

# **Guidelines for Undertaking Agriculture Joint Sector Reviews**

**Developed by:  
The CAADP Joint Action Group on  
Monitoring and Evaluation and  
Mutual Accountability**

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## Contents

1.0	CONTEXT: .....	1
2.0	Joint Sector Reviews.....	2
2.1	The General Aim of the JSR Guidelines.....	2
3.0	The Principles underpinning JSRs .....	3
4.0	Timing and Periodicity of JSRs.....	6
5.0	Scope and content .....	6
6.0	The Joint Sector Review Process .....	7
6.1	The Planning Phase .....	8
6.2	Data collection .....	11
6.3	Analysis and synthesis of findings .....	12
	The Value-Addition of JSRs .....	12
6.4	Dissemination of findings and recommendations and follow-up .....	13
	Suggestions for ensuring that the Review recommendations are operationalized .....	15
7.	Challenges of Organizing and Managing Joint Sector Reviews.....	16
Annex 1:	Proposed Layout of JSR Report .....	a

## 1.0 CONTEXT:

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) is the Africa-owned plan for agriculture-led development in Africa to eliminate hunger and reduce food insecurity. In pursuit of the CAADP goals, pledges and commitments have been made by various stakeholders. Within the realm of translating the pledges and commitments into tangible actions, the Mutual Accountability Framework (MAF) for CAADP was developed (NPCA, March 2011).

Mutual Accountability requires that each Stakeholder commits to, and is held accountable for their actions within the framework of collective responsibility on a shared agenda. In the context of CAADP, it is critical that collective action processes are clearly defined within a shared agricultural development agenda and an agreed joint operational framework. Furthermore, mutual accountability should encourage peer support and learning, considering that the successful execution of one stakeholders' roles is critical to the realization of the overall shared agenda and development objectives. This calls for high commitment and trust among the stakeholders.

Mutual accountability takes place when governments, donors and involved stakeholders all hold one another accountable for jointly agreed-upon development results. The Paris Declaration on Aid effectiveness<sup>1</sup> identifies Mutual Accountability for Development Results as one of the principles necessary for development effectiveness. At the country level, development of a framework of joint action and sharing of performance information based on mutually agreed performance criteria is a key condition to ensuring effective implementation of CAADP. Of critical importance is that the process is guided by a shared agenda, common objectives, coupled with genuine dialogue and debate among the stakeholders on the results in light of agreed performance indicators.

In order to ensure adequate monitoring and evaluation of agriculture sector developments as guided by CAADP, the African Union called for the development of an M&E system. In 2010, a continent wide system M&E framework for CAADP was developed by a team of resource persons from the Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS), the Africa Union Commission, the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA), the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and other organisations (Benin et al 2010). The CAADP M&E framework outlines a set of performance indicators – including indicators that can be used for promoting mutual accountability and peer review across sub-national units, countries and regions as well as at the continental level. *These indicators may be regarded as a minimum set of indicators to which countries can add according to their specific realities and interests when designing performance measurement systems or when strengthening their evidence-bases, for example when undertaking country level agriculture sector reviews.*

<sup>1</sup> [www.mfdr.org/sourcebook/2-1Paris.pdf](http://www.mfdr.org/sourcebook/2-1Paris.pdf)

## 2.0 Joint Sector Reviews

The CAADP Mutual Accountability Framework (MAF) provides the broad architecture for review, dialogue and debate in the implementation of sector development plans. Various initiatives, such as Joint Sector Reviews (JSRs), provide the basis for performance assessment which is a prerequisite for effective planning, budgeting and overall policy decision making. Furthermore, such initiatives provide useful platforms for stakeholders to get insights into, and influence policies and priorities in the sector.

In this regard, Joint Sector Reviews are considered to be appropriate platforms for applying the CAADP Mutual Accountability Framework at country level. JSRs should provide opportunities for generating evidence-based data on CAADP performance, guided by the continent-wide M&E framework and drawing lessons and good practices at the country level. JSRs should also provide information for regional and continental level performance reporting.

### 2.1 The General Aim of the JSR Guidelines

The general aim of the Joint Sector Review (JSR) guidelines is to assist Country stakeholders to strengthen/develop and implement Joint Sector Reviews (JSRs) for the Agriculture sector in their respective countries. The guidelines also highlight the function of the JSR as a management and policy support tool for inclusive stakeholder review, planning, programming directions, budget preparation and overall guidance on policy orientation.

It is noteworthy that all countries already have various processes that obtain to Joint Sector Review undertakings. These guidelines hence aim at strengthening such processes within the frame of promoting mutual accountability on the CAADP agenda.

The **primary purpose of the JSR** is to strengthen existing national monitoring, evaluation, dialogue and accountability processes. This involves strengthening the assessment of sector performance in light of the intended results.

