



# Assessing Government Readiness for Transformation (GRT) of the Agri-food Sector

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, METHODOLOGY, AND  
IMPLEMENTATION PROTOCOL

JANUARY 2022

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# 1. Introduction

## Background

**The agricultural and food sector in Africa plays a critical role for its overall development.** The agricultural economy employs 65–70% of Africa’s labour force and typically accounts for 30–40% of GDP and agriculture and agribusiness together are projected to be a US\$ 1 trillion industry in Africa (excluding North) by 2030 (compared to US\$ 313 billion in 2010). As a result the sector is high priority in the political agenda for economic transformation and development<sup>1</sup> of many governments across Africa. Yet agri-food transformation is not just implemented by Ministries of Agriculture: it requires a coordinated, whole-of-government approach, including the Head of State, the Ministry of Finance, Trade, Water, Environment, Land, Justice, but also local governments and key agencies like agricultural research and investment promotion. Recently, in line with the food systems approach, there is new demand for inclusiveness to bring on board more actors such as those in the health and nutrition sector. Hence it is essential that governments drive an inclusive agricultural transformation agenda, in collaboration with the private sector, farmers, civil society and development partners. Therefore, **government’s ability to make rational decisions, design strategies, policies and plans for achieving them, and allocate and manage resources efficiently for delivery of the plans is critical to Africa’s ability to transform its agriculture and the food system as a whole.**

**The purpose of this document is to present a tool to assess the readiness of governments to drive such an agenda, so that it can inform holistic planning of support by partners to governments.** The Government Readiness for Transformation of the agri-food sector (GRT) framework provides a comprehensive and replicable approach to measuring state capability, or governments’ readiness to drive transformative agriculture agendas. It looks at the effectiveness of systems and processes in place to shape and deliver government leaders’ agendas and the extent to which political incentives and other enabling factors are in place to build and sustain momentum to move government leaders’ agendas forward. These dimensions are scored based on results from an expert survey and a selection of external indicators. The intent is for TBI, AGRA and other interested partners to apply this tool in the countries in which they work to allow for better support to governments. It is hoped this tool can enhance harmonised approach to partner’s support to governments in the agricultural sector.

**The GRT framework is a product of the collaboration between the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change (TBI) and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)** to improve approaches to measuring government readiness for agricultural transformation. Since 2018, TBI has been working with AGRA to combine AGRA’s sector-specific capacity strengthening expertise in agricultural transformation with TBI’s holistic whole-of-government approach.

**In 2020, AGRA and TBI joined forces to pilot new ways of tracking change in state capability** and the wider governmental system within which our interventions operate, focusing on Ghana, Nigeria and Mozambique. The aim of this AGRA-TBI partnership, supported by USAID, is to catalyse change within governments to accelerate agricultural transformation through building linkages between ministries of agriculture and the rest of government. This work builds on pre-existing and ongoing initiatives within both TBI and AGRA to strengthen our approaches to measuring state capability to drive the agricultural sector.

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank: Growing Africa Unlocking the Potential of Agribusiness, 2013

## Objective and Rationale

The GRT framework aims to help complete the puzzle of state capability, by providing a tool which can strengthen the linkage between capacity assessment, political economy analysis, and intervention design, using a robust, yet lean analytical framework. Approaches to measuring state capability abound, however, the focus on technocratic best practices and blueprint governance models, the limited access of development partners to the political realities of working in government, and the complexity of the factors involved continues to pose important challenges to effectively benchmarking capability. Unlike other state capability indices and assessment approaches, the framework aims to draw on the practical knowledge and insights of government leaders and development practitioners who are embedded in government institutions, in a transparent and replicable manner.

Governments' scores against the GRT framework provide practitioners and funding partners with critical insights to design, track, and evaluate interventions to strengthen state capability for agricultural transformation. By providing a standard approach for in-country assessment and cross-country comparison, the tool also aims to help guide the allocation of resources within country contexts and across intervention portfolios in Africa (Figure 1). In addition, the tool aims to contribute to TBI and AGRA's objectives to mobilise additional resources for state capability work among external development partners.

*Figure 1- GRT simplified theory of change*



The purpose of the GRT framework is to strengthen the way we design and evaluate interventions and in-country support to government leaders that are driving and enabling the transformation of the agri-food sector. The tool aims to achieve this through:

- **Enhancing our understanding of the nature of state capability** – or what state capability looks like – in different countries. By analysing government readiness against a comprehensive analytical framework, we can better understand where there are gaps and bright spots which can be addressed through interventions in more targeted ways. These results can also be shared or triangulated with counterparts to generate a common understanding of key issues.
- **Consistently tracking the evolution of state capability** – or capturing how country capacity for change and drivers of change are shifting and progressing over time. By refreshing the tool on an annual basis, this will provide useful insights to inform the expansion of portfolios, adaptations to project design to meet new or persistent challenges, and a more consistent assessment of the wider system and political economy of the sector.
- **Comparing and categorising countries** – using the results from the tool to score governments against capacity and drivers of change and build a database of scores over time which can be plotted in a comparative matrix. Through this matrix, we aim to create a shorthand for referring to types of countries which will require different types of support. This is particularly helpful for allocating resources across a regional portfolio.

