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Strengthening coherence between agriculture and social protection

Ghana country case study report

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Abbreviations

AEA	Agricultural Extension Agent
CLIC	Community LEAP Implementation Committee
DDA	District Director of Agriculture
DLIC	District LEAP Implementation Committee
FASDEP II	Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy II
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNSPS	Ghana National Social Protection Strategy (Draft)
GoG	Government of Ghana
GSFP	Ghana School Feeding Programme
GSGDA	Ghana Shared Growth Development Agenda
KEEA	Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abire Municipal District
KII	Key informant interviews
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LEAP	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
LIPW	Labour-Intensive Public Works
METASIP	Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan
MGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
YIAP	Youth in Agriculture Programme

Preface

Agriculture and social protection can complement and mutually reinforce each other in reducing hunger and poverty. On the one hand, agricultural interventions can promote growth in smallholder productivity by addressing structural constraints that limit poor households' access to land and water resources, inputs, financial services, advisory services and markets. On the other hand, social protection can provide liquidity and certainty for poor smallholders, allowing them to invest in agriculture, re-allocate their labour to on-farm activities, invest in human capital development, increase participation in social networks (which constitute an important source of informal risk management) and better manage risks, thereby allowing them to engage in more profitable livelihood and agricultural activities.

Recent policy declarations at global and regional levels emphasize the combined role that agriculture and social protection can play in tackling poverty and hunger. For example, the 39th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) urged member states to strengthen coordination between agriculture and social protection (CFS, 2012). Several African policy initiatives and declarations explicitly call for stronger coordination between the two spheres, such as the 2003 Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods.

Efforts to strengthen links between agriculture and social protection policies are also taking place at national levels. However, little is still known about how to strengthen these linkages, including opportunities for doing so and some of the challenges that need to be overcome. To partly fill this gap, case studies were carried out in seven countries across Africa (Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho and Zambia), Asia (Bangladesh) and Latin America (Mexico and Peru). Findings from the case studies will contribute to country-level policy dialogue and to developing guidance material on how to strengthen coherence between agriculture and social protection.

Executive Summary

This study took place in Ghana (Accra and Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem Municipal District) 20-30 April 2015. The study was led by Luke Harman of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) along with local partners Dr Kofi Marfo and Mrs Joyce Haleegoah.

The project focuses on two core questions:

- What are the current experiences of achieving coherence between Ghana's agricultural and social protection policies and programmes?
- What lessons and insights do these experiences hold for achieving more and better coordination between the two sectors?

The Ghana country study set out to focus particularly on the linkages between one of the country's flagship social protection programmes – the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) cash transfer programme – and complementary agricultural services. However the study also aimed to allow for a focus on other programmes and issues as they arose, along with a focus on broader issues of coherence and coordination mechanisms at different levels.

Key findings of the study include:

- There are clear overlaps in the policy objectives of the two ministries with overall responsibility for agriculture and social protection, particularly around the issue of food and nutrition security and livelihood empowerment. However explicit links between both sectors in their core policy documents remain largely absent, with the exception of the identification of agricultural measures as examples of complementary services important in the achievement of the draft Ghana National Social Protection Strategy.
- Regarding programmes, there are clear complementarities, with traditional social protection programmes tending to target efforts towards poorer and more vulnerable households and numerous agricultural programmes targeting the poor with greater means or ability. However evidence of proactive links or coordination to facilitate movement between the two was limited, with potential conflicts (or missed opportunities) arising from a focus of agricultural extension on the less poor who are already somewhat organized. In general, many programmes exhibit particular scope for substantial dual-sector benefits and synergies to be achieved providing there is a greater focus on achieving dual benefits to both sectors.
- In terms of coordination, while a number of mechanisms exist for participatory planning and implementation at the national, district and local levels, the findings from this study indicated they were often more of a formality without a clear drive, incentives or capacity to deal with issues of cross-sector collaboration specifically between social protection and agriculture. Some exceptions exist, such as the inter-ministerial participation in the Ghana National Household Registry, which has been supported by the World Bank.

- Considering the issue of performance, it was found that while the LEAP and other social protection programmes may be leading to important gains, there are major missed opportunities arising from a lack of a coordinated approach with agriculture, which would not only bring greater gains to beneficiaries of social protection but would also help achieve the policy objectives of the agricultural sector.

Based on the findings of the study, the report makes the following recommendations:

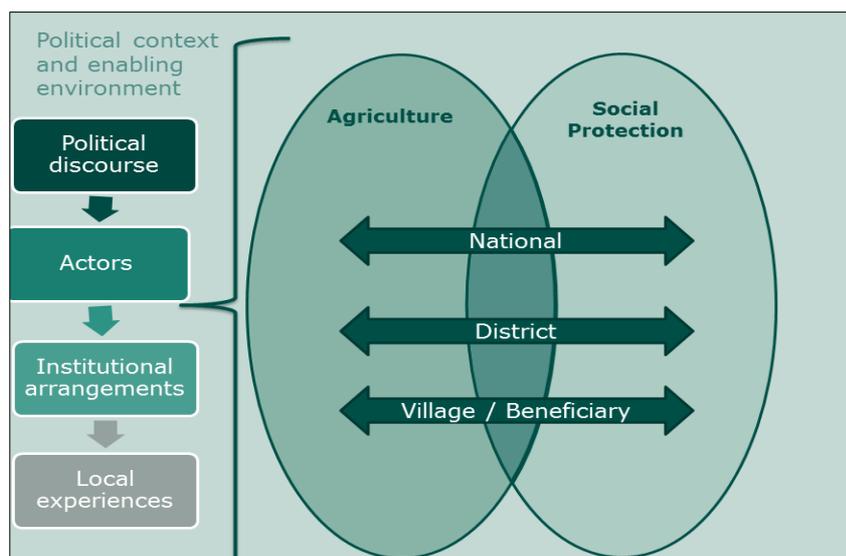
- Strengthening coherence will likely require a three-pronged approach at the national, regional and district, and local levels.
- At the national level there is a need for a clear push (particularly from those working in social protection) backed up by political commitment, to highlight the inter-dependencies between and scope for synergies and dual-sector benefit arising from specific programmes and services. This appears to be a necessary first step in establishing a more appropriate national forum to allow the two sectors to communicate directly with each other at a senior level. Capacity constraints within the new ministry responsible for social protection may mean that support is required from development partners.
- Clearer guidance and support also appear to be required then at district levels around incentivizing stronger information sharing and collaboration between agriculture and district Departments of Social Welfare. Plans for Regional and District Social Protection Coordinating Committees could likely play an important role in this regard, providing they are allocated sufficient resources and capacity training. The recent development of the Ghana National Household Registry will also have a crucial role to play here although there will still need to be a concerted effort (underpinned by clear incentives and motivation) for inter-sector collaboration and joint operations.
- A concerted effort is also required at the community level, which is where the actual needs of poor and vulnerable households must be identified. As capacity is thin on the ground, particularly for the ministry responsible for social protection, it will be important to focus on strengthening community structures such as the CLICs (for LEAP) in order to provide the essential link between identification of local needs (e.g. for complementary services) and coordinated service provision from the district level.

1. Introduction

This study forms part of seven country case studies carried out as part of the FAO project “*Strengthening Coherence between Agriculture and Social Protection*”. Ghana was selected as one of the countries because of its emerging social protection agenda and the presence of a now well-established National Social Protection Strategy, along with the growing importance at policy level attached to issues of coherence and coordination.

The study in Ghana followed a common approach and framework set out as part of the country case studies, and involved looking at the context (including policies and programmes), coordination and outcomes. This was carried out through a combination of an initial desk-based review, which involved reviewing key documents covering development strategy, agricultural and social protection policy and research papers. A two-week in-country data collection exercise was then carried out, involving a number of key informant interviews (KIIs) with various ministry staff and development partners (donors) and focus group discussions with local communities (FGDs).¹ At the end of the data collection period, key informants from the national level were invited to a validation workshop held in Accra at the FAO Ghana Office, where the emerging findings were presented and discussed. The study involved looking across both the agricultural and social protection spheres at the national and subnational levels.

Figure 1 Framework to analyse interactions between knowledge, policy and power



The two main, overarching questions underpinning the study were the following:

1. What are the current experiences in Ghana of achieving coherence between its agricultural and social protection policies and programmes?

¹ A full list of key informants is provided in Annex 1.

2. What lessons and insights do these experiences hold for achieving more and better coordination between the two sectors?

To answer these questions, a range of topics were explored through both the desk-based review and the in-country analysis following a common investigative framework (see Appendix 2). In terms of the data collection tools for the in-country analysis, a register of questions developed for the country case studies formed the basis of the main lines of enquiry for all KIIs and FGDs, with the final questions being adapted for specific roles and depending on the emerging themes and issues. The main areas of investigation spanned policy and programme details, coordination, coherence and performance.

The study in Ghana involved identifying and interviewing key individuals at national and district level within the two ministries with overall responsibility for Ghana's agricultural and social protection activities. That is, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP). In addition, at the national level an individual from the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) was interviewed along with development partners.

Due to limited time, the district level was chosen over the provincial one as it emerged during national-level discussions to be the most important level of administration through which programme implementation ultimately takes place. The Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem Municipal District (KEEA) was purposively selected on the basis of its being a district where the main agricultural and social protection programmes of interest were being implemented, was a focus district for a recent FAO qualitative study investigating the impacts of the LEAP programme (Roopnaraine, Pozarny, and Estruch, 2015) and was also geographically accessible within the time frame of the study at 170 km from the capital, Accra. KEEA is located in the Central Region, with a population in 2010 of 144 750.² It is recognized that KEEA is just one of 216 districts in the country and no assumptions are made about findings being representative of other administrative areas.

Within KEEA, one community was randomly selected from a list of all those in which the LEAP programme was being implemented and where the number of beneficiaries exceeded 12 in order to allow for male and female FGD groups of a reasonable size. Each such community was allocated a number that was written down on a folded piece of paper, with one then selected by the District Social Welfare Officer.

The community selected was a rural community of 215 households and a population of 2 126 people in 2014. The main livelihoods in the area were subsistence farming (e.g. cassava and plantain), with some small-scale cash crops (cocoa and citrus) and some small-scale fishing from nearby rivers. There was also some petty trade within the town. Originally there were 33 LEAP beneficiaries in the community, but that number has since come down to 22 after the other beneficiaries (many of them elderly) had passed away.

² The 2010 District Census.

At the community level, key informant interviews were held with the community chief and a representative of the Community LEAP Implementation Committee (CLIC).³ Community-level FGDs were also carried out with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the LEAP programme, with both groups split into male and female groups. The FGDs were carried out in the local language (Twi) with the assistance of a Ghanaian facilitator.

It is crucial to note that, during the period in which this study was carried out, Ghana was undergoing a budgetary crisis and was in receipt of assistance from the International Monetary Fund. This may well explain some of the findings, e.g. around particularly acute financial constraints at the district level. Implications of this are considered in the Conclusions section.

