

The Joint Sector Review process in Uganda¹: the good, the bad and the ugly

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Abstract

Uganda has taken a Joint Sector Review (JSR) approach to its health, water & environment, justice, law & order, and agricultural sectors, among others. This paper compares and contrasts the JSRs across the different sectors, based on previous analyses available in the literature, key informants, and personal observation of these JSR processes. This comparison illuminates success and best practices as well as poor practices and lessons learned. The paper concludes with implications for best practices and suggested improvements in future Joint Agricultural Sector Reviews at the country level in Uganda, but with implications for the rest of the continent.

1. Introduction

Annual reviews of the progress being made by many of Uganda's economic sectors have been started over the past decade, encouraged by a national development policy that promotes this practice. They are seen as a means of monitoring progress made by the sectors and of setting targets for their development for the coming year. Reviews of the agricultural sector have been held for the past seven years and this paper seeks to provide a review of their format and impact, as well as providing some comparison with the experiences of those held for other sectors. Examples of good practice are highlighted in the hope that they will be adopted, thus increasing the overall effectiveness of the annual review process. This, in turn, will contribute to the improved performance of agriculture which is and will for the foreseeable future continue to be, a key sector of the country's economy.

2. Background

2.1 What is a Joint Sector Review?

A comprehensive definition of joint sector reviews (JSRs) is provided in the 2015 Agriculture Performance Review Report (Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, 2015[a]): *"JSRs are a mutual accountability tool by the Africa Union in the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). They provide a forum for joint assessment by all stakeholders of sector performance and joint agreement on priority interventions to improve performance"*. The summary report of the 2013 Joint Review (MAAIF, 2013[c]) deepens the definition by adding that the Review is a, *"...multi-stakeholder forum for performance assessment, budget and policy guidance supported by a sector performance report with a pre-determined theme originating from policy issues. It makes recommendations for the sector to undertake in the next financial year whose decisions are subject to endorsement by a relevant meeting"*. The Reviews are also an important mechanism for promoting broader awareness of the work of the different actors in the sector, of the issues impacting on their work and on their responses to them.

2.1 Government and international policy pronouncements on JSRs

Annual reviews are mentioned in the first National Development Plan, NDP (Republic of Uganda, 2010). The Plan states, to be based on the findings contained in the annual sector performance report and, it notes, accountability would be promoted through the participation of the private sector, civil

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society organizations (CSOs) and “citizenry”³. Emphasis is placed on the need for participants also to include Ministries, Department and Agencies, MDAs (including the National Planning Authority (NPA) which was, it stated, to take a greater role) and Development Partners.

The country’s Second National Development Plan (NDP II) covering the five-year period from 2015/16 (Republic of Uganda, 2015) obliges all sectors to hold a comprehensive joint sector review each year to assess the performance of the sector in relation to the Plan’s macro and sectoral targets, and to identify challenges and solutions. They were, it was stressed, to be based on annual performance reports. It refers to these joint annual reviews (JARs) of the different sectors, as forming a key component of its implementation framework – as being part of the process of “*facilitating tracking of planned results*”, proposing that they would be, “*...redefined to focus on...performance reporting on... sectoral results*”, while their independence would be enhanced through the use of “*...independent assessors and increased civil society participation*”. The Reviews are, it continues, to be “*...serviced by the Sector Working Group Secretariats*”, with “*a significant role*” being played by the NPA, while participants were to include, “*Ministries, Departments and Agencies..., Development Partners, the private sector, faith-based organisations, cultural institutions, and civil society organizations operating in the sector*”. Researchers and Members of Parliament are also identified in the Plan as being “*Other Key Actors*”⁴.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry & Fisheries’ (MAAIF) 2010/11-2014/15 Development Strategy and Investment Plan, DSIP, (MAAIF, 2010) notes that reviews of the agricultural sector are to be held each year⁵, with a key role being played by the Agriculture Sector Working Group to, “*...Provide information for Joint GoU-Donor Reviews*”. The intended focus of the proposed, “*annual/bi-annual sector review processes*” is clear, namely: “*...to ensure effective monitoring of DSIP implementation*”.

The important role of the Joint Agricultural Sector Annual Review (JASAR) process is re-emphasized in the Ministry’s Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan 2015/16 - 2019/20 (ASSP), the successor to the DSIP, which confirms that, “*...a joint annual sector review will be held bringing together development partners, private sector, CSOs and other MDAs*”. It should be organized by the M&E Division of the Agriculture Planning Department to review the performance of the sector and would be continued during the life of the ASSP, “*...bringing together Government agencies, the private sector, development partners and civil society organizations*” (MAAIF, 2017[a]).

The ASSP further clarifies that the annual reviews are to take place at district, regional and national level prior to the overall joint sector review, in order to enable key stakeholders to be brought together to review, learn and draft strategies for overcoming barriers and improving performance in the implementation of the Plan and the attainment of its goals and objectives, at their respective levels. For this reason, local-level annual “feedback and reflection sessions” need, it notes, to be timed to take place prior to the JASAR so that the issues arising from these deliberations are consolidated and shared at the national-level meeting.

