

Coordination arrangements

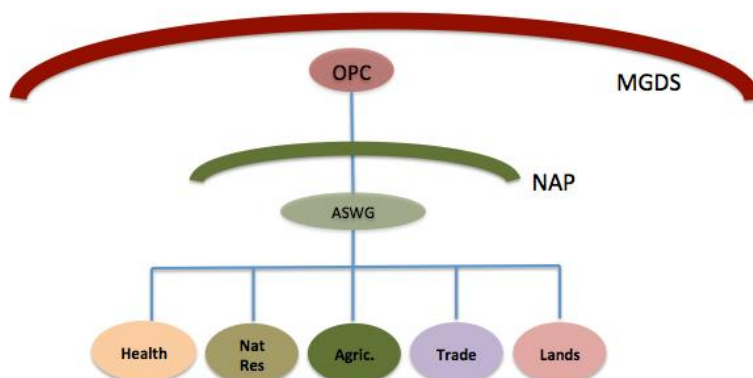
A Discussion Note to support the formulation of Malawi's NAIP (2017-2021)

The basis of the NAIP formulation is the National Agriculture Policy (NAP). The NAP states that its “development took place against the background of incoherent sub-sectoral policies” and the NAP can thus also be seen as a response to a lack of coordination, which could (at least partly) be explained by the fact that there was no overall agricultural policy to guide coordinated action. So it should not be forgotten that the NAP itself represents a powerful coordination tool, and one that was missing in the ASWAp-era.

The NAP is about *agriculture*, but as in *agriculture transformation*, with the aim of creating a more diversified, specialised and market-oriented sector in which both farming and non-farming households can increasingly rely on the market to earn incomes and meet their food needs. The NAP states “development objectives will not be achieved if the policy is oriented towards smallholders and their food needs alone and sustaining smallholder farming in the long-term. A more heterogeneous perspective of the farming sector is adopted, including support to medium-scale and large-scale commercial farmers.” Therefore, the NAP includes objectives related to sustainable management of agricultural resources; climate change; increased agricultural exports and incomes; and food security & improved nutrition in the face of growing population pressure & urbanization.

The NAP has designated the NAIP to be its main implementation vehicle and this has been the premise of the NAIP formulation process so far. However, the persistent concerns about the feasibility of inter-sectoral coordination under the NAIP do require that a consensus must be sought on how the NAP is best implemented: Either with implementation divided over a larger number of frameworks each more narrowly aligned to the mandate of the coordinating ministry; Or with a large proportion of NAP implementation to be captured in the NAIP, with smaller portions still captured in other framework and with the NAIP being implemented by the MOAIWD *and* other ministries for activities within their mandate as well as by Non State Actors.

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The second option is the one followed. If NAP implementation is split over many frameworks in different ministries, with only a narrow NAIP under responsibility of the MOAIWD, then the question arises, who coordinates these different frameworks, if the NAIP is but one of many, and not the main one.

It is unrealistic to assume that OPC will coordinate different implementation frameworks under a sector policy. There are many sector policies and OPC cannot coordinate work under each. Thus, the onus is with a sector ministry, but in the case of the NAIP, the sector ministry that is the custodian of a programme that includes work done in other ministries, needs to involve these other ministries in coordination, as is explained below.

The scope of the NAIP has been delineated on the premise that certain activities in agriculture need to be done together for them to work; too narrow a focus on production & productivity risks losing sight of trade and export opportunities, which themselves are powerful incentives for production. That is why the proposed NAIP is set-up with its pillars of resilience, production & productivity and markets interlinked.

The NAIP still is very much an *agriculture* programme, much as the NAP is an *agriculture* policy, but in a way that acknowledges that action by others in areas such as nutrition, trade and natural resources, should be included in the package, for the sum to be more than the parts.

In order to not make the NAIP too ambitious, efforts will be made over the next weeks to prioritise activities within these different areas, rather than to focus the programme as a whole on just the more classic production and productivity area. But this does increase the need for coordination: between ministries and between government and non-state actors.

