



**STRENGTHENING MEDIA ENGAGEMENT WITH THE AFRICAP PROGRAMME'S
RESEARCH TO INFLUENCE POLICY**

SOUTH AFRICA TRAINING REPORT

November 2019



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.INTRODUCTION	3
2.ENGAGEMENT OF MEDIA IN THE GCRF AFRICAP PROGRAMME	3
3. WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES	4
4. WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS	4
4.1. EXPECTATIONS	4
4.2. CHALLENGES	4
4.3. PRESENTATIONS	3
4.4. DISCUSSION	4
4.5. RECOMMENDATIONS	5
5. ANNEXES	6
5.1 WORKSHOP PROGRAMME	6
5.2. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	7
5.3.MEDIA STORY ON THE TRAINING WORKSHOP	8

1. Introduction

Agriculture contributes about 15 percent to the African continent's GDP and employs a significant proportion of the labour force (FAO). One of the unique features of Africa's agriculture is that smallholder farmers/farms constitute approximately 80 percent of all farms, while employing about 175 million people directly with significant positive impact on the environment. The importance of agriculture to the peoples of Africa justifies that agriculture must get special attention especially in the context of the threat posed by climate change.

The programme, called Agricultural and Food-system Resilience: Increasing Capacity and Advising Policy (AFRICAP), is a £9.2million research programme focused on improving evidence-based policy making to develop sustainable, productive, agricultural systems, resilient to climate change. It is led by the University of Leeds, a leading Russell Group university in the north of England, in partnership with the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network, a pan African multi-stakeholder policy network whose regional secretariat is in Pretoria, South Africa.

The programme is focused on generating evidence-based policy to transform agriculture and food systems in Africa. GCRF-AFRICAP aims to improve productivity of farming systems and their resilience to shocks emanating from climate change impacts. The aim is to support climate-smart and sustainable agricultural development, thus assist countries to attain their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of reducing poverty and hunger, whilst attending to the key targets of the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods in Africa. The programme assesses how food, agriculture and natural resources policies can be developed so that they support SDG 2; no hunger and SDG 13; climate action.

AFRICAP conducts its research activities in Africa (South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Malawi) and the UK. The funding for the programme is from the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), a £1.5billion UK Government programme to support research that addresses critical problems in developing countries across the world. It is administered by the UK's Biotechnology and Biological Sciences

Research Council. The University of Leeds, FANRPAN and other partners in the programme include from the UK – the University of Aberdeen, the UK Met Office and Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET), Malawi; National Agriculture Marketing Council (NAMC), South Africa; economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), Tanzania and the Agriculture Consultative Forum (Zambia). A media engagement programme was developed to ensure that the evidence that is generated is socialised with the journalists in order for the correct reporting to be done. The main aim is to ensure that accurate reporting through media is done by a team of capable journalists.

2. Engagement of Media in the GCRF AFRICAP Programme

The media's potential to play a vital role in international development has long been acknowledged. The media is capable of providing a powerful platform for debate, discussion and collective problem-solving. Whilst the AFRICAP programme has a Policy Advocacy and Engagement Plan, there is need for supplementary media support aimed at amplifying programme activities and their impacts beyond the limited geographical implementation sites. The media has a critical role of supporting and profiling developmental interventions to a broader audience, creating awareness and promoting adoption of lessons by people in similar circumstances.

The rationale for supplementary media support is premised on the understanding that research conducted development issues is not an end in itself. The research outputs are not ordinarily be reader friendly to non-researchers. These non-researchers even include the media people who are the main communication conduit between the research work and the general public including policy makers. If knowledge created by research interventions such as AFRICAP is shared and debated publicly (through popular media platforms), it is more likely to be adopted by policymakers and practitioners. Policymakers often use multi-media sources such newspapers, radio and television as sources of information. They also rely on feedback to publications and radio phone-ins to gauge public opinion. Media debates can fuel public interest and concern over particular issues, adding to existing pressure on governments to change policy.

The media profiles developmental interventions to a broader audience, creates awareness, shares and promotes the adoption of new innovations and lessons learnt. That is why the media is prioritised in the GCRF-AFRICAP programme through capacity building for journalists to report on climate change and agriculture.

