

Michigan State University

New Alliance Policy Acceleration Support (NAPAS) Activity

Associate Cooperative Agreement no. AID-612-LA-15-00001

Quarterly Report

24 November 2014 to 31 March 2015

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MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

USAID/Malawi Quarterly Progress Report

Project Name: New Alliance Policy Acceleration Support: Malawi (NAPAS: Malawi) Activity

Reporting Period: November 24, 2014 to March 31, 2015

Obligation Funding Amount: US\$1,000,000

Project Duration: November 24, 2014 to November 24, 2017

Evaluation Dates: November 24, 2014 to March 31, 2015

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Project Objectives: The New Alliance Policy Acceleration Support: Malawi (NAPAS: Malawi) is an activity under the Sustainable Economic Growth project of USAID/Malawi being implemented by Michigan State University in collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute and the University of Pretoria. NAPAS exists to enable the government of Malawi to implement the policy reform agenda to which it committed under the New Alliance Country Cooperation Framework for Malawi. NAPAS has the goal of *providing effective technical support to the government of Malawi so that it sustainably achieves the high-level commitments to policy reform made in the New Alliance Country Cooperation Framework for Malawi*. These policy reforms have the broader aim of improving the agriculture investment climate in Malawi through commercializing and increasing the role of the private sector in Malawi's agricultural sector. NAPAS has the following three principal objectives:

1. Provide effective technical support for policy formulation by working jointly with the staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development in Malawi and members of pertinent Technical Working Groups (TWG) to draft evidence-informed policy and program design documents for consideration by senior government officials and stakeholders in agriculture and food security policy processes.
2. Engage in effective policy communication to inform debate on agriculture and food security policy issues in Malawi. Improve the quality of debate among participants in the policy process through which policy reforms committed to under the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition will be undertaken. NAPAS: Malawi will contribute to policy communication efforts led by other policy research and civil society organizations in Malawi. These policy communications efforts will include conferences, workshops, or production of periodic policy briefs.
3. Ensure that gaps in expertise constraining effective agricultural policy reform are filled.

I. Overall Progress of the Project for the Quarter

In the period November 24th 2014 to March 31st 2015 significant progress has been made by the NAPAS: Malawi activity. Much of the activities in this period focused on setting up offices in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD) and establishing relationships with staff in the Ministry, particularly in the Department of Agricultural Planning Services (DAPS) as well as with the Principal Secretary and the Minister. Additionally, the NAPAS staff have engaged in building relationships with various other key non-state

stakeholders in the agriculture sector in Malawi, including Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM), the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET), Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), and the Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI).

With respect to the first objective, the NAPAS team was called upon by the Honourable Minister Dr. Allan Chiyembekeza to draft a policy brief informing the ministry on options for redesigning the Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP). This policy brief that the NAPAS team developed was submitted to the Minister in February 2015 and has been used by the Minister and Principal Secretary (PS) to engage in internal government deliberations on FISP reforms, some of which are expected to be implemented in the 2015/2016 farming season. In addition, the NAPAS team was responsive to the demands of the PS and the Director of Agricultural Planning Services, when asked to write an internal document on refocusing the agriculture sector in Malawi with an emphasis on diversifying the sector's production. This document is currently being used as an input into the drafting of the National Agriculture Policy (NAP), which the NAPAS team is technically supporting DAPS to deliver by end of 2015. The NAPAS activity significantly contributed to the progress that has been made on developing the NAP, particularly in terms of organizing and conducting nation-wide consultations as well as analysing the inputs from the national consultations. The NAPAS team also gave input into other policies and strategy documents that are currently being drafted or reviewed. These include the National Seed Policy and Strategic Plan, the Contract Farming Strategy, and National Nutrition Policy and Strategy.

With respect to the second objective of engaging in effective policy communication to inform debate on agriculture and food security, the NAPAS team has made input in discussions and meetings in several technical working groups as well as the agriculture sector working group meetings. Some of the technical working group meetings where NAPAS has given substantial input include the Commercial Agriculture, Agro-processing and Market Development and the Food Security and Risk Management TWG. The NAPAS team has also provided input on how the government can reprioritize its policy commitments under the New Alliance at the New Alliance Core Team meetings, which the NAPAS staff are part of.

