



SAIRLA GHANA NATIONAL LEARNING ALLIANCE

Locations Ghana

Dates 01/10/2016 - 01/04/2020

Summary

Agricultural production and productivity needs to increase in order to enhance economic growth but environmental impacts and social conflicts need to be taken into account. The concept of sustainable agricultural intensification which considers these complexities is needed. The Sustainable Agricultural Intensification Research and Learning in Africa (SAIRLA) programme achieved this through commissioned research and facilitating learning at different levels in selected African countries.

The problem

Sub-Saharan Africa's population is growing. Everyone needs enough nutritious food, so agricultural production and productivity needs to increase. Different approaches and methods to achieve this also need to be assessed on how much they can reduce environmental impacts and social conflicts while enhancing economic growth.

Developing equitable sustainable agricultural intensification in Africa is a complex challenge. Several factors need to be taken into account including rising inequality, chronic poverty, diverse values and interests. Major environmental challenges for global agriculture, such as climate change and biodiversity loss, also have to be addressed.

Against this backdrop, the concept of sustainable agricultural intensification aims to increase agricultural productivity while maintaining or improving environmental quality and social cohesion in a sustainable way.

What we are doing

Any sustainable agricultural intensification requires innovative approaches. This led to the introduction of the Sustainable Agricultural Intensification Research and Learning in Africa (SAIRLA) programme. The programme commissioned research projects to look into issues such as equity, policy processes, risk factors for smallholder farmers, access to and use of market and agronomic information, and sustainability strategies. With outputs from these research projects and from other sources, SAIRLA facilitated learning at many levels to understand different ways of achieving sustainable agricultural intensification and their developmental implications. The participating countries included Burkina Faso, Ghana, Ethiopia, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia.

The programme was funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and managed by [WYG](#) and [Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich](#). CABI was responsible for implementing the National Learning Alliance in Ghana in collaboration with the [Science and Technology Policy Research Institute \(CSIR-STEPRI\)](#). The National Learning Alliance in Ghana facilitated and gave guidance to a process which co-generated, shared and facilitated the use of knowledge by decision makers (policy makers and investors) to develop sustainable agricultural intensification in ways that enable poorer smallholder farmers in Africa, particularly women and youth, to participate in and benefit from agricultural development. The project ultimately sought to enhance the wellbeing of all smallholder agricultural value chain actors through effective policies and investments in sustainable agriculture.

As with the other participating countries, Ghana's National Learning Alliance worked with partners in the public and private sectors, civil society groups, media, SAIRLA research projects and national research and teaching institutions to seek an outcome where decision makers (policy makers and investors) at national and local levels have access, and the opportunity, to engage with evidence on what works and what is unlikely to work to enable poorer smallholders, especially women and youth, to benefit from sustainable agricultural intensification in Ghana.

The goal of the National Learning Alliance in Ghana was to make research evidence on sustainable agricultural intensification available and utilised by decision makers. These included government, investors and other key stakeholders who need to deliver more effective policies and investments in sustainable agricultural intensification that strengthens the capacity of poorer farmers to access and benefit from agricultural development programmes in Ghana.

The project's four strategic objectives included:

- Facilitate co-generation of research evidence that addresses equitable access to sustainable agricultural intensification processes by smallholders particularly women and youth
- Develop stakeholder engagement plan and facilitate sustainable agricultural intensification research evidence use by policy makers, investors and implementers in decision making processes
- Jointly identify means of achieving effective implementation of policy and business strategies that improve the capacity of poorer smallholder farmers, especially women and youth to achieve sustainable agricultural intensification
- Network with local and external organizations to facilitate sustainable agricultural intensification, social learning and knowledge management

The Ghana National Learning Alliance was supported by three of SAIRLA's research projects based in Ghana:

- Improving the use of tools to make sustainable Agricultural Intensification more equitable (Tools & Metrics)
- Gender and Legume Alliance (GALA)
- Managing trade-offs and synergies for sustainable intensification (SITAM)

Results so far

The project set up and officially launched the National Learning Alliance in Ghana and identified and engaged key stakeholders (boundary partners). 'Project outcome mapping' was also developed and validated with progress markers agreed with these boundary partners.

One policy symposium was organized, two policy briefs were issued and a survey was conducted on the capacity needs of stakeholders to effectively access and use research evidence. The Ghana National Learning Alliance also organized a stakeholders' workshop to validate the findings of the capacity needs assessment survey. Knowledge products were developed for strategic stakeholders and decision-makers.

Further information can be found on the [SAIRLA website](#).

Donors

UK Department for International Development (DFID)

Partners

SAIRLA Research projects: (GALA, Tools and Metrics, and SITAM), Science and Technology Policy Research Institute (CSIR-STEPRI)

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<https://www.cabi.org/what-we-do/cabi-projects/>