Already in ASWAp, other ministries, like Trade and Lands, carried out certain activities, as did non-state actors (NGOs and private sector). However, these tended to be activities supported under the ASWAp-SP, in which funds were earmarked to go to these activities, rather than being financed by the ASWAp budget managed by the MOAIWD. Nevertheless, lessons on coordination across government and with NSAs were learnt under ASWAp, and these lessons should inform the increased need for such coordination under the NAIP.

This discussion note distinguishes two parts of coordination:

1. Related to management, this looks at the (more upstream) structures such as the ASWG and TWGs, general based at national level;
2. Related to implementation; looking at structures that link national to sub-national levels.

In proposing coordination arrangements under the new NAIP, effort was made to build on tried and tested structures but to strengthen their weaknesses. A principle followed is that structures should be strengthened in their key functions and in accordance with their mandate.

NAIP Management

Inter-ministerial coordination

- Is needed at the level of the agriculture sector, between ministries that contribute to the NAP such as the ministers of Trade, Lands, Environment, Health, Local Government and Finance. But it is also needed at a cross-(or multi-)sector level under the MGDS and between policy frameworks such as the National Agriculture Policy, National Nutrition Policy, Social Protection Policy, Decentralisation Policy and others.
- During ASWAp, there was established an *Executive Management Committee* that was supposed to provide strategic direction and inter-ministerial coordination, to oversee

implementation and endorse annual workplans and monitor progress. This EMC however, has not met regularly and was not really effective.

- The **Agriculture Sector Working Group** is one of a range of SWGs established by Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC) in 2008 to coordinate action under the first MGDS. This makes the ASWG a standard structure of government that has received its mandate from the highest government level. From the start, the ASWG was intended also as a mechanism for inter-ministerial coordination. In the SWG Guidelines (March, 2015) the ASWG composition includes MOAIWD, Ministry of Industry, Trade & Tourism, Ministry of Lands, Housing & Urban Development and the Roads Department of the OPC. The SWG in Agriculture is seen as one of the more successful SWGs. Coordination mechanisms under the new NAIP should build on these strengths but overcome the ASWG weaknesses.
- **Technical Working Groups** were an extension of the SWG and mandated to guide and review technical implementation of ASWAp. They had inter-ministerial representation as well as participation by NSAs, especially NGOs but also private umbrella organisations like MCCI. Commitment of the private sector dwindled as TWGs had a lack of decision-making capacity and also representation of other ministries was difficult to maintain.

Under the NAIP the following is proposed for inter-ministerial coordination

At the cross/multi-sector level:

This is at the MGDS level and does not fall within the NAIP's remit. OPC is responsible for overall coordination under the MGDS, an important task that should be taken care of. Sector-level coordination should report to this higher-level cross/multi-sector coordination.

At the sector level:

Coordination through budget execution: NAIP design takes into account other programme frameworks at the agriculture sector level. Most important are the Joint Sector Plan (Ministry of Trade) and the National Resilience Plan (OPC). Activities that are planned, budgeted for and financed in these frameworks are not included in the NAIP. For activities that were prioritised but subsequently did not receive any funding, a decision will be made on whether they should be moved into the NAIP, provided these activities significantly contribute to achievement of NAP targets. These activities, when adopted by the NAIP, will become part of the NAIP budget. However, their implementation can be by, e.g. the Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Natural Resources, together with NGOs or the private sector. This means that successful NAIP budget execution will both trigger, as well as be based on, inter-ministerial coordination of activities.

Coordination bodies: The ASWG and its TWGs have proven to be workable structures that are furthermore a standard part of government set-up, also in other sectors. Therefore, they should continue to be used, but strengthened. Both structures would benefit from receiving a wider responsibilities and more decision-making power, even if that would mean that targeted capacity building is necessary. The private sector should be given a more active role in setting the agenda (especially at TWG level) and an increased decision-making power of ASWG and TWG should provide incentives for participants to take part.

Inter-ministerial coordination: We do not propose to re-invigorate the EMC or to establish a new structure. Instead it is proposed that the ASWG is strengthened to fulfil its mandate for inter-ministerial coordination. The ASWG can continue to be coordinated by the PS Agriculture. In the

interest of inter-ministerial cooperation, PSs from other NAIP ministries should attend the ASWG meetings (up to 2 per year¹).