The NAPAS staff have also convened meetings that brought together various stakeholders and departments in the MOAIWD for policy dialogue. For example, meetings between CISANET and policy makers in the DAPS were convened to discuss input into the NAP. Also, the NAPAS team convened a meeting between the International Food Policy Research Institute, FAO and the Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS to give input into the review of the National Nutrition Policy and Strategy.

Regarding filling gaps in expertise constraining effective policy reforms, the NAPAS team has engaged with the economists in the DAPS on a daily basis, providing on-the-job capacity strengthening on policy analysis. The NAPAS staff assisted the DAPS staff in organizing and conducting national policy consultations as well as analysing the inputs from the consultations.

II. Challenges, Solutions and Actions taken

The current challenges include the slow pace in finalizing the NAP, largely due to budgetary constraints that the Ministry faced and slow bureaucratic processes involved with releasing funds

for use by Ministry staff. As a solution to this challenge, the NAPAS team has helped the DAPS in securing funding for the NAP consultation from non-government sources for example through liaising with CISANET which funded the national-level consultation as well as with the ASWAP SP secretariat in the Ministry, which funded all the district-level consultations for the NAP. In addition, NAPAS staff allocated some of the resources under the NAPAS budget to support the policy consultation events. A potential challenge is that significantly more resources than were budgeted for under the NAPAS budget may need to be used to facilitate policy forums.

The NAPAS activity has also faced some challenges in terms of procuring project vehicles. This has necessitated the hiring of vehicles for local transport in Lilongwe as well as for long-distance travel to meetings and consultation events outside Lilongwe. The project vehicles have not yet been procured due to delays in obtaining duty and VAT tax exemption from the Ministry of Finance. This has budgetary implications as hiring of vehicles was not planned for and adds to the project costs. So far the NAPAS team has reported this issue with the Agreement Officer Representative (AOR) and there has been efforts by USAID to help address this issue. A potential solution to the problem of procuring project vehicles is to also meet with the Minister of Finance as well as working with the MRA officials to see if the impasse can be addressed.

One challenge is that different agricultural policy reforms under the New Alliance are currently being handled by different departments in the Ministry and this necessarily requires the NAPAS team to engage broadly within the Ministry, beyond the DAPS. As such, the pre-existing tensions in relationships between policymakers in different departments pose a risk to the NAPAS activity as it is seen as primarily responding to the DAPS. An example of this is the tension observed by the NAPAS staff between the Director of Agricultural Planning Services (Mr. Alex Namaona) and the Controller of Agricultural Services-Institutions (Mr. Gray Nayndule Phiri). A solution to this problem has been to build rapport with the Controller of Agricultural Services – Institutions and carefully navigate the relationships between the two. A separate issue is tension between the EU-funded consultant and the NAPAS staff, which has at times proven difficult to address perhaps due to pre-existing challenges between the Controller of Agricultural Services – Institutions and the DAPS. A solution identified is to minimize interactions with the EU-funded consultant as these appear to only aggravate the situation.

III. Lessons, Best Practices and Recommendations

Prior to NAPAS activity the relationship between the DAPS and CISANET was largely antagonistic and limited communication would take place between the two. Now that NAPAS has been engaging with CISANET and DAPS, the level of dialogue and collaboration on policy formulation between the DAPS and CISANET has improved significantly, to the extent that CISANET commended the Ministry's new efforts in the NAP formulation process in their newsletter (Issue 1, Volume 2, 2015). This is following previous negative public comments CISANET had made criticising the Ministry in news outlets.

IV. Success stories

The NAP consultations were deemed a great success by several stakeholders since they brought together a wide range of stakeholders to deliberate on the policy options for Malawi's agriculture sector. The NAPAS team was central to this process and made significant effort to identify and

invite a wide range of stakeholders, in addition to what the Ministry had suggested and this appears to have paid dividends. Making the extra effort to engage with key stakeholder more broadly and to meet them wherever possible helped in making the NAP consultations a success. One Member of Parliament in Dedza-Ntcheu District commented that he had never seen the Ministry of Agriculture or any Ministry for that matter consult people so widely in a policy formulation process in his 20+ years in politics. Similar sentiments were expressed in several consultations. In all, 57 groups of stakeholders that included government staff, subject matter specialists, private sector, civil society, youths, women, and people who govern (members of parliament, traditional authorities and chiefs) were consulted at the district level and national level. More than 800 people participated in the consultations. Responses to the consultations were systematically analysed and will be incorporated in the drafting of the NAP. The data will also be shared to stakeholders in Malawi and for open data access, globally.

