Trends, frameworks and requirements for a comprehensive approach to advisory services in Africa

Presented by Magdalena L. BLUM
FAO Research and Extension Service
FAO/ADB 6th Thematic Meeting
Rome, 8 January 2008
Situation of many African extension systems over the past decades

- Insufficient support to advisory services in the post T&V and structural adjustment period
- Expectation that the private sector would take over advisory services
- Reduction and aging public staff / brain drain / gender bias / missing career perspectives
- Advisory profiles hardly revised over the past decades
- Outdated pre- and in-service training
- Project type interventions with little “real world” involvement, e.g. marketing approaches
- Insufficient research on advisory service systems, strategies and approaches, outcomes and impacts
- Lack of infrastructure (roads, ICTs, irrigation, …) affects agricultural productivity and advisory performance

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Lessons learned for developing improved extension systems

- False assumption that institutional models can be imported (Green Revolution, Grameen Bank, T&V model, etc.)

- Complexity of African agriculture requires diverse solutions which are adapted to country specific and local conditions

- Building indigenous institutions is essential, but a time-consuming process based on learning process and human capacity building

- Categories of countries to be differentiated (Africa Dev Indicators 2007)
  - Even within the country categories differentiation is required
  - Gap between the African countries has widened

- Not either/or, but joint efforts of public, private sector and civil society (NGOs, producer organizations) required

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Facts showing the need of increased advisory services

- 41% of SSA’s population under the poverty line of $1 a day (2004)
- Low productivity and chronic food gaps still remain in many African countries
- Growing population, low life expectancy, AIDS, ...
- Varying secondary (20-80%) and very low tertiary education (5%) enrollment
- Vocational training in agriculture not promoted
- Large numbers of relatively small farms and geographically dispersed communities
- Political power of farmers varies among African countries
- Now/future: increasing food prices, less food aid available

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## Institutional and Operational Reform of Extension Systems (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FROM</th>
<th>TO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard extension models</td>
<td>Systems shaped according to country conditions and based on lessons learned / good practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One main public system</td>
<td>Pluralistic system with public, civil society and private service providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension as public good</td>
<td>Public and private goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National coverage by the public sector</td>
<td>Private sector coverage driven by markets and funding, public sector with complementary roles and tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public research as main source of knowledge and innovations for extension</td>
<td>Multiple sources of knowledge and innovations (research, local knowledge and innovations, ICTs, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Institutional and Operational Reform of Extension Systems (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FROM</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centralized system</td>
<td>Decentralized system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology focus</td>
<td>Problem, demand &amp; market focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandate for agricultural development</td>
<td>Broader mandate for agricultural, rural development and environment/climate change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical lines of command</td>
<td>Horizontal collaboration &amp; multi-disciplinary teams, partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entirely public funded system</td>
<td>Public funding remains indispensable, Delinking delivery and financing, New Funding mechanisms, Clients share costs according to their capacities/cost-recovery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Continuing public sector roles within a pluralistic system of advisory services

- Funding of advisory services
- Promoting advisory services of private sector and civil society
- Delivery of advisory services related to public goods
  - Poverty reduction/MDGs and food security
  - Environment and climate change
  - Areas with comparative advantages
- Shared coordination of advisory services
  - Identification of gaps, creating synergies, avoiding duplications
  - Representation of service providers
- Monitoring and evaluation
  - Identification of advisory needs and gaps
  - Mapping of service providers
  - Audits (out-sourcing, etc.)
  - Outcome and impact of advisory services for policy formulation

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Main roles of private sector and civil society with respect to advisory services

- Delivery of advisory services
  - by the private business related to:
    - Profitable advisory services
    - Advisory services to farmers who can pay for services
    - Specialized areas of advice
    - Areas with comparative advantages
  - by civil society (NGOs, producer organizations):
    - Profitable advisory services
    - Areas which are funded through development aid
    - Farmer-to-farmer advice (also in less or non-profitable advisory areas)

- Funding/co-funding of advisory services (also by farmers organizations)

- Shared coordination of advisory services

- Monitoring and evaluation
  - Identification of advisory needs and gaps
  - Participation in mapping of service providers
  - Outcome and impact of advisory services

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Extended Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System

Figure 1. Agricultural Advisory Services as Component of an Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System

Source: Adapted from Rivera et al. (2006).

