

From Participation to  
Partnerships :  
a novel way for Research to  
accompany innovations  
processes.  
Emerging lessons & challenges

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# Introduction: Research & Stakeholders

- The conventional approach is still dominant in the scientific world with a top-down approach
- There are some firm steps towards listening and working with all the actors engaged in the innovation process (farmers, FOs, NGOs, public institutions, firms,...)
- It's a long story from on-farm research, farming systems, participatory research, learning process, innovation system approach
- *This presentation will assess some experiences and challenges dealing with Action-Research in partnership*

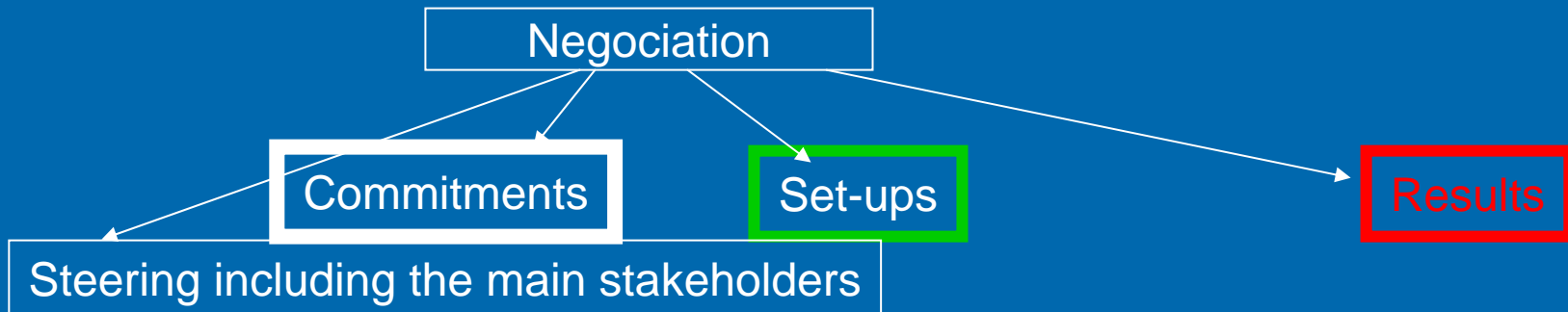
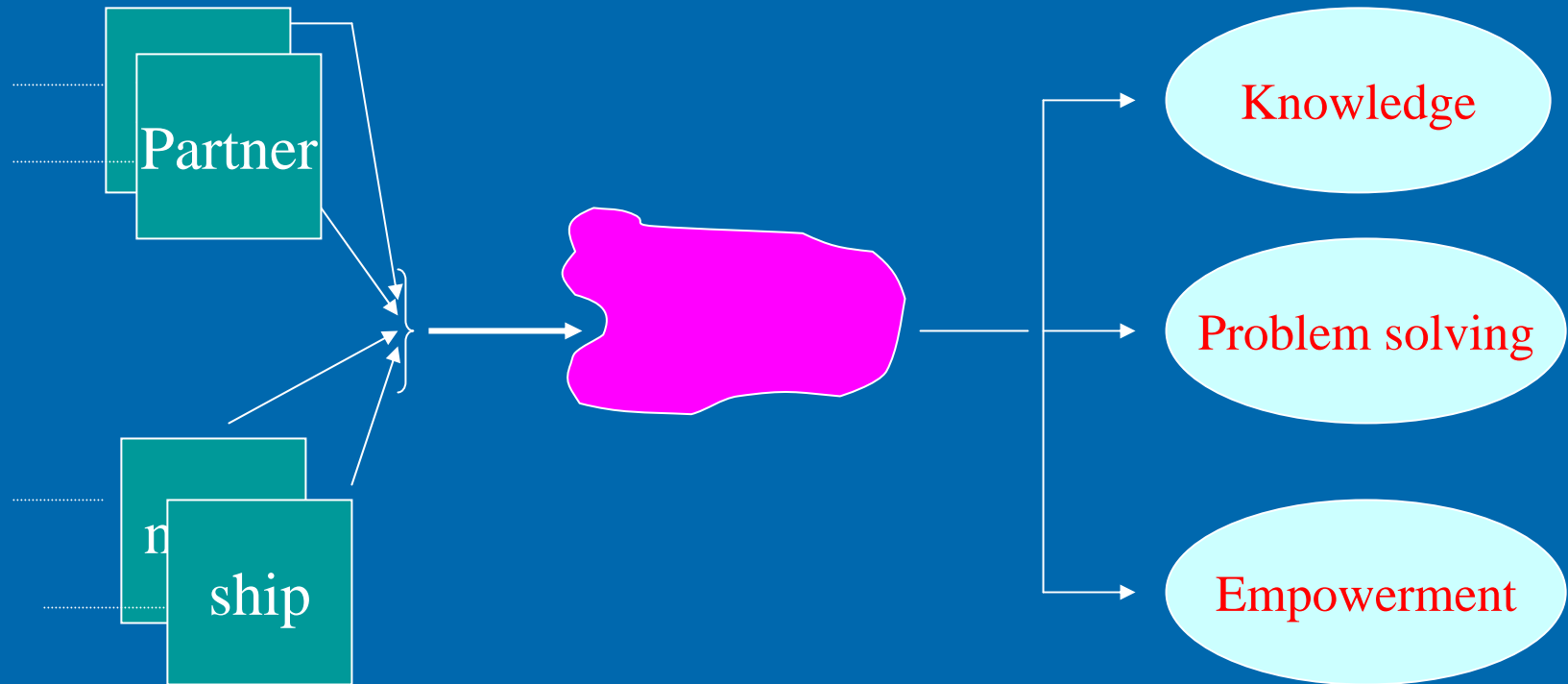
# Objectives

- Main research question
  - ***What type of partnerships and which mechanisms related to AR are needed to strengthen the capacity of rural societies to innovate ?***
- Systematization of experiences
  - Analyze of 10 case studies for which researchers worked with other stakeholders “in a different way”
  - Using a guideline

# Case studies

Sites	Themes	Major stakeholders				Period
		Research	F.O.	Tec.	Misc.	
<i>Nicaragua</i>	<i>Participatory breeding sorgho</i>	XX	X	X		2003-2006
<b><i>Mexique</i></b>	<b><i>Conservation Agriculture &amp; Irrigation</i></b>	<b>XX</b>	<b>XX</b>	<b>XX</b>	<b>X</b> <b>(Input supplier)</b>	<b>2000-2004</b>
<i>Reunion Island</i>	<i>Territorial development</i>	X	X		X	1999-2000
<b><i>Cameroun</i></b>	<b><i>Diffusion of banana transplants</i></b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		<b>1997-2002</b>
<i>Costa Rica</i>	<i>Imagining the future of smallholder agriculture</i>	XX	XX	X		2004-2005
<b><i>Equateur</i></b>	<b><i>Cocoa Supply chain issues</i></b>	<b>X</b>	<b>XXX</b>		<b>x</b> <b>(Agro-industry)</b>	<b>2000- ....</b>
<i>Brazil – Nordeste</i>	<i>Innovations to cope with drought</i>		(ONG)	XX	XXX	1992-2003
<b><i>Brazil - Cerrados</i></b>	<b><i>Sustainable Devevelopment in Agrarian Reform Sector</i></b>	<b>XX</b>	<b>XX</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b> <b>(form)</b>	<b>2002 - ....</b>
<i>North Cameroon</i>	<i>Farm management advice</i>	XX	X			1998-2004
<b><i>France -LR</i></b>	<b><i>PPB organic durum wheat</i></b>	<b>XX</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>2003- ....</b>

# Key principles of AR-P





# Key highlights & lessons

A unmanageable process ?

# Characteristics of the AR-P

	Cam	Me	Reu	Bre	CR	Fra	Nic	Ecu
<b>Results</b> - Knowledge - Solutions to problems - Empowerment	XX	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
				X	X	X	Xx	Xx
				X	X	X	x	x
<b>Commitments'</b> formalization								XX
<b>Set-ups</b> - Governance - rules (co-management)		Xx						X
		X	X	X	X	X	XX	XX

# Lesson 1: ARK is a result of encounters which are not happening just by chance but it's hard to plan

- Some individuals have a key role depending on their trajectory, objectives, social status,... making them available to an encounter between their interests and the common project
- The structures / community need to support individual efforts by offering degrees of freedom and means.
- The success of the encounter is “the right people in the right place, at the right time, and with the capacity to mobilize resources (human, financial, information)

# Lessons 2 : AR occurs under Break-downs with respect to prevailing paradigms

Two types of break-down are often necessary

## 1) within the institutions or organizations

- With the role of individuals who are often members of minority or even dissident groups

## 2) with respect to the approaches

- With a frustration with respect to conventional approaches and their limitations in providing solutions to problems faced by users
- With the willingness to take risks with non conventional methods from a scientific or institutional viewpoint

# Lessons 3 : Crisis is a sign of process maturity

- The process is usually describes with different phases
  - preliminary contacts, participatory diagnostic, action plan design, implementation, evaluation,
- But crisis occur generated by
  - Different interests among the participants
- The crisis demonstrates or could demonstrate
  - AR is dealing with the real challenges
  - the appropriation of the process
- The crisis generates
  - A stop and go process
  - Evolutions in the objectives, activities but also commitments
- The crisis are manageable but unpredictable

# Lessons 4 : AR is a Co-construction of the knowledge and the set-ups

- Co-construction implies negotiations and formalization about :
  - Results expected
  - Way to work together (rules, ethical framework, coordination mechanisms, steering committee, contracts,...)
- With the partnership there is a need to address a broader range of issues than in conventional approaches, so that each partner can develop its own role and own way to participate & find answers to its own problems
- **Co-construction** of innovation requires specific set-ups
  - Set-ups are both a major challenge and a major product of a co-construction process
  - Set-ups are diverse, usually complex, and with rapid evolution
  - There is a need to separate operational issues and scientific issues in the making decision process to both produce shared scientific knowledge and concentrate the action on problem solving

# Key Challenges

- Issue related to set-ups: which ones are more efficient for which objectives, in which context, in which stage of the process
- Issue related to scales (from local to national), how they can be articulated and how to proceed at each level (a simple scaling up is not possible!)
- Issue related to the key stakeholders involvement : how to identify them , how to involve them
- Issue related to the right balance between Research and the other partners in coordinating the project, taking into account the empowerment process of the partners
- The recognition of the AR methods is still an issue in the academic world :
  - We are talking about constructivism vs positivism, multidisciplinary research vs disciplinary,...
  - need to train (formally and by doing) researchers and their partners to these approaches
- And so many others

A group of approximately 15 people are gathered outdoors in a rural setting, surrounded by trees and a field of young plants. Some individuals are standing and talking, while others are sitting on the ground. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. The text "Thanks for your attention" is overlaid in the center of the image in a white, sans-serif font with a black outline.

Thanks for your attention