The ToRs of the ASWG can then be expanded to include:

- Endorse the Agriculture Sector Performance Assessment Framework (PAF). This has yet to be formulated, but will drive all development activity in the sector as the intention is for all implementers and supporters to buy into this single indicator framework;
- Oversee the Agriculture Joint Sector Review;
- Based on TWG advice, carry out final vetting of (DP/NGO supported) agriculture projects to assure NAIP compliance (see below);
- Monitor adherence to the Code of Conduct (all stakeholders supporting agriculture sector) and to the MoUs (all DPs supporting the NAIP).

The TWGs too must become more effective platforms for the planning and monitoring of inter-ministerial cooperation. They already have that mandate but their capacity and the incentives for successfully carrying it out must increase. It is proposed to have one TWG for each of the eight NAP Policy Priority Areas. This will support alignment to the NAP and it will increase coordination and coherence between the four NAIP pillars. Each of the TWGs then has between one and four NAIP Intervention Areas under its auspices. The TWG appoints an agency or institution that takes the lead for each of the Intervention Areas (IAs) under its responsibility. This lead agency/institution deals with the IAs technical issues and bottlenecks, data-collection and monitoring of progress of the IA; it reports to the TWG during its meetings. The TWG should concentrate on overall coordination.

NAIP Pillar	NAP Policy Priorities	NAIP Intervention Areas
Enabling environment	Institutional Development, Coordination, Capacity Development	IA 1: Coordination and M&E
		IA 2: Farmers Organisations
		IA 3: Agriculture Services delivery
		IA 4: Policy Reform
Resilience	Food and Nutrition Security	IA 5: Diverse nutritious foods available and consumed
		IA 6: Food safety and standards
	Agriculture Risk Management	IA 7: Early warning and other agriculture risk systems
		IA 8: Pest and disease management
	Empowerment of Youth, Women and Vulnerable people	IA 9: Empowerment and tenure security
		IA 10: Resilience

¹ In response to the troubles of the ECM, it was considered to insist that the PS from contributing Ministries attend, or else the Ministry would be noted as absent in the minutes. This too can be a rule for the ASWG.

Production & Productivity	Sustainable Agriculture Production & Productivity	IA 11: Agricultural Innovation Systems
		IA 12: Access to inputs
		IA 13: Sustainable Land Management
	Sustainable Irrigation	IA 14: Irrigation and Water Management
	Mechanisation	IA 15: Mechanisation
Markets	Agricultural Market Development, Agro-processing and value-addition	IA 16: Market systems, contract farming, price interventions
		IA 17: Value addition, agro-processing and rural electrification
		IA 18: Market infrastructure
		IA 19: Agriculture finance and insurance mechanisms

Each of the TWGs should have representation of different ministries (depending on its subject matter), and have strong NGO and private sector participation. TWGs should not automatically be chaired by MOAIWD Department Directors, but instead on a rotational basis, determined by election of its members, and preferably with a government-private sector co-chairing arrangement.

To enable decision-making by the TWG, participants should be from a high-enough level to do so (Directors, Assistant Directors). To ensure continuity, membership should be based on individual participants, not by institutional ‘placeholder’ (as then a different person gets sent every time).

To keep the institutional set-up lean, there will not be a separate layer of Task Forces (as proposed in the Aide Memoire), but instead their function will be absorbed by the TWGs. This means that each TWG can identify critical issues related to their area of influence and they can set-up an ad-hoc task team with members from amongst their ranks, or, as need be, supported by TA or experts or TA on short-term contracts. The TA/experts are accountable to the TWG. For example, there is a current urgent need for accelerating policy reform (IA 4). The TWG on Institutional Development, Coordination & Capacity Development can set-up a task force to spearhead that process.

The agenda of both the TWGs and especially the meetings by IA (under auspices of the AI lead agency) should be needs based. People should coordinate to discuss and solve problems, not for coordination’s sake alone. The culture of ‘results-oriented coordination’ should be absorbed, and if necessary be part of capacity development efforts.