2. Policies and programmes

After summarizing some of the key socio-economic challenges facing Ghana, this section reviews a number of strategic policy documents and programmes across agriculture and social protection. It is shown how there is a clear recognition at the national policy level of the importance of coherence across all sectors as well as of inter-sector coordination on the part of agriculture and social protection, although not necessarily with each other. In terms of the key programmes identified at the national level, there appear to be a number of agricultural programmes considered by key informants as providing social protection but which operate independently of the MGCSP. It was noted by key informants from within the MoAL that some of these will be incorporated into the new upcoming National Social Protection Strategy. This would seem to be a positive step in terms of documenting the wider range of programmes across ministries that play key roles in social protection. Overall, despite a general recognition of the need for coordination, there are currently clear overlaps in target groups and the links between agriculture and social protection have not yet been sufficiently demonstrated. This suggests a critical need for greater integration of all social protection activities under the new social protection policy and a coherent approach to, and tools for, targeting.

2.1 Key challenges in Ghana

Since the 1990s Ghana has experienced consistent economic growth rates, averaging over 6 percent per annum (World Bank, 2013). Following a rebasing of its gross domestic product (GDP) figures, as of November 2010 the country also obtained lower-middle income status (Moss and Majerowicz, 2012).

These positive macroeconomic trends have been accompanied by an impressive halving in the poverty headcount ratio from the early 1990s, and Ghana was the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to achieve Millennium Development Goal 1 of halving extreme poverty. While this achievement is certainly to be celebrated, the gains have not been equally shared, with poverty reduction predominantly concentrated among those farmers involved in export crops (notably cocoa) in the central and southern regions. At the same time, poverty has remained

³ According to programme design, the CLIC should be composed of community members, a representative from education, health, NGOs and religious groups (OPM, 2013). In the village visited, however, the two individuals playing the role of the CLIC were the local chief and his assistant.

stubbornly high among subsistence-orientated farmers, many of whom are disproportionately located in the three northern regions, comprised mainly of savannah areas: Northern, Upper East and Upper West. In 2012-13, poverty incidence in these regions were around 50 percent, 44 percent and 71 percent respectively (GSS, 2014). Among the specific challenges facing poor agricultural households in Ghana as noted by key policy documents and/or key informants include: a high dependence on rain-fed agriculture, small land sizes,⁴ over-fishing of water bodies, unfavourable land tenure systems, lack of liquidity among farmers for necessary inputs and basic technologies, poor extension services and agronomic practices and technical knowledge, high post-harvest losses and weak rural markets (MoFA, 2007, 2010).

Despite declining over time (from around 40 percent in 2000), agriculture's contribution to GDP remained just over 20 percent as of 2013 (World Bank, 2013). In 2010 the agricultural sector as a whole (including forestry and fisheries) accounted for over 40 percent of total employment (ILO, 2010). The smallholder sector plays a key role in this, producing around 80 percent of Ghana's total agricultural output in the mid-2000s (MoFA, 2007). A large number of households in Ghana remain highly vulnerable to a range of shocks, both at the household and community/broader levels. Of particular pertinence among the latter include climate-related shocks (e.g. drought and flooding) and price shocks (for agricultural inputs, outputs and commodities). Combined with limited options for earning a decent living (particularly in rural areas) and the low initial asset base of many households, these can lead to a vicious cycle of coping strategies that limit the ability of households to step up and step out of poverty.

Responding to the continued vulnerability of a large portion of households, from the turn of the millennium, Ghana has launched a number of social protection initiatives, including the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) from 2003 and the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) from 2005. In 2008, following a sudden spike in food and fertilizer prices, a national fertilizer subsidy programme was also announced. The development of a National Social Protection Strategy in 2007 helped provide an overarching policy framework identifying existing social protection activities and a number of interventions for future development, including the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) cash transfer programme (which started in 2008) and the Labour-Intensive Public Works (LIPW) project starting in 2011.

This emerging social protection agenda, along with the continued centrality of agriculture to the Ghanaian economy and future poverty reduction efforts, raises the question of what linkages and coordination efforts exist between agricultural and social protection policies and programmes. This is an important question given that a considerable proportion of remaining income-related poverty is concentrated in rural areas (GSS, 2014).

2.2 National policies

This section introduces a number of key national and sector policy documents and uses them as a first step in exploring evidence of coherence or linkages between agriculture and social protection at this level. In general, it is found that despite some emphasis on the importance of inter-sector collaboration in general (e.g. through the matrix of various responsible actors for

⁴ In 2007 it was estimated that around 90 percent of farm holdings were less than two hectares in size (MoFA, 2007).

various themes in Ghana's Shared Growth and Development Agenda and "improved institutional coordination" being a key agricultural sector objective), there is currently surprisingly limited suggestion of particular linkages between agriculture and social protection. However, Ghana's agricultural policy approach does seem to demonstrate clear overlaps with social protection, with a strong focus on poor and vulnerable households, though it seems that it may currently be doing so in a silo. From the social protection side, the latest 2012 draft of the Ghana National Social Protection Strategy (GNSPS) does make some reference to agriculture, but it remains fairly limited.

It should be noted that given the limited scope of this report there are a number of other sub-sector policy documents which cannot be covered. For example, there exists a Gender and Agricultural Development Strategy developed in 2004, which is currently being revised, partly to incorporate a greater reference to social protection, as the concept was in use at the time.⁵ The new strategy will apparently feature a focus on youth and the disabled, among other vulnerable groups. Other policies mentioned during interviews which are not covered here include an Extension Policy, which is being revised to take on board emerging issues such as climate change.

Medium-Term National Development Policy Framework: Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA) II, 2014–2017

The GSGDA II is the key document of the Government of Ghana (GoG); it sets out the GoG's overall development priorities and acts as the operational framework for the President's "Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Policies, 2014-2020 – An Agenda for Transformation". The GSGDA builds on the previous GSGDA I (2010–2013) and sets out the GoG's overall policy objectives and strategies, helps guide the planning and implementation of medium-term and annual development plans and budgets at sector and district levels, while also providing a framework for donor coordination. The agenda was developed by the NDPC, which has overall responsibility for the development and coordination of a national development plan and advising the president on development planning policy and strategy.

The GSGDA is guided by the following seven thematic priority areas:

1. ensuring and sustaining macroeconomic stability;
2. enhancing competitiveness of Ghana's private sector;
3. accelerated agriculture modernization and sustainable natural resource management;
4. oil and gas development;
5. infrastructure and human settlements development;
6. human development, productivity and employment; and
7. transparent, responsive and accountable governance.

The GSGDA is recognized as a key focal point for all ministries, departments and agencies as well as the decentralized institutions (primarily the metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies) as they identify programmes and projects to implement. It was noted by one key

⁵ Interviews with key informants from the Women in Agricultural Development Department (WIAD) of the MOFA.

informant that sector and ministry budgetary approval depends on demonstrating alignment with the document. It also acts as a framework for donor coordination.

The document includes a matrix of responsible actors for implementation and achievement of the various policy objectives. However, with regard to the theme of accelerated agricultural modernization, the MGCSP does not feature as a key collaborating agency for the achievement of any of the agricultural sector's main objectives. When it comes to "Social Policy" and "Social Protection" (under the "Human Development, Productivity and Employment" theme), the MOFA does not feature at all. This provides an initial indication of limited perceptions of overlap or inter-dependencies between the MOFA and MGCSP. This aspect is explored further by looking at key policy documents for the respective ministries.

Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy II (FASDEP II)

FASDEP II is a revised version of the earlier FASDEP I, which was first developed in 2002 as a "framework for the implementation of strategies to modernisation [*sic*] of the agricultural sector", itself based on an earlier Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Development Strategy (MoFA, 2007, p. vii). One of the reasons for amending the original FASDEP was that it was recognized through a poverty and social impact study that the policies were ill-suited to achieve the desired impact on poverty reduction. Among the reasons for this were an inadequate targeting of poor households and a lack of clarity over how the MOFA would work with other ministries, departments and actors on inter-dependent activities that fell outside the ministry's own domain (MoFA, 2007). As such, these form core principles of the FASDEP II where it is stated, for example, that "There shall be targeting of the poor in appropriate aspects of policy and programmes" and "Inter-sectoral collaboration will be pursued in the implementation of policies and programmes" (MoFA, 2007, p. 23). If implemented, both the shift towards better disaggregation in targeting of interventions as well as the emphasis on collaboration are clearly positive developments in terms of facilitating improved opportunities for coordination and coherence with social protection. The six core objectives of the FASDEP II are:

- food security and emergency preparedness;
- improved growth in incomes;
- increased competitiveness and enhanced integration into domestic and international markets;
- sustainable management of land and environment;
- science and technology applied in food and agriculture development; and
- improved institutional coordination.

Clearly some of these policy objectives, particularly those around food security and emergency preparedness and improving incomes, demonstrate stronger overlaps (and scope for strengthened coherence) with issues of social protection than others. The explicit goal of improved institutional coordination also demonstrates a willingness on paper to address some of the institutional issues around engaging with other actors.

In terms of specific measures proposed to achieve these objectives, there appear to be no explicit linkages made with social protection programmes, although a number of the strategies do actually indicate examples of social protection. For example, for the objective on food

security and emergency preparedness, strategies include (among others): developing irrigation schemes for different categories of farmers to ensure year-round production; targeting the vulnerable in agriculture with special programmes that will enhance their diversification opportunities, reduce risk and enhance their access to productive resources; enhancing nutrition through coordination of programmes and institutions for food security, dissemination of nutrition and health information and advocacy for food fortification; and developing effective post-harvest management strategies, particularly storage facilities, at individual and community levels. The second measure mentioned above is perhaps the clearest example of social protection, given its focus on reducing risk and vulnerability, although all demonstrate some features of social protection.

As for improved institutional coordination, the main focus is really around public-private sector engagement, with the recognition that, unless there is more private sector involvement, then the sector will struggle to make progress. There is also an emphasis, however, on greater coordination with development partners (donors) and other ministries, departments and agencies. A core platform for this and greater intra-sector coordination was supposed to be the creation of a platform for joint planning and coordination at national, regional and district levels. At the national level a key role was envisaged for the NDPC and at regional and district levels, Regional Coordinating Councils and District Development Coordinating Councils were to play similar roles with a lead from MOFA directorates. However the policy stops short of any specific mention of social protection, instead mentioning as one of the strategies the aim to coordinate MOFA's policies and activities with those in water, health and research. According to one key informant in the MOFA, while there is no explicit mention of social protection, the strategy does in practice address social protection issues through the improved differentiation of targeting of different activities. Another key informant explained that when the FASDEP II was being developed, social protection as a term had not yet gained the same popularity and recognition that it has today.

An important component of the FASDEP II lies in the section on implementation procedures where it is noted that "Performance of the food and agriculture sector depends on other MDAs outside of MoFA. Successful implementation of FASDEP II requires a concerted action on the part of the Government of Ghana as a whole. The key considerations in the implementation of FASDEP II will be efficient allocation of resources, strengthening linkages between different stakeholders and coordinating their activities. The Ministry of Food and Agriculture will play the leading role in the implementation and, in most cases, lead in the coordination of sector activities." (MoFA, 2007, p. 48). However, beyond providing a number of general principles concerning the roles of different categories of stakeholders (e.g. development partners and other ministries), it does not offer any clear detail relating to social protection. For this, one will need to look more closely at specific sector programmes and activities.

