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Common Framework products



*Conceptual
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Scoping Study

Tool factsheet

IMPLEMENTING THE COMMON FRAMEWORK ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (CD) FOR AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION SYSTEMS (AIS)

This factsheet is part of a series outlining tools and approaches to promote capacity development projects for agricultural innovation systems (AIS). The tools described in these pages are designed with a view to the practical implementation of the principles of the Common Framework of the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP), a G20 initiative. They have been applied in the Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) project, funded by the EU and jointly implemented by Agrinatura and FAO in collaboration with national partners in Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Laos and Rwanda.

A scoping study can provide important input for the process of galvanizing commitment in the capacity development for AIS cycle. The scoping study explores the nature and dynamics of the agricultural innovation system, in order to disclose past and ongoing investments and mechanisms relating to AIS and CD for AIS in the country. In particular, the study looks into the various initiatives and projects that support capacity development processes.

The ultimate objective of the scoping study is the preparation of the CD needs assessments that will guide the CD initiative itself.

Purpose of the study

The scoping study lays the grounds for the country-level inception workshop that will bring the government into contact with the other key stakeholders, including organizations that offer CD services (CD suppliers) to enable these actors to consult, engage with one another, discuss their respective levels of participation and identify priority value chains/innovation partnerships. The findings of the scoping study will provide material for a round-table discussion on the development of a national vision of CD for AIS.

The scoping study:

- Maps and characterizes stakeholders, projects, programmes, actors and the existing coordination mechanisms that form part of the innovation partnership or AIS, and indicates those engaged in CD for AIS;
- Acknowledges ongoing initiatives for the promotion of innovation in agriculture (innovation platforms, higher education programmes, etc.);
- Provides information about the performance of the main AIS stakeholders in the country;
- Nominates 'champions' of AIS or CD for AIS (key influential individuals within organizations/networks);
- Identifies the governance structures of the main CD initiative participants.



How to organize a scoping study

The scoping study is conducted by a national consultant whose work follows a terms of reference (ToR). It can be broken down into the following steps:

1. Set realistic boundaries

The first step is taken even before any in-country visits are planned. A desk review is made of past scoping studies/assessments reports relating to AIS and of the document repository compiled by CD experts. The consultant(s) should also review existing CD initiatives to avoid duplications, leverage already available resources and take note of the national priorities for agricultural development.

By the end of this first stage, the focus of the study will have been fixed, along with a list of potential key contacts, and a preliminary overview will have been made of the most important AIS and CD for AIS activities.

2. Develop a methodology along with key national partners

A data-collection methodology needs to be adopted. It may consist of semi-structured interviews with resource persons (see guidelines below) and focus-group sessions. If necessary, the data collection may entail an additional review of the literature and a network analysis.

The tools of data collection can be the same as those used in stakeholder mapping (such as semi-structured questionnaires, timelines, network and SWOT analyses).

3. Conduct consultations and in-country interviews

Consultations and interviews are held in the target country to validate the information gathered from the desk review and the stakeholder mapping process. Consultations should be organized to allow all key stakeholders to take part (so invitations should be made well in advance).

4. Analysis and reporting

The information gathered in the scoping study (i.e. from the documents review, in-country stakeholder meetings and other sources) is reviewed and analysed by the consultant. The objective is to arrive at a shared understanding of how individuals, organizations and institutions are working on or involved in capacity development for AIS, and therefore which parties should have a role in the implementation of actions in the country.

The output of the scoping study should be a concise report that gives a detailed analysis of the actors, their characteristics and priorities. The report should also include recommendations for potential linkages with existing innovation initiatives/partnerships/networks that can be absorbed into the CD interventions, which, in turn can add value to them.



Generic semi-structured interview guidelines

Target: Previously identified resource people who are knowledgeable about the focus of the interview (e.g. heads of organizations, heads of programmes, persons in charge of innovation-related activities).

The following are some examples of the details that can be extracted. The questions should be followed up on to obtain further details and enrich the discussion:

1. **Your organization:** Type, size; history; budget, objectives; main activities; partners; documents describing the organization;
2. **Your main activities on developing/supporting innovation processes:** type of innovation-related work; staff involved; results achieved;
3. **Any activity you developed relating to CD for AIS:** CD for whom?; Modalities, objectives, arrangements;
4. **Knowledge of and approach vis-à-vis AIS concepts;**
5. **Strengths and weaknesses of your organization** in the sphere of innovation, and **needs/opportunities** to which the CD intervention can answer.



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