



Project name: Farmer Access to Innovation Resources (FAIR3)

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PROLINNOVA partner: ENVIRONMENTAL ALERT

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1.0 Introduction

PROLINNOVA–Uganda is an NGO-led multi-stakeholder initiative to build a national learning network on promoting local innovation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resource management (NRM). PROLINNOVA–Uganda’s main objective is to mainstream community-led approaches to agriculture and natural resource management. This report covers activities implemented in the FAIR3 transition project from February to December 2012. PROLINNOVA–Uganda, through its partners, has implemented various activities during this period.

2.0 Activities implemented

A: Elaboration of recommended model and scenario for LISF implementation

A1.1 Documentation of model for implementing Local Innovation Support Fund (LISF)

PROLINNOVA–Uganda at Environmental Alert (EA) and partners reviewed the LISF approach piloted in Uganda and developed a model for implementing LISF in Uganda. The objectives of this activity were: i) to document the FAIR model for an LISF approach in Uganda; ii) to describe systematically and in operational terms the best way to implement LISF in the country; and iii) to examine and analyse cost efficiency of the approach. The review for the model was organised from 11–26 September 2012. The draft model was shared with other partners for their inputs and suggestions. The responses from partners were received and the Secretariat is putting together the partners’ contributions into the draft report. The documentation of the Uganda FAIR model is not yet printed; the PROLINNOVA–Uganda Secretariat is processing its printing. Then it will be shared with development partners. The documentation of the model will support the partners in initiating similar interventions in Uganda.

A1.2 Elaborating and writing up LISF up scaling scenario

PROLINNOVA–Uganda with partners developed an LISF upscaling scenario for Uganda. The objectives of this activity were: i) to formulate and document a practical, viable and visible LISF upscaling scenario; ii) to develop strategies, structures, processes and steps for scaling up the LISF approach and embedding it in farmer organisations and supportive ARD organisations; and iii) to draw up an action plan on how to mobilise further support for the chosen scenario.

A workshop for disseminating the developed upscaling scenario was organised for partners on 27 September 2012 and was attended by 15 core partners (10 men and 5 women). The partners contributed their ideas to the draft report on the upscaling scenario. The ideas were useful in improving the first draft. The document was shared with a member of the PROLINNOVA International Support Team, who provided support in improving the document. The document is not yet printed. It was agreed that the Secretariat would add more information to the document before publishing it. The draft document is undergoing refining to put it in a publishable form. The scenario will then be printed and shared with partners.

The document will provide guidelines for the development partners who wish to take up the initiative. It will be used as a tool in lobbying farmer organisations to take the lead in mainstreaming the approach.

A1.3 Conduct four follow-up activities in supporting LISFs

In the period 12–17 November, the PROLINNOVA–Uganda Secretariat organised an M&E exercise for the eight community-based organisations (CBOs) that piloted LISFs. The partner NGOs involved were Environmental Alert and KULIKA Uganda. The objectives were: i) to reflect on the progress of strategies developed for sustaining FAIR; ii) to identify challenges faced by leaders and farmers in implementing the identified strategies for sustaining FAIR; iii) to develop practical solutions to the identified challenges; iv) to follow up local innovators in the field who were FAIR beneficiaries; and v) to identify innovations for documentation.

Lessons learnt/observations

The joint monitoring has strengthened the partnership. Five of the eight CBOs have started up income-generating activities to raise funds to sustain the LISF at CBO level. In addition, two CBOs have accessed community demand driven (CDD) funds, part of which is used to support the LISF. Proposals can be developed for joint experimentation, where farmers and Masters or PhD university students can validate the innovations. Innovations that have been developed can be commercialised to benefit the farmers and improve their livelihoods.

A1.4 Disburse funds to one CBO to support innovations developed through LISFs

In July, Environmental Alert disbursed 1,500,000 Uganda shillings (approx. 462 Euros) to the CBO Musamba Environmental Protection Group in Mubende District. The objectives of this activity were: i) to consolidate on the achievements of the LISF; ii) to support the development of local innovations; iii) to gather more information and evidence on LISF operation and share with partner organisations for mainstreaming the intervention; iv) to have an LISF operational site during the transition period which could be used during for lobbying and support of LISF. Three farmers accessed the funds.