A JSR therefore should seek to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the “operationalization” of the sector strategy or development plan and jointly agree on areas and

More specifically, the JSR should seek to:

- i) Describe and analyse the structure, conduct and performance of the sector, as well as its associated programs and policies. In countries that have already done a JSR, this review will also build on the previous ones; in this case, sector performance is reviewed against the actions agreed in the previous review or in other appropriate forums;
- ii) Identify strengths and weaknesses of the sector and associated policies and programs including the appropriateness of government's priorities; and
- iii) Make recommendations for increased effectiveness and efficiency in sector performance.

timelines for further work by key stakeholders. While a JSR focuses more on evaluation, dialogue and accountability processes, it also strengthens the monitoring process by creating demand and indicating user preferences/needs for monitoring data and information.

**Mandate** - The Mandate of commissioning a JSR lies with the accounting officer of the key ministry responsible for agriculture. The purpose, scope, scale and timing of the JSR will be determined by a committee designated by the management of the agriculture ministry in collaboration with other key strategic partners in the sector, and coordinated with inter-ministerial CAADP processes.

It is important to ensure that the JSR process involves the participation of the appropriate stakeholders from the outset and that there is agreement on the key performance areas that will be reviewed. This will contribute to increased ownership of the findings of the review especially by the Ministry of Agriculture and all major stakeholders, which in turn will boost the likelihood of implementing the recommendations of the review.

The principles of Mutual Accountability and country ownership are pertinent to a successful JSR process, ensuring that Governments, donors and non-state actors including the private sector and civil society are actively involved in the review, dialogue and debate processes along a shared agricultural development agenda, and that all stakeholders are accountable to one another – based on individual stakeholder commitments to jointly agreed results. There are two critical types of performance data relevant to Mutual Accountability: implementation data—data on effective implementation of commitments made by individual donors, government and the private sector in support of the shared development agenda; and impact data—sector performance data informing the level of impact on societal goals such as poverty reduction and food security, that are associated with successfully executing the portfolio of actions specified in the shared development agenda.

### 3.0 The Principles underpinning JSRs

The following principles should inform the preparation, implementation and follow-up of Joint Reviews of the agriculture sector.

**National Ownership:** Joint Reviews are a government-led national exercise and the process is, preferably, to be initiated and driven by the key Ministry responsible for Agriculture and/or designated coordinating entity for example the CAADP country team/a JSR steering committee). Country Agriculture Sector Development plans should ideally provide the targets, against which progress and performance is objectively measured.

Reviews are more likely to be productive if the framework of joint action has strong political backing from the political leadership of the sector endorsing the JSR. The participation of political leaders in the review process throughout is very important. It is also vital to have a top politician such as the Prime Minister or Minister of Finance for example officiating at the opening or closing function of the JSR final reporting workshop. Furthermore, it is important to secure commitment to the recommendations of JSRs among the key stakeholders – including (sub)-national governments.

**Relevance:** JSRs should have a Review Steering Committee. The Committee should ensure that the design, scope, scale, and any special focus areas for the review are relevant to the status and trends of Agriculture sector development in the country. The Committee should be multi-ministerial: although the key concept underpinning the review is a shared agricultural development as expressed through a country's agricultural development plan or strategy, the portfolio of actions required to successfully implement the strategy requires buy-in from other ministries. The actions should also be informed by strategic outcomes such as improved nutrition that have positive impacts across multiple sectors.

**Inclusiveness and Participation:** All relevant partners and stakeholders should be part of the whole process of planning and implementing JSRs. Particular attention must be paid to securing genuine participation of farmers' organizations and of vulnerable populations such as women who get directly affected by the performance and risks in the Agriculture sector. Where an inclusive multi-stakeholder agriculture coordinating committee does not yet exist, the JSR may be used as an opportunity to form one in order to institutionalize inclusiveness and participation in a sustainable way.

**Commitment to results by all participants:** Genuine involvement in the planning and implementation of the Review will foster the likelihood of participants committing to follow up on the findings and recommendations. Accordingly, clear follow-up mechanisms should be established.

**Evidence-based:** The Review should be informed by data from national M&E frameworks, complemented by data from partners' programs or projects, specific sub-sector reviews and reviews of discrete elements of the Agriculture sector e.g. public expenditure reviews. It should also take into account and incorporate scientific and technical developments.

**Transparency:** The choice of the Review Team as well as the review methodologies should be transparent such as to enhance objectivity and minimize biases and prejudices. Relevant JSR data, evidence and documents should be published or made public in a timely fashion so that stakeholder groups can be active participants in the evidence-based dialogue.

**Enhancing national planning:** Reviews are a critical part of programming cycles, and are not an end in themselves; ultimately, the execution of JSRs should contribute to strengthening the national planning systems. Therefore the timing of implementing JSRs should be informed by

the planning and programming cycle of the Agriculture Sector. Ideally the timing should precede or be appropriately aligned to the national development planning, legislative reviews and budgeting cycles. This will enable the findings of the reviews to inform the planning and budgeting decisions.

