

Perspective

Importance of agricultural and rural development, research and extension programmes

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INTRODUCTION

In agricultural and rural development, research and extension programmes are critical. Furthermore, they are critical to fulfilling agricultural innovation's promise. Most of the difficulties confronting agricultural and natural resource management in developing nations may be addressed via innovation. Many developing countries, on the other hand, lack the resources necessary to fully develop their innovation capability. Agricultural research institutions' activities are frequently hampered by a lack of funding and inadequate financial management, as well as limits in knowledge transfer initiatives. Similarly, extension systems are frequently under-resourced, under-coordinated, and employ antiquated ideas and methodologies.

FAO strives to close this gap by assisting member nations in transforming their Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS). All individuals, organisations, and businesses that develop innovative products, processes, and organisational forms in order to achieve food security, economic development, and sustainable natural resource management are referred to as AIS.

By providing policy advice and technical assistance to member countries, promoting studies, policy dialogue, networks, and partnerships at all levels, and supporting capacity development for rural knowledge institutions, FAO works to create an enabling environment and improve national agriculture research institutions and rural extension services. FAO is concentrating its efforts on improving inclusive AIS in order to meet the requirements of small farmers and fully exploit the promise of agricultural innovation in family farming.

FAO has taken a comprehensive approach to attain this aim, comprising five important areas of work:

FAO encourages member nations to use the AIS idea to shape their institutions and policies in order to develop their capacities. Using the FAO capacity development framework and emphasising stakeholder ownership and participatory processes, this includes the AIS, its sub-systems at all levels, and the respective institutions (farmer organisations, advisory systems and their services, research institutions, private enterprises, and so on). The Tropical Agricultural Platform (TAP), a multilateral dynamic facilitation mechanism that promotes increased coherence and higher effect of Capacity Development (CD) for AIS in tropical countries, is also using FAO as a coordinator. TAP has created a Common Framework on CD for AIS in order to further its objective. The Framework's three primary outputs are the Conceptual Background, the Operationalization Guidance Note, and the Synthesis.

FAO fosters networking, information exchange, and interaction of many players in AIS and its subsystems through the development of tools and processes. FAO assists member states in implementing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as TECA and VERCON to improve stakeholder interaction and information accessibility. FAO offers technical assistance and training to its member nations to help them build their skills in agricultural biotechnologies and associated concerns, as well as advice on the establishment of national biotechnology programmes and biosafety regimes.

FAO also promotes agricultural R&D through collaborations with a variety of other international organisations, including the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR), the CGIAR Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) of the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and the CGIAR Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA), all of which have secretariats in Rome. The Food and Agriculture Organization was also a founding member of the Global Forum of Rural Advisory

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Services (GFRAS). FAO promotes inclusive agriculture innovation for its member countries, focusing on smallholder farmers and their organizations, through provision of policy advice, including advice on investment requirements, directly to member countries, as well as assisting in the development

of the programmes, strategies, and techniques required for implementation. FAO also publishes policy studies, such as the flagship publication “Innovation in Family Farming,” which was released on October 16, 2014 as part of the State of Food and Agriculture report (SOFA) series.