

Prolinnova Nepal invited to APAARI's expert consultation in agri-food innovations in Asia and the Pacific in Taiwan, 1 – 3 November 2016

An expert consultation on best practices in agri-food innovations in Asia and the Pacific was held in Tahichung City, Taiwan, 1-3 November 2016, jointly organised by Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), Council of Agriculture (COA), Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), World Vegetable Center and Asian Farmers Association (AFA). The event was attended by more than 70 individuals from 16 countries (Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam). The three-day programme consisted of technical sessions on models and case studies on agri-food innovations, partnerships for agri-food innovations, capacity development in agri-food innovations; technology based agri-food innovations; knowledge management on agri-food innovations and policy oriented agri-food innovations. The participants visited several organisations: World Vegetable Centre, Taiwan Orchid Plantation, Taiwan Orchid Growers Association, Star Orchids and Tai-Ling Biotech.



Participants of APAARI's expert consultation in Taiwan, November 2016 (Suman Manandhar, front row, third from right)

The meeting emphasised the need to involve farming communities in innovation processes by the scientists. Suman Manandhar representing PROLINNOVA-Nepal presented lessons from the country platform on facilitating multi-stakeholder partnerships to support farmer innovation in food and agriculture. Suman talked about the partnership modality of PROLINNOVA-Nepal, its history, the organizations that form the partnership and their capacities; working modalities and governance of the network; its essential features, good practices and achievements, the added value of and challenges faced by the network. He presented the Participatory Innovation Development (PID) approach and discussed local innovation support funds (LISF) as a mechanism to support farmer innovators in their research. He also drew attention to integration of courses related to local innovation and PID into academic institutions such as the Institute of Agricultural and Animal Sciences of Tribhuvan University. Participants appreciated PROLINNOVA's endeavours in recognising grass-root local innovation which, in turn, helps scientists to work together with farmer innovators and develop context-specific innovations. They agreed that smallholder producers in different agro-ecological environments need context-specific innovations and hence appropriate strategies need to be developed to meet their needs. Smallholder farmers must be actively involved in analysis of options, and in decision-making as well as the implementation of joint research.