

# Policy issues for Improving Monitoring and Evaluation of Agricultural Extension Programmes in Nigeria: A Critical Review

By

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Abstract Agriculture plays a pivotal role in Nigeria's economy, providing livelihoods for the majority of its population. Agricultural extension programs are essential for disseminating knowledge, technology, and best practices to farmers, thereby enhancing productivity and food security. However, the effectiveness of these programs depends on robust monitoring and evaluation (M & E) mechanisms. This study discusses the policy issues surrounding the enhancement of M & E in agricultural extension programs within the Nigerian context. It consists of a comprehensive review of the existing policies and frameworks governing agricultural extension programs in Nigeria. Furthermore, it highlights the critical need for policy reforms to address these issues and improve the overall efficiency and impact of agricultural extension services. The study also explores international best practices in M & E for agricultural extension programs, drawing on experiences from other countries. By examining successful case studies and approaches, it identifies potential strategies that Nigeria can adopt to strengthen its M&E mechanisms. In conclusion, this abstract emphasizes the importance of policy interventions in advancing the M & E of agricultural extension programs in Nigeria. It underscores the potential benefits, including increased agricultural productivity, reduced food insecurity, and improved livelihoods for rural communities. By addressing the policy issues discussed herein, Nigeria can take significant steps toward achieving its agricultural development goals and fostering sustainable economic growth.

**Keywords:** Monitoring, evaluation, policy, extension, programs

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## INTRODUCTION

Monitoring and evaluation (M & E) is a critical process used in various sectors, including development

projects, government programs, business initiatives, and nonprofit organizations. M&E involves the systematic

collection, analysis, and interpretation of data to assess the performance, progress, and outcomes of a project or program. It is an essential tool for decision-making, accountability, learning, and continuous improvement (Kabeyi, 2019). Agricultural extension is a critical component of agricultural development and support systems. It encompasses a wide range of activities and services designed to disseminate knowledge, technology, and information to farmers, rural communities, and other stakeholders in the agricultural sector (Maulu, Hasimuna, Mutale, Mphande and Siankwilimba, 2021). The primary goal of agricultural extension is to improve agricultural productivity, enhance sustainability, and promote rural development (Koyenikan, 2008).

Agricultural extension is a dynamic field that evolves to address the changing needs and challenges of the agricultural sector. It plays a pivotal role in improving food security, reducing poverty, and fostering sustainable agricultural practices in both developing and developed countries (Sennuga *et al.* 2023a). Effective monitoring and evaluation are essential for agricultural extension programs to demonstrate their impact, learn from experiences, and continuously improve their operations and outcomes. It is a dynamic process that evolves alongside the project or program it assesses (Matthew and Olatunji, 2016; Sennuga *et al.* 2023b).

## AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION PROGRAMS

Agricultural extension programs in Nigeria are crucial for promoting modern farming techniques, improving agricultural productivity, and enhancing the livelihoods of rural farmers (Maulu *et al.*, 2021). These programs aim to bridge the gap between research institutions and farmers by disseminating agricultural information, technology, and best practices to farmers in the field. The Nigerian government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international agencies have been involved in implementing various agricultural extension programs in the country. Agricultural extension services play a pivotal role in the agricultural sector by offering farmers technical guidance and advice while also providing essential resources and services to support their agricultural endeavors (Muyanga and Jayne, 2006). These services serve as a vital bridge between agricultural research and practical farming, facilitating the dissemination of valuable information and innovative ideas to farmers. Agricultural extension programs encompass a wide range of areas, including the promotion of enhanced crop varieties, improved livestock management, effective water resource management, and the control of weeds, pests, and plant diseases (Ajah *et al.* 2023). In certain cases, agricultural extension efforts may extend to the establishment and strengthening of local farmers' groups and organizations, enabling them to harness the benefits of these extension programs. In essence, agricultural extension services supply farmers

with the indispensable elements they need to enhance their agricultural productivity (Bello, Baiyegunhi and Danso-Abbeam, 2021).

