



GLOBAL OVERVIEW 2017

Building, changing, learning



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A year of progress – CDAIS in 2017: a global overview

Introduction

The project aim is to strengthen the functional capacities of actors involved in agricultural innovation systems – or in other words, to strengthen the ability of such actors to make things happen in complex and unpredictable situations. This is taking place through ‘learning by doing’ at three levels: (i) innovation niche partnership (micro) level; (ii) organizational (meso) level; and (iii) policy and regulatory (macro) level. Learnings were facilitated through specially designed training, coaching, mentoring, workshops, meetings and innovation fairs. It is presumed that individual learning can be acquired and remobilized if the professional context in which these individuals evolve allows them to do so. Thus, the issue of capacity building of the organizations and its environment are crucial. If organizations develop their ability to innovate, openly and responsibly in multi-stakeholder situations, this will de facto, address the need to build individual functional capacities. If the policies provide the incentives and support mechanisms, then the partnerships and organizations are given the opportunity to innovate.

In 2017, the main activities were to define the vision, capacity gaps and action plans of selected innovation niche partnerships in the eight pilot countries. A consultative approach was developed to engage the actors in a learning mode that tracks changes in their knowledge, attitude and practice. The approach is guided by outcome mapping. Hence, to assess success, CDAIS uses progress markers, i.e. a series of milestones revisited and revised, instead of just identifying fixed end-point indicators as usually used in project logframes. And at the end, each innovation niche partnership has a coaching plan.

The coaching plan is a tool that consolidates the information gathered from the capacity needs assessment and defines the way forward with tracking mechanisms. More details on the concept of the coaching plan is described in the next section and the country reports provide information on the lessons derived on its use. The coaching plan or general vision of each niche partnership were validated at the national level and presented at an innovation fair or ‘marketplace’. The objective is to get the political ‘buy-in’, and to engage other potential partners and attract new investors in the partnership.

The following synthesis provides insights into the achievements, lessons learnt, and ways forward, from experiences amongst the eight CDAIS pilot countries in 2017. And the challenges faced are well summed up in the (French) cartoon shown.



“Who wants change?”

“Who wants to change?”



“This is only a pilot project, but I see the momentum that has already been created, and that the process is being handled with reflection. You can grasp much from the country reports and much more can be gained from cross-cutting experiences between the different countries.”

Pierre Fabre, European Commission/DG DEVCO, during the 3rd CDAIS Global Consultation held at the National Agricultural and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), Lao PDR, 18-19 September 2017

Background to CDAIS

Improving rural livelihoods through agricultural innovations seemed easy. Technologies were introduced i.e., new seed varieties, micro-finance, and much more. But progress was still limited. Why? It was seen that irrespective of what new technologies offered, farmers and those who work with them, still lack the ‘functional capacities’ or ‘soft skills’ needed for change to happen e.g. the ability to link with others, negotiate, and engage in political processes. This conclusion was confirmed at a 2011 meeting of ministers of agriculture from the G20 countries, who then decided to support the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) to address this.

In 2015, CDAIS partners from eight countries in Africa, Asia and Central America, along with many global partners, were given the challenging task of putting into practice a new concept. As a first step, CDAIS initiated a global consultation through the TAP Global Taskforce. They agreed on a common methodology called ‘the framework on capacity development for agricultural innovation systems’. But would it work? There was only one way to find out. CDAIS used this conceptual framework to guide its activities in eight pilot countries.

Funded by the European Commission, the Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovations Systems (CDAIS) project is managed by Agrinatura, a consortium of European universities and research institutes, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and national partners in the pilot countries (Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Laos and Rwanda).

Achievements

Fifty national innovation facilitators, trained

CDAIS is working with 50 individual facilitators in the agricultural innovation process, referred to as national innovation facilitators (NIFs). The professional profile and picture of each is on www.cdais.net, by country. They are coached by Agrinatura Focal Persons and FAO country project managers, each is referred to as national innovation facilitator (NIF), mostly working with a single innovation niche partnership or organization. Since the start of the project in 2016, they have received formal and on-the-job training in the following areas.

- Conducting participatory capacity needs assessment using tools to i) analyse partnerships through their history, ii) review and analyse relevant initiatives, relationships among value chain actors or actors within a geographic area, iii) analyse challenges or gaps in the partnerships and value chains, and iv) facilitate joint visioning.
- Initiating and documenting an innovation process using coaching plans that captures the baseline of engagement of partnerships, why the actors are engaged in partnerships, identification of the primary movers that catalyse change to innovate, the changes needed, and how changes will be achieved.
- Facilitating reflection and refinement of actions to ensure joint actions to innovate are achieved.

Two guides on strengthening capacities to innovate, produced and adapted

These guides were developed to assist in strengthening the capacities of national innovation facilitators (NIFs), and as a reference in the coaching process of the innovation niche partnerships, and organizations providing innovation support services.



(a) Guide on the coaching process of innovation niche partnership

CDAIS identifies learning cycles to coach and track progress in innovation niche partnerships. Each niche partnership is facilitated by a national innovation facilitator (NIF) who brings together key actors to address commonly identified challenges and opportunities in specific regions or within a value chain. Together, they develop and implement action plans focused on strengthening their functional capacities. Capacities are strengthened through learning cycles. If actors have the functional capacities, they are empowered to take advantage of opportunities or face the challenges.

Such an approach requires not just facilitation skills, but also an understanding of the concepts of learning and acting together. Listening, identifying opportunities, matching and finding synergies with potential partners and, continuous reflection among the actors are needed. NIFs are coached by the Agrinatura Focal Person to facilitate so that actors in the innovation niche partnerships can jointly plan, act, learn and re-plan. One complete process is called a learning cycle. This is described in the guide, as well as how the NIFs can achieve this. The process can be put together in three stages:

Stage 1. Engaging and planning with relevant actors to work together. The initial step is conducting a participatory capacity needs assessment, using tools to review any existing partnerships or relevant initiatives. Awareness is raised on the potential of partnerships. The second step is consolidating and validating the identified opportunities and challenges. Actors are invited to discuss and agree to work together. The output is the first version of a coaching plan. It consolidates the ideas and track changes among actors in terms of knowledge, attitude and practice. Details on the coaching plan is described in the next section.

Stage 2. Acting on agreed actions. Actors conduct activities together that improves their functional capacities. This could be skills training, joint development of strategic and business plans, or negotiating to access resources, e.g. with micro-finance or input suppliers.

Stage 3. Reflection and refinement of actions. Having conducted certain activities, actors gather again to reconsider if activities or actions contributed (or not) to the agreed vision or objectives of the niche partnership or, if the objectives of working together must change based on new knowledge gained. The process results to revised coaching plan. Coaching plan is revised by the NIFs based on this joint reflection. The NIFs are expected to have the capacity to evaluate the partnerships i.e. how it is evolving and progressing against their agreed objectives using the progress markers.

The guide is not a blueprint to be used in the same way across all countries, or even in all niche partnerships within one country. Rather, it is a general approach with series of steps to stimulate learning and readjustment of activities to achieve the objectives of each partnership.

(b) Guide on organizational coaching process

Each innovation niche partnerships has diverse needs for innovation support services (ISS), e.g. to engage a community to work together; establish partnerships; experiment, develop or adapt innovation, or create change at scale (political advocacy, financing, patents, etc.). Several organizations can respond to these needs, but generally, with limitations. Strengthening the organization's ISS capacity is one of the key objectives of CDAIS to complete the three levels of interventions. CDAIS proposes three capacity domains for ISS.

To organise. This concerns the internal resources of an organization, i.e. its ability to create a conducive environment for innovative ideas and service delivery. It is affected by the type of leadership, use and management of teams, and investments in staff.

To relate. This looks at the organization's relationship with the outside world, i.e. if it is dependent/independent of, or complimentary with, the other actors; if it has a power to influence or an affirmed legitimacy; and if it frequently exchanges with the outside world and if the nature of these exchanges is defined/clear.

To deliver. These are the services and products the organization designed and packaged as innovation support services, i.e. technical know-how, its relevance, effectiveness and sustainability.

This guide describes the CDAIS process of how organizations can be supported by NIFs to gain these functional capacities of organizations. Three stages of coaching are proposed: (i) organizational analysis, (ii) co-visioning and joint planning, and (iii) action, reflection and refinement.



The monitoring, evaluation and learning framework, including coaching plans

In 2016, CDAIS developed its monitoring, evaluation and learning framework (MEL). The main objective is to regularly monitor and evaluate learning and capacity development processes, so that interventions can be adapted in a timely manner in response to specific needs. Thus achieve greater impact. By doing this, evidence of the impact pathway is regularly produced as progress is made. At the end, the donor can fully understand the reality of the implementation of the project.

In 2017, a coaching plan (based on the MEL framework) was developed as a tool to track the changes of actors within the niche partnerships. It has four main components:

WHY. Consolidates findings of capacity needs assessments i.e., beneficiaries, value added of innovation, partnership's vision and priority objectives. Priority objectives are defined based on joint analysis with the actors on current opportunities and challenges.

WHO. Lists priority actors of change to allow partnerships to achieve its objectives. Actors can have negative or positive impacts. It is important to know these key actors, so the partnership knows how to manage interactions and/or influence them.

WHAT. For each actor, change is expected for innovation to happen. What should change are described through progress markers. Changes can be in knowledge, attitude and/or behavior.

HOW and WHEN. This is basically, the action plan of the niche partnership. It lists priority activities to achieve the objectives, i.e. resources required, responsible actors, timeframe of delivery, etc.

Each coaching plan is expected to evolve over time. It is updated after each learning cycle in particular, after the reflection and refinement workshops.

Innovation fairs / marketplaces

Actors involved in the innovation niche partnerships in all but one of eight pilot countries presented their visions and proposed activities to potential innovation service providers during an innovation fair or marketplace. These were one day events where development partners including potential donors were invited, including innovation support service providers e.g. micro-finance organizations. During the events, the niche partnerships representatives and NIFs facilitated the discussions. Proposals on working together were presented. In turn, they were given advice about their vision, objectives and proposed activities.

Stories of change, capturing personal experiences

Eight stories of change were published on www.cdais.net. Each covered an aspect of how CDAIS facilitated or catalysed change among actors in the value chain or geographic region. Stories described how actors observed changes, personal and organizational, through interactions and joint planning. Stories include experience from the capacity needs assessment on feed safety in Ethiopia, NIF training in the rice-aquaculture niche in Laos, and sharing experiences in the mango value chain in Bangladesh. All stories were authored by national facilitators, with support from a communications specialist to help to build their writing capacities. And with more news items, the website became much more active.

Global consultations and team building

Throughout the year, project team members at national and global level meet virtually and globally. Discussions were organized around thematic topics and operational issues. The Agrinatura task team and project management team and country teams meet regularly in a month either virtually or physically.

A [major consultation was held in Laos in September](#) where country teams of each eight pilot countries attended i.e. lead national innovation facilitators, country project managers and national project coordinators. This was an opportunity for cross country exchange especially on country adaptation of concepts and methodologies.

Lessons learnt

Ensuring linkages between the four levels of interventions

A unique approach of CDAIS is the comprehensive way it strengthens capacities at individual, partnership,



organizational and systems level. This requires investment in building relationships among individuals and organizations of diverse cultures, interests and capacities. Efforts continue to build links between actors at all levels, to strengthen teams or working groups, and to jointly find solutions. These are achieved through workshops, meetings (formal and informal), and interpersonal discussions. It relies heavily on the network of members of the CDAIS project, and members within each innovation niche partnership.

Intensive cycles of concept development, context adaptation and documentation

The CDAIS approach might sound simple, but engaging people to be part of the process is a challenge. Change can be daunting for individuals or organizations due to perceived consequences, risks or presumptions. CDAIS proposes accompanying change at all levels in such diverse environments. This requires openness and an ability to adapt, rather than having a fixed framework of operation. CDAIS uses an iterative methodology, i.e. initiating ideas/concepts, testing in one country, capturing lessons for sharing with others (within the country and across the eight pilot countries), and having a pragmatic and adaptable approach to planning consequent steps. This might include stopping an activity, or redoing it differently because it has not adequately responded to identified needs or issues. Learning also occurs within the CDAIS team together with its implementing partners (learning-by-doing) as each capacities are reinforced during each stage of the process. This iterative process is captured in the coaching plans of innovation niche partnerships and innovation support service organizations. Such an approach requires long term investment, and cannot be achieved with a short, fixed term, four-year project.

Communicating with decision makers at all levels

Engaging policy makers to promote and accompany change requires more than one single dialogue or event. It requires building relationships and gaining commitments at all levels. In addition, policy change exists not only at national level. It can be initiated or supported at community and regional level. Such diversity requires regular communication of concrete information that is of interest to policy and decision makers. For example, policy makers will only be able to envisage a national action plan if they know the level of existing support services, or if such a plan is identified as a priority by the government and if there are adequate resources allocated for its implementation.

The challenge of sustainability, and understanding of the CDAIS approach

Despite various initiatives on agricultural innovation systems, there is still very limited understanding on the concept and its use. Most national facilitators knew about agricultural innovation systems but had limited field experience in facilitating an innovation process. Finding the most relevant actors to work together is a challenge. The appropriate resources (time, human and financial) are not always available to support partnerships and key organizations. Furthermore, the management of multi-disciplinary teams and inter-organizational collaboration that underlie collective innovation, remain superficial. There is an essential need to reflect in the medium and long term, on how the multi-level, iterative, tailor-made, intensive knowledge-producing CDAIS approach can be internalized and carried forward by sustainable and legitimate organizations.

Next steps

In Year 4, the innovation niche partnerships will undergo at least two to three learning cycles. These include strengthening the functional capacities of actors through training on specific themes (management, business skills, partnership building, proposal writing, negotiation skills, etc.), or facilitating negotiation among actors to agree on issues such as commodity prices, access to markets or finance. NIFs will continue to receive coaching and specific training on facilitation and use of CDAIS tools such as outcome mapping.

The organizational coaching process will be initiated using the guidelines developed, and an additional team of facilitators will be trained to accompany the organizations. The first task is organizational analysis where NIFs will be trained on its purpose and use.

The 4th CDAIS Global Team Meeting will be held in the middle of 2018. The objectives is to review and reflect on the progress in the countries and relevance/adaptation of approaches and methodologies. At the end of the meeting, adjustments of plans and resources will be reconsidered as needed.



Country teams

Angola

- Afonso Zola, *FAO Country Office CDAIS Focal Person*
- Armando Valente, *National Project Coordinator (NPC)*
- Madalena Teles, *Agrinatura-EEIG Focal Person (AFP), UL/ISA*
- Maria de Fátima do Nascimento, *Country Project Manager (CPM)* (starting in September 2017)

Bangladesh

- Claire Coote, *Agrinatura-EEIG Focal Person (AFP), NRI*
- Mohammad Shahjahan, *National Project Coordinator (NPC)*
- Nasreen Sultana, *Country Project Manager (CPM)*
- Nur A. Khondaker, *FAO Country Office CDAIS Focal Person*
- Rozana Wahab, *Agrinatura, Lead NIF*

Burkina Faso

- Aurélie Toillier, *Agrinatura-EEIG Focal Person (AFP), Cirad*
- Daouda Kontongomé, *FAO Country Office CDAIS Focal Person*
- Georges Yameogo, *National Project Coordinator (NPC)*
- Propser Kola, *Agrinatura, Lead NIF*
- Zacharie Segda, *Country Project Manager (CPM)*

Ethiopia

- Amanuel Assefa, *Country Project Manager (CPM)*
- Chilot Yirga, *National Project Coordinator (NPC)*
- Hanneke Bouta Vermeulen, *Agrinatura-EEIG Focal Person (AFP), ICRA*
- Kebebe Ergano, *Agrinatura, Lead NIF*
- Lemma Gitachew, *FAO Country Office CDAIS Focal Person*

Guatemala

- Julio Catalán, *Country Project Manager (CPM)*
- Marco Vinicio Cahueque, *National Project Coordinator (NPC)*
- Massimo Battaglia, *Agrinatura-EEIG Focal Person (AFP), AICS*
- Maynor Estrada, *FAO Country Office CDAIS Focal Person*
- Nury Furlan, *Agrinatura CD Expert*

Honduras

- Edgardo Navarro, *Country Project Manager (CPM)*
- German Flores, *FAO Country Office CDAIS Focal Person*
- Nury Furlan, *Agrinatura CD Expert*
- Orlando Caceres, *National Project Coordinator (NPC)*
- Stefano Del Debbio, *Agrinatura-EEIG Focal Person (AFP), AICS*

Laos PDR

- Bounthong Bouahom, *National Project Coordinator (NPC)*
- Chanthalath Pongmala, *FAO Country Office CDAIS Focal Person*
- Oudong Keomipheth, *Country Project Manager (CPM)*
- Patrick d'Aquino, *Agrinatura-EEIG Focal Person (AFP), Cirad*

Rwanda

- Charles Murekezi, *National Project Coordinator (NPC)*
- Gilbert Kayitare, *Country Project Manager (CPM)*
- Hans Dobson, *Agrinatura-EEIG Focal Person (AFP), NRI*



- Otto Vianney Muhinda, *FAO Country Office CDAIS Focal Person*

Global core team

- Abdoulaye Saley Moussa, *FAO HQ Technical support to Angola, Burkina Faso and Ethiopia*
- Andrea Sonnino, *FAO HQ Technical support to Guatemala and Honduras*
- Christian Hoste, *Member POC as TAP Chair, TAP (till September 2017)*
- Delgermaa Chuluunbaatar, *Extension Officer, FAO – AGDR*
- Hanneke Lam, *Project support from EEIG Secretariat, Agrinatura-EEIG*
- Ilka Gomez, *Operation Assistant, FAO*
- Judith Francis, *Member POC as TAP Chair, TAP (starting September 2017)*
- Karin Nichterlein, *Member POC, FAO – AGDR, Technical support to Bangladesh and Rwanda*
- Magali Rouillier, *Project Financial Controller, Agrinatura/CIRAD*
- Manuela Bucciarelli, *FAO – AGDR, Technical support to Bangladesh and Rwanda*
- Myra Wopereis, *Ex-officio member POC, Project Global Coordinator, Agrinatura/ICRA*
- Nick Pasiecznik, *Global Communications Developer, Agrinatura/ICRA*
- Patrick Kalas, *Capacity Development Officer, FAO – OPCC*
- Philippe Petithuguenin, *Co-Chair Project Oversight Committee (POC), Agrinatura-EEIG/CIRAD*
- Richard Hawkins, *Member POC, Agrinatura/ICRA*
- Samy Gaiji, *Co-Chair Project Oversight Committee (POC), FAO – AGDR*
- Viviane Radier, *CDAIS Project Management Assistant, Agrinatura/ICRA*





Country Reports

This is the second part of the CDAIS global overview. It contains updates from each of the 8 pilot countries, i.e. Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Laos and Rwanda.





