Strengthening the Evidence for Agricultural Policy Decisions in Nigeria: A Training on Cost-Benefit Analysis

One of the goals of the Nigeria Agriculture Policy Activity (NAPA) is to enhance national capacity of Nigerians to generate, analyze information, and formulate evidence-based policy options for consideration by decision makers and stakeholders within the agriculture sector. In line with this objective, a Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) training was organized for relevant stakeholders within Kebbi State's Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) as well as select commodity associations in the state.

Feed the Future representative of the Nigeria Agriculture Policy Activity, Prof. Oyinkan Tasie, delivering his opening remarks

CBA is an analytical tool that provides the framework and relevant information for decision making by ascertaining the extent to which benefits from an intervention exceed investment costs and implementation. Aside from supporting viability assessment and distributional analysis of allotment to each participating stakeholder within the enterprise value chain, CBA principally facilitates selection among alternative investment projects. Thus, the CBA training was mounted to bridge capacity gaps in observed enterprise investment analysis among agricultural sector stakeholders for engagement with policy and decision makers. The training will further enhance efficient allocation of scarce resources in the light of dwindling public revenue, while enhancing project sustainability for improved livelihood among the rural poor agrarian households in Kebbi State.

The training was held at Vatebra Tech Hub, Birnin, Kebbi, from August 22 to August 26, 2022. Training covered eight modules, spanning all aspects of CBA concepts, approaches, and techniques, including risk analysis and the application of CBA to policy analysis. The training was participatory, involving both theoretical and practical sessions. The goal of the training was to equip and enhance participants' understanding of the application of CBA techniques for agricultural policy, program, and project analysis. It is intended to ensure efficient fiscal management and enhance accountability, transparency, and project sustainability in Kebbi State's public sector through deepening trainees' capacity for project and policy analyses, within the public and private sectors.

The training was facilitated by B. A. Sule (PhD); Ibrahim Badamasi of Babangida University, Lapai, Niger State; and A. A. A. Coker (PhD), Federal University of Technology, Minna. Thirty-four (34) people including 3 women benefitted from the training, comprising officers of Kebbi State Ministries of Agriculture, Budget and Economic Planning, Finance, Commerce, and Animal Health Husbandry and Fisheries. Participants from the private sector comprise members of All Farmers' Association of Nigeria, Rice Farmers' Association of Nigeria, Onion Producers, Processors and Marketing Association of Nigeria, The National Cassava Growers' Association, Maize Association of Nigeria and Mango Farmers,

Processors and Marketing Association. Staff of Kebbi State University of Science and Technology Aliero were also in attendance.

Participants listening attentively during one of the training sessions

In his welcome remarks, the NAPA Coordinator for Kebbi State, Professor Ayuba Gona of the Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero, welcomed all participants and expressed optimism that the training will help bridge the observed capacity gap in showcasing evidence for policy engagement using the CBA technique and the need to enhance project sustainability for improved livelihoods, in line with the State's development objectives. In his opening address, the representative of the Feed the Future Nigeria Agriculture Policy Activity, Prof. Oyinkan Tasie, noted that Kebbi State is an agrarian state and hoped that the capacity building session will go a long way in achieving the desired objectives of strengthening evidence for policy decisions in the state. While further noting the spread of participants across the agriculture sector in the state, he expressed optimism on the positive impact of the project.

Facilitators assisting participants during one of the practical sessions

At the close of the training sessions, participants were grouped into three and each group given a few minutes to deliberate and come up with two proposal topics to be submitted to Kebbi State Ministry of Agriculture for review, selection and buy-in. Thus, it is expected that at the end of the activity, participants would have developed project investment proposals, with strong CBA content, for consideration by Kebbi State Government for inclusion in its budgetary and investment framework for the 2023 fiscal year. To follow-up the development of prioritized project proposal, a WhatsApp group was created to facilitate technical assistance and follow up on participants' progress by the facilitators.

In his closing remarks, Dr. A. A. A. Coker urged participants to utilize the skills learnt to change the narrative in Kebbi State. Participants were further assured that the team will always be available to clarify grey areas towards ensuring prompt completion and delivery of their project proposals.

By: B. A. Sule

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