***Sensitivity to gender and other cross-cutting issues:*** The Joint Review process provides an excellent opportunity to factor in the important, but often downplayed or even neglected crosscutting considerations of gender and human rights. In order to achieve this, data to be collected needs to be disaggregated by gender and other demographic criteria – to the extent possible. This will enable analysis of issues - by gender for example.

***Learning experience:*** A major consideration and benefit of the joint review process is that it enables stakeholders to learn from each other's expertise and experiences and contribute to building national capacity for implementation.

***Multi-Sector Orientation:*** The review should recognize that agriculture and food security goals in a country are not solely dependent on the activities of the ministry of agriculture. Other ministries such as trade, industry, works and environment, as well as the private sector, the legislature, civil society, commodity associations and farmers organizations play an important role in fostering agricultural production, food security and income. For this reason, the review process should reflect a multi-sectoral approach and be implemented by a broad range of stakeholders.

Furthermore, it is expected that all partners in the Agriculture sector align their efforts to clearly articulated National Strategic Plans and annual or biennial action plans. This enhances the relevance and ease of joint and multi-stakeholder agriculture sector reviews.

In principle, there should not be Donor-only led or government-only sector reviews. Ultimately, as a comprehensive Joint Review mechanism becomes well established, it should progressively override the need for parallel and/or asynchronous review processes that have heavy transaction costs for governments, non-state actors and development partners alike.

***Sustainability:*** The JSR process should be conducted within existing frameworks and processes as much as possible in order to encourage sustainability of the reviews. In this regard, deliberate efforts should be made to design the review in such a way that it can be feasibly and sustainably carried out periodically – making particular considerations of time, cost and manpower implications. In line with this, existing monitoring, evaluation, dialogue and accountability structures, processes and institutions should be engaged and strengthened where necessary.



## 4.0 Timing and Periodicity of JSRs

The timing and frequency for joint reviews will depend on specific country contexts, usually linked to wider government planning, budgeting, and legislative reviews and reporting processes. National Strategic Frameworks or Plans, often with three- to five-year time frames, often define the frequency and timing of periodic studies and hence could be useful guides on the periodicity and timing of the joint sector reviews.

The timing of a joint review must be congruent with the national Agriculture Sector planning and budgeting cycle (including, where applicable, legislative reviews on agriculture), so that the findings can inform reprogramming of ongoing efforts or planning for a new national strategy and programme. In addition, congruence with national development planning, sectoral planning and budgeting cycles is important for the alignment and integration of Agriculture Sector related priorities into non-Agriculture sectors such as education, health, water, roads, youth and women's affairs, etc, as well as mobilization of domestic and international resources.

As annual or biennial costed work plans become the norm, a light annual Joint Review process should be envisaged, complemented by a more intensive and comprehensive mid-term review.

## 5.0 Scope and content

The scope of the Joint Review should be comprehensive to examine mutually agreed aspects of the Agriculture Sector Development at country level. It is recommended that the review takes advantage of and uses the validated CAADP M&E system (Benin et al 2010) as a stepping-stone to a more country specific review of the agriculture sector. Overall, the review should be designed to answer fundamental questions such as the following:

1. To what extent did the environment enable agriculture growth during the review period? How supportive were agriculture policies and governance structures to agricultural growth? Are there critical management issues? Are mechanisms for coordination at all levels effective? What aspects should be improved to promote agriculture growth?
2. At what stage in the CAADP implementation process is the country and what are the emerging results, the challenges and lessons learnt? What should be done to enhance / sustain the momentum of implementation?
3. What is the size, structure and observable trend(s) in agriculture funding? Are the stakeholders in the sector meeting their various commitments in terms of funding agriculture? In what ways can the size and structure of agriculture funding be improved?

4. How accessible are agriculture inputs, services, technology and production factors to the farmers and front-line staff, and what are the resultant performance trends in light of the agriculture sector growth?
5. How well is the country managing domestic and international agriculture trade? How do farm gate prices compare with urban and international prices? Is the country taking more advantage of international demand for its commodities (especially value added commodities) than before?
6. If there were positive changes in agriculture funding, productivity and growth, were they accompanied by reductions in the level of poverty and food insecurity? How effective is agriculture funding, productivity and growth and what can be done to improve the sector's impact on poverty and food insecurity?

The extent to which these questions can be answered largely depends on the availability and accessibility of good and reliable data and analysis on the various issues reviewed. It is therefore important that the appropriate stakeholders in charge of providing data are made aware of the needed data and analysis. Where such data and analysis are not presently available, plans should be made to provide them for future JSRs. It may be useful to include future data and analytical needs in the appendix of the report as a guide for the agencies in charge of data generation and analysis in research agenda for subsequent periods.