ANGOLA

Country Project Manager: Maria de Fátima do Nascimento

National Project Coordinator: Armando Valente

Agrinatura Focal Person: Madalena Teles

Lead National Innovation Facilitator: Clemente de Oliveira Paulo

MEL Focal Person: Romão Cabeto

Rural entrepreneurship

Location: Kwanza Sul

Aim: Providing business opportunities to new agricultural entrepreneurs and foster large-scale cereals and vegetable production.

Facilitator: Dibanzilua Nginamau



★ Luanda

KWANZA SUL



HUAMBO



BIÉ

SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN



Rice development

Location: Huambo and Bié

Aim: Increasing rice production and productivity and improve smallholder production techniques.

Facilitator: Juliana Sacamia



Community based seed production

Location: Huambo and Bié

Aim: Increasing the multiplication and commercialization of high quality seeds, produced by small producers

Facilitator: Zeferino Konda

ZAMBIA

BOTSWANA

Angola – 2017 country report



“The project has helped me to learn more and produce more. I see now that if we organize ourselves we can achieve even better profits.”

João Feliciano, smallholder farmer, Carpato 2, Kwanza Sul, Angola, and stakeholder in the rural enterprises innovation partnership

1. Key activities

Coaching process at niche partnership level

This builds on capacity needs assessments conducted in 2016 on the three selected niches: rural enterprises, seed production, and rice. Developing action plans started after the CNAs, before the coaching plan tool had been agreed at the global level. At that time, capacities to be improved were elaborated based on the needs identified by the partnerships and validated by them in a workshop. The first learning cycle took place in May 2017, in Huambo for all niche partnerships. It was focused on the creation and strengthening of partnerships. The coaching plan was then presented to the NIFs to be used for monitoring activities implemented in all partnerships. The development of the coaching plans was a difficult process not only for the NIFs but also for the AFP. The coaching plans for each innovation niche partnership were first drafted based on how the NIFs and the AFP understood the concept, expecting it to be updated over time and used as a tracking tool.

Validation workshop

The main goal of the validation workshop in April 2017 was to present to national innovation stakeholder (e.g. niche actors including agriculture institutions and government agencies), the results of the CNA especially the objectives of each niche partnerships and its required capacities to innovate. The niche partnerships presented



were rural entrepreneurship, planalto seeds and rice development in Huambo. The validation workshop was held for 2 days before the marketplace. The first day was a preparatory meeting for the actors of the partnerships to discuss the proposed “coaching plan”. On the second day, the validation workshop was held with the participation of the members of the partnerships, the Provincial Director of Agriculture, the representatives of the Administrators of the Municipalities of Huambo and Bailundo and the technical group. In total there were 46 people. The presence of these actors fostered active discussion that validated and improved the “coaching plans”.

“CDAIS is like a blacksmith’s furnace. We put in a hard problem, like a metal bar, afterwards we can work it into another shape as a tool that we need.”

Francisco Venda, president of Sementes do Planalto seed coop, Bailundo, Angola, stakeholder in the seed innovation partnership

Marketplace

The market place was held on 28 November 2017 at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, with 63 participants, from NGOs, research, academia, private institutions and banking. The objective was to identify innovative solutions to respond to capacity development needs and promote interaction between niche actors, donors and service providers. Three sessions were organised i) presentation of results of the capacity needs assessment and action plans, ii) exchange of experiences and discuss potential joint-actions to strengthen the capacities to innovate, and iii) facilitate partnerships to develop or generate new skills needed by the niche actors. The opening ceremony was chaired by the Secretary of State for Agriculture, Carlos Alberto Jaime Pinto, accompanied by representatives of FAO, Mamoudou Diallo, and the European Union, Danilo Barbero. The three partnership representatives presented posters containing the needs, action plans and its potential impacts. A ‘world café’ session allowed sharing of experiences on capacity development in agricultural innovation systems, where service providers presented to the partnerships their knowledge and experiences. The final session was group discussions to adjust expectations of partnerships and service providers, to establish agreements that responds to the capacity needs of the partnerships. The actors of the niche partnerships had the opportunity to be advised by service providers on how to improve their work. The participants unanimously agreed that it is necessary to improve both the technical and functional capacities to improve agricultural productivity (with assured quality). Thus, they should partner with the institution present, to improve knowledge and services.

Organizational capacity needs assessment

Three organizational capacity needs assessments were performed in May 2017, though the methodologies had not yet been finalized at the global level. Three organizations were identified to conduct this activity.

- The Faculty of Agriculture Sciences of University José Eduardo dos Santos (FCA) teaches and researches in agronomy, forestry and food technology, training extension agents in rural communities, and it has its own advisory services.
- The Agriculture Research Institute (IIA) focuses on generating knowledge, technologies and services that contribute to agriculture and forestry development. IIA executes and coordinates applied research and participatory research in the agriculture and forestry fields, with 9 agriculture research stations, 1 forestry station, 1 agriculture and livestock station, 6 specialized laboratories and 1 documentation and diffusion centre.
- The Sementes do Planalto Seeds Cooperative has as their main aim the multiplication of improved seeds (maize, bean and soya) to alleviate dependence on external resources. What is produced locally generates income for farmers and creates job opportunities.

These three organizations were selected based on the scoping study and suggestions from national experts in the CDAIS Technical Working Group appointed at the inception workshop. They emerged as key organizations to the niche partnerships and could have a regional impact. The organizations have potentials role in establishing national platforms, learning space and political lobbying mechanism on capacity development for agricultural innovation systems (CD4AIS). The final decision was made jointly with the National Project Coordinator. Based on this decision, next step was to meet with the directors to assess their interest in providing services to partnerships, present the concepts of CDAIS and niche partnerships, identify the service unit/department within the organization, and discuss who could be involved. Once the interest was expressed, a workshop was organised. On the first day of the workshop, a capacity needs assessment questionnaire (similar to the one done on the



partnerships CNA). This was followed by a presentation on CDAIS and the proposed process of the capacity needs assessment for each organization. An exercise on the timeline was conducted to understand the history of the organization in the past 5 years. Then, the first part of the 7S exercise was undertaken to understand more about organizational strategy, structure, systems, shared values, skills, style and staff. On the second day, the organizations completed the 7S exercise and questionnaire. Then, the netmap exercise was used to access relationships among organization, followed by the future-backwards to find paths to achieve the best possible scenario. The last session is on the questionnaire 2 (similar to that in the partnerships) was used. The analysis of results is ongoing as the methodologies were not finalized. More information will be gathered in the beginning of 2018 through interviews and will be integrated into the final guidelines of organizational CNAs.

Communications

During the marketplace, the media and minister of agriculture were informed about development of activities. Posters, flyers and press releases were produced, validated by the EC country delegation before the market place. Contacts were established regarding legislation (e.g. the seed niche) and training (rice and rural entrepreneurship niches). IIA supports CDAIS on logistics. Courtesy meetings were held with the local government of Bailundo and with the Provincial Direction of Agriculture of Huambo regarding project objectives and activities. Meetings were held with the EC country delegation to present the new project staff. Monthly briefings are held in the FAO office where the CPM presents activities, problems faced and next activities.

2. Capacities strengthened

Individual level

Dr. Armando Valente (IIA Director) took up the role of CDAIS national project coordinator at the start of 2017. He has followed all project activities by actively interacting with all team members, and participated fully in the marketplace. There was no CPM since October 2016, but from July 2017 Maria de Fátima do Nascimento took on this role. She immediately approached IIA and JICA to organize training and provide improved seeds for two of the three niches, and facilitated linkages among the NPC, FAO, EU delegation and AFP. She also attended the global consultation in Laos in September 2017 where she met other CPMs, exchanged ideas and experiences, and consequently she now know she can learn from their experiences and collaborate with them. She was responsible for the organization of the marketplace in November 2017. In June 2017, Ana Melo was replaced as AFP by Madalena Teles, who organized the 'partnership creation and strengthening workshop' after supporting the validation workshop and organizational CNA. She is improving her capacity to overcome challenges and to reflect and learn from each event.

FAO focal point Afonso Zola has been involved since the outset and provided valuable support especially during the absence of a CPM. A key problem was that four of the five NIFs left the project in 2017 to study abroad, so three new NIFs, were hired. In May 2017, they were trained on CNA methodologies. Since then they have been actively engaged in all activities, including the coaching process and development of coaching plans. But more work still has to be done with the NIFs and partnerships. Now, they know the importance of collaboration in working with the partnerships, but most importantly, they are improving their capacity to overcome challenges and to think of solutions together with the partnership actors. In May 2017, a new facilitator was integrated in the project, to be responsible for the MEL but could not attend the MEL workshop in Montpellier and did not show commitment to the CDAIS project. To solve this, one of the three new NIFs is now responsible for the MEL. The AFP and a capacity development expert attended the MEL workshop. They will pass the information to the MEL focal person.

“Collaboration needs compromise, and this is not always easy.”

Jorge Chicale, farmer, Terra do Futuro, Kwanza Sul, Angola, stakeholder in the rural enterprises innovation partnership

Niche level

A total of eighteen actors of the three partnerships (rice, seeds and rural entrepreneurship) attended a training workshop on 'Partnership creation and strengthening' where they discussed types of partnerships, risk identification, how to generate ideas, how to write a partnership agreement, and how to work with business model. All exercises were made by each partnership regarding their objectives, problems, etc., with the support of the



NIFs and the capacity development expert. They planned activities for the following months. One of the outcomes of this workshop is the strengthening of relationship among the actors of the partnerships which resulted to two technical training courses on agronomic practices for rice cultivation and how to multiply quality seeds. Actors of all partnerships attended the marketplace. This was an opportunity for the partnership actors to show their potential for partnerships. They also shared their experiences and challenges with the capacity development service providers and donors. At the end of the market place, the actors improved their communication capacities and collaboration skills with different partners.

3. Lessons learnt

Marketplace

Enough time for preparation and delivery of presentations is crucial to success. The marketplace should have taken place in Huambo where two of the partnerships are located, and not in the capital Luanda. The mapping and identification of service providers should be carried out earlier to maximise their presence at the event, and more service providers could have been invited. Immediate follow-up with service providers after the marketplace would ensure a better clarification on future agreements with partnerships. There are more partnerships outside CDAIS project that could benefit from this CD approach. The establishment of a national platform would be a way of integrate more actors of development interested.

Coaching plan development

The coaching plan concept should have been clearer at the beginning. The tools should be better explained and should be available earlier. The AFP should have a clear knowledge of the tools to be able to pass on information to the NIFs. And the NIFs should be well familiarized with the tool, to implement it properly. The approach used initially after the CNA is different from the one being applied now. The initial approach resulted to a uniform 'coaching plan' for all partnerships because it was elaborated based on common needs, gathered during the CNA. At that time, the coaching plan tool was not available. Four learning cycles were planned, each one composed of a learning event followed by a field visit to each niche. Now, a coaching plan for each partnership is being developed, tailor-made to fit their needs and action plans designed accordingly.

Organizational capacity needs assessment

The objectives should have been made clearer to the attending actors, and the tools used should have been agreed earlier. The tools applied were not perfect to assess organizational capacities to provide innovation support services. The results of CNA of Seeds Cooperative were very similar to the ones of seeds partnership CNA, so it was decided not to keep it at the organizational level. In mid-2017, the tools applied were those available at that time, but the final tools for the organizational coaching process were only developed and finalized later. This raised some questions, i.e. should we advance and do things on time but therefore a little bit differently, or should everyone wait until all countries 'are on same page' and delay activities for that year if not everyone is ready?

4. Next steps

The next priority is the finalisation and implementation of coaching plans per niche partnership. This should include support to NIFs and adaptation to the context in each niche partnership. The niche coaching process started in 2017, but it will be rigorously supported for each partnership between February and October 2018. For example, in the rural entrepreneurship partnership there will be support for agribusiness activities and managing cooperatives or associations. The seeds partnership will be supported in administrative and financial management and how to prepare agribusiness plans. The rice partnership will also have support on cooperative/association management, and more technical assistance.

Three organizations will initiate the coaching process in 2018. This will build on and improve the work done in 2017, using the new proposed tools. This include interviews in March followed by capacity development activities.



The CDAIS communications developer will visit all partnerships in February, to gather information for “stories of change” and support the NIFs on how to interview, photograph and write the stories of change.

The first reflection and refinement workshop will take place on 21 February 2018, including training on communications and management, with two more niche reflection workshops planned in June and September to address issues identified during the CNA. Two events related to the coaching process for organizations are also planned in May and September.

A policy dialogue meeting is planned for July, involving the members of the national project working group and key policy actors. The objective is to discuss how possible policy measures would help overcome the identified problems during the work done by the consultant for Policy Dialogue. ToRs for this consultant will be prepared and the concept will be adapted to the Angolan context. The consultant will visit the niche partnerships to identify policy issues, based on the CNA and coaching process, to be discussed and addressed at local or national level.

“CDAIS doesn’t give us money. But better than that, it teaches us ways to increase our production and profit so we can make more money ourselves.”

Francisco Venda, president of Sementes do Planalto seed coop, Bailundo, Angola, stakeholder in the seed innovation partnership

Country team

- Armando Valente, *National project coordinator (NPC)*
- Maria de Fátima do Nascimento, *Country Programme Manager (CPM)*
- Madalena Teles, *Agrinatura Focal Person (AFP)*
- Afonso Zola, *FAO Country Office CDAIS focal person*
- Abdoulaye Saley Mossa, *FAO technical officer support*

NIFs

- Clemente de Oliveira Paulo, *Lead NIF*
- Juliana Nené Sacamia, *Rice NIF*
- Zeferino José Konda, *Seed NIF*
- Dibanzilua Nginamau, *Entrepreneurship NIF*
- Romão Hossi Cabeto, *MEL focal person*

Supported by:

- Mamoudou Diallo, *FAO Representative*
- Danilo Barbero, *EC country delegation contact point*
- Luís Mira da Silva, *Agrinatura representative from ISA*

Technical Advisory Group

One representative from:

- Africa Innovation Foundation (AIF)
- CODESPA
- Faculty of Agronomic Sciences (FCA)
- Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (FMV)
- Agronomic Research Institute (IIA)
- Agronomic Development Institute (IDA)
- Veterinary Research Institute (IIV)
- National Institute of Coffee in Angola (INCA)
- Terra do Futuro Project (PTF)



BANGLADESH

Country Project Manager: Nasreen Sultana

National Project Coordinator: Baktear Hossain

Agrinatura Focal Person: Claire Coote

Lead National Innovation Facilitator: Rozana Wahab

Mango

Location: Rajshahi division, Chapai Nawabganj district, Shibganj Upazila

Aim: Improving links between stakeholders through support of a mango platform, upgrading strategic and innovative capacities, increasing returns from mango cultivation and processing

Facilitator: Sorof Uddin



Shibganj Upazila



Trishal Upazila



Farmed fish

Location: Mymensingh division, Mymensingh district, Trishal Upazila

Aim: Making the pond fish value chain work more effectively through greater cooperation, particularly for marginal farmers, in input supply, marketing and market links

Facilitator: Moshir Rahman

Dhaka



Pineapple

Location: Chittagong division, Bandarban district, Bandarban Sadar Upazila

Aim: Strengthening existing marketing and producer organisations for a sustained pineapple sector

Facilitator: Jamal Uddin



Bandarban Sadar Upazila

INDIA

MYANMAR

Bangladesh – 2017 country report



“The CDAIS approach of providing opportunities to participate, learn together and formulate joint solutions will usher in new horizons for marginal fish farmers...and will surely help in successful implementation and achievement of the desired results.”

Mr Ritish Pandit, fish farmer, Mymensingh, Bangladesh, stakeholder in the fish innovation partnership

1. Key activities

Capacity needs assessments

Five capacity needs assessments (CNAs) were completed in 2017 (the first conducted in December 2016), working with around 120 stakeholders to identify problems in the value chains and discuss potential solutions that could be supported by CDAIS activities. All five CNA focused on value chains selected by the Steering Committee in a particular geographical location selected by the FAO. No pre-existing stakeholder organizations had been identified at the time of the CNA so the CNA exercises were carried out with a set of stakeholders identified by the sub-district agricultural/fisheries/livestock officer.

Validation workshop

The pre-validation workshop was held in May 2017 and the validation workshop in September 2017. The objectives of both were to support the five original niches to develop their coaching (action) plans. The objective of the second was also to select three of these niches for further support and active engagement. It was also held just before the marketplace, so niche teams were able to prepare and practice their presentations for delivery at that event. The concept of handing total responsibility to ‘ordinary farmers’ is a completely new concept in Bangladesh. The NIFs who are all professional staff and mostly government research officers, found it initially hard to grasp the concept and what was expected of them. Farmers are able to voice the challenges they faced



and suggest technical solutions but were unaccustomed to working in groups, so it took a long time for them to understand the concept of functional capacities and how they could be used to support the achievement of their visions.

