Climate Change–Related Projects Implementation in AGRA Bread Basket Areas in Ghana

ABOUT THIS BRIEF

It is clear that sub-Saharan Africa contributes the least to the global accumulation of greenhouse gas emissions. The whole Africa continent contributes only 4% of global CO₂ emissions. However, this region has been considered to be more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than any other. A number of interventions have been implemented towards climate change adaptation and mitigation in Ghana. Most of these projects are funded by international development partners and few by the government of Ghana. The major stakeholders for these interventions have been farmers with a few being researchers and other stakeholders. This brief advocates for researchers, policymakers, farmers and all other stakeholders to be equally integrated into climate change–related interventions.

BACKGROUND

The effect of climate change is being felt in various parts of the world. The effect has been manifesting in various forms such as rising temperatures, melting glaciers, shifting rain patterns, increased storm intensity and rising sea levels. The majority of agricultural activities in Ghana are rain fed, and climate change would have a significant impact on the livelihoods of farmers and food security of the nation at large.

Since the early 1990s, most industrialised nations and many developing countries have implemented climate change–related policies. The OECD has contributed to the debate through its analytical work on the design and implementation of effective climate change policies, as well as its peer reviews of policy performance in individual countries.

This Policy Brief summarises the various climate change projects that have been implemented in Ghana, particularly northern Ghana, between 2000 and 2011, delineates the challenges encountered in the implementation, and provides suggestions for how the government can achieve its climate change commitments in the future.

THE RESEARCH APPROACH

In order to identify the climate-related initiatives implemented in northern Ghana, both government and non-government organisations were consulted. A checklist was prepared and administered to various heads of organisations identified through a snowball sampling technique because there was no pre-existing list of projects. Climate change initiatives were also identified through a desk study of grey and published literature obtained from the implementing organisations and the Internet. Content analysis was used to analyse the data.

KEY FINDINGS

Based on the literature review and study report, 37 climate-related initiatives were identified as being implemented in Ghana. The projects have focused on building farmers’ capacities to adapt to or cope with impacts of climate change and creating awareness about the effects of climate change. The projects have varied geographical coverage in terms of region and reach at the community level and are funded by the Government of Ghana, international development partners and civil society organisations.

Projects Implementation Status

Figure 1 presents information on ongoing and completed climate change–related projects in northern Ghana. About 81% of these projects have ended. The remaining projects are expected to end in 2014.
Project Distribution by Region and Community

Figure 2 presents the coverage of selected projects within the bread basket areas. About 51% of the projects were implemented in all regions of northern Ghana. Furthermore, the Accra Plains and Afram Plains each benefitted from 10% of the projects.

Distribution of Projects by Target Group

A good proportion (73%) of the projects target farmers (Figure 3), and the initiatives promoted are to build farmers’ capacity to use better farming practices. About 15% of the projects focus on supporting households to take advantage of both indigenous and introduced resilience techniques to reduce the effects of climate change. Furthermore, about 12% of the projects concentrate on equipping other stakeholders in the study area with information and technologies to enable them to train others (e.g. research institutions, farmer groups, communities).

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government should make conscious efforts to advance policy; mitigation in agriculture will need to be compatible with national goals for food security, economic development and trade to ensure sustainability.
- Similarly, mitigation measures must provide tangible benefits to farmers, including the poor.
- Interventions such as carbon storage in soil or above-ground biomass are well understood; less is known about others such as management of nitrous oxide from manure. Farmers, including smallholders and women, must also actively participate in evaluating options to ensure their relevance and sustainability.
- Quality of project inputs and capacity of implementers must be assured to ensure credibility of project activities and eschew negative perceptions of beneficiaries about the project.