

AGRA Impact Series

Improved Budgeting Software Increases Efficiency at Burkina Faso's Ministry of Agriculture

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Until last year, it took officials eight months to prepare the annual budget for Burkina Faso's Ministry of Agriculture and Hydro-agricultural Development (MAAH). Even then, the budget tables had to be constantly readjusted as the software did not adequately link financial investments to results or outcomes. This is besides the tedious manual input required. However, this changed when a timely software investment supported by the Alliance for a Green Revolution (AGRA) reduced the processing time to just three months, while ensuring high levels of accuracy and reducing administrative workload.

AGRA's support began in early 2019, following the discovery that an initial program budget software was inoperable due to constant bugs. Additionally, the software had not been properly adapted for ease of use and was not mobile-responsive, amongst other issues.

"We needed a stable tool for the development and implementation of the program budget; one that adequately complements the roles of the people involved in the budgeting process," said Yassia Kindo, the Director General of Sectorial Studies and Statistics (DGESS) of the Department in charge of Agriculture.

Following AGRA's investment, the software was overhauled and first deployed in the 2019-2020 budgeting process with tremendous success. For example, despite the MAAH receiving a budget cut of more than 20 billion FCFA from the State that financial year, the efficient planning supported by the software made it possible to sufficiently use the limited available resources in achieving several critical commitments made by President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré.

These included the development of irrigated areas and lowlands, investment in agricultural processing plants and an improvement in the acquisition and supply of agricultural inputs and equipment.

In addition, and following the better targeting of constrained resources, the MAAH created an agricultural insurance scheme and the Agricultural Development Fund, projects that had not been achieved in the country's 60-year-old history.

According to Fidèle Salou, the Director General of the Coordination of Projects and Programs, upgrading the software was critical for the optimal operationalization of his ministry's program budget.

“The results-based programming has improved the quality and efficiency of public spending,” he said.

The MAAH now operates the most sophisticated program budget software of any ministry in Burkina Faso. In the coming weeks, a monitoring and evaluation module will be added onto the program, further increasing its role in supporting the ministry.

The software has become a vital tool for transparency as it is structured around an outcome-oriented execution framework that follows the principles of mutual accountability.

Indeed, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) recognizes such results-based systems as good for establishing clear lines of communication between policy makers, budget managers and other administrators—all of whom share accountability for execution.

“Outcome-based budgeting is objective driven, provides accountability, enhances transparency and is enabled by technology all whilst supporting the strategic goals of government,” said a 2017 report by PWC Australia¹.

Raoul Ouedraogo, the Program Officer of AGRA’s representation in Burkina Faso agrees

with PwC noting that the MAAH’s new software has become an efficient tool for supporting the optimal use of public resources.

“There is no longer a need for using several tools to process data, which must then be made consistent. In the new software, all functionalities are integrated into a single processing tool while taking into account all the instruments for implementing the program budget,” Ouedraogo said.

The program budget software is one of many projects that AGRA has used to support agricultural programme delivery in the West African nation. Since 2006, the agency has helped the Burkinabe government prioritize its investments by improving performance management through planning, budgeting and monitoring.

¹ PWC Australia. Outcome Based Budgeting: How a focus on outcomes can drive better funding decisions for the consumer. Adelaide, Australia: PWC, 2017. <https://www.pwc.com.au/consulting/assets/publications/pwc-consulting-outcome-based-budgeting.pdf>