A budget should be made available at NAIP level that works on a competitive basis with the first and the best TWG proposals most likely to be supported; This should enable the TWG to become more solution-oriented: TWGs should consider themselves, and be empowered to become drivers of change and less of a talking shop. TWGs should furthermore dispose of a ‘coordination budget’ that enables them to convene meetings, maybe even hire professionals to facilitate their establishment or individual meetings. This budget can be a % of the budget of the IAs under their responsibility, as coverage of coordination overheads.

TWGs, when strengthened by capacity development and empowered by budgetary resources, can also be held accountable for progress under their priority area. At least they should be accountable for compiling progress data as well as identifying and overcoming hindrances to progress.

The ToRs of the TWG can be expanded to include:

- Inform the process of preparation of Annual Workplans & Budgets (AWPB) for Ministries, Departments and Agencies that contribute to their priority area. Of course, the AWPB of one Department may contribute to different TWG priority areas, so this is not a case of dividing AWPBs over the different TWGs, but rather it is a TWG responsibility to make sure that a sufficient amount of activities in their priority area are included in the annual plans and budgets; because otherwise, they will have nothing to coordinate.
- Help ensure that the complement of relevant AWPBs addresses the priorities of the TWG comprehensively;
- Identify potential areas for public-private cooperation;
- Maintain an overview of DP/NGO projects within the priority area and ensure that these are NAP-aligned and NAIP compliant².
- Advise the ASWG on the vetting of projects within the priority area concerned;
- Where necessary, identify technical issues in need of TA/expert(s) support; write the ToRs, oversee implementation of the contract and act as the point of accountability for the TA/expert(s).
- Report to the ASWG on progress; especially in the context of and on time for the annual Agriculture Sector Performance Report and the bi-annual Agriculture Joint Sector Review.

The Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture is an important platform; it is often overlooked and usually seen only in the context of accountability, as they are most visible at the start of the budget year, when they play a role in the endorsement of the agriculture budget. This is an important role, and the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture in Malawi is possibly not sufficiently equipped to make optimum use of this role. Capacity development to the Committee is advised. But also, their members could be part of TWGs. They are members of parliament and represent a constituency and it may be a win-win situation in that this could be another representative of the voice of farmers and being on a TWG can be a capacity building exercise in its right for the Committee member.

Intra-ministerial level:

Much as the concern under the Malabo Declaration is with inter-ministerial coordination, the fact is that intra-ministerial coordination is often another big hurdle, as ASWAp implementation has confirmed. The Department of Planning has a mandate for intra-ministerial coordination, but in MOAIWD there is another agent that can play a crucial role here: Controller of Agriculture Extension and Technical Services (CAETS). The CAETS officer is placed between the level of the PS and that of the departments. As such it is above the departments putting it in a beneficial position of oversight. And as a support office to the PS, the CAETS has a direct line to decision making. The CAETS consists of only one officer, who has recently been appointed after the office being unstaffed for a long time. Given the importance of intra-ministerial coordination under the NAIP, and given the challenges faced with the same under the ASWAp, it seems justified to assess whether this office should not be strengthened.

² Aligned to the NAP is in support of NAP objectives and targets. NAIP compliance at an activity level and can also include a balancing of interventions across geographical areas (e.g. to avoid an NGO concentration in a single district) or across target groups (e.g. to avoid a concentration of development efforts around the poor).

A pendant to CAETS is the CAS, or Controller of Agricultural Services. The CAS supervises Trusts and Parastatals, and where these play a role in NAIP implementation, CAS should be involved.

Both CAETS and CAS should be members of the ASWG. The CAETS could further play a leading role in the TWG on Institutional Development, Coordination & Capacity Strengthening; and the CAS in the TWG on Agriculture Market Development, Agro-processing and Value-addition.

