

## Strength of Linkages among Local Governments, Farmers and Agricultural Development Agencies in Southeast, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This study was designed to determine the strength of linkages among Local Governments, Farmers and Agricultural Development Agencies. The study was carried out in the southeastern geopolitical zone of Nigeria which is made up of five states namely; Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo but Imo was not used in the study. All the agricultural/veterinary department staff and farmers in the four states made up the population of the study. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select respondents. Data for the study were collected using questionnaire/interview schedule and field observation. Copies of questionnaires were administered to the local government (LG) staff and literate farmers by the researcher and trained assistants. Oral interview was used for some programme coordinators of some agricultural agencies by the researcher. Interview schedule was used for illiterate farmers. Data were presented using percentage. Respondents indicated that there were linkages between LGCs and RTEP in training of staff (65.9%), NSPFS in fund transfer (53.6%) and Fadama III Project in joint diagnosis of problems (43.0%), etc. Farmers perceived that linkage exist between LGCs and ADP include joint diagnosis of problems (66.9%), joint use of farmers (66.9%), joint use of staff (63.4%), etc.; joint diagnosis of problems (70.0%) between LGCs and NSPFS. Majority (58.6%) indicated linkage by LGCs with Fadama III in joint use of clients/ farmers, about 47.0% indicated joint use of staff, 45.5% indicated joint planning of programmes, while 42.8% indicated joint fund transfer, among others. About 55.0% of the respondents indicated linkages in joint funding of project, joint diagnosis of problems (51.0%), between LGs and RTEP. Farmers and agricultural development agencies namely, Fadama III, NSPFS, RTEP have strong linkages with LGCs and have strongest linkage with ADP.

**Key words:** Local governments • Farmers • Agricultural programmes • Linkages and Southeastern Nigeria

### INTRODUCTION

LG is a creation of British colonial rule in Nigeria. It has overtime experienced change in name, structure and composition. In the 1950s, election was introduced according to the British model in the western and eastern parts of the country, with some measure of autonomy in personnel, financial and general administration [1]. Local government administration in Nigeria has undergone many changes of which the 1976 reforms and the Constitutions of 1979 and 1999 can be said to be most prominent. Following the 1976 reforms, LG became recognized as a tier of government entitled to a share of national revenue consequent on its constitutionally allocated functions [2]. The reforms introduced a multi-purpose single-tier local government [3].

Local government administration is a government at the grassroots level of administration meant for meeting peculiar grassroots need of the people [1]. A LGA should have a population range of 150, 000 to 800, 000. The reform focuses on the administration of the public at the grassroots level where there is a majority of the population of Nigeria. According to Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), [4], the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides in part 11, section 7 (1) - (6) for the establishment of the local government system as the third tier of government in Nigeria. Thus, Nigeria operates three tiers of government, federal, state and local governments. According to Madukwe [5], LGs are established worldwide to facilitate local development which could be economic, social and political.

Local government as the third tier of government brings agricultural interventions to the rural farmers. The functions of a LGC in the area of agriculture as contained in the Fourth Schedule, Section 7 of the 1999 Constitution include establishment, maintenance and regulation of slaughter houses, slaughter slab, markets, gardens, parks; and participation in the development of agriculture and natural resources, other than the exploitation of minerals. According to Manyong, Ikpi, Olayemi, Yusuf, Omonona, Okoruwa and Idachaba [6], the federal government also hoped to provide through LGCs the following services in LGAs : (i) the provision of an effective extension service; (ii) provision of rural infrastructure to complement federal and state governments' efforts; (iii) management of areas irrigated with dams; (iv) mobilization of farmers for accelerated agricultural and rural development through cooperative organizations, local institutions and communities; (v) provision of land for new entrants into farming in accordance with the provision of the Land Use Act; and (vi) coordination of data collection at primary level. The federal government guidelines of 1976 see the LG as a legally established representative council empowered to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal governments in their areas [4].

The Federal Republic of Nigeria spelt out definitive roles and responsibilities for federal, state and local governments as well as the private sector in order to remove role duplication and overlapping functions among them [7]. The LGC should ensure through devolution of functions the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions such that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized. This type of development strategy must be the one that taps the initiative of the people through their active participation in conceiving, planning and implementation of programmes to eradicate poverty. A study carried out in Anambra State by Nwalieji, Igbokwe and Nsoanya [8], states different roles of LGCs that were accomplished. They include establishment of demonstration plots, provision of slaughter houses and slabs, establishment of market gardens, provision of health centres and clinics, mobilization of farmers for cooperatives organizations and formation, procurement and distribution of fertilizers, improved seeds, improved seedlings, tractors and implements and awareness creation through exhibition of agricultural products and agricultural shows. Others include tree planting and field day programmes, participation and coordination of agricultural development

projects and programmes at local level and agricultural staff training and workshops. Some of the roles that were not accomplished according to the study included promotion of viable agro-based projects such as snail, fish and poultry farming and acquisition of land for new entrants into farming.

