

Part Two: Sectoral Strategies, Action and Implementation Plan

Agriculture

Background

- Niger State is endowed with abundant natural resources with an estimated land area of 86,000sq. Km. or 8.6 million hectares representing about 9.3% of the total land area of the country. Almost all types of soils typical of the savannah regions of West Africa can be found in the State. They vary from the shallow soils around the rocky terrains to deep soils of the Fadama valleys. The deeper soils, which are of alluvial type although complex in nature are amongst the best and have special potential for both rain fed and irrigated farming.



- The State experiences distinct dry and wet seasons. The length of the wet season decreases from south to north with annual rainfall varying from 1600mm in the south to 1100mm in the north. The rainy season lasts for 5 to 6 months in the northern part and 7 to 8 months in the south.
- The crop production output cuts across all crop horizons, including food and cash crops, major ones being rice, sorghum, maize, millet, groundnuts, cowpeas, soybeans, benniseed, cotton, yam, cassava, sweet potatoes, sugarcane, melon and vegetables of all kinds. Naturally cultivating species of sheanuts, locust bean and oil palm are also in abundance.
- The extensive flood plains at the southern boundary of the State, availability of large water bodies (Rivers Niger, Kaduna, Gbakogi, Gurara, Chanchaga), dams/reservoirs (Kainji, Shiroro and Jebba), numerous streams as

well as the distinct 6 months dry weather offer great opportunity for dry season cultivation of particularly rice, sugarcane, maize, pulses and assorted vegetables. The annual production of the major Fadama crops such as rice, maize, sugarcane and assorted vegetable over the years is estimated to be over 200,000 metric tonnes, while that of cassava; yam and potatoes are 548,299; 3,520,666 and 112,324 metric tones respectively. However, these average annual crop production outputs remain very low compared to the State's potential.

- Livestock production is equally a major agricultural activity of a vast majority of



farmers and herders in Niger State.

- The 1990 Livestock Census put livestock population at 1.54 million cattle, 0.95 million sheep, 1.59 million goats and 0.21 million others (including camel, pigs etc.) in addition to about 5.78 million poultry i.e. chicken, guinea-fowl, turkey, duck and doves. The production is largely by small holders under local traditional practices. There is however potential for large scale production due to availability of large expanse of grass land suitable for year round grazing,

favourable weather, abundant water sources and absence of tsetse fly. Attempts made towards improving livestock production in the past were:

establishment of grazing reserves at strategic locations in the State to reduce trans-humane by pastoralists; establishment of veterinary centres; provision of drugs, vaccines and equipment for treatment of diseases and establishment of control posts to monitor livestock movements within and outside the state. However, all these services and infrastructure have dwindled due to poor funding of the sub-sector.

- The abundant large inland water bodies including dams/

reservoirs along valleys and flood plains of rivers Niger and Kaduna and numerous tributaries and streams spanning over 436,196 has provide artisanal fishermen a means of livelihood. An estimated 18,161.12 metric tonnes of fish is harvested annually through artisanal fishing. This is grossly below its potential.

- The State has less than 6% vegetation under protection as against United Nations' recommendation of 25%. The State has numerous constituted forest and game reserves which have suffered persistent encroachments. The entire forest estates of the State are being threatened by loggers, fuel wood collectors, farmers and grazers. The existing forestry

laws are obsolete and weak to enforce sustainable exploitation of forest resources in the state.

- It is envisaged that a clear policy on increasing agricultural output will provide impetus to the development of industries in the areas of fertilizer blending, agricultural chemicals, hand-tools, feed-mills, flour mills, oil extraction, sugar and fruit extraction, pharmaceuticals, industrial starch, furniture among others. The positive implication of these is

that more jobs will be created in the State.

Sectoral Challenges

The challenges in the agricultural sector include:

- Inadequate and high costs of basic agricultural inputs such as improved Seeds/planting materials, organic and inorganic fertilizers and agro-chemicals; Insufficient and high costs of agricultural equipment and machineries such as tractors, bulldozers, animal traction etc.