At the programme level:

The NAIP should not be seen as a project based in the MOAIWD. The NAIP is instead the sector's investment programme, that guides all of what MOAIWD does, includes additional activities by other ministries and with the private sector, NGOs and other NSAs involved in implementation wherever relevant. To ensure overall coordination, monitoring and reporting, there continues to be a need for a NAIP Secretariat but it should not be about implementing a project, but about coordinating an investment framework.

The NAIP Secretariat's coordination task goes beyond the ministry to include other ministries and NSAs. Therefore, the NAIP Secretariat should be semi-detached from the Ministry; and it should be kept outside the regular ministerial work such as procurement, non-objections, dealing with personnel issues, representing senior official at events, writing speeches etc. The NAIP's tasks are of a technical nature, supporting NAIP implementation. The Secretariat should involve staff from other ministries whenever needed. The NAIP Secretariat reports to the PS, but technical matters should be reported also to the ASWG, to enable it take on its overall coordination role in the sector. The ASWG should receive a technical report of the NAIP Secretariat prior to every ASWG meeting (usually two/year). Reporting to the PS is on an on going basis and as per PS demand.

The NAIP Secretariat's ToRs could include:

- Advise the preparation of the AWPBs for MDAs that contribute to the NAIP;
- Ensure that the complement of AWPBs addresses the NAIP's priorities comprehensively;
- Maintain an overview of DP/NGO projects supporting the NAIP;
- Support government-DP coordination in NAIP implementation; be an accessible partner to DPs in the sector (DCAFS, and where relevant DoNUTS);
- Keep an overview of resource government and DP flows to the NAIP and advice on a balancing of these resources so that NAIP priorities are addressed in a thematically and geographically balanced manner (i.e. avoid a concentration of resources around, e.g. food security or certain districts); Where necessary advise DPs on direction of support to NAIP areas and on changes in project design to make support more NAIP compliant;
- Advise the ASWG on the vetting of projects in support of the NAIP;
- Compile M&E information from government (MOAIWD and other ministries) and DPs and monitor progress against NAIP targets.
- Support the undertaking of the JSR including compiling progress reports and organising the events;
- Undertake monitoring activities including sector wide bi-annual outcome surveys and linking with National Statistical Office on such studies

Management of support to the NAIP:

The management of support to the NAIP still requires the existence of PMUs to manage donor-funded projects. Especially when, as is the case in Malawi, DPs use several different modalities. In agriculture, one is a pool fund managed under WB procedures, along with projects. And the project modality is very different among different donors: For example, an EU project has different requirements than has a Belgium project, and in particular IFIs have different modalities than bilateral. This makes the transaction costs of aid quite high in Malawi.

Based on the government's feedback, it is felt that this kind of management-of-aid type of work should be kept separate from the tasks of the NAIP Secretariat, so as not to overwhelm the Secretariat with submitting and changing proposals, submitting non-objections to procurement and reporting according to different donors' requirements.

Therefore, the proposal is to continue to have a PMU for the management of the support to the NAIP. However, the confusion that was created by having an ASWAP-Secretariat and an ASWAP-SP Secretariat should not occur. Thus the NAIP Secretariat should not be lumped together with the work of an aid management unit and that can be reflected in the name: MDTF-PMU, for example. The MDTF-PMU (current ASWAp-SP Coordination Unit) can continue to be based in the Department of Planning, while other PMUs may be based elsewhere, according to the thematic focus of the project. In the long run, as capacity (both staffing levels and staffing competencies) it would be desirable to reduce the PMU implementation modality towards mainstreaming with MOAIWD activities. This would not impact on the NAIP Secretariat.

Instruments of coordination:

The ***Agriculture Joint Sector Review*** has been undertaken since 2011 coordinated by MOAIWD. Over the years it has grown in strength and in 2015 the private sector actively participated. To reflect the spirit of public-private cooperation of the new NAIP, the JSR can in future be clearer also on the progress achieved by NSAs, and have less of a strong focus on what the government has done (with support of DPs). The JSR is a useful coordination tool as it brings all players to a common level of understanding and creates consensus around the way forward. It should be supported further under the NAIP.