The ASSP was recently revised to better reflect Uganda’s commitments under the Malabo Declaration. Uganda is seeking to strengthen one of the core principles of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural

³ It further specifies that the reviews should take place in “August/September”, although “August” is also specified as being the due date in the same document! Interestingly, it is also stated that, “*OPM will reprimand sectors that do not submit the reports on time*” (op.cit. p.397) – clearly a hollow threat as only one such report has ever been produced for the agricultural sector!

⁴ Even if, in other parts of the document, the stakeholder groups specified as participating in these meetings (“*Joint GoU/DP Reviews*”) appear to be less all-encompassing.

⁵ Although in another part of the document it is stated that, “*...there should be a bi-annual sector review meeting (similar to what is happening in (the) Ministries of Health and Education)*”.

Development Programme for agriculture and food security, namely that of mutual accountability between “state and non-state stakeholders to hold each other accountable....” (NEPAD, forthcoming), in respect of Actions and Results that drive the growth and transformation of the agricultural sector. Uganda’s JASARs are seen as a key component of this commitment, and are included in the Africa Union Commission’s biennial continent-wide assessment of the progress made by each member country in achieving the provisions of the Malabo Declaration. Uganda scores well in this area (Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, 2018).

3. The JASAR history in Uganda⁶

Each year, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) organizes a joint agricultural sector (performance) review during which, among other things, the respective heads of the sub-sectors and technical support units present reports on the progress made in operationalizing their work plans over the previous financial year/twelve-month period.

3.1 Genesis

Between 2002 and 2006, the Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) was monitored by means of two-day joint reviews held each year prior to the start of the national budget cycle. The seven core components of the PMA, namely: agricultural advisory services, agricultural research & technology development, agricultural education, rural finance, agro-processing & marketing, natural resource management and physical infrastructure, fell within the portfolios of a number of ministries. Given the multi-sectoral scope of the PMA, several ministries participated in these annual reviews along with representatives from the Development Partners (DPs), civil society, local government, the private sector and farmer organizations. Consequently, they were well attended: more than 100 people took part in the 2006, and last, PMA joint review, for example. A consolidated performance review report prepared by the PMA Secretariat formed the basis of the reviews, which were hosted by MAAIF and co-financed with the DPs. Key actions for the coming 12 to 18 months were agreed upon.

Since 2011, MAAIF has organized its own joint agricultural sector annual (performance) reviews⁷.

3.2 Purpose

Uganda is a signatory to CAADP, the implementation of which requires mutual accountability among Governments, farmer organizations, the private sector, civil society organizations, researchers and DPs for actions and results through the mechanism of a joint sector review. JASARs, it is hypothesized, provide a forum for agriculture sector stakeholders to review and discuss the extent to which the sector’s results and outcomes have been realized during the previous twelve months, and to reach mutual agreement on the priority interventions and actions required in the coming year in order to improve the performance of the sector. The Reviews assess trends in overall sector performance compared with targets such as the SDGs and those contained in the Ministry’s Budget Framework Paper, in its ASSP and in the Second National Development Plan.

3.3 Form and function

Timing: It is expected that, the JASAR will have taken place by September each year (NEPAD, forthcoming) in order for its findings, recommendations and action points to be used to guide those involved with the annual budget preparation process which begins in earnest towards the end of the

⁶ Additional information on the JASARs is provided in Table 1, while the Bibliography gives details of most of the reports prepared both before and after each of the Reviews.

⁷ Interestingly, the 2011 meeting was simply called the Agriculture Sector Annual Review; the annual meetings became “Joint” the following year.

calendar year. Certainly each of the JASARs held over the past four years has taken place during the third quarter of the year (Table 1), while the 2018 Review is also scheduled for this quarter.

Duration: All of the JASARs have extended over a two-day period and, in most cases, the national meeting has been preceded by field visits (*see below*) in accordance with guidance contained in the ASSP (*see Section 2.1, above*).

Table 1. JASARs in Uganda, 2011-2018: an inventory

Year	Date	Actions	Theme	Participants	Field visits
2011	July	7	<i>Agriculture for food security and wealth generation</i>	221	0 ⁸
2012	November	25	<i>Towards actualizing the agricultural revolution in Uganda</i>	271	4
2013	November	28	<i>Agriculture for food and income security</i>	379	4
2014	September	17	<i>Towards commercialization of the agricultural sector</i>	415	3
2015	September	15	<i>Towards agricultural commercialization for wealth creation</i>	413	0
2016	August	41	<i>Enhancing agricultural productivity for job creation</i>	371	1
2017	September	27	<i>Accelerating agricultural transformation from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture</i>	382	1 ⁹
2018	August	-	<i>Building resilience to climate change effects to enhance agricultural productivity</i>	300 (<i>est.</i>)	1

