

Making support to food security in Africa more effective

A summary of the Independent Assessment of the CAADP Multi-Donor Trust Fund

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Key messages

This report finds that the Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) supporting the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) has played a key role in building the capacity of institutions tasked with advancing CAADP at continental and regional level and in improving coordination around CAADP.

Nevertheless, it identifies important shortcomings in the way this support has translated to impact on the ground at the national level. Such shortcomings could be addressed during the ongoing design for a future MDTF.

Making the MDTF more effective requires improving the governance of the Fund and clarifying its role vis-à-vis the CAADP structures and other types of CAADP support. But also a stronger role of national stakeholders in continental CAADP, better mainstreaming of CAADP in official AU-RECs organs and stronger subsidiarity, seem to be preconditions for such MDTF improvements to work.

This Note summarizes the outcome of the Independent Assessment of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), undertaken by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), the Laboratoire d'Analyse Régionale et d'Expertise Sociale (LARES) and the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF).¹ The **Independent Assessment revolved around three broad questions:**

- Is the MDTF building the capacity of CAADP Lead Institutions supporting the implementation of CAADP?
- How far is CAADP implementation support through MDTF-sponsored institutions contributing to change in agricultural policymaking and planning in countries? What are other key perceptions of overall CAADP performance?
- Has the MDTF improved alignment and coordination in CAADP support?

The **methodology** adopted consisted of a desk-based review of relevant evidence, followed by qualitative interviews with a wide range of stakeholders at international, continental, regional and national levels. Given the complexity of the processes at stake, the multiple thematic dimensions of CAADP and the diversity of state and Non-State Actors (NSA) involved, a comprehensive assessment of the CAADP MDTF would have required more time for discussions and analysis. However, the purpose of the assignment was neither to conduct a 'fully fledged' evaluation nor a mid-term review, but rather the provision of inputs for a multi-stakeholder dialogue which is currently ongoing within CAADP processes. The time schedule of the assessment was short, to ensure its results could feed such debates on the way forward in 2014 on issues of MDTF effectiveness, in the context of upcoming reflections as part of the AU Year of Food Security.

Capacity of the Lead Institutions

The MDTF, through the CTFs, has increased the ability of Lead Institutions to drive the CAADP process on the international stage, at continental level and in African regions. CTFs in particular have had a major impact on beneficiary institutions' capacity. In general, more capacity has also enabled continental and regional institutions to increase their ownership of the process (though CAADP ownership at national level is a different story). MDTF support has mainly focused on hiring of staff, organisational capacity, process planning, financial management capacity, technical assistance (TA), all very important and appreciated; capacities in knowledge management, policy and strategic analysis should however receive additional attention. Further, support provided through CTFs, as opposed to support provided through the "TA window" (component 3 of the MDTF), is most effective with regard to capacity building.

Relatively **consensual options that should be explored to improve the effectiveness of the MDTF**, include:

- reduction of ad hoc TA activities (also as a share of total MDTF resources);
- increased focus on technical capacity building and more systematic planning and monitoring of it (e.g. by including indicators on Lead Institution capacity in the new CAADP Results Framework currently under development);
- stronger and more targeted institutional strengthening objectives;
- more efforts on knowledge management at all levels.

MDTF and CAADP performance at national level

CAADP's awareness-raising role cannot be overstated. It has put agriculture at centre stage for African economic growth and food security and provided an open forum for discussion on agricultural issues in Africa at continental, regional and national levels. It has also led in some countries to better inter-sectoral coordination, improved donor coordination and enhanced investments by governments, private sector and

¹ For the full Report on the Independent Assessment please see ECDPM Discussion Paper 158 , available at www.ecdpm.org/dp158.

development partners. However, **progress at the national level is mixed**, with CAADP too often remaining a process with low levels of ownership and financial sustainability (this is not a “CAADP only” problem: regional and continental initiatives are often not picked up nationally). This is to a large extent dependent on national political economy dynamics (and one should not expect the MDTF to solve all national problems). On the positive side, CAADP has also often proven to be a process that opens space for NSA in the agricultural sector. Nonetheless, MDTF could have done more to equip countries and Lead Institutions with tools to move from NAIPs preparation to actual implementation, while a disconnect in terms of speed between the continental and national level processes can still be observed.

Recommendations that found a good degree of consensus are:

- more political economy analysis should be undertaken within CAADP, pre-compact and post-compact, (i.e. to make CAADP more ‘politically smart’), possibly with support of a future MDTF;
- MDTF should equip countries and Lead Institutions with tools to move from NAIPs preparation to actual implementation, i.e. establishing models, tasks, systems and deliverables to sustain the CAADP momentum beyond the design of compacts and investment plans;
- supporting country-level Joint Sector Reviews should be a way for the MDTF to contribute to country-level CAADP implementation.

Donor alignment and coordination in CAADP

The MDTF has only modestly improved alignment in CAADP support. Alignment of broader CAADP support to actual investments priorities identified in national and regional investment plans remains limited. Possible causes lie with African countries/regions as well as development partners (bilateral assistance shaped by priorities put forward by Ministries of Finance or Planning, often different from NAIPs, and by development partners’ own priorities). **The MDTF is recognised to have considerably increased coordination at different levels**, particularly amongst African Lead Institutions, between sectors, and among MDTF contributing Development Partners (DPs). **Coordination between MDTF-contributing DPs and non-contributing DPs was perceived as weak**, which brings serious problems of duplication of efforts and complicates implementation, with continuously changing focus on topics before results related to existing priorities materialise.