Therefore a new NAIP ***Performance Assessment Framework*** (PAF) is being developed which will identify about 19 outcome indicators (one per intervention area), as well as higher level indicators, which will form the basis of reporting at the JSR³. This framework will be finalised once the NAIP is finalised and in close cooperation of the ASWG. For a sector to have a single PAF, that all players buy into, is a huge advantage and a tool that make inter-ministerial coordination or the coordination between government and DPs much easier.

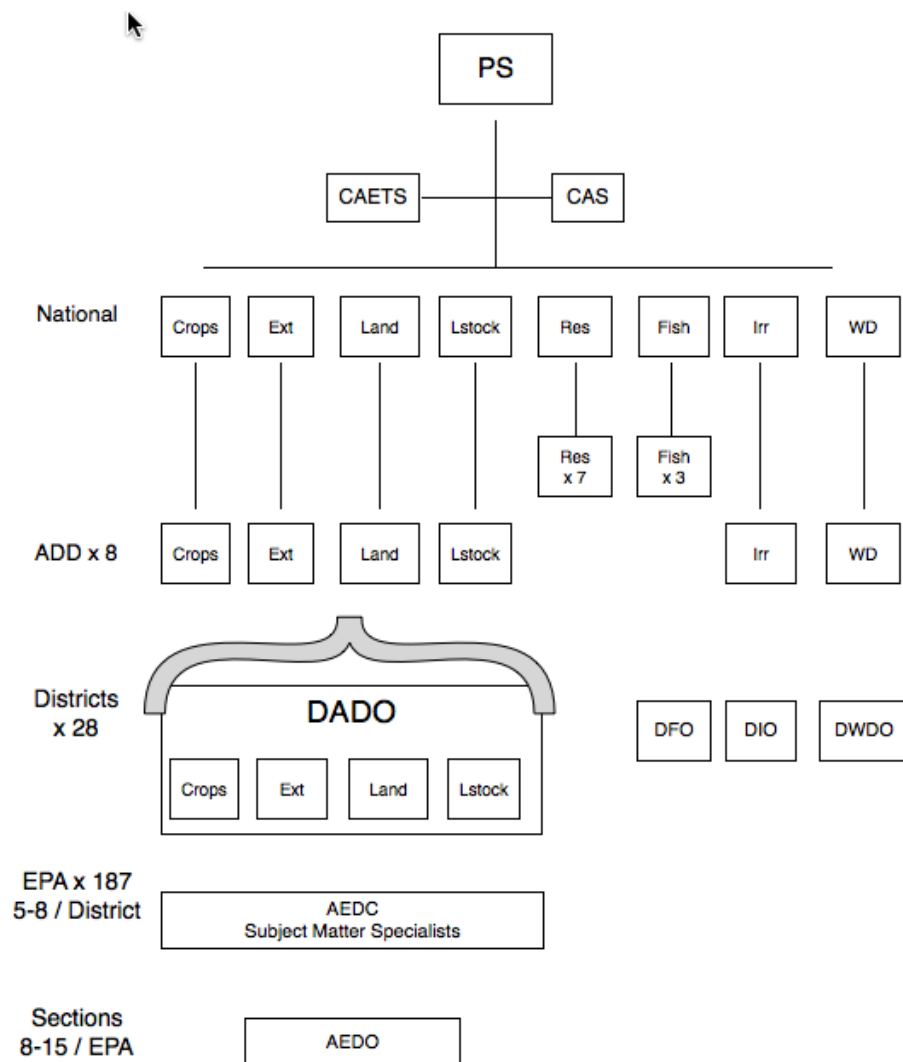
Another instrument is the annual ***Agriculture Sector Performance Report*** (ASPR). The ASPR is done annually for the JSR and informs the coordination process of the extent to which implementation is on track and where it needs to be adjusted.

³ The JSR process resulted in an overall ASWAp M&E framework of less than 30 indicators; these 30 indicators are integrated into the NAIP formulation process, although in some cases data was not available nor regularly collected; in other cases the NAP provides guidance on indicators that the NAIP will also take on-board.