1. Mr Ssali Dodovic a farmer innovating with pumpkin beverage, received 160,000 Uganda shillings to buy inputs and tools to expand the innovation;
2. Mr Kitandwe Mathias, a farmer innovating in processing snacks from cassava, received 250,000 Uganda shillings to buy inputs and tools to expand the innovation;
3. Mr. Bamulinde Vincent, a farmer innovating with cocoa potting, received 225,000 Uganda shillings to buy inputs and tools to expand the innovation,
4. The Fund Management Committee allocated 150,000 Uganda shillings to the Musamba Environmental Protection Group to support their activity of planting traditional tree species.

The CBO was able to approve and disburse a total of 785,000 (approx. 241 Euros) by the close of the reporting period. It is still receiving applications from farmer innovators for processing.

Lessons learnt/observations

Farmers need continuous supervision and support to make the farmers motivated and to implement the project according to the intended objectives. The leader of the CBO plays a very significant role in resource mobilisation. Leaders of CBOs who have roles at the sub-county or districts have managed to access funds at the sub-county level.

B: Mobilise the support and commitment of key stakeholders

B1.1 Organise dialogue activities to mobilise local commitment to fund the LISF through government budget

PROLINNOVA–Uganda through EA organised a dialogue meeting with staff of the Uganda National Farmers Federation (UNFFE) on mainstreaming LISFs. The objectives of the meeting were: i) to sensitise the staff of UNFFE on LISFs; ii) to discuss the process of mainstreaming LISFs into UNFFE activities; iii) to discuss the role of UNFFE in upscaling LISFs; and iv) to discuss strategies for upscaling LISF by UNFFE. The discussion took place on 7 November in the UNFFE offices and was attended by 11 UNFFE staff members, including 5 district branch coordinators. The balance of funds foreseen for this activity have been allocated to documenting more cases studies on LISFs to share with stakeholders.

Observations

The dialogue was also attended by the Chairperson of the UNFFE Board. The chairperson supported the idea and other follow-up meeting are to be organised to support UNFFE. The Executive Director of UNFFE is a member of the PROLINNOVA–Uganda National Steering Committee. This offers UNFFE a better opportunity to mainstream LISF. More discussions will be held with UNFFE on mainstreaming LISFs. In addition, more dialogue meetings will be organised with other potential stakeholders in LISFs.

B1.2 Organise two media events to increase recognition and support of local innovators among stakeholders

PROLINNOVA–Uganda through the partner organisation A2N started a process of organising awareness-raising about LISFs. The process is continuing; some farmers have been visited and interacted with on the benefits of LISF. The process began in December 2012 and is in the final stages of publishing the case stories in newspapers in early 2013. The objectives of this activity were: i) to raise awareness on the impacts on local innovation when farmers participate in decision-making of LISF management in facilitating solutions to agriculture and nature resource management; ii) to raise awareness on the role of farmers in the decision-making process in the LISF; iii) to raise awareness on the appropriate mechanisms for supporting farmer innovation; iv) to increase recognition for financial support of local innovation by government and other stakeholders; and v) to share information about PROLINNOVA and LISF activities to a wider community. Publishing the case stories in the print media is an avenue of informing policymakers about the benefits of LISFs to farmers. The publications will improve on the visibility of PROLINNOVA.

Observation

To create more support for LISF, there is need for rigorous publishing of case studies using various channels. The funds re-allocated to documentation will be used to further document more case stories of LISF and to share these cases to various stakeholders for support of LISF.

C. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

C.1 Management of LISFs at local and international level

EA has provided support to the country platform. Regular communication with partners has been done through email, face-to-face (one-on-one) interaction, meetings and telephone. EA is committed to the PROLINNOVA programme and it has been integrated into and supported by the EA Senior Programme Office Food Security and Enterprise.

Observations

Partners need to be engaged during resource mobilisation and their allocation to be known right from proposal development. The activities to be implemented by the partners have to be spelt out during development of the proposals. This will strengthen the partnership and bond the partners to the network.

General challenges

PROLINNOVA being a partnership programme, sustaining partner motivation is challenging due to different interests.

Lessons learnt

- Successful implementation of PROLINNOVA activities depends on the commitment of partners.
- LISF is an entry point for participatory innovation development (PID). Farmers have a lot of ideas. Farmer innovators have to be linked to universities for joint experimentation with Masters or PhD students.