



ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ATVET) SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

Executive summary of a pre-
feasibility study conducted
from 23rd February to 4th March,
2020



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INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY

This study was carried out by the International Network for Agricultural and Rural Training (Réseau FAR - International) with funding from the French Development Agency (AFD), in support of the Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning (MBNP) within the framework of evaluating the relevance and need for funding of the renovation and development of the Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) system in Nigeria.

The main objective of the study was:

- to assess the Nigerian public and private, rural and agricultural vocational training system with special emphasis on the current challenges faced by rural dwellers in Nigeria, the key professions and needs in the rural sector ;
- to establish a diagnosis of the agriculture and rural training system, key actors and existing initiatives in Nigeria ;
- to identify strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Nigerian agriculture and rural Technical and Vocational Education and Training system.

The study reviewed the rural context and key challenges of the Nigerian ATVET system and mapped out priority needs in terms of skills that could be conferred especially to the Nigerian youth in order to tackle the problem of unemployment and underemployment, while contributing to agricultural development, food security and food self-sufficiency through targeted training delivery, focused on value chains of priority commodities.

The next step in the process is a detailed feasibility study that will carry out an in-depth investigation and analysis of the axes proposed by this initial pre-study with respect to the renovation and development of the Nigerian ATVET system.

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that the rapid growth in the population of Nigeria is often associated with unemployment and underemployment problems especially for the youths. Overall, the Nigerian population is youthful as about 62.9% (some 126,388,880) is between the age brackets of 0 to 24. Whereas 43.49% of the population is 14 years old or below, 19.39% is aged 15 to 24 years. In 2016 it was estimated that some 17.53% of Nigerian youths had no education whilst 4.3% of them had never finished their primary education. Some 13.48% and about 49.38% had respectively completed primary and secondary education as against 15.35% who had graduated from tertiary education. As regards employment, it was estimated in 2016 that 13.7% of Nigerians in the labour force were aged 15 to 24, and 8.2% of those aged 25 to 34 were unemployed. The unemployment situation of youths is worsening each year.

Nigerian agriculture contributes some 40% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with crops accounting for 80%, forestry 3% and fishery 4% of the agriculture GDP. Some 88% of Nigeria's non-oil export earnings come from the agricultural sector, which employs about 84% of the working population, who carry out production activities mostly in family farms and private small farm businesses. Agriculture is therefore the largest economic activity in the rural areas of the country where almost 50% of the population lives. On the other hand, majority of agro-industrial enterprises in the country depend on the sector for raw materials. The availability of land, water and labour constitute some of the several untapped potentials



that Nigerian agriculture has for growth and development. It is estimated that about 84 million hectares of Nigeria's total land area has potential for agriculture; however, only about 40% of this is under cultivation. In addition to her diverse and rich vegetation that can support widespread livestock rearing activities, the country's large and growing population provides a potential for vibrant internal markets that can in turn be key drivers for increased agricultural productivity.

However, analysis of the Nigerian job market trends indicates that some 26.5 million (50%) of Nigerian workers aged between 15 and 64 are working in low productivity agriculture. Very high yield gaps ranging from 17.9% for cassava to 94.2% for oil palm have been recorded for all the main crops cultivated by Nigerian smallholder farmers. On the other hand, domestic production of livestock products is far below the national demand, resulting in large imports of livestock and livestock products. Insufficient training, skills development, capacity building for practising farmers and low levels of injection of qualified youths into the agricultural sector account in great part for the low production and productivity recorded in Nigerian agriculture.



I° OVERVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ATVET) IN THE NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

1.1. CHALLENGES OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AND ATVET SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

The Nigerian agricultural sector faces a multitude of challenges as a result of the major divestments in that sector, following the oil boom in the 1970's. One of the key challenges concerns issues relating to food security and food self-sufficiency for the rapidly growing population (growth rate \approx 2.6%). The costs of food imports in the country have been growing at an alarming rate, with some 23.1 million people (11.5% of the total population) being undernourished in the period between 2016 and 2018. Between 2007 and 2010, Nigeria's food imports were estimated at some 98 trillion Nigerian Naira (NGN) (about US \$628 billion). Food insecurity prevalence in the low-income urban households stands at some 79% while in the rural areas it is estimated at about 71%. In 2010 alone, Nigeria spent some NGN 632 billion on wheat imports, NGN 356 billion on rice imports, NGN 217 billion on sugar imports and NGN 97 billion on fish imports. It is projected that food and nutrition insecurity might assume alarming dimensions if firm mitigation measures are not put in place.