NAIP Implementation

Strengthening downward implementation structures was a key objective also of ASWAp. However, this has happened to the extent that is needed, in part because of funding constraints, with the major part of expenditure concentrate at national level. Capacity constraints and an insufficiently implemented decentralisation policy have been further hindrances.

A Core Function Analysis was finalised in June 2016, which gives recommendations regards a restructuring of the high-level part of the ministry, as the CFA did not go down to Departmental and Unit structures at the operational level. Further, the CFA did not cover the departments of Irrigation and Water Development. It highlighted the silo-mentality of working and the fact that ASWAp had intended to change this. This has not happened sufficiently under ASWAp and the programme structure now propose for the NAIP hopes to overcome this more successfully. Especially when implemented together with the recommendations of the CFA for streamlining departments into fewer units and having a Chief Director responsible for several departments ensuring that issues across departments are harmonised and synthesised before they are shared with the PS. The role of the CAETS⁴ and CAS is important in this regard, as mentioned above.



Looking at downward implementation and potential coordination constraints, the following can be noted (see diagram). Technical departments at the national level are replicated at ADD level for all of the 8 Agriculture Development Division. The exception is Dep. of Fisheries of which there are only 3 at area level and the Dep. of Research that is situated in 7 agro-ecological regions suitable for the type of research for the particular institution.

At district level, the departments are again replicated, but the merger between

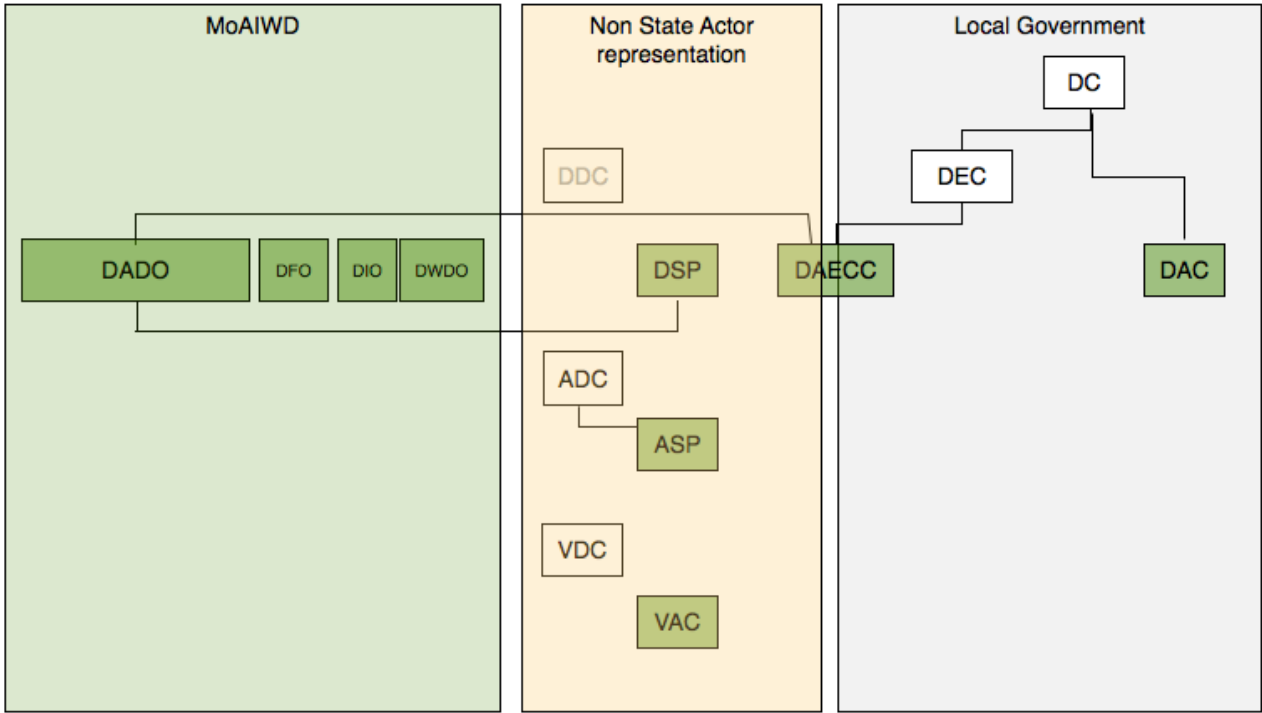
⁴ CAETS is responsible for departments of Crops, Extension and Lands. As per CFA proposal the CAETS and CAS are reflected at a level between the PS and departments, but implementation is yet to follow.

