

# Nigeria Agriculture Policy Activity

April 2024

NAPA Highlight #22

## Synergies: Two USAID sister projects working together with Nigerian Higher Education institutions

The USAID Feed the Future Nigerian Agricultural Policy Activity (NAPA) has continuously sought ways to strengthen partnerships with sister projects for more impact. One such synergy is with the USAID Feed the Future Nigerian Agricultural Extension Activity. The goal was to fight input waste and curb climate change excesses among profiled Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in various agricultural value chains through the use of the soil nutrient and soil productivity index maps that had been created under NAPA for Benue State. ([Synergies between USAID Feed the Future... - Blessing Iveren Ejeh | Facebook](#)).

Following the development of the maps, a staff member of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources Makurdi, and a cohort lead on soils, Mr. Hilary Achia, who doubles up as Desk officer on soils for the Agric. Extension activity, was trained to use the maps with the help of the Dr. Blessing Agada and the map's designer. Mr. Hilary can now calculate fertilizer requirements for SME's based on site specific locations and crops. This will increase demand for use of the maps (<http://bitly.ws/J5gv>) in the state with possible impact on yields and the climate.

The ongoing conflict in Russia and Ukraine, has a devastating effect on food security in Nigeria as Ukraine is a leading source of fertilizer that is imported into Nigeria. Given depleted soils, and without affordable fertilizer, farmers will see declining yields and escalated food prices. Fertilizer is an essential input for these farmers, as it enhances soil fertility and restores nutrients depleted from previous growing seasons. When the right recommendations/blend of fertilizer as an input is adhered to by the farmer, and the correct rate applied at the right place with proper guidance from extension personnel,



Dr. Blessing I. Agada In-country lead on Soil Productivity under NAPP/NAPA and the Coordinator for the USAID FtF Extension Activity Mr. Joseph Adayi Unogwu at a review of agricultural activities with the Commissioner of Agriculture Dr. Kester Kyenge and his Directors in Makurdi.

yields will increase. Also, with high intensity rainfall, soil particles as well as nutrients beneficial to plants growth are lost in runoff. These lost nutrients become potent greenhouse gases impacting climate change. These losses can be minimized with proper management. To reduce the loss, the capacity of farmers and extension workers are strengthened on methods of sustainable intensification and use of climate smart practices embedded in Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA)/ Regenerative Agricultural practices. Consequently, we look to create incentives around carbon footprint generation as a benefit to the farmer. Profiled SMEs/Farms that sequester carbon through defined Regenerative Agricultural practices, when ascertained, will be paid. Conversation with INNOVX to purchase these carbon credits is in the pipeline, with pilots currently in Nasarawa and Niger States.

We intend to improve the current poor extension farmer ratio of 1:8,000 and ensure that the farmers/SMEs have access to the right information. The model, to do so, was developed while I was a visiting scholar at Michigan State University, USA, under the Nigerian Agricultural Policy Project (NAPP). It

entails, using 400 level undergraduate students of the faculties of agriculture (during their industrial attachment year) profiled and trained to serve as extension workers on projects for SMEs as individuals or in clusters. In the pilot stage, they will be paid a stipend by the project partners, with the SMEs to bear the cost of these services once the SMEs have built adequate capacity. The first pilot is already running in Benue State. This we hope will immediately increase producer access to climate information as well as information and training on climate-resilient practices; improve yields sustainably; enhance use of evidence on producer knowledge, uptake, and return on investment; increase reach and quality of public- private agricultural extension and advisory services and provide jobs for our teeming youths.



Teaching some SMEs at Makurdi LGA. The right placement of inorganic fertilizer in a maize yam intercrop following recommendations from the interpretation of results from the soil tests.

The model extends to accommodate graduate students with 70 of them already trained in the first pilot, now in a pool:

- [So, we had the onboarding of 25 of... - Blessing Iveren Ejeh | Facebook](#) ;
- [Day 1 in pix.... Excited students... - Blessing Iveren Ejeh | Facebook](#);
- [Rounded up yesterday with lots of... - Blessing Iveren Ejeh | Facebook](#)

Of these seventy (70) student extension agents trained on various digital tools, twenty (20) have

been deployed to SMEs in the pilot phase. Our team was fully funded to participate in the 6th Wide Agricultural Extension week in Abuja Nigeria to showcase this model as a solution to the extension farmer service delivery gap.

- [Good to be back online! .Apologies... - Blessing Iveren Ejeh | Facebook.](#)



Conversations with parties for a memorandum with the Vice Chancellor JOSTUM



The governance team with students profiled under the pilot phase



Indoor training on diseases identification in maize





Outdoor training on soil sampling and the use of the LandPKS mobile app. for on-the-spot assessment of soil physical properties.



Student EAs in a rice field of the SME/SHFs

By Blessing Iveren Ejuh-Agada PhD.