- It has been estimated that only about 5% of agricultural activities have been mechanized while 10% uses animal traction;
- Inadequate quality trained extension workers and demonstration plots;
- Poor storage facilities causing high post-harvest losses of agricultural produce coupled with inefficient marketing system;
- Lack of small scale processing plants for surplus perishable farm produce;
- Virtual absence of all-year -round farming due to absence or non-functional irrigation facilities and equipment. Only 25% of the potential FADAMA land in the State has been developed.
- High level of deforestation as a



- result of unsustainable farming practices, timber and fuel wood collection and over-grazing;
- High cost and/or scarcity of fishing equipment/inputs such as fishing nets, hooks, fingerlings, boats and out-board engines coupled with obnoxious fishing practices resulting in depletion of fisheries resources especially in the numerous inland water bodies of the state;
- Inadequate cold storage and processing facilities, and absence of standard fish marketing infrastructure;

- Inadequate supply of improved breeds of livestock for husbandry, dilapidated veterinary clinics and high costs and scarcity of veterinary drugs, vaccines and equipment;
- Inability of small scale farmers to access agricultural credit facilities of NACRDB, commercial banks, specialized NGOs and international donor agencies;
- Rural-urban migration due to absence of basic social infrastructure in rural areas.

Policy Thrust

In view of the potentials of the state and the constraints to agricultural production, the policy thrust of the Development Action Plan will be directed at the following:

- To take advantage of the diverse agricultural resources of the state to develop an agricultural sector that will guarantee food security, reduction of rural poverty and accelerated economic development of the state.
- The Sector shall be private sector driven, however with the Government creating an enabling environment through public private partnerships. Priority will be placed on sourcing private investments and public private partnership partners not only for agricultural production but also for the production of farm inputs like tractors, fertilizers, seedlings, storage equipment etc.

Policy Target 1:
Accelerated Crop
production with emphasis

on Rice, Groundnut and Cassava and other high value crops.

Specific activities directed at attaining this Policy Target are:

- Timely supply of 70,000 metric tonnes of assorted fertilisers to farmers annually;
- Timely supply of over 250,000 litres of assorted agro-chemicals to farmers annually;
- Provision of 1,200 metric tonnes of improved seeds and planting materials of rice, groundnut and cassava to farmers annually;



- Provision of 150 tractors and 500 units of animal traction implements;
- Rehabilitation and development of 4 medium scale irrigation facilities at Zara, Lioji, EdoLapai, Guzan and establishment of small irrigation facilities such as wash-bores, 250 tube-wells, 100 diversion modules and 500 irrigation pumps;
- Establishment and rehabilitation of 30 farm services centres;
- Transformation of the 3 farm at Tegin, Nasko and Kuta into self-sustaining integrated agricultural enterprises for training and employment of youths; and
- Rehabilitation of grains warehouses at Minna, Wushishi and Pandogari and purchase of 1000

metric tonnes of grains annually for buffer stock programme. Simple but improved storage facilities would also be promoted for subsistence farmers.

- Resuscitation of Badeggi rice mill and establishment of 150 new processing centres/mills for rice, groundnut and cassava, and
- Provision of support to ADP through training of different cadre of stakeholders in
- Agricultural production especially Partners, Extension agents and researchers.

Policy Target 2:

Increase in the production of livestock and Fisheries.

Establishment of 3 Livestock Improvement and Demonstration Centres



- at one per senatorial zone of the State (Tshohon Lapai, Sheyi and Bobi);
- Gazetting and development of 15 grazing reserves;
- Establishment of livestock drugs and vaccines revolving fund;
- Development of 10 Ox-bow lakes of 50-100ha each and 5 dams/reservoirs of 50-100ha each and completion of Tagwai hatchery;
- Accessing ECOWAS Micro-credit for fisher folks; and
- Establishment of a Regional livestock and commodity market at Mokwa.

Policy Target 3:

Biodiversity Conservation and Development of Forestry Resources.

- Review of all existing
- forestry laws and enactment of new ones;
- Establishment of 500 community based forests/woodlots;
- Rehabilitation and expansion of 250 ha of forest plantations;
- Establishment of 3 standard nurseries for seedlings production; and
- Restoration and development of Alawa (311 km²) and Dagida (300 km²) game reserves.

Policy Target 4:

Improved Access to Agricultural Credit and Financing.

- Establishment of Agricultural Trust Fund;

- Accessing existing Agric. Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund; and Payment of counterpart funds for donor assisted projects.