**Note:**

*Most reviews will be able to draw upon data from other review processes including project level reviews. In due course, specific project or major grant reviews should be an integral part of, or input into the comprehensive joint reviews. Similarly, reviews with a specific technical or geographical focus, as well as management and operational reviews e.g. public expenditure reviews would form an integral part of, and feed into, a comprehensive joint review of the Agriculture sector.*

## 6.0 The Joint Sector Review Process

The content (the 'WHAT') of joint reviews will be dependent upon the context, unlike the joint review process (the 'HOW'), which should be determined by, and in line with the principles outlined above.

The process of undertaking JSRs can be divided into four main phases:

- (a) The *planning* phase, during which the scope of the Review is defined and mutually agreed;
- (b) The *data collection* phase, where available quantitative and qualitative data is gathered;
- (c) The *synthesis and analysis* of findings and recommendations; and
- (d) *Dissemination and follow-up*.

## 6.1 The Planning Phase

The following steps are recommended.

1. The accounting officer of the Ministry responsible for agricultural development should **formally take a decision to carry out a JSR** and provide all necessary political and financial support.
2. **Set up a Steering Committee** chaired by the designated Ministry of Agriculture Accounting Officer with representation from major stakeholders: public sector, non-public sector and research and data leaders. In order to ensure national ownership of the review, it is recommended that the **JSR general objectives** are drawn up by a multi-stakeholder JSR oversight committee<sup>2</sup>. This committee should also develop **terms of reference**, and as well ensure that the design of the review strengthens rather than duplicates existing monitoring,

The steering committee's task will be to oversee and guide the whole process from planning through implementation to follow-up. The Steering Committee's composition and its modus operandi should underscore the principle of national leadership of the process and at the same time reinforce the principle of participation and inclusion. Participation of key stakeholders and partners in the planning ensures that they have a say in defining the scope and content of the review and strengthens commitment to its recommendations and follow-up.

evaluation, dialogue and accountability processes and institutions in the country.

It is important that both the data generators and the data users are represented on the oversight committee. The representation of the public sector can include the ministry of agriculture (particularly the planning department) and other key ministries, the legislative committee on agriculture, the central planning commission etc, while the non-public sector can include farmer organizations, agri-businesses/organized private sector, donor community, financial institutions that fund (or plan to fund) agriculture, the media and civil society.

The legislative committee(s) on agriculture is particularly important here as the review can provide them with information needed for their oversight role in the sector. The media will be needed to ensure adequate publicity of the review and thereby encourage national participation.

The research and data leaders can include the central statistics office, the National Agriculture Research System (NARS), and leading think tanks and research councils. Their role would be to ensure that the review team is aware of and gets access to the most recent data and analysis, which can inform the review.

The groups mentioned above are indicative and will vary in significance of importance and subsequently in representation on the oversight committee - from country to country.

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<sup>2</sup> In countries that have functional multi-stakeholder SAKSS steering committees, consideration could be made for the SAKSS steering Committee to oversee the implementation of the JSR.

3. **Establish a Secretariat<sup>3</sup> for the JSR Exercise.** The steering committee will identify/establish a secretariat for the review process. It is recommended that, where possible, an existing department/unit be assigned this function. Ideally it should be a department/unit that is already tasked with activities related to agriculture monitoring and evaluation and accountability. In countries where a Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (SAKSS) is operational, the SAKSS node/secretariat can be the secretariat of the JSR exercise. Under the guidance of the Steering Committee, the secretariat will be responsible for housing all relevant available data and documentation, and generally supporting the implementation of the Review.

The secretary of the steering committee may be the head of the review secretariat in order to fully operationalize the decisions of the steering committee. Ordinarily, the secretary should be a senior member of staff of the planning department or designated national coordinating entity for the agriculture sector, or the SAKSS coordinator.

4. **Draw up Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Review.** This should be based on the broad objectives stated by the steering committee. Having clear Terms of Reference and agreement about them serves three main purposes:
- (i) They articulate concretely and clearly the scope of the review, time frame, and methodologies;
  - (ii) They promote consensus building around agreed objectives among all stakeholders and harness collective support for the review and, subsequently, its recommendations; and
  - (iii) They help to secure the inclusion and genuine participation of all partners.

The TORs can be usefully captured and elaborated upon in a **Concept Note**. This would spell out in detail what will be reviewed, where, by whom, and what issues and programme areas will receive specific attention and why. The Concept Note would also spell out the time frame, the proposed methodologies, and outline required inputs and costs, as well as the strategies for follow-up, dissemination and implementation of the recommendations.