As discussed below, during fieldwork there was no evidence of coordinated implementation on the ground between agriculture and social protection, at either district or local levels. The few examples of coordinated actions which did emerge relate to the district agricultural office working closely with district health officials, such as on the promotion of orange-fleshed sweet potato as a means of improving nutritional outcomes among farmers. When asked why there was collaboration with health and not the district Department of Social Welfare, key informants from the district-level MOFA explained that they invite those from the Ministry of

Health to their programmes and they come and share similar goals as the success of farming depends on having healthy farmers. One of the recommendations for improving coordination with social protection programmes was to have written policy guidelines, including very specific steps on how to implement coordination in practice.

Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan 2011—2015 (METASIP)

Whereas FASDEP II sets out the MOFA's broad policy objectives, the METASIP acts as the investment plan setting out the specific measures and measurable objectives under six programme headings which directly correspond to achievement of the six FASDEP II objectives. To take one example, under the programme for "Food Security and Emergency Preparedness", one of the seven components is "Support for Diversification of Livelihood Options for the Poor with Off-Farm Activities Linked to Agriculture", under which specific measurable outputs are identified along with a set of interventions for achieving them. One such output is that "five percent of people falling below the extreme poverty line will be supported to engage in off-farm livelihood alternatives by 2015".

Throughout the METASIP there are a large number of areas in which specific mention is made of the need to target the poor or the poorest of the poor with a clear emphasis on specific interventions for strengthening rural livelihoods and food security among these categories. This suggests the policy direction from the MOFA is one in which there should be strong complementarities with the aims of social protection, but also potentially some overlaps depending on how programmes and activities on the ground are targeted and coordinated.

The (draft) Ghana National Social Protection Strategy (GNSPS)

The most recent strategy for social protection comes in the form of a 2012 draft GNSPS, developed by the ministry then responsible – the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare. The draft GNSPS builds on an earlier 2007 National Social Protection Strategy under the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment. Since the 2012 draft GNSPS, however, a new ministry called the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) was established in 2013 by the new government. This is the lead coordinating ministry on issues relating to social protection and, through its Department of Social Welfare, directly manages one of Ghana's flagship social protection programmes, the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme.

It was noted in various discussions with key informants how, since its inception, the MGCSP has gained significant political backing and support at high levels in the country, in part because it has a strong and influential Minister who has been in charge since the beginning and has demonstrated a clear commitment to the success of the new ministry and its work. In addition, it was apparent during KIIs how strong and increasing donor support and commitment is also helping to boost the interest in social protection within Ghana, along with specific initiatives such as the sponsoring by UNICEF of a South-South cooperation with Brazil, which aims to promote cross-country learning around social protection.

With a recent scaling up of the social protection agenda in Ghana, including the development of the Ghana National Household Registry under the National Targeting Unit housed within

the MGCSP, and expansion of two of the country's largest social protection programmes (the LEAP and LIPW discussed below), the MGCSP is currently finalizing a new updated social protection policy which is expected to come out in July 2015. These recent developments render the question of how agriculture should "fit in" particularly timely.

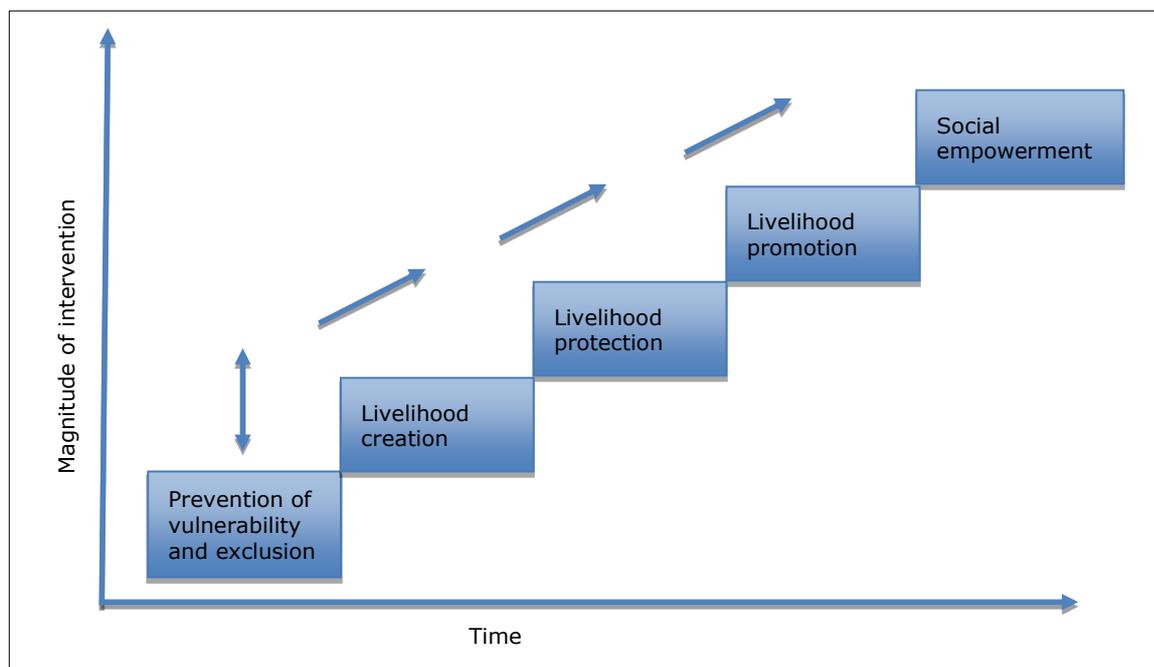
The main purpose of the draft GNSPS is described as being "to facilitate the implementation of a social protection floor through the adoption of mechanisms to empower the extreme poor, vulnerable and excluded persons through coordinated resource mobilisation, delivery of essential goods and services and monitoring and evaluation, relying on improved collaboration between allied public and private sector agencies" (MESW, 2012, p. 21). Given the focus on a social protection floor, the draft GNSPS is understandably very broad in its scope and what it hopes to achieve. However one of the key functions of the strategy is also to shift the emergent social protection landscape in Ghana away from a "piecemeal approach" towards a "harmonised, integrated, sustainable and forward-looking national framework". It therefore forms the core foundation through which greater inter- (and intra-) sector coherence can be achieved.

At the core of the strategy are the following "action areas" or "intervention areas":

- cash transfer programmes, energy and utility subsidies;
- child rights and child protection and development;
- labour-intensive public works, expansion of skills training and training centres;
- pensions and other contributory social insurance schemes and social welfare services;
and
- public health programmes, personal safety and security.

In turn, these are seen to cover five levels of intervention required during the life cycle of extremely poor and vulnerable people, namely: (1) prevention of vulnerability and exclusion, (2) livelihood creation, (3) livelihood protection, (4) livelihood promotion and (5) social empowerment. One general mention of agriculture comes under the "livelihood promotion" level, where it is explained that the promotion of livelihoods is crucial for poverty reduction and that the social protection strategy would seek to expand access to schemes such as the Integrated Agricultural Input Support programmes (MESW, 2012, p. 34).

Figure 2 Draft GNSPS path to social progress



Source: Adapted from (MESW, 2012)

The main reference to coordination with agriculture within the GNSPS is around the recognized importance of complementary services for cash transfer beneficiaries. Here, a number of examples of appropriate overlaps for cash transfer beneficiaries are identified along with a general commitment to facilitate access to a range of complementary programmes including agricultural extension and fertilizer subsidies. For example, referring to a cash transfer programme that was the predecessor of the LEAP, it was suggested that District Social Welfare Officers and District Assemblies “are assisting and encouraging beneficiary Caregivers to access relevant social protection interventions available in the respective districts. These services include: Micro Credit Schemes, Youth Employment Programme, Agricultural Input Support and other pro-poor programmes.” (MESW, 2012, p. 15). Elsewhere in the draft policy, access to complementary services is recognized explicitly as part of the exit strategy for certain categories of beneficiaries of cash transfers. It is also mentioned how memoranda of understanding were signed with MOFA, among others, as one of the ways of achieving these linkages, including through the institutions involved sharing a common register of the extremely poor and vulnerable people in a given area. However it is instructive to note that under the implementation framework the MOFA is not shown at all to be one of the key ministries involved as a collaborating partner. From the agricultural side, while the latest agricultural extension policy is still under development, an abridged version does make reference to the need to revise the previous extension policy and ensure that extension “responds to the needs of the poor and socially disadvantaged segments of society” (MOFA, 2015a), but stops short of making explicit reference to social protection or cash transfer beneficiaries.

In brief, the draft GNSPS as it currently stands offers the beginnings of a framework through which some level of coherence and coordination with agriculture can be achieved. At present, however, there appear to be limited examples expressed of linkages with agriculture, with the

main one being around complementary services for cash transfers. In practice, this was not found during fieldwork in the district and community visited as explained below. One of the reasons for the limited linkages at the policy level is likely to be that, as of 2012, the social protection agenda in Ghana was very much still in its infancy, and so there was understandably a need to focus on setting out the core elements of Ghana's approach to social protection. However, with social protection measures now scaling up, it is anticipated that the new upcoming policy will demonstrate a greater focus on linkages with the agricultural sector.

2.3 Programmes

This section provides an insight into the issue of coherence by looking at specific agricultural and social protection programmes and exploring issues of conflict, coordination and synergies. A large number of such programmes operate in Ghana under different ministries. While programmes below are listed under agriculture if implemented by the MOFA, some agricultural programmes exhibit features of social protection, and there are some social protection programmes with agricultural components or which impact upon agriculture. The programmes focused upon here include flagship initiatives, programmes that represent relatively larger shares of sectoral budgets, those which received particular mention during KIIs and agricultural programmes identified as having particular overlaps or scope for linkages with social protection. While issues of performance are dealt with in a later section, among the key findings are that the social protection programmes presented demonstrate considerable promise for dual benefits to the achievement of policy objectives for both sectors, and that a number of agricultural programmes targeted to poorer households seem to offer potential for layering or sequencing of support to households covered by social protection measures (providing it could be accomplished at a low cost). However, as yet, explicit intentional linkages or coordination between programmes in both sectors appear to be largely absent.

Social protection

Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme

Frequently referred to as Ghana's flagship social protection programme, LEAP is a nationwide unconditional cash transfer programme which aims to provide a safety net for the poorest and most marginalized groups in Ghana, and to protect and empower beneficiary households. The transfers are targeted towards the poorest households, with a focus on the elderly (aged 65 or above), the disabled who are unable to work and carers of orphans and vulnerable children. Targeting takes place through a combination of an initial community-based targeting shortlist followed by a proxy means test.