3. Workshop Objectives

On the 18th of November 2019, the FANRPAN South Africa Node Host Institution, the National Agriculture Marketing Council (NAMC) convened a media training workshop at its offices in Pretoria. The workshop's aim was to enhance journalists' knowledge about the AFRICAP programme, climate change and agriculture issues, how research influences policies. More specifically the workshop had the following objectives:

- Gain an understanding on the nexus of climate change and agriculture.
- Gain an understanding on how (and if) the media can communicate agriculture, climate change and interventions by the GCRF-AFRICAP to help audiences understand the role of research in influencing policies to help the countries improve food security.
- Enhance skills as a journalist on how to report agriculture and climate change issues.
- Interact and share ideas with other journalists and experts in climate change and agriculture to gain further insight on the subject.
- Develop skills to articulate clearly policy issues on agriculture and climate change.

4. Workshop Proceedings

The training workshop was attended by 11 journalists from across different media platforms; print, broadcast and online. FANRPAN Director, Advocacy and Communications, Mr. Francis Hale, welcomed participants to the workshop. All participants introduced themselves, indicating their positions and the organisation they work/work for. Most of the participants are experienced journalists who cover agriculture regularly.

Mr. Hale introduced FANRPAN as a policy think-tank that analyses food, agriculture and natural resources policies and advocates for them. It convenes multiple stakeholders (government, researchers, farmers, farmer organisations, civil society, policy makers) through what it terms 'Multi-stakeholder Dialogues' where it presents and shares research evidence that can be

used to influence policies. Mr. Hale said the media were strategic in amplifying research evidence in informing policy making in particular in the agriculture sector which was being impacted by climate change.

The media messaging around agriculture and climate change needed careful consideration to make impact because He said the media should needed to seize the opportunity to complement policy advocacy efforts by highlighting the policy landscape on food and nutritional security which underpin the push for greater investment in African agriculture and efforts to adapt and mitigate climate change. He noted that sports coverage attracted huge sponsorships in addition to public following because of the strategies deployed in marketing it and there was no reason that agriculture can garner the same level of interest and investment if effective policies were in place. The media had a role to articulate this using evidence research.

Participants were then asked to state their expectations in order to help meet some of them through presentations and discussions during the training. They also outlined their challenges which make it difficult for them to report effectively on climate change and agriculture.

4.1. Expectations

- To understand the GCRF-AFRICAP programme
- To explore opportunities to develop and commercialise agriculture content
- To network and share skills and experiences in covering agriculture

4.2. Presentations and Discussions



FANRPAN Director, Advocacy and Communications, Mr. Francis Hale, presented a background on FANRPAN's advocacy work.

FANRPAN's advocacy work. FANRPAN has advocated for policy alignment based on generated research evidence, noting that the media are well placed to hold governments accountable when it comes to policy formulation and implementation on food security. Agriculture contributes over 25 percent of Africa's GDP and provides jobs for an estimated 70 percent of the population making it an economically and socially important sector that will benefit from transformation. He noted that in 2008 agriculture was not part of the climate change negotiations and in essence Africa was not part of those negotiations because agriculture is important in Africa for economic growth and development. The critical question has been how Africa adapts its agriculture to alleviate the impact of climate change. In 2009, FANRPAN with the support from COMESA, mobilised civil society, the COMESA Ministers of Agriculture and Environment and the African Union to endorse the inclusion of agriculture at the Climate Change COP 15 Conference in December 2009 through a "No Agriculture, No Deal" campaign.

Agriculture is a pivotal sector providing food, fuel and raw materials is largely a story untold, well not effectively by the media. FANRPAN Consultant, Mr. Busani Bafana, shared perspectives on why agriculture is now a headline story because food security is back on the global agenda.

More so now, the phenomena of climate change and its impact on the future of food production and nutrition security has galvanised the world to want to protect agriculture and farmers livelihood through adaptation and mitigation approaches. Mr. Bafana said the media needs to understand the science of climate and in as much as that of agriculture to interrogate and tease out critical the issues and better inform the public. However, telling the agriculture story is many a time hamstrung by poor appreciation of the pressing issues around food and nutrition security, while journalists too are limited in getting the agriculture story to the front page as a result of several challenges, one of which is resource limitation. In discussion, journalists identified challenges to effectively covering agriculture and climate change issues, specifically in South Africa as follows:

- Agriculture and climate change stories are real on the ground but getting to the story often requires adequate resources in terms of transport and finances.
- Editorial policies and media markets. Media houses in South Africa are owned by individuals and companies and there is a case of who pays the piper calls the tune when it comes to publishing agriculture stories. Commissioning editors are often reluctant to

run agriculture stories which are not in line with their editorial policy.