The framework and tools we propose in this paper are not intended to be used as an evaluation framework for any single intervention or programme. While interventions may contribute towards change in connection with a small portion of the framework (which can be assessed through robust contribution analysis) most of what is measured in this tool is beyond the control and scope of any single intervention. However, by using this tool, we can better integrate an understanding of the system within which interventions operate, and we can translate this understanding into action by identifying relevant interventions, programmes, and projects for specific countries. For each

intervention, components of the tool may be linked to outcomes within results frameworks and used to monitor and evaluate change over time (for example, an intervention to improve capacity around policy design).

## Users of the GRT Framework

The goal of the GRT as a tool is to strengthen the way we design and evaluate interventions and in-country support to government leaders. Target users for the tool are then governments and the partners that support them, as described in Table 1.

**Table 1: Users and audience**

| Audience                                  | Use                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AGRA                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform interventions</li> <li>• Assess countries for expansion strategy</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                    |
| TBI                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and evaluate interventions</li> <li>• Resource mobilisation</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                        |
| Funding partners (PIATA and others)       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand governments' role in agri-food transformation</li> <li>• Assess countries progress and challenges to inform strategy</li> <li>• Inform interventions</li> <li>• Monitor and evaluate programmes</li> </ul> |
| Government counterparts                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-assessment tool</li> <li>• Evaluate areas for change</li> <li>• Inform new policies and reforms</li> <li>• Benchmark with other countries</li> <li>• Request specific support from partners</li> </ul>           |
| Private sector and Civil Society          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform engagement with government</li> <li>• Facilitate meaningful space for participation in government agenda</li> </ul>                                                                                            |
| Other actors in the agriculture community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand governments' role in agricultural transformation</li> <li>• Inform interventions where relevant</li> <li>• Inform engagement with government</li> </ul>                                                    |

## 2. The Government Readiness for Transformation framework

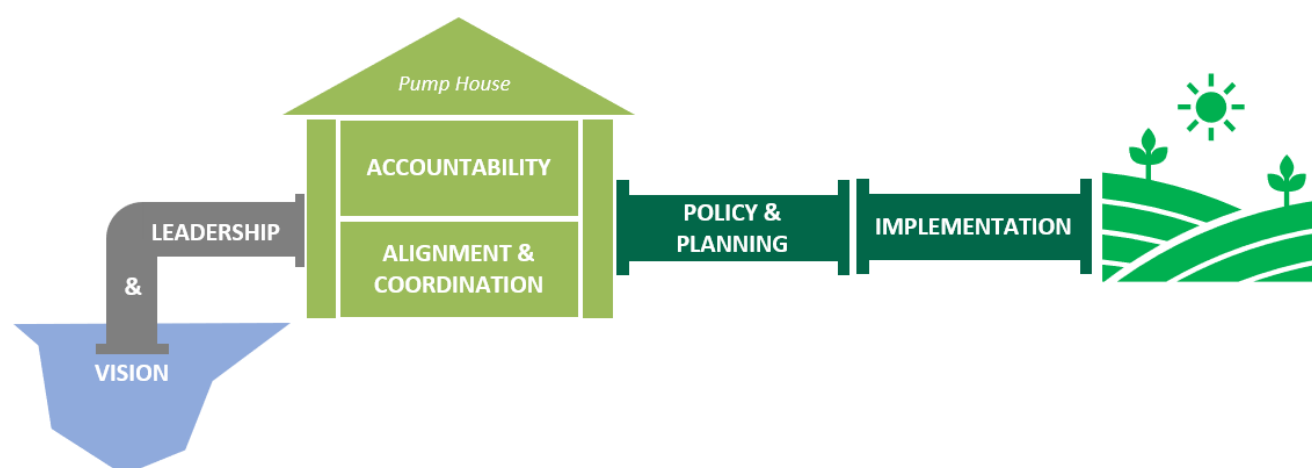
### Conceptual Framework

The GRT assesses both the effectiveness of systems and processes in place to shape and deliver government leaders' agendas and the extent to which political incentives and other enabling factors are in place to drive those agendas. It measures the power structures and relationships that enable (or disable) agricultural transformation, and the capacity of government to deliver the vision of its leadership. The development of the GRT framework builds on existing approaches by AGRA, TBI and within the broader context of agricultural frameworks such as CAADP. The literature review and development of the tool is described in the Methodology section.

