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Integrated Growth and Development Plan: Responsibility of roleplayers

Neels Ferreira

The vision of the IGDP is “An equitable productive, competitive, profitable and sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector”. This vision is supported by a mission that states that the vision will be achieved through developing and sustaining a sector that contributes towards economic growth, job creation, rural development, sustainable use of natural resources, maintenance of biodiversity, sustainable livelihoods and food security.

Within this vision and mission one immediately realise that certain roleplayers will be solely responsible for certain components of the vision but in most cases there will be shared responsibility. At this stage it is important to note that organized agriculture share the broad vision and mission of the IGDP, as it is essentially the same as that contained in previous strategic plan for the agricultural sector – the latter document of which Agri SA was also a signatory.

Various goals and objectives are defined in the IGDP, such as those related to research and development, access to markets increased productivity, etc. Although, in most cases, the responsibility to ensure the success of the IGDP depends on shared responsibility by all stakeholders, it is important to note that one must determine leading role-players to take responsibility for certain goals and objectives. A few will be highlighted:

- Support to new and existing producers and access to markets:

DAFF must take responsibility to support producers on all levels. The current situation is that commercial agriculture does not receive adequate support from government, while we must compete on an unlevel playing field in the world market. It is also critical to have access to markets, both locally and internationally. In the case of international markets government must ensure that relevant sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures be in place to ensure that the country complies with international standards. The Rift Valley Fever issue is a good example.

- Job creation:

This goal will be a shared responsibility between government and the sector. The sector needs an enabling environment in which it can operate in order to create jobs. In this case government must create such an enabling environment by not restricting the sector with draconic legislation and administrative burdens.

- Food security:

Given the enabling environment just spoken about, the sector can be responsible for food security on a national level. However, the state of food security will depend on the profitability of the sector and any negative impact as such, can risk food security.

- Increased productivity, improved profitability and competitiveness:

This can be attained by the sector through improved infrastructure, services and water supply, as well as appropriate research and development (R&D) and incentives to reduce input costs. Although a large portion of R&D is being done by the private sector, such as input suppliers, Government still remains an important role player especially where research takes on a public good character: i.e. aimed at the agricultural sector or even subsectors. Given public and private R&D the sector will then be responsible to increase productivity. Incentives to reduce input costs will result in improved productivity.

- Improve natural resource management

The sector can and will improve natural resource management, since it is one of the scarce resources, if the environment (meaning the institutional environment) is of such a nature to assist the sector to operate in an efficient and effective way. In this case the regulatory framework and enforcement must be complete by government to assist the sector.

It is recognised that a growth and development plan of such a nature can't be implemented by one stakeholder in isolation. It is therefore crucial that there should be better coordination between all government departments implied in the plan and the private sector to ensure implementation of the plan in order to improve agriculture in South Africa.

The IGDP and the Strategic Plan for the South African Agricultural sector differs in one significant area viz. governance is a fully hedged pillar of the IGDP. The document contains a monitoring and evaluation framework based on the government-wide monitoring and evaluation system. A functional, integrated M&E system is important for the Sector, not only for the purpose of providing a framework for monitoring, planning, budgeting and evaluation activities, but also for the possibility of establishing a joint M&E committee, which allows for the participation of other key sectors and stakeholders. It is therefore very encouraging to notice that it is recognised by government to include all stakeholders within the sector in the design and implementation of the integrated monitoring and evaluation system and the subsequent performance reviews.

It is important to note that to establish an effective performance management system it is required to develop an understanding and agreement among all stakeholders within the sector as to what needs to be achieved and how important performance management decisions will be made. Therefore, where appropriate, all stakeholders within the sector will have to be included in the design and implementation of the integrated M&E system and subsequent performance reviews.

A good, integrated M&E system within the sector must be able to generate timely reports on progress made towards achieving the government's outcomes, provide alarm bells where progress are stagnating and to provide management within the sector with adequate information to help keep the interventions identified running as smoothly as possible.

Furthermore it will be critical to conduct financial and performance monitoring to determine sector efficiencies, the use of resources for intended purposes and the achievements of the outcomes or national goals.

In developing performance indicators reporting templates, data collection mechanisms and schedules will need to be developed to ensure that the participants within the sector have a mechanism for monitoring participant specific performance indicators. This will ensure that lead institutions responsible for a performance indicator, will develop specific reports at specific intervals to assist in the tracking of progress of activities towards delivery.

Annual programme reviews will have to focus on how the available inputs have been used and what outputs and short term outcomes have been produced. These reviews should also focus on the challenges, role players and interactions between various role players and lead institutions. With regards to the monitoring and evaluation responsibilities a number of stakeholders within the sector will have to play a key role in ensuring that the monitoring, reporting and programme evaluation are competently undertaken within the sector. Roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders within the sector will have to be identified.

Agri SA and its affiliates will most certainly participate in this structures and processes – after all the survival of agriculture and rural communities are at stake.

Thank you