4. **Circulate** the Terms of Reference and/or the Concept Note among all partners for inputs. This will involve engaging key stakeholders and partners. The whole planning and preparation phase is a critical time for securing the engagement of key stakeholders and partners. Their respective motivation and incentives for participation in the Joint Review on the one hand, and constraints and disincentives on the other, are likely to differ. These may obtain to financial and human resource issues, timing and duration, or to specific concerns over the scope and content. Civil society organizations for example may be skeptical about issues of transparency and accountability, and farmer groups' interest groups in particular may need reassurance about genuine as opposed to token participation. Donors—and everyone else for that matter—will need to be convinced that the Joint Review process will result in more effective and efficient use of resources.

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<sup>3</sup> To the extent possible, the secretariat should be permanent and designated to coordinate reviews annually

Understanding the different motivations and concerns will enable the planning team to address them through the Review's process, scope and content, and methodologies. In that context, the following questions may be asked of each:

- (i) What has been/is their involvement to date in the agricultural sector development?
- (ii) What is their current or potential, unique or major contribution to the agriculture sector?
- (iii) Are there related monitoring, evaluation, dialogue and accountability activities they have contributed to or they are aware of which should influence the design of the JSR?
- (iv) What are their concerns about the current status of the agriculture sector's performance?
- (v) What should the Joint Review pay particular attention to?
- (vi) What are their constraints to participating fully in a joint review process?
- (vii) What would induce or facilitate their participation?

5. **Finalize Terms of Reference/Concept Note.** It is recommended that the final terms of reference are approved by the accounting officer in the key ministry responsible for agriculture and the steering committee as they will have a critical role in following up on the recommendations of the review.
6. **Mobilize resources**—human and financial. Ideally all partners will contribute as appropriate. Given the importance of the activity to national development, it would be most appropriate – for sustainability purposes if JSRs are annually budgeted for by the key ministry responsible for agriculture and possibly the legislative committee on agriculture. As is commonly practiced, other stakeholders in the sector may contribute depending on their mandates and capabilities.
7. **Constitute the Review Team,** draw up Terms of Reference for the team members and issue contracts for external consultants. This phase will also include the establishment of Technical Working Groups as deemed necessary. The composition of the review team and profile of the team members will be guided by the agreed scope of the Review as well as by the availability of technical assistance, both national and international.

**Note: Inclusiveness/genuine participation and objectivity are central to a Joint Review.**

In putting together the Review Team the organizers will ensure that farmers and those most affected by the performance of the agriculture sector such as vulnerable groups including rural women, youth, disabled etc., are included and have a genuine stake in the process and its outcomes. Likewise local level (district and community) inputs and participation in the process must be obtained, especially as re-enforcement of the decentralization process. The team composition should

A balance must be struck between external expertise from outside the country, “external” but yet in-country national expertise from academia, research institutes, civil society organizations, and “internal” expertise (i.e. those actually involved in implementing and supporting the agriculture sector development, including government, NGOs, development partners, etc). The composition and balance of the Team should ensure objectivity and independence.

also take into account and reflect gender and human rights considerations. Finally, the breadth of relevant expertise and the balance between external and internal reviewers should be such as to maximize objectivity and impartiality.

8. Draw up **an implementation and follow-up plan** for the Review, based on the Term of Reference or the Concept Note with time frame, individual or institutional responsibilities, and costs and logistics implications. The implementation plan should include, amongst others validation and dissemination sessions of the Review findings to key stakeholders. The scope of the Review will determine to a large extent how the review is planned and subsequently conducted. The implementation plan, for example could include constituting sub-groups to focus on specific technical or programme areas.
8. **Plan the logistics** for the Review, including field visits, workshops or meetings, transportation, etc. The logistics planned will be a function of available resources and what needs to be observed. The timeline for the entire process from planning to the dissemination workshop will vary but on average may range between 3 - 4 months. It is expected that where the JSR becomes a regular event, the planning aspect may take less time and the process can take 1.5 - 3 months.

## **6.2 Data collection**

To the extent possible, data collection should be part of the routine CAADP national data collection processes. Furthermore, there is likely to be available in most settings a range of both qualitative and quantitative data on different aspects and elements of agriculture sector development that will inform the Joint Review; a range of quantitative data may have already been generated by existing national Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems. The Review team will collect and collate all available information with logistic support from the secretariat of the Review.

Information/data to be collected, informed by the content and scope of the JSR, may include:

- (i) Agriculture Production and Market Survey reports;
- (ii) Agriculture M&E reports at both sector and program/project level;
- (iii) International trade reports;
- (iv) Public expenditure review reports;
- (v) Health Sector and Education Sector review reports;
- (vi) Household, Demographic and Health Survey findings;
- (vii) Resource-needs estimates; reports on assessments of the status of coordination and harmonization of Agricultural sector and its leadership; and
- (viii) Other data sources listed in **Annex 2** of these guidelines.