Presentations: It has been common practice for a technical presentation on the progress made in operationalizing the respective development plans over the previous financial year to be made by a representative from each of the constituent Departments of the Ministry (Animal Resources, Crops, Fisheries), plus, NAADS and NARO¹⁰, MAAIF's extension and research semi-autonomous agencies¹¹, respectively. The Ministry also makes a presentation on the extent to which the "Agreed Actions" recommended at the previous JASAR have been addressed during the reporting period. Other presenters of technical papers usually include: the Agricultural Planning Department and the Budget Monitoring Unit of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. The quality of the presentations has been very mixed in spite of detailed guidelines being drafted in most years to guide the authors. At the same time, the reporting on the Agreed Actions has been patchy – in 2014, for example, only 13 of the 28 actions agreed at the previous meeting were mentioned. The report was silent on the progress of the remaining 15.

⁸ Although, an evaluation of the meeting recommended made that field visits should be an integral part of future JASARs (Kakuba, 2012).

⁹ No field visits, but a regional JASAR workshop which was held in Lira.

¹⁰ Although the format changed in 2017, with the Ministry's presentations being by theme rather than by sub-sector/department.

¹¹ Which have been given preference over the Ministry's other agencies due to the fact that in the recent past they accounted for up to two-thirds of the MAAIF budget.

Other formal ‘statements’ which normally feature during the JASAR meeting, include those given by the chair of the Agriculture Development Partners’ Group, the private sector, local government and, in recent years, by civil society (and/or the Uganda National Farmers’ Federation, UNFFE).

Field visits/regional JASARs: In most years, field visits have been undertaken as an integral part of the JASAR. Participants visit the sites of a number of Government of Uganda (GoU) and externally-supported projects to learn about their operations and any factors that may be impacting progress. The visits have proved to be popular and the only constraint to having them would appear to be the availability of funds, as was the case in 2017.

The 2014 Review recommended that regional-level JASARs should be held to capture the specific concerns of the different zones. It was recognized that due to budget constraints, it would not be possible to hold these in all regions of the country but it foresaw that over time all of the country would be covered. It proved possible to hold regional JASARs in 2016 and 2017 following the field visits in the Districts adjacent to where the regional meetings are being held. A regional JASAR following a series of field visits is also planned for 2018. A few, key observations made by those participating in the field visits/regional meetings are fed into the JASAR proceedings.

Theme: Each year a different ‘theme’ has been chosen for the JASAR (Table 1). The purpose of such themes is not clear since one would imagine that they would describe a factor impinging on progress in the sector or on a goal which the sector is striving to achieve in that particular year. No matter what, it might have been expected that reference would be made to the theme throughout the Review meeting. This has not been the practice to date, however: not only has the theme rarely, if ever, been referred to during the Review, but the papers given and presentations made by the different stakeholder groups during the course of each JASAR have, almost without exception, failed to make any mention of it.

Participants – representation, institutional affiliation and numbers: Participation in the JASARs was originally planned as being limited to two parties: the Government and the Development Partners¹². However, by the time the first review was held, this notion had changed and the doors were opened wide, to include representatives of the private sector, farmers’ organizations, academia and civil society. However, it was not until 2014 that CSOs were really represented – participating in the field visits, in the preparations for the Review and in the Review meeting, itself. Before that date, the JASAR organizers were of the opinion that civil society was adequately represented through the participation of the UNFFE. The role of the former in the JASAR process has now become clearer and more institutionalized. Other invitees include technical staff from MAAIF and its semi-autonomous agencies. Other stakeholders comprise a wide range of stakeholders including staff from other Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs), the media, Members of Parliament, local government and Operation Wealth Creation¹³.

In spite of the varied stakeholder groups represented at the JASARs it is worrying to note that participation in the proceedings by most of them has been minimal at best, and the situation appears to be getting worse. Some observers are reported as feeling that the Review process is increasingly becoming a ‘MAAIF annual review’, rather than one encompassing the sector as a whole. It is important to discover the reasons behind some of the stakeholder groups – the private sector, in particular – failing to make a significant contribution to the proceedings, and to address them.

¹² The DSIP (MAAIF, 2010), for example, refers exclusively to Joint GoU/DP Reviews. Interestingly, this is still true of the Water and Environment Sector Review, which is entitled ‘The Joint Government of Uganda-Development Partner Sector Review’ (Government of Uganda, 2016), even if other key stakeholder groups are well represented and participate actively.

¹³ Since 2015.

Over the past seven years, the number of JASAR participants has averaged 350 and the number has been increasing. The large number and varied background of those attending the Reviews do not allow for adequate and high-quality participation by all participants, while meetings are difficult to control to such an extent that time-keeping is all but impossible.