Agriculture and Irrigation and Water Development, as well as Fisheries (yet an earlier merger) has not taken place to the extent that these departments are part of District Agriculture Development Office. Instead, there are separate District Offices for each of these departments.

This also means that there is a District Agriculture Officer (DAO) and at the same hierarchical level there is a District Fisheries Officer, District Irrigation Officer and District Water Development Officer. All these officers are represented in the District Executive Committee (DEC) and the District Agriculture Extension Coordination Committee (DAECC). It is unlikely that these offices will be merged physically, as these buildings are part of the old ministerial structures.

- It is unclear whether this represents a coordination challenge, but before implementation of the NAIP starts this issue may need looking into.

At the district level, government structures interact with Local Government structures and structures that have non-state actor representation. Below is a very schematic diagram in which all structures that discuss agriculture are green, and structures are divided into those belonging to MoAIWD (green), those in which NSAs take part (orange) and those of Local Government (grey).



The DADO and offices of Fisheries, Irrigation and Water Development are members of the District Stakeholder Panel (DSP), which have a wide membership of service providers, private sector, farmers, CSOs and NGOs (e.g. CISANET). The same structure is at area level Area Stakeholder Panels (ASP) and at village level, Village Agriculture Committees (VAC). At all these levels MoAIWD staff are represented. This is a good opportunity that would enable upward information flow from farmers and other beneficiaries of the NAIP. However:

- How are VAC, ASP and DSP connected?

It is recommended that these linkages be strengthened under the NAIP so that an upward and downward communication can take place.

Then, at area level the ASP is a sub-platform of the Area Development Committee (ADC); the VAC at village level is connected to the Village Development Committee. However:

- There does not exist a District Development Committee (DDC) of which the DSP would be a part. Where do issues, questions, resolutions that are discussed at the DSP go to?

The DSP may lead directly into the District Agriculture Extension Coordinating Committee (DAECC), of which the DADO and fellow MoAIWD officers are also a member.

- What is the linkage and the division of roles between the DSP and the DAECC?

Both have government-NSA participation, so both are public-private platforms around agriculture. So in the interest of streamlining the manifold structures at district level:

- Can the DSP and the DAECC be merged?

On the side of the Local Government structures, below the District Council (DC) is the multi-sectoral District Executive Committee (DEC) comprised of technical officers from government and NGOs. The District Agriculture Extension Coordinating Committee (DAECC) is a sub-committee of the DEC and is one of the more effective public-private coordination structures at the district level.

The District Agriculture Committee (DAC) is made up of elected councillors. It seems to be one of the least effective agriculture platforms at district level in. Yet, it mirrors the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture at national level:

- Is there a way to link the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture to the DAC? The Parliamentary Committee can then receive input from the field and the DAC information from the national level.
- Or is the DAC so ineffective that it is best to abandon it in the effort to streamline district structures?

The DADOs are in the process of being integrated into the decentralized structure under the District Commissioner. When that is finalized, the DADOs will no longer be part of the MoAIWD structure.

- How will the absorption of the DADOs by the DC affect the MoAIWD's ability to be informed of implementation level progress and issues?

During the implementation of NAIP it is imperative that the connection to the field, via the available sub-national structures, is assured. This must become a working relationship, as the thrust of the NAIP must be at field and farm level.

How best to make use of the structures that are available, which ones to strengthen, which ones to merge, which to abandon, are issues that need to be addressed. They cannot all be addressed sufficiently during the formulation phase, but this national to district / field level channel must be made a topic of concern in the NAIP's first pillar on Enabling Environment and under the NAIP's policy priority of Institutional Development, Coordination and Capacity Strengthening.