The information gathering process will involve to varying degrees a mix of:

- (a) Technical briefings and updates by relevant Technical Working Groups;
- (b) Desk reviews and analysis of available information (including farm, household and market surveys) on the different aspects of agriculture sector performance;
- (c) Key informant interviews or focus group discussions, including in particular key populations especially the vulnerable groups, for additional information and/or for triangulation and validation of assumptions;
- (d) Thematic or issues-specific workshops with stakeholders to further appraise status and progress or otherwise;
- (e) Visits to local/decentralized levels to complement, validate local level reports or reviews;
- (f) If required and possible, commissioned special surveys and studies; and
- (g) Special site visits to assess quality of specific interventions.

### **6.3 Analysis and synthesis of findings**

The Steering Committee will define the approach and methodology that is most appropriate for the breadth and depth of the Review. The following steps may be considered as a participatory approach to the analysis and reporting process:

- (i) A preliminary synthesis of findings and conclusions is undertaken around each major area by the relevant Technical Working Group. *It is recommended that technical working groups (of a manageable size of 3- 6 people) are formed around the top priorities listed in the CAADP country investment plan and/or the country's policy priorities supporting accelerated implementation of the CAADP investment plan;*
- (ii) A workshop to discuss the findings and derive action points and recommendations;
- (iii) A draft overall synthesis based on the above by the Review Team;
- (iv) Circulation of the draft report to all participants of the Review for input;
- (v) A public forum at which the full draft report is presented and comments are heard; and
- (vi) Finalization of Review Report.

### **The Value-Addition of JSRs**

The process of data collection and the subsequent analysis and synthesis of the findings are at the centre of the joint review process. They apply and illustrate several of the key principles governing Joint Reviews.

**They are evidence-informed and capture new science;** the whole process is about collecting and collating qualitative and quantitative data needed to inform decisions on policies and programmes. At the same time, the process should be such as to allow new science and evidence from the operational level to inform the discussions.



**They strengthen national monitoring and research systems;** it is recommended that the review process should not aim at intensive field data collection as this requires more intensive and time consuming attention from the national statistical and monitoring system. Rather, the JSR should aim at using all available secondary data and, where possible, some light surveys and qualitative data collection.

In the same vein, the JSR may not aim at conducting all relevant research during its duration but carry out what is feasible during the available time and use research results already available. In the process, research gaps will be noted for filling by the research agencies in the future. As such, the JSR strengthens both the monitoring and research systems in the country by making them serve policy making better.

**They also enhance national planning processes;** in the medium term, as the timing of Joint Reviews coincides with broader national development and budgeting cycles, data from the process will feed into the latter, and vice-versa.

**They are a collective learning exercise;** the genuine participatory nature of the Review coupled with the breadth of expertise and experience of the reviewers offer a real opportunity for mutual learning.

The data collection process pinpoints the strengths and weaknesses of existing national M&E systems and can usefully stimulate national and international partners alike to adhere to the “One agreed M&E system” principle and consolidate national monitoring systems. This would include, where necessary, broadening the range of indicators on which data is collected to inform future reviews.

#### *6.4 Dissemination of findings and recommendations and follow-up*

At all phases of the Review, commitment to, and ownership of, the Joint Review process and its recommendations should be pursued, including at the stage of disseminating the findings and recommendations of the Review.

Once the Review Team has finalized its report, the accounting officer in the key ministry responsible for agriculture, in collaboration with the Steering Committee of the JSR should ensure that the findings and recommendations of the Joint Review are taken up for policy and management considerations.

Assessing performance differences across different parts of the country could be a valuable avenue to illuminating good local practice in sector performance as well as in mutual accountability practices which may not “surface” sufficiently in national level aggregate reports.

The following considerations are recommended during dissemination of the Review findings and recommendations:



The findings of the JSR exercise are discussed in a multi-stakeholder forum, and an Aide Memoire is produced as an immediate output containing a summary of key findings, conclusions and recommended actions for implementation in the next budget planning cycle. The draft aide memoire is presented and endorsed by the stakeholders, principally to form one of the key reference documents for planning in the next financial year.

The comprehensive JSR report is subsequently prepared – taking into consideration the salient issues in the aide memoire. The report, presented in an appropriate forum, provides the basis for all stakeholders – including government, CSOs, donors, etc to commit themselves publicly on key aspects of the sector's growth and development. This buttresses the practice of mutual accountability in subsequent JSR or other review, dialogue and debate meetings.