*Documentation*¹⁴: Following each of the Review meetings a short “Summary Report”¹⁵ has been produced by MAAIF and distributed to participants. This provides a useful record of the proceedings and information on the field visits undertaken prior to the event, the Agreed Actions recommended by the meeting and a list of the participants. However, in the past two years, a “Workshop Proceedings” document has also been published, many months after the event. The reasons behind the publication of this second report are not clear since it repeats the entire content of the Summary Report (including some editing of the agreed Actions and the list of participants?). Summaries of each of the presentations made during the meeting are the only (but substantial) addition. Both of these Proceedings documents are more than 70 pages long and difficult to read. Consequently, they are unlikely to be read. This is unfortunate given that the ASSP specifies that the reports of the JASAR will be the source of the information used to monitor changes in sector performance at the Results-Outputs level (MAAIF, 2017[a]; Table 15).

A detailed “Performance Review Report” drafted by MAAIF was published for the 2015 JASAR, running to more than 90 pages (MAAIF, 2015[a]). The report contains a significant amount of useful information that could have informed the deliberations of the meeting had it been made available some weeks before the event, and had it been edited to avoid the presentation of excessive detail in some areas. Rather, it was made available to the participants after the Review meeting had begun. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the document was given the attention it deserved following the JASAR event. It is also surprising that it is the only report on performance associated with the Review process since they started in 2011¹⁶. Such reports inform the proceedings of all of the annual reviews of all of the other sectors, in line with first NDP, where it is stated that the annual sector performance reports “...will be produced by August....and will be a key input to the joint sector review...” (Republic of Uganda, 2010 p.397). The Second National Development Plan reiterates this point, noting that the sectors’ annual performance reports will also serve as the main reference material used during the NDP II annual review forum.

Actions: Each year, a number of ‘Actions’ have been agreed upon during the Reviews to be addressed during the coming year in order to improve the performance of the sector¹⁷ and, in particular, to inform the work of MAAIF in planning the next budget cycle.

In some cases, there have been so many that it would have taken enormous effort to monitor them all throughout the year (Table 1). In 2016, for example, there were 41 Agreed Actions, a number of which were the responsibility of other ministries (Finance, the Ministries of Education and Environment & Tourism, etc)¹⁸. However, for the most part (NEPAD [forthcoming], estimates the figure to be more than

¹⁴ Details of all of the publications mentioned here, as well as a number of others, are provided in the Bibliography.

¹⁵ In 2012 the document was entitled, “aide-memoire” and was signed by the Permanent Secretary and the Chair of the Agriculture Development Partners’ Group. This was the first and last time that an aide-memoire was drafted following a JASAR event. In 2017, the name of the document became “Agreed Actions” although the contents differed little from those contained in the earlier Summary Reports.

¹⁶ Although one reviewer has clarified that Performance Review Reports were drafted in some other years but that their publication missed the JASAR deadline!

¹⁷ Although, these have been largely Ministry-focused – see below.

¹⁸ This is not a new phenomenon, however. At the PMA 2005 JAR, 54 undertakings were agreed. It is interesting to note that by June 2006, 35 per cent of them had been fully implemented, 54 per cent had been partially implemented while 11 per cent had not been implemented. The main reasons for such slow progress were reported to have been financial and institutional inadequacies – including the slow pace of processing various laws and policies and the low levels of buy-in by political leaders (NEPAD, *forthcoming*).

90%) it is MAAIF, alone, which is responsible for undertaking the agreed actions, whereas the justification behind JASARs is to support “mutual accountability”. There has never, for example, been an Action, the responsibility for which lies with the Development Partners, or civil society. Finally, no attempt is made to prioritize the Actions so that resources to address them could be more efficiently allocated throughout the year.

In addition, many of the agreed actions are so vaguely specified (such as “*gender mainstreaming*”, and “*strengthen mechanisms for co-ordination and collaboration*”) that no monitoring would have been possible, while in a number of cases the “Agreed Actions” are actually the normal core functions of the Ministry (“*enforcement of illegal fishing*”, “*promote aquaculture*” and “*strengthen regulatory services for quality assurance*”, for example). In addition, in only some years has the Department or person responsible for handling a specific the Action been identified at the JASAR meeting, itself, or in the report of the meeting. Finally, many of the Actions are repeated from one year to the next, the most common being: “*increase the national budget share for the sector*”, while (until recently) “*implementing the single spine extension system*” and “*developing a tracking matrix for all pending legislation*” also appear regularly.

Most worrying of all, however, is that fact that no follow-up of the Agreed Actions is understood ever to have been undertaken at subsequent meetings of the Agricultural Sector Working Group, whereas it is standard practice in other sectors at meetings of their Working Groups or equivalent.

