

## REPORT ON PROLI-FANS MEETING HELD ON 19 MAY 2017 IN TAMALE, GHANA

(COMPILED BY MICHAEL PERVARAH AND JOE NCHOR)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

A meeting on the Promoting local innovation in Food and Nutrition Security (Proli-FaNS) project was held among the ACDEP team, Proli-FaNS country coordinators, some Prolinnova Oversight Group (POG) and International Support Team (IST members) and the sub-regional coordinators (SRCs) on 19 May, 2017 – a day after the end of the International Partners Workshop (IPW) – at the International Conference Centre of the University of Development Studies in Tamale, Ghana, to review progress and discuss Proli-FaNS management and implementation as well as sub-regional coordination issues. The main topics on the agenda were: updates on Proli-FaNS implementation; project reporting (financial and narrative), budgets and workplans; monitoring and evaluation (M&E); communication; governance; and sub-regional activities and budgets.

In attendance were: Joe Nchor, Malex Alebikiya, Michael Pervarah and Wilhelmina Ofori-Duah (Ghana); Do Christoph Ouattara and Bangali Siaka (Burkina Faso); Jean Bosco Etoa (Cameroon); Amanuel Assefa (Ethiopia; SRC for Eastern and Southern Africa and standing in for Hailu Araya, who was absent); Makonge Righa (Kenya); Georges Djohy (SRC for West and Central Africa, Benin), Chris Macooloo, Ann Waters-Bayer and Juergen Anthofer (POG members) and Chesha Wettasinha (IST).

### 2. OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

Malex Alebikiya, Executive Director of ACDEP (host of Proli-FaNS), chaired the day-long meeting. He welcomed participants to the meeting and appealed for their maximum cooperation to achieve its objectives. He briefly outlined the agenda for the meeting and led its review for efficiency. Inputs and suggestions were made to prioritise the agenda.

#### **Financial reporting**

To enable the ACDEP Finance Manager, James Japiong, to attend to other equally important issues at the office, James was asked to present his report on financial issues including reporting and budgets. He gave account of some challenges encountered during the initial stages of the Proli-FaNS project that affected financial management. Some of the challenges reported include the following:

- Challenges associated with funds transfer
- Late submission of bank details by some Country Platforms (CPs)
- Late submission of reports by CPs
- Quality of financial reports
- Quality of supporting documents
- Poor organisation of scanned supporting documents which constrained ease of audit trail.

#### **Proli-FaNS quarterly budgets**

With respect to the quarterly project budgets submitted by the CPs, the Finance Manager shared the following observations:

- Delays or non-submission of budgets by CPs
- Some cases of over-budgeting
- Arithmetical inaccuracy of cost estimates
- Non-compliance with work plans

- Inclusion of unfinished activities in the next work plan and budget.

### **Fund transfer**

The Finance Manager informed participants that two transfers have so far been received from Misereor but indicated that the project was incurring high bank charges for funds transfer to the respective CPs. Issues with funds transfer were outlined as follows:

- Initial delay in receiving bank accounts information from some CPs
- Problems with some bank account details submitted
- Internal challenges with Barclays Bank that tend to delay transfers to CP accounts
- High remittance charges
- Delays in acknowledging receipt of transfers by CPs
- The issue of double transfer to Burkina Faso in December 2016.

As a result of lapses exhibited by Barclays including delays in transfers, double interest charges etc, James hinted that ACDEP was taking steps to change to the Standard Chartered Bank of Ghana to ensure effective transfer of funds and more efficient transactions in Year 2 of the project.

### **Matters arising from the audit**

With respect to financial auditing, it was reported that an independent auditor has been contracted by ACDEP as required by the project donor. Issues that emerged from the audit report include difficulties in tracking scanned documents with the general ledger in order to have an audit trail, and the double transfer error by the bank to Burkina Faso.

Following the presentation on financial matters, the following recommendations were proposed for action by the Finance Manager/ACDEP and CPs

- The Finance Manager to develop further guidelines on best practice for financial administration of Proli-FaNS;
- Need to serialise receipts for easy tracking;
- Participants were reminded that this last quarter is four months (i.e. April–July), therefore CPs, particularly the one in Ethiopia whose Coordinator was not present at the meeting, need to take note;
- ACDEP was encouraged to discuss with Misereor the possibility of submitting the report three weeks after ending the quarter's project activities;
- The Finance Manager was requested to keep Chesha in copy of correspondence on funds transfer to the IST to ensure effective response.

The need for primary source documents for audit purposes came up strongly. It was therefore suggested that CPs should take steps to audit the Proli-FaNS project as part of their institutional audit and extract a separate report for ACDEP. In the case of the CPs in Burkina Faso and Cameroon, which may not be required to do an institutional audit as a requirement in their countries, they were encouraged to do a specific audit of the Proli-FaNS project and submit a report to ACDEP. The Executive Director of ACDEP indicated that budget provision would be made from ACDEP's budget under the audit budget line to support CPs to cover the cost of the project audits.

### **Funds to sub-regional platforms**

With regard to funds to sub-regional platforms in Africa, it was agreed that travels by SRCs would be based on the general work plan and justification. The budget request should be submitted to ACDEP for onward submission to the POG for approval.

## **Documentation**

Under documentation, it was suggested that the cost estimate for translating policy briefs should be determined. In that regard, the budget for documentation was apportioned as follows:

- EUR 1000 to West and Central Africa (Georges)
- EUR 500 to East and Southern Africa (Amanuel)

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

The total budget line was stated as EUR 1550.00 to span to end of July 2017. It was suggested that the budget be split between the two SRCs. Each was therefore expected to receive EUR 775.00. Possible project activities that could be charged to this budget line were mentioned as: meetings, printing of reports and communication.

### **3. UPDATES ON PROLI-FANSFROM CPS**

All five Proli-FaNS CPs presented project updates, with outputs captured as follows:

#### ***Kenya***

- Two action-learning sites selected
- Consultation processes carried out followed by identification of local innovators
- PID training carried out at SRC level for anglophone CPs
- Local Steering Committee established
- National Coordinator recruited
- Partners meeting held during the inception workshop
- National Steering Committee (NSC) meeting held to develop strategies for improving CP functioning

#### ***Ethiopia***

The National Coordinator was not at this meeting but the SRC Amanuel presented an update for Ethiopia. He indicated that the activities carried out in Ethiopia were in the same line as reported by Kenya but that Ethiopia has a third site which is not supported by Proli-FaNS. In addition, he reported that one person from the NSC who was trained in the anglophone PID training showed great enthusiasm but has no experience in doing PID and hence would require support from those who have such experience and international PID training.

#### ***Ghana***

- CP meeting on Proli-FaNS led to selection of two sites and local NGO implementing partners
- Community consultations and sensitisation created awareness and helped identify preliminary innovations and relevant local stakeholders
- Selection and validation of 32 (20f/12m) local innovations at the two sites
- Establishment of two local multistakeholder platforms (MSPs)
- PID training held for local stakeholders, after earlier participation of two core team members in anglophone training in Nairobi
- Documentation: all innovations have been profiled, a few documented in posters and brochures, one pull-up stand, including website management
- Project launched at local action-learning sites
- Hosting of IPW 2017

- M&E activities – regular monitoring by Coordinator and M&E focal point, no M&E plan yet
- NSC reconstituted with 7 members.

### **Burkina Faso**

- Community consultations were conducted by the three partner NGOs in their respective areas of intervention: 17 innovations by women of the 20 innovations were selected and jointly validated.
- The host NGO (Diobass BF) was updated on the project in Burkina Faso for a better understanding of the project.
- Presentation of the project to the partners: Following the Accra workshop, a PROFEIS meeting was held in November 2016 to present the project and the main conclusions of the launch workshop. It brought together 10 participants from PROFEIS member associations. The topics covered were: project activities and the budget allocated to each country; the roles of PROFEIS Burkina Faso in the framework of this project (governance roles for the national steering and implementation committee, the multi-stakeholder platforms to be set up in the field and their functioning).
- The finalisation of the list of innovations and innovations selected: 20 innovations selected including 17 innovations by women.
- Two joint meetings were organised at the learning sites to present Proli-FaNS with respect to its content and objectives and the expected changes with the innovative farmers and their local facilitating NGO partners.
- Training in PID on 23–26 January 2017 in Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou, for 8 persons from the Burkina Faso and Cameroon CPs. This made it possible to better understand the concept of Participatory Innovation Development (PID) and the links with improving farmers' local innovations and also the follow-up of the results of the joint experiments.
- Meetings to strengthen PROFEIS Burkina Faso: Meetings held on revitalising the network, notably by setting up the NSC and a project implementation team. It was decided to continue informing the member partners pending the finalisation of the guidelines for the NSCs discussed at the launch workshop in Accra.
- The CP has planned and designed protocols to conduct PID joint experiments on five women-focused innovations at two experimental sites.
- Set up two local multi-stakeholders platforms (MSPs) in Gourcy and Gomponsom involving more than 20 members and 7–10 executive officers per platform.
- Advocacy: Meeting with CPF and ROPPA for presentation of Proli-FaNS.
- Documentation: Sessions to characterise the innovations have been held and 25 innovations are being documented.
- The quarterly meeting of the NSC was held on 30 March 2017 at the Réseau-MARP meeting room in Ouagadougou with 20 participants (NGOs, associations, researchers, technicians, farmers and farmer innovators). Points of interest concerned the conduct of joint experiments in learning sites and the empowerment of farmers in research.

It was explained that the CP coordinator is different from the coordinator of Proli-FaNS. Hence, all emails and correspondence should be copied to Mathieu Ouedraogo, Do Christophe, Siaka Bangali and Djibrillou Koura.

### **Cameroon**

- On 21 and 22 March 2017 in Nkometou at the headquarters of the Joint Initiative Group of the Beekeepers of Nkometou (APINK), one of the member organisations of the CLG, a training workshop on PID was held. The workshop was attended by 16 participants, including five women.

- The day of 20 March 2017 was devoted to a meeting to raise the awareness of stakeholders on the establishment of a local MSP. The Higher Institute of Agriculture of Obala (ISAGO), ACEFA and the CLG are the members for this local platform.
- From August 2016 to March 2017, 12 innovations were identified and three were validated by the local MSP. These are the Fonje hive, production of poultry from *Aloe vera* and Moringa, and use of tree bark (*Santiriatrimera*) as starter for the fermentation of the traditional maize beer.

In Cameroon, it is still not clear whether Jean Bosco Etoa or Christine Andela is the CP coordinator.

#### **4. DISCUSSION TO CLARIFY THE CONCEPTS OF LOCAL INNOVATION AND PID**

As was done at the project inception meeting in November 2016 in Accra on the concepts of local innovation and PID, a thorough and lengthy discussion was repeated at this meeting to further clarify participants' understanding and knowledge of the two concepts in order to enhance their application in the field to achieve expected outcomes. This was triggered by apparent confusion and misunderstanding among IPW participants and the host NGO staff during the field trip to Yendi to see innovations and PID work among innovators. Hence, the discussion focused on local innovation (what is it and how to identify local innovation), the PID process (who decides what to investigate or experiment on), funding for PID through a Local Innovation Support Facility (LISF), LISF implementation, and required support for PID processes.

Consequently, the following recommendations were made as to the way forward to improve on knowledge and capacity on the concepts/ methodologies:

- Build capacities of facilitators and gender experts to engage and facilitate the PID process more effectively to achieve local objectives
- Assess and build the capacities of the implementing NGO teams / local MSPs/local steering committees at the action-learning sites
- Use the backstopping budget to help build local capacities using IST members.

#### **5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Chesha led the discussion with the objective of developing M&E guidelines with appropriately detailed indicators to help in managing project M&E. The outcome of the discussion was as follows:

M&E will be done at two levels within the Proli-FaNS project:

- 1) M&E to keep track of progress according to the monitoring framework submitted to MIsereor as part of the Proli-FaNS proposal
- 2) M&E to find out whether the local innovation/PID approach is leading/contributing to development outcomes.

##### **1) M&E to keep track of progress according to the monitoring framework submitted to MIsereor**

At this level, M&E will focus on the project objectives. Data are to be collected by CPs/SRCs on the following indicators to ascertain the achievement of the objectives:

- Number of relevant innovations identified, validated and documented per action-learning site (male/female)
- Number of PID processes
- Number of farmers (male/female) who participate in sharing events
- Number of women innovators recognised and rewarded from relevant government agency (10 per learning site)
- Number of non-project farmers who have started to adopt/adapt local innovations disseminated by farmer innovators involved in the project
- Number of sub-regional platforms established and strengthened
- CPs engagement in fundraising with support of SRCs to be able to support work on local innovation/PID.

Note: the proposals could follow two main aspects of Prolinnova work:

- a) Proposals that scale up or mainstream the farmer-led innovation development approach
- b) Proposals that scale out innovations developed by farmers and stimulate adaptation through farmer-led research.

SRCs are to keep track of and report on fundraising activities in their sub-regional platforms (regional + CP levels).

## **2) M&E to find out whether the local innovation/PID approach is leading to/contributing to development outcomes**

Beyond the requirement of the Proli-FaNS project, Prolinnova CPs need to assess whether and how the project inputs are leading to development outcomes. To do this within the limited budget constraints, it was suggested that CPs should focus on two key areas:

**2.1) Increased capacity to innovate at community/local level:** This level will focus on two main indicators:

- a) Number of “new” innovations or experiments being done within the community
- b) Number of new (institutional) linkages established by the community.

## **2.2) Improved food and nutrition security status in the community**

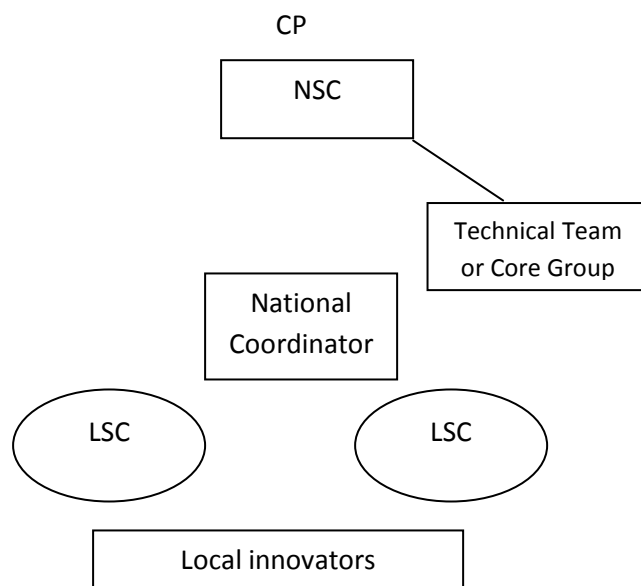
At this level, we will need to find out what local people (men and women) mean by food and nutrition security. This could be done at each action-learning site and then two locally specific indicators will be selected by the local field teams and MSP. Some of the possible indicators in this case could be:

- Access to sufficient food throughout the year (this could mean a reduction of the lean food/hunger period)
- Increase in the number of meals per day for the entire household (e.g. from one to two)
- Women having access to sufficient food (e.g. sufficient food that women have at least one full meal a day)
- Improved food diversity – food groups (i.e. production and consumption).

At this point, Chesha agreed to further develop these points into a monitoring guideline to be shared with Proli-FaNS country partners. She requested the assistance of Joe and Michael to review a first drafts he will prepare while still in Tamale on 22 May, which will later be sent to the CPs and other parties for comments, leading to a final M&E guideline for the project.

## **6. CP GOVERNANCE**

POG Co-Chair Chris Macolooled this session. He explained that the governance structure varies per country but generally the structure looks like this:



According to him, what is important is that the specific role and function of the various organs of the system must be very clear. He further stated that each of the organs needs to have bylaws to guide its operations. Besides, there should be separation of roles and responsibilities. He emphasised that the roles of the Coordinator is critical and could be a full-time or part-time Coordinator. Having underscored the importance of the structure and function of the various organs, the question was how to ensure effective management of the CPs.

It is expected that the NSCs would be fully constituted to approve the CPs annual work plans and budgets before these are sent to ACDEP for approval and consolidation to Misereor. To this end, Chris appealed to CPs to ensure that their respective NSCs are in place by end of July 2017. The following timelines were therefore agreed:

- All NSCs to be fully constituted by **1 July 2017**
- Year 2(August 2017–July 2018) work plans and budgets to be submitted to ACDEP by **15 July 2017**
- Year 2 first quarter (August–October 2017) work plans and budgets to be submitted to ACDEP by **31 July 2017**.

## **7. PROGRESS REPORTING (NARRATIVE)**

The Proli-FaNS Project Coordinator, Joseph Nchor, reported that two reports have been prepared and submitted to the donor to date: August–December 2016 and January–March 2017. He reiterated that progress reports should follow the headings outlined in the work plan and budget.

Consequently, the following timelines were agreed upon:

- April–July 2017 quarter narrative and financial reports should be submitted by **31 July 2017**
- CPs, SRCs, IST/KIT to submit their Year 1 (Aug 2016 to July 2017) annual reports by **31 August 2017**
- The Project Coordinator should draft and share an annual reporting template with partners by **15 June 2017**.



- The Executive Director of ACDEP to update next steps/task list that was started at the end of the inception meeting.

## **8. COMMUNICATION**

The following observations and suggested improvements were made:

- The Zoom communication needs to improve at ACDEP
- Get everybody onto the Zoom platform
- Copy all communications to CPs, POG and IST also to the SRCs
- When a parcel is sent by courier, the intended recipient is to be notified by email and the recipient is to confirm receipt by email
- The report on this meeting should be circulated to all participants in the first week of June 2017 for comments and inputs before a final report.

## **9. CLOSING REMARKS**

In his closing remarks, Malex thanked all participants for their zeal and relentless efforts to sit through the long meeting at the end of the long week of the IPW 2017. He indicated that we have managed the initial teething challenges of project implementation and now have to hit the ground running. He thanked the IST for supporting ACDEP to successfully host IPW 2017 and also thanked Misereor and SDC for co-sponsoring the event. He wished all participants a safe return to their destinations.