## Some Key Aspects of Agricultural Extension Programs in Nigeria:

**Government Initiatives:** The Nigerian government, through the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and state agricultural agencies, has initiated several extension programs to improve the lives of farmers, rural dwellers and improving food security (Camillone, Duiker, Bruns, Onyibe and Omotayo, 2020). These programs often involve the recruitment and training of extension workers who work directly with farmers to provide advice and training on improved farming methods, pest and disease management, and crop diversification. Examples of these initiatives include the National Accelerated Food Production Project which was initiated in 1972, the River Basin Development Authority which was instituted in 1973, Agricultural Development Project introduced in 1975, Operation Feed the Nation (1976), Green Revolution Programme (1980), Accelerated Development Area Project (ADAP, 1982), Multi-state Agricultural Development Project (1986), Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Scheme (1987), National Fadama Development Project (1992), National Special Programme for Food Security (2003).

These programs were established with a variety of objectives in mind, each aimed at addressing specific challenges and needs within the agricultural sector (Koyenikan, 2008; Adeyemi *et al.* 2023). Some of the objectives include:

- i. **Provision of Access Roads:** Creating access roads for farmers and rural residents to improve transportation and connectivity.
- ii. **Revitalization of Extension Services:** Enhancing agricultural extension services through integrated supply of farm inputs and infrastructure support.
- iii. **Access to Water:** Ensuring access to water resources for agricultural purposes, such as irrigation.
- iv. **Increasing Productivity and Income:** Assisting farmers in realizing their full potential to boost agricultural output, productivity, and income on a sustainable basis.

While these programs have achieved some degree of success, they also face certain limitations for various reasons. These limitations can stem from factors such as resource constraints, logistical challenges, or unforeseen obstacles. Despite their successes, these programs may require continuous adaptation and improvement to address their limitations effectively and continue contributing to the agricultural sector's growth and development (Matthew and Olatunji, 2016).

**Training and Capacity Building:** Extension agents are trained to work with local farmers, helping them adopt modern and sustainable agricultural practices (Barman,

2013). Training and capacity building are essential processes in various fields and industries, including business, education, healthcare, government, and nonprofit organizations. These processes aim to enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals or groups to achieve specific goals or perform their roles effectively. Training includes topics such as crop cultivation, livestock management, soil health, and post-harvest handling.

The primary goal of training and capacity building is to enhance the participants' capabilities, so they can apply what they have learned in their work or daily lives. It is also focused on empowering individuals, organizations, or communities to become self-reliant and capable of addressing their own needs and challenges effectively (Norton and Alwang, 2020). Training and capacity building can take various forms, including workshops, seminars, on-the-job training, e-learning modules, and classroom instruction. It may also extend to activities such as strategic planning, resource mobilization, leadership development, and building networks and partnerships. Training can lead to increased productivity, improved job satisfaction, and better performance in the workplace (Idu et al., 2023). They also contribute to the long-term sustainability of organizations and communities, enabling them to adapt to changing circumstances and achieve their missions. Training and capacity building are essential processes for personal and organizational development. They play a crucial role in improving skills, knowledge, and competencies, ultimately leading to better performance, increased resilience, and the ability to address complex challenges effectively (Olaoye, Ojebiyi, Anakwe and Akinniyi, 2023).

The key principles and considerations for training and capacity building are:

- **Needs Assessment:** Before designing any training or capacity-building program, it's crucial to conduct a thorough needs assessment to identify specific gaps and areas that require improvement.
- **Customization:** Tailor training and capacity-building programs to the unique needs, goals, and circumstances of the target audience or organization.
- **Sustainability:** Ensure that the skills and knowledge acquired during training or capacity building are sustainable over the long term.
- **Participation and Inclusivity:** Involve stakeholders and participants in the planning and decision-making processes to promote ownership and inclusivity.
- **Resource Allocation:** Adequately allocate resources, including funding, time, and personnel, to support training and capacity-building initiatives.
- **Feedback and Continuous Improvement:** Encourage feedback from participants and use it to improve the quality and relevance of training and capacity-building programs.
- **Documentation:** Maintain records and documentation of training and capacity-building activities to track progress and demonstrate impact.

**Farm Visits:** Extension agents regularly visit farms to assess the needs of farmers, provide guidance, and offer practical solutions to agricultural challenges faced by farmers (Maulu et al., 2021). Extension farm visits typically refer to visits organized or facilitated by agricultural extension services. Agricultural extension services are government or university-based organizations that provide information, resources, and support to farmers and the agricultural community (Baloch and Thapa, 2019). These visits are often designed to educate farmers, agricultural professionals, and the public about various aspects of farming and agricultural practices. For effective farm visits, the following must be put into consideration (Barnabas et al. 2023).