In conclusion, there has been a general feeling from its outset that the quality of the JASAR process has been challenging and that the Reviews have consistently failed to meet expectations. Perhaps part of the reason, as reported for the JLOS annual reviews, is that the JASARs have, “...*become very ritualized, and there are limited opportunities for frank discussion at these meetings...*” (Roberts & Sejjaka, 2017). In the same study – into the operational efficiency of fifteen sectors of Government – the authors concluded that only a quarter of them (Health, Justice Law & Order, JLOS, Water & Environment and Public Finance Management) had developed effective co-ordination arrangements, including: constructive engagement both within the sectors, themselves, and with external stakeholders, joint planning, results-based monitoring and effective progress review mechanisms. The success of these highest-ranked sectors is attributed to a number of common factors including: a committed leadership, effective sector co-ordination (largely through the JSR process and the Agreed Actions’ monitoring function performed by the Sector Working Groups), a clear articulation of shared goals, access to resources for shared activities and DP support, which has been seen to have a significant positive impact on the development of the sector. Agriculture is in the lowest-ranked group¹⁹ (of 8 sectors), assessed as being in need of more committed leadership and stronger co-ordination arrangements – the JASAR being the most important.

4. Joint annual reviews²⁰ in other sectors

Joint sector reviews have a longer history in some other sectors – for example, annual water (& environment) sector reviews²¹ began in 2009, while the forthcoming 2018 joint review “mission” for the health sector will be its 24th! Based on the small number investigated, it is clear that the format of annual reviews in other sectors differ significantly. One similarity, however, is that all of the JSRs are held at about the same time of the year as the JASAR – during the third quarter of the calendar year – while the stakeholder groups that participate are similar to those that participate in the agriculture review.

¹⁹ It is ranked as 10th out of the fifteen that were reviewed. The assessment uses nine ranking criteria including: the sector plan, results’ monitoring, Sector Working Group meetings and the annual review.

²⁰ They are termed “Joint Review Missions” in the Ministry of Health.

²¹ The two sectors, water and environment, have had the same JSR since the merging of the two ‘parent’ ministries in 2015/16.

A Sector Performance (“Monitoring”) Report is drafted by the Ministry of Health, and both distributed to participants prior to the Review each year and posted on the Ministry’s web-site. The Water & Environment Sector Performance Report is also prepared for distribution to the JSR participants and posted on the respective Ministries’ web-sites, in advance of the meeting.

Depending on how soon after the end of the financial year the Review is held, the contents of the report may be limited to the progress made and achievements realized in only the first six to nine months of the year – in other words, it represents a partial annual report. It is, nevertheless, used as the basis for the deliberations at the Joint Review (“Mission”). A report on the progress made in implementing the “priority actions” identified in the previous year’s JSR meeting is another one of the principal documents presented and discussed in the Review meeting.

A total of 21 “Priority Actions” were identified in the Health sector in 2015/16. In the case of the Water & Environment JSR, 11 were identified in 2015/16, 12 the following year and 14 in 2017/18.

The information that is used in compiling the reports is provided by the Health MDAs, with inputs also being made by the private sector, civil society and the DPs. Guidelines, which are constantly updated, assist the authors in drafting their sections of the Performance Report. Each year a consultant is hired to assist with this task and it is understood that, on occasions, the individual plays a more active role than simply receiving and amalgamating the sub-sector contributions. For both the Health and the Water & Environment sectors, the cost of this technical assistance is covered by the DPs, in part at least.

At the end of the Health JSR, an aide-memoire containing, among other things the Agreed Actions to be taken during the coming year, is compiled, reviewed and signed by the major parties to the Review, which include: the Ministry of Health, the Development Partners, the private sector and civil society. The document also details the priorities of and inputs required for, the sector’s work program in the subsequent financial year. These Actions (or “milestones”) are, as mentioned earlier, closely monitored by the sector as a whole at quarterly meetings. They are also a key input to the Ministry’s annual budgeting process.

In general, the background documentation, the different sector Performance Reviews and the reports drafted during and following the meeting (the aide-memoire) are of a high standard: clear, comprehensive, well-written and brief. Indeed, a commentator recently noted that the Performance Review prepared for the Water JSR is, “...a very comprehensive report that pulls in data from national surveys as well as the main government agencies and NGOs working on WASH, water resources, and environmental management” (Danert, K. 2016)²².

Between 250 and 400 participants attend the Health JSR meeting each year – there were 260 in 2016, for example. In earlier years, numbers had dropped as a result of between four and five Review meetings being held at the regional level shortly before the national JSR. The regional meetings were organized in order to have local information needs addressed closer to home. It was envisaged that this would result in greater local collaboration and improved service delivery at the district level. However, numbers have started rising again and up to 400 people now attend the national JSR which is held in Kampala while the Ministry has recently decided that regional workshops are no longer affordable. In the case of Water &

²² It is important, however, not to underestimate the ‘costs’ of producing such high-quality documentation: “...collating and updating all of this data on an annual basis places a tremendous load on the government and partners” (op. cit. p. 35).

Environment, regional sector review meetings are held 6 months later/earlier, preceded by field visits to key project sites. For this reason, they are more technical in nature than the national review meetings.

The budget for the Review process in the Health and Water & Environment sectors is met by both the DPs and the Government, with the costs of those who attend the meeting from the regions largely being covered by the former, in the case of the Health Sector. In some years, provision is made for the Health JSR extending into a third day, due to the increasing numbers of issues to be handled but also partly as a result of poor time-keeping by the participants. The Water & Environment JSR is a three-day event, with a significant proportion of the final day devoted to closing remarks, awards, appreciations, etc. On the other hand, the Energy & Minerals JSR extends over two days.

