

## **A REPORT ON THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE INUAGRAL MEETING**

DATE:30<sup>TH</sup> September 2020

VENUE: Mariam Hotel, Tamale Ghana.

The National Advisory Committee (NAC) of the 4R Nutrient Stewardship Project held its first meeting 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2020 to launch the committee. Fifteen NAC members (PPRSD, MoFA/DARS, PEAG,SEND GH, Wunpini Agro Chemicals, DCS-MoFA, Farm Radio, Yara Ghana ltd, CSIR-SARI, Department of Agric RCC, IFDC-Ghana, MoFA, Global Affairs Canada) participated in the meeting together with staff of CDF Canada Ghana, the media (TV3, Joy News, Citi Tv and Metro TV ). In addition, representative from CDF Headquarters, Fertilizer Canada Headquarters participated through the virtual link.

David Sumbo (consultant) organized (brought together the experienced stakeholders in the agricultural value chain) to form the NAC and facilitated the NAC launching ceremony. The facilitator remarked that the NAC would give advice, recommendations, and support CDF country team on the execution of the 4R Solution project with virtual representation from fertilizer Canada and CDF Canada.



The facilitator welcomed the participants and reiterated the purpose of the NAC. It then followed by Self-introduction of the participants to enable members familiarize themselves with each other.

The CDF country manager delivered her welcome address and briefed the committee members on the 4R project overview including the project goal, result areas, implementation strategies, the targeted beneficiaries, and its social, economic, and environmental benefits. She added that the 4R project will contribute to the total agricultural output of Ghana. She further highlighted some key specific activities implemented by the 4R project at the community level to achieve the project outcomes. In explain the extents to which the project has so far benefited smallholder farmers at the community level, quoted a beneficiary who shared how the training on the learning sites with respect to the 4R principles of fertilizer application has help her.

*“the introduction of the 4R will solve/prevent land disputes amongst families since I won’t have to fight with my brother over a piece of land when I can apply the 4R farming practice to my small piece of farm land and get increased yields”*

She also threw more light on the necessity for the agriculture sector to focus on intensification of the farming process rather than extensification. She indicated that the population keeps increasing and the growing age (youth) lack interest in farming hence the introduction of the 4Rs into farming practice will increase crop yields and help small holder farmers get the best yields from their small piece of land. Therefore, the 4R principle should be adopted by all farmers and promoted/championed by the NAC to help the 4R-NSP be considered in policy formation as one of the best farming practice.

The committee went on a short break for members of NAC to take a group picture and engage the media for interview with the project management team and the NAC members regarding the project focus and the roles and responsibilities of the NAC in achieving the project goal.



Figure 2 NAC Members



Figure 1 Secretary of the peasant farmers association engaging in a media interview on the benefits of 4R-NSP to farmers

Virtual presentation was made by Mr. Clyde Graham (CEO Fertilizer Canada) on the NAC and the purpose for the formation of the committee, the need for the selection of representatives from various organizations, the objectives of the committee, and how the activities of the NAC will contribute to the broader goal of the project. He entreated member of the committee to contribute their expertise towards the achievement of the 4R-NSP in-country goal.

In response to the questions, concerns and comments raised during and open discussion session, Mr. David Sombo re-iterated on some of the key notes Mr. Clyde raised. He commented that “One key result area of the 4R NSP project is to increase integration of gender sensitive 4R principles in relevant standards and policies (globally and nationally). The 4R-NSP is a science-based use of fertilizer (Right Source @ Right Rate, Right Time, Right Place ®) that improve environmental sustainability, improves farmer productivity, and increase farmer-based income and profitability.

Therefore, one of the key strategies to achieving the objectives is to establish a National Advisory Committee (NAC) to support and advocate for the adoption of the 4R principles into national policy. Hence, there is the need to discuss the engagement framework of the committee and what role each member will play within the framework. The team will then develop a strategy which could be adopted to promote the 4Rs, the target of each strategy, key activities to undertake to accomplish the strategies, the NAC members responsible for the execution of the strategies and the expected outcomes of the strategy.

## RECOMMENTATIONS

The NAC members made some key suggests/recommendations after going through the frame work, amongst these were;

- I. The inclusion of an irrigation component in the 4R-NSP, this will make it stand out from other projects and support the farmers all year round.
- II. The 4R-NSP liaise with other projects in the same agricultural scope, to leverage on their resources/ innovations to help introduce farmers to the 4R practice.
- III. The project identifies specific media personalities to follow the project and report constantly on the events of the project.

Below is a detailed presentation of the engagement framework which was discussed at the meeting. Comments, suggestions, and alterations were also made until the final framework below was agreed to.

