

IIMI-Nigeria Program's Experience in Strengthening National Capacity

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Introduction:

International Irrigation Management Institute (IIMI) on the invitation of the Federal Ministry of Water Resources has established its field office in Kano in August, 1991. IIMI has been assigned to work in collaboration with Hadejia-Jama'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBDA), one of the eleven RBDAs and a parastatal agency of the Federal Government in charge of irrigation and water related development and management.

Because of the changes which have occurred in national policies as a result of Nigeria's Structural Adjustment Program, River Basin Development Authorities including HJRBDA are now faced with radically different environment in which it must operate. Many services which it formally provided to cultivators, such as ploughing services, fertilizer distribution and extension advice are now to be provided through the private sector.

In addition, these policy changes have mandated parastatal agencies such as HJRBDA to achieve financial autonomy in their operations. This had lead to compelling need for the authority to re-examine its basic purpose, objectives, values, structures and mode of operation in the light of these new situation.

In response to the policy change context, the action research in collaboration with HJRBDA is to promote agency-farmer joint management in large scale irrigation system. Kano River Irrigation system in Kano with command area of 15,000 ha is the site for action research.

IIMI-Nigeria program is the youngest among the country programs of IIMI. It has been only a year old program.

Context:

Nigeria is a densely populated country in West Africa, with a population of 89 million according to recent official census result. It is also one of the largest countries in West Africa

and dominates the region with irrigated agriculture.

About 90 percent of the area under irrigation in Nigeria has traditional irrigation systems while only 10 percent has modern irrigation systems defined as those with large dams or diversion weirs and headworks with water control structures. They have an elaborate network of infrastructure to deliver water and are managed independently by the irrigation agency or jointly by the irrigation agency and beneficiary farmers.

Irrigation Institutes in Nigeria:

The Water Resources wing of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Rural Development has eight departments. One of them is the Department of Irrigation and Drainage.

The Department of Irrigation and Drainage is to promote the development of irrigated agriculture through the RBDAs and to provide guidance and technical support to RBDAs. The Department reviews feasibility studies, design and construction proposals for RBDAs irrigation projects. It is responsible for carrying out studies to examine the potentiality and feasibility of irrigation development and engage in the formulation of the irrigation development master plan.

Eleven River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs), parastatal agencies of federal government, were created in 1976 with the responsibilities of irrigation infrastructure development as well as agriculture production activities within the river basin area. The river basins extend to more than one state. In 1986, the mandate of RBDAs was revised. The RBDAs are "to undertake comprehensive development of both surface and ground water resources for multipurpose use with particular emphasis on the provision of irrigation infrastructure and control of floods and erosion and for watershed management" and "to develop and keep up to date a comprehensive water resource master plan, identifying all water resources requirements in the authorities area of operation, through adequate collection and collation of water resources, water use, socio-economic and environmental data of the River Basin".

Changes have taken place in the scope and management of RBDAs. The RBDAs were partially commercialized and agricultural activities are withdrawn from their mandate. Further, the RBDAs are classified into A,B,C categories based on the volume of work and economic status of these RBDAs.

Besides these policy formulating and implementing agencies, advisory agencies for policy formulation exist at the federal level. They are; (a) National council for Water Resources (NCWR) and (b) National Technical committee on Water Resources (NTCWR). There are agencies relating to irrigation program implementation and management of the state level. However, the focus of reforms in public irrigation organization for the purpose of IIMI study will be at federal level agency like RBDAs

Irrigation Research Institute:

There are many agriculture research institutes like Institute for Agriculture Research of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, National Cereal Research Institute in Niger State, National Water Resource Institute, Kaduna are established by the Federal Government. There are about 22 Agriculture Engineering Departments all over the country. There is no specialized research institute in irrigation management. Departments of different Universities have engaged in irrigation related research. The research activities are usually driven by the fund made available by the donor agencies. At present, Geography Department of Bayero University, IAR of Ahmadu Bello University, Department of Agriculture Engineering of Ilorin University and Public Administration Department of Ile-Ife University are undertaking research in different aspects of irrigation systems.

IIMI-Nigeria Program:

IIMI has established its country office in Nigeria on the basis of understanding reached between the Ministry of Water Resources and International Irrigation Management Institute. Memorandum of Understanding between the Federal Government of Nigeria and International Irrigation Management Institute has not yet been signed. This is still with the government for final approval as well as for the change of status of IIMI from non-governmental to international research institute like that of ICRISAT, ILCA and IITA in Nigeria. It will take sometime before the MOU is signed between Federal Government of Nigeria and International Irrigation Management Institute.

In order to have early start of IIMI program in Nigeria, IIMI entered into an agreement with ICRISAT in order to start IIMI program under the umbrella support of ICRISAT-WASIP, Kano. Hence, IIMI-Nigeria program is known as IIMI-ICRISAT program.

Such arrangement is temporary one but it has approval of the government.

Consultative Committee consisting of different sections of people on irrigated agriculture is in the process of formulation pending the finalization of MOU. In the absence of such Consultative Committee, IIMI programs are discussed with the officials of HJRBDA and with the Department of Irrigation and Drainage of Ministry of Water Resources.

Collaboration with other agencies:

Relations are established with Kano State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources in relation to intervention strategy in small scale development program. Farmer participation has been important feature of interaction with the Ministry.

Research collaboration with the universities mentioned above are in the process. Formal agreements are yet to be signed between IIMI and these institutes. Initial contacts have been established with these potential collaborators.

Proposal was prepared to undertake collaborative research between IIMI and IITA on Inland Valley Irrigation systems. National partners for this research is yet to be identified.

Finance for activities in Nigeria:

Ford Foundation and IIMI-Nigeria provided fund for IIMI-Nigeria program. Office space and other facilities have been made available by HJRBDA. However, the funding is on the project basis limited to 18 months period. Second phase project is in the process of finalization.

Activities:

IIMI-Nigeria program focuses basically on Agency-Farmer Joint Management. The collaborating system for this action research is Kano River Irrigation system. There are four sub-activities in this action research program:-

- (a) Institutional development
- (b) Change in the management style
- (c) O & M procedure

(d) Resource mobilization

These sub-activities are pertinent in relation to commercialization and privatization policy of the government.

Effort is being made to establish working relation with Department of Agriculture Engineering of ABU. ABU Master students will be funded to undertake thesis writing exercise in the field of IIMI's interest. Similar negotiation is going on with Ilorin University.

Proposal to hold national seminar to identify research priorities in irrigation management in Nigeria is being planned with Department of Agriculture Economics and Sociology of IAR of ABU.

Participation in National Seminar:

IIMI has participated in seminars organized by the national institutes. Papers are presented on behalf of IIMI. Seminars have been very important forum to expand IIMI's contact with multiple institutes in Nigeria.

Analysis and Recommendations:

IIMI-Nigeria program has started only a year ago. It is too early to evaluate the elements regarding the strengthening the national capacity to address the issues on irrigation management.

Analysis of strengthening national capacity needs to be understood from a cyclic point of view. Program needs to go through a cycle like.

- (1) initiation, instillation, distillation, adaptation and maturation. IIMI-Nigeria program is in the process of initiation. Establishment of program is only the start. Then, it has to go through the process of instillation. There will be gradual adoption of the program. Experiences would be acquired through the process of interaction. It would be distilled. Similar institutions would adopt the experiences and results, once the program would be matured, wide application would be possible. The time frame for the

evaluation of strengthening the national capacity is important . Breeding a new crop and testing it under different environment takes 6 - 8 years. However, there has not been a tested time frame to strengthen the national capacity at the institutional level.