

Engagement & Collaboration in Ghana's Research Institutions: Exploring the Who, Why, and How

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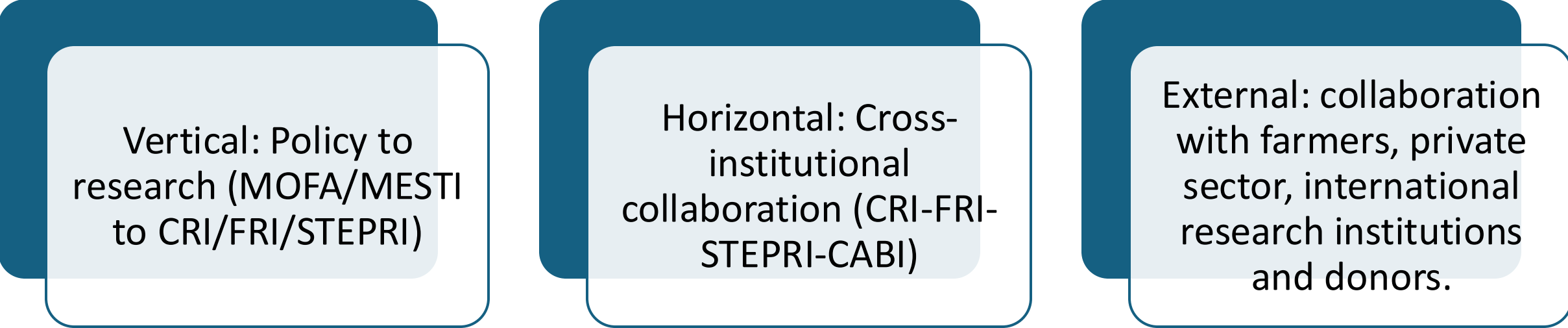
Key Question

How do engagement and collaboration take shape within Ghana?

- Who engages?
- Why do they happen?
- How are they structured?



Institutional Collaboration Topologies



Vertical: Policy to research (MOFA/MESTI to CRI/FRI/STEPRI)

Horizontal: Cross-institutional collaboration (CRI-FRI-STEPRI-CABI)

External: collaboration with farmers, private sector, international research institutions and donors.

The Process

Drivers of Collaboration

- Formal mandates play a role.
- Strategic necessity—access to funding, resources, and relevance.
- International funders and global networks are powerful catalysts—and sometimes gatekeepers.
- Initiation from below—farmers' association or private sector actors.

Directionality of Knowledge

- Resource-holders (expertise or funding) shape project goals and implementation.
- Power asymmetries influence whether collaboration is politically embedded or technically standardised.

Structural Constraints

- Delayed or limited government funding.
- Competitive donor funding landscapes.
- Bureaucratic barriers in cross-institutional coordination.

Key Tension

- Collaboration is both a response to constraint and a performance of legitimacy.

Navigating Interfaces: Linking Research to Policy and Practice

Why Engagement Matter

- Enhances the **relevance and usability of research** in national development contexts (Clark et al., 2016).
- Supports **scaling of innovations** by linking scientific outputs to local needs (Scoones & Thompson, 2009).
- Bridges gaps between **formal science and Indigenous or experiential knowledge** (Chambers, 1994; Sumberg & Thompson, 2012).

Institutions operationalise through:

- **Advisory roles**—policy briefs, stakeholder meetings, and embedded researchers (Weiss, 1979; Jasanoff, 2005)
- **Extension work**—collaborating with MOFA officers and NGOS.

Challenges

- **Policy fragmentation** due to siloed institutional approaches and misaligned global-local agendas.
- **Tensions** between **national policy** goals and **donor-driven frameworks** (Pomerantz, 2004; Fraser & Whitfield, 2009).
- **Communication barriers** and **resource constraints** that hinder sustained engagement (Hall et al., 2001)

Sociological Insight: More than Coordination

These spaces reveal **negotiations over legitimacy, expertise, and institutional authority** (Gieryn, 1983)

Interfaces between science, policy, and practice are not linear — they involve **boundary work**, power dynamics, and selective translation (Hoppe, 2005; Leach et al., 2006)

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Thank You