The GRT is structured around five key components to assess government readiness: **vision and leadership, accountability, alignment and coordination, policy and planning, and implementation.** These components have been designed to be representative of what works for government effectiveness, adapting it to the reality of the agri-food sector. The focus is put on leveraging the leaders' resources towards a wide coalition for transformation, given the scale and breadth of the task. The food and agriculture sector does not only involve the Ministry of Agriculture but also crucially government entities in charge of water resources, of land, of industry and commerce, of infrastructure, etc. as well as development partners, the private sector, farmers' organisations, and others.

To explain how the five components work together to make up a government's readiness for delivery, we use the analogy of a water pump system transporting water to farmers' fields (Figure 2). In our analogy, the water is the vision of the country and leadership for agricultural transformation. The water can be of good or bad quality and requires a system of a pump and pipes to be transported effectively towards being delivered to farmers. The pump represents the power held by the leader to coordinate actors in government, and external actors exerting pressure on government to drive the vision for transformation through the system. The pipes are the capacity of the government to deliver the vision – the leader can have a great vision and strong political power, but without the necessary government capacity and systems in place, they will not be able to implement their agenda for citizens. The GRTT framework aims to assess these different components, and identify the gaps in the system, or leaks in the pipes. This simplified diagram is only illustrative and hides the fact that government doesn't work in a linear fashion – still we feel it helps to grasp the main aspects of state capability and readiness to drive transformation of the agri-food sector.

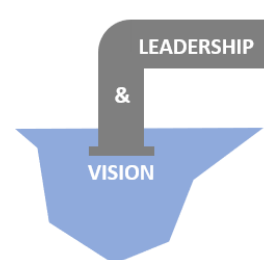
Figure 2 – GRT conceptual framework



# The five components

## 1/ Vision and Leadership

**This component describes the extent to which government has articulated a clear, prioritised vision for the country’s development transformation, and this is effectively carried by the leader.** Prioritisation is an important part of defining a compelling vision for two reasons: Firstly, the scarcity of resources – whether they be human capital and expertise, financial resources or political capital – require decisions on where they should be allocated most effectively. Where resources are scarce, if everything is a priority then nothing is, and little gets done. Secondly, because focusing on a specific set of problems or issues is the best way to achieve institutional change.



In addition to prioritising a strong vision, this component assesses the extent to which this vision, or agenda, for agricultural transformation is led by the Head of State and is cascaded down into different spheres of government. It looks at the political dynamics around agricultural transformation and the political power of the Head of State within his/her political faction and vis-à-vis other political factions. “Vision and leadership” is represented as the water going into the pump house in our analogy as the water pumped by the leader is what fuels the system towards implementation – it needs to be the right vision (quality water) and be owned by effective leaders.

**The key indicators assessed under the Vision and Leadership component**, then broken down into specific questions in the GRT survey described in the Methodology section and in Annex 1, are the following:

- 1.1/ *Expression of the vision.* The vision is clear and has been communicated, including through national plans.
- 1.2/ *Quality of the vision.* It is a compelling vision for the agri-food sector as a catalyser for economic transformation.
- 1.3/ *Strength of leadership.* The leader’s effective engagement on the sector supports delivery of the vision.

## 2/ Accountability

**This component describes the extent to which lessons from delivery and impact are reflected back into the vision, policies and plans and government is accountable for those results.** This component seeks to understand the extent to which government is accountable to itself, to citizens, and to other relevant bodies for results in the transformation process, through reporting and data sharing to relevant agencies within government and to the wider public. The GRT framework here also looks at the legislative system, legal systems, and regulatory systems in the agri-food space and how they strengthen accountability for results towards transformation of the sector: the extent to which key stakeholders are consulted in policy development and the quality of interaction between private citizens and government in legal and judicial processes. “Accountability” is placed in the pump house in our analogy as it looks at internal and external pressure on government that contributes to moving the water (vision) through the system.



**The key indicators assessed under the Accountability component are the following (see survey in Annex 1 for more details):**

- 2.1/ *Government’s systems of accountability.* Government has mechanisms in place to report on progress to various bodies.
- 2.2/ *Mutual accountability.* Stakeholders in the agri-food system evolve in an environment of accountability.



### 3/ Alignment and coordination

**This component describes the extent to which the different stakeholders necessary to drive and enable agricultural transformation effectively work together to move things forward throughout the process of driving change.** To do so, they need to be

ALIGNMENT &  
COORDINATION

aligned around the vision and the leader, and then effectively coordinate through various mechanisms. Stakeholders are within government – staff and heads of Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) – and outside government – farmers’ association, private sector, development partners, etc. This component assesses the level of interaction between those key stakeholders as well as the extent to which their interactions are institutionalised in coordination structures. “Alignment and coordination” is placed in the pump house given that, for the agri-food sector more than any other, it is necessary to get stakeholders to work together in order to move the water through the system.

