

FAIR: Findings from an international review of experiences

Laurens van Veldhuizen
Mariana Wongtschowski
Ann Waters-Bayer

Background

- PROLINNOVA encourages actors in formal ARD to recognise local innovation and engage in joint experimentation and learning with farmers
- Partners saw need for alternative funding mechanisms to support farmer-led PID
- Developed concept of **Local Innovation Support Fund (LISF)** to allow farmers to invest in their own research and decide on the support they need for this

International review of experiences to identify strategic questions

- French funding support (DURAS programme) to pilot LISFs in Cambodia, Ethiopia, South Africa and Uganda:

FAIR (Farmer Access to Innovation Resources)

- PROLINNOVA International Support Team reviewed relevant experiences worldwide to provide basis on which each Country Programme could develop its own design for piloting LISFs

Cases reviewed

- CATF: Competitive Agricultural Technology Funds (Uganda)
- CIAL: Local Agricultural Research Committee (Latin America)
- SSPF: Small-Scale Project Funds (GTZ)
- ATIRI: Agricultural Technology and Information Response Initiative (Kenya)
- SF-FFS: Self-Financed Farmer Field Schools (Kenya + Uganda)
- NIF: National Innovation Foundation (India)
- C3F: City Community Challenge Fund (Zambia + Uganda)
- Horticulture Innovation Fund (Netherlands)
- LIBIRD Local Innovation Support Fund (Nepal)

Strategic choices... “big questions”



Level of decentralisation

National

Regional

District

Farmer-owned? Institutionally-based?

Three main modalities:

1. LISF inside already existing organisation outside the community (NGO, GO, research)
2. Newly created independent institution
3. LISF based in farmer group, union or cooperative

Individual vs group applications

- Groups:
 - Strengthening existing groups
 - Potential to regenerate funds
 - Advocacy
- Individuals:
 - Giving a chance to creative people

What could an LISF finance?

- Costs of cross visits
- Costs directly related to experimentation: notebooks, measuring equipment etc
- Payment for involvement of governmental development agents – travel, accommodation
- Documentation material
- Insurance – if experiment fails, LISF covers the loss

Selection criteria – examples

- Likely to be relevant to the poor
- No negative gender implications
- Potential for dissemination
- Environmental aspects and sustainability
- Strength and past record of individual/group
- Farmer-owned experiments

Who selects the proposals? An ideal selection committee...

- Inclusion of representatives of all stakeholders:
 - Willingness and availability
 - History of cooperation
 - Experience in participatory approaches
- Not too large... not too small...
- Include formal researchers?
- Conflict of interest: do I get to approve the grant I will be working with?

Sustainability

- Time horizon: DURAS (French funding) for only two years
- Replenishing the funds
 - Diversify donor base
 - Institutionalisation tapping on governmental resources
 - Farmer-led partial replenishment
 - Endowment fund

Conclusions and next steps

- Few experiences thus far in **farmer-led** LISFs
- Key questions and suggestions provided to Country Programmes to consider when setting up their LISFs
- Studies to explore experiences and best institutional set-ups in each particular country
- Country Programmes have embarked on the pilots with farmer groups and supporting NGOs
- **Monitoring and evaluation** central to learning from this action research