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Diversified Functions and Roles of advisory services

by M.L. Blum, 2008

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Required research for improving advisory services

- **Actual state** of extension and advisory services
- Inadequate knowledge on how to create a favorable institutional environment in African nations
- Lacking knowledge base on how to craft demand-driven organizations to help African farmers, traders and the owners of micro-enterprises
- **Cost-effectiveness** of various extension systems (public, private and civil society sector)
- Missing studies in Africa on the cost and benefits of achieving higher rates of farmer participation through NGOs (White and Eicher, 1999)
- **Impact studies** of various advisory services are fractioned
Conditions that favor improving and reinvesting in advisory services

- **Better economic growth** in countries with improving institutions (Africa Dev Indicators 2007)

- Access to communication services has increased dramatically in Africa, especially radio, mobile phones
  - **Higher cost-effectiveness** of information provision

- Increasing food prices allow for investments and adoption of innovations

- Local/regional markets are likely to develop with less food aid available and increased energy prices
  - **Higher returns** to advisory services

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## Requirements for new advisory systems (1)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>New advisory systems</th>
<th>Requirements and Investments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systems shaped according to country conditions and based on learning from good practices</td>
<td>Country and advisory systems <strong>analysis</strong> (potentials, constraints, institutional landscape, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluralistic system with public, civil society and private service providers; subsidiary principle</td>
<td><strong>Redefinition of roles and tasks</strong> of service providers, development of <strong>partnerships and networks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector coverage driven by markets and funding</td>
<td>Identification of <strong>gaps</strong>, special concern for <strong>disadvantages groups</strong> (women, youth, ...) and poor regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple sources of knowledge and innovations (research, local knowledge and innovations, ICTs, etc.)</td>
<td>Promotion of partnerships and networks, also social innovations, ICTs for more information cost effectiveness</td>
</tr>
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## Requirements for new advisory systems (2)

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<th>Requirements / Investments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decentralized system</td>
<td>Strengthened decentralized services, but staff located within <strong>professional advisory services</strong> and up-to-date <strong>backstopping services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem, demand &amp; market focus</td>
<td>New strategies, procedures, collaborations, instruments, ... adapted technologies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Broader mandate for agricultural, rural development and environment / climate change | **Pre-service and In-service Training** in new advisory subjects (irrigation, high value crops, marketing, adaptation to climate change, process facilitation, ...)
| Horizontal collaboration & multi-disciplinary teams, partnerships | **Increased managerial capacities** / different style of management (training), organizational development approach to develop **learning institutions** |
| Public funding for pluralistic advisory services remains indispensable, New Funding mechanisms, Clients share costs accord. to their capacities | **Financial innovations** required, Adaptation of institutions and rules to different funding mechanisms |

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Frameworks – Market-oriented advisory services (MOOAS)

M.L. Blum, 2008, adapted from Neuchâtel Initiative

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Frameworks – Demand driven approaches

- Promoting and organizing demand
  - needs analysis and priority setting, representativity of farmers’ organizations

- Facilitating linkages to service providers
  - right of clients to choose their advisors

- Enabling dialogue, negotiations, agreements with advisory services

- Developing demand side financing
  - client access to advisory funds, vouchers, combining local projects with advisory budget, ...

- Ensuring quality services of providers / supply side

- Managing and organizing delivery of advisory services / operational side

- Managing change through learning
  - evaluating services involving clients and adapting the approach

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A comprehensive approach to advisory services in Africa

- **Country-specific Analysis and Policy Design** (lessons learned, good practices, analysis and research results)
- Improving governance and strengthening advisory institutions
- Pre- and In-service training / including new agendas
- **Comprehensive approach**
  - Demand/client – driven and market-oriented
  - Problem/constraints - oriented along the value chains
  - Technological and social innovations
- **Contextualize capacity building** (policies, institutional and organizational frameworks, education and training as well as approaches, methods and tools)
- **Testing** and evaluation of alternative institutional, organizational and financial solutions in an action research approach
- Cost-effectiveness of information delivery through ICTs and mass media
- Consider the right of the client to choose his/her advisor – even in public services

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Thank you for your attention

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