LEAP is directly managed by the Department of Social Welfare under the MGCSP and is one of Ghana's most extensive social protection initiatives, covering over 77 000 households across all 10 regions of the country as of September 2014 (MoGCSP, 2014b). By April 2015 it was operating in 144 districts.⁶ Discussions with development partners indicated plans for an expansion of the programme in order to reach a greater proportion of eligible households.

⁶ Interview with key informant from the Department of Social Welfare.

Through the programme, monthly cash transfers ranging from GHS 48 to GHS 90 (US\$ 11.80 to US\$ 22.10), depending on household size, are paid on a bi-monthly basis to beneficiaries at local pay points through the national postal service.⁷ The total cost of the programme for the government in the 2014/2015 financial year was GHS 38 million (around US\$ 9.3 million).

As part of an attempt to achieve a more integrated and effective approach to social protection, LEAP beneficiaries are entitled to free health insurance through another key social protection programme – the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). As mentioned above, there also appeared to be attempts in the past at linking LEAP to complementary services relating to livelihood empowerment, such as agricultural extension services and programmes. Official LEAP documentation and interviews with key informants show that there continues to be an interest within the LEAP programme in strengthening linkages with other complementary services (e.g. free school uniforms, access to agricultural support and micro credit schemes) (MOGCSP, 2014a). According to a key informant from the Department of Social Welfare, coordination of complementary services is seen as very important for achieving graduation out of the LEAP. A KII with a development partner echoed this point, saying that it was “impossible to think about graduation without agriculture” and a key informant from the NDPC also highlighted the importance of, and growing emphasis on, graduation from the LEAP, with complementary services playing a key role. A greater focus on complementary services is apparently scheduled to emerge after the introduction of an electronic payment system in 2015.⁸

On the one hand, given the targeting focus of the LEAP it may not be immediately obvious how it can contribute to the achievement of agricultural policy objectives. In the community visited as part of the fieldwork, many beneficiaries pointed out how they themselves were unable to directly engage in crop-based agriculture because of age or disability. However the FGDs also revealed that some beneficiaries are able to hire labour and a few indicated that they were able, or would be able, to engage in certain types of agriculture, such as small livestock or snail farming, in line with findings from a qualitative assessment of the LEAP programme which found some households investing in productive activities (OPM, 2013). These findings around a mixed ability of LEAP beneficiaries to directly engage in agriculture reinforce an important point made by the head of the LEAP Coordinating Unit, which was that complementary services must at some level be driven by local needs rather than in a top-down fashion.

Aside from the LEAP impacting on the agricultural sector through increased productive investments or hiring of agricultural labour, studies have indicated that the LEAP can bring about positive benefits to the sector more broadly through increasing demand in local economies (OPM, 2013; Thorne *et al.*, 2014).

Labour-Intensive Public Works (LIPW)

An example of planned complementarity between social protection and agricultural activities appears in the LIPW which is one of the main large-scale social protection programmes mentioned here besides the LEAP. The LIPW, which is part of a broader project called the Ghana Social Opportunities Project (which funds both the LIPW and LEAP), is funded by the

⁷ GHS = Ghanaian New Cedi. Exchange rate used throughout the report is GHS 1 = US\$ 0.246.

⁸ KII with key informant from the Department of Social Welfare.

World Bank and supports labour-intensive public works for rural households during the dry season when there is low labour demand. The complementarity between the two sectors lies in the timing of employment, helping to smooth consumption through additional income-generating opportunities throughout the year.

In contrast to LEAP, the LIPW is managed under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD). As of 2012 the plan was to locally employ 210 000 people to carry out infrastructure works in deprived communities (MESW, 2012). An interview with a development partner indicated additional financing was planned for further scaling up.

A further complementarity with agriculture comes in the form of the actual works being carried out which, as of April 2015, were focused around developing feeder roads, tree planting and creating water sources for livestock.⁹ All of these activities help support various objectives within Ghana's agricultural strategy.

Ghana School Feeding Programme

The GSFP emerged out of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), where the concept was proposed as an effective way of achieving the Millennium Development Goals on hunger, poverty and malnutrition. The programme started as a pilot in 10 schools in 2005, with the personal backing of former President John Kufuor and like the LIPW is also managed and implemented through the MLGRD.

By April 2015 the GSFP had reached 1.7 million children across Ghana in primary schools or kindergartens, providing them with one free hot meal per day.¹⁰ The immediate objectives of the programme are: (i) to increase school enrolment, attendance and retention, (ii) reduce short-term hunger and malnutrition among kindergarten and primary school children and (iii) boost domestic food production (GSFP, n.d).

A key element of the programme that creates substantial opportunities for synergies between social protection and agriculture is that, according to the operational manual, the food used to feed the children should be prepared from locally grown foodstuffs. School caterers purchase food for the schools (though currently they appear largely free to purchase from where they wish) and they are then to be reimbursed through the MLGRD which receives funding from central government. However, key informants at national and district level highlighted how, in practice, synergies with local agricultural systems are often not achieved or fully exploited. This is fundamentally the result of financing delays, which mean caterers often have to purchase food on credit, and means they tend to have to buy from markets (which can contain imported foodstuffs) rather than smallholders. There also seemed to be a reluctance to impose stricter requirements upon caterers to purchase from local farmers (with the exception of a key informant from the NDPC who cited the example of Brazil's formal agreements between producers and caterers) and no evidence was found in the district visited of support to farmers to be able to meet the procurement requirements. The only exception was that the district agricultural office was reported to have played a facilitative procurement role by purchasing 200 bags of maize from farmers in the previous season and selling it to the GSFP.

⁹ Interview with key informant from the World Bank.

¹⁰ Interview with key informants from the GSFP secretariat.

The GSFP is intended to target schools in areas and households particularly prone to hunger and malnutrition. It therefore uses a number of criteria through which to select beneficiary schools, including (among others): low school enrolment, attendance and retention (especially among girls); high drop-out rates; low literacy levels; high hunger and vulnerability status; and poor access to potable water (GSFP, n.d). However these are also the areas in which farmers are more likely to require assistance in producing food.

Agriculture

According to Kolavalli *et al.* (2015) four programmes have been absorbing a large share of the MOFA's total expenditure: agricultural mechanization, the Fertilizer Subsidy Programme (FSP), block farming and the national food buffer stock. Of these two are of particular relevance to social protection and were mentioned during discussions about Ghana's main agricultural programmes – the FSP and block farming – which are considered below.

At a broader level, and as noted in the section on policy above, there are various agricultural programmes in Ghana that do focus on poorer households. As such, there are numerous examples of theoretical complementarities with social protection in so far as there exist programmes that present opportunities for linking to social protection measures, such as through sequencing out of protection towards livelihood promotion.

Fertilizer Subsidy Programme (FSP)

The FSP began in July 2008 in response to the spike in food and fertilizer prices, thereby demonstrating characteristics of a social protection measure. In its original incarnation it operated as a voucher subsidy programme targeting subsidized fertilizer to small-scale farmers through Agricultural Extension Agents, although there were no explicit targeting criteria concerning income or crops grown (Banful, 2009).

However, soon after, the operation of the FSP changed when in 2009 the programme became a general price subsidy, whereby four types of fertilizer were subsidized at the port entry. The subsidized price was around 64 percent of the retail market price (Benin *et al.*, 2013). The aim of the programme was ultimately to increase the national average rate of fertilizer application from just 8 kg per hectare to 20 kg per hectare in order to raise crop yields and production, increase farm profitability and strengthen private sector input markets. This switch to a more general subsidy raises the question of how far the FSP has continued to operate as a social protection measure or demonstrate complementarities with social protection initiatives. In so far as it enables access to otherwise unaffordable inputs to poorer vulnerable households that depend on agriculture for their livelihood, the FSP does represent an important complementarity to social protection measures. However it remains unclear to what extent poorer households actually benefit from the FSP.

Over time the FSP grew to represent one of the MOFA's main areas of expenditure and, in 2014, the government was unable to implement the FSP as it had not paid fertilizer companies.¹¹ A 2015 subsidy programme has since been announced, but with a far lower government subsidy (around 20 percent of market prices) and with priority given to outgrower

¹¹ As such it appeared to represent a fairly sensitive topic and was not a programme that was discussed or explored in great detail.

farmer groups (GoG, 2015), raising the question of how far the FSP now represents a genuine complementarity with social protection.

Block Farming Programme (BFP)

Another key national programme, the BFP, aims to facilitate farming as a business by focusing on large tracts of land for the production of selected commodities based on an area's comparative advantage. The concept involves bringing beneficiaries together to develop one large production area with all of the various services they require (e.g. extension, mechanization services and subsidized inputs), taking advantage of economies of scale. The programme began in 2009 with pilots in six regions.

During discussions with some key informants from the MOFA, it was suggested that the BFP could be seen as an example of social protection. Indeed, on paper the programme does seem to play a social protection function, given the particular focus on youth, with the aim of creating employment among the rural poor, improving incomes and increasing food security (Benin *et al.*, 2013).

In terms of coherence with social protection, at present the BFP seems to simply represent an example of an agricultural intervention that is complementary to social protection by aiming to address the risks and vulnerabilities found in poor rural areas through an agricultural employment and livelihoods approach. Clearly, given the focus of the programme, it is only targeted at those able-bodied individuals who are able to meaningfully engage in agricultural production and in that sense it is more similar to the LIPW, as far as targeting is concerned. Beyond this broad complementarity, however, no evidence of any explicit linkages was found between the programme and other social protection interventions.

Credit-in-Kind

Within the livestock subsector, one national programme mentioned by a number of key informants was the Credit-in-Kind scheme that allocates free livestock (five female and one male) to selected farmers, which they are required to then pay back in kind after two years to another beneficiary.

According to a key informant from the Animal Production Directorate, when selecting areas for this programme, the MOFA considers where livestock will thrive and where there is sufficient land. Selection of beneficiaries is then determined at the district level, where the farmers chosen should be those who are (a) already practising husbandry of the particular form of livestock, (b) able to demonstrate they have the means to keep the animals (e.g. having a pen or coop), and (c) show an ability and willingness to take care of the livestock. As such, despite essentially being a form of social assistance by virtue of providing a transfer of productive assets, the programme does not target the very poorest, but rather those who already show some capacity to engage in a productive way with livestock. However, as with the BFP, it was suggested during interviews with key informants from the MOFA that the Credit in Kind programme does represent a form of social protection.

Regarding the issue of coherence, the Credit in Kind programme addresses a different type of vulnerability – that faced by poor yet viable farmers – and it therefore complements the

“Livelihood Promotion” step in the draft GNSPS “Path to Social Progress”. Beyond this complementarity, there do not currently appear to be any links made between the programme and social protection initiatives.

Youth in Agriculture

While it was not possible to interview anyone from the Youth in Agriculture Programme (YIAP), the programme is another agricultural sector initiative showing clear overlaps with social protection. The YIAP aims to motivate youth to engage in agriculture as a commercial venture, in part to address the issue of youth unemployment, vulnerability to crime and other social problems (MOFA, 2015b).