It is important to note, that the cost of holding the JSRs dictate their format – in 2017, the Health sector decided that since the cost of holding the event at a hotel had become prohibitive, JSRs would, henceforth, be held using the conference facilities of a government office. The same venue is planned for the 2018 Review.

5. Recommended best practices

The purpose of this section is to provide a number of examples of best practice in the format and structure of annual sector reviews in the hope that some of them will be adopted by those involved with both planning and managing the JASAR process in future years. In this way the full potential of this annual exercise will be realized. At the same time, however, it is important to appreciate that these are only guidelines and that they will continue to be adjusted and added-to, over time.

Time-scale and agenda: Two days is the most common duration of an annual Review, although the time allocated for the Review will ultimately be determined through an assessment of a number of different factors, including: (i) the number and depth of the presentations that need to be made; (ii) the amount of time (days) that the invited participants are able to commit to the Review process; and (iii) the financial resources available to cover the cost of hiring the venue, the sitting allowances of the public service participants, etc.

As a rough guide, the first day should largely be taken up by the presentations listed in the Section below, while the focus during the second day is parallel sessions in which thematic working groups listen to a short presentation on the progress made in addressing specific Agreed Actions identified in the previous annual review. From this, key emerging issues in the same or a related focus area of the sector would be identified and new undertakings to address them identified and prioritized. The Actions recommended by each group would then be presented to the plenary session for discussion, leading to a decision by the meeting on the final list of (a limited number, between 10 and 20, preferably) the priority actions that are to be addressed by identified²³ sector stakeholders over the following twelve months. For a number of reasons, the Actions thus identified could include some carried over from those identified during the JASAR held the previous year.

Presentations: The presentations made during a JSR should include most if not all of the following:

- Opening speech (line Minister, preferably);
- Keynote address (The Water & Environment and Health JSRs have adopted the practice of inviting an external speaker to make the keynote address, bringing experience from outside Uganda to bear on the topic that is the theme each year. Commentators believe that this has been a useful innovation and it seems it would be worth adopting at a forthcoming JASAR);

²³ See Footnote 23.

- Highlights of the previous JASAR;
- Summary report of the pre-JASAR field visit(s) and the regional JASAR;
- Short statements on the theme and on the key opportunities and challenges/issues that have impacted the operations of the different sector stakeholder groups during the last 12 months: DPs, CSOs, private sector and local government (the latter, so that information on service delivery performance at the local level, is made widely available; some of this may be covered in the report under the previous Bullet);
- Report(s) assessing the performance of the sector over the past 12 months – amalgamated, or by sub-sectors, and what this means for the sector and the economy more broadly – with a focus on the progress made in implementing the “Agreed Actions”. Outlook for the sector for the coming year, emerging issues and recommendations for action, as appropriate;
- Technical analysis of the sector/Ministry performance (data, costs and benefits), by OPM’s Delivery Unit/MoFPED’s Budget Monitoring & Accountability Unit;
- Draft priority Agreed Actions/undertakings²⁴ for the coming year to address key challenges (as well as milestones and institutional responsibilities)²⁵; and
- Closing.

Theme: Considerable thought should be given to choosing a theme for the Review. (In this respect, preparations for the Health JSR include circulating a number (4 in 2018) of suggested themes for consideration and ranking by the organizers). Ideally, the theme would reflect an existing or emerging policy issue(s) that is negatively impacting the sector.

Participants: In addition to staff from the subject Ministry, participants at both the meeting and in the field visits should include representatives from associated key MDAs – the Ministry of Finance in particular – the private sector, DPs, civil society, sector associations/organizations, (selected) local governments and academia. The balance between each of these stakeholder groups can never be more than a skilled choice informed by experience of previous JASARs and by the financial resources at hand. The presence of media representatives is also important²⁶.

Not only should all of these institutions be invited to the Review meeting but, for the eventual success of the event, it is important that active senior level participation be maintained throughout – and not limited to the opening address and other activities before tea/lunch on the first day, which has been the experience of many Sector Reviews. Full participation by all stakeholder groups is essential if the event is to be a meaningful review of the sector.

Actions: They are typically discussed and decided during the discussions held during the break-out session, involving technical working groups considering different issues. No matter how well the process is managed the views of some individuals in respect of a selected Action tend to prevail over others. Active measures need to be taken to reduce this to a minimum.

Documentation: A report should be made available to participants well in advance of Review meetings which provides a comprehensive review of developments in and the performance of, the agricultural sector during the past year. In addition, such a document needs to reflect the work of all

²⁴ Specifying a limited (manageable) number of “smart” Actions to address specific issues; meaning that they can be monitored easily, and that each one has a specified time-frame, an institution/individual responsible for tackling it and an expected outcome. The means of verification also need to be clearly defined.