Relatively consensual measures to address such alignment and coordination challenges should include:

- strengthening inter-departmental information exchange and coherence, both within African governments/RECs as well as within development partners structures (e.g. between headquarters, regional offices and national offices; and DPs to brief many staff members on CAADP, e.g. field staff, thematic experts working on aid-for-trade, water & sanitation, etc.);
- more systematic testing of alignment to CAADP by DPs at continental, regional and national levels;
- stop the “hundred flowers bloom” approach and more transparency/systematic tracking and planning/coordination for any CAADP support activity (more regular reporting, including on CTFs), linked to the Partnership Agreement and Results Framework under development (also by including indicators on coordination and alignment in the new Results Framework).

Key CAADP stakeholders, including Lead Institutions, are conscious of many of the shortcomings highlighted above in terms of capacity, national performance, and alignment and coordination. **Interviews and missions have revealed a high level of mobilisation to scale up what has succeeded, and address areas of concern.** In light of this, it will be crucial to use the AU Year of Agriculture and Food Security to make CAADP more result-oriented and to decentralise the process of reflection around CAADP and also the future of the MDTF.

Looking Forward

There is no obvious alternative outside the MDTF in order to support Lead Institutions and the overall CAADP process at the regional, continental and international levels. Separate CAADP-earmarked budget support to different Lead Institutions would not guarantee the same level of coordination, lesson sharing and ‘cost-effectiveness’ (both within and between various African and DP organisations), nor would promote a “whole-of-Africa” approach. “No-more MDTF” and “no budget support to different Lead Institutions” would make it difficult to improve CAADP’s overall performance and impact. **So there is a widely-held perceived need for continuation of a CAADP multi-donor trust fund** to support the overall CAADP process and its improvements (including the ability of Lead Institutions to assist countries in implementing CAADP). Nonetheless, **a number of improvements should be made for a more effective MDTF:**

- improving MDTF governance and clarifying the role of each CTF vis-à-vis broader CAADP structures and support:
 - clarify/formalize the relation between the MDTF Partnership Committee (PC), the Development Partners Task Team (DPTT) and the Business Meeting (BM) in the Partnership Agreement : BM is the joint overarching decision-making body; below it, the DPTT is the overarching DP coordination forum and the MDTF is one of various mechanisms to support CAADP; both DPTT and MDTF should respond to decisions taken at BM;
 - clarify MDTF accountability and reporting lines, particularly “vertically” (i.e. to leaders and managers of the institutions members of the BM and the PC), including for any future TA window (which should also be capped);
 - monitor also outputs of MDTF support (that is, performance on CAADP targets and implementation progress) rather than only inputs (actual delivery of each funded activity);
 - study “pros and cons” of different options to reform the composition and procedures of the PC (like for example one permanent seat for each REC within the current PC), e.g.: creation of “an African body” to run the process and select what to fund and a donor body with a veto power over the first body’s proposals; or a technical-administrative secretariat for daily management complemented by an “MDTF Board” providing a forum for oversight and advocacy towards other DPs.
- in addition to CTFs for current Lead Institutions (including for all RECs simultaneously), establishing new CTFs to support more African institutions (including continental or regional networks of NSAs and knowledge institutes) as well as priority themes (possibly through the CAADP Joint Action Groups);
- devoting larger share of support from all CTFs to urgently address demands from national stakeholders and to sustain implementation progress in-country after NAIPs are launched, while exploring the possibility of a moratorium on continent-wide CAADP sub-processes (e.g. KIS) and top-down selected thematic priorities (e.g. agribusiness strategies);
- improving CTF activities planning through more clarity of individual CTF implementation plans and better prioritization (following the example of the AUC DREA Strategic and Operational Plan 2014-2016), as well as better task-division between activities supported by different CTFs.

Considering all the issues highlighted in this Report, **the process to design any new trust fund should be deep** (including in-country consultations to strengthen national-level ownership) and take the required amount of time, ideally only after the Partnership Agreement and new Results Framework have been adopted. Informed and widely accepted improvements would not only increase the effectiveness of the MDTF, but would likely also encourage more donors to contribute to a future MDTF. Lastly, such process should also carefully examine the most suitable organisation to host a future MDTF, including African institutions such as the African Development Bank.

The overall CAADP needs to be ‘re-launched’ as a precondition for MDTF improvements to work. This includes:

- **a stronger role of countries and national-level stakeholders** (e.g. private sector) in continental CAADP. This should take the form of AU MS funding Lead Institutions (and co-financing CTF-sponsored country-level initiatives) and engaging in CAADP at higher level (through the BM or even, possibly, through an African CAADP ‘control cabin’, similar to the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee);
- **better mainstreaming of CAADP in official AU-RECs organs;**

- agreement on a Partnership Agreement and new CAADP Results Framework that clarify and systematize the **implementation of subsidiarity** in CAADP processes and CAADP support (i.e. role and targets of each partner, including task division among the AUC, NPCA and RECs, and the added value of the MDTF vis-à-vis the rest of CAADP support). This first requires a three-dimensional institutional analysis on existing mandates, thematic task division (“who does what”) and capacities (comparative advantages on each relevant theme).

ECDPM, LARES, ESRF and their partners are committed to continue contributing to these important discussions, including by deepening any of the above ideas and proposals, which would require frank political and policy dialogue about different possible options for improving CAADP and its support.

ECDPM Briefing Notes

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This publication benefits from structural support by ECDPM's following partners: The Netherlands, Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Luxemburg, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria and the United Kingdom.

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