The coaching process

Three niche partnerships (herein referred to as 'clusters' which is how the Bangla word used re-translates, and has been endorsed by the NIF as more understandable) were selected at the validation workshop in September 2017 for further development – fish, mango and pineapple. Two, on tomato and poultry were rejected. Endorsement was ensured by having a keen NIF, a professional mandate enabling them to interact with niche actors, and the existence of fledgling groups and committed cluster representatives. Action plans for the three selected clusters were refined; rigorously focusing and reducing the objectives and related activities. In supporting the development of coaching plans, considerable emphasis was put on identifying functional capacity needs as each group found it much easier to focus on its technical needs. Few if any of the cluster representatives and NIFs had any experience of this way of working, but with the help and support of the lead NIF, their understanding of how CDAIS is trying to support them is growing. Facilitation training by Juan Ceballos of ICRA of the NIF and niche representatives in December 2017 helped to further increase their understanding and focus.

“The main purpose of the CDAIS approach is to ensure that all stakeholders within a system have the opportunity to participate, learn together and to formulate joint solutions.”

Shila Fatema Wadud, national innovation facilitator, fish niche, Bangladesh

Marketplace

This event linked some 100 stakeholders and service providers, and this was the first time that such an event was organized in the agricultural sector in Bangladesh. Participants found it exciting to learn from each other and from CDAIS. It facilitated the matching of capacity development supply and demand; and specifically, create opportunities for actors in national agricultural innovation systems to (i) meet and share experiences and future programmes/projects on strengthening capacities to innovate, (ii) discuss assessed niche needs and action plans for capacity development, and (iii) identify service providers and establish partnerships to develop niche capacities to innovate. Emphasis was placed on functional capacity development needs, such as the capacity to undertake value chain analysis, business development, leadership skills, negotiating, group purchasing, team building, organization development; and the capacity to influence policy.

All niches showed interest in training on good agricultural practices. A poster was presented by the lead NIF on tools used: timeline analysis, problem/solution tree, netmapping and visioning. The event had three sessions, a formal welcome by the FAO Technical Officer, AFP, FAO Rep, BARC Executive Chair and a representative of the Minister of Agriculture, followed by niche presentations on capacity development needs, and a final session with presentations by participating organizations where they pitched their services and ideas. Good linkages were made, participants expressed satisfaction with the event, and as a result, the country project manager has regular contact with service partners. Of these, the government organization 'a2i' is committed to support all niches with market monitoring applications; the World Bank-funded National Agricultural Technology Program (NATP II) is committed to supporting the poultry and tomato niches, the latter also with the Hortex Foundation, and BAPA and DAM are committed to supporting market development of all niches.

Organizational assessment

Possible organizations as key stakeholders in CDAIS for organizational assessment were presented to the taskforce for comments and endorsement. Those selected were the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), the Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM), and the Bangladesh Agri-Processors Association (BAPA).

Communications

A CDAIS Bangladesh Facebook group set up in 2016 was maintained by the CPM with postings on agricultural innovation shared with members, and NIFs and farmers contributing to the page. The Lead NIF and AFP met the EU Delegation in Dhaka to brief the First Secretary (Food and Nutrition and Sustainable Development) and Attaché (Programme Manager, Food and Nutrition Security) in September 2017. APAARI were represented at the



marketplace www.apaari.org/web/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2018/APAARI_Newsletter_December2017.pdf. Others mentioned their marketplace participation on their Facebook pages: <http://katalyst.com.bd/katalysts-participation-in-cdais-marketplace-brokering-partnerships-for-effective-capacity-development-for-agricultural-innovation/>. Two stories of change were also produced and published, on the fish niche by NIF Shila Wadud and on mangoes by lead NIF Rozana Wahab.

Other activities

The project provided opportunities for learning through flexible structures. The Lead NIF, CPM and NPC held additional learning and discussion sessions with the cluster NIFs and representatives. NIFs were engaged via mobile apps and were available for consultation during their spare time, indicating their interest in doing something meaningful and different. Explaining the coaching plan required the lead NIF to develop documents to help NIFs better understand the concept. The coaching plan also had to be modified in a different version of Excel and converted to a Word document, as the original Excel format supplied did not work in the computers available in Bangladesh. An Advanced Facilitation Manual was prepared by the Lead NIF.

2. Capacities strengthened

Individual level

The Country Project Manager who joined CDAIS in September 2015 through organizing the Marketplace, learned techniques for facilitating multi-stakeholder platforms, engaged influential development partners, a private sector agro-processor association, a Prime Ministerial office project and many NGO and government service providers. NIFs were trained in facilitating the coaching process, engaging with niche actors, organization of events, etc. The lead NIF also participated in the Laos CDAIS and TAP meetings which broadened her awareness of the project and enabled her to interact with a wide variety of stakeholders from different partner organizations.

“My capacity for collaboration and coordination of a global project has definitely [been] strengthened, [especially on] how to coach stakeholders on capacity development... and I now see causes of lack of sustainability in previous projects and how we could do things differently.”

Dr Mohammed Shahjahan, CDAIS National Project Coordinator, Bangladesh

Niche level

Niche actors were supported on certain capacities e.g. thinking on behalf of a group or cluster, advising the NIF on who to invite to niche meetings, etc. CDAIS tools and exercises brought people together to collaborate, reflect and learn, think strategically, and this is causing behavioural change. Farmers have learnt about joint visioning and preparation of action plans to address sectoral constraints and challenges, such as mango farmers who now realize the importance of functional skills and joint collaboration, and they are willing to work together to ensure they do not face losses in their businesses. Following the capacity needs assessment in Shibganj, mango growers were motivated to come together to form the Shibganj Mango Foundation, to represent their interests and develop more lucrative marketing opportunities. Farmers have learnt to discuss their problems, and they are beginning to see the benefits of the CDAIS approach in changing mindsets towards sustainable development in achieving food security. Niche representatives were also able to talk to government officials, NGOs and development partners to whom they could present their case to establish linkages.

“CDAIS helped us understand the importance of collaboration with key actors in order to move towards achieving our vision of a safe and supported mango industry.”

Omar Ali, President of the Shibganj mango platform, Bangladesh, stakeholder in the mango innovation partnership

3. Lessons learnt



General issues

The challenges of introducing and implementing this type of approach are underestimated. This process is new, and many decision makers and researchers come from a mind-set more familiar with projects that achieve technical changes. It is helpful to read about other experiences, the need for patience, the time to align different stakeholders, build their capacity and organise processes and platforms where people can give input and feel connected to a larger discussion about the future of the industry, and to let multistakeholder partnerships chart their own course as they never go according to a pre-defined plan. Project implementation would have been easier and less costly if clusters were closer to Dhaka or closer to each other, and each activity involves two days travel in addition to the work required. Also, NIFs are between one and four hours' drive away which means they need to rely on telephone rather than face-to-face communication with cluster representatives. Furthermore, involving and directly benefiting women the trade-off in the CDAIS approach is a challenge. Traditionally, women are responsible for postharvest activities and animal rearing at the homestead, and not in field production, and literacy levels tend to be low.

“After the CDAIS workshop, we understood that technical skills are not enough to sustain our business. We also need to build our functional skills to do well in farming.”

Ismail Khan, farmer, Shibganj, Bangladesh, stakeholder in the mango innovation partnership

Niche CNA

Common activities and project methodology must be considered and amended in the light of local/national realities. At the start of the project the commonly-held view by government and FAO experts was that there were few if any agricultural innovation platforms in existence. This led to the project working with completely new stakeholder groups which required much effort to form and galvanise partnerships where 'soft skill' / functional capacity development was relevant. Value chain stakeholders had few opportunities to put across their needs for research and training or to vocalise their visions, but once they realise that CDAIS could facilitate them to do this, they begin to realise the benefits of taking charge. However, this needs an understanding of what is offered by service, research and extension providers so they have a role to play also, but not necessarily at the central stage. This is a very new concept in Bangladesh and needs fostering so that such service providers can respond better to the new demands of industry and producers. CDAIS capacity needs analyses have shown that producers desperately need support and linkages to obtain remunerative markets and to identify ways for upgrading their produce, and importantly, that they are in a position to communicate their insights and requirements with researchers, extension agents and investors. It is hoped that through the organizational CNA, research leaders will be able to consider possible changes for future practice.

NIF training

The NIFs almost without exception, are government officers and have not been exposed to such concepts, methodologies and systems now understood to be needed to support innovation. The three sets of training provided in 2017, pre-validation, validation and advanced facilitation, have helped increase their understanding and confidence but they still need coaching by the lead NIF to organise and take overall responsibility for events.

Marketplace

Consideration should be given to turning this into a regular event, with a particular focus on discussing and showcasing ways to support functional capacity development, multistakeholder platforms and learning cycle approaches. The FAO should take credit for this innovative event and the linkages that it has fostered and promote this approach on its website.

Coaching plan development

This is a very new concept, and development and completion require much more support than was initially appreciated. It should also have been translated into Bangla for easier understanding and completion. Niche reps had two formal guided workshop to think about their sector's needs and to try to break these down into different types of skills and activities which was useful. However, the process of completing the action plans needed far greater involvement of the project team than was foreseen. It also needs to be simplified to allow more participation of those who rarely have the need to write things down, and particularly not in English. The pineapple cluster representatives speak different languages. Much more attention needs to be given to understanding and



completing this vital part of the project delivery mechanism.

Team building

Collaboration through the organization of weekly or bi-weekly skype calls between the CPM, Lead NIF, AFP and FAO HQ technical support staff have helped, along with clear allocation of responsibilities at country level, to bring about smoother implementation of project activities. Language for easy communication for non-Bangla speakers is a challenge; few people are really bi-lingual and this means that communication for bouncing ideas between national and international staff is more difficult, and misunderstandings about project purpose and activities can arise. Some concepts are being incorporated into training programmes on rural development by the Bangladesh Academy of Rural Development, and NIFs are using enhanced facilitation skills in other professional activities. The organization of events such as the fish cluster inaugural meeting where the CDAIS team all worked together provided opportunities for brainstorming and trust building, though language issues prevented this from happening with a larger group.

4. Next steps

The third Executive Chairman of BARC in office since the project began retired at the end of December 2017 and the NPC retires in January 2018. Therefore, the team will need to brief the new incumbents about the project and provide support. The three niche coaching plans must be finalised and accepted so that the learning cycle activities can be initiated, and suitable organizations for training need to be shortlisted and interviewed. For the organizational CNA, the three organizations (BARC, DAM and BAPA) need visiting and agreement ascertained, the NIF training needs to be organised and delivered, including moderation of information collection methods. The policy dialogue process will be initiated, to involve a series of consultations including regional round table dialogues in each of the districts where niches are based, and one national level dialogue to raise policy constraints to the attention of the national level policymakers.

“CDAIS means motivation, inspiration, relationships, production, development ...”

Moshiur Raham, national innovation facilitator, Fish niche

Country team

- Claire Coote, *Agrinatura Focal Person (AFP) NRI, UK*
- Karin Nichterlein, *FAO HQ Technical Officer Support FAO Rome HQ, Italy*
- Manuella Bucciarelli, *FAO HQ Technical Support Officer FAO Rome HQ, Italy*
- Mohammad Shahjahan, *National Project Coordinator (NPC) BARC*
- Nasreen Sultana, *Country Project Manager (CPM) FAO Bangladesh*
- Nur Khondaker, *FAO Country Office CDAIS Focal Person FAO Bangladesh*
- Rozana Wahab, *Agrinatura representative/Lead National Innovation Facilitator (NIF) Bangladesh*

NIFs

- Fish niche NIF: Moshiur Rahman, *BFRI*; Niche reps: Ritish Pandit, *hatchery and fisheries owner*; Kudrat-E-Alahe, *hatchery and fisheries owner*
- Mango niche NIF: Shorof Uddin, *BARI*; Niche reps: Omar Ali, *President of Shibgagj Mango Foundation*; Ismail Khan Shamim, *General Secretary of Shibgagj Mango Foundation*
- Pineapple niche NIF: Jamal Uddin, *BARI*; Niche reps: Lal Hai Bawm, Jessi Chakma, Lian Dir Bawm

Technical Advisory Group

The second meeting was in May 2017, and a smaller group met in August and October 2017 which has been very supportive and has given good suggestions, particularly relating to the organizational assessment.



- Abdur Rashid, Deputy Director (training/coordination), Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM)
- Afzal Hossain Bhuiyan, Advisor-Strategic Partnership, iDE
- Anirban Bhowmik, Country Director, General Manager, Katalyst
- Bhagya Rani Banik, Executive Chairman, BARC convener/chair
- Fakhru Islam Munshi, President, Bangladesh Agro-Processors Association (BAPA)
- Mitul Kumar Saha, AGM (Marketing), Hortex Foundation
- Mohammad Shahjahan, NPC, BARC, secretary
- Mustafizur Rahman, Director Innovation (Joint Secretary), A2I Programme, Prime Minister's Office
- Salma Akhter, Professor, Dept. of Sociology, Dhaka University
- Wais Kabir, Executive Director, Krishi Gobeshona Foundation (KGF)





BURKINA FASO

Country Project Manager: Zacharie Segda (FAO)
National Project Coordinator: Georges Yameogo (MESRSI)
Agrinatura Focal Person: Aurélie Toillier (CIRAD)
Coaching team: Armel Hien, Prosper Kola, Aristide Sempore (CIRAD)

Family micro enterprises

Supporting the development of food-processing innovations led by women

Location: Bobo Dioulasso region

Aim: Improving quality of processed products, availability of quality inputs and processing equipment, and accessing to tailored financial services

Facilitators: Azara Nfon Dibie (GRET), Raymond Kiogo (IRSAT)



Drip irrigation

Creating drip irrigation markets for small scale family farms

Location: Centre, Centre Ouest, Est, Nord

Aim: Promoting markets for low cost drip irrigation systems, and increasing access and financial support to improve the smallholders' capacity to invest

Facilitators: Raymond Kyogo (IRSAT), Philippe Yanogo (CEAS)



Digitalizing advising services

Designing new numeric tools to improve efficiency

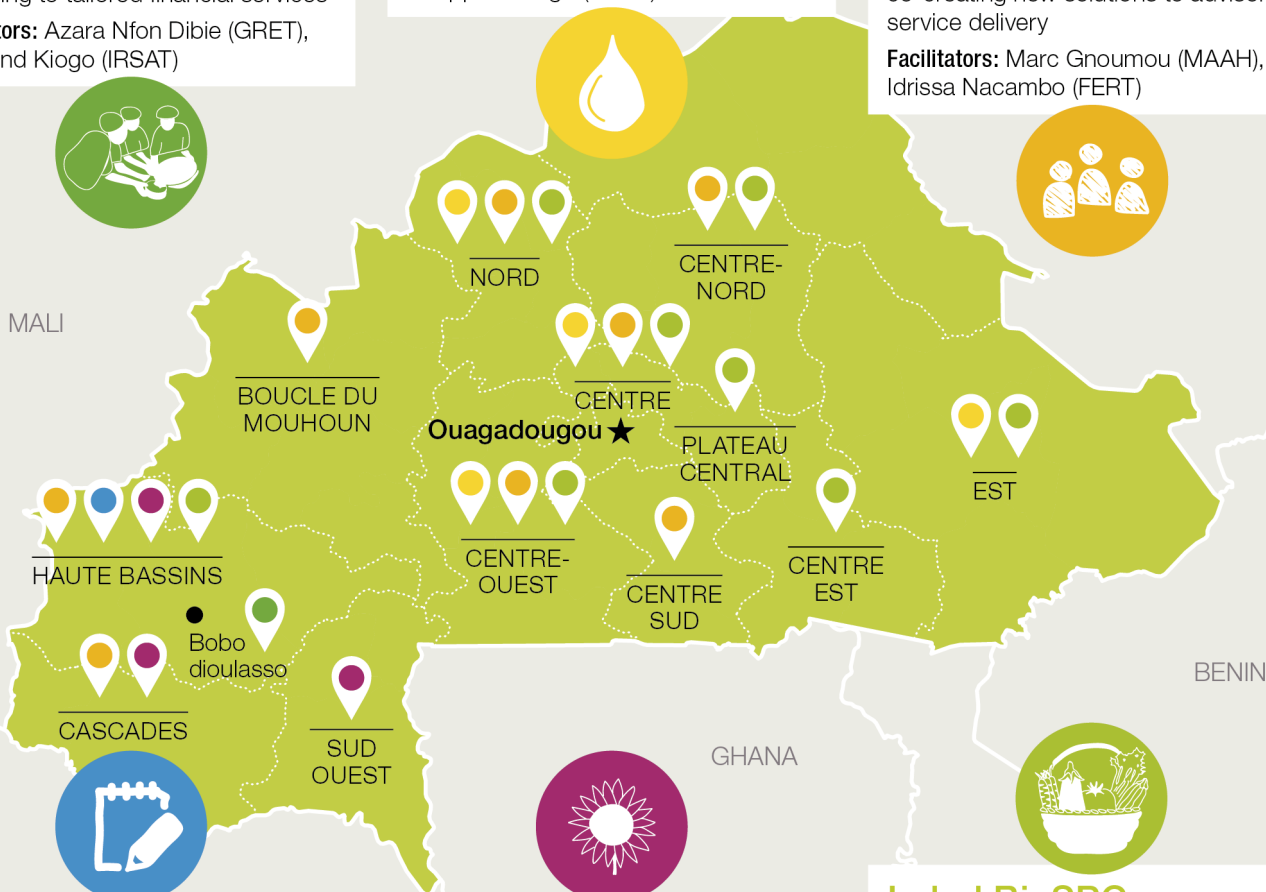
Location: Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades, Centre, Centre Nord, Centre Ouest, Centre Sud, Hauts-Bassins, Nord

Aim: Identifying bottlenecks in and co-creating new solutions to advisory service delivery

Facilitators: Marc Gnoumou (MAAH), Idrissa Nacambo (FERT)



MALI



Local land charters

Support the appropriation by municipalities of land charters for agriculture-livestock integration

Location: Hauts-Bassins

Aim: Finalizing local land charter development processes through greater involvement of municipalities

Facilitators: Lassaya Nikiema (MESRSI), Ibrahima Zerbo (CORADE)



Sunflower

Developing the value chain

Location: Cascades, Hauts-Bassins, Sud Ouest

Aim: Producing high-yielding seeds from a local variety, and ensuring access to quality inputs

Facilitators: Drissa Sangare (Agropol), Zongo Salmon (MAAH)



Label BioSPG

Scaling the first national label for organic agriculture

Location: Centre, Centre Est, Centre Nord, Centre Ouest, Est, Hauts-Bassins, Nord, Plateau Central

Aim: Ensuring effective extension and advisory services, new markets and access to quality organic inputs

Facilitators: Clémence Lankouande (CNABio), Lassaya Nikiema (MESRSI)



BENIN

GHANA

Burkina Faso – 2017 country report



“Commercialization is a challenge. This is why the CDAIS project supports [the] CNABio [innovation partnership]. We need to strengthen capacities to improve the structure of our partner’s network and give more visibility to organic agriculture.”

