

Chapter 4

Financing and Training Imperatives for Resilient Agriculture in Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the financing and training imperatives for resilient agriculture in Nigeria. A proposed twin-track approach to addressing the challenge of agriculture as a development issue in Nigeria involves both encouraging agri-business and supporting the large population of smallholders. On the basis of supporting the large population of smallholder farmers, this chapter highlights the financial and training needs for the efficient practice of resilient agriculture. Discussions in this chapter are based on secondary data obtained from relevant sources. Supporting farmers for the purpose of resilient agriculture requires conscious investment in generation, development, and dissemination of relevant agricultural practices for agricultural intensification and sustainable use of natural resources. In effect, finance and training in support of the farmers are called for. Against the background that there is low government investment in agriculture, and because agriculture is a private sector activity, special funding mechanisms that incorporate public-private partnerships that deliver financial solutions are recommended. With respect to training, resilient agricultural practices should form part of the curriculum in the primary, secondary, and tertiary schools in Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

In most developing countries including Nigeria, the agriculture sector's role goes beyond the classical functions associated with providing food, raw materials, employment and incomes. According to Eboh (2011), the roles of agriculture in a modernizing economy are much more transformative than are implied in the classical models of development. The topical transformative role of the agricultural sector is typified by the fact that it is at the centre of the strategy for economic diversification from oil.

As the population increases, Nigeria will be compelled to find ways and means to effectively transform the agriculture sector to adequately meet the needs of this population while simultaneously decreasing the environmental impact attendant to the transformation programme. Additionally, climate change clearly compounds the challenges confronting the agriculture sector. It has been argued that to assure food security, eradicate rural poverty and create social stability, policies and institutions are required to enhance the ability of individuals, households and production systems to recover from the incidence of shocks and stresses on the agriculture sector as a result of climate change.

Globally, there is high pressure on land use as 20% of forests and 50% savannahs, grasslands have been converted to agriculture (Ramankutty & Rhemtulla, 2012; Pereira, 2010). Land cover change for agriculture, which is one of the key drivers of biodiversity loss, could increase extinction rates a hundred-fold over the 21st century (Baumert, Herzog, and Pershing, 2005). Agriculture is responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions than any other human activity (Baumert, Herzog, and Pershing, 2005). In Nigeria, agriculture contributes a small extent to global warming through bush burning and other poor land management practices, however it bears the full brunt of climate change impacts. For instance, according to Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) (2014), the 2012 flood, in which over 2.3 million people were displaced, 363 persons lost their lives and the total value of losses across all sectors of the national economy put at US\$16.9 billion, exposed Nigeria's vulnerability to extreme climate events and underscores the need for deliberate planning to enhance adaptive capacity and resilience across all sectors of the Nigerian economy, including agriculture. Without doubt, agriculture is critical and central for Nigeria's overall development; it is also a major driver of environmental decline.

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