²⁵ This particular presentation would best be made towards the end of the Review meeting.

²⁶ Although the number should be realistic – for example, it is not clear why a total of 35 media reps (9 per cent of the total number of participants) attended the 2014 JASAR! No media representative registered for the JASAR in 2012.

actors – not only reporting on the achievements of and challenges faced by, MAAIF, as was the case in the 2015 performance report, for example (MAAIF, 2015[a]). The Sector Performance Report is a key resource for those involved in the Review and, for this reason, technical assistance should be sought by the Ministry to help with the data collection and drafting process, if required.

The Agreed Actions should be included in a matrix which would: (i) be used to monitor progress made in tackling them, at the (quarterly?) meetings of the Sector Working Group – or equivalent – throughout the subsequent year; and (ii) help to guide the planning and budgeting process of the Ministry and others for the next Financial Year. This would form one part of a document summarizing the proceedings of the Review which could, as is the case for the health and water & environment sectors, take the form of a succinct²⁷ aide-memoire. It could be signed when it has been finalized shortly after the event, by representatives of the key stakeholder groups which participated in the meeting. Whatever form the document takes, it should be published, circulated widely and a copy uploaded on to the Ministry website for increased transparency.

6. Conclusion: suggested improvements in the JASAR process

To date, the full potential of the JASAR process in Uganda has not been realized. There are a number of reasons for this which have been detailed earlier. Perhaps the most critical include the fact that comprehensive documentation that is critical for the success of the Review has rarely been made available in time – all documents should be provided in advance of the event and should be easy to read. Authors need to be aware that some of the documents will be used for monitoring purposes in the following year. For this reason, they need to be simple and clear. In addition, the Performance Reports should be an honest assessment of the performance (outcomes) of the sector as a whole and not be limited to describing the work of the Ministry alone – civil society, development partners, the private sector and others should also be requested to contribute information on both their achievements and on the challenges they have faced during the past year. In this way, the tenor of the event will become one where the focus is on the agricultural sector as a whole rather than on MAAIF alone. In other words, in the JASAR process mutual accountability needs to be precisely that: accountability of all stakeholder groups for the work undertaken in realizing the Action Points agreed at the previous JASAR rather than reporting being largely restricted to public actions and undertakings. Until now it has been MAAIF, almost alone, that has reported on the work it has undertaken in this respect each year.

Robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms also need to be established to assess progress being made with the implementation of planned actions and to come up with ideas or where necessary new strategies for improvement. (The ASWG would be a good platform for this). This is another reason for the less-than-expected impact off the JASAR process to date.

Not only is an annual review of the agricultural sector in line with the requirements of Uganda's National Development Framework and the CAADP process, but it is also a highly useful process for informing other partners in the development of the sector, and of the progress being made in and the blockages preventing the transformation of the country's agricultural economy. At the same time, by its very nature, the characteristic of mutual accountability means that the process is highly visible – the contribution of each stakeholder group is scrutinized, suggestions are made as to how processes and procedures can be made more efficient and mutual agreement can, thus, be reached on the course of action that is being proposed to be adopted by each one of them. As a part of this effort, and in order to give the JASAR a real purpose, MAAIF's budget priorities and the allocation of funds between its different Departments and activities should closely reflect the action points agreed at the JASAR held prior to the preparation of the annual budget.

²⁷ Examples made available by the ministries of Health and Water & Environment are less than 20 pages in length.

It is believed that an honest and objective assessment by agricultural sector stakeholders of past JASARs and adoption of a number of the best practices followed by the annual joint review process in other sectors in the country which have been proved to result in highly-positive outcomes, is one way in which the efficiency of the JASAR process in the future is likely to be assured. This paper has tried to do this and to recommend the essential components and actions that to be incorporated within the JASAR process in the future. Only when this has been done will the full potential of the Joint Annual Sector Review to act as a catalyst for the more effective deployment of resources in order to boost the growth of agriculture in Uganda and ensure the increased participation of its people the development of the sector, be possible.

The 50th anniversary of “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly”, a famous Spaghetti Western movie starring Clint Eastwood, was celebrated recently. This paper has sought to highlight both the positive and negative aspects of the JASAR process since its inception in Uganda only seven years ago as well as pointing out some of its less-than-flattering features. It is an accepted fact that the movie changed the way countless directors thought about the genre and that it continues to influence film to this day. In the same way, it is hoped that this paper will assist stakeholders in re-thinking the way in which the annual review of the agricultural sector is undertaken and that this fundamental change will continue positively to influence the sector into the future. ?????

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²⁸ The original document is dated June 2016. It was revised in mid-2017 to incorporate the commitments made by Uganda under the Malabo declaration.

Mutual Accountability: Economic Foundations, Best Practices, and Policy Implications An Organized Symposium submitted to ICAE-2018

Background:

Mutual accountability is potentially the most exciting development innovation of the decade, particularly as it is maturing in African agriculture to be inclusive of all stakeholders. The idea of mutual accountability emerged in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and gained traction and specificity in the Busan Partnership Agreement and supporting documents (UN 2012).