Despite its existence, access to land for crop production activities is major challenge to the Nigerian agricultural sector. Generally, some 70% of landowners in Nigeria inherit land while just about 4.6% purchase their land as against 9.3% that rent land for use, while about 6.5% use community land. Youths who are motivated to enter agriculture, face very serious difficulties accessing land. Land laws are outdated and the land tenure system make access prohibitive. Acquisition of farmland in rural areas is often undocumented making tenure security low.

Access to credit for financing small farm businesses is constrained by high operating costs, and inadequate risk management, making loans expensive and hence uneconomical. Financial inclusion of smallholder farmers is estimated at 26%, with only about 18 % of them receiving credit from both formal and informal sources.

Other major challenges to agricultural development include access to quality farm inputs, information, agricultural finance literacy, dysfunctional and poorly organised markets for agricultural products and adaptation to climate change. Above all, there is insufficient training, capacity building and advisory service provision to farmers.

Government efforts for the development and promotion of Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) did not pay off mainly because Nigerians have historically considered agriculture and vocational agricultural training as a pathway for low level, less brilliant and less privileged or second-class citizens. For example, in the 2014/2015 school year, whereas only some 3,587 students graduated from 13 agriculture related courses in Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology, about 12,156 students graduated from the accountancy course alone.

Today, some of the key challenges faced by the Nigerian ATVET system are the inexistence of a clear strategy specifically addressing agricultural and rural training at all levels, poor



coordination among actors who initiate interventions in the sector, inadequate and obsolete infrastructure and equipment such as poorly equipped workshops, libraries and classrooms, weak industrial experience scheme for learners, shortages of staff in quantity and quality due to irregular training of trainers, unattractive conditions of service for trainers, inadequate funding of ATVET provision structures and a weak focus on skills acquisition through a competency-based approach among others.

The ATVET system is not perceived as one of the key pillars in agricultural and rural development especially concerning the development of smallholder agriculture which is in the hands of some 80% of farmers, and small and medium agro-industries that account for some 16% of the farming population and therefore jointly have a high potential to contribute to the overall economic development of the country.

1.2. THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT'S "ATVET STRATEGY"

The Nigerian National Policy on Education perceives technical and vocational education and training as those aspects of the educational process involving, general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in relation to various sectors of economic and social life. In line with this policy orientation, the Nigerian ATVET system is built on a hybrid approach, which imparts mostly knowledge and some practical skills to learners to enable them either proceed to further education or to transition to work.

Providers of initial agricultural and rural professional training in Nigeria are either in the formal, non-formal or informal sectors. Formal agricultural training is provided by the state education system and leads to recognised qualifications. Training is delivered in some 42 colleges of agriculture including 17 Federal and 20 State colleges, as well as 5 private mono and polytechnics including Vocational Enterprise Institutions (VEIs) and Innovative Enterprise Institutions (IEIs).

The structure of the formal ATVET system put in place is however characterised by what may be referred to as the 'missing foundation' and 'weak middle', because it focuses on intermediate and higher level entry points but pays very little attention to the base where smallholders operate. Moreover, as a result of the curriculum mismatch, very few graduates from these training institutions actually enter and build careers in agriculture. It is estimated that 40% of smallholder farmers in Nigeria never attended school, 26% attended secondary school and 20% attended primary school while only 5% of them attended higher levels of education. Overall, graduates of colleges of agriculture account for only about 8% of the agricultural labour force in the country.

Foundation education in agriculture is provided in primary and secondary schools in what is referred to as the 'Catch them Young strategy' intended to attract the younger generation of Nigerians to agriculture early. This also does not seem to culminate in the results expected. In addition to foundation agricultural education, government has created and empowered universities that specialise in higher education in agriculture and related fields. However, this level of agricultural education is not really in the domain of Technical and Vocational Education and Training that is placed under the purview of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and graduates are ill prepared to enter the profession.



However, factors that favour the development of the ATVET system are the existence of a National Policy for Education which is reviewed in conjunction with technological developments and evolutions in the political, social, economic and environmental context of the country, the existence of strong agricultural development policies conceived at the national level and implemented at the state levels, the existence and functioning of policy implementation structures related to ATVET such as the National Board for Technical Education, the Industrial Training Fund, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, Institutes with a mandate for research and training, Agricultural Colleges, VEIs and IEs and training centres which are engaged in some form of agricultural and rural training.

On the other hand, government has put in place a favourable environment for public - private partnerships in the domain of ATVET alongside a strong decentralised approach to agricultural development and ATVET delivery in the perspective of agricultural transformation at the levels of States and local government areas. Above all, there is a strong political will of the Federal and State governments to advance agribusiness and strategic value chains that can contribute to economic development of local areas, states and the nation as a whole. This is in line with the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) which focuses on sustainable growth and poverty reduction through empowering people and improving social service delivery, fostering economic growth in the non-oil private sector in particular, and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of government, while improving governance.