- **Purpose:** Extension farm visits aim to promote agricultural knowledge and best practices. They may focus on specific topics such as crop management, pest control, livestock care, sustainable agriculture, or farm business management.
  - **Target Audience:** These visits can cater to a wide range of audiences, including farmers, agricultural students, researchers, policymakers, and the general public. The content and format of the visit may vary based on the intended audience.
  - **Content:** Extension farm visits often include guided tours of farms, demonstrations of farming techniques, workshops, seminars, and hands-on activities. The content is designed to provide practical information and solutions to common agricultural challenges.
  - **Collaboration:** Agricultural extension services often collaborate with local farmers, agricultural organizations, universities, and other stakeholders to organize these visits. This collaborative approach helps ensure that the information shared is relevant and up-to-date.
  - **Accessibility:** Extension farm visits may be free or have a nominal fee, depending on the organization and the specific event. It's essential to check with the organizing entity for details on cost, scheduling, and registration.
  - **Seasonality:** Some extension farm visits may be tied to specific seasons or agricultural events. For example, there might be visits related to planting and harvesting seasons or special events like agricultural fairs.
  - **Learning Opportunities:** These visits can be excellent opportunities to learn about the latest agricultural technologies, research findings, and sustainable farming practices directly from experts and experienced farmers.
- Demonstration Farms:** Some extension programs establish demonstration farms to showcase best practices and innovative technologies to farmers. Farmers can learn by observing and participating in these activities. A demonstration farm, also known as a demo farm or model farm, is an agricultural facility or piece of land specifically designed and managed to showcase and

educate farmers, agricultural practitioners, and the public about modern and sustainable farming techniques, technologies, and practices (Danso-Abbeam, Baiyegunhi and Ojo, 2020). These farms serve as living examples of innovative and efficient agricultural methods and aim to disseminate knowledge and best practices to improve crop yields, livestock production, and overall farm management (Ebukiba *et al.*, 2023).

Demonstration farms play a crucial role in disseminating knowledge and promoting sustainable and innovative agricultural practices. They help bridge the gap between research institutions and farmers by providing practical examples and fostering a culture of learning and adaptation in agriculture (Lacoste *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, they contribute to food security, rural development, and environmental sustainability in many regions.

**Information Dissemination:** Information is disseminated through various means, including workshops, field days, radio programs, and mobile technology. The use of mobile phones has become increasingly popular for reaching remote and underserved areas (Haruna *et al.* 2023). Information dissemination is a core function of agricultural extension services, as it plays a crucial role in conveying knowledge, innovations, and best practices to farmers and stakeholders in the agricultural sector. Effective information dissemination is essential for improving agricultural productivity, sustainability, and rural development (Takahashi, Muraoka and Otsuka, 2020).

Effective information dissemination in agricultural extension is a dynamic process that requires continuous assessment, adaptation, and innovation. By utilizing a variety of communication channels, engaging with the target audience, and delivering relevant and actionable information, extension services can empower farmers and contribute to the sustainable development of agriculture and rural communities (Tahakashi *et al.*, 2020).

**Technology Transfer:** Extension programs facilitate the transfer of new agricultural technologies, such as improved seeds, fertilizers, and machinery, to farmers. They also promote the adoption of sustainable farming practices, such as conservation agriculture and organic farming (Sennuga *et al.* 2020). Technology transfer refers to the process of sharing and disseminating knowledge, innovations, technologies, and intellectual property (IP) from one entity, such as a research institution, company, or government organization, to another entity, typically with the goal of applying the technology for practical use or commercialization. Technology transfer can occur within the same organization or between different organizations, often involving universities, research institutions, businesses, and government agencies (Olagunju, Hassan, Samad & Kasin, 2019).

Technology transfer plays a crucial role in innovation, agricultural and rural development, and the general advancement of society by ensuring that valuable knowledge and technology are effectively utilized and put

to practical use. It bridges the gap between research and real-world applications, benefiting both the originators and adopters of technology (Olagunju *et al.*, 2019).