**The key indicators assessed under the Alignment and coordination component are the following (see survey in Annex 1 for more details):**

- 3.1/ *Alignment*. Key stakeholders within and outside governments are aligned behind the priorities and the leader’s vision.
- 3.2/ *Reality of coordination*. Stakeholders effectively collaborate to deliver agricultural transformation.
- 3.3/ *Institutionalisation of coordination*. Mechanisms to coordinate are clear and institutionalised.

### 4/ Policy and planning

**This component describes the extent to which the vision is captured into policy and then the extent to which clear, realistic plans are in place to concretize the vision and those policies for transformation.** Policies here are defined as institutionalised proposals to solve issues related to the transformation of the agri-food sector. It is fundamentally about the design of evidence-based solutions and their approval within government (the policy process, sometimes based in the law), whilst plans, or the planning process, is about capturing the policies into actionable documents geared towards implementation. They are linked under one important component in our framework as they work together to capture the vision of the leader. Plans describe implementation of policy solutions which describe the solutions decided to achieve the vision of the leader.

POLICY &  
PLANNING

Quality policies make clear what is the government’s proposed solution to solve key issues – for example, a policy on fertiliser regulations, policies for the development of the cocoa value chain, policy on land titling. Effective planning makes clear who must do what and when in order for any policy to be delivered. A lack of clarity in any of these areas will undermine delivery. Effective planning involves both the quality of planning and the use or application of plans throughout delivery. “Policy and planning” is represented as a pipe in our analogy as they are key cogs of the systems to bring water to the fields, depending on coordination and accountability to effectively function.

**The key indicators assessed under the Policy and planning component are the following (see survey in Annex 1 for more details):**

- 4.1/ *Policy process*. Government has efficient processes in place to develop new policies in the sector.
- 4.2/ *Planning process*. Government has efficient processes in place to develop plans that capture the vision and the policies.
- 4.3/ *Use of plans*. Plans in the sector are effectively used for delivery.

## 5/ Implementation

**This component describes the extent to which government tracks the progress of achieving key deliverables for the sector and collects quality data to test the impact of delivery.** It focuses on the delivery of plans and policies, and the systems that are needed to get them delivered, both at the national level and the subnational level.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Leaders in government need to be able to tell whether their priorities are on track and have a way of intervening when they are not. This component analyses delivery tracking and performance monitoring, the systems that are in place to adapt them when things are not going to plan, and the incentives and norms in place around performance management.

It was key here to split the component to analyse implementation systems and capacity both at the national level (closest to the Head of State's vision) and all the way down at the local level, closer to actual implementation in rural areas. The sub-component on the local level tries to assess the extent to which there are delivery systems at that level, and the extent to which local governments interact and report to federal or national counterparts. "Implementation" is represented as a pipe in our analogy given it is the last cog in the system after policy and plans towards effectively delivering the water to the fields.

**The key indicators assessed under the Implementation component are the following (see survey in Annex 1 for more details):**

- 5.1/ *Delivery mechanism.* Government has systems and tools in place for implementing the plans and vision.
- 5.2/ *Delivery capacity.* Implementation is based on a culture of delivery.

## Approach

**The GRT framework aims to address the need for a new approach to measuring state capability** – one which better captures AGRA and TBI's thinking on effective governance from years of embedded advisory and technical support which reflected the importance of politics in driving change within government. Specifically, we set out to develop a methodology and tool with a new approach that incorporated:

- 1) **A clear emphasis on the role of politics and political leadership in driving change.** We know that leadership matters for driving change, at the top of government and within key institutions. In order to better understand the conditions within which this leadership is exercised effectively, we also need an explicit focus on the politics surrounding leaders and their ability to wield political power to get things done. TBI and AGRA's years of support to government institutions at the centre of government and in agriculture Ministries means that there is a rich and often untapped understanding of these dynamics. In the GRT survey, we include questions on political authority and power of the centre of government to capture these dynamics.
- 2) **A 'whole of government' approach that captures differences in capability across government and in relation to key sector requirements.** We need to measure capability across government by focusing on the way relevant national and sub-national delivery agencies interact with each other to perform their required roles. We also need to combine this analysis with an understanding of the strength of leadership and delivery at the centre of government. To do so, our framework aims to assess capacity and drivers of change at both the centre of government and sectoral levels to generate a holistic understanding of readiness for transformation. This recognises that the effective implementation of a leader's agenda for transformation rests on the power and capability of the centre of government (the Office of the Head of State, Ministry of Finance, and other key units in the remit of the President or Prime

Minister) to lead and communicate the leader's vision, manage performance, and coordinate responsibilities across delivery agencies.