The LG has linkage with the state governments as prescribed under Section 162 (6) of 1999 Constitution of Nigeria as follows: the State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA) which is a special account maintained by each state government into which shall be paid allocations of the LGCs of the state federation account and from the government of the state [4]. This account is meant to be a mechanism that can implement the notion of 'fiscal federalism' at the LG level in Nigeria. External sources of revenue for LGCs include grants, statutory allocations and share of the value added tax (VAT) receipts. The internal sources include property and community rates, taxes, fees and charges of various kinds. However, Ukwueze (undated) notes that revenue from internal sources appears inadequate for the LGs to carry out their functions and responsibilities. Local governments have linkages with some agricultural agencies and agricultural programmes/projects. For instance, linkages such as joint use of client, joint diagnosis of problems, joint use of staff and joint budgeting can exist between LGs, Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) and farmers. The LGs had linkages with Fadama I, II and III projects and actively participated in their implementation [9]. Okafor [10], reports linkage between LGs and farmers in the implementation of Presidential Initiative on Rice (R-Box) and Presidential Initiative on Cassava Production and Export. The author also reports that LGCs and NGOs assisted farmers by empowering their groups through the provision of training facilities at local government and farmers' levels. Nwalieji, Igbokwe and Nsoanya [8], report the existence of strong linkages between LGs, ADP, National Special Programme for Food Security (NSPFS), Fadama projects and avian influenza programme in Anambra State.

**Purpose of the Study:** The general purpose of the study was to assess the performance of local government administration in agricultural development in Southeast Nigeria. Specifically, this study was designed to:

- Determine the linkages existing between local governments, farmers and agricultural development projects and programmes;

- Ascertain farmers’ perception of linkages between local governments, farmers and agricultural development projects and programmes;
- Ascertain local government staff perception of linkages between LGCs, agricultural development agencies and farmers; and
- Determine the strength of linkages between local government, farmers and agricultural development projects and programmes

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

**The Study Area:** The study was carried out in the southeastern geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The Southeast zone of Nigeria is made up of five states namely; Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. The states are made up of local government areas, namely: Abia, 17, Anambra, 21, Ebonyi, 13, Enugu, 17 and Imo, 27 LGAs and a total of 95. Some of them are located in urban towns while a majority of them are in rural areas. The area lies between latitude 4° 15’N to 07° 00’N and longitude 05° 34’E to 09° 24’E [11].

**Population and Sample:** All the agriculture/veterinary department staff and farmers in the five states made up the population of the study. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select respondents. In the first stage, four (4) states namely: Abia, Anambra, Enugu and Ebonyi were selected using simple random sampling technique. In the second stage, five (5) LGAs were purposively selected from each of the four states. These were among the LGs that were participating in different agricultural programmes such as Fadama III project and Commercial Agricultural Development Programme (CADP). The LGs were: Umuahia South, Umuahia North,

Aba South, Aba North and Ikwuano in Abia State; Ihiala, Awka North, Anambra East, Oyi and Anambra West in Anambra State; Afikpo North, Ishielu, Ebonyi, Ezza South and Ohaukwu in Ebonyi State; and Nsukka, Oji River, Awgu, Enugu East and Udi in Enugu State. This gave a total of 20 LGs (Table 1). In the third stage, four town communities were randomly selected from each LG giving a total of 80. Two farmers were randomly selected from each town community giving a total of 160 farmers.

In the fourth stage, one management staff (HOD, agriculture and veterinary unit) was purposively selected. The supervisory councilors for Agriculture/Veterinary Departments of the 20 LGs were also purposively selected. The reason for the purposive selections of supervisory councilors of LGs and heads of agriculture and veterinary department was because they were in better positions to provide information as regards agricultural development in their LGs. This gave a sub sample of 20 management staff and 20 LG supervisory councilors and a total of 40 respondents. A stratified random sampling procedure was used to select 14 respondents from all the cadres of agriculture and veterinary department of each of the 20 LGs. This gave a sub sample of 280. The total sample size for the study was therefore 480 respondents (Table 1). However, only 145 farmers and 179 local government staff responded. Therefore, only 324 of the instrument were finally used for the analyses.