**Market Linkages:** Some extension programs help farmers access markets by providing information on market prices, connecting them to buyers, and promoting value addition and agribusiness opportunities. Market linkage extension, also known as market-oriented extension, is a specialized approach to agricultural extension services that focuses on helping farmers and rural producers connect more effectively with markets. It aims to improve farmers' access to markets, enhance their understanding of market dynamics, and enable them to produce and sell agricultural products that meet market requirements and demand (Norton & Alwang, 2020). Market linkage extension helps smallholder farmers and rural producers maximize their income, reduce market-related risks, and contribute to the economic development of their communities. By bridging the gap between farmers and markets, this approach supports agricultural transformation, poverty reduction, and food security.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF EXTENSION PROGRAMS

Continuous monitoring and evaluation of extension programs are essential to assess their impact and make necessary adjustments for improvement. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are critical components of extension programs, which are designed to disseminate knowledge, information, and resources to individuals or communities to enhance their skills, practices, and well-being. Effective M&E processes help extension programs assess their impact, make necessary improvements, and ensure that resources are being used efficiently (Matthew & Olatunji, 2016). Here are key steps and considerations for monitoring and evaluating extension programs:

### **Monitoring:**

**Establish Clear Objectives:** Begin by setting clear, measurable, and achievable objectives for your extension program. These objectives should outline what you aim to achieve and provide a basis for monitoring progress.

**Define Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** Identify specific indicators that will help measure the program's success. KPIs could include the number of participants, changes in behavior or practices, knowledge gained, or other relevant metrics.

**Data Collection:** Collect data regularly to track progress. This data may include participant feedback, attendance records, surveys, and observations.

**Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish mechanisms for participants to provide feedback. This can help identify issues or improvements needed in real time.

**Data Analysis:** Analyze the data collected to assess whether the program is meeting its objectives. Compare actual performance against expected results.

**Timely Reporting:** Generate periodic reports summarizing the program's progress and share them with stakeholders, including program funders, participants, and decision-makers.

**Evaluation:**

**Formative Evaluation:** Conduct a formative evaluation before the program begins to assess the needs, interests, and existing knowledge of the target audience. This helps in program design.

**Summative Evaluation:** After the program is completed or at specific intervals, conduct a summative evaluation to assess the overall impact and outcomes of the program. Use KPIs and other data to measure success.

**Use Control Groups:** If possible, use control groups or comparison groups to assess the program's impact by comparing participants to non-participants.

**Surveys and Interviews:** Administer surveys and conduct interviews or focus groups with participants to gather qualitative data on changes in knowledge, attitudes, and practices.

**Cost-Benefit Analysis:** Evaluate the cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit ratio of the program. Determine if the resources invested are justified by the results achieved.

**Stakeholder Feedback:** Seek feedback from various stakeholders, including program participants, staff, and partners, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the program's strengths and weaknesses.

**Adaptation and Improvement:** Based on the evaluation findings, make necessary adjustments to the program design, content, or delivery methods to improve its effectiveness.

**Reporting and Dissemination:** Share the evaluation findings and insights with stakeholders to promote transparency and accountability.

**Learning and Knowledge Sharing:** Use the evaluation process as an opportunity for learning and knowledge sharing within the organization. Document lessons learned and best practices for future programs.

**Long-Term Impact:** Consider the long-term impact of the program, such as sustained behavior change and community development, in addition to immediate outcomes.

Effective monitoring and evaluation of extension programs help ensure that resources are used efficiently and that the program's objectives are met. It also provides valuable insights for continuous improvement and helps demonstrate the program's impact to funders and other stakeholders (Norton & Alwang, 2020).

## IMPROVING MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF EXTENSION PROGRAMS

Improving the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of extension programs is essential for ensuring their

effectiveness, accountability, and impact (Masvaure & Fish, 2022). Here are some strategies and best practices to enhance the M&E processes for extension programs:

- **Clear Program Objectives and Logic Model:** Start by clearly defining the program's objectives and outcomes. Develop a logic model that outlines the program's inputs, activities, outputs, and expected short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes.

- **Engage Stakeholders:** Involve all relevant stakeholders, including program staff, participants, community members, and funders, in the M&E process. Their input can help identify key indicators and goals.

- **Use SMART Indicators:** Ensure that the selected indicators are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART). This makes it easier to track progress and assess impact.

- **Baseline Data:** Collect baseline data before the program begins to establish a starting point for measuring change.

- **Real-Time Data Collection:** Implement real-time data collection methods, such as mobile surveys or digital forms, to capture data more efficiently and accurately.

