

PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID)
IDENTIFICATION/CONCEPT STAGE

Report No.: PIDC35627

Project Name	Building Capacity for Evidence-Based Agricultural Development
Region	AFRICA
Country	Gambia, The
Sector(s)	General Extension and Research (38%), Crops (20%), Irrigation and drainage (29%), General Agriculture, fishing and forestry sector (13%)
Theme(s)	Rural markets (15%), Rural policies and institutions (24%), Rural services and infrastructure (61%)
Project ID	P157775
Borrower(s)	Republic of The Gambia
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Agriculture
Environmental Category	C-Not required
Date PID Prepared/Updated	02-June -2016
Estimated Date of Board Approval	30-Sep-2016

I. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. The Gambia is a small sub-tropical and Sub-Saharan country on the West Coast of Africa, covering an area of about 11,000 square Km, and on two sides of River Gambia. The country is bordered by Senegal on all sides, except the West, where it is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean. The Gambia has limited natural resources, and the economy is dominated by the service and agriculture sectors. The Gambian economy achieved robust growth of 5.3% between 1998 and 2001, and the GDP increased 62.2% between 2004 and 2012, but has since been challenged by both internal and external factors. Fiscal deterioration, high government borrowing and shifts in monetary and exchange rate policies have contributed to economic uncertainty and a jump in real interest rates and public debt. The country is also vulnerable to external shocks, given its relatively undiversified economy largely driven by the services sector, mainly driven by tourism is the key driver of the economy and the most significant foreign exchange earner. Economic growth contracted from 4.3% in 2013 to an estimated -0.7% in 2014 due to the effects of Ebola on tourism-related activities, the delayed rains experienced in 2014 and continued macroeconomic policy challenges.

2. The population of The Gambia was estimated in 2013 at 1.8 million, and is young, with 41% of them being under 15 years of age. Population density is 176 persons per square Km, one of the highest in Africa. Poverty is an important development challenge for the country, which was ranked 165 out of 187 countries in the 2012 UNDP Human Development Index. Poverty is deeper and widespread among households headed by agricultural and fisheries sectors, and there is a pronounced spatial dimension with poverty head count for rural households twice as high as urban households.

3. The Gambia's agriculture and natural resource sector consists of four sub-sectors, namely agriculture (crops, livestock and poultry, research and development, and agricultural service providers), forestry, fisheries and wildlife. Groundnut contributes significantly to the national economy, accounting for 60 percent of domestic exports, and 55 percent of rural households engage in groundnut production. The country is classified as a low-income food deficit country, and produces about 50% of its food consumption needs. Furthermore, only 54% of the country's arable land (about 430,000 Ha) is used for food production. Agriculture is predominantly subsistence, uses very little mechanization, few inputs, and rain-fed, with very little irrigation. As such, the agricultural productivity is low, and the sector is especially vulnerable to droughts.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

4. The agricultural sector remains one of the largest contributors to income and employment generation and a vital element in the country's drive towards self-sufficiency in food production, reduced rural poverty and sustainable development. Specifically, the sector contributes about 22- 29 percent annually to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), generates approximately 85% of export earnings and two thirds of households income. It provides employment to 75 percent of the country's population and meets about 50 percent of the national food requirements. Its share of the country's total exports is 70 percent, thus constituting a substantial part of The Gambia's foreign exchange earnings. Agriculture is also the sole means of income generation for the majority of rural households over 70% of which are below the national poverty line. In The Gambia, about 91 percent of the extremely poor and 72 percent of the poor work in agriculture. The agricultural sector is regarded as the prime sector for investments to raise income, improve food security and reduce poverty.

5. The Gambia has a Sahelian climate is characterized by a long dry season, and short wet season which last from June to October. Mean annual rainfall, which averaged about 1,200 mm between 1886 and 1969 declined to 744 in the 1980's, and increased slightly to about 800 mm in the early 2000s. Average temperatures in the country have increased since the 1940s, while average relative humidity has decreased from over 75% in 1945 to about 55% in 2002.

6. The agriculture sector is characterized by small-scale, subsistence rain-fed crop production (mainly groundnuts, coarse grains, and rice), traditional livestock rearing, semi-commercial groundnut and horticultural production, cotton and a large artisanal fisheries sub-sector. Agricultural output is generated by around 69,100 farm households (500,000 people engaged in farming) cultivating 320,000 ha or about 57 percent of total arable land estimated at 558,000 ha. The country produces just about 50 percent of its food needs, exposing it to severe hunger and household vulnerability due to food insecurity.