## Framework for Engagement

Strategy	Target	Key activities	NAC members to be involved	Expected outcome
<b>Lobbying</b>	Politicians and senior government officials	Formal and informal meetings	All members as and when the opportunity avails itself	Greater appreciation of the relevance of 4R
<b>Advocacy</b>	Policy makers Fertilizer companies Farmers and farmer groups	Participation in high level policy meetings and conferences	All members	Critical mass of 4R champions developed
<b>Information dissemination</b>	Fertilizer manufacturers and distributors, different categories of farmers Ministry of Food and Agriculture	Promotional activities of various fertilizer companies. Dissemination of evidence from Project and other sources using Public campaigns Leaflets, news sheets posters Websites Webinars	FC, CDF, SEND MOFA	Increased knowledge and understanding of the benefits of 4R Increase project visibility
Enforcement of standards	Ghana standards authority, PPRSD	Proper testing of all fertilizers to ensure they are true to type	Researchers DAES Manufacturers Farmers	Quality of fertilizers reflect the specification
Popular mobilization	Farmers, policy makers, industry players	Sensitization, education, organization of cooperatives	Project team, department of Agric, NAC members	Awareness about 4R raised Increase project visibility
Media Engagement	Policy makers, farmers, industry players	Identify specific media personalities to follow the project, Radio & TV discussion, Media Coverage for every 4R event, Social Media	Communication Person, FRI, FC	Increase awareness and trigger government response Increase project visibility



Figure 3 Members of Group 1 brainstorming on the work frame

The NAC members were tasked by the facilitator (consultant) subgrouped the participants for group exercise to develop an action plan for the year. The groups were tasked to outline the anticipated challenges of the 4R-NSP and propose specific actions to mitigate the challenges. Below is the outputs of the group work.

### GROUP 1

	CHALLENGE	ACTIVITIES/SOLUTION	WHO
1	Limited awareness on the concept of 4Rs by farmers, industry and extension	Promotion of awareness creation through information/education campaigns	The projects team as leader, supported by industry players MoFA, department of Agric and researchers
2	Inadequate information on the right types of fertilizers for specific crops and soils	Promote more soil testing and amendments demonstration to accommodate the right types of fertilizers	Department of Agric as leaders, project team will support with researchers
3	Affordability of the right type of fertilizer from the right source	Training on cost-benefit analysis modules with farmers to appreciate the profitability of 4Rs	Department of agric as leader, supported by industry players
4	Difficulty in applying the right type of fertilizer into the soil	Supporting local fabricators to produce hand-held fertilizer applicators	Project team and local fabricators
5	Lack of availability of the right type of fertilizer at the right time due to logistical constrains	Identify community-based volunteers to play the role of sales agents to the industry players	Industry Players

### GROUP 2

	CHALLENGE	ACTIVITY/SOLUTION	BY WHO
1	Too many organizations doing demonstration on fertilizer	MoFA/Policy to regulate all fertilizer application and recommendation across the country	MoFA
2	Erratic rain fall due to climate variability	Promote and adopt CSA technologies through on-farm demonstration, field days etc.	DAES, NGOs, Private extension
3	High cost of soil testing	Create simple but efficient soil testing kits. Conscious effort to improve institutions with soil testing kits	Private sector researchers
4	High cost of fertilizer and other inputs in the absence of subsidies	Engage stakeholders to review cost of inputs	MoFA, NGO, AFAP
5	Inadequate knowledge about crop management practices	Develop communication packages to improve increase knowledge on the project. Engage with the media to promote crop management practices	DAES, Farm Radio



### GROUP 3

	CHALLENGE	ACTIVITY/SOLUTION	BY WHO
1	Inconsistent Rainfall	i. Provision of weather information ii. Conservation Agric iii. Small-scale irrigation facilities, dams etc.	i. Ghana Metrological Service -Farm Radio (dissemination of information, other actors) ii. Project Team, Agric Departments, extension, Sari iii. DDAs
2	Negative perception of fertilizer use	-Sensitization -Dialogue -Demonstration -Video documentaries in local languages	Project team, Extension, res DDAs, Community heads MoFA, DOA, Research Project team, DOA, NAC
3	Poor access to fertilizers due to PFJ Calendar	Promotion of all year-round fertilizer distribution	MoFA, DOA, MMDAs NAC, Security Agency
4	Resistance from organic promoters	More subsidies on other agro-inputs Build capacity of farmers on access to finance	MoFA NGO's and project team

The above outputs were presented by each group respectively for questions, concerns, inputs, and clarifications. The facilitator then asked all members of the committee to vote for the most pressing challenges they think should be prioritized and this was done.

Members went on to append their signatures to the framework indicating their commitment to the membership of NAC and to fully contribute to the success of the 4R-NSP.

Appointing a chairman person for the committee was made an agenda for the next NAC meeting, since the consultant wants the chairperson to be someone who fully understands the project and is passionate about the cause of the project and is willing to fully support the advocacy of 4R-NSP into national policy hence it was postponed to the next meeting.

The consultant then showed appreciation to members for participating in meeting off their busy schedules and called upon them to commit to the action plan developed moving on. There the meeting came to an end.

In conclusion, the NAC inaugural meeting was a very successful one and members on the committee are poised in supporting the 4R-NSP to be considered in policy formation and one the best and productive agricultural farming practice.



Figure 5 Mr. Mahama from Yara Ghana LTD making a presentation on behalf of group 1



Figure 5 Madam Adisatu from PPRSD voting for her most prioritized challenges