- The accounting officer of the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the Steering Committee is responsible for disseminating the Review Team Report to all stakeholders and partners. The draft report should be placed on various information platforms – such as website(s) where it can be easily accessed. It is advisable that the report is shared well ahead of dissemination fora to allow invited participants time to reflect on it individually and/or in groups. Furthermore, advocacy groups and independent think tanks can take up the responsibility of obtaining feedback on the report from their respective constituencies.
- The accounting officer of the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the Steering Committee convenes a meeting with representatives of all stakeholders and all major partners, where the Report is presented and debated. In particular, strong representation should be ensured from the local and community levels. Of equal importance is the participation of research agencies as they fill data and analytical gaps that can further strengthen the JSRs;
- Avoid presentation of progress reports by individual agencies during the meeting. The discussions in the meeting should derive from the terms of reference of the review and the draft report based on them.
- The meeting should be designed to elicit as much free expression from farmers, the vulnerable and others who traditionally have a 'low voice' as much as possible. There should be good facilitation so that no single group(s) dominates the meeting. It is recommended that break out sessions be used to encourage in-depth discussions of the most critical issues raised in the report. This will also encourage the building of consensus and partnerships during the meeting.
- It may be valuable to involve the media in disseminating the Review findings and recommendations. Promoting multimedia interactive sessions with stakeholders and the general community will also encourage participation of the wider community.
- The Secretariat with the Steering Committee should incorporate any major comments and suggestions arising out of the dissemination workshop that is deemed appropriate;

- The accounting officer of the should release the final Joint Sector Review Report;
- Endeavour to secure buy-in from strategic groups (legislative bodies and commissions) through various means – including lobbying and advocacy activities; and
- Ministry of Agriculture or the designated coordinating authority to lead the process of incorporating and reflecting the Review recommendations in the National Agriculture Sector Strategic Framework and Action Plans and budget. The JSR promotes an inclusive, transparent, evidence-based process.

### **Suggestions for ensuring that the Review recommendations are operationalized**

- (i) Ensure timely dissemination of the Review findings and recommendations. The review report and associated information should be uploaded to the ministry and other stakeholders' website to encourage dissemination.
- (ii) Ensure that they are shared at the operational level among all stakeholders.
- (iii) Consider preparing audience-specific summaries i.e. tailored to specific constituencies (political leadership, media, specific lobbies, etc.) so as to enhance understanding, acceptance and application of recommendations. Consider publishing an executive summary of few pages separately from the main report which would be more detailed. This would allow for easier reading for some audiences.
- (iv) Capture key action points in a user-friendly framework with time frame, main implementers and partners and indicative resource needs.
- (v) Define indicators and set targets for implementation of the main recommendations.
- (vi) Integrate recommendations into annual or biennial operational plan. For example, it is recommended that research agencies that provide data and analysis should include the data and analysis needs of the JSR in their research agenda for the following year. This would provide more background material for the next JSR.
- (vii) Where relevant and possible, feed into resource mobilization strategies and integrate recommendations into upcoming major grant proposal developments (Global Fund etc.)
- (viii) If required, translate new priorities and emerging issues into operational guidelines.

## 7. Challenges of Organizing and Managing Joint Sector Reviews

The following are some of the key challenges in planning for and conducting a comprehensive joint review:

1. Securing high-level commitment and support from government and partners;
2. Ensuring effective representation of constituencies i.e. that representatives have capacity and mandate to articulate their constituencies' issues;
3. Ensuring genuine participation (especially important for key vulnerable populations) through, among others, appropriate review processes and methodologies (inclusion is more than participation);
4. Managing diverse interests and concerns;
5. Striking a balance between comprehensiveness and realistic timelines and costs;
6. Ensuring that district and community level performance are appraised as part of the Agriculture sector performance;
7. Ensuring that the JSR process is aligned to, and does not duplicate aspects of existing national monitoring, evaluation and dialogue and accountability processes and institutions;
8. Ensuring timely dissemination of the findings and recommendations; and
9. Ensuring that the recommendations are applied.

### Sources:

- Benin et al (2010) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System for the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). ReSAKSS Working Paper No. 6. Washington, D.C.: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) <http://www.resakss.org/>
- FAO Animal Production and Health Guidelines, 2011-11-16
- Tanzania Agriculture Sector Review and Public Expenditure Review 2008-09
- Tunisia Agriculture Policy Review  
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/TUNISIAEXTN/0,,contentMDK:21459577~pagePK:1497618~piPK:217854~theSitePK:310015,00.html>
- Ghana Agriculture Sector Performance Review ... [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&menuPK=64187510&searchMenuPK=64187283&siteName=WDS&entityID=000094946\\_00092205320243](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&menuPK=64187510&searchMenuPK=64187283&siteName=WDS&entityID=000094946_00092205320243)

## **Annex 1: Proposed Layout of JSR Report**

### **The Review – Core Content:**

#### **I Table of Contents**

#### **II List of= acronyms**

#### **III Executive Summary**

Highlights the key findings contained in the chapters below.

#### **IV. Introduction**

Purpose, objectives and target audience; History/context: general country context: basic description of the national ecological, social, economic and political situation; reporting period; scope and methodology of the JSR report; overview of major changes in trends compared to last reporting period; whether interventions are on track to achieve stated targets or not; and implications for staying on track or for achieving greater and better distributed outcomes.