V. Management Issues

The current administrative assistant will be resigning at the end of May 2015. NAPAS is in the process of hiring another administrative assistant and 5 shortlisted candidates have already been identified. The administrative assistant will likely be identified by June 2015. A consultant, Dr. Chance Mwabutwa, who was hired to assist the NAPAS team from January to March 2015 has now left the team and is working for the EU for the next 5 months, stationed in the Ministry of Finance. The NAPAS team has been considering to hire him on a full-time basis since there is clear need for his skills in the DAPS, particularly on budgeting. The capacity gap on budgeting has in part been responsible for the delays in policy reforms, since various activities such as policy consultations need to be budgeted for within the Ministry.

VI. Update of the PMP

The NAPAS team has drafted a questionnaire that will be administered in a policy stakeholder survey in the month of May 2015. This questionnaire will collect recall baseline data which will be used to evaluate the NAPAS activity. In addition, the NAPAS team has been tracking several outputs as shown in Table 1 below. The last column in Table 1 reports on the progress for each indicator that NAPAS tracks and reports on a quarterly basis.

Table 1. Indicators for Monitoring Progress of the NAPAS activity

Result Area	Indicator	Unit of Measure	Data Source	Method of Data Collection	Frequency of Data Collection	Result & Description
2	Number of policy reform commitments the government of Malawi made under the Country Cooperation Framework to support the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Malawi for which MoAIWD is responsible that have been completed or are in progress.	Number of New Alliance policy reform commitments	Twenty-six policy reforms were made in the New Alliance Country Cooperation Framework for Malawi that are the responsibility of MoAIWD to implement. Records on progress on these policy reforms will be updated on a regular basis by NAPAS: Malawi staff.	NAPAS:Malawi record keeping; contact: New Alliance secretariat	Annually and quarterly	5 (NAP, Seed Policy, Contract Farming Strategy, National Nutrition Policy and Strategy, FISP)**
3	Number of demonstrated uses by policy makers of evidence (analyses and policy papers) generated or presented through NAPAS:Malawi.	Number of demonstrated uses	Annual NAPAS:Malawi records will be used. NAPAS:Malawi will maintain records of use by policy makers of evidence supplied by the project	NAPAS:Malawi record keeping	Annually and quarterly	2 – FISP brief and Refocusing Agriculture paper
4	Index (or scorecard) of quality of the institutional architecture for agriculture and food security policy processes in Malawi	Index of quality of institutional architecture	Measured by stakeholder evaluation survey to capture level of satisfaction and confidence. Baseline survey in April 2015; endline survey in mid-2017	Stakeholder survey implementation and analysis	Twice over life of project	N/A
5	Index (or scorecard) of quality of agriculture and food security policy processes in Malawi.	Index of quality of policy processes	Measured by stakeholder evaluation survey to capture level of satisfaction and confidence. Baseline survey in April 2015; endline survey in mid-2017	Stakeholder survey implementation and analysis	Twice over life of project	N/A
Output:						

1	Number of policy research and best policy practice papers generated.	Number of papers produced	NAPAS:Malawi records will be used. Activity staff will maintain records on all policy research and best policy practice papers generated; all training sessions held, with sex-and sector-disaggregated information on participants; and all engagements with private sector and civil society organizations to work with them on how their engagement in policy formulation processes might be strengthened	NAPAS:Malawi record keeping	Annually and quarterly	2 – FISP brief, NAP background paper
2	Number of stakeholder learning forums on agriculture and food security policy issues supported.	Number of learning forums			Annually and quarterly	1 – Beating Famine
3	Number of people receiving short-term training in policy analysis, planning, formulation, advocacy, monitoring, and evaluation.	Number of trainees			Annually and quarterly	0*
4	Number of institutions where trained individuals are applying new practices	Number of institutions			Annually and quarterly	0*
5	Number of private sector and civil society organizations assisted to participate in policy formulation processes.	Number of firms & CSOs assisted			Annually and quarterly	31
Input:						
1	Labor allocations to activity, disaggregated by level of expertise and type of activity – technical support, communications, capacity strengthening.	Person-weeks allocated	Annual and quarterly NAPAS:Malawi reports to USAID/Malawi – 1 week spent on technical support (writing and revising the FISP brief by Dr.	NAPAS:Malawi record keeping	Annually and quarterly	Technical support-16 man weeks and 1 man day