**Instrument for Data Collection:** Data for the study were collected using questionnaire/interview schedule and field observation. Copies of questionnaire were administered to the LG staff and literate farmers by the researcher and trained assistants. Oral interview was used

Table 1: Selected states, LGAs and number of respondents

Selected states	Number of LGAs selected in each state	Number of respondents
LG supervisory councilors in the selected 20 LGs		20
HODs of agriculture/veterinary department in the selected 20 LGs		20
LG staff		
Anambra	5	70 (14 respondents ×5 LGs)
Enugu	5	70 (14 respondents ×5 LGs)
Ebonyi	5	70 (14 respondents ×5 LGs)
Abia	5	70 (14 respondents ×5 LGs)
Sub-total	20	320
Farmers		
Anambra		40 (2×4 Communities×5 LGs)
Enugu		40 (2×4 Communities ×5 LGs)
Ebonyi		40 (2×4 Communities ×5 LGs)
Abia		40 (2×4 Communities ×5 LGs)
Sub-total		160
Grand total	20	480

for some programme coordinators of some agricultural agencies by the researcher. Interview schedule was used for illiterate farmers. The questionnaire was validated by academic staff of the Department of Agricultural Extension, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The instrument contained relevant questions that sought information on LGs linkages with farmers, ADPs and other current agricultural development projects and programmes.

**Measurement Variables:** To measure the linkages that existed between local governments, farmers and agricultural development programmes/projects, respondents (LG Agriculture/Veterinary Department staff) were asked to indicate (from the list of types of linkages provided) the types of linkages that existed between LGs, farmers and shortlisted agricultural development programmes and projects namely, ADP, NSPFS, Fadama 111, RTEP and CADP.

**Data Analysis:** Data were presented using percentage.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Local Government Staff Perception of Linkages Between LGCs, Agricultural Development Agencies and Farmers:

Majority (65.9%) of the respondents indicated that LGs had linkages with Fadama III project in client or farmer referrals when necessary and grants management; 48.6%, 43.6% and 43.0% of the LG staff also reported linkages between LGs and Fadama III project in joint use of clients (farmers), joint use of staff and joint diagnosis of problems, respectively (Table 2). If an agricultural intervention programme has meaningful linkages with LGs and farmers, the programme is bound to achieve its objectives if properly funded. The finding is in support of Mojekwu [9], who reports provision of capacity building support to staff of agriculture, budget planning, research and statistics (BPRS) departments of LGCs by Fadama III project. Most (65.9%) of the respondents also indicated that LGs had linkages with NSPFS in joint budgeting and with RTEP in training of staff.

Table 2 also reveals that 53.6% of the respondents reported fund transfer as a linkage between LGs and NSPFS, while 49.2% of them indicated the existence of linkage between LGs and CADP in training of staff. About 46% and 46.4% of the respondents denoted that LGs had linkages with NSPFS and farmers in joint use of farmers, respectively. Table 2 also shows that 46.9% of the

respondents in LGs had linkages with farmers in joint budgeting, about 47% had linkages with NSPFS in joint planning of programme, 45.8% had linkages with CADP in joint use of staff, while 43.6% and 43.0% of the respondents had linkage with Fadama 111 Project in joint use of staff and joint diagnosis of problems, respectively. The results show that LGCs staff believe Lgs had many formal linkages with farmers and these agricultural agencies. The reason these linkages exist amongst them is because agriculturally, they pursue commonly shared objectives and having regular contact enhances inter-agency interaction and improves productivity.

### Farmers' Perception of Linkages Between Local Governments, Farmers and Agricultural Development Projects and Programmes:

There were linkages existing between local government councils and agricultural development programmes such as ADP, NSPFS, Fadama III, RTEP and CADP. The linkages existing between LGs and ADPs were joint diagnosis of problems (66.9%), joint use of farmers (66.9%), joint use of staff (63.4%), joint planning of programmes (46.9%) and joint evaluation of programmes/projects (40.7%), among others (Table 3). The finding agrees with Madukwe *et al.* [5], who note that joint use of staff is a linkage that can be established by ADPs and LGs. About 66.9% of the respondents indicated that there were linkages in joint diagnosis of problems. Lower percentages of the respondents agreed that there were linkages in joint budgeting (35.2%), joint use of farmers (29.0%), joint evaluation of programmes/projects (27.0%) and joint funding of projects (25.5%), among others, between LGs and NSPFS.

Furthermore, there were linkages existing between LGs and Fadama III in joint use of clients/ farmers (58.6%), joint use of staff (47.0%), joint planning of programmes (45.5%) and joint fund transfer (42.8%), among others. About 55.0% of the respondents indicated linkages in joint funding of project, joint diagnosis of problems (51.0%), joint use of staff (47.0%), joint budgeting (46.9%), among others between LGs and RTEP. These findings show strong interactions between LGs and agricultural development agencies which enhance agricultural productivity. However, there were weak linkages between LGs and CADP. This result agrees with the information obtained from an oral interview with the Acting State Coordinator of CADP, Enugu State who indicated that CADP does not have any linkages with the LGs in discharging their duties to farmers.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of local government respondents' perception of linkages among farmers, local governments and agricultural development agencies (n=179)