- 3) **A focus on capturing observed behaviours and actions, not just policies and blueprints of government structures.** We believe we need to move beyond looking at what is on paper and focus on what is happening *in practice*, to avoid representing a biased view of how government should function in our analysis, and better understand how actual government practices evolve. We aim to avoid the trap of isomorphic mimicry, whereby measurement of capability encourages governments to develop systems for the sake of best practice, which in reality do not function effectively in their context. To this end, our expert survey tool draws on recent work by Yuen Yuen Ang to develop different 'vignettes' or scenarios of behaviour, which are then scored by respondents based on the extent to which they agree that these behaviours tend to occur<sup>2</sup>.
- 4) **An honest identification of 'known unknowns', or areas we need to learn more about.** We need to build in space within the assessment tools we use to frankly assess our own blind spots and develop plans to understand them better. Our expert survey includes open-ended questions which ask respondents to reflect on the accuracy of their responses and their confidence. Experts will then attend a post-survey workshop to discuss together their responses, areas where further clarity is needed, and areas of divergence.

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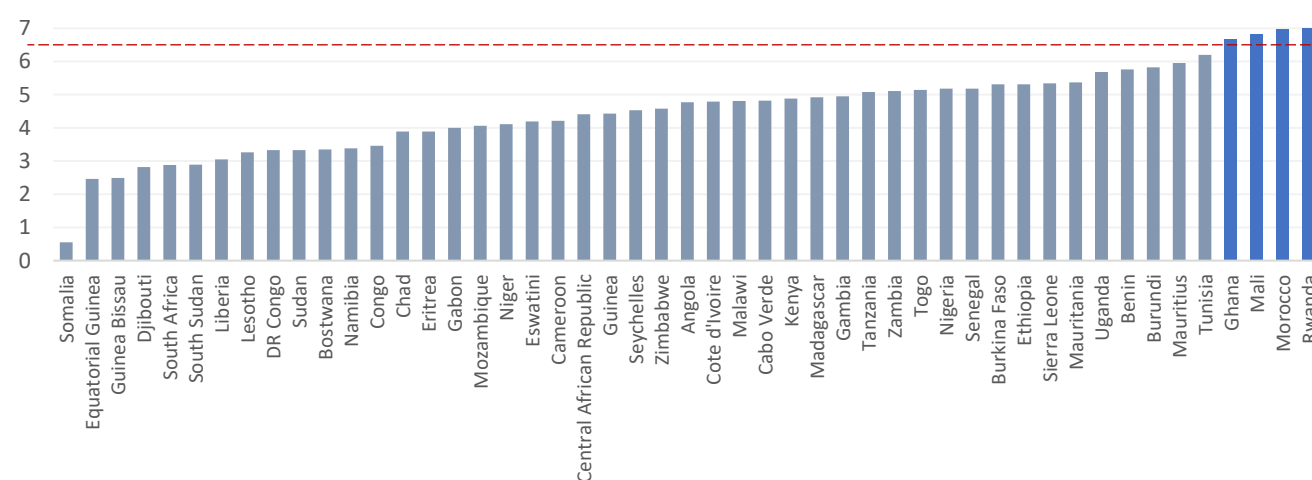
<sup>2</sup> China's Gilded Age: The Paradox of Economic Boom and Vast Corruption, Yuen Yuen Ang, Cambridge University Press, 2020

# 3. Methodology

## Development of the Tool

There has been extensive work measuring the agricultural transformation path (or “green revolution”) of countries. The most commonly used source of information is the African Union’s Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme’s scorecard, available every two years as part of its Biennial Review (Figure 3)<sup>3</sup>. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) mapped in over 1970 to 2015 the path towards agricultural transformation on the continent and looked at which policies were instrumental to move the needle<sup>4</sup>. The World Bank Enabling the Business of Agriculture scores looks at a specific aspect of transformation<sup>5</sup>, while the Food Systems Dashboard collates various indicators relevant to assessing the transformation path<sup>6</sup>, including looking at governance of the sector.

Figure 3: CAADP Biennial Review Agricultural Transformation Scorecard, 2019



Only 4 countries on the continent are “on track” to achieve agricultural transformation (score above 6.5).

**We think previous frameworks and studies have not focused enough on a crucial component of agri-food transformation: the role of government as a driver and an enabler.** The GRT aims to fill this gap by capturing AGRA and TBI’s knowledge of what works to build state capability for transformation. TBI has an extensive track record over 13 years working on delivery systems with African governments, and later on adapting those systems to fit the specific needs of the agri-food sector. It has worked or is working with the Liberia’s Agriculture Task Force under the Office of the President, the Nigeria’s Project for Agriculture Coordination and Execution under the Vice President’s Office, the Burkina Faso’s Presidential Programmes Delivery Unit, the Sierra Leone’s Presidential Delivery Team, the Kenya’s Agricultural Transformation Office in the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ethiopia’s Agricultural Transformation Agency and the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit, and more. TBI had previously done work on a matrix to assess center of governments’ capacity to deliver their leader’s vision (not just agriculture), which inspired aspects of the GRT.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nepad.org/caadp/publication/2019-africa-agriculture-transformation-scorecard-aats>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.iisd.org/agricultural-transformation/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://eba.worldbank.org/en/eba>