2	Financial resources directly expended by NAPAS:Malawi on policy process strengthening activities.	US dollars expended	Nankhuni), 5 weeks writing and revising the refocusing Agriculture document by Dr. Mabiso. 3 weeks analyzing the NAP consultation inputs by Dr. Mwabutwa (1 week) and John Mazunda (2 weeks) - NAPAS Consultant and IFPRI Analyst respectively. Communications: Roughly 1 week spent by each of these: Dr. Mabiso; Dr. Mabutwa; Dr Nankhuni; John Mazunda; and 1 day by Dr Benson communicating the refocusing document and getting inputs from different departments of the MoAIWD. On capacity building roughly 1 week (each) spent interacting with Junior staff of the MoAIWD on the NAP consultations and analyses of the data collected during the NAP consultations: Done by Dr. Mabiso and John Mazunda.			\$43,125
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*Note: A policy communication training was originally planned for in the 2nd quarter of 2015 (March) but ended up taking place a day later on April 1, 2015. And will be counted towards next quarter's achievements.

** These are the policies and strategies that NAPAS has worked on.

VII. Planned Activities for Next Quarter

The following activities shown in Table 2 are planned for the 3rd quarter (April-June) for the NAPAS activity:

Table 2. Planned NAPAS activities for April to June, 2015

Activity Description	Month or Date	Description of NAPAS contribution or efforts	NAPAS staff responsible
Policy Communication Training	April 1, 2015	NAPAS to organize and deliver training on Policy Communication for various stakeholders including DAPS staff, civil society, LUANAR and journalists in collaboration with Food Security Policy Innovation Lab and SEBAP.	Dr. Athur Mabiso Dr. Flora Nankhuni Dr. Suresh Babu (FSP IL)
Mapping the Linkages between Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition*	April 28, 2015	Activity led by SEBAP. Presentation by NAPAS on Agriculture-Nutrition Policy Landscape in Malawi	Dr. Flora Nankhuni
Consultations with LUANAR staff	April 30, 2015	The consultations are to reach out to LUANAR to offer the services that NAPAS staff can offer the university in areas of capacity building and to propose future joint activities.	Dr. Flora Nankhuni Dr. Todd Benson (FSP IL)
Drafting of the NAP	May 2015	Department of Agricultural Planning Services has ownership but with significant support from NAPAS	Dr. Flora Nankhuni Dr. Athur Mabiso
Validation workshop for the NAP*	May 2015	NAPAS will provide financial support and help DAPS organize a workshop to validate the NAP	Dr. Flora Nankhuni Dr. Athur Mabiso
Finalizing editing of National Nutrition Policy and Strategy	May 2015	Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS is leading this activity but with substantial input from NAPAS	Dr. Flora Nankhuni Dr. Athur Mabiso
Baseline Stakeholder Survey	May – June 2015	NAPAS staff will implement a baseline stakeholder survey for M&E purposes.	Dr. Flora Nankhuni Dr. Athur Mabiso Dr. Todd Benson (FSP IL) Dr. Mywish Maredia (FSP, IL)
Finalizing the Contract Farming Strategy	June 2015	Department of Agricultural Planning Services has ownership but with significant support from NAPAS	Dr. Athur Mabiso
ECAMA Research Symposium*	June 2015	NAPAS will support a panel discussion on policies for value	Dr. Flora Nankhuni Dr. Athur Mabiso

		chain development and agricultural transformation	
Policy Analysis Training	June 2015	Training of policy analysts in the DAPS and other relevant Departments and Ministries on policy	Dr. Athur Mabiso Dr. Flora Nankhuni Dr. Suresh Babu
Analysis and writing Agricultural Zoning brief	June 2015	Led by FSP Innovation Lab and supported by NAPAS	Dr. Todd Benson Dr. Flora Nankhuni Dr. Athur Mabiso

*NAPAS: Malawi expects USAID/Malawi to attend the event