	Agricultural Development project (ADP)	National Special Programme of Food Security (NSPFS)	Fadama III	Root and Tuber Expansion Programme (RTEP)	Farmers Types of linkages*	Commercial Agricultural Development Programme (CADP)
Client or farmer referrals when necessary	21.8	39.7	65.9	16.8	10.6	33.5
Joint diagnosis of problems	7.3	36.9	43.0	17.3	24.0	36.9
Joint use of clients (farmers)	31.3	46.4	48.6	7.8	46.4	37.4
Joint use of staff	16.2	25.1	43.6	24.6	21.2	45.8
Joint funding of project	43.6	26.8	24.6	3.9	23.5	26.3
Joint budgeting	33.0	65.9	35.2	18.4	46.9	13.4
Fund transfer	31.8	53.6	33.0	32.4	36.9	25.1
Joint planning of a programme	12.8	46.9	31.8	23.5	17.9	31.3
Joint evaluation of a programme/project	34.1	31.3	25.1	3.4	3.9	5.6
Management of grants	21.8	39.7	65.9	16.8	10.6	33.5
Joint research	23.5	17.9	31.3	34.1	46.4	3.9
Training of staff	5.6	21.8	39.7	65.9	33.0	49.2

\*Multiple responses

Table 3: Percentage distribution of farmers' perception of local government linkages with Farmers, agricultural development projects and programmes (n=145)

Types of linkages*	Agricultural Development project (ADP)	National Special Programme for Food Security (NPFS)	Fadama III	Root and Tuber Expansion Programme (RTEP)	Commercial Agricultural Development Programme (CADP)
Joint diagnosis of problems	66.9	66.9	24.1	51.0	21.4
Joint use of clients (farmers) for agricultural purposes	66.9	29.0	58.6	27.6	27.6
Joint use of staff for disseminating agricultural information	63.4	24.1	46.9	46.6	15.9
Joint funding of project	37.2	25.5	25.5	54.5	14.5
Joint budgeting	35.2	35.2	17.9	46.9	7.6
Fund transfer	30.3	23.4	42.8	14.5	14.5
Joint planning of programmes	46.9	18.6	45.5	45.5	20.0
Joint evaluation of programmes/projects	40.7	26.9	26.9	42.8	21.4

\*Multiple responses

**Demonstration of Strength of Linkages Between LGCs, Farmers and Agricultural Development Agencies as Shown in Table 3:** Figure 2 shows that farmers and agricultural development agencies namely, Fadama III, NSPFS, RTEP have strong linkages with LGs and very strong linkage with ADP. Table above shows that among all the agricultural development agencies, ADP had the strongest linkage with farmers. This is probably because ADP has lasted longer than other agricultural development agencies. However, Obiechina [12] notes that extension support to ADP from international donor agencies and three tiers of government have continued to decline. In spite of the fact that figure 3 shows very strong linkage between ADP and LGs, the linkage is getting weak in reality, hence rendering the agency inactive. Mojekwu [9] reports that 20 LGs in Anambra State consistently paid their government cash counterpart contribution (GCCC) to Fadama III project. This shows strong linkage between LGs and Fadama III in transfer of

funds. Figure 3 also shows weak linkage between LGs and CADP. This finding is in conformity with the finding in Table 3 above which reveals weak linkage between LGs and CADP.

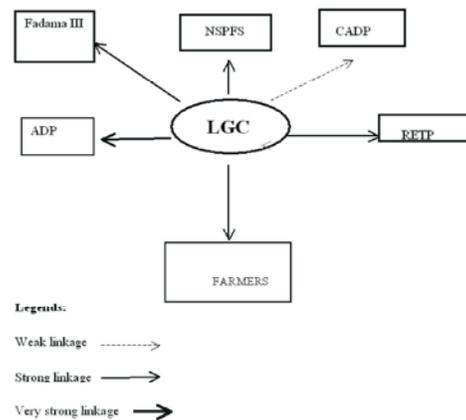


Fig 2: The strength of linkages between LGs, farmers and agricultural programmes/ projects

## CONCLUSION

Linkages used for inter-communication among LGs, farmers and agricultural development agencies were many and this offers great potentials for effective interaction that lead to positive results towards agricultural development among these groups. Fadama III project employed the following linkages: client or farmer referrals when necessary and grants management, joint use of clients (farmers), joint use of staff, joint diagnosis of problems, joint planning of programmes, among others. Local governments had strong linkages with NSPFS in joint budgeting, fund transfer, joint diagnosis of problems, joint funding of projects; with RTEP in training of staff; with ADP in training of staff in joint diagnosis of problems, joint use of farmers, joint use of staff, joint planning of programmes, joint evaluation of programmes/projects. Among all the agricultural development agencies, ADP had the strongest linkage with farmers possibly because it is the oldest agricultural development agency.

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