



## **PILOTING LOCAL INNOVATION SUPPORT FUNDS**

**Lessons 2008-2011, preparing for upscaling:  
Notes on FAIR meeting 2012**

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### **Three central action-research questions**

- ***Does the LISF work effectively?*** Does the system generate applications, processes them, disburses money, monitors use?
- ***Is the LISF cost efficient?*** Does it perform all of above tasks with acceptable handling and overhead/management costs?
- ***Is the LISF a sustainable system?*** Has it a farmer co-managed institutional setting to continue beyond project funding?



## LISF operation

- Farmers/groups write & submit a grant/loan application, plan & budget, for work on an innovation development
- Screening committee selects and disburses funds
- LISF finances *Innovation and Learning*, not farm investments
- Sharing outcome/results (reports, CBO meetings, farmer fairs)



## Diversity of LISF designs

Country	Application logic	Grant approval
Cambodia	Farmer <i>groups</i> through partner organizations to national committee	National Multi stakeholder committee
Ethiopia	Farmer to CBOs with Farmer Committee	CBO
Ghana	Farmer to zonal LISF Committees to national committee	National Multi stakeholder committee
Kenya	Farmer to district Committee chaired by farmer to national committee	National Multi-stakeholder committee
Nepal	Farmer to district Committee; or farmer to CBO	District multi-committee or CBO overseen by national committee
Tanzania	Farmer <i>groups</i> through NGO to regional committee	Regional multi-stakeholder committees
South Africa	Farmer to 1 CBO with a multi-stakeholder Screening Committee	CBO
Uganda	Farmer to CBO with Farmer Committee	CBO

## Implementation: LISF grants/country

Country	Years	Applications	Approved	% approved
Cambodia	5	270 <sup>1)</sup>	213 <sup>1)</sup>	79%
Ethiopia	3	142	106	75%
Ghana	3	144	72	50%
Kenya	4	125	37	30%
Nepal	7	119	104	87%
South Africa	6	77	25	32%
Tanzania	3	24	22	92%
Uganda	5	222	124	56%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1180</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>64%</b>

## ***Mobilizing applications***

***Large differences in number of applications! many with***

***1. decentralization of LISF management***

***2. many partner organizations,***

***3. group applications with applications from many members***

***4. accepting wider range of applications***

## Quality of applications?

- **more than 60% of applications approved: high?! Initial lower percentage, improving over time**
- **high success percentage because of support by partner staff in improving first drafts?**

## LISF grants per country

Country	Female ( <i>individual applications</i> )	Processing time (days)
Cambodia	39%	46
Ethiopia	n.a.	n.a.
Ghana	18%	44
Kenya	49%	89
Nepal	57%	n.a.
South Africa	54%	49
Tanzania	n.a.	n.a.
Uganda	47%	97
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>62</b>

***Involvement of women positive; but Ghana, Tanzania, Ethiopia?***

## LISF grants per country (2)

Country	Average size of grant Euro	Range of grant Euro	Funds used <i>mostly</i> for
Cambodia	61	7-125	Joint experimentation
Ethiopia <sup>1)</sup>	33	13-108	Farmer own experimentation
Ghana	131	10-410	Strengthen farmer innovations;
Kenya	248	85-550	Strengthen farmer innovations;
Nepal	103	5-500	Mixed
South Africa	956	51-1670	Joint experimentation
Tanzania	1000	1000	Joint experimentation in groups
Uganda	48	11-306	Strengthen farmer innovations
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>5 - 1670</b>	

<sup>1)</sup> Data are for 2010 only

## Use of LISF Funds Experimentation

- **Strengthen farmer innovations;**
- **Farmer own experimentation: small scale but systematic**
- **Farmer-led joint experimentation: Costs of support from others in application? Training by and with farmers**
- **Cross visits by farmer groups to study innovative experiences elsewhere**
- **Farmer-led documentation of innovation (pictures, brochure)**

## **Processing & decision making: three approaches**

**Centralised multi-stakeholder  
screening committee decides**

**Decentralised multi-stakeholder  
committee decides (district level?)**

**Decentralised, farmer/CBO based  
committee decides**



## **Transaction Costs 1**

Country	Implementati n features	% to farmers	% partners co-handling LISF	% coordination, training, M&E research
Cambodia 2010	Strong role of individual partners	35%	20%	45%
Ghana 2009-10	Strong role of partners through committee	29%	11%	60%
Uganda 2010	LISF directly handled by CBOs	40%	11%	49%
SA 2009- 2010	1 CBO established for LISF	15%		85%

Partners also investing a lot of own time



## **Reducing transaction, more funds to farmers?**

- **Less coordination costs after piloting?**
- **More LISF funds processed per year with same costs (more districts, more grants, larger grants for joint experimentation)**
- **Reducing costs by greater role of farmers, CBOs?**
- **Stimulate CBO managed revolving funds to continue LISF grants without agency costs**
- **Simplifying and standardization of LISF procedures, application forms, formats?**

## **Lessons learnt 1**

1. **No single best model:**
2. **The model changes over time when people involved get more experienced**
3. **Farmers do have interest in experimentation funds once they understand**
4. **LISF not stand-alone but with existing participatory programs, organizations**
5. **Decentralization, with capacity building and quality control**

## **Summary: answers to the 3 main research questions**

- 1. Models for LISF implementation that *work well* have been found; most are still work in progress and not fully clearly documented;**
- 2. Current models becoming *cost efficient*? further streamlining possible;**
- 3. LISF did not yet found a *sustainable farmer co-managed institutional basis* in the country but implemented as externally funded project**

## **2012 Transition year**

- ***Consolidating the model(s) as found feasible in the country: document with clear description***
- ***Working out best ways to upscale LISF in the country: document with strategies and plan***
- ***Interact with and mobilise key organizations that need to play a role in this upscaling***



## ***LISF Up-scaling scenarios***

- National Local Innovation Fund within a credible **national farmer organization**.
- Integration into **MOA extension** e.g. through RELC.
- LISF Sub-unit under government **research?**
- Establishment of **National Innovation Fund**: New legal identity?
- **Self-managed**, resourced **CBO-based LISFs**
- Link to existing innovation funds



## ***THANKS***

***To all farmers, CBOs and partners involved in the action research and sharing of experiences***