- **Qualitative and Quantitative Data:** Utilize a combination of quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (narrative) data to gain a comprehensive understanding of program impact and participant experiences.

- **Regular Data Collection and Reporting:** Establish a regular schedule for data collection and reporting, ensuring that data is collected consistently throughout the program's duration.

- **Data Quality Assurance:** Implement quality control measures to ensure data accuracy, consistency, and completeness. Train data collectors and conduct periodic data audits.

- **Utilization of Technology:** Leverage technology, such as data management software and visualization tools, to streamline data collection, analysis, and reporting processes.

- **Participatory M&E:** Engage program participants in the M&E process. Encourage them to provide feedback and share their insights on program effectiveness.

- **Regular Reviews and Adaptations:** Conduct regular reviews of M&E data to assess progress and identify areas for improvement. Use this information to adapt program strategies as needed.

- **Capacity Building:** Train program staff in M&E techniques and principles to enhance their data collection and analysis skills.

- **Cost-Effective M&E:** Balance the cost of M&E activities with the program's budget. Prioritize key data points that provide valuable insights.

- **Impact Assessment:** Go beyond measuring outputs and assess the program's impact on participants and communities. Use control groups or comparison data when possible.

- **Data Visualization and Reporting:** Present

M&E findings in visually compelling formats to make them more accessible and understandable for stakeholders.

- **Learning Culture:** Foster a culture of learning within the organization, where M&E findings are used for continuous improvement rather than just reporting.

- **Transparency and Accountability:** Share M&E results with all stakeholders, including donors, participants, and the public, to ensure transparency and accountability.

- **External Evaluation:** Consider conducting external evaluations by independent evaluators to provide an unbiased assessment of the program's impact.

- **Iterative Improvement:** Use M&E findings to make iterative improvements to the program over time, enhancing its effectiveness and sustainability.

By implementing these strategies and emphasizing a culture of continuous improvement, extension programs can enhance their M&E processes and better measure their impact on participants and communities. This, in turn, helps ensure that resources are used effectively and that program goals are achieved (Akoon, 2023).

## **POLICY ISSUES FOR IMPROVING MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION PROGRAMS**

Improving monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of agricultural extension programs in Nigeria is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness and impact of these programs. Nigeria's agriculture sector plays a significant role in the country's economy, and well-structured M&E policies can help ensure that extension services reach their intended beneficiaries and contribute to agricultural development. To enhance the monitoring and evaluation of agricultural programs in Nigeria, several policy considerations need to be addressed. These include determining what aspects should undergo monitoring or evaluation, establishing the timing for these activities, identifying responsible parties for monitoring and evaluation, specifying the preferred methodology for each project, and outlining the essential tools for conducting effective monitoring and evaluation within agricultural programs and policies (Matthew & Olatunji, 2016). Some policy issues to consider include:

### **What Should Be Subject to Monitoring or Evaluation?**

Agricultural programs can be assessed concerning their appropriateness (suitability and quality), achievement (degree of meeting primary objectives), and efficiency. Whether evaluating the entire program or specific segments, these parameters can be used as the basis. Evaluators should also scrutinize both processes and outcomes (results) (Kerzner, 2022). For example, a program designed to enhance farmer productivity should primarily focus on productivity, measured according to

predetermined policy indicators to ensure consistency. Programs should be subject to monitoring and evaluation to assess if it has achieved its predefined objectives.

### **When Should Monitoring and Evaluation Be Carried Out?**

Monitoring and evaluation should be seamlessly integrated into every facet of agricultural programs. It is crucial to cultivate a practice of conducting continuous monitoring and periodic evaluations of the highest possible quality for all processes and products involved in different program segments. Allocating resources and scheduling for monitoring and evaluation should be an integral part of the program planning process. Systematic evaluation often demands more resources than usual, so it should align with available resources and be justifiable based on its potential impact. Regrettably, many agricultural programs in Nigeria neglect this vital aspect, with some only conducting monitoring activities sporadically. Timely and proper monitoring and evaluation, when carried out, significantly contribute to program improvement (Kissi, Agyekum, Baiden, Tannor, Asamoah & Andam, 2019).