While the draft GNSPS did mention attempts at linking caregiver recipients of an earlier cash transfer programme with the Youth Employment Programme (which was run under a different ministry), no evidence was found demonstrating any systematic attempt to link beneficiaries of the LEAP (or other social protection measures) with the YIAP.

Fisheries

Speaking with a key informant from the Fisheries Commission, the main areas of its programmatic activities focused around the problem of overfishing. The five key programmatic areas of the commission mentioned included: aquaculture development, fish resource management, reducing illegal fishing, increasing fish health and post-harvest management, and management and administration (which includes coordination between sectors working in fisheries and with other agencies).

The question was raised by an interviewer during a KII over the potential conflict between punitive measures for addressing overfishing and the focus within social protection on addressing vulnerabilities related to limited income-generating opportunities. It was explained how, taking a longer-term view, this was not a conflict as overfishing damages economic resources and that much of the focus within the commission is on trying to provide alternatives. For example, one major regional project mentioned in this regard was the West Africa Regional Fisheries Project, supported by the World Bank, which aims to urge households to voluntarily give up fishing and go into aquaculture.

One of the project areas that was mentioned, which was believed to have clear overlaps with social protection, was a project supporting post-harvest fish processing and alternative livelihood options, with a particular focus on women. However further investigation suggested that the activities appeared to currently be operating on a relatively low scale, limiting the scope for meaningful discussion around coherence.

In brief, it has been shown that there is considerable overlap and potential for complementarities and synergies between social protection and agricultural programmes. The social protection programmes highlighted all show promise for contributing to the objectives of the agricultural sector and, similarly, there exist a number of agricultural programmes which complement the component of the draft GNSPS centred on livelihood promotion. However there was also shown to be limited evidence of intentional linkages across programmes and a number of missed opportunities for greater coordination and synergies.

3. Coordination

This section looks at issues of coordination and institutional mechanisms. Among the key findings are the following. First, at the national level there is strong potential for coordination through a wide range of institutional mechanisms for coordination and collaboration across sectors. However, in terms of mechanisms specific to facilitating coherence between agriculture and social protection, greater coordination seems to be held back by a number of factors including limited initiatives to date led by the MGCSP (possibly due to capacity constraints), a continued lack of awareness within parts of the MOFA about what social protection is and how it can complement and fit into the MOFA's agenda, and funding constraints. Second, at a programmatic and implementation level, one of the major constraints identified was overlapping and incoherent approaches to targeting. This is currently being addressed through the establishment of a major new initiative to establish a Ghana National Household Registry. Third, one of the main findings at the district level and below in the area visited was that it was actually very difficult to talk of coherence or coordination due the apparent absence of any substantive government agricultural programmes or activities at the time of the visit, aside from limited agricultural extension work. In addition, the social protection activities that existed with scope for greater coordination with agriculture were few and far between and also scattered so that any coordination would currently be only at a small scale. Concerning institutional mechanisms at district level it was found that, although mechanisms for coordination between agriculture and social protection do exist, in practice they face major challenges in terms of fulfilling their intended role, let alone fulfilling their potential.

3.1 National coordination

At the national level a number of different institutional mechanisms exist with potential to facilitate coordination across sectors. However, when it came to actual coordination between agriculture and social protection, there appeared to be relatively limited engagement.

One of the considerable institutional assets for facilitating cross-sector coordination in Ghana is the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC). The NDPC has existed since the mid-1990s as an independent government institution located within the Office of the President, with the mandate of advising the president on development planning policy and strategy and providing a national development policy framework with the aim of enhancing the well-being and living standards of all Ghanaians. As part of its role it is mandated to “monitor, evaluate and coordinate development policies, programmes and projects” (NDPC, 2015). It does this in various ways, including through requiring ministry activities to be linked to the national development policy of the day before budgets can be approved.

Recent discussions within government seem to indicate that the NDPC will continue to play the same or an even stronger role in future, arising from the fact that the Economic Planning department was moved to the Commission from the Ministry of Finance.¹² This was seen as a potentially positive move by the a key informant from the NDPC in so far as it could provide the NDPC with the opportunity to have greater flexibility in responding to emerging needs of

¹² Interview with key informant from NDPC.

different sectors. This is significant as a typical response of ministries that do not meet their performance indicators is that they are resource-constrained in certain areas.

While the NDPC has been around for some time, it was noted by a number of key informants that its activities had recently been picking up, at least in part because of increasing concerns over duplication, particularly with respect to the targeting of the same groups with different policies or programmes. The NDPC also appears to have also played some positive role in acting as a third party keeping check on the policy and programme focus of individual ministries. It was mentioned by a key informant within the Commission how the NDPC conducts studies on the efficacy of sector policies and a few years earlier had found that, within the government's agricultural activities, the poor were "not being touched". This in turn helped initiate the development of a more pro-poor strategy.

Although the NDPC currently plays a role in monitoring and overseeing coherence across all government sectors and performance in achieving agreed indicators, so far it seems to have played a more limited role in facilitating specific coordination between agriculture and social protection. A set of platforms that do exist to assist in this regard are cross-sector planning groups facilitated by the NDPC. For example, social protection issues come under the human development thematic area, which has its own group of those involved in the topic area who can attend to discussing planning with other ministries and departments. However, with agriculture as a sector generally considering itself less concerned with human development, these groups are not especially conducive to bringing together the necessary stakeholders from agriculture and social protection. According to a number of key informants, the main link that currently exists between social protection and agriculture is through the Women in Agriculture Development (WIAD) department of the MOFA, which works on the policy areas of gender, nutrition, value addition and food safety, and was seen to work closely with the MGCSP.

According to a key informant within the NDPC, the commission does play a key role in facilitating the MOFA's programmatic objective of "Improving Institutional Coordination". The NDPC was also seen by other key informants from the MOFA as a valuable third party that could help convene meetings given its independent authority and not being linked to either sector, as sometimes when meetings are convened across ministries it can apparently be a challenge to always secure sufficient commitment or interest. However, despite these roles, ultimately it seems that a push is required from one or both of the two sectors themselves after identifying specific areas for strengthening coherence. For, while the NDPC is mandated to support the coordination of development activities, it was noted by a key informant from the commission how there is also a need for initiative by the sectors themselves, which are ultimately responsible for implementation. It also seemed clear how the NDPC itself is extremely stretched and, while it can act as a neutral third party, may not be in a position to initiate additional cross-sectoral meetings.

According to the key informant from the NDPC, when inter-sector coordination does take place it tends to do so at the ministry level, for example, through Sector Working Groups, where the NDPC is also represented. However, it was mentioned during the validation workshop that the mandate of these groups can be very broad and involve many people such that it does not always allow for issues specific to two sectors to in fact be given the attention they deserve as there can be competing demands on time.

The Agricultural Sector Working Group was mentioned by a number of key informants as a monthly meeting of all development partners and some civil society organizations to discuss issues relating to the agricultural sector. It was suggested to be a notably open group which could be joined easily by those who feel they are engaged in agriculture in some way. However there did not currently seem to be much engagement from MGCSP, arguably down to a very limited capacity, though there do seem to be some attempts and interest by those working on social protection for greater engagement in this forum, with support and involvement from UNICEF, which is currently the key coordinating development partner on social protection.

For social protection, the main institutional framework for coordination at the national level currently seems to be the Social Protection Sector Working Group, which meets every two to three months. It is chaired by the development partners, who rotate responsibility, although UNICEF has been the chair since it started. There is apparently also some representation from the MOFA but this was seen by one development partner as “a missed opportunity” as, according also to some development partners, there has been limited senior level engagement from agriculture. Part of the reason for this was understood to be a perception within agriculture that social protection is “not something they are really concerned with”.¹³ It was suggested that there was a need for more to be done in raising awareness of social protection within the MOFA and exploring initiatives for closer collaboration. However it was also pointed out that there are very few senior people within the new MGCSP who are in a position to do this. There was also a component of individual personalities being important, and it was mentioned in discussions with one development partner that when true linkages and cross-sector coordination take place it is actually more about having the right people in the right place at the right time.

Another inter-sector mechanism from agriculture used less frequently than the Agricultural Sector Working Group and more for longer-term planning and accountability was the Joint Sector Review, which was said to take place around once or twice a year, with input from national level to local level. This platform was said to have been useful in bringing the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Trade together for discussions and joint operations with the MOFA, though no mention was made of the MGCSP being involved. Again, this appears to be due to the MGCSP currently drawing upon its relatively limited capacity to focus on its own core operations.

Overall, concerning policy planning it was pointed out by a key informant in the MOFA that “when it comes to policies, they are developed in a participatory way, even though one ministry might lead”. With regard to the upcoming social protection policy, it was noted how this involved the use of a Technical Working Group that included representation from the MOFA along with development partners. Similar involvement by the MGCSP in policy planning for the MOFA was not mentioned in any of the KIIs. However another individual from a different department within the MOFA mentioned how some departments and actors work more closely together than others, particularly when there appears to be a stronger overlap between the kinds of work being carried out, citing the case of WIAD being more involved in the development of the latest social protection policy. However, as noted in more detail below, this department is relatively weak and marginal within the ministry as a whole.

¹³ Interview with development partner.

A key informant from WIAD confirmed how a representative from the department was invited to participate in the development of the new social protection policy that is being drafted, as social protection is considered closely linked to gender in Ghana. As a result of that participation, a number of agricultural programmes have become identified as examples of social protection. The representative highlighted Block Farming and a National Livestock Project as two examples of social protection operating under the MOFA and so they will become part of the social protection policy document, which was recognized to potentially bring some benefit in terms of future government commitment to them.

For a number of key informants, one of the greatest obstacles to coherence currently concerns targeting and repetition and overlapping. According to one interviewee from the MOFA, “one of the big problems I see is with targeting. There are so many interventions and there is an issue of collaboration. You find a lot of repetition. For example, in the north, people are going in and coming out with the same message. If decentralization was properly implemented this could be addressed”. It therefore seemed to suggest that a great deal of the responsibility for coherent approaches to targeting currently rests at the regional and district levels.

In terms of addressing this targeting challenge, it was highlighted by a number of key informants how the MGCSP is currently leading on the development of the Ghana National Household Registry, which all ministries concerned with pro-poor targeting should be able to use. The initiative, supported by the World Bank, has seen involvement from the start by the MOFA (along with other ministries) in the development of the database, including the selection of specific indicators to be included. This development represents a major step forward in terms of helping address the coordination challenges, highlighted at various points in this study, around overcoming the informational obstacles to identifying recipients of different government interventions from various ministries.

A further challenge holding back greater coordination at the national level was noted to be the continuity of ministers, with considerable changes occurring within the MOFA in recent years compared to the MGCSP where it has been more consistent and where a number of key informants highlighted that the current minister had in fact been a driving force behind social protection gaining ground and interest over the last few years.

As for development partners, these seem to largely be playing a positive role in supporting coherence, with a number of major donors working closely together on the topic of social protection (UNICEF, DFID, World Bank and more recently USAID). However one gap that became apparent was that, although there is a strong group of development partners working on social protection, there is scope for other development partners with greater experience and focus on livelihoods to also play a more central role in the national-level coordination mechanisms on social protection as this could help bring about the link that is required with agriculture. A prime candidate here is the FAO, given its strong background in agriculture and growing interest in social protection.