<sup>6</sup> <https://foodsystemsdashboard.org/>

**AGRA and TBI are thought leaders on state capability for agricultural transformation, and have together published a paper on lessons from the government of Israel<sup>7</sup>, as well as guides for governments to answer to the impact of COVID-19 on agriculture and food<sup>8</sup>.** The GRT builds on the extensive work previously done by AGRA on its Agricultural Sector Institutional Capacity Assessment (ICA) in 2019 and 2020, looking at the 11 countries where AGRA is present. The ICA looks at five thematic areas which are found within the components of the GRT: Alignment of strategies and policies; Enabling Business Environment; Capacity to implement; Coordinated investments and action; and Mutual accountability for results. The GRT brings a political economy and leadership perspective to these components, and refines the methodology to integrate AGRA and TBI's latest thinking on state capability. We also used AGRA's indicators for state capability, and AGRA's Guidelines and Process Map for the Design of Agriculture Sector Strategy, National Agriculture Investment Plans and Flagship Programmes.

**We also reviewed external frameworks and studies in the space of state capability for agricultural transformation to inform the development of the GRT.** This included USAID's cross-country study on Institutional Architecture for Food Security Policy Change (2015), McKinsey's article on Successful agricultural transformations: Six core elements of planning and delivery<sup>9</sup>, World Bank's Enabling the Business of Agriculture reports<sup>10</sup>, and others. Unlike other state capability indices and assessment approaches, the framework aims to draw on the practical knowledge and insights of development practitioners who are embedded in government institutions and trusted by government counterparts, in a transparent and replicable manner. This approach and the tools we use may be useful for other practitioners and academic institutions interested in monitoring state capability.

**Finally, AGRA and TBI tested the GRT conceptual framework and survey as a pilot in Nigeria in August 2020, and used it to refine the approach.** 12 people participated in the online survey (pre-selected by AGRA and TBI Nigeria teams) and 7 of them took part in an expert workshop. The workshop was designed to gather qualitative information from participants that provided more explanation on the Nigerian reality. The report for the Nigeria pilot is available for reference. Learning from this pilot, we realised that the initial two dimensions (capacity for change and drivers of change) and matrix system were confusing for survey and workshop participants and added needless layers of complication. The results of the survey highlighted confusion as well for specific questions which were then reviewed, as well as for the differences between vision and leadership, and between policy and planning. In this revised version of the framework, we have merged some of the components to keep the five described in this paper. The score scale has been changed to a 5 point Likert scale instead of 10. Figure 4 gives an overview of the average scores for the Nigeria pilot for each of the previous 7 components and the new 5 components (more details available in the pilot data and report).

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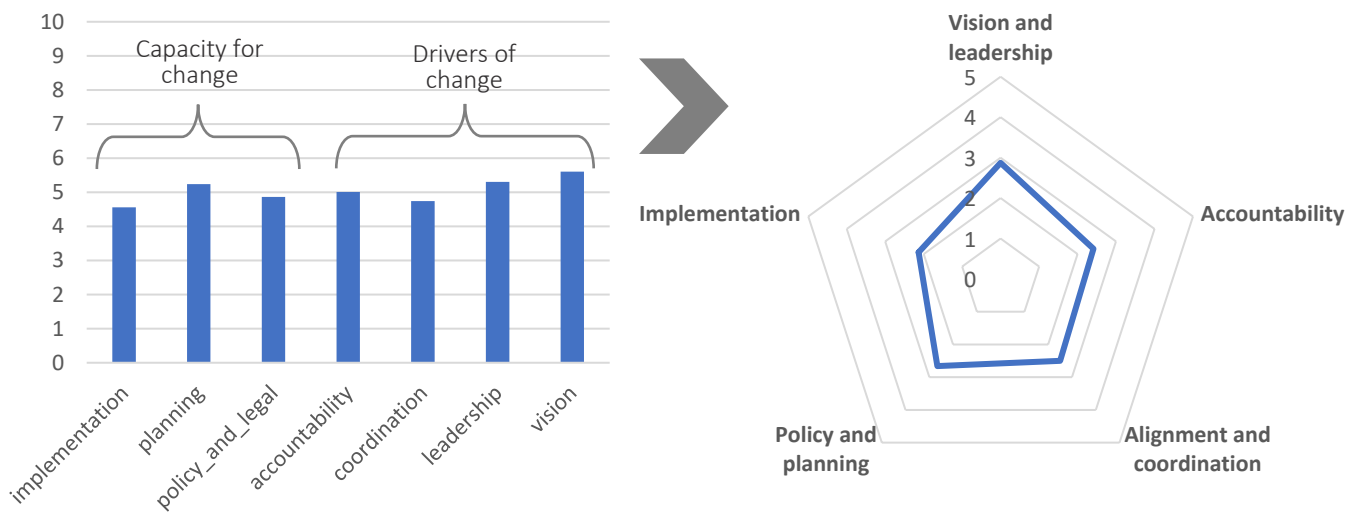
<sup>7</sup> <https://institute.global/advisory/how-israel-became-world-leader-agriculture-and-water>