#### **V. Enabling environment**

Situation analysis of global, regional and national political governance and economic management in reporting period; Critical social factors during the review period - social instability, elections etc; Overview of the Government's agriculture and agriculture related (e.g. trade) strategy/development plan/programs/projects; analysis of agriculture sector governance and management issues - decision-making processes and bodies, mutual accountability, inclusiveness and policy dialogue, critical management/operational issues, effectiveness of coordination mechanisms at all levels (including donor activity harmonization and alignment with national priorities), legal and investment framework, strategic analysis and knowledge management systems during the review period; description of changes in trends compared to targets (set in the last JSR/other avenue) as well as performance in last reporting period; summary of last JSR recommendations and extent of implementation; likely causes of the changes and performance/implementation level; how changes may affect success of implementation of CAADP/National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP); anticipated changes in the environment in next reporting period; what needs to be done to minimize any negative effects or maximize positive effects of CAADP/NAIP in terms of improving the agriculture policy environment.

#### **VI. Implementation process**

Status of countries at major stages of CAADP process compared to target stated in last reporting period – CAADP launching, compact signing, CAADP implemented; description of key factors limiting or enhancing progress; expectation for reaching next major stage in the process and what needs to be done to make it happen.

#### **VII Tracking commitments and agricultural spending**

Agricultural spending and other commitments by government, donors and private sector in reporting period; description of changes in trends compared to commitments and targets stated ( in the last

JSR/other avenue) as well as performance in last reporting period; likely causes of the changes and performance level; description of major factors contributing to spending patterns on different types of public goods and services; changes required to improve agriculture funding.

### **VIII Agricultural growth performance**

Economy- and sector-wide growth, contribution of different subsectors and major commodities to agricultural growth, agriculture services/inputs availability and other growth performance indicators in reporting period; description of changes in trends compared to targets as well as performance in last reporting period; likely causes of the changes in trends; description of key factors limiting or enhancing agricultural growth in different places.

### **IX Agricultural trade performance**

Value and volumes of agricultural exports and imports, other agricultural trade performance indicators, and contribution of different sub sectors and major commodities to trade in reporting period; description of changes in trends compared to targets (set in the last JSR/other avenue) as well as performance in last reporting period; likely causes of the changes in trends; description of key factors limiting or enhancing agricultural trade in different commodities; demand outlook for major commodities and long-term price projections for major commodities; changes required in order to improve agriculture trade performance.

### **X Poverty, hunger and food and nutrition security (CAADP goals)**

Poverty, hunger, and food and nutrition insecurity rates and related indicators in reporting period; description of changes in trends compared to targets (set in the last JSR/other avenue) as well as performance in last reporting period; differences in outcomes across different places and socioeconomic groups and reasons underlying differences; assess relationships between the various measures of welfare; whether on track to achieve target rates or not; implications, including what needs to be done, for staying on track or for achieving greater and better distributed outcomes

### **XI. Agricultural Investments, growth, Poverty, and hunger linkages**

Associations (simple correlations) between different interventions (process, policies, investments) and agricultural growth and poverty-reduction; differences in the associations across different places and socio-economic groups and reasons underlying differences: agricultural investment - agricultural productivity linkages; agricultural productivity - poverty/ hunger/ food and nutrition insecurity linkages; agricultural investment - poverty/ hunger/ food and nutrition insecurity linkages; description of changes in trends compared to targets (set in the last JSR/other avenue) as well as performance in last reporting period This section examines whether achievements in growth and investment are actually accompanied by improvements in income and food security and examines the implications for achieving faster and higher agricultural growth and greater and better distributed poverty, hunger and food and nutrition outcomes.

**XII Specific issues/projects:** Can include other country-specific analyses of issues related to agriculture sector performance and productivity not discussed above (e.g. climate change, environment etc);

Summaries of the reviews/evaluations of on-going or recently completed programs/projects to indicate levels of implementation, lessons learnt and successes achieved. In particular, the impacts of the programs/projects on food security and welfare indicators should be highlighted.

**XIII Conclusions:** Summary of major changes in trends compared to last reporting period; outlook for agriculture growth and productivity, poverty, hunger, and food and nutrition security and implications for staying on track or for achieving greater and better distributed outcomes; Mutual Accountability conclusions based on summary scorecards for implementation of commitments and impact of the portfolio of development actions on key societal goals such as accelerated agricultural growth, poverty reduction, and improved nutrition. Summarise the impacts of current policy on the level of performance in the sector as captured in the chapters above.

**XIV Risks/Opportunities/ Recommendations:** See OECD guidelines on how to identify risks and define mitigation measures. Include potential policy directions/options, investments, strategies and action plans based on the assessment of government policies and programs in the review period. This would involve summarizing the necessary changes in policies and priorities for various stakeholders in order to achieve country growth and poverty reduction targets. The recommendation should include an action plan outline with timelines and deliverables for key stakeholders.

**Appendix:** Research Evidence Availability Report - areas for further work by data and analysis providers.