### **Who Should Be Responsible for Monitoring and Evaluation?**

Typically, the individuals responsible for leading program planning and implementation should also oversee monitoring and evaluation efforts. Thus, agricultural extension administrators and their staff should assess their own programs, as this process provides valuable learning experiences, enhances their program knowledge, accumulates useful evidence for program implementation, and supports professional growth.

Responsibility for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in extension programs should be distributed among various stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive and effective M&E process. Different individuals and groups play distinct roles in the M&E system. It's important to establish clear roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder in the M&E plan. This includes defining who collects, analyzes, and reports data, as well as who makes decisions based on the findings (Bbosa, Edaku & Kiyingi, 2023). Collaboration and communication among stakeholders are crucial for a successful M&E system, as it helps ensure that data is collected consistently, analyzed effectively, and used for program improvement and decision-making. These include:

- **Program Coordinators:** who are responsible for planning, coordinating, and implementing the M&E system. They ensure that M&E activities align with the program's objectives and manage resources and staff for M&E tasks.

- M&E Specialists/Officers: these are professionals with expertise in monitoring and evaluation who design the M&E framework, develop data collection tools, train staff, and oversee data collection and analysis. They ensure the quality and integrity of M&E data.
- Program Implementers: they are directly involved in delivering program activities, such as extension agents, trainers, or field staff. They collect data related to program activities, outputs, and participants.
- Data Collectors: they are responsible for collecting primary data, including conducting surveys, interviews, or focus group discussions. They ensure data is collected accurately and timely.
- Participants/Beneficiaries: Participants play a role by providing feedback, participating in surveys or assessments, and sharing their experiences and insights. Their input is valuable for assessing program impact.
- Stakeholders: External stakeholders, including donors, government agencies, and community leaders, may have a role in overseeing and reviewing M&E activities. They may also provide resources or guidance for M&E.
- External Evaluators: independent evaluators or evaluation firms may be hired to conduct external evaluations at specific intervals. They provide an unbiased assessment of program impact.

### Tools for Monitoring and Evaluation

The choice of tools for monitoring and evaluation is pivotal in policy programs. In Nigerian agricultural programs, monitoring and evaluation should rely on straightforward and easily measurable indicators capable of describing or quantifying changes (both in processes and progress) across various activities or components, spanning different locations and timeframes (Kabeyi, 2019).

They should provide useful relevant information about the performance of the projects and/or programmes in achieving the intended objective. Indicators used in most of these agricultural projects and/or programmes should include both qualitative and quantitative aspects, reflecting achievements of physical and financial targets and improvement in the quality of services delivered by the project interventions. The relevant information for estimating the values of indicators should be collected through specifically designed format and code sheets by qualified and well-trained field workers (Bbosa *et al.*, 2023).

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools are essential for collecting, analyzing, and managing data related to the performance and impact of programs, projects, and initiatives. The choice of tools depends on the specific objectives, scope, and complexity of the M&E effort.

Selecting the appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools depends on the specific objectives,

context, available resources, and capacity of the M&E team. Combining multiple tools can provide a more comprehensive view of program performance and impact.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, addressing policy issues for improving the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of agricultural extension programs in Nigeria is crucial for the country's agricultural development and food security. The effectiveness of extension services relies heavily on a well-structured monitoring and evaluation framework that can provide timely feedback, facilitate data-driven decision-making, and ensure accountability.

While progress has been made in recent years, challenges still exist, including inadequate funding, limited technical capacity, and a lack of coordination among stakeholders. Therefore, it is imperative that policymakers and relevant authorities take proactive steps to address these issues and strengthen the M&E system for agricultural extension programs. By prioritizing M&E capacity building, allocating sufficient resources, and fostering collaboration among government agencies, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, and other partners, Nigeria can enhance the impact of its agricultural extension efforts. Additionally, the integration of modern technologies, such as digital data collection and remote sensing, can improve data accuracy and accessibility, leading to more informed policy decisions. In light of the pivotal role agriculture plays in Nigeria's economy and the livelihoods of its citizens, a robust M&E system is not just a luxury but a necessity. The successful implementation of policies aimed at improving monitoring and evaluation in agricultural extension programs will contribute to increased agricultural productivity, improved rural livelihoods, and ultimately, food security for the nation. Therefore, policymakers must commit to these reforms, ensuring that they are not only enacted but also effectively implemented to bring about the desired positive changes in Nigeria's agricultural landscape.

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