Mrs Clémence Samba, national innovation facilitator for the Bio SPG innovation partnership, Kadiogo province, Burkina Faso

1. Key activities

Summary

Activities focused on reinforcing capacities in national agricultural innovation systems that respond directly to farmer demand, and that answer questions related to technical, organizational and social innovations. For example, how can sunflower be integrated in the maize-cotton cropping system for environmental sustainability and diversifying income? Can smallholder farmers have easy-maintenance micro-irrigation systems linked to water storage system? How can the ‘organic’ or ‘safe’ food label be adapted in Burkina Faso? Can smallholder farmers gain access to high-value markets if they are organized as micro-enterprises? Can farmer capacities be improved so they can better access advisory services and ICT? This requires the strengthening capacities of actors so they can respond directly to the specific needs that enable them to innovate, and which in turn, contributes to sustainable agriculture development.

In Burkina Faso, the project team developed a strategy to support this challenge. This included strengthening links among actors at niche, organization and policy levels, adapting the interactive approach, and sharing relevant



knowledge to enable actors to make informed decisions and develop visions beyond the CDAIS project. Actors were mobilized through capacity-building activities at the niche partnership level, and by involving members of the CDAIS team in meetings or committees organized at the policy level with technical and financial partners, such as the EU delegation in Burkina Faso. The national CDAIS team developed and implemented a support system for niche actors between February and May 2017, resulting in support to learning loops, innovation situation analysis, and development of a capacity building strategy.

Capacity needs assessment validation

A capacity needs assessment validation workshop was held in May 2017, and which also introduced the coaching plan with interventions at individual and organizational level. ANVAR (National Agency for the Valorisation of Research Results) was particularly involved with nine people present. Working groups were organised by category of actors, e.g. private actors and civil society and, actors who develop public policies, public services supporting innovation such as agricultural advice or scientific research, etc. They each formulated their expectations from the CDAIS project and identified their possible contribution, and results which feeds into a reflection on innovation support services (public or private), that must be created or developed to better meet the needs of innovative project leaders.

Marketplace

This was conducted in July 2017. MESRI was particularly involved in the organization of the Agricultural Innovation Marketplace, and that allowed the Minister to take cognizance of the six innovation situations supported by CDAIS and the twelve support services put forward.

“Knowledge gained and new contacts made during the marketplace will help to stimulate change.”

René Emmenegger, CNABio, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Organizational capacity needs assessments

Organizations were selected based on specific criteria related to their services and the needs of niche actors. The selected organizations all have strong links with the six innovation niches through their fields of competence and geographical intervention areas. Together with the CDAIS project teams immediate and concrete actions will be envisaged in support of innovative projects but also to train them to support the needs of these project leaders so that they respond better. In parallel, close support to some organizations started in October 2017 with ANVAR (National Agency for the Valorisation of Research Results) but was postponed due to internal issues within the organization and changes of personnel. The aim is to explore these organizations internally, their capacities and motivations to improve their support services for innovation, using organizational diagnostic tools. Other identified organizations included FONRID (National Fund for Research, Innovation and Development), CAP-M (Matourkou multipurpose agricultural centre), IRSAT (Research Institute of applied sciences and technologies), and La Fabrique a private incubator of innovative companies in Ouagadougou. Organizational diagnosis will be conducted for these organizations in 2018.

Policy dialogue

Links were made with those who elaborate political and regulatory framework in particular with MESRI and its partners. MESRI coordinates the CDAIS project and is responsible for the National Support Strategy for Innovation (SNI). Specific actions were conducted with DGRSI (Directorate General of Scientific Research and Innovation), ANVAR and FONRID, that depend on MESRSI. DGRSI is also involved in all CDAIS activities and in particular through a CDAIS innovation facilitator who uses his new acquired functional skills directly in the operation of his service at the DGRSI.

2. Capacities strengthened

Two facilitators (NIFs) were identified for each niche with complementary technical and organizational skills. It was important to engage facilitators that will ensure that the innovation identified will succeed. This combination plays a key role in the success of the project, but they need to be coached and trained regularly, based on the



'situation for facilitation' they find themselves in. NIFs training needs identified included network/team building, public speaking, writing newsletters, motivating others; project management, drawing up capacity building business plans to technical and financial follow-up/reporting, technical approaches to collaboration (the cloud, Google Drive, Google docs, etc.); illustration or analysis software to support niches and evaluate their activities or actions; 'classical' communication and reporting software (writing, spreadsheet and presentation); and searching for information on the internet. Training undertaken in 2017 included diagnosis of capacity building needs at niche level, design of a support plan, identification of progress markers, public speaking, mobilizing partners, and training in soft skills.

The CDAIS team designed innovation support approaches for niche actors (principles, steps, tools, skills required), while training the NIFs and beginning to implement much-awaited capacity building activities by niche actors. In parallel, a monitoring-evaluation-learning system was set up to assess the implementation of innovation support plans according to progress made by niche actors using progress markers.

The main strengthened capacities are those of the NIFs, the MEL team, the CPM, NPC and AFP. Acquired skills included the capability to design a support plan based on a set of information collected in various ways (multi-stakeholder workshops, interviews, interpersonal communication, secondary data, etc.), present a support plan and convince new partners, implement a coaching plan, look for specific skills according to support needs, know how to define the objectives of a multi-stakeholder workshop, facilitate it and mobilize a range of tools and collaborative or participatory exercises. Furthermore, new skills include the ability to evaluate functional abilities, design communications, learn how to listen and how to be heard in multi-stakeholder or steering committee meetings, and how to identify the different stages of an innovation process and the specific needs of innovation support.

“Today, I am happier because I sell my own organic produce, and I know it is of better quality.”

Mrs Iboulo Clarisse, farmer and vice president of the Koubri women's organic producer group, stakeholder in the Bio SPG innovation partnership, Kadiogo province, Burkina Faso

3. Lessons learnt

Activities in 2017 were diverse and intensive, producing new tools and methods, requiring mobilization of different skills. And this required sorting the right way to organize the CDAIS team given the resources and skills available. The main difficulty was in contracting service providers and consultants, with project structure that does not allow for flexible management and no dedicated administrative team which proved to be very disabling. There are difficulties in implementing innovation support, related to the structuring of the CDAIS approach. Time is too short to reach results that require several years, e.g. transformation of individuals and organizations through second-rate learning. Time is also needed to train the CDAIS team in contexts where the approach is completely new; and to support learning of niche actors who are challenged to question their ways of working. The necessary investment of innovation support teams makes it possible to support no more than two or three niches, given the size of the CDAIS project. Since the innovation support team trains itself, project implementation methods are not designed to set up a local project management office, so it is difficult to work quickly and efficiently, or to cope with the magnitude of capacity building needs demanded by the different niches.

There were difficulties in interactions between the project team and niche actors that require a struggle against the habits and behaviour of actors vis-à-vis development projects. CDAIS is a priori considered a 'project' among those who fund equipment and training, but it is only after having participated in CDAIS capacity building workshops that some begin to become aware of the room for manoeuvre they have if they reinforce their functional capacities, and therefore the interest to invest in CDAIS activities. Moreover, it is difficult in the context of large development projects with substantial budgets, whereas CDAIS resources are insufficient to convince some actors to get involved in the support process. Thus, it is considered that 'the project approach' on a national multi-level scale is therefore not conducive to these types of tailor-made capacity building actions. Rather, this type of approach must be carried by competent and national organizations though the project could play a role of capacity



building of such organizations. The challenge of supporting organizations that provide national level innovation support services become central to achieving CDAIS objectives: sustainability and efficiency of support mechanisms for agricultural innovation.

Niche partnership capacity needs assessments

Network actors were involved in innovations, individually or collectively, and how such networks could be strengthened for innovation to succeed. For those in the diagnosis, this must also be the beginning of an action plan, contributing to the emergence or structuring of an innovation partnership. It is rare that all organizations that contribute to a given innovation have already had opportunities, and that partnerships and their identified needs were realized almost a year later. Initial diagnosis led to the creation of a space for meeting and discussion, bringing together actors working on the same innovation and giving them the opportunity to discuss their actions, in creating a learning space, sharing points of view on the blockages underlying innovation through exchanges, create a space of co-creation: start to move towards common vision, and show the strong divergences or competition between organizations or individuals that do not create favourable conditions to have a common plan and a partnership.

The initial diagnosis did not allow an understanding of what binds actors together or perceive the entry points that would allow an external support team to carry out effective actions. Such actors do not necessarily tell the truth during the workshops, either because the right people are not present, or because the needs are not well perceived or that individuals do not see the interest to cooperate in such a diagnostic exercise. It is only when activities are implemented that incite or oblige actors to work together, or they create obstacles so they can be treated by the support team. People are accustomed to expressing expectations of development projects, i.e. what they imagine a project will 'pay' them (training, exchange visits, materials, etc.). But individuals are rarely asked to identify for themselves what they would like to do together. This is often imposed and decided elsewhere. Such 'practice' destabilized the CDAIS process at first and hinders the actors to be creative.

There were also specific limitations in the self-assessment of capacity building needs. Some individuals did not know about their organization, i.e. history and activities. This was accentuated by considerable turn-over of staffs in public services and cooperation agencies, representing a major obstacle to collective inter-organizational construction. In addition, to be successful, the diagnosis is conducted in several phases. These include collective workshop preparation, reviewing projects related to targeted innovations, organizations or individuals involved and interests in participating in the process, building the facilitation team, accepting the sociotechnical challenges of innovation to guide discussions in the workshop (i.e. brainstorming sessions, group exercises and collective assessments (and 'visioning')), and collecting diverse data to better understand the functioning of the network. And for coaching to be effective, it is important to have well-trained facilitators, a flexible but solid support team, simple but robust MEL tools and, regular activities to maintain the commitment of niche actors.

Organizational capacity needs assessments

Five candidate organizations were selected (ANVAR, CAP-M, Master Agrinovia, La Fabrique and IRSAT) from which 2-3 will be selected for full assessment. The CDAIS team produced a full methodology for organizational assessment which can be tested and improved with two of these, ANVAR et CAP-M. The assessment was initiated with the ANVAR but could not be completed due to internal changes. These are linked to diverging vision at the political level i.e. on the role and functioning of ANVAR in the national innovation system. This situation is an interesting case to understand how organizations can or cannot transform themselves to better meet the needs of innovations. It will be analysed by the CDAIS team. With CAP-M (polyvalent agricultural centre of Matourkou), The diagnosis was made between December 2018 and March 2018. The production of the accompanying plan is underway.

Diagnoses show that capacity needs depend on niche characteristics, the nature of actors who undertake the innovation and the stage of the process. The nature of capacities to be reinforced can be similar in different niches (e.g. capacities to negotiate, to engage in political processes, to experiment, etc.), but the objectives are different as are the actors concerned, which results in different support needs. Technological issues and access to finance often present important constraints. To become motivated, organizations may need to glimpse on technological solutions where they have the opportunity to deploy, to access new knowledge, new materials, new skills and



financial support. Thus, building functional capacity is meaningless if it does not complement the development of technological solutions and finding funding.

4. Next steps

Activities in 2018 will complete those started in 2017, capitalizing on the development on the diversity of skills, tools and methods needed by facilitators to fulfil their functions. This will feed reflection at meso and macro levels on possibilities of supporting the professionalization of NIFs, in partnership with CAP-M (School of professional training of agricultural advisers), Agrinovia Master Ouaga 1 and partners (IFAD and University of Rome 3). One objective for the durability of the CDAIS approach is the development of NIF training courses. A workshop is organized for February 2018, for example, on training in innovative design, design thinking, soft skills, communication at the political level, and how to convey messages.

These will be followed by coaching plan activities and finalising actions to reinforce capacities, evaluating effects and identifying new partners to continue niche training. There are more training planned for NIFs, to increase competences on soft skills using design thinking and creativity. A workshop will also be organised to characterise the responsibilities of being a NIF with the aim of institutionalising it. At national/policy level, the main activity will be to organise a round table policy dialogue including several actions supporting the DGRSI and reinforcing their capacity to develop the national innovation strategy in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture. This will propose dedicated actions for agricultural innovation. The year 2018 will be devoted to broadening the circle of political actors concerned - interested in the development of a policy and regulatory framework to facilitate agricultural innovation, building on the experience of MESRSI through the CDAIS project.

NOTE: This is summarized and translated from the full (48 page) annual report for Burkina Faso, available in French, on request.

Country team

- Georges Yameogo, *National Project Coordinator (NPC)*
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- Daouda Kontongomde, *FAO Country Office CDAIS focal person*
- Abdoulaye Saley Moussa, *FAO HQ technical officer support*
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NIFs

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- Marc Gnoumou, *DGPV/DVRD-Direction de la Vulgarisation et de la Recherche -Développement*
- Idrissa Nacambo, *FERT – Agri-agence*
- Drissa Sangare, *AGROPOL- Association d'appui aux filières oléo-protéagineuses*
- Clémence Lankouande, *CNABIO-Conseil National de l'agriculture biologique*
- Azara Nfon Dibie, *GRET puis OXFAM – organization internationale de lobbying*
- Philippe Yanogo, *CEAS – Centre Ecologique Albert Schweitzer*
- Lassaya Nikiema, *DGRSI / MESRSI – Direction générale de la recherche scientifique et de l'innovation*
- Eveline Compaore, *INERA – Institut National de l'environnement et de recherches agricoles*



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- Prosper. N Kola, Armel Hien, Aristide Sempore, Antoine Choumoff, Aurélie Toillier

Supported by:

Steering committee

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Technical Consultative Group

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A technical committee consisting of the CPM (MERSI), the NPC (FAO) and the AFP (CIRAD/Agrinatura) meet at least once every month.





ETHIOPIA

Country Project Manager: Amanuel Assefa
National Project Coordinator: Chilot Yirga
Agrinatura Focal Person: Hanneke Vermeulen
Lead National Innovation Facilitator: Kebebe Ergano
MEL Focal Person: Elias Zerfu

Community based seed marketing

Location: Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region, Gurage zone, Butajira

Aim: Increasing dialogue with regional policy makers; drafting new directives for improved and unrestricted seed marketing systems and their passing into law

Facilitator: Tegegne Wakoya



Chickpea Seed multiplication partnership

Location: Amhara Region, Semien Gondar Zone, Gondar

Aim: Improving the quantity and quality of chickpea seeds through cluster farming

Facilitators: Turuwork Zelalem, Endalkachew Abie



Milk demand stimulation

Location: Addis Abeba

Aim: Influencing policy and creating a demand for locally produced pasteurized milk through media campaigns and a school milk pilot programme

Facilitators: Tatek Tesfaye, Tafesse Mesfin, Meti Tamrat



Malt barley seed system

Location: Oromia Region, Arsi zone

Aim: Supporting farmers' cooperatives to increase the production of quality malt barley seed

Facilitators: Abiro Tigabie, Tolesa Alemu



Feed safety and quality

Location: Addis Abeba

Aim: Developing a broadly supported legal framework and guideline for risk assessment, risk management and risk communication

Facilitator: Getachew Asmare



Ethiopia – 2017 country report



“CDAIS doesn’t buy machines or offer credit. It provides something more, something different that other projects don’t do. It builds capacity in soft skills.”

Tessema Alemayehu, head of the EDGET cooperative union, Butajira, Ethiopia, stakeholder in the seed innovation partnership

1. Key activities

Capacity need assessments

The capacity needs assessment for each niche partnership (feed safety, milk production, chick pea, malt barley and seed cooperative) were conducted in mid 2017 after the national innovation facilitators (NIFs) attended a training workshop on tools and methods. The objective was to collectively analyse the challenges of the niche partnerships, identify innovation agendas and set its objectives, strategies and collective actions. Each niche partnership was assisted in analysing the core problems and determine innovative solutions towards their collective visions. In the process, the niche actors identified their functional capacity needs. Some of the needs identified were low ability of niche actors to influence decision making processes, limited awareness of existing policies, limited incentives for networking and partnership development, weaknesses in joint learning, experimentation and, packaging and sharing information to outsiders. They also indicated limited knowledge on processes of innovation, such as knowledge creation, making institutional arrangements or influencing policy on innovation, technical expertise, organizational development, leadership skills and building relationships and interactions in multi-stakeholder partnerships. One of the lessons drawn from this was that the niche partnerships are composed of diverse actors with different institutional cultures. This can have impact on the performance of the innovation processes and outcomes.



The coaching plan

Preparing the coaching plan was a major activity in 2017. The project team was introduced to the concept of the coaching plan early in the year. The coaching plan was developed by the global project team and introduced to the country team through trainings. After the first training, the NIFs were requested to produce the first draft of the coaching plan per niche partnership. The coaching plan is a tool for the NIFs to capture the evolving process of the niche partnerships during specific timeframe. It gathers the information defined during the capacity needs assessments and various consultations among the niche actors and the NIFs. It records the niche objectives, expected results of actions, roles and responsibilities of actors, anticipated time of implementation and progress markers of change among actors. The NIFs took the first draft coaching plans to each niche partnerships for review and validation by the niche actors. The coaching plan should be owned by the niche actors. It is a dynamic document that records and adjusts plans based on lessons learnt and capacities improved within the niche and the niche actors itself. Therefore it is a tool that tracks the changes (i.e. progress markers) in knowledge, attitude and practice by the niche actors.

“CDAIS is focusing on how to organise seed marketing actors and how to get them to talk to each other, which is changing the situation more than any increase in technical skills.”

Agdew Bekele, Southern Agricultural Research Institute, stakeholder in the seeds innovation partnership

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

This activity is led by the MEL focal person. It involves collecting data during the review and refinement workshops such as status of the progress markers. Data and information gathered are used to update the coaching plans for the next actions. In 2017 the major activities conducted included a presentation of the MEL framework to the NIFs who attended a training workshop on coaching plan, uploading of the revised CDAIS-Ethiopian baseline data on the CDAIS 'capacity.community' webpage, participation at the CDAIS MEL workshop in Montpellier and feedback to Ethiopia team, preparation of draft documents on the operationalization of CDAIS MEL in Ethiopia; and drafting of Theory of Change for Ethiopia.

Action plan implementation

Given the first version of the coaching/action plans, some niches were able to submit action plans and started implementation of activities. The chickpea niche field day was conducted with exemplary outcome. It helped the niche actors to understand the challenges in the value chain by talking to the farmer. This has influenced the contents of the coaching plan. The seed innovation niche identified a researcher to assess and make recommendations about the written seed policy and its implementation, help organize a regional workshop on policy advocacy (including contacting actors to prepare for the policy workshop) and facilitate the establishment of a lobby group. The milk-demand niche submitted an action plan. It started conducting studies in 220 schools in and around Addis Ababa. Schools which are receiving school feeding support were given priority. The study was to find leverage point where to start the milk school feeding for assured impacts. The study included an inventory of organizations interested in school feeding and school milk feeding programs. The findings of the assessment will be presented in the niche workshop to determine consequent steps.

Communications

The first CDAIS 'story of change' was developed by NIF Getachew Asmare, presented at the 2017 Laos CDAIS workshop, and a second story was published about the seed niche. The CDAIS communications developer visited and made a presentation to all NIFs and key niche actors on principles of communication, writing skills, interviewing and taking quality photographs.

Preparatory work were conducted for the marketplace. New actors were visited where project objectives were shared. This include visit to USAID office who showed interest in mobilizing, at country level, value chain development projects such as the Livestock Lab and Fintract. Similarly, GIZ officials met in Laos facilitated connections with green innovation project in Oromia region. Other agencies such SNV, IFC and the Ethiopia First Lady project on school feeding were also contacted giving promising conversations for the relevant niche initiatives. However, due to delays in undertaking the marketplace, concrete actions were put on hold.



“CDAIS is playing a paramount role in addressing the lacking legal framework on risk assessment, risk management and communicating risk in the country.”

Gemechu Nemie, director of the Ethiopian Animal Feed Industry Association (EAFIA), stakeholder in the feed safety innovation partnership

2. Capacities strengthened

Individual level

The capacity of the CPM and Lead NIF was developed through involvement in project management, facilitating linkages and supporting NIFs and niches. This included preparations for the marketplace and policy dialogues, and discussions and negotiations with and between national and international organization, including the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR), FAO and ICRA/Agrinatura. The capacity of the National Innovation Facilitators (NIFs) to support innovation niche partnerships to innovate is being developed through the coaching plan. A training workshop was organized for the NIFs and niche representatives using a simplified version of the coaching plan. This resulted to the first version of the coaching plan which in turn was reviewed by respective niches. This training on the coaching plan was a good opportunity for the NIFs to practice facilitation of multi-stakeholder workshops and presentation of the plans to all NIFs, and international facilitators from ICRA and FAO. From the coaching plan, each NIF developed an action plan, submitted to the country project management and EIAR for review. The approved action plan guided the release of funds to the niches. The role of NIFs was critical not only in developing the action plan but also in its implementation. Some NIFs were involved in ‘story harvesting’ in collaboration with the CDAIS communications developer.

Niche Partnership level

The most remarkable capacity developed is at the niche partnership level. The actors in the niche partnerships showed improved ability to plan collectively, narrow divergent views and jointly agree on actionable areas. At the beginning of the project, the actors in the niche partnership actors had divergent views. Several meetings and interactions were needed to develop the coaching plans especially for its relevance, coherence and consistency. For example, the chickpea innovation niche partnership organized a field day to promote interaction among actors as well as jointly define the actions to use cluster farming (as defined in the coaching plan). This field visit and consultation led the group to recognize that lack of a disease resistant chickpea variety was a bottleneck problem that affects production and productivity. The community seed innovation niche also strived to organize a regional workshop at Hawassa region to improve the seed policies. This required lobbying with government officials and critical partners who are major actors in creating change in the seed policy directives.

Ten niche actors and country teams (i.e. NIFs, steering committee members and technical advisory team) have a much better understanding of the innovation system approach and tools to facilitate innovation. It is not easy for actors with diverse missions and goals to work together on common agendas. By actively participating in the project, they gained positive attitude and experiences for joint learning and action hence, initiate innovation partnerships. The different niches such as the community seed innovation niche has great potential to change regional seed policy directives, impacting on the economic viability of the farmer unions as well as other seed enterprises. The malt barely innovation niche is strategically positioned to improve seed quality supplied to private companies. However, it might not be able to achieve the required changes during the project period. This innovation niche has an important role in bridging the gap between the major actors to improve relations that can bring these changes. If the development of a regulation/directives on risk assessment, management and communication on feed safety is achieved, it is likely to have impacts in improving feed safety and quality in the country, including the reduction of aflatoxin in milk. However, the milk demand stimulation niche is complex. Niche partners wants to pilot school milk feeding while CDAIS cannot provide money to buy the milk. Rather, the project aim is to develop the capacity of niche members to access funds, test the concept and draw lessons for bigger impacts. The chickpea innovation niche is testing a cluster farming approach. This is also being tried by the public extension organization in different parts of the country. Yield increases are anticipated in 2018. The malt barley niche partnership has the potential to increase the domestic supply of malt barley to local breweries.



3. Lessons learnt

The year was a turning point for the project implementation in the country. The approaches and methodologies are understood and adapted into country context. The country team members are committed. Few lessons learnt are highlighted below.

Joint learning

- The iterative learning process is seen as flexible but confusing at times. It is difficult for actors in the niche partnership to understand why some activities are delayed or additional information is required after an event occurred. This is further complicated when actors change overtime. On the other hand, it is acknowledged as useful to have niche actors participate in NIF national trainings and workshops. This increases the overall understand of the CDAIS approach and the iterative learning process.
- The coaching plan was necessary but time consuming. NIF's spent much time on administration. But the repeated meetings deepened their understanding of the concepts and improved the relationships between NIFs and the project management team.

Country adaptation and appreciation of the approaches and methodologies.

- The country team (including the NIFs) redefined the meaning of a CD intervention. It considers that a 'small' activity with only few actors, is a CD intervention if it can catalyse innovation or remove barriers of innovations.
- The marketplace and policy dialogue are more than just workshops. It requires careful planning of activities before and after the event. These activities should take into account the complex process and relations among partners. It requires more staff time. An additional individual hired as a consultant, could have assisted in elaborating policy issues for the market place.
- Originally it was planned to undertake all innovation related policy dialogues at national level. However, some policy issues are better resolved at regional level. Therefore, national policy dialogues are limited to certain cases which require national policy interventions.
- The community seed innovation niche formed a small lobby group to influence regional level policy maker. Through this group, the process attracted high level of intervention there it increased the chance of organizing the regional policy dialogue. It is now planned for early 2018.
- Organizational assessment was not conducted in 2017 due to heavy workload. This was also not given priority by the team based on the advice of the mid-term evaluation team. By end of the year, the team realised that the organizational intervention is an important dimension in strengthening functional capacities in the country.
- There are several large scale development programmes in Ethiopia. CDAIS is a very small initiative. However, the approach of building capacity of several actors and improving collaboration is unique. There is interest in wider application. It is also unique that the CDAIS project has available resources for the facilitators and that the partnerships have the flexibility to adjust their approach to reach their goal. Adjustments are made based on changes in the environment and increased understanding of the partnership dynamics. This iterative cycle at partnership level is new. It is increasingly appreciated. The project also benefits from previous projects in the country such as Prolinnova. Bringing completely new AIS concept in a country would otherwise have taken a lot longer to be embraced.

Team building and management

- Two facilitators per niche partnership was advantageous if they have two different profiles (i.e. research, extension). Two individuals complement and support each other especially in facilitation and strategic planning and implementation of activities. However if both facilitators are from the same sector this advantage is not observed. In certain cases, additional facilitators are provided to the niche partnerships whenever there are barriers and gaps.
- Niche champions are important to influence the dynamics in the niche partnerships. Their engagement and involvement in national trainings and workshops increased ownerships and understanding of the value of functional capacities in breaking barriers in the innovation systems.



- The EIAR and ICRA partnership created an effective process to channel funds to each innovation niche partnership. This was seen as an innovative institutional arrangement not originally planned. This has overcome challenges in fund disbursement to the niches located outside Addis. It ensured a smooth flow of funds to the niches and facilitated the implementation of niche action plans.
- The country teams are realising the need to be inclusive i.e. having farmers in the niche partnerships and more women as NIFs. It was challenging (factors beyond the project) but now there are two active women NIFs. Looking at the challenges and lessons from other disciplines and sectors (e.g. value chains, business, industry) can have benefits to managing the partnerships.



4. Next steps

Key activities for 2018 include reflection and refinement workshops and field visits to revise or update action plans by the actors in the niche partnership. National innovation platform studies to be validated through a workshop. Pre-marketplace activities to be finalised i.e. contracts, niche brochures and posters, invitations to conduct the marketplace. There will be several activities after events, i.e. reporting, facilitating linkages among niches and potential partners. An assessment of policy issues will be undertaken by a consultant, including a preparatory policy dialogue workshop, two policy dialogues at regional level and two at national level. The project team will also conduct an organizational assessment, and participate in global activities, e.g. workshops, cross country comparison studies and other assignments.

“Thanks to CDAIS, we are now moving quickly towards resolving our problems.”

Tessema Alemayehu, head of the EDGET cooperative union, Butajira, Ethiopia, stakeholder in the seed innovation partnership

Country team

- Chilot Yirga, *National programme coordinator (NPC)*
- Amanuel Assefa, *National Country Manager (CPM)*
- Hanneke Bouta Vermeulen, *Agrinatura Focal Person (AFP)*
- Lemma Gizachew, *FAO Country Office CDAIS focal person*
- Abdoulaye Saley Moussa, *FAO HQ technical officer support*

NIFs

- Lead NIF: Kebebe Ergano
- National NIF: Samsom Eshetu
- NIF malt barley: Abiro Tigabie Mersha
- NIF malt barley: Tolesa Alemu
- NIF seed cooperative: Tegegne Wakoya
- NIF chick pea: Turuwark Zalalam Warkineh
- NIF feed safety: Getachew Asmare
- NIF milk production: Meti Tamrat Fite

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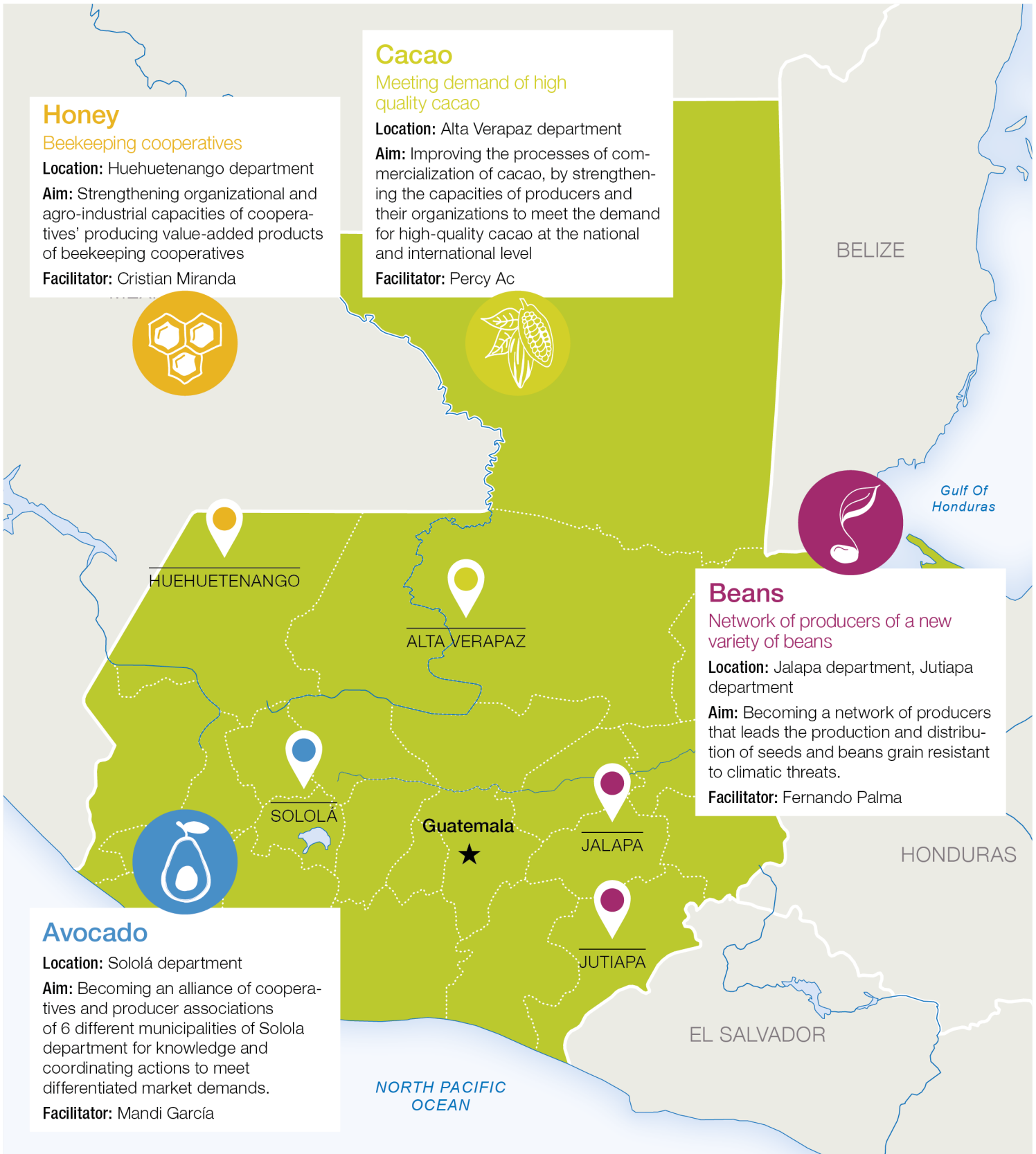
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National Project Coordinator: Marco Vinicio Cahueque
Agrinatura Focal Person: Nury María Furlan



Guatemala – 2017 country report



“CDAIS gives us opportunities we didn’t have before, to transmit new knowledge and messages regarding the benefits of improved approaches in our work.”

Lionel Osorio [far right], president of ATESCATEL seed cooperative, lead stakeholder in the bean innovation partnership, Atestecampa, Jutiapa, Guatemala

1. Key activities

Niche Partnership capacity needs assessment (CNA)

The CNA activities allowed the stakeholders from each of the four niches, avocado in Solola, beans in the oriental departments of Jutiapa and Chiquimula, cacao in Alta Verapaz and honey in Huehuetenango, to come together and share, discuss and agree a common vision, identify challenges, and prioritize them while also proposing a list of possible actions. The resulting assessment of capacity needs was validated at a CNA validation workshop held on 20-22 March 2017. They also identified other initiatives that could support them in achieving their aims and how stakeholders could build on other on-going efforts.

CNA validation

The needs assessment process which had begun in September 2016 was validated on 20-22 March 2017. The objective was to have a shared understanding of each niche situation, and consequently, to develop an action plan on specific capacity development for each niche. Results of the validation workshop were presented to potential suppliers of the capacity development at the marketplace. **Both events took place in Antigua, Guatemala, taking advantage of the large 'Agritrade' international agricultural trade fair being held there at the same time. There were 25 stakeholders from the cacao, honey, beans and avocado niches at the validation workshop.**



The validation workshop resulted on a shared understanding of the niche concept, characteristics, objectives, actors, and the relationships among actors. The challenges were identified and prioritised, providing clarity as to its type, actors involved, possible value chain approaches that can be used, and characterisation based on different agronomic, economic, social, political, organizational and managerial aspects. Individual competences were also discussed especially the relationships between knowledge, skills and attitudes to describe existing competences and how to develop them. Finally, the activities were presented and agreed, including the logic and sequential order of learning topics, the prioritization of required competencies, and a tentative calendar for the learning cycles.

The coaching process

The coaching plan concept was introduced at the global level during a CDAIS meeting in April 2017. It was then translated into Spanish, adapted for the national context, and shared with the national team. The coaching plan was further adapted for each of the niches, using elements that were identified in the capacity needs assessment. The NIFs were further coached on improve understanding and use of this tool. A series of workshops at niche level helped to identify key elements of the coaching plans, such as priority objectives of niches, and activities to reinforce capacities. The Agrinatura team considered it fundamental to implement further training to consolidate coaching plans and promote ownership by the niches.

The importance of enriching niches with other actors was highlighted. During the marketplace, other initiatives and stakeholders were identified that could add value to the niche partnerships. A meeting of the national facilitation team analysed outcomes from the coaching plan development and market place. One of the main point raised was the important role of facilitators within the project. The facilitators and niche champions agreed on i) the importance of understanding that the niche is a system involving different actors that interact to achieve a shared vision, ii) that NIFs recognize current and potential actors of each innovation niche, and iii) that NIFs propose key actors to be involved. It was also agreed with NIFs that most actors identified in stakeholder mapping are included in learning cycles, and organizations that could provide support services in response to niche needs, were identified.

A series of workshops were held in each of the niches in July. Each niche spent one day defining the roles of organizations that are part of the niche, and the required capacity development activities within each niche. The CPM and capacity development regional expert provided further coaching from 28 August to 1 September to consolidate the first version of the coaching plan. This process resulted to few recommendations before the implementation of the coaching plan. These were i) training of those who will monitor and evaluate on how to fill out the coaching plan, ii) training of NIFs on facilitation techniques and understanding the type of information required from niches to fill out the coaching plan.

Marketplace

The marketplace was held, entitled 'Strengthening associations for an effective capacity development for agricultural innovation'. It was held as a side event in the national AGRITRADE fair which had more than 3000 attendees. There were 73 participants for the CDAIS marketplace, including niche actors, the CDAIS technical team, and representatives of the private, academic, public and international cooperation sectors that could potentially meet the needs identified within each of the niches. The 'World café' method was used to promote and motivate participation between the supply and demand sides. It allowed interaction among actors of the four niches with capacity development providers. There were exchange of experiences and discussions on future programs and projects that could strengthening the capacity to innovate. Results from the needs assessment process and the resulting action plans were presented. New alliances and partnerships were made that could generate new capacities to meet the identified needs.

Communications

Videos on several niches were produced, included a film including the bean niche representative, Leonel Osorio and the cocoa niche including an interview with the EU ambassador in Guatemala, Stefano Gatto. CDAIS also participated in the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Days of FAUSAC in March and September, with



representatives of the bean niche attending the seed fair organized by Cristian Relief Service.

Other activities

Training of cacao technicians was also undertaken in coordination with the inter-institutional technical committee of the cocoa chain, and further capacity development directed to Project Directors of FAO Guatemala. There were interactions between the CPM and the National Innovation System through the Innovation Committee of the Science and Technology Secretariat SENACYT, strategic strengthening of the National Council for Agricultural Development CONADEA of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food, support for the creation of the National Beekeeping Commission CONAPI, and the organization of the avocado chain was strengthened as a contribution to the policy dialogue. CDAIS participation in the life stories event on World Day at the Spanish Cooperation Center, Guatemala City.

2. Capacities strengthened

At individual level

The country project manager and NIFs benefitted from learning-by-doing, from analysing results from the CNA, and in preparing for the marketplace and using innovative methodologies to facilitate the negotiation of service supply and demand required for developing capacities in innovation systems. NIFs acquired competencies to conduct participatory processes to identify and evaluate needs, the capacity for organizing, and to execute learning events. They also understood how to develop and use the coaching plans based on the theory of change.

At niche partnership level

Niche actors developed a shared vision by understanding each actors needs and historical development. They have broadened their vision of national and international markets, and have a greater willingness to participate in capacity development activities. Niche actors also recognized that to expand market opportunities, they need to strengthen their organizational and business capabilities. Furthermore, due to weaknesses within government bodies who should fulfil functions related to the project, niche actors saw they had to take initiatives to strengthen themselves. In the avocado niche for example, the CNA brought in new producer associations who wanted to be involved, and an extension network that facilitated partnerships with other municipalities. Originally, only associations from San Andrés Semetabaj were part of the niche, but it now includes producers from five other municipalities. In the cocoa value chain there are two working groups, one from the south and one from the north of the country, and the CNA helped to strengthened the relationship between them. The bean niche extended its range with the addition of the Association of Agricultural Producers of Laguna del Hoyo APALH, an actor that shares objectives and is compatible with the whole partnership. Producers of the honey niche began steps to establish a national beekeeping commission. There was also organizational strengthening of the CONADEA-MAGA Agricultural Development Council where relations among related units were strengthened within agricultural chains.

At national level

FAO through CDAIS became a member of the Commission of Innovation and Entrepreneurship of the National Secretariat of Science and Technology (SENACYT), the Regional Agricultural Research Consortium (CRIA) technical committee of IICA, the R+D+I (Innovation + Development + Research) Network of the Guatemalan Association of Exporters, and the Inter-institutional Technical Committee of the Cocoa Chain. Connections made through these processes are expected to support future efforts related to the planned policy dialogues and national platforms.



3. Lessons learnt

Training national innovation facilitators

At the initial stages of this pilot project, it was difficult to identify the exact capacity needs. Initial training of NIFs was too short to form the necessary capacities for undertaking the needs assessment and following processes, but this was overcome with further support. Trainers in the first phase of the project should have been clearer about the capacities that the NIFs would need, to be able to undertake the evaluation of capacity needs, coaching plan and learning cycles. The NIF training manual should have been available before the NIF training workshop to understand the processes and the outputs to be obtained from each activity. Furthermore, the eventual relationship between the NIFs and niche actors did not always allow a constant relationship among niche actors, and it was only the eventual economic incentive offered to NIFs that motivated them to continue.

Capacity needs assessments

The selection of participants is key. Furthermore, to facilitate the understanding of the project and the role of NIFs, complete and finalized manuals would have ensured that processes were better understood. However, the nature of the project meant that methodology is being developed by partners using their respective expertise. Tools used in training workshops need to be owned by the whole training team, to give confidence and clarity to NIFs. It is a challenge to maintain interest in this phase of the project, so a schedule is suggested that allows continuity, but also digestion of information and individual reflection that does not interfere with day-to-day activities in the niches. In addition to CNA training, the core project team must ensure constant coaching to NIFs to assure the right development of niche actors and activities.

Marketplace

The proposed methodology allowed information exchange between niche actors and potential suppliers or respondents of needs. Holding the marketplace within the AGRITRADE fair increased the visibility of the CDAIS project and the niche partnerships. The World Café allowed wider exchange between the participants, but there were also disadvantages due to time and space limitations and the interference from the commercial activities of AGRITRADE with the participatory activities of the CDAIS marketplace. Validation of needs should be carried out in the same week as the marketplace.

Coaching plan

As the guidelines for preparation of the coaching plan were delivered after CNA validation, this caused difficulties regarding diffusion to the national team, since further training was needed to achieve a common understanding and to complete the necessary adaptation to the country context. However, coaching plan elaboration meant that a learning cycle within the niches on strategic planning was included, requiring adjustment and refinement of the original results of the CNA validation.

4. Next steps

For the finalization of coaching plans, a workshop will be held on 5-9 February to strengthen NIF capacities for the coaching plan. Following this, capacity development experts will be hired to address topics identified in the needs assessment. Regarding the coaching process for both niches and organizations, analysis of the coaching plan that will be presented and discussed in the February workshop. It will feed into a revised methodology to be used to carry out the coaching process. And as for other events, the services of an expert consultant in policy dialogue will be hired at the start of 2018, and the annual operating plan will be executed according to the project programme.



Country team

- Marco Vinicio Cahueque, *National Project Coordinator (NPC)*
- Julio César Catalán Ramírez, *Country Project Manager (CPM)*
- Massimo Battaglia, *Agrinatura Focal Person (AFP)*
- Diego Recalde, *FAO Country Office CDAIS focal person*
- Andrea Sonnino, *FAO HQ technical officer support*
- Nury Maria Furlan, *CD Regional Expert*

NIFs

- Avocado NIF: Mandi Liliana García Socón
- Bean NIF José Fernando Palma Castillo
- Cacao NIF: Percy Ac
- Honey NIF: Cristian Miranda

Supported by:

National Steering Committee

- FAO, Guatemala: Diego Recalde, Maynor Estrada; Mayra López and Julio Catalán
- Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food -MAGA-: Marco Vinicio Cahueque and Max González.
- FAO, Rome: Andrea Sonnino and Ilka Gómez
- AGRINATURA: Massimo Battaglia (until end of 2017), Chiara Sgreva
- IAO; Nicolás Arbace, Nury Furlán and Stefano Del Debbio
- ICRA: Richard Hawkins
- EU Guatemala; Claudia Barillas.

Technical Advisory Group

- **Avocado**: Faustino Arévalo (CONADEA-MAGA), Marco Quilo (AGEXPORT),
- **Cocoa**: Jerber Roche (FUNDALACHUA), Raúl Quezada (FUNDASISTEMAS), Ismael Herrera (AGEXPORT), Humberto Tejada (Consultor), Héctor Carrillo (MAGA CONADEA), Fernando Conde (IICA), Erick Ac (UICN).
- **Beans**: Leonel Osorio (ATESCATEL), Fernando Sagastume (MAGA), Gustavo Rivas (ANAGRAB), Mirna Ayala (FAUSAC), Byron Zúñiga (FAUSAC).
- **Honey**: Álvaro Almengor (COPIASURO), Joe Gálvez (CIPAC), Jorge Ibarra (MOSCAMED) Marta Velásquez (CONADEA-MAGA).



HONDURAS

Country Project Manager: Edgardo Navarro
National Project Coordinator: Erick Martínez
Agrinatura Focal Person: Stefano Del Debbio

Cacao

Location: Atlántida

Aim: Strengthening management and entrepreneurial vision, improving access to technical and financial services, storage facilities and other infrastructure, and the standardization of quality cocoa

Facilitators: Erick Ordoñez; José Ruiz

Beans

Location: Olancho department

Aim: Creating a network of the value chain stakeholders at the national level, by improving a stakeholders' platform and promoting self-sustainable business development through innovation, training and quality standards in the beans' field.

Facilitator: Julia Cruz



Coffee

Location: Lempira department

Aim: Strengthening specialty coffee producers through improving cooperative organization and business management, increasing market links and coordination with other rural development actors, and empowering investment capacity and access to finance and to export.

Facilitator: Rudy Omar Mejía

Potatoes

Location: Intibucá and La Paz

Aim: Increasing the average income of potato producers by adapting the crop production to climate change and plagues (such as the «paratrioza», *Bactericera cockerelli*); Improving producers organizations on negotiation skills, best practices application, added value process and commercialization channels

Facilitators: Héctor García, Arlis Zepeda (Facilitator support)

Honduras – 2017 country report



“I use what I have learnt working with CDAIS in my other work, training youth from our indigenous community in agricultural production, marketing and business skills so they will hopefully stay with us and not emigrate as so many others do. One innovation helps another.”

Arlis Zepeda, assistant national innovation facilitator for the potato partnership, La Esperanza, Intibucá, Honduras

1. Key activities

Capacity needs assessment

Stakeholders from each niche gathered around in different events to discuss common challenges and objectives. At the end of the CNA validation in Honduras, it was possible to clearly identify for each niche, their history, composition, vision, main challenges to achieving the vision, and capacity needs to face these challenges. In addition, it was possible to identify the importance of enriching niches with other initiatives and stakeholders that could complement the efforts already being made by the niche, and which was achieved during the ‘marketplace’ event, where they were all brought together.

The coaching process

In April 2017, the coaching plan was introduced during the CDAIS global meeting, and how to structure its planning and activities foreseen as being developed at niche level, involving key stakeholders. This would allow greater ownership, commitment and understanding of the roles played by each actor within the partnership and would help to reinforce the concept of the niche as a system with actors that together pursue a common goal. To apply



the proposed methodology, it was necessary to follow a series of actions and overcome some initial challenges. First, the translation of the Excel file needed to be adapted to the different contexts, making good use of lessons learned during previous stages of the project. A major challenge was for niche teams that would be in charge of sharing the information to the national project team, to develop ownership of their own plans. It was decided to use adapted version that included only the 'time zero' of the actions, as well as a small introduction to the plan that explained its purpose and the continuous updating and adjustments in each learning cycle that was planned. Once the translation, adaptation, and explanation of coaching plan was completed, this was shared with the NIFs. Preliminary discussions were held with each NIF to discuss the content of the plans and clarify doubts, especially on the baseline and the 'why' sheet of the Excel file. Dates were then identified on which key stakeholders could participate in virtual conferences, for elaboration of coaching plans to be validated in July and August.

The outcomes of these meetings were that innovation niche stakeholders identified three priority objectives, became familiar with the concept of 'progress markers', understood their own role within the niche, and that they identified capacities that each of the actors must reinforce to achieve the agreed priority objectives. Initial workshops for coaching plan preparation were then held for all niches: with the potato niche on 14 July (Intibucá, La Esperanza), the cacao niche on 19 July and 5 September (La Ceiba, Atlántida), the bean niche on 25 July (Juticalpa, Olancho) and the coffee niche on 1 August (Gracias, Lempira).

There was no standardization in how these consultation meetings were organized or in the content covered, because each niche has unique characteristics that require flexibility in order to reach the expected outcomes. To complete the niche coaching plan, the potato niche for example, held additional meetings within activities dedicated to the National Potato Chain by PRONAGRO of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, and different project partners demonstrated commitment with increased ownership by other stakeholders who attended both meetings. Through these meetings, difficulties were seen by some niches and facilitators in their ability to complete the required information, mainly on the 'how' page. For this reason, it was decided to plan further meetings with NIFs and selected key niche players, in order to consolidate the results within each niche. It was also considered important to involve the Technical Committees, and thus, a coaching plan consolidation and validation meeting was held on 7-8 September in Tegucigalpa involving NIFs and the Technical Committee.

Marketplace

This took place on 31 March 2017 in Tegucigalpa, organized under the leadership of FAO in partnership with Agrinatura/AICS and ICRA, with the main stakeholders of selected niches (potato, coffee, cacao and beans) of Intibucá, Lempira, Atlántida and Olancho departments. There was a total of 59 participants (23 women, 36 men) and of these, 16 were from producer organizations, 19 from cooperative agencies, 10 from the public sector, 5 private sector, 5 NGO, and 4 researchers. The objectives were to identify the supply and demand of technologic innovations that would enable donors, NGOs, organizations for local and national development, and of agricultural innovation systems stakeholders to map these innovations, share information and experiences, and establish partnerships, associations or other forms of collaboration.

The marketplace was organized following the World Cafe methodology, beginning with the formal opening, a plenary with participant presentations, an introduction of CDAIS, its objectives and methodology. Niche actors were organized amongst eight working tables (two for each niche). Participants stayed 20 minutes at each table and listened to the requirements for innovations identified in the action plans validated the previous day. At the end, each table drew up a list of collaboration agreements between niche stakeholders and organizations able to finance and/or implement capacity development interventions, which niche stakeholders presented in plenary. The different organizations then clarified any concerns they had, and they discussed and developed how the collaborative work would be done. Each participant also completed an evaluation form to understand and evaluate their experience of this first World Cafe in Honduras. Many agreements were made between innovation alliances and service providers. However, it is important to note that a single event can only be a starting point to create true links. As such, the National Project Manager has been constantly following up the agreements resulting from the event, achieving important alliances with FIDE, for example, a private non-profit organization, on organizing capacity development activities. This has made it possible to optimize the available resources in training on topics identified as priority as priorities for the niches that focus on exports, such as coffee and cacao.



Communications

A communication expert was appointed to collect data from the niches and transform them in stories to be shared at global level. FAO local team regularly publishes information regarding the project on local newspapers.

2. Capacities strengthened

At individual level

The CNA validation workshop allowed niche stakeholders to exchange knowledge and experiences, developing their curiosity and desires to replicate successful learning in other niches (potato and coffee, for example). It was very helpful that niche representatives together with the NIFs in each niche, had the necessary opportunities beforehand to prepare all the necessary inputs for presentation to maximize the results from the marketplace. The World Café as a participative tool, allowed dialogue between service suppliers and the partnerships that seek agricultural innovation. It allowed individual stakeholders to make new contacts, ask the right questions and get concrete answers from the institutions, service providers and other invited persons. This event also allowed a rich exchange of experiences and knowledge among actors from within and outside the niches, leading to new collaborative relationships. Furthermore, adopting the coaching plan led each niche to acknowledge each of the stakeholders involved, embrace the complexity of the systems they work within, recognize that each stakeholder in their specific role can contribute and influence niche capacities to achieve their objectives, and planning activities that are consistent with priority objectives.

The MEL focal person also participated in the MEL Workshop in November in Montpellier, France. It was important to review the existing baseline information of monitoring, evaluation and learning that should have already been collected, and to reinforce understanding regarding the importance of MEL in a global pilot project, to validate the methodology proposed in the Common Framework. The MEL focal person learnt more about the impact pathway of the project and obtained a vision of the project's contribution to the national reality.

3. Lessons learnt

Niche capacity needs assessments

A clear definition of what comprises a niche was required, since it is not only a commodity chain or the chain's vision, but a multi-stakeholder group with a shared vision. It was also demonstrated that a shared vision is easier to achieve by including relevant stakeholders and creating spaces to interact. NIFs were then able to raise more interest among stakeholders, and consequently achieved greater participation in project activities. A common issue was that most niches required improved competencies on organizational and business management. Exchange of knowledge and experiences among NIF's generated an interest in project activities and interaction mechanisms that could be replicated in other niches, such as between potato and coffee, for example. Individual capacities were also reinforced in the Agrinatura team that needed to become owners of the plan in order to transfer the information to the national teams.

Marketplace

Many agreements were made between innovation alliances and service providers during and immediately after the marketplace. The Country Project Manager followed up the agreements, achieving important alliances and which made possible the optimization of available resources in training on topics identified as priorities for the niches (i.e. exports, such as coffee and cocoa).

Coaching plan development

A deeper understanding of the design and implementation of learning cycles was requested, and in particular the difference between teaching and facilitating learning. In teaching, the resource person maintains control over the subject. In facilitation, the resource person constructs the learning together with participants and reflects with them on lessons learnt. But for the application of the suggested methodology, it was necessary to follow a series of actions, and overcome few initial challenges. First, the translation of the Excel file needed to be contextualized and adapted for the country, trying to make good use of the lessons learned during the previous stages of the project. But the meetings held in each niche, firstly for the CNA and then for the design of the coaching plan have



improved team spirit amongst stakeholders, since the effort of each of them was focused on a common vision. Moreover, joint events gathering stakeholders from Honduras and Guatemala allowed for cross-country team building.

4. Next steps

Coaching plans finalised during 2017 will be revised during reflection and refinement meetings in 2018. The coaching process for niches, will continue as planned, with monitoring, evaluation and learning activities to follow that implementation. As for the coaching process for organizations, first, these will be selected by the National Technical Committee. A 5-day training of the national team will be implemented by a capacity development expert to develop methodology on organization analysis, supported by facilitators who will lead implementation.

The following events will be organized at the niche level. A NIF learning event will improve the capacity of NIFs to implement capacity development coaching plans for innovation niche partnerships and organizations, and allow them to better reflect, review and document experiences, lessons learnt and implement good practice by capacity development facilitators. Two national platform workshops will be held. In the first, a capacity development expert will meet with actors in each niche and others identified by the national consultant who could provide services to the niches, aiming to achieve a common vision of their roles in agricultural innovation systems. In the second workshop, they will together develop a national capacity development plan for agricultural innovation systems. There will also be a week-long training course for the national team with a capacity development expert to better own the methodology on organization analysis.

Country team

- Francisco Herrera, *National Project Coordinator (NPC)*
- Edgardo Navarro, *Country Project Manager (CPM)*
- Stefano Del Debbio, *Agrinatura Focal Person (AFP)*
- Nury Furlan, *Regional Expert*
- Lenin Edgardo Gradiz, *FAO Country Office CDAIS focal person*
- Andrea Sonnino, Manuela Bucciarelli, Ilka Gomez *FAO HQ technical officer support:*

NIFs

- Bean NIF: Julia Cruz
- Cacao NIFs: Verónica Bejarano (until 5 September 2017), José Ruiz
- Coffee NIF: Rudy Mejía
- Potato NIFs: Héctor García (lead), Arlis Zepeda (support)

Supported by:

Technical Advisory Group

This includes key actors working on the innovation partnerships at national level, and that met three times in 2017, on the side lines of the CNA Validation on 31 March, to follow up after the mid-term evaluation on 9 June, and the coaching plan validation on 8 September.

National level - Julio Morales (PRONAGRO), Ricardo Salvado (DICTA), and Sonia Gamero (SEDUCA).

Partnership level -

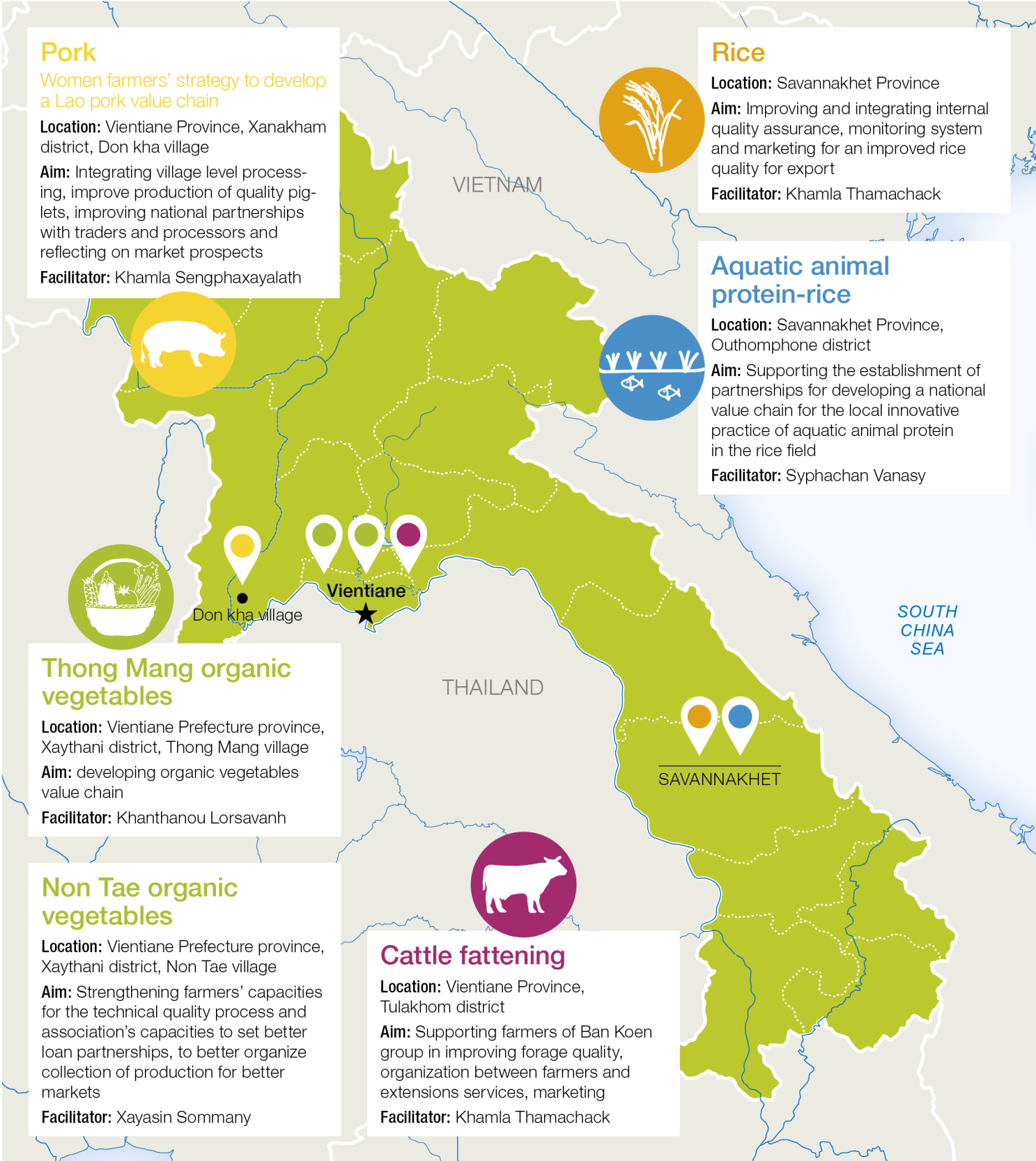
- Potatoes: Edwin Flores (PRONAGRO), Héctor García (DICTA), Arlis Zepeda
- Coffee: Carmen Rivera (HQC), Rudy Mejía (IHCAFE)
- Cocoa: Miguel Romero (ASEPRA), José Ruiz (CURLA)
- Beans: Luz Herrera (ASOPRANO), Ruben Sinclear (UNA), Julia Cruz (DICTA)





LAOS

Country Project Manager: Oudong Keomipheth
National Project Coordinator: Bountong Bouahom
Agrinatura Focal Person: Patrick D'Aquino
Lead National Innovation Facilitator: Lampheuy Kaensombath



Pork

Women farmers' strategy to develop a Lao pork value chain

Location: Vientiane Province, Xanakham district, Don kha village

Aim: Integrating village level processing, improve production of quality piglets, improving national partnerships with traders and processors and reflecting on market prospects

Facilitator: Khamla Sengphaxayalath



Rice

Location: Savannakhet Province

Aim: Improving and integrating internal quality assurance, monitoring system and marketing for an improved rice quality for export

Facilitator: Khamla Thamachack



Aquatic animal protein-rice

Location: Savannakhet Province, Outhomphone district

Aim: Supporting the establishment of partnerships for developing a national value chain for the local innovative practice of aquatic animal protein in the rice field

Facilitator: Syphachan Vanasy



Thong Mang organic vegetables

Location: Vientiane Prefecture province, Xaythani district, Thong Mang village

Aim: developing organic vegetables value chain

Facilitator: Khanthanou Lorsavanh



Non Tae organic vegetables

Location: Vientiane Prefecture province, Xaythani district, Non Tae village

Aim: Strengthening farmers' capacities for the technical quality process and association's capacities to set better loan partnerships, to better organize collection of production for better markets

Facilitator: Xayasin Sommany

Cattle fattening

Location: Vientiane Province, Tulakhom district

Aim: Supporting farmers of Ban Koen group in improving forage quality, organization between farmers and extensions services, marketing

Facilitator: Khamla Thamachack



Laos – 2017 country report



“I have a dream, to see a new production model develop here, and spread – a mixed system of rice, crops and aquatic animals that uses natural nutrient cycling and needs no chemical or fertilizers, as in this new rice-tilapia innovation that this farmer is trying.”

Syphachanh ‘Tou Lee’ Vannasy, *national innovation facilitator for the ‘aquaculture-rice’ innovation partnership, Savannakhet, Lao PDR*

1. Key activities

Summary

Activities advanced in 2017 in the six niches selected in Lao PDR to implement and test the CDAIS approach. These are pig fattening (Xanakham district), organic vegetable production (Non Tae and Thong Mang, Vientiane district), cattle raising (Ban Koen, Vientiane district), improving rice quality (Savannakhet district), and integrated rice-aquaculture (Outhomphone district).

Capacity needs assessments

Six niches were selected in 2016 and *capacity needs assessment* visits to each were completed in March 2017. During April and May, niche actors were supported with additional visits to formalize CNA conclusions and tentative action plans. On functional capacities, the priority challenge in Lao PDR is (i) to help stakeholders make progress on analysing their needs and deciding by themselves the priority issues and required actions, (ii) inclusive ownership of partnerships with other actors and (iii) identifying relevant training, selecting trainers, etc. In the past, both actors and their technical advisers (including NIFs) used to let technical services decide for them. Therefore, the whole CNA process was designed to respond to this constraint by offering a learning-by-doing approach.



During CNA visits, the NIFs asked niche actors to identify actions needed to help with their capacity development, and what experts, trainers, and other partners could support them. For each niche, this assessment of capacity needs and initial actions required was written up into posters within the CDAIS learning process framework, to help niche actors observe progress in their capacities. A first draft of the posters was presented during niche-level workshops, and together, the niche actors checked and corrected each sentence, before presenting the updated posters themselves during the national validation workshop. Throughout the year, the first of the planned actions were implemented in each niche. However, it was seen that these initial CNAs were only a first and incomplete view of real niche needs, because the niche actors need time and experience to progress. As such, further support is needed as the first actions are implemented including review and revision of needs assessments. Also, the first action plan was designed by actors to progress in a self-driven development-process, but each tended to focus on technical constraints.

Functional capacities, or the lack of them, are difficult for niche actors to grasp. This include some of the NIFs. According to the learning-by-doing approach, the first (2017) implementation phase of action plans is considered as a way to highlight, from concrete difficulties during implementation, the lack of functional capacities. Consequently, at the end of the year 2017, a review of niche actors' attitudes was conducted with the NIFs. The lack of empowerment was identified and qualified. To achieve a quality shift, coaching plans will be reflected upon with NIFs in early 2018. Actions towards organizations (CNA and action plan for organizations, organizational analysis, policy dialogues) will be a part of this coaching plan.

Initiating the coaching plan

In 2017, the first step of the coaching plan was implemented. Data were collected using questionnaires. A reflection workshop was organized on 7 March with NIFs to dive into the different challenges of the coaching process. On 17 May a validation workshop was held. Actors from each niche presented by themselves two posters, on the CNA and their action plan. National organizations and key partners including those from the financial sector, listened to niche actors as each explained their work and needs around their respective posters in the morning. A debate was then organized to embed national partners as niche actor support. Specific niche training was also planned with the help of national participants, e.g. on pig meat processing, organic vegetable production in the monsoon season, etc. Lastly, a discussion with financial partners on adapted loans to local actors ended with a decision to run economic/financial training for CDAIS stakeholders to better understand the elements for adapted loans and other financial support, organized few months afterwards for NIFs.

Marketplace

This was held on 19 May, called an 'innovation fair', facilitated by FAO. Niche actors showed their newly learnt abilities to present by themselves, without any NIF help during the workshop, their CNA and Action Plan. The Innovation Fair enabled the project team establish partnerships with other projects, which support Local extension services.

Policy dialogue

A first policy dialogue was held in Savannakhet on 21 November, facilitated by FAO. Outputs from this confirmed issues that were already emerged in other national debates and workshops. There were no specific shift as regards to supporting niches partnerships, partly because the policy dialogue occurred too early in the CDAIS process. Policy challenges will be the last to emerge at local level, once the technical constraints and local organizational dysfunctions are overcome.

Communications

The CDAIS communications developer visited one of the niches, and others as part of the Laos meeting field visits. Two success stories were produced and published, on rice-aquaculture, and organic vegetable production. The FAO local team published some information in local newspapers, and NAFRI succeeded in having a small documentary on national TV.

“We now need to turn small-scale innovations into successful large-scale enterprises.”

Bounlium Planethavong, farmer, Nongkhamhed village, Savannakhet, Lao PDR, stakeholder in the rice-aquaculture innovation partnership



2. Capacities strengthened

Individual level

NIFs have the usual Lao institutional top-down approach on how to provide support to innovations. Everything is usually assessed and decided by officials and experts. Farmers are considered not able to organize and think by themselves, hence they need to be assisted. There is no training that can change this in-depth attitude and behaviour. This can only be done through learning-by-doing process where progressive changes is made in their mindsets, opinions...and related skills. Consequently, through this approach, the functional capacities of NIFs are strengthened. However, to acquire the skills to use CDAIS participatory tools, having just the CDAIS framework is not enough. It is far too complex for the NIFs to understand, although there is a probability that they will understand it at the end of project.

The approach of learning-by-doing, is initiated by letting the NIFs use the CDAIS tools for the CNAs. The NIFs use these tools directly with the niche partnerships. In addition, they have regular working meetings with the AFP. Slowly, they come to understand and become empowered through this process.

The same approach is used for NIFs to learn to facilitate partnerships. Currently, the NIFs have limited skills to conduct participatory facilitation although they have shown progress in their ability to develop action plans. They are developing their skills through practical experiences with the niche partnerships. For example, in planning with the niches, the NIFs realised that to be able to facilitate, they need to know basic economics and finance to be able to assist the niche actors.

Therefore the NIFs received initial training on participatory tools for economic/financial understanding/review, and business plan development. This training was provided by the Lao Micro-finance Association and Isabelle Vagneron, a CIRAD economist based in Vientiane. NIFs adapted and applied these tools according to the context of their niches. After this training, in early 2018, the NIFs will go back to the niches to share these new knowledge. In turn, the NIFs will document their own experiences and draw conclusions on how actors can improve their own knowledge on economics and finance. The key objective of this step is not to produce guidelines, rather, by asking the NIFs to write their own experience, they have more in-depth understanding and hence, assure skills development.

Having acquired this skills, the NIF gained higher level of capacities. They changed their attitudes on how to facilitate the niche partnerships. They are able to 'step back' and allow the actors to drive the process. Several NIF workshops/trainings were organized during the year so they could progressively understand that part of empowering the niche actors is to bring the process from CNA to policy-dialogue. From this regular NIF coaching (learning cycles), progress were made. The niche CNAs and Action Plan were developed by the actors themselves and not by the advisers (NIFs or extension agents).

Niche level

In Laos, niche actors are not accustomed to driving their own development by themselves. Though they are free to express themselves, they are often reluctant to face this unusually uncomfortable position. CDAIS participatory tools were helpful to drive them slowly towards self-expression. Eventually, some hidden issues that didn't emerged in former projects arose, such as unfair benefit distribution and differential voices within farmer organization, unfair agreements with private sector, weak skills of extension agents and local expertise. These results, together with the NIFs improved capacities, prove that the effectiveness and impact of the learning-by-doing approach and usefulness of the participatory tools.

“Our farm is like a school for us – we learn something new every day”

Mrs Khammone Luanglath, deputy head of the Tongmang organic vegetable growers group, Lao PDR, stakeholder in the organic agriculture innovation partnership



3. Lessons learnt

Capacity needs assessments

In the national context, developing local actor's abilities to make their own assessment and decisions cannot be reached only through the CNA process. This requires every actor involved (farmer, extension agents, NIF and others like traders and bankers) to progress through a learning-by-doing process. They should acknowledge that farmers must take the centre stage in the process to assess the farmers' needs and requirements. For example, when traders want to buy farm products, they negotiate with extension agents and not directly with farmers. The same for bankers and farmer loans.

Therefore, the process of strengthening the functional capacities has to be split in two separate objectives. The first is to build the *skills* to acquire functional capacities e.g. skills to assess, and skills to understand economic concepts and, the *attitudes* that would drive progress. The second involves *time* and *strategy* to use the learning-by-doing approach. During the niche CNA, the project first stage, local actors and NIFs definitely don't have enough understanding to grasp the meaning of functional capacities. Hence, they did not have the capacity to identify their needs to improve these capacities. This situation provides a different perspective on the process of needs assessment. It implies that needs assessment is a continuous process with incremental progress along the continuum. This requires that the CDAIS project allows to regularly modify and improve the original steps of the needs assessment and action plan to ensure that a step of progress is a move forward.

In Lao PDR, the key capacity building priority is with the NIFs. If they are skilled, they can make local actors progress in their own functional capacities. In turn, local actors with functional capacities can make their local organizations progress or be accountable.

A specific coaching process to develop functional capacities is being developed progressively and should be formalized through the NIF team. The challenge is to show the advantages of having the NIF capacities to national decision-makers and institutions. This should be the medium-term impact of the CDAIS project. The national leaders should recognise that the NIF capacities are crucial for innovations to happen in the country. The NIFs have indispensable role to link local extension agents and other actors as well as influence decision-makers to have relevant national policies. Therefore, the NIFs should gain institutional support in the country. For this to be achieved, few questions arises i.e. *what is the right national institution to host the NIFs with the mission to support local organizations and actors to improve their functional capacities?* The next steering committee will examine all of these issues.

4. Next steps

Niche action plans

Actions in 2017 at niche level focused on technical skills, with phone calls planned to niches in early 2018 to check on the extent niche actors can get ownership of their action plan. They have asked for detail and to justify activities and budget. This combines with NIF leaders' assessment of what happened during 2017 activities, with a focus on the remaining progress required regarding functional capacities. These two assessments will feed into a coaching plan reflection workshop on 7 March 2018, to set a strategic plan to progress for each niche.

Organizational capacity needs assessments and action plans

The required progress in functional capacities identified in 2017 show that local organizations are key to progress, both at the local and national scales. Therefore, two levels of organizations will separately be supported. These are mainly extension services at local level, and research and extension organizations/departments, at national level. Others will be identified during organizational analysis. At local level, some steps of organizational CNA will be organized separately for each niche; others will be done together. This activity will start with meetings between NIFs to set up adapted coaching support for each niche. The key to these is how to organise these tricky inadequacies of functional capacities, unfair benefit distribution and unequal voices within farmer organizations, unfair agreements with the private sector, weak skills of extension agents, poor local expertise, and imbalanced



power relationships. During these meetings, NIFs will draw on their experience and tested tools to set adapted strategies, methods and tools, with the help of the AFP. And in the same learning-by-doing approach, these meetings will maintain the aim to design and adapt support for NIFs to progress continuously. After this design and planning meeting, CNA organizations will be implemented in each niche, from February to April 2018.

National level platforms

To achieve this key purpose for lasting impacts beyond the end of the project, actions such as innovation platforms were planned, but which need to be adapted to the national context. These will be implemented from February to September 2018, and the next steering committee will advise on how to find the best strategy and schedule. In February 2018, the Steering Committee will set a strategy to develop the national hosting for CDAIS facilitation skills, followed by in May 2018, the policy dialogue workshops for the four Vientiane Province niches. From September to December 2018, the national role of the NIF taskforce will be secured, as regards the spreading out CDAIS facilitation skills.

Training national innovation facilitators

In 2018, there will be three approaches to improving NIF capacity building. The first will be to develop skills to make target groups progress on 'soft' functional capacities (internal structuring of local organizations, advocacy capacities towards officials, power relationships, power balances...). The second will be to coaching skills for actors to better understand and improve their knowledge of economic and financial issues. The third will be to develop skills so NIFs could become national 'trainers of trainers', and potentially to establish a national task force. These three aims will be pursued throughout the same learning-by-doing approach that was applied in earlier years, combining meetings where NIFs are asked to assess and formalize their experience, and implementing periods where they learn from their successes and failures. And like in former years, this work will enrich CDAIS methods and tools from NIFs own experience.

“CDAIS is aligned with our national agricultural development strategy and will help us overcome some of the main constraints. It will help smallholder farmers in Laos become more organised, empower them, and help to develop our priority value chains through training in making new linkages and supporting dialogue.”

Dr Bounthong Bouahom, Director General of NAFRI, Lao PDR

Country team

- Bounthong Bouahom, *National Project Coordinator (NPC)*
- Oudong Keomipheth, *Country Project Manager (CPM)*
- Patrick d'Aquino, *Agrinatura Focal Person (AFP)*
- Stephen Rudgard, *FAO Country Office CDAIS focal person*
- Karin Nichterlein, *FAO HQ technical officer support*

NIFs

- Lead NIF: Dalaphone Sihanath
- National NIF: Lampeuy Kaensombath
- NIF pig fattening: Khamla 'Pern' Sengphaxaiyalath
- NIF rice quality: Nikhom Chanphava
- NIF cattle rearing: Khamla Thammachak
- NIF rice-aquaculture: Syphachan 'TouLee Vannasy
- NIF organic vegetable production (Non Tae): Kolakoth Phommalin

Supported by:



Technical Working Group

There was no meeting in 2017, although it was established by the project to be within the national institutional context. The group will be updated and resumed in early 2018, to develop steps towards a national innovation platform.

2018 National Technical Working Group (tentative)

CDAIS Steering Committee:

- Koen, UE Delegation – Laos
- Bouthong, DG NAFRI
- Pongmala Chanthalath FAOLA
- Patrick d'Aquino CIRAD

NAFRI:

- CDAIS facilitation team: Nikhom Chantava, Khamla Sengphaxaialath, Oudong Keomithep
- CDAIS Technical advisers: Souksamlane Khamphoumy, Xayasin Sommany, Bousong Vongvichith
- Director of NAFRI Economic and rural development research center

DTEAP:

- CDAIS facilitation team: Khamla Thamachack, Khanthanou Lorsavanh
- Director of Department of Technical Extension
- Director of Department of Rural Development and Cooperatives

NUoL:

- CDAIS facilitation team: Lampeuy Kaensombath, Syphachan Vanasy, Kolakoth Phommalin
- MAF, Director of Department of Policy and Legal Affairs, MAF
- DAFO Xanakham, Ban Koen, Non Tae, and Thong Mang.





RWANDA

Country Project Manager: Gilbert Kayitare
National Project Coordinator: Charles Murekezi
Agrinatura Focal Person: Hans Dobson

Dairy value chain

Location: Northern Province, Burera district

Aim: Providing capacity development and improving management systems, milk yields and quality

Facilitator: Augustin Mutijima



NORTHERN PROVINCE

EASTERN PROVINCE

★ Kigali

SOUTHERN PROVINCE

BURUNDI

Cassava value chain

Location: Southern Province, Ruhango District

Aim: Improving and strengthening production of disease-free cassava through developing partnerships between farmers, traders, public and private research and extension services

Facilitator: Corneille Ntakirutimana



Rwangingo catchment

Location: Eastern Province, Gatsibo district

Aim: Improving yields and livelihoods, building on previous partnerships and projects by strengthening capacities to manage multistakeholder partnerships, to communicate and to engage successfully in agribusiness

Facilitator: Straton Habumugisha



Rwanda – 2017 country report



“Homegrown solutions, from smooth collaboration, is the best channel we have to adopt in order to support long term and sustainable development.”

Uwambaye Marie, Mayor of Burera district, dairy value chain niche

1. Key activities

The coaching plan

The CDAIS project is being implemented in three niches and each has its own particularity in terms of the business it is centered on, partners, stakeholders, and geographic location. The diversity of capacity development needs was elaborated in the capacity needs assessment (CNA) process in 2016. This formed the basis for the capacity development action plan developed along with training modules to address specific needs. At the same time, a more comprehensive analysis of visions, objectives, partners, actions required and progress markers was made using the coaching plan framework, so that the modules could be fine-tuned.

The main objectives of the coaching plan are to capture and document the vision and objectives of the niche actors, to provide a framework for planning and implementing the coaching process, and to provide a framework to track progress related to changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices. The development of the coaching plan involved the AFP who introduced the concept and practices to better understand the objectives and expected outcomes, and who also led the initial drafting and provided guidance on further concerns and questions arising. Each niche is has two National Innovation Facilitators (NIFs), so the coaching process for three niches therefore involved six NIFs. The CPM, as overall manager of national project activities, supported the NPC to coordinate field work and capture all the required information from all niches, while also checking for quality of the



documentation. Finally, FAO HQ and the CDAIS technical officer contributed much to revision and refinement of coaching plans. The result of the coaching plan development process was that for each niche we have a well-articulated matrix with clear activities and at each level of actors, progress markers, expected outcomes, teams to be involved.

Policy dialogue process

A major multi-stakeholder workshop on cassava development was conducted on 23-25 October 2017, a CDAIS innovation. The aim of this 'cassava week' event was to strengthen collaboration of all stakeholders to identify sustainable solutions for the development of the cassava value chain. The major objectives were twofold. The first was to reach a common understanding of the relevance of innovation and role of policy development and institutional issues in promoting agricultural innovation around cassava value chain. The second was to recommend improvements in the institutional mechanisms and enabling environment, such as the functioning of multi-stakeholder platforms, and incentives and disincentives for collaboration that promote agricultural innovation for cassava development. It was a gathering of many different cassava value chain actors, including professional farmers, representatives of cassava cooperatives, local and central governments, representatives from local and international NGOs supporting cassava development and partnering with existing structures, agronomists, private investors in cassava, processors, traders and transporters, input suppliers, and government institutions involved in policy and development levels. The recommendations are being implemented and positive changes are being observed such as negotiation of prices between farmers and the processing plant, involvement of a number of seed multipliers in the systems, etc.

Organizational capacity needs assessments

Planning began in 2017 with the three likely organizations identified after consultations with key actors and the project steering committee (PSC): Rwanda Agriculture Board active at Province level; district level local government authorities; and processors – particularly the cassava processor at Kinazi and the dairy Community Processing Centre at Burera. These will be put to the PSC for final endorsement.

Communications

The EC delegation has been kept up to date through project steering committee meetings and with visits to its offices. Opportunities are always taken to consult on decisions so that the project activities align as well as possible with current related activities and policies. The opportunity was taken to advocate for mainstreaming of agricultural innovation approach at a workshop to develop the outline for the new national strategy for agricultural transformation (PSTA4). The CPM and AFP attended the workshop and two of the NIFs in their government capacities were part of the drafting team. Advocacy for innovation systems were included at the drafting workshop on PSTA4. The first story of change was produced by one of the NIFs appointed as 'story harvester' on the dairy niche, and which was very well received at the CDAIS annual meeting in Laos.

Other activities

An innovative 'cassava week' in the Ruhango niche partnership in October 2017. A three-day workshop saw all categories of actors in the cassava value chain from across the country, convening to discuss policies and their implementation with regard to development of cassava and other commodities in the district. Discussions analysed the root causes and they made recommendations which they have since started to implement, with major results being observed. There is an improved process of information sharing between the Rwanda Agricultural Board (RAB) and seed multipliers making seed of disease-resistant varieties being made more available in quality and quantity. A marketplace took place, matching seed demand and supply between multipliers and farmers, leading to the areas planted with cassava increasing again from 5700 to nearly 10,000 hectares (March 2018). The cassava processing plant enhanced collaboration with farmers, increased processing capacity from 9% to 40%, and the unit price for cassava flour dropped from €1.21 to €0.73 per kg, increasing demand from consumers. The round table discussions during cassava week was a genesis of working partnership between cassava stakeholders, and an online communication network of actors was created leading to a new continuous exchange of information; where both demand and supply of products and services are arranged and answers can be obtained within a couple of hours.



“Partnership is the only way of finding solutions for complex challenges, especially when different actors have different levels of understanding of the situation and consequences behind.”

Emmanuel Bashimiki, a modern farmer and cassava seed multiplier

2. Capacities strengthened

Individual level

The CDAIS Global meeting and Partner Meeting of the Tropical Agriculture Platform in which CDAIS project partners participated in Laos in September 2017 gathered different project staff at national and global levels, as well as TAP partners to discuss the implementation, and review the process and progress, agree on key steps of developing capacities, and recommit to the new work plan. Rwanda was represented by three participants including the CPM, a NIF representing the NPC, and one lead NIF, and who benefitted greatly from the learning through exchange with other CDAIS countries during the meeting, and capacity development at the TAP Partner meeting. In particular, there was learning on approaches to policy level promotion of AIS (enabling environment), and the reinforcement of the message by TAP partners that a key focus of CDAIS is research – trying out new approaches and techniques and learning from what works and what doesn't. There was also beneficial sharing between countries on types of niches and commodities involved through the poster sessions. It was also an occasion to have country meetings with the AFP and FAO HQ Rome support staff.

The CPM, NIF and AFP capacities were also strengthened during two days of training on 8–9 August 2017, the first was on adult learning, delivered by two NIFs, and the second day was on coaching skills, delivered by an external consultant. Participants discovered their learning styles, visual, auditory, reading and writing, kinesthetic or tactile, learned about profiling workshop participants and additional facilitation skills. The second day on coaching skills, participants learnt about the GROW model of coaching, involving setting goals, assessment of the current reality, review of the full range of options, then committing to specific ways forward. There was a role play opportunity where listening and coaching skills could be practiced with another participant. There were also useful discussions on the need for motivated 'change agents' at the niche level – if the wrong people are leading, there will be no progress for the partnerships.

The CPM attended the MEL workshop in Montpellier, France, 7-9 November 2017 on behalf of the Rwanda team as the responsible person for the follow-up of the MEL in Rwanda. An action plan of MEL activities was developed after the three-day training. Members of this working group had capacities strengthened in their understanding of MEL implementation in country and how it integrates with the organizational analysis and organizational coaching process, developing a Theory of Change (ToC) in each country.

“I have learnt a lot from my involvement in this initiative. But most of all, I have learnt to listen...!”

Leon Niyibize, national innovation facilitator

At niche level

Capacity needs assessments revealed priority areas for capacity development in all three niches. These are translated into training modules to be used to develop the capacities of 71 actors, i.e.:

- (i) Models for agricultural development, explaining their evolution since 1960, achievements realized and what makes the agricultural innovation systems most preferred when it comes to sustainable agriculture and access to market. Niche actors now understand AIS in the context of other approaches that have evolved over time.
- (ii) Roles and governance in innovation partnerships, and how a partnership should be established, whose roles and responsibilities have to be played, and capacities required. Niche actors will define these roles and responsibilities more clearly during the course of the learning cycles.
- (iii) Participatory and inclusive management practices for innovation partnerships, including leadership and gender issues. Again, key issues introduced, awareness raised of their importance and a plan will be developed to improve participation and inclusion in management practices.
- (iv) Entrepreneurship, involving many business aspects such as access to markets and price negotiation, but the interventions at this stage puts emphasis on introducing and discussing how a partnership could take advantage



of existing challenges and opportunities to solve, intervene and invest to improve the business of all partners. Awareness and key issues have been raised in learning cycle 1.

(v) Internal and external communication in partnerships, which is key and must include top down and bottom up system and the proper management of information flows should be installed. This has been also implemented in participatory manner.

The process has been initiated in all the niches, where ad hoc teams of five people have been selected to prepare a list of partnership roles and responsibilities, governing body and memberships, calendar and action plan to be prioritized, etc. These teams are working on these issues and they will report to the other niche actors during niche visits in 2018.

“CDAIS has helped me understand better the challenges in the milk value chain, from farmer to final consumer.”

Jean de Dieu Nizeyimbabazi, director of Agriculture and Natural Resources in Burera District, stakeholder in the dairy innovation partnership

3. Lessons learnt

The coaching plan was developed only after the capacity development action plan had been drawn up, so a process of harmonizing was required. The general perception, however, was that the process was too complex. But the process did help the in-country team to getting even stronger with the support of consultants. Efforts were made to strengthen the capacities of the NIFs with a day of training on adult learning, and a day of training on coaching skills, and with much expertise within the country team, much benefits to be gained from sharing skills and knowledge. A good example of harnessing and sharing specialist capacities that already exist within the national team was the CPM/NIF/AFP training on adult learning that was delivered by two of the NIFs with expertise in this area, and further such events are being planned. The establishment of small steering groups at each niche was at the request of the niches themselves and is a way of establishing (and recognizing) their leadership and roles as champions and agents of change. But it was realized that a single workshop per learning cycles is not sufficient to cover all of the modules, and either some rationalization is needed of that the number of modules should be increased or that additional sessions are planned within the constraints of time and budget.

Niche activities evolve, involving many actors whose interests change over time, so it was important that niche actors themselves developed, together with CDAIS NIFs, key progress markers to be able to track changes towards achievement of the set outcomes, goals and vision of the niche. During the first visit of the learning cycles, discussions with niches and a look back to the coaching plans showed that there was a slight gap between the capacity development gaps identified during the CNA, and the capacities that the agreed progress markers relate to. But this, however, was expected as people become more adept at reflection and self-analysis. Their perceived capacity needs will evolve, and this is considered to be a positive sign of change.

4. Next steps

Niche actors have also been supported through the development of their negotiation and business skills, and other skills will be developed in upcoming learning visits scheduled in 2018. Coaching plans will be finalized and printed copies of the vision, objectives and progress markers will be provided for periodic review by the steering group. The second and third capacity action visits as part of the coaching process will be carried out early in 2018 with the reflection and refinement days to be organized immediately afterwards. Additional visits will be made to support the capacity development of the partnerships as time and budget allows. Regarding the organizational CNAs, the network analysis data from the CNAs were reviewed to identify the key organizations providing innovation support services to niches. This showed that Rwanda Agricultural Board (RAB) at provincial level, district level government/administrative offices, and the dairy Community Processing Centre were the three key organizations. An external specialist will be brought in to train the NIFs in organizational assessment, and the NIFs, plus national consultants where appropriate, will carry out the organizational CNAs. Once the capacity needs of the organizations have been identified, the national team will review which of the capacities can be strengthened by members of the national team and which will require national or international consultancy support.



FAO is leading on the policy dialogue at niche and nation levels, and will contract a consultant to lead these activities, but the national team will support where necessary. It is a reflective process that will involve people from different interest groups to discuss the integration and adoption of agricultural innovation systems into national strategies and implementation processes. It will aim to resolve the assumption that people in different positions will have different perspectives, and maybe divergent interests, on the same problem.

“The CDAIS project has made me an innovative thinker.”

Jean de Dieu Nizeyimbabazi, director of Agriculture and Natural Resources in Burera District, stakeholder in the dairy innovation partnership

Country team

- Charles Murekezi, National Project Coordinator (NPC)
- Gilbert Kayitare, Country Project Manager (CPM)
- Hans Dobson, Agrinatura Focal Person (AFP)
- Otto Vianney Muhinda, FAO Country Office CDAIS focal person
- Karin Nichterlein, FAO HQ technical officer support

NIFs

- Lead NIF: Corneille Ntakirutimana
- NIF: Straton Habumugisha
- NIF: Leonidas Dusengemungu
- NIF: Gisèle Ntakirutimana
- NIF: Anita Mutesi
- NIF: Leon Niyibizi

Supported by:

National Project Steering Committee

- Charles Murekezi (NPC and Chair)
- Arnaud De Vanssay - (EU),
- Otto Vianney Muhinda (FAOR)
- Hans Dobson (AFP)
- Gilbert Kayitare (CPM)
- Karin Nichterlein (FAO) (Observer)

The third PSC meeting took place on 6 April 2017, with two meetings scheduled in 2018.