The Joint Sector Review (JSR) has emerged as the instrument of choice for implementing mutual accountability. However, throughout most of the developing world and in most sectors, the JSR remains an interaction solely between donors and governments. In Africa, the African Union has requested that countries have an annual JSR that includes the private sector and civil society in addition to donors and governments. The JSR process elicits voluntary commitments from all stakeholders to inclusive growth in the agriculture and food sector, and ideally holds stakeholders accountable for past commitments.

In 2017 the African Union completed the first ever continental Biennial Review of progress towards implementation of the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation. The Biennial Review is the continental equivalent of the country JSR. It was the first mutual accountability process implemented at the continental level in any sector, and the only process in which Heads of State report to each other on their country's contribution to continental growth and transformation. In the inaugural Biennial Review, 47 of 55 African countries reported on their progress.

This IAAE session presents the state of the art on the concept and application of mutual accountability. Five 'lightning' presentations cover highlights of the economic foundations, best practices, and policy implications from mutual accountability. Then discussion commences with comments from the African Union Commission on Rural Economy and Agriculture, which had responsibility for overseeing the preparation of the Biennial Review.

Audience:

The primary audience for this session includes all agricultural economists interested in Africa. Secondary audiences include the global academic community that is interested in mutual accountability processes, and non-academic stakeholders (government, donors, private sector, civil society) interested in policy implications emerging from mutual accountability processes.

Session outline (lightning session):

To preserve time for audience discussion, sessions will be presented in 'lightning round' format where each presenter will have ten minutes to present up to ten slides. The discussant will have five minutes.

Moderator: Dr. Ousmane Badia

Presentation 1: Tsitsi Makombe, Senior Program Manager, International Food Policy Research Institute
This paper reviews the literature pertaining to the key components of mutual accountability: inclusive, evidence-based planning; voluntary commitments to the plan by all stakeholders; and public accountability both for successful execution (or failure) of individual commitments and jointly for the success of the plan. Key findings include: the complexity of development processes precludes mechanistic solutions in favor of multi-stakeholder actions in support of common shared goals; written, public commitment increases the likelihood of successful execution of the commitment;

Presentation 2: Dr. James Oehmke, Senior Food Security and Nutrition Policy Adviser, U.S. Agency for International Development, Washington; Kristin Franklin, International Agricultural Program Specialist,

U.S. Agency for International Development, Washington. This paper extends previous work on the behavioral economic foundations' of cooperation in the context of mutual accountability processes (Oehmke et al. 2018). A model of trust in the 'assurance game' is nested in an evolutionary economics model to simulate the likelihood of obtaining cooperative outcomes as influenced by typical mutual accountable interventions. Expected outcomes are that trust enhances the likelihood of aligned, cooperative action, and that mutual accountability practices such as voluntary and public statements of commitment and pre-commitment enhance the trust-building process, thereby enhancing successful cooperative action.

Presentation 3: Martin Fowler, Agriculture Livelihoods Advisor, U.S. Agency for International Development, Uganda Uganda has taken a JSR approach to its education, energy and minerals, health, water and environment, and agricultural sectors, among others. In this paper Martin Fowler compares and contrasts the JSRs across the different sectors, based on previous analyses available in the literature, key informants, and personal observation of these JSR processes. This comparison illuminates success and best practices as well as poor practices and lessons learned. He concludes with implications for best practices and suggested improvements in future JSRs at the country level, both in Uganda and with implications for the rest of the continent.

Presentation 4: Dr. Greenwell Matchaya, Southern Africa Coordinator, Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support Systems. In this paper Greenwell Matchaya reviews ReSAKSS experiences as a technical partner for the African Union supporting the Biennial Review country reports development processes. This paper is based on personal experiences of Matchaya and the entire ReSAKSS team, as well as assessments of the Biennial Review reports provided by Permanent Secretaries of Agriculture and other Permanent Secretaries via the African Union Specialized Technical Committee, and reactions from Heads of State via the African Union Summit. The paper highlights successes and lessons learned. It concludes by discussing implications for both technical and process changes for the second Biennial Review to be presented in January 2020, and proposes some recommended changes.

Presentation 5: Dr. Sheryl Hendriks, Professor of Food Security, University of Pretoria Dr. Hendriks analyzes South Africa's decision to submit a Biennial Review (BR) report on how the country stacks up against the Malabo commitments, which represents a bold step for South Africa towards engagement and alignment with continental processes. This paper presents the South African outcomes of the 2017 BR and seeks to identify where country's national policy framework and targets align with Malabo to support the process of domesticating CAADP. Discussant: Dr. Godfrey Bahigwa, Director, Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union References United Nations, Development Cooperation Policy Branch, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Mutual Accountability for Development Cooperation Results: Where Next? United Nations Economic and Social Council, advance version, accessed 12/12/2017, available at

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