

SCALING UP LOCAL CAPACITY TO INNOVATE FