Piloting Local Innovation Support Funds (LISFs) in 8 countries in Africa & Asia

Ann Waters-Bayer
PROLINNOVA International Support Team
ETC Foundation, Netherlands

PROLINNOVA–Kenya
Farmer-Led Funding Mechanism Workshop
Nairobi, 13–14 August 2012

Structure of this presentation

1) Local Innovation Support Fund (LISF)
   • Background: from LI to PID meant to be farmer-led
   • Why an alternative funding mechanism?
   • How does it work?
   • How are we learning from the piloting?

2) Experiences of the 8 PROLINNOVA Country Platforms
   • LISF design and management
   • Impacts and challenges
   • Lessons learnt and outlook
PROLINNOVA Country Platforms (CPs) = Communities of Practice

• In 20 countries

• Made up of diverse stakeholders (state and non-state): farmers, advisors, scientists, academia, private sector and policymakers

• Common vision: World where women and men farmers play decisive roles in agricultural research & development (ARD) for sustainable livelihoods

• Each CP designs its country-specific approach to promote farmer-led Participatory Innovation Development

Africa: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda

Asia: Cambodia, India, Nepal

Latin America: Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru

Common elements of all CPs’ activities

• Creating the evidence: identifying, analysing and documenting processes of local innovation and farmer-led PID

• Establishing national and subnational multistakeholder platforms to plan and implement joint activities, share information and learn jointly

• Building capacity of all actors in PID, M&E, impact assessment, documentation, etc

• Policy dialogue to mainstream PID at local, district and national level
From recognising local innovation ...

- Hundreds of inspiring local innovations identified & documented
- Through participatory assessment, most of them selected for sharing through:
  - Farmer-to-farmer visits
  - Village workshops
  - Innovation fairs
  - Catalogues
  - Posters
  - Farmer magazine
  - Pamphlets
  - Community radio
  - Video (also participatory)
  - Mass media: newspapers, TV

... to farmer-led joint experimentation (PID) on farmer-specified topics, e.g.:

- Salt lick for cattle using local minerals (Ghana)
- Termite control using local predators (Uganda)
- New ways to manage soil fertility using organic matter (Cambodia)
- Improving traditional ovens to dry fish (Niger)
- Trapping wasps that hinder beekeeping (Nepal)
- Combating bacterial wilt in enset (Ethiopia)
- Various herbal treatments for pest control (several countries)
Why a locally managed innovation fund?

- Still tendency for scientists and rural advisors to dominate in PID process: exploring their, not farmers’ questions.
- Generally, most “participatory ARD” is still technology transfer: testing scientists’ / dev’t project’s ideas.
- Some competitive funds exist for participatory ARD but mainly controlled by scientists.
- Can power balance in ARD funding be changed? → farmers “call the tune”

PROLINNOVA partners learning in action

by exploring complementary ARD funding mechanism:

- so farmers can decide what will be researched, how and by whom: farmer-led participatory ARD
- to make ARD more accountable to & relevant for smallholder farmers
- to develop, test and adapt models of farmer-governed ARD that can be scaled up
Local Innovation Support Funds (LISFs)

- Piloted by PROLINNOVA partners in:
  - **Asia:** Cambodia, Nepal
  - **Africa:** Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania & Uganda

- Overarching questions in the action learning:
  - Can funds for experimentation & learning be efficiently channelled through smallholders?
  - Can this approach improve their livelihoods and their influence on mainstream ARD?

### LISF works similarly in all countries

- National multi-stakeholder team coordinates piloting of LISF
- It develops LISF guidelines based on exploratory study
- It sets up and builds capacities of local Fund Management Committees (FMCs)
  - FMCs identify funding criteria
  - FMCs make open call for proposals
  - Farmers submit simple proposals
  - FMCs use their criteria to select grantees and provide resources
  - Farmers lead **(joint) research**
  - Farmer researchers share results
- Participatory M&E and impact assessment
Similar screening criteria in all countries

- Idea driven by applicant(s)
- Innovation appears sound in economic, environmental & social terms
- Applicable by resource-poor
- Applicants willing to share results (public goods from public funds)
- Proposal for experimentation and learning, not farm investment

Multiple levels of mutual learning

- **Community:** thru local research and M&E by farmer groups and FMC
- **District:** as rural advisors, NGOs, scientists, college staff support farmer-led experiments, organise innovation fairs, facilitate M&E
- **Country:** thru reflection workshops and joint impact assessment by national multi-stakeholder platform, strategising how to mainstream the approach
- **International:** thru international workshops and e-conferences with partners in piloting & non-piloting countries
### Design features of LISFs in the different piloting countries – 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Application by</th>
<th>Approval by</th>
<th>Type of funding</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Farmer groups thru partner NGO to NSC</td>
<td>NSC</td>
<td>Loan, 0 or low interest, pay back to group’s revolving fund</td>
<td>10 provinces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Farmer to CBO</td>
<td>Farmer FMC in CBO, then NSC</td>
<td>Grant; 20% own contribution</td>
<td>5 districts in 3 regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Farmer to zonal multi-stakeholder committee to NSC</td>
<td>Zonal committee, then NSC</td>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>4 zones in 2 regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Farmer to district multi-stakeholder committee to NSC</td>
<td>District committee, then NSC</td>
<td>Grant, own contribution encouraged</td>
<td>4 districts in 2 regions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Design features of LISFs in the different piloting countries – 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Application by</th>
<th>Approval by</th>
<th>Type of funding</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Farmer to district multi-stakeholder committee</td>
<td>District committee; larger grants by NSC</td>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>4 districts in 3 regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Farmer group thru NGO to regional multi-stakeholder committee</td>
<td>Regional committee</td>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>6 districts in 2 regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Farmer to CBO</td>
<td>CBO board based on recommendation of multi-stakeholder FMC</td>
<td>Grant, 5–10% own contribution</td>
<td>8 communities in 1 district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Farmer to CBO</td>
<td>FMC in CBO</td>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>8 districts in 1 region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Number of grants made and percentage approved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>No. applications</th>
<th>% approved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>2006–11</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>2008–10</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>2008–11</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>2008–11</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>2005–11</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>2006–11</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>2009–11</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>2007–11</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>1224</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Grant size and use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Average grant size (Euro)</th>
<th>Range in grant size (Euro)</th>
<th>Used mainly for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>7–125</td>
<td>Joint experimentation with extension and university staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13–108</td>
<td>Farmers’ own experimentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>10–410</td>
<td>Improving farmer innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>85–550</td>
<td>Improving farmer innovations, payment for external support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>5–500</td>
<td>Farmers’ own experimentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>51–1670</td>
<td>Joint experimentation and learning visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>294–1300</td>
<td>Joint experimentation in groups with research and extension staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>11–295</td>
<td>Improving farmer innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>5–1670</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Percentage of individual applications by women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% applications by women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Two main ways of managing LISFs

1) **More centralised multistakeholder committee (key partner organisations & farmer reps):**
   - more interactive learning and experimentation
   - stronger quality control (screening, implementation)
   - slower processing of grant applications
   - relatively high operational costs
   - less influence of farmers in decision-making

2) **Decentralised farmer managed committee:**
   - less involvement of other actors in farmers' research
   - smaller grants (low funds for external expertise)
   - low operational costs
   - more accessible for smallholders
**Example: LISF mechanism in Ambo, Ethiopia**

ERSHA hosts Fund Management Committee (FMC)

Vetting by FMC

Proposals

Pre-screening by local FMC

Proposals

Experiencing farmers

**Legend**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Money</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

FMC that vets proposals consists of people from the 5 sub-districts

ERSHA (Ethiopia Rural Self-Help Association): LISF coordinator plays advisory role in vetting committee and in monitoring

**Participatory impact assessment**

**Involvement of different actors in LISF:**

- **Strengthened social organisation** around managing local ARD and funds for it
- **Built smallholders’ capacities** to formulate own needs and access relevant information
- **Increased smallholders’ confidence** to interact with “outsiders” in joint innovation
- **Stimulated interest of rural advisors and scientists** to support farmer-led PID

Ethiopian farmer explains his experiment to MoA staff
Challenges:

• Difficult to generate in-country funding:
  – trying partial repayment
  – but should be public funds available for local learning & public goods

• Still high transaction costs while piloting:
  – 30–40% of total budget actually goes to farmers
  – rest for coordination, training, advisory support, M&E etc

* Difficult to involve scientists:
  – farmers initially want to experiment on own, using local advice
  – research institutes have own agenda & little room to support farmer initiatives

but encouraging response from rural advisors exposed to LISFs

Some findings & lessons learnt

• Smallholders can manage funds for locally relevant innovation development, with appropriate initial support

• LISF needs to be custom-made depending on local capacities, degree of community organisation and availability of support services

• LISF cannot stand alone: it works best when integrated into existing participatory programme

• Involvement in LISF can enhance role of smallholders in governance of publicly funded ARD

South African smallholders having their say
Perspectives

• Promising steps toward complementary funding mechanism that gives farmers direct access to funds for innovation according to their priorities

• LISFs need to be better linked into regular research and extension programmes and organisations – encouraging them to create space for farmer-led experimentation

• Partners now consolidating most feasible models for each country and working out how to upscale them – while retaining their smallholder focus and farmer-led character

LISF upscaling scenarios

being explored by PROLINNOVA partners in different countries

• Establishing LISF within national farmer organisation

• Integration into local government administration

• Integration into MoA extension service

• Integration into government research

• Establishing National Innovation Fund (new legal entity)

• Integration into many different development organisations

• Based in self-managed and self-resourced CBOs
Vision

A world in which women and men farmers play decisive roles in research and development for sustainable livelihoods