7. The sector continues to experience low productivity and modernization and remains largely undiversified. This is manifested in this high incidence of rural poverty, household food insecurity, accelerated rural-urban drift and rapid environmental degradation. The demand for food is growing with the increase in population, while agricultural production is falling and now provides less than half the total national requirements. The Government of The Gambia's strategy to address critical constraints to fast and sustainable development of the agricultural sector includes policy initiatives outlined in the Agricultural and Natural Resources (ANR), Vision 2020, Vision 2016, and Gambia National Agricultural Investment Plan, all of which are consistent with the Government's Program for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE). This national agenda is data and information intensive and will require continuous monitoring for reporting on progress and to inform decision making and the national budget. The PAGE also recognizes that the evidence base needs to be strengthened in order to

improve the transparency and accountability of Government.

8. Availability of reliable, consistent, comprehensive and timely agricultural information is critical to the development of the agriculture sector. At the strategic level, credible agricultural statistics are required for policy development, improved planning and informed decision-making and to monitor and evaluate agricultural sector performance. At the lower levels, agricultural data and statistics are used to support public and private trade and business development, manage food security, disaster-risks, and research and education, among others. As African economies continue to grow with agriculture as the main driving force, there is an urgent need to build Monitoring and Evaluation systems and capacity for ensuring the availability of timely quality data of key indicators to inform policy actions, evidence-based decision making, and monitoring the progress of Agriculture programs and projects.

9. Farmer's demand for information has increased in recent years due to greater market instability, more complex production technologies among others. Lack of timely information can prevent good quality decision and thus lower the efficiency of production decision among farmers. Differences in decisions about what crops to grow can be attributed to differences in resources, levels of knowledge, environment, approaches concerning uncertainty and other factors. Farmers require information to link various inputs at reasonable prices, and also link output markets. Inadequate and weak information, statistical and monitoring and evaluation systems impede effective planning and development.

10. The Planning Services Unit of the Department of Agriculture (DOA), is set up to provide reliable, relevant, high quality and harmonized statistical information on the Agricultural Sector for use by stakeholders for policy and program planning and management, as well as monitoring and evaluation purposes. In the context of the National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS), the Agricultural Sector Strategy for the Development of Statistics (SSDS) was designed to improve Agricultural Sector Statistical System to quicken the pace in the production of the required statistics that will support and improve development outcomes. However, the capacities in the Planning Services Unit are limited to provide the services and information products for sectoral planning, policy advice, programming and monitoring and evaluation to improve program effectiveness and increase agricultural sector productivity.

11. Moreover, even though technology is widely available to improve productivity and reduce vulnerability and food insecurity, use of new technology by the farmer is seriously constrained. The uptake and sustainable use of these new technologies is low and slow. Strong agricultural extension linkage complimented by flawless information flow enhanced by the effective use of information and communication technologies (ICT) will significantly boost agricultural production and improve rural livelihoods.

12. With the national goal and objective of food and nutrition self-sufficiency and commercializing Agriculture, the relevance of Agricultural Extension is even more critical than ever before. The effectiveness of agricultural extension work highly depends on the quality and numbers of extension professionals who are qualified, motivated, committed and responsive to farmer demands.

13. The Gambia has tried several Agricultural Extension approaches/models, all of which had lacked inherent sustainability measures, clarity of goals, objectives, modus operandi and focus, thus limiting their success. Moreover, as the budgetary allocations to the Agricultural Sector continue to be constrained, the Extension Service also continues to face series of constraints and deterioration in quality of service to producers.

14. Economic reform programs implemented by many African countries including Gambia have,

among others, led to the reduction in the numbers of extension agents available under the traditional public extension to deliver agricultural knowledge and information to farmers. Moreover, the few extension professionals left in the system are poorly motivated, unskilled and lack appropriate competencies in terms of participatory skills, knowledge, facilitator mindsets and related behavior required working with farmers in a demand driven manner. The Gambia like many other SSA countries has over the years attempted in many ways to reorganize its extension systems. By and large, these reforms have aimed at addressing the issues of relevance and towards more effective and efficient service delivery systems. Despite these reform efforts, a number of structural and institutional bottlenecks still remain on the road to efficient agricultural advisory services provision.