<sup>8</sup> <https://institute.global/advisory/tools-governments-covid-19>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/chemicals/our-insights/successful-agricultural-transformations-six-core-elements-of-planning-and-delivery>

<sup>10</sup> <https://eba.worldbank.org/en/eba>

**Figure 4: Nigeria pilot scores, from 7 components and 2 dimensions to 5 core components**



## GRT Survey

We developed the GRT conceptual framework into a survey to collect data from practitioners in the field, building on the work described in the previous section. The GRT is a conceptual framework but also fundamentally a practical tool that can inform interventions and builds our understanding of state capability. The survey breaks down the five components and the indicators described previously into questions that test participants’ knowledge of government readiness for agri-food transformation. Aggregated questions scores for each component give a snapshot of readiness for a specific country, collated into a radar graph that highlights the gaps in state capability. These graphs can be assessed for multiple countries, allowing to inform portfolio interventions at the regional level.

Respondents to the survey are asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements about how government and leaders operate. The statements are structured into sections in accordance with the five components of the GRT framework. As discussed in the approach section, statements are framed to draw on participants’ lived experiences and empirical observations of behaviour in government. Strongly disagree is scored as a 0, and strongly agree as a 5. The survey includes questions about key agencies relevant to the agri-food sector as well as the centre of government to assess the drivers and capacities for change in a holistic way. Each component also has one “negative” question, which is inversely scored, to test the blockers of change like influence of informal networks, misuse of funds, misaligned incentives, etc. The end of the survey includes open ended questions, as well as filtering questions on participants’ interaction with government. For the full survey questionnaire, see Annex 1.

The idea is to present a country’ GRT results in a radar graph and not as a composite score averaging all five components. This allows to highlight the gaps where reforms and support to strengthen state capability is most needed, and limits the tendency to compare and rank countries according to just one number. We tested weighting components and creating a final index score for the Nigeria pilot, but the final result did not have much meaning without looking into the details for each of the component assessed in the survey. Within each component, each question is weighed the same towards the component average score, including the inversely scored negative question.

## Survey participants

**We are planning to survey both government staff and the practitioners that work closely with government and might provide an additional perspective.** The survey is anonymous to secure participants' opinion and facilitate open discussions. Government staff participating can include department heads, cadres, officers and other staff engaged in the delivery of agricultural transformation – importantly, not just within the Ministry of Agriculture. We are looking to survey government staff in the center of government (Office of the President, Ministry of Finance and others), in relevant line Ministries (Agriculture, Trade, Land, Public Works, Energy, etc.) as well as at the subnational level where possible. This ensures a wider perspective for agricultural transformation that reflects the broad coalition needed to deliver.

**The AGRA and TBI teams in the country where we will roll out the GRT survey will help put together the list of participants,** which will be updated every two years. In addition to government staff, participants will include experts, consultants, technical assistants and advisors that work closely with government to deliver transformation of the agri-food sector. We believe that these individuals are well placed to provide data on the functioning of government from an unbiased point of view, since they hold a unique position of being both trusted advisors and external parties to government. Staff in AGRA and TBI country teams themselves would hence take the survey.

## Data collection and validation

**The survey will be administered online every year to the full participants list, while a larger validation exercise will be undertaken for each country every two years.** The implementation protocol section describes in greater detail the timing and resources needed to regularly collect data and process it for reporting. Every year, the survey will be administered to participating countries online – the exact number of countries will be decided by AGRA and TBI, with the goal to add more countries as we use the GRT for expansion strategies. This frequent data collection uses limited resources as it is all done online, and allows to gather data regularly enough to track evolution of state capability. We are building a strong back-end process for the data, so it is easily consolidated into a dashboard for AGRA, TBI and partners to use.

**In order to ensure the validity of this exercise and for governments to own the results, additional workshops will be undertaken every two years for each country.** We will work with consultants in country to facilitate the process: participants will take the survey online, and then participate in two types of events. The first are workshops with a small number of participants, split into the five components of the GRT framework, to review the results of the survey from the previous two years. Here, the goal is for participants to discuss each question for that component and agree together on the scoring. The idea is to both limit subjective scores by getting to a consensus and collect qualitative information from the discussion on the reality of government readiness. The final score for each component will be a calculation taking into account the scores obtained from the last two years of online survey and the consensus scores obtained from the validation workshops.

