



Tropentag, September 9-11, 2020, virtual conference

“Food and nutrition security and its resilience
to global crises”

Improving Agricultural Extension Service by Formation of Private Extension Group for Sustainability of Innovations

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Abstract

Agricultural extension and advisory services plays a major role in Agricultural development. In Nigeria, agricultural extension services have been primarily provided by the public sector, most notably the Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) funded through the World Bank in the 1970s. However, the withdrawer of the funding and the subsequent difficulty of government to solely finance the sector has been having a noticeable effect on the inability of the public extension bodies to perform efficiently due to insufficient funding at the state level, inadequate availability of inputs for demo plots, poor logistic support and inadequate staffing. A reasonable number of public extension staff retires annually without replacement or recruitment in the last two decades, leading to the close down of some Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP) offices and some dilapidated buildings. This study project is targeted at creating job opportunities for Agricultural graduate by formation of private extension group / advisors for sustainability of innovations to fill the gap provided by public extension service providers. The private extension agents after undergoing rigorous capacity building, through Training of Trainers (ToT) will work with private agro processing companies in mobilising farmers, support small scale farmers by providing timely advice and link to market, seed and fertiliser companies NGOs in carrying out training and monitoring demo plots. The targeted agents are mainly youths who are already familiar with extension principles and adult learning techniques, therefore adoption and sustainability of innovations will be possible as knowledge transfer will be easy as the agents will closely monitor the farms.

Keywords: Nigeria, Private extension services, sustainability