- Biased agriculture coverage. Owing to the white ownership structure in the South African media, commercial farming received wide media coverage as a result of vested interests in the sector. There are a few black owned media companies that focus on agriculture coverage.
- Inadequate capacity among mostly black journalists who cover agriculture and climate change issues to generate and widely disseminate content.
- However, it is not all doom and gloom in telling the agriculture story. FANRPAN Consultant, Ms. Mantoe Phakathi, shared a viable solution journalism approach to improving the agriculture and climate change narrative where journalists need to seek and highlight approaches that are working and question why they are working and how these could be replicated widely to effect change. Solutions journalism, Ms. Phakathi said, is about telling the whole story on what responses does the action featured in the story address, how the approach works and includes limitation and provides evidence of impact.
- While climate change reporting tends to focus on the gloom and doom thereby desensitizing readers to the subject, yet audiences are drawn to solutions to challenges and solutions and what actions people are taking to improve their situation.

For example, what are smallholder farmers doing in a drought situation to save their livestock?



Bonani Nyhodo, the Coordinator of the FANRPAN South Africa Node and Senior Manager at the National Agriculture Marketing Council (NAMC) said the media should use available news outlet no matter how small because these can make an impact in articulating the agriculture narrative.

Citing the example of the prominence of the rhino poaching story in South, Africa, Nyhodo said a media campaign on key issues can produce the required effect on policy makers.

“Why it is that the rhino horn story is on the top table in terms of dissemination but we are failing to get some of these things that are pertinent, like the soil where the rhino is poached but someone manages to get the rhino story on the Presidents’ desk for a money briefing but not the soil story,” Nyhodo asked.

It was discussed that despite the challenges journalists face in telling the agriculture story, they should leverage on existing opportunities to get the word out about agriculture and climate change issues. In the case of South Africa, there is an understanding on broad-based economic transformation in the country but more importantly there was need for a transformation of mind-sets given the migration of skills, rural urban shift which have an impact in how the agriculture story is told. The background of journalist telling the story about agriculture should not determine their contribution to the agriculture agenda shaping but must complement it. Journalists can be prophets of good by asking the uncomfortable questions for example around land – a key agriculture issue in South Africa that speaks to food security.

4.3. Recommendations

- It is recommended that the FANRPAN Node, NAMC, facilitate the establishment of a social media platform such as a Whatsapp Group on the media engagement to facilitate sharing of information between the media and the GCRF-AFRICAP project. Furthermore, such a platform will also facilitate networking among journalists covering agriculture and climate change issues in South Africa and beyond.
- The GCRF-AFRICAP should facilitate the publication of agriculture content from journalists in South Africa on its website and other information dissemination platforms.
- A media fellowship should be established under the auspices of the GCRF-AFRICAP to help journalists devote time to undertake incisive reporting on agriculture and climate change issues under the themes of the GCRF-AFRICAP project.

5. ANNEXES

5.1. Workshop Programme

Time	Activity	Responsible
08:00 – 08:30	Session 1	NAMC
08:30 – 09:00	Arrivals and registration Welcome and introductions Input(s): • Workshop objectives • Expectations • House rules • Overview of workshop	Bonani Nyhodo Mantoe Phakathi and Busani Busani – Media Consultants
09:00 - 09:30	Session 2 Agriculture and the Climate change nexus • What is FANRPAN all about? • Why the partnership with the University of Leeds? • How is climate change affecting or affected by agriculture?	Francis Hale, Director Policy Advocacy and Communications FANRPAN Regional Secretariat
09:30 – 10:00	Session 3 General overview of GCRF-AFRICAP programme	
10:00 – 10:30	Tea Break	
10:30 – 12:30	Session 4 General Overview of Climate Change Impact and Response in Tanzania	
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 – 14.00	Session 5 Climate Change and Agriculture – the story of the day.	Mr. Busani Bafana – Media Consultant
14:00 – 15:00	Session 6 Reporting Climate Change – The Solutions Journalism Approach	Ms. Mantoe Phakathi – Media Consultant
15.00 – 16:00	Session 7 - Experiences of local journalists - Tips on Reporting on Agriculture and Climate Change Opportunities for building networks	Mr Daniel Semberya
17:00	Way forward and Closing	MantoePhakathi and Busani Bafana