**The second event will aim to present the results of the GRT survey, as well as make recommendations to government and its partners** to strengthen state capability for the transformation of the agri-food sector. The goal is to ensure governments buy into the results of the GRT in an institutionalised way and not only through the staff participating in the survey. AGRA and TBI teams, facilitated by the consultants, will facilitate the presentation and support government to design reforms and programmes to improve its performance in specific areas of the GRT. Partners that are keen to support government in this endeavour will participate and get insights from the recommendations presented under the GRT.

## Reporting

**Three types of reports will be created out of the process described above:**

1. **Dashboard.** The GRT data collected every year will be entered into a system that automatically aggregates it in the back end to create a dashboard of key results per country.

This will include number of respondents, scores per components, confidence of the respondents, disaggregated scores per type of participant, disaggregated scores per number of years working in / with government, and others. The dashboard will be accessible by AGRA and TBI teams who will be able to easily extract reports for presentations to governments, partners and other GRT users.

2. **Country reports.** Following the validation workshops every two years, a report for each country will be created, including the results of the online survey and validation workshops, an analysis of additional external indicators to cross-check results (see Annex 2), and recommendations for interventions to strengthen government readiness for transformation. These reports will be made available to governments and support partners, and used to inform interventions in the country for changes in state capability.
3. **Regional report.** The key gaps highlighted by the GRT process in each country can be presented into a report covering several countries where AGRA and TBI are working or exploring for new projects. This will allow to showcase patterns as well as specificities of each country and government, and the type of interventions needed to address them. We aim to create a typology of countries given their support needs to strengthen government readiness for agri-food transformation. The regional reports will be used within AGRA and TBI to inform the portfolio of interventions, reflect on the strategy and explore new countries. They can be shared with partners with similar goals, and with governments interested to benchmark themselves against other countries.

## Limitations

The GRT approach looks to balance a strong, valid framework that explains government readiness for agricultural transformation and the practical need for a simple system to regularly collect information and evaluate change. As such, we make compromises that are important to note here as they should be considered when designing new programmes or interventions using the GRT. Such limitations include the following:

- **Subjective, mostly qualitative approach which may affect comparability across countries.** Social desirability bias, recall bias, and differing interpretations of the survey statements may impede the accuracy and comparability of results across contexts. The survey is designed to reduce these biases through clear construction and the selection of participants who are both internal and external to government to ensure an independent and varied perspective.
- **Small sample size of participants per country.** It is possible that the sample of expert respondents to the GRT online survey will be relatively small (<50) which may amplify the effects of biases mentioned previously. The participants workshop every two years is designed to add clarity and depth to the quantitative analysis in a focus group type setting, while also providing participants with the opportunity to revise their answers if they have misunderstood the survey statements. In addition, participants will be asked during the workshop to provide evidence substantiating their responses.
- **Participants' incentives causing possible bias.** Linked to the previous points, the fact that participants sampled for scoring the survey may also be responsible for leading capacity strengthening interventions in the governments being assessed may create incentives to show positive increases in scores over time. This leads to risks in distortion of the accuracy of the tool. To mitigate this, participants are encouraged during the workshop to provide honest feedback and cite evidence that substantiates their responses. This assessment should also be presented as one data point among many to measure the effectiveness of programmes over time.



# Conclusion

**We believe that improved state capability and government readiness for transformation is crucial to effect change in an agro-led inclusive development,** a green revolution lifting people out of poverty and providing them with steady incomes and social prospects. This is because governments are the cornerstone for agri-food transformation, as both drivers and enablers: working across the market system to develop aspects of strategic value chains, providing infrastructure and the right enabling environment, supporting smallholder farmers to commercialise, investing in research and development, etc. All countries that have developed through the agriculture sector have done so with heavy involvement and support from government, like in Brazil, USA, China, Vietnam, Israel, Morocco, and others.

**The Government Readiness for Transformation of the agri-food sector, as a conceptual framework and a tool, aims to enrich our understanding of state capability to deliver this economic development and agri-led transformation.** AGRA and TBI have developed this framework jointly to inform our strategy, programme and interventions when looking to support governments with their efforts to transform the sector. The GRT framework is also intended to help government themselves in their reforms and change process, as well as to inform partners' interventions in that space. The GRT framework is structured around five key components which we believe capture the essence of government readiness: vision and leadership, accountability, alignment and coordination, policy and planning, and implementation at both national and subnational level. It captures lessons on the importance of political economy aspects and of using a whole-of-government approach to the sector, rather than one centred around Ministries of Agriculture.

**We want to take a flexible approach to the implementation of this framework, constantly learning from the process and iterating as we go.** This paper describes the conceptual framework, the methodology and initial implementation protocols but it is meant to evolve as the concept and the tools evolve from lessons learned. AGRA and TBI are partners in this learning journey, and we hope to bring along with us the government counterparts we work with as well as interested development and implementing partners. We can work together to bring the water all the way to farmers' fields.



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