



Farmer-managed funds for local innovation

PROLINNOVA:

PROMoting Local INNOVation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resource management

PROLINNOVA is an international network that fosters local innovativeness and joint innovation development. It recognises the dynamics of indigenous knowledge and seeks to enhance innovation capacities of farmers so that they can adjust better to changing conditions, creating and adapting their own site-appropriate systems and institutions of managing resources for livelihood security and sustainable development.

Vision *A world in which women and men farmers play decisive roles in agricultural research and development (ARD) for sustainable livelihoods.*

Farmers' direct access to funds for farmer-led experimentation is key to achieving this.

Piloting Local Innovation Support Funds (LISFs)

PROLINNOVA partners in 8 countries in Africa and Asia are piloting LISFs. They create opportunities for community management of funds for demand-driven ARD. The initiative seeks to:

- Set up sustainable community-based funding mechanisms to promote farmer-led ARD
- Evaluate, document and share experiences with these mechanisms
- Build replicable models for local governance of research and development.

LISFs provide grants to farmers for:

- Farmer learning visits
- Farmers' own experimentation
- Farmer-led research together with development agents and/or scientists
- Disseminating results of these activities

Country networks piloting LISFs

Country	Coordinated by
Cambodia	Centre d'Études et de Développement Agricole Cambodgien (CEDAC)
Ethiopia	AgriService Ethiopia (ASE)
Ghana	Association of Church Development Projects (ACDEP)
Kenya	KARI / World Neighbors (WN)
Nepal	Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD)
South Africa	Farmer Support Group (FSG)
Tanzania	Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM-Tz)
Uganda	Environmental Alert (AE)

Initial findings

Period covered	Applications received	Applications approved	Processing time
4 years	1224	64%	71 days

The LISFs enjoy strong farmer ownership across gender and social groupings. The pilots showed that:

- Funds for ARD can be handled locally, including setting priorities, screening proposals channelling funds to farmers
- LISFs need to be custom-designed according to local capacities, degree of farmer organisation, support services etc
- LISFs work best when integrated into participatory programmes that give needed support.

Policy implications

Scaling up LISFs requires an enabling policy environment for:

- Allocating part of regular ARD funding to supporting local innovation & channelling it through LISFs, where they exist
- Developing country- and district-specific forms of LISFs where they don't exist
- Encouraging research and extension staff to support farmer-led experimentation by creating space for it in ARD programmes.



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