5.2 List of Participants

	Name	Institution
1	Carl K. Khalo	Mzansi Agriculture Talk
2	Busani Bafana	Consultant
3	Mantoe Phakathi	Consultant
4	Francis Hale	FANRPAN
5	Malerato Sekha	Instika Agrimedia
6	Malixole Gwatyu	Brand Et Al
7	Tshepho Phaahla	Mzansi Agriculture Talk
8	Peter Mashala	Batswa Africa Communication
9	W.A. Nozibele	NAMC
10	E. Montsho	FANRPAN
11	P.N. Yeki	NAMC
12	Bonani Nyhodo	NAMC
13	N. Mazibuko	NAMC
14	B.N. Mpyana	NAMC
15	Fikile Moya	Freelance
16	Kholofelo Sebati	Freelance
17	S. Siyanda	Freelance
18	C. Lemawane	SABC
19		

5.3. Media Story on the Training Workshop

GCRF/AFRICAP conducts Media Engagement in South Africa

Written by Busani Bafana and Manto Phakathi

Pretoria, Nov. 18 – The GCRF/AFRICAP Project conducted a media engagement workshop in Pretoria this week with South African journalists to stimulate media interest in writing on agriculture and climate change.

Organised by the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) and the National Agriculture Marketing Council (NAMC), the dialogue emphasised the role of journalists in unpacking agriculture and climate change issues in South Africa specifically, and Africa in general.

FANRPAN, in conjunction with researchers from Leeds University and University of Aberdeen in the United Kingdom; the UK Met Office and Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET) from Malawi; Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) from Tanzania and the Agriculture Consultative Forum (ACF) from Zambia, is jointly implementing the four-year Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) AFRICAP project, with the NAMC in charge of the South African component of the project.

The dialogue exposed journalists to the research activities of the project and how it can support media practitioners improve their ability to create appealing and informative content for audiences.

“We need stories that are based on evidence which is derived from scientific research to influence policy decisions in agriculture and natural resources,” FANRPAN’s director for policy advocacy and communications, Francis Hale said.

Francis urged the journalists to apply creativity in unpacking the science so that their stories helped inform the public on agriculture development in the same manner in which audiences are glued to events such as sports.

“Private companies are fighting each other to support sporting franchises; we need similar response to agriculture because it is the cornerstone of the economies of many African countries,” said Francis, adding: “We therefore urge you to do your best to make agriculture and climate change centre-stage topics.”

Through media consultants, Manto Phakathi and Busani Bafana, the journalists were supported with tools of packaging agriculture and climate change stories in an appealing manner so that audiences are drawn to the subject.

The journalists also outlined their challenges in reporting on agriculture and natural resource issues, which included the lack of resources to cover stories, many times in remote locations. Furthermore, research information was either inaccessible or of a technical nature beyond the comprehension of the journalists. However, it was emphasised that journalists needed to understand the science to better inform the public.

The South Africa FANRPAN Node Coordinator, Bonani Nhyodo, a senior manager at NAMC and also the coordinator of AFRICAP project activities in the country urged journalists to take advantage of all media platforms, even if they seemed small, in disseminating information, because they have an impact in engaging audiences.

“It is important for the media to get the word out on agriculture development and there is need to capitalise on smaller media platforms which may be seen to have limited reach, but can create huge impact,” said Bonani.

The GCRF/AFRICAP is a programme focussing on promoting poverty reduction and hunger through climate-smart agriculture and sustainable development.

This report was prepared by: Mantoe Phakathi – Media Consultant. The training workshop was coordinated by the Agriculture Consultative Forum (ACF)

This work was supported by UK Research and Innovation as part of the Global Challenges Research Fund, Grant Ref: BB/PO27784/1



About the Agricultural and Food-system Resilience: Increasing Capacity and Advising Policy (AFRICAP) Programme

The Agricultural and Food-system Resilience: Increasing Capacity and Advising Policy (AFRICAP) programme is a four-year research programme focused on improving evidence-based policy making to develop sustainable, productive, agricultural systems, resilient to climate change. The programme is being implemented in Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and the UK led by the University of Leeds, a leading Russell Group university in the north of England, in partnership with the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN), a pan-African multi-stakeholder policy network. The programme is funded by the UK Government from the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), which aims to support research that addresses critical problems in developing countries across the world. It is administered by the UK's Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) - UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

Implementing Partners: FANRPAN; University of Leeds; University of Aberdeen; the UK Met Office; Chatham House - Royal Institute of International Affairs; the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET), Malawi; Department of Agriculture Research Services (DARS), Malawi; National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), South Africa; Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), Tanzania; and the Agricultural Consultative Forum (ACF), Zambia.

For More Information

Website: <https://africap.info/>

Twitter: @gcrfafricap

Email: contact@africap.info