15. New extension approaches require new knowledge systems. The lack of a critical number of properly qualified extension professionals with the right knowledge, skills and attitude demanded by the new extension environment is posing serious impact on the provision of quality services to farmers. The functions and skills of the extension professionals within the new demand-led and market oriented extension services delivery systems need to be developed. Public sector budget and personnel to deliver such vital services have dwindled leaving a greater section of farmers unable to access valuable and timely services. Moreover, the limited extension officers are constrained by poor mobility and infrastructure.

16. To increase producers access to critical advisory services, both public and private providers have been using a variety of delivery "channels," such as radio, print media and increasingly, leverage information and communication technologies (ICT)-enabled channels to tackle key constraints to improve the delivery of agricultural and advisory services. Particularly, the mobile phone networks are increasingly being used, given the recent dramatic increase in access to such networks and the proliferation of mobile phones, even in rural areas, and affordability even for the poor.

17. It is therefore the intention of this grant support project to also leverage on ICT to enhance the delivery of agricultural advisory services which have been weakened by lack of capacity, large farmer to extension ratio, and ageing extension workforce.

18. Furthermore, in order to achieve the national objective to contribute to increasing agricultural productivity, it is imperative to address the access of farm families to information on production and proven technologies as well as inputs that will directly increase farmer's production base, increase their market access and boost their income levels.

19. This service requires an efficient data and statistical information platform which provide effective, efficient and real-time services to both stakeholders and farmers. The introduction of electronic information & extension delivery system (e-extension system) is envisaged to offer tremendous real time data and extension delivery capabilities to the agricultural sector.

Relationship to CAS

20. The Sector Strategy for the Development of Statistics (SSDS) is the medium term (2015-2019) strategic plan of the Planning Services Unit of the Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, towards achieving the vision of timely, reliable and quality data for broad consumption. It is aligned fully with the national goals of the Government of The Gambia's Vision 2016, the Vision 2020, and supports the realization of national strategic programs, including the Agricultural and Natural Resources (ANR) Sector Policy, and the Program for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE). The proposed interventions

outlined in these strategic national policy documents are expected to achieve at least eight percent growth in the agricultural sector in The Gambia. This, combined with accelerated non-agricultural growth could stimulate the level of growth needed in the sector to transform the country's rural areas and to significantly reduce poverty levels. The PAGE recognizes that evidence, information and data are required to ensure accountability and transparency of Government's decisions and to empower the citizenry. The project will contribute to this agenda by improving the quantity and quality of statistics and ensuring that they are analyzed and disseminated widely.

21. The Joint Partner Strategy of the World Bank and the African Development Bank for The Gambia (2013-16), support evidence based decision-making. The Country Partnership Strategy specifically recognizes the need for a more targeted support towards a results based approach to public policy formulation in The Gambia, which the proposed project could help to achieve. In addition, as part of IDA 15 and IDA 16 Results Measurement System, results based Country Assistance or Partnership Strategies are expected to include a review of the national statistical systems and an indication of what is needed to strengthen the capacity both to generate and to use statistical data. IDA 15 clearly states that statistical capacity building will be given prominence, especially in mainstreaming a comprehensive discussion on country statistical systems and followed up with relevant instruments in line with country priorities and in collaboration with other development partners.

22. The proposed grant intends to support the implementation of the Agricultural Sector Statistics Development Strategy to operationalize the National Strategy for Development Statistics in the Agriculture sector, by improving the quantity and quality of statistics and ensuring that they are analyzed and disseminated widely to support evidence-based decision making, and monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of public sector programs in the agricultural sector. It also intends to support the Government of the Gambia to pilot current innovations in the agricultural advisory services provision as it seeks to modernize its agricultural extension service to accelerate technology adoption and enhance sector productivity for improved national food security.

II. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Proposed Development Objective(s)

23. The objectives of this grant support are to build technical and institutional monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity and enhance farmers' access to agricultural advisory services in the Gambia. The project will achieve these objectives by strengthening capacity for data collection, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and analysis for ensuring the availability of quality data and information for evidence based policy making, and also leveraging on ICT and the prolific use of mobile telephony to enhance agricultural advisory services delivery in The Gambia.

