



THE ROLE OF LOCALLY-LED AGRICULTURAL POLICY THINK TANKS

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Presentation at the 3rd National Research Dissemination Conference

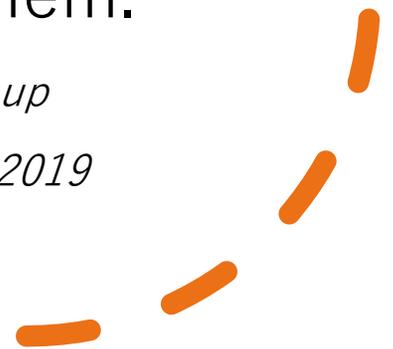
Sunbird Nkopola Lodge

November 18, 2020



“No matter the amount of financial resources mobilized for Africa’s development, such funds would yield only limited results if countries do not have the human, organizational and institutional capacity to absorb and effectively utilize them.”

*African Development Bank Group
Capacity Development Strategy, 2019*



Why agricultural policy analysis and policy think tanks?

- Since majority of households in Malawi are dependent on agriculture, improvements in agricultural policy analysis capacity may therefore have high payoffs;
- Policy analysis influences popular views over time, the nature of political debates, policy discussions, and policy decisions
- Agricultural policy think tanks are part of a policy ecosystem that includes:
 - Public institutions, farmer groups, local universities, international research institutes, civil society and development partners.

Autonomous policy institutes or think tanks

- Developing independent think tanks funded **from local or external sources** to build long-term analytical support for public and private sector stakeholders in the country
- Have an advantage of being more **independent** and **less vulnerable to political suppression** than policy units within ministries of agriculture and public-funded universities
- Are also less vulnerable to being ignored by stakeholders if they can demonstrate **credibility, empirical evidence** and **independence**

Sadly, in many African countries, international groups continue to assume a dominant role in agricultural policy analysis and policy engagement activities with local governments



Hence, MwAPATA Institute!

- Malawian-led policy think tank established to inform and guide national policy issues related to agriculture, natural resources and rural transformation
- Affiliated with National Planning Commission and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Currently receiving technical and institutional development support from Michigan State University
- Initial funding being provided by Agricultural Transformation Initiative
- Strategies underway to explore diversification of funding sources

MwAPATA Institute Objectives

- **Policy research:** Generate cutting-edge empirical research to inform policy debates and policy making processes in agriculture, natural resources and rural development
- **Data quality improvements:** Provide technical support to public data agencies to improve agricultural data quality and ensure effective tracking of agricultural transformation indicators
- **Capacity building:** Improve local experts and policymakers' capacity to conduct policy analysis and use of evidence to make better-informed decisions in the agricultural sector
- **Policy coordination:** Build a coalition of the most important public and private stakeholders in the agricultural sector to generate consensus on needed actions for agricultural transformation and to drive these actions forward into implementation

Research at MwAPATA Institute

The MwAPATA Institute's research falls into three broad categories:

- i. **Demand-driven**- responds to policymakers' *specific requests* for studies to fill information gaps around specific policy actions
- ii. **Reactive/rapid response**- responds to *specific urgent requests* from policymakers, the private sector, and/or development partners
- iii. **Supply-driven**- analysis geared towards *anticipating major challenges* and alerting stakeholders about the need to respond proactively rather than reactively

Visit: <https://www.mwapata.mw/publications>

Demand Driven Research

- i. Unlocking Implementation Challenges: Lessons from Agricultural Sector
- ii. The Future of Smallholder Farming in Malawi
- iii. Manufacturing and Industrialization in Malawi: Trends, Opportunities, and Strategies
- iv. Food Imports Profiles for Malawi

Reactive/Rapid Response Research

- i. An Early Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Agri-food Systems in Malawi
- ii. Agricultural Input Support Programmes: Best Practices and Challenges

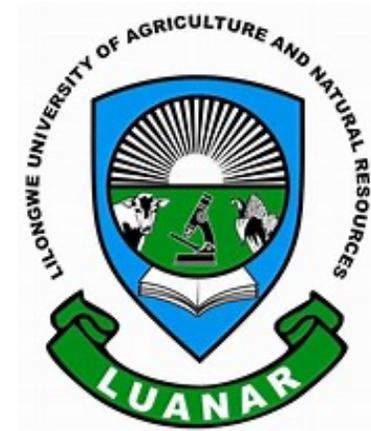
Supply driven Research

- i. Agricultural Transformation in Malawi: Call to Action
 - We highlight the need for and a path towards policies Malawi could adopt to achieve economic development and transformation

Implementation support

- i. Working closely with PoISAT project in the Ministry of Agriculture
- ii. Supporting the Ministry of Agriculture to implement the recommendations of the World Bank's Enabling the Business of Agriculture Report
- iii. Supporting the Ministry of Agriculture to review the Agricultural Policies and Regulations Technical Working Group

Partners



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