A final key gap that seems to be currently holding back greater coordination between the sectors is the absence of an updated social protection policy which identifies the full range of measures being implemented in agriculture and elsewhere under the heading of social protection. Without this as a starting point it is difficult to see how full coherence can be achieved. According to a key informant from WIAD, “we have activities that are social

protection but not labelled as such, so we are working in isolation. We do not tag the activities as social protection, but they are. In terms of collaboration with the Ministry of Gender [Children and Social Protection], we track what they are doing.” The new social protection strategy will therefore be an important institutional framework for closer coordination and coherence with the agricultural sector, although this will depend on how fully agriculture’s activities on social protection are included within it.

3.2 Coordination at district level and below

It was mentioned by national level key informants that it was at the regional and district levels in particular that more substantive coordination should take place in terms of the implementation of programmes, particularly given the decentralized system that exists in Ghana. When asked why one can expect greater coordination at these levels, one key informant from the MOFA mentioned that it is because under the decentralized system, they work under one person (namely the District Coordinating Director), which can make it easier.

However, one of the key insights from interviews and discussions at the district level and below was that the very notion of coordination was difficult to contemplate given the exceedingly low level of government agricultural activities taking place in the district, as discussed below. One of the major challenges noted at district level was the fact that the agricultural department survives on bare minimum resources and currently operates no major programmes apart from a few low-scale livestock initiatives. It was also mentioned how there was no fuel for his extension staff, meaning that the staff were advised to at least do what they can around the areas where they lived. It was also suggested how even airtime for communications had to be covered out of the agricultural staff’s own pockets, with obvious implications for the operations of government agricultural services in the area.

A core institution for coordination at district level is supposed to be the District Planning Coordinating Unit (DPCU) which comprises members of the District Assembly and heads of government departments.¹⁴ A similar structure was noted to be in place at the regional level in the form of the Regional Coordinating Council. The key individuals within the DPCU are the District Chief Executive, who was considered to be a somewhat political figure, and the District Coordinating Director, who plays a more technocratic role as the effective head of the civil service at the district level. It was mentioned how the success of the DPCU can often reflect how competent these two individuals are in their posts, but that there may also be some incentives for collaboration between departments where district assemblies are assessed at the regional level and above on how well they bring departments together and engage in collaborative efforts. However there were limited details of how any such assessments are reached in practice.

Discussions at the district level indicated that the DPCU may in practice not be the right forum for actually discussing issues that primarily concern two sectors as it is more of a forum for broader development issues in the district. It was also noted by district-level key

¹⁴ The District Assembly deals with local administration (at the district level) and has elected representatives from the localities in a district (making up 70 percent of members) and 30 percent of members nominated by government. The Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) are mandated to monitor, coordinate and evaluate the performance of the metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies. The RCC is chaired by the Regional Minister and has representatives (i.e. presiding members) of the various assemblies as members.

informants how opportunities for discussions between departments should ideally take place on a quarterly basis, led by the District Coordinating Director, but that such meetings had not occurred. It was not possible during the visit to the district to find out why this was.

Regarding specific interactions between the department of agriculture and the District Social Welfare office (through which the MGCSP operates at a district level), it was mentioned by the DDA that they have no real coordination with them. It was felt that they operated in their own sphere with the LEAP programme and were not forthcoming in information sharing. However this is most likely the result of significant capacity constraints at the district level, with the Social Welfare office having a staff of just three.

One of the key structures for coordination at district level between the LEAP programme and other departments, including agriculture, is the District Leap Implementation Committee (DLIC) which should have representation from all heads of department. In the district visited, however, it was mentioned that the DLIC was barely functioning with meetings held once or twice a year. The main purpose of the DLIC was seen by key informants from agriculture to simply be that of updating other sectors (including education and health) on general progress but not as an opportunity for discussion about greater coordination. It was also noted how the district office of the MOFA did not have access to the names of the beneficiaries receiving cash transfers through the LEAP, even though all parties recognized during interviews that it could be a good step forward. Not even the agricultural representative of the DLIC had a list of the LEAP beneficiaries, but noted how “it would have been very nice” and how, if they had known, they could have aimed to give these households special consideration for emerging livelihood opportunities, training or other support such as the Credit in Kind programme or a cockerel programme where cockerels are sold at a subsidized price. It was explained by a key informant from the district agricultural office that it need not necessarily involve any major costs to target LEAP beneficiaries, but that without information on who they were, it could not come about.

More broadly there seemed to be a major missed opportunity for communication between agriculture and the District Social Welfare Office through the DLIC, with a key informant from the latter highlighting how they felt left in the dark as to what agricultural activities were being implemented in different areas. There appear to be a number of issues at the bottom of this problem, including insufficient understanding of and commitment to the potential role of the DLIC meetings for strengthening coordination across sectors as well as obvious capacity constraints among sectors in even delivering their own programmes. In the case of the District Social Welfare Office, there were apparently three individuals to cover the entire district who can call upon the support of six staff from the Department of Community Development, which operates under the MLGRD.

The weak operation of the DLIC does not appear to be specific to the district visited, with another qualitative study highlighting how the DLIC in a district from the Northern Region had failed to even meet, reportedly due to limited resources making community-level monitoring impossible (OPM, 2013). There therefore seems to be a need for a greater focus on how to support the capacity and operation of such institutions, which are not only central to the operation of the LEAP, but also currently represent the main opportunity in some districts for staff from agriculture and social protection to come together.

Interestingly, it was found that there appears to be somewhat stronger coordination between agriculture and health at the district visited. When asked why this was the case, the DDA indicated it had to do with sharing common goals, but also because of a more cordial relationship. It was said that “we invited them to our programmes and they come...they have similar goals, for example around nutrition.... Our success depends on healthy farmers”. When asked what holds back further coordination with social protection it emerged that having clearer written policy guidelines on how to coordinate with those working on social protection would help. As the DDA put it, “if it would be spelt out clearly at the national level it would help a lot”.

At the community level, the planned coordination of agricultural extension reaching LEAP beneficiaries as set out in the GNSPS did not appear to be happening at all. FGDs highlighted how the main agricultural extension received was for cocoa, which around 50 percent of households in the community benefitted from. However extension services were noted to be given to those who had managed to organize themselves and prepare their farms; those who were not in that position were recognized as being poorer. This potentially highlights a degree of conflict between the current institutional interests of the agricultural sector, which aims to work with those who are already somewhat able to engage productively, with a view to the goal of Ghana’s social protection agenda, which involves supporting those who may not yet be in a position to effectively organize themselves in order to receive agricultural training.

According to the design of the LEAP, the local mechanism responsible for facilitating access to complementary services is the Community Leap Implementation Committee (CLIC). However, in the community visited, the CLIC was composed of just two individuals – the chief and his assistant. During discussions at the community level, no evidence emerged of the role played by the CLIC in linking LEAP beneficiaries to complementary services. As with the DLIC structures, it appears that there may be considerable gains to be made through a focus on strengthening CLICs as well, as noted elsewhere (OPM, 2013).

4. Performance

This section provides a brief summary of whether expected outputs of the main agricultural and social protection programmes in Ghana are being achieved on the ground, the reasons behind any key problems and whether performance could be improved by more or better coordination with other programmes. A number of key messages have been identified in this section. First, it is somewhat difficult to gauge the impact of agricultural activities because of limited information on monitoring and evaluations, which is a problem that has been noted elsewhere. Second, of the two social protection programmes that are reviewed, it is found that the LEAP programme in particular demonstrates particularly promising results, although these are restricted by the absence of layering or sequencing of support to LEAP beneficiaries in the area visited. Evaluations of the GSFP indicate some positive impacts on increasing enrolment although with limited evidence of impacts elsewhere, including boosting local food production. To achieve these synergies a number of further specific efforts will be required.

4.1 Agriculture

Formal evaluations of ongoing agricultural programmes were difficult to come by, making an assessment of their performance somewhat challenging. The need for more information on the impacts of agricultural expenditures has been highlighted elsewhere (Benin, Mogues, Cudjoe, & Randriamamonjy, 2012; Kolavalli *et al.*, 2015). However a number of insights can be drawn from various discussions with key informants and other independent research.

One of the key insights that emerged from discussions with stakeholders was that funding within the agricultural sector remains a major concern, with obvious implications for the performance of agricultural programmes and activities. The main initiatives that seem somewhat immune from this are large donor-funded programmes which typically operate as discrete projects. Within the WIAD department it was noted how in four years WIAD's funding had dropped to one quarter of what it had been. When asked about this, it was suggested that the cuts were not specific to that department or ministry and recent funding constraints were indeed corroborated elsewhere within the MOFA. The story of limited funding going to agriculture is supported by an independent analysis by the International Food Policy Research Institute. According to their calculations, despite an overall growth in agricultural expenditure (from a very low base) between 2001 to 2011, the actual share of total agricultural expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure represented between 3.2 percent and 4.2 percent in 2011,¹⁵ and is estimated at between 2.1 percent and 3.4 percent in 2012, which remains far from the 10 percent national budget commitment that Ghana had signed up to through the CAADP (Kolavalli *et al.*, 2015).

In terms of the performance of the FSP, as noted earlier, the programme was postponed from the 2014 season after fertilizer companies were not paid. While it was difficult to uncover what exactly lay behind this, it seemed that it could at least partly be caused by the general financial challenges that are being faced in the country which have had impacts right across government.

¹⁵ The higher figure represents the amount when spending on the public cocoa corporation COCOBOD is included (which should be excluded according to CAADP rules). These figures contrast with substantially higher proportions from a 2013 MOFA and World Bank study which used considerably lower total government expenditure figures than those reported in the government's official public accounts.

Another insight into agricultural performance came at the district level where it emerged, when speaking with the DDA, that despite the large number of agricultural programmes and interventions that are set out in the METASIP, in practice there were no real government programmes currently in operation to speak of. While a number of programmes had been in operation (e.g. Block Farming and a Roots and Tubers programme) at the time of the interview the main activity emerging from the agricultural department was the provision of a skeleton extension service and a few low-level livestock programmes. One example was the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Project, through which five farmers from the entire district were to be selected to receive sheep.

It was pointed out that at the time of interview no money had been received for an entire month in order to allow for activities to take place. As such, there was no money for fuel for the motorbikes used by Agricultural Extension Agents (AEAs) or for communications. The severity of the situation was such that the interviewers were told that, in practice, the 12 AEAs for the district were simply advised to do what they could by at least meeting farmers in the areas where they live, and they had even been advised to make use of the radio in order to spread their messages. According to the DDA, the AEA to farmer ratio was currently between 1:4 000 and 1:5 000.

Accounts of limited funds seemed to be validated by findings within the community visited, where FGDs revealed that the only main consistent support received was for between 30-50 percent of the community for their cocoa crop, among which women represented 30 percent or less. Contact was made around three times per year and services included subsidized seedlings, fertilizer and pesticide spraying, as well as advice on good agronomic practices. The only other agricultural support mentioned by community members was previous training in how to plant cassava in rows, good economic practices and provision of a few seedlings.