Key Results

24. The expected outcome will be improved quality and reliability of agricultural statistical information for effective policy making and good governance and the design and monitoring of agricultural sector programs and policies. It is also expected to improve quality data and agricultural advisory services for improved productivity. These would ensure the availability of quality data and

information for evidence-based agricultural and rural development. The grant support outcomes will be measured by the following indicators;

- User satisfaction with agricultural statistical products and services
- Timely production of agricultural statistics
- User satisfactory with agricultural extension services
- Producers with knowledge of improved technologies generated/released as well as good agricultural practices

III. Preliminary Description

Concept Description

25. The grant will support the implementation of two key strategies of the Ministry of Agriculture: the agricultural sector strategy for the development of statistics and the national agricultural extension strategy. It will support the Planning Services Unit of the Department of Agriculture to build technical and institutional capacity for ensuring the availability of quality data and information for evidence-based agricultural and rural development. It will also support the Agricultural Extension Services Unit of the Department of Agriculture to pilot E-Extension System as a means of improving its capacity to deliver agricultural advisory services, using ICT to ameliorate the human and technical constraints of the Department while enhancing to producers access to technical and market information to accelerate technology adoption and increase productivity.

26. The project will be organized around two main components: (i) strengthening sectoral capacity for agricultural statistics; and (ii) enhancing agricultural advisory services delivery through ICT.

27. **Component 1: Strengthening Sectoral capacity for collection, analysis, dissemination and utilization of agricultural statistics (US\$900,000):** This component will focus on helping to enhance the agricultural statistical capacity including the underlying statistical framework to ensure the production of quality statistics. It will have two subcomponents: (i) enhancing the capacity of Statistical Department of Planning Services Unit, and (ii) improving the agricultural statistical framework.

28. **Subcomponent 1.1: Enhancing the capacity of Statistical Unit of Planning Service:** The objective of this subcomponent is to support the development of a robust agricultural information system that can contribute significantly to better informed policy and decision making. It would strengthen the capacity of the agricultural sector in The Gambia to (i) track and report on activities, outputs and results; and (ii) use monitoring and evaluation information to improve policy, program and project management.

29. **Subcomponent 1.2: Agricultural data production and dissemination:** This subcomponent will support the improvement of data collection, compilation, validation, management, analysis and dissemination of data in order to improve the quality, timeliness and use of agricultural data. It will focus on both enhancing existing statistics and improving the capacity to collect and how these are communicated and disseminated to users. It will help to improve the agricultural sector statistical system to ensure effective operation of agricultural sector statistical structures. It will put in place data flow channels between the center, regions and districts. The Component will train and equip the M&E and Agricultural Statistics staff at the national, regional, district levels and other stakeholders in agricultural data collection generation, analysis, dissemination and use of agricultural statistics; by developing training modules for training of all key stakeholders, by developing tool kits and M&E/MIS guides; by building a robust MIS and through procurement of requisite M&E/MIS hardware and software.

30. **Component 2: Enhancing agricultural advisory services delivery through ICT (US\$700,000):** The component will strengthen the capacities of rural development workers, farmers, farmer organizations and rural communities. The component will support two key activities. The first will be development of e-knowledge management website where content will be created and updated by the scientific community, agricultural experts and published on the portal for users like field extension officers, Farmer based organizations, NGOs, policy makers, etc. And second, support the transmission of the content from the knowledge management portal to end users - farmers, enabled extension officers in the field - via voice and SMS.

31. **Sub-component 2.1: E-Extension Portal and Field Information Management System (Electronic Information and Extension Service Delivery):** The subcomponent will introduce and pilot electronic information and extension delivery system (e-extension system) to offer real time, data and extension delivery capabilities to the agricultural sector in terms of wider farmer coverage, vast information storage, fast communication channels and links between different media.

32. The grant will support to build an electronic extension portal and knowledge platform to enhance the capacity of extension officers, and improve their access to information and new knowledge on improved technologies and good agricultural practices. The purpose of the platform is to serve as a knowledge management system that integrates research/content from the various stakeholders for end user support. It allows for exchange of information among agricultural stakeholders as well as generation of reports, analysis of data for strategy review and response to field enquiries and queries. It will also improve reporting on field events, and timely statistical data recording and reporting. There would also be e-labs that would help develop extension officers and farmer's e-learning skills.

33. Linked to Component 1, the sub-component will support an extension field data capturing system, a digital photography and GPS assisted smartphone application, to improve field data capture and delivery reporting using smartphone application.

