link and work with the CAADP Focal Point to promote Country Communication and Advocacy Plans (that are contextualised to respond to country incentives) for the BRR. CAADP Focal Point need to work with the Ministry

communication and media team, in addition to the CAADP journalist network; and identify NSAs to dialogue, translate and disseminate the BR recommendations as soon as possible before losing the momentum

- 2) Use a centralised BR platform for information sharing and dissemination. There is need to review and build on what exists, consolidate and centralise. The ReSAKSS website/online platform acts as a repository for different CAADP documents, but should we create a branded platform for the BRR and Scorecard and all other tools or create an online landing page/portal/interface page that links to all information/data available on the Biennial Report. CAADP Branding, needs to build awareness around the BRR and Scorecard.
- 3) Development and sharing of knowledge products such as: a) Policy briefs (ReSAKSS?) and b) Research findings – how do we permeate the BR report in all our work? Currently the Annual Trends and Agriculture Report captures all CAADP indicators and BR indicators should be included going forward
- 4) Development of communication/media toolkits for:
 - Key Events/platforms to capitalize on these moments to rally up momentum and action behind the BR report.
 - Communication and advocacy champions at national, regional and continental levels. A review of the malaria scorecard structure will be handy to learn from on how this operational structure works. That is:
 - ⇒ Operating in different geographies and dimensions
 - ⇒ Strategic communication people mixed with influencing professionals who would develop the fundamentals of a strategy for the kind of people we are trying to influence – think sector wide, on issues like – how do we influence discussions in Rome, how do we link to the CIGIAR, how do we link to other audiences that are not agriculture?
 - ⇒ Separate out communication within the CAADP system
 - Stakeholder analysis needs to be carried out that would identify the institutions to drive different agendas at different levels (national, regional and international)

IMMEDIATE ACTION: As an immediate action, the team constituted an interim taskforce that will meet during the CAADP PP to further the above agenda and draw out a clear roadmap. The team include: AGRA – Waiganjo, Cynthia Harriet; IFPRI/ReSAKSS – Hawa Diop, Tsitsi; AUC/NPCA – Carol, Mwanja (convener); Trust Africa – Beth; BMGF – Rinn; Wasafari- Alex; CNC – Kop’ep and Kenya – Okeyo Isaiah

Developing key messages will require the following:

- 1) Knowledge on when to develop message
- 2) Academic champions to further the agenda
- 3) Setting a framework for a working group on communication, which builds on drawing in champion; and is linked to the mutual accountability network (led by AUC, NPCA and AGRA) to draw in more partners
- 4) CNC to take up the interpretation and domestication of the BRR and Scorecard for local consumption; with Government being a key stakeholder at country and subnational levels.
- 5) Develop continental and national communication plan with deadlines for the 2018 BRR and AATS. Government being a key constituent there is need to:
 - ⇒ Engage governments as champions continentally and globally
 - ⇒ Lobby Government to communicate the results of the BRR within the country and open up the space for inclusivity

⇒ Select 5 countries to use communication, engaging parliamentary groups, and drive strong advocacy around the BR Report

ACTION AREA 4: Improving Technical Instruments, Processes and Indicators

The BR design instruments include:

- a. *Design instruments* - CAADP Results Framework; CAADP Implementation Strategy and Road Map; Technical Guidelines; and Country Reporting Templates
- b. *Data Processing Instruments* - Technical Note, and Data Entry Tool
- c. *Coordination Instruments* - Coordination Mechanism Document; Country Grouping and Reporting flow from country to continental

The main lessons drawn from the BR were highlighted as:

- 1) Good and genuine partnerships are beneficial (AUC/NEPAD, RECs, countries, Technical Partners, development partners)
- 2) RECs and trainers are key to training, follow up and coordination of the countries in BR process.
- 3) For inclusivity and effective communication, clearly outline constituents of Agriculture to include crop, livestock and fisheries.
- 4) Successful BR data collection process calls for coordination and inclusivity of all CAADP constituents
- 5) Correct interpretation, measurements and description are drawn when indicators are well defined. There is need to review indicator definitions especially for complicated indicators (e.g. vulnerability) to draw meaning from them
- 6) Decisions on how to define proxy indicators that are comparable across countries is critical to BR process
- 7) Maintaining consistency of the participants representing member states is key for continuity, coordination and follow-up.
- 8) BR data collection should actively involve technical partners in the country agriculture sub-sectors to fill data gaps e.g. Technical Partners involved in post-harvest losses, youth employment in agriculture, vulnerability etc.
- 9) Strengthening country data systems and capacities to collect data is a way forward to minimize gaps due to missing data and ensure quality, validated and credible BR data is submitted by member states.
- 10) Countries need to explore and adopt innovative data collection systems beyond the manual system of entering data, for instance, the use of web-based applications for entering and processing data at country level that is automatically transmitted to RECs and continental levels.

The main policy messages are:

- 1) Strengthen the coordination of the BR process, and exchange of information at all levels.
- 2) Strengthen the national statistics systems, with emphasis in integrating BR indicators into national data collection systems.
- 3) Invest in data, tools for data collection and management
- 4) Harmonise data policy at regional level.
- 5) Institutionalize M&E for NAIPs and RAIPs
- 6) Support development of a web-based tool that is complete e.g. definition of indicators