4.2 Social protection

The original focus of investigation in this study was around the LEAP programme and its interactions with agricultural programmes and activities, and so it is this which receives the main attention here. During the course of the fieldwork it became apparent that the LIPW also offers particular scope for synergies with MOFA activities given the focus on able-bodied, but poor, households. However time and space prevents further discussion of this programme here.

LEAP

The LEAP programme has benefitted from rigorous monitoring and evaluation, including a qualitative and major quantitative impact evaluation. Together, both have demonstrated significant impacts of the LEAP programme on a range of areas including food security, health, education, savings and investments as well as having positive multiplier effects on the local economy (Handa et al., 2013; OPM, 2013). For example, between 2010 and 2012 food insecurity was found to have decreased among beneficiaries by 25 percent (and 32 percent among female-headed households). Participation in the programme was also associated with a 7 percent increase in school enrolment of children aged 13-17 and a reduction in the likelihood of older girls missing school by 11 percent.

It was noted by a key informant from UNICEF that these impacts have come despite the considerably lower levels of transfer that are now being provided,¹⁶ and the impact evaluation also notes the negative effect of irregular payments during the period of study (which seems to have been addressed in recent months).

Through FGDs it was found that the LEAP programme was delivering its intended outputs in the community visited and was considered by beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike to be offering a substantial lifeline to communities. This corroborates the finding of a World Bank study which compared the targeting effectiveness of the main social protection programmes in Ghana and found LEAP to be the most effective (MoGCSP, 2014b).

Beneficiaries in the areas visited through this study were reportedly using the money for food, medication, education and other essentials, with a few being able to make small investments to engage in petty trading, but others finding it was not quite enough for anything more than basic needs. One area that was noted to be lacking by beneficiaries was that the money did not go far once certain expenses had been covered, such as medication or school fees. On average it was suggested that the money was used up within between two weeks and a month. As such, it was suggested by some that additional support and capacity building for trading or seed capital for small livestock would allow them to lead a more independent life.

Among other problems encountered regarding the programme that were noted by beneficiaries was that since the location of the cash payments was moved to another town they now had to pay for transport, amounting to GHS 2.4 – already 5 percent of the average monthly payment. In addition, it was noted that after beneficiaries passed away, their transfers were not reallocated to others within the community and so there were gradually fewer households in the community receiving the transfer.

Ghana School Feeding Programme

The main evaluation of the GSFP was that carried out by Ernst and Young in 2012. Among the key findings of that report were that impacts on drop-out rates and repetition rates were not significantly different to non-GSFP schools (Ernst and Young, 2012). Another major challenge of the programme has been that it has not been achieving its potential as a means of boosting local food production and rural incomes. The proximate reason for this is the low local food content that appears to be used and also limited nutritional value of the meals provided. According to a survey by Ernst and Young, only 18 percent of caterers bought 100 percent of their ingredients locally and 16 percent indicated they made no local purchases at all (Alhassan and Alhassan, 2014). Some of the key challenges identified include the absence of procurement models or procedures to facilitate purchases from farmers, seasonal availability of local food, the high price and non-availability of foodstuffs.

Interviews with key informants in this study also identified that procurement from local farmers was undermined by major funding challenges, mainly with regard to funds reaching the local level in order to reimburse caterers. According to a key informant from KEEA, it was only in April 2015 that money was received from the central government for the period 4 June to 24 July 2014. As a result, local caterers have to frequently purchase food on credit,

¹⁶ Transfers at the time of the study were around a third of their level in 2015.

which they can only do by looking beyond purchasing from local farmers.¹⁷ Funding constraints were also linked to the limited nutritional value of foodstuffs sometimes used.

Finally, although the GSFP was intended to target the most deprived districts and communities through a decentralized implementation strategy, a study by the World Bank in 2010 found that only around 21 percent of the disbursement was reaching the poor and only 13 percent of the share of outlay was reaching children in extremely poor households (MESW, 2012, p. 53).

Performance relating to coherence and coordination

There was limited evidence of programmatic linkages or layering of support between agriculture and social protection programmes. Hence there are few examples of how greater coherence or coordination impacts on programme performance and outcomes. It was noted by a key informant from the NDPC that currently there is in fact a need for greater analytical work on livelihoods to demonstrate the role and benefits of different complementary services as a means of informing policy and programme development. One such study that has taken place in northern Ghana investigated the performance of a “multifaceted graduation programme” which included the layering of a cash transfer along with a productive asset grant, training and other complementary services (Banerjee *et al.*, 2015). While the general findings around the importance of layering may be of relevance, the study involved considerably larger transfers than any of the existing social protection programmes in Ghana. There is therefore scope for further piloting and evaluation of layering approaches more in line with resources available.

A number of insights from FGDs at the community level emerge in terms of how performance is currently being held back by a lack of coordination across sectors. One such insight relates to the lack of sequencing with the LEAP. Specifically, it was noted by beneficiaries as well as a key informant at district level that one of the major problems at the time is that although cash transfers can help LEAP beneficiaries to provide a better chance for their children to attend and do well at school, once they complete their schooling they typically have no opportunities available to them. Either they are unable to carry on into secondary school because of the school fees or they have no employment opportunities open to them after secondary school.

From a programmatic perspective, this clearly represents a gap in the life cycle approach being proposed in the latest draft GNSPS. In practical terms it means that the investments that have been made in the household up until that point are constrained, even raising the question over how far inter-generational poverty will actually be achieved. However there are a number of opportunities for linking such households (who already show some greater promise than other very poor households not receiving transfers) with existing government programmes. For example, LEAP households containing youths could be linked with programmes such as the YIAP mentioned earlier. In the context of Ghana’s highly decentralized governance system, there is also scope at a district level for some discretion over the use of internally generated funds (from local taxation) to layer additional support to

¹⁷ Interview with key informant from the district school feeding secretariat.

beneficiary households on a needs basis. Ideally, responsibility for the creation of such linkages should be clearly allocated in order to ensure clarity and accountability.

A further issue relating to coordination which seemed to be holding back further improvements in the livelihoods of LEAP beneficiaries was that, although they had funds to cover immediate needs such as for food, medication, shelter or education, there appeared to be little left for investments that could help them sustain themselves on a more independent basis. Discussions with beneficiaries indicated that additional one-off seed funding for small enterprises such as snail farming, small livestock, fish farming or petty trading and capacity building in enterprise development would enable them to be in a more secure position and help cover expenses once the funds from the cash transfer had run out. It would also help them in coping with the hunger season experienced between March and August by which time households have sold their grains and heavy rain and wind can spoil their crops or make farming difficult. However, a clear message from the FGDs was that some beneficiaries are so old, frail or disabled that the most appropriate support for them is the regular receipt of cash transfers in order to maintain their basic needs. Such households are not able to engage in agriculture themselves, so additional livelihood support in this area was not deemed to be particularly appropriate. Any coordination should therefore effectively differentiate between different types of beneficiary household, even under the same programme.

On the issue of linking LEAP with complementary services, it is worth highlighting a finding that emerged from discussions at the community level on the issue of LEAP beneficiaries being eligible for free health insurance under the NHIS. While it has been reported that by 2012 90 percent of LEAP families were enrolled in the NHIS (MoGCSP, 2014b), in the community visited it appeared that they were still waiting for their cards and that rather than everyone receiving one, they were told that in the whole district they had just 50 places, and so only five LEAP beneficiaries would get a card. It was not possible to explore the reasons for this further, but it does indicate that in any linking of services, funding will need to be allocated for an effective monitoring system in order to check that services are actually being provided on the ground as planned.

The other main insight relating to how performance of programmes could be improved through increasing coordination with other programmes was in the GSFP, which was operational in the KEEA district. As noted above, there have been challenges across the country in terms of realizing the objective of boosting locally produced foodstuffs for a range of reasons. In KEEA, it was noted how this issue was partly being overcome through assistance from the MOFA, which used its relationship with farmers to help procure and sell 200 bags of maize to caterers. Although this appears to have been ad hoc it does suggest one possible way forward through which the programme could address the challenge that caterers face in linking with local farmers and consequently have a stronger impact on boosting local farmer incomes through the guaranteed market provided by the schools.

5. Conclusions

Having considered key policies and programmes and issues of coordination and performance, this section concludes by asking to what extent are Ghana's agricultural and social protection policies and programmes coherent? Answering this requires reflection on issues of conflict, complementarities, coordination and synergies. First, a broad overview is provided regarding the issue of coherence before addressing the question over what could be done to strengthen coherence.

5.1 How coherent are agriculture and social protection in Ghana?

Overall, there is a clear convergence of policy interests between the MOFA and the MGCSP in Ghana, especially around the issue of food and nutrition security and strengthening rural livelihoods. While the agricultural sector also has a clear interest in developing larger scale commercial agriculture, as a result of the latest review of the Ghana's agricultural policy, there is now a fairly substantial emphasis on targeting poor and vulnerable households through a range of specific commitments as proposed in the METASIP. The issue of livelihood empowerment is also an area which is set to become increasingly important for the MGCSP as it scales up its flagship LEAP programme. The latest draft GNSPS recognizes, as was also mentioned by a number of key informants, that addressing linkages to livelihood promotion will be central to ensuring that those who are able to can move beyond the LEAP programme.

The broad convergence of policy objectives are also reflected in a number of complementarities in agricultural and social protection programmes, with numerous agricultural programmes addressing the issue of livelihood promotion which forms a central part of the latest draft GNSPS. There are also clear examples of specific programmes which straddle the divide between agriculture and social protection and offer potential for synergies or can at least help achieve the policy objectives in both sectors. For example, the GSFP, if financing, procurement contract and production constraints were addressed, could offer substantial opportunities to provide a market for local farmers while focusing on the nutritional vulnerability of poor households with children of school age. The LIPW too, while not a key focus in this study, offers significant potential for synergies with MOFA programmes given that the programme targets poor but able-bodied beneficiaries who, through the income earned, are then able to invest in productive agricultural enterprise. For agricultural services to overlook such households would represent an obvious missed opportunity.

Despite this, however, there is limited evidence to date of any integrated approach to achieving these goals, with both ministries appearing to still largely operate in silos. From an institutional perspective, while a number of mechanisms exist which could be used to strengthen coordination between policies and programmes in both sectors, they are currently underused and ultimately lacking a clear drive and agenda aimed at bringing about greater coordination and coherence between the two sectors. Interviews indicated a lack of engagement at senior levels and that the main interactions currently taking place involve one (relatively small) department within the MOFA concerned with gender issues – WIAD. A number of reasons were given for the limited engagement, including: social protection still is a relatively new concept and an understanding of its breadth and focus limited; restricted

capacity within the MGCSP for outreach beyond its own operations; and disruptions caused by numerous ministerial changes within the MOFA.