34. **Subcomponent 2.2: Local content access (Audio farmer library) and Call Center:** The subcomponent will support the transmission of content from the knowledge management portal to end users-the farmers, enabled extension officers in the field via voice and SMS. The sub-component will support the establishment of a multilingual Interactive Voice Response (IVR) service and audio component to provide an opportunity for time sensitive, critical valuable content to be delivered at any time to the farmer. The objective is to reduce constraints to technology dissemination and adoption by using mobile phone interventions designed to increase uptake of technologies, change farming practices and increase farmers access to services. The subcomponent will support the transcription of all best practices in agriculture in the portal for easy access by farmers in their local languages. With the use of standard mobile phone, farmers and other agricultural stakeholders can call an IVR system for content on best farm practices in their local languages.

35. A Multi lingual call center would also be established to which the farmer also has the option to call for further expert support. This would involve the establishment of a call center to handle farmer queries beyond the IVR and offer effective response within the shortest possible time. The call center links farmers directly through a standard phone call to Subject Matter Specialist (SMS) and in virtual meetings to solve large outreach constrains resulting from high farmer - extension ratio. Under the program Field officers in the regions and districts would have the opportunity to access information from the established system with the use of Smart Mobile Phones to service the farmers instantly at their various locations upon dialing-in with a specified number.

36. **Component 3: Project Management and Monitoring and Evaluation (US\$200,000):** The project will be managed by the Central Projects Coordination Unit (CPCU) of the Ministry of

Agriculture, which also coordinates the implementation of the World Bank-financed Commercial Agriculture and Value Chain Management Project (GCAV). The CPCU will oversee the coordination, M&E and fiduciary management of the project. Project activities will be executed through delegated mandate to technical department in the Ministry of Agriculture and its relevant service units. A results-based memorandum of understanding will be signed between CPCU and participating directorates, covering roles and. In coordination with the technical directorates, the CPCU of GCAV will manage procurement of goods and consultancy services. Financial management activities will also be handled by the CPCU.

37. The Grant support and GCAV will have the same Steering Committee. Key resource persons with good knowledge with grant support activities may be invited to the Steering Committee sessions to improve governance in project implementation.

38. Similarly, the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the project will be undertaken by the IDA-financed GCAV. Specifically, the proposed grant support project will benefit from the capacity built by the GCAV in project for data collection, processing and dissemination. Indeed, GCAV already has in place an M&E team comprising M&E specialists at the Central Projects Coordination Unit (PCU) and at the Planning Services Unit (which is also a key beneficiary of the grant). The project will also recruit a consultant to support the preparation of a light baseline study in the targeted zones, so as to establish the basis against which project results will be measured. The consultant will also undertake the impact evaluation study at the end of project. The project will provide opportunities for students to participate in the M&E teams and benefit from hands-on training, and field research for Masters and engineer degrees will be prepared based on project's activities.

39. The experience from piloting the e-extension will be closely monitored, and lessons learned shared within the wider development community, for potential scaling up under the Government and donor financed programs and projects. A project completion report will be prepared and widely distributed among project stakeholders, and also made available online via GCAV's website for wider dissemination.

IV. Safeguard Policies that Might Apply

Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project	Yes	No	TBD
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01		X	
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04		X	
Forests OP/BP 4.36		X	
Pest Management OP 4.09		X	
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11		X	
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10		X	
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12		X	
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37		X	
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50		X	
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60		X	

V. Financing (in USD Million)

Total Project Cost:	2.00	Total Bank Financing:	1.85
Financing Gap:	0.00		
Financing Source			Amount
BORROWER/RECIPIENT			0.15
PHRD/International Development Association (IDA)			1.85
Total			2.00

VI. Contact point

World Bank

Contact: Kadir Osman Gyasi
Title: Senior Agriculture Economist
Tel: 5241+4139
Email: kgyasi@worldbank.org

Borrower/Client/Recipient

Name: Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
Contact: Mr. Abdoulie Jallow
Title: Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance
Tel:
Email: liejallow@hotmail.com

Implementing Agencies

Name: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security
Contact: Mr. Sait Drammeh.
Title: Permanent Secretary
Tel:
Email: saitwaka@yahoo.co.uk

VII. For more information contact:

The InfoShop
The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20433
Telephone: (202) 458-4500
Fax: (202) 522-1500
Web: <http://www.worldbank.org/infoshop>