

PROLINNOVA focuses on recognising the dynamics of indigenous knowledge (IK) and learning how to strengthen farmers' capacities to develop their own site-appropriate systems and institutions of resource management. The programme seeks to scale up farmer-based approaches to development that start with discovering how farmers carry out informal experiments with new ideas. Understanding the rationale behind local innovation transforms how researchers and extensionists view local people. Local ideas can then be further developed in a truly participatory process that integrates the dynamics of IK and formal scientific knowledge.

How it all started

PROLINNOVA was conceived in December 1999, when Southern and Northern NGOs met in Rambouillet, France, to consider how existing approaches to participatory ARD could be scaled up. At this meeting, ETC EcoCulture, a Netherlands-based NGO, was asked to facilitate the launching of a PROLINNOVA programme. The inception phase started in 2003 in Ethiopia, Ghana and Uganda. NGOs in the various countries facilitate multi-stakeholder design of their own programmes. They identify local experiences in farmer innovation and Participatory Innovation Development (PID). They convene workshops to analyse these experiences and develop action plans to improve and scale up participatory approaches to farmer-led ARD. The CPs design international activities to reinforce their own activities.

Country-specific programme design

The national plans and activities differ, depending on the experience and self-identified strengths and weaknesses in each country, but common elements include:

- developing inventories of local innovations, innovators and organisations working with them

PROLINNOVA seeks to:

- *demonstrate the effectiveness of user-led innovation for sustainable development*
- *build strong farmer-extension-researcher partnerships*
- *increase capacities of farmers, researchers, extensionists and policymakers in participatory approaches, and of trainers who can continue facilitating the process*
- *integrate participatory approaches to farmer-led innovation and experimentation into research, extension and education institutions*
- *pilot decentralised funding mechanisms to promote local innovation*
- *stimulate national and regional policy dialogue to favour local innovation*
- *set up platforms for reflection, analysis and learning about promoting local innovation*

- bringing farmers, extensionists and scientists together to plan and implement participatory experiments, starting from jointly prioritised local innovations
- creating national and regional multi-stakeholder platforms to share information about local innovation and to learn jointly about PID and its institutionalisation
- building capacity to identify and document local innovation and engage in PID
- participatory monitoring and evaluation of joint activities, outcomes and impacts
- creating awareness and engaging in policy dialogue with decision-makers in research, extension and education, so as to create favourable institutional and policy environments for PID.

Decentralised programme structure

In each country, a local NGO convenes the major stakeholders in ARD. The local NGO is the secretariat for a **National Steering Committee (NSC)** made up of representatives from government research, extension and education, other NGOs and - wherever possible - farmer organisations. The NSC defines the CP activities, ranging from farmer-led experimentation to national-level advocacy. It gives the CP policy and technical guidance and helps mobilise resources. A smaller core team handles day-to-day implementation of the CP.

An **International Support Team (IST)** - made up of the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) based in the Philippines, CIS (Centre for International Cooperation) and ETC EcoCulture in the Netherlands, and AGRIDEA in Switzerland - supports the country-level activities in international coordination, capacity building, networking, web-based knowledge management, documentation, publishing and advocacy.

A **PROLINNOVA Oversight Group (POG)** serves as a governance mechanism to ensure accountability of the GPP to the CPs, their constituencies and the donors. It is composed of representatives from the CPs and the IST and three persons from international research and development organisations.

Communication and information

PROLINNOVA builds platforms for discussing concepts and experiences in promoting local innovation processes. Information about PROLINNOVA activities is spread through articles in various magazines and in printed and electronic newsletters and through radio and TV. In collaboration with *Insight* and *Compas* (Comparing and Supporting Indigenous Agricultural Systems), participatory video allows local innovators to make their own audiovisual documentation to share with other communities and to influence policymakers. The PROLINNOVA website (www.prolinnova.net) is the main tool for communicating developments in the CPs and internationally. Anyone can subscribe to the PROLINNOVA electronic listserver by contacting prolinnova@etcnl.nl and to the *PID Circular*, an annotated bibliography on recent PID publications, by contacting pid-circular@etcnl.nl.

Sources of support

Since 1999, PROLINNOVA has been supported primarily by DGIS (Netherlands Directorate General for International Cooperation) and IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development). Activities under PROLINNOVA have also received support from the GFAR, the Non-Governmental Organisations Committee (NGOC) of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CTA (Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation), Rockefeller Foundation, Misereor (Germany) and the World Bank IK Program. Funds are constantly sought to cover all the activities planned by the CPs and to support platforms being built up in other countries.

Country Programmes

Cambodia - Cambodian Centre for the Study and Development of Agriculture (CEDAC) - yskoma@online.com.kh

Ethiopia - AgriService Ethiopia (ASE) - ase@ethionet.et

Ghana - Ecumenical Association for Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ECASARD) - ecasard@ghana.com

Nepal - Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD) - info@libird.org

Niger - Regional Centre for Specialised Education in Agriculture (CRESA) - cresa@intnet.ne

South Africa - Farmer Support Group (FSG) - lettyb@ukzn.ac.za

Sudan - Practical Action (formerly ITDG) - mabroukm@itdg-sudan.org

Tanzania - Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) - pelumtz@maf.or.tz

Uganda - Environmental Alert (EA) - rlutalo@envalert.org

New Country Programmes are welcome! Organisations interested in building multi-stakeholder platforms in their own countries to promote local innovation in agriculture and NRM are invited to contact the PROLINNOVA Secretariat:

PROLINNOVA Secretariat

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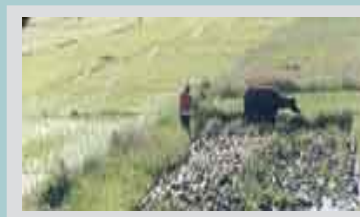
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PROmoting Local INNOVation



In Cambodia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nepal, Niger, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, diverse stakeholders have joined forces to promote local innovation in agriculture and natural resource management (NRM). After analysing their own experiences in agricultural research and development (ARD), they have drawn up their individual PROLINNOVA Country Programmes (CPs) as well as joint international activities for mutual learning and policy dialogue. This Global Partnership Programme (GPP) is an NGO-initiated community of practice that is being built from the bottom up, in the spirit of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR).

www.prolinnova.net