Committees specifically designed to (in part) strengthen coordination between the two sectors as part of the LEAP programme (DLICs and CLICs) were also found to be weak and not functioning as intended in the areas visited, further limiting scope for coordination and synergies. The proposed linkages between LEAP beneficiaries and complementary agricultural services were not found to be in place and were constrained by lack of information sharing. In these areas coordination was further undermined by the absence of any major government agricultural programmes being carried out, resulting from resource constraints and potential conflicts or missed opportunities in terms of extension services being targeted to those who are already more able. In terms of resource constraints, as noted in the introduction, during the period of study Ghana was undergoing a budgetary crisis and in receipt of IMF support. In so far as these fiscal challenges continue to put pressure on core agricultural service delivery at the local level, they also raise important questions over the need for rationalization and whether there are programmes which could be scaled back in terms of coverage in order to ensure that more resources are available at district level to guarantee delivery of “essential” cost-effective interventions, particularly those targeted at vulnerable households.

In brief, there is considerable potential for strong complementarities between agriculture and social protection in Ghana, although there appears to be, as of yet, no obvious drive aimed at strengthening coherence and attending to weaknesses observed in the mechanisms that exist to deliver cross-sector coordination. This is perhaps understandable given the relatively recent emergence of the social protection agenda in the country. This raises the question of what can be done to strengthen coherence.

5.2 Achieving greater coherence

Achieving greater coherence between these sectors will require actions at the macro- (national), meso- (regional and district) and micro- (community) levels. First, a concerted political and technocratic push from the MGCSP demonstrating the inter-dependencies and scope for synergies with the MOFA could help to galvanize interest and support for a more focused institutional mechanism that brings together the two sectors at national policy and programme design levels. According to some key informants, it appears that there is a need for much higher-level political engagement in order to make strides in exploring and negotiating greater linkages with agriculture. An example was given of how the decision to commit to providing all LEAP beneficiaries with free health insurance under the NHIS was ultimately a proposal that received firm political backing. Similar initiatives linked to agriculture would benefit from careful research and analysis in order to set out an appropriate, well-evidenced and strong case before beginning a policy dialogue through appropriate channels. Given that the MGCSP remains a relatively new ministry with capacity constraints, technical and other support from donors could be useful in this regard.

Second, once the above is in place, greater awareness of the interdependencies could be used to provide clearer guidance and support downwards to the regional and district levels to incentivize stronger interdepartmental information sharing and collaboration. The district level in particular has a key role to play here, being at the vanguard of coordinating service

delivery. The planned Regional and District Social Protection Coordinating Committees could likely play this role, providing they are allocated sufficient resources and capacity training. The recent development of the Ghana National Household Registry will also have a crucial role to play here in facilitating information sharing of beneficiaries. However there will still need to be a concerted effort (underpinned by clear incentives and motivation) for intersector collaboration and joint working.

Third, it is ultimately at the community level where the actual needs of poor and vulnerable households must be identified and so a concerted effort is also required here. This point was echoed by the head of the LEAP Management Unit, who explained that with regard to complementary services through the MOFA, we need to look at the local level to understand how to implement them as the process cannot be top down; it must start from what people are already doing. When considering how to operationalize strengthened coordination at a local level, it is essential to recognize that both the MOFA and especially the MGCSP have a very limited presence on the ground. The front-line MGCSP staff ultimately operates at the district level as the ministry does not yet have the local capacity that the MOFA has. It will be therefore important to focus on strengthening community structures such as the CLICs (for LEAP) in order to provide the essential link between identification of local needs (e.g. for complementary services) and coordinated service provision from the district level.

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Appendix 1: List of key informants

Name	Position	Department, ministry or affiliation
National level		
Mary Opoku-Asiama	Director	Women in Agricultural Development (WIAD), Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA)
Pauline Addy	Head of Food Safety Unit	WIAD, MOFA
Kwamina Arkorful	Director of Livestock	Animal Production Directorate, MOFA
Josephine Ivy Quagrainie	Assistant Director	Policy Planning and Budget Directorate, MOFA
Doris Abena Yeboah	Head of Unit	M & E Unit, Fisheries Commission
Mawutor Ablo	Director of Social Protection	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP)
Dzigbordi Kofi Agbekporu	Head of LEAP Management Unit	Department of Social Welfare, MGCSP
Gabriel Owusu	Assistant Director (Coordinator of Farmer-Based Organizations and Private Sector Extension)	Directorate of Extension Services, Monitoring & Evaluation, MOFA
Mary Mpereh	Deputy Director	National Development Planning Commission
Kingsley Young Opare	Programme Officer	Ghana School Feeding Programme
Kwame Nuako	Technical Advisor	Ghana School Feeding Programme
Han Ulaş Demirag	Country Programme Manager/Representative	International Fund for Agricultural Development
Luigi Peter Ragno	Social Protection Specialist	UNICEF
Kathleen Beegle	Programme Leader (Social Protection)	World Bank
District level		
Mr A N Wireku	District Director of Agriculture	MOFA
Cecilia Arthur	District Social Welfare Officer	MGCSP
Joseph K Sam	Coordinator	District School Feeding Secretariat
Joyce Atumbu	District Agricultural Officer (Livestock)	MOFA
Community level		
Community chief		

Community LEAP Implementation Committee representative
Female beneficiaries of the LEAP (13); male beneficiaries of the LEAP (8)
Female non-beneficiaries of the LEAP (26); male non-beneficiaries of the LEAP (14)

Appendix 2: Investigative framework

Descriptive data		Normative interpretation	Data required/ data source
Understanding the policies and programmes for agriculture and social protection			
Background and history	<p>What are the main challenges in the rural areas of the country? What are the levels of poverty, how have they changed over the last 20 years, and what is known about the trends seen?</p> <p>What have been the main public strategies to promote agricultural and rural development and to reduce rural poverty?</p>	<p>How adequate and sufficient have public programmes been compared with the size of the challenge faced?</p> <p>What has been learned about agricultural development and social protection in the country in the last 20 or so years?</p>	<p>Rural poverty, food security and nutrition data/longitudinal/trends</p> <p>Annotated timeline of public strategies</p> <p>Literature/poverty data</p> <p>Development policy/strategy/plans statements</p> <p>Key informant interviews (national level)</p>
What is the strategy for agricultural development and social protection?	<p>For policies and programmes: what are their aims, intermediate outcomes and activities?</p> <p>[Set out the theory of change or narrative summary of the logical framework, together with the key assumptions that link up the levels.]</p>	<p>Is the theory of change coherent? Do the means seem adequate to realize the ends envisaged?</p> <p>Are assumptions made reasonable? Do they assume that other programmes are successful?</p> <p>Do they involve high levels of risk or uncertainty?</p>	<p>National poverty reduction strategies/development plans</p> <p>Logframes</p> <p>Key informant interviews (national level)</p>
What are the political and administrative conditions that apply to the policies and programmes?	<p>How much political support does the programme have? Are there groups opposed to the programme? To what extent are goals and the means to achieve them agreed?</p> <p>What is the implementing agency? How broad are its functions? What technical staff does it have? How decentralized is the agency?</p> <p>To what extent can leaders and staff at regional and district level vary programme activities to suit local circumstances?</p>	<p>Does the programme have political backing commensurate with its mission?</p> <p>Does the implementing agency have the capacity to deliver the activities planned?</p>	<p>Discourse/narratives on major programmes</p> <p>Programme implementation manuals</p> <p>Capacity needs assessment</p> <p>Perceptions survey data</p> <p>Political/election statements regarding programmes</p> <p>Newspaper articles</p> <p>Discussion fora</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p>

<p>What is the nature of the task set? <i>Simple, straightforward or complex and innovative?</i></p>	<p>What are the specific features of the programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who: clients, targeting? • Where: geographical area? • What: delivery of services/inputs/payments/ knowledge, etc? • How: which agency or agencies are involved? What active collaborations form part of the programme? 	<p>Does the programme deliver tried and tested interventions, or are there innovative and novel elements? How complex or simple is the programme? Can it be standardized, or does it require tailoring to local circumstances? How much scope do managers and field staff have to adapt the programme to local circumstances and to emerging insights? How is the programme monitored? Any scope for re-planning? [Are mistakes accepted?]</p>	<p>Coverage data, output (e.g. payments) data Organogram Monitoring and evaluation reports, including rosters and outputs. Programme implementation manuals Coverage maps Logframes Key informant interviews</p>
<p>What is the human and physical environment of the programme?</p>	<p>What key factors in the physical and human environment affect implementation and results? To what extent do programme managers have any influence over these factors? How does the programme deal with changes in the environment?</p>	<p>To what extent does the programme depend on elements in the environment not under control of the agency? How stable are key elements in the environment? What key risks arise from the environment? Do managers and field staff have sufficient scope to react to changes in the environment?</p>	<p>Key informant interviews Logframes (risks/assumptions), risk assessments, risk management documentation Programme monitoring</p>
Co-ordination			
<p>What co-ordination is seen within and between programmes?</p>	<p>What mechanisms are used to co-ordinate programmes?</p>	<p>How well do the forms of co-ordination work? Are they effective?</p>	<p>Key informant interviews</p>
	<p>Where does co-ordination occur? At central, regional, district or village level?</p>		<p>Key informant interviews (at all levels), FGDs</p>
	<p>How much co-ordination takes place? Through sharing of goals, exchange of information, joint planning, or close collaboration among field staff?</p>		<p>Key informant interviews</p>
	<p>What incentives to co-ordinate do staff of different agencies have at different levels?</p>	<p>How much scope do district and field staff have to adjust their operations without referring back to headquarters?</p>	<p>Key informant interviews (at all levels)</p>
		<p>Do the benefits of coordination outweigh the costs? Or vice versa? Are there procedures that produce little, yet cost time and money?</p>	<p>Key informant interviews (at all levels)</p>

		Are there cost-effective ways in the programmes that could be better co-ordinated?	
Coherence across programmes			
What ways are the programmes coherent?	Do the programmes share a similar theory of change or set of beliefs about to promote development? Do they share goals?	Are there potential synergies that are not being achieved? If there are conflicts, how might programmes change to eliminate them?	Key informant interviews (at all levels)
	Do the activities carried out complement or conflict with one another? Or are they largely independent of each other?		Key informant interviews (at all levels) FGDs
	Do the outcomes of one programme affect the other, either positively in creating synergies, or negatively by diminishing the results of the other programme? Or are the outcomes largely independent of one another?		Key informant interviews (at all levels) FGDs
Performance			
	Does the programme deliver the outputs expected in the field? Are clients receiving the expected services, benefits, etc. from the programme? What problems have arisen in implementation?	What accounts for any problems, delays, setbacks?	Key informant interviews (at all levels) FGDs
	Are programme outputs contributing to programme goals?	If not, then why?	Key informant interviews Programme and impact evaluations
		What does the programme consider successful?	FGDs
	What aspects of performance result from co-ordination with other programmes?	Could performance be improved through more co-ordination with other programmes?	Key informant interviews FGDs

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FAO, together with its partners, is generating evidence on the impacts of coordinated agricultural and social protection interventions and is using this to provide related policy, programming and capacity development support to governments and other actors.



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