1.3. IMPORTANCE OF A STRONG AND FUNCTIONAL ATVET SYSTEM FOR THE COUNTRY

The agricultural and rural training system in Nigeria needs revamped to reverse the situation. This system needs to be well structured, professional, and firmly anchored in local territories close to the beneficiaries but flexible enough to effectively and efficiently adapt to evolutions in the agribusiness-related job landscape. The Nigerian government therefore needs to invest in the renovation and development of her Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) system for the benefits highlighted to be derived.



II° KEY STAKEHOLDERS OF THE CURRENT ATVET SYSTEM IN NIGERIA SECTOR

The different actors of the ATVET system in Nigeria include public sector structures such as ministerial departments and agencies, research institutes, the private sector, national and international NGOs, Farmer's organisations (groups, cooperatives and associations), private training institutions (VEIs & IEs), Agricultural Development Programs and Projects (ADPs) and Local Government Areas (LGAs) among others.

The key ministries that intervene in one way or the other in ATVET in Nigeria are the Federal Ministry of Education, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Federal Ministry of Labour, the Federal Ministry of Youth Affairs, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment through the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment through the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) and the Industrial Training Fund (ITF).

Vocational agricultural training institutions are under the tutelage of the Federal Ministry of Education and are placed under the direct supervision of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), which is charged with coordination, evaluation of skilled manpower needs, preparation of master plans, determination of financial needs of training institutions, harmonisation of entry requirements, establishment and maintenance of minimum standards and accreditation of academic programs.

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) on its part, was created in 2011 and charged with administering and disbursing funds to Federal, State and private tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria. These funds come mainly from the 2% education tax paid by registered companies in the country. TETFUND is also charged with the provision of essential physical infrastructure for teaching and learning, didactic and instructional materials and equipment, the facilitation of research, the training and development of academic staff and the provision of other needs judged critical and essential by the Board of Trustees.

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) plays a key role in agricultural training and extension education. It contributes to the continuing education of extension workers through its State Ministries and Agricultural Development Programs. FMARD contributes to agricultural training through such programs as the Youth Employment in Agriculture Program (YEAP), the N-Power Agro Program, the Junior Farmer Field and Life School as well as the Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprise (LIFE) programs. Through the LIFE program, some 127,000 cooperatives identified nationwide have been trained and assisted to set up activities using the cluster model with focus on production, agro processing/value addition, and services.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also play an important role in agricultural and rural training in Nigeria. Some of these organisations include but are not limited to the Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND), 'Tomato and Orchard Producers' Association of Nigeria (TOPAN), Youth Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture (YISA), etc.

The private sector in Nigeria is a key driver of agricultural and economic growth as it makes significant contributions to job creation, provision of goods and services and trade. It accounts for some 65% of the country's GDP. Private sector interventions in the ATVET



system are provided by mono and polytechnics, Vocational and Innovative Enterprise Institutions (VEIs and IEIs) that provide training and prepare middle level personnel for entry into the agricultural sector. The presence of private stakeholders means that public - private partnerships can be set up to create jobs along agricultural commodity value chains with a high potential for moving players from the informal to the formal economy. However, private sector initiatives in agricultural training and skills development in Nigeria are poorly structured and coordinated.

The Nigerian ATVET landscape is also characterised by the presence of a number of international technical and financial partners (donor or funding organisations) that support programs in various aspects of agricultural and rural training. Some of the areas of intervention of these partners include the provision of funds for the construction / rehabilitation of infrastructure, support to the development of curricula and training guides, support to training of trainers and support to the socio-professional integration of trained beneficiaries. These organisations include the FAO, GIZ, IFAD, DFID and AFD among others, and have either opted for interventions in all the states (FAO) or have interventions in a limited number of states (GIZ, IFAD, DFID).

From the foregoing, it is clear that many stakeholders are currently active in Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Nigeria, but their interventions are rather uncoordinated and not well focused. Recently however, key technical and financial partners involved in the agricultural development and ATVET sectors, have created a collaboration and information exchange platform where they discuss issues concerning their work in Nigeria. This platform will enable them to better plan, align and leverage their actions to build synergies and avoid duplication of actions and wastage of funds. It will be profitable to the entire system if such a coordination and concertation platform is broadened to include all the other major ATVET actors.

III° PILOT INTERVENTION FOR THE RENOVATION OF ATVET IN NIGERIA

Considering the opportunities that exist for the transformation of agriculture, the employment of youths, the creation of wealth and the overall economic development of the country by well trained, skilled and competent actors, it is evident that the ATVET system needs to be renovated and further developed.

To this effect, this study proposes a pilot program whose overall objective will be to conceive and operationalise an ATVET system that will contribute to the improvement of youth employment and the standard of living of farmers through initial and continuing training and support for the establishment of productive small and medium scale farm enterprises, and agribusinesses built on value chains of priority commodities.

The sub objectives of the pilot phase of the program shall be the:

1. Renovation of pilot agricultural technical and vocational education and training system (initial and continuing), and the socio-professional settlement support system in three targeted states ;
2. Development of services and the provision of resources to agricultural and rural actors in the renovated pilot centres ;
3. Strengthening of the federal and state coordination and steering of the ATVET system in association with the private sector and other concerned actors ;
4. Structuring of funding alongside the strengthening of the governance of the ATVET system.

3.1. PROGRAM CONTENT

The major axes of the proposed program, the activities earmarked and expected outcomes are summarised in the simplified log-frame below.

Description of axes	Activities to be carried out	Expected outcomes
Axis 1: Training of young and practising farmers in training centres	→ Identification of pilot states and training institutions (training centres and colleges) to enter the program	→ 9 Young Farmers' training centres are identified and renovated in 3 targeted states
	→ Assessment of resources available	→ Centres' projects are elaborated by the 9 pilot centres → The training of young farmers is initiated in the pilot centres



<p>Axis 2: Training of agribusiness and value chain operators in Colleges of Agriculture, Mono and Polytechnics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Rehabilitation / construction of infrastructures and acquisition of materials and equipment. → Training needs assessment and development of training contents → Training of trainers → Elaboration of centres' and schools' projects with the involvement of local actors in their governance in order to facilitate uptake and ownership of the structures as development pools in their territories <p>Training of beneficiaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 6 colleges are identified and renovated in the 3 targeted states → Schools' projects are elaborated by the 6 pilot schools → The training of agribusiness and value chain operators is initiated in the pilot colleges
<p>Axis 3: Socio-professional integration of trained youths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Development of a socio-professional integration support system → Backstopping of the social integration of the trained youths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A functional socio-professional integration support system is developed → 65% of the trained youths receive support for their socio-professional integration
<p>Axis 4: Development of a multi-actor partnership platform involving public and private sector stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Constitution and operationalisation of concertation platforms → Monitoring and evaluation of strategic plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Funding is provided to the Nigerian Agricultural and Rural Training (ART) system → An effective monitoring and evaluation system is put in place → The national strategy for ATVET in Nigeria is reformed →
<p>Axis 5: Territorial anchorage of the renovated ATVET system</p>	<p>Strategic communication around pilot institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Strategic communication master plans are developed for each pilot state → Strategic communication and promotion of the ATVET system is effective



		<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Local actors adhere and take ownership of the training structures→ The agricultural profession in the territories of pilot training structures is valorised→ A response to the territorial demand for agricultural development is provided
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3.2. MODUS OPERANDI

The pilot phase of the program shall be implemented in 3 states to be selected on the basis of their willingness to contract a loan from AFD, their geopolitical zones, the population of smallholder farmers, the potential population of young farmers to be trained, the predisposition of state governments to fund and develop ATVET, the existence of training institutions that can be integrated into the ATVET program and past and current experiences of the states with regards to ATVET. Other criteria include the existence of initiatives that will provide opportunities for ATVET renovation and also benefit it, the current performance of State ADPs, the existence of opportunities for partnerships to renovate and develop ATVET, the existence of Agricultural Research Institutes and the propensity of Local Governments to support ATVET renovation and development initiatives.

The program shall be represented at all levels of governance in the country, with a central Coordination Unit at the Federal level, placed under the responsibility of a National / Federal Coordinator who will have under his direct authority an Administrative and Financial Component, a Liaison and Public Relations Component, a Training Development, Delivery and Inspection Component and a Monitoring and Evaluation Component.

An appropriate mechanism will be worked out with competent institutions to ensure proper functioning of the pilot training structures involved in the program.

The planning, discussion, validation and steering of the renovation process based on the axes highlighted will be done by a steering committee constituted of key public and private sector stakeholders, territorial actors, professionals and beneficiaries concerned with ATVET development and headed by the Federal Ministry of budget and National Planning.

The feasibility study that will pave the way for the inception of the ATVET renovation and development program shall be coordinated by the proposed steering committee, leading to the necessary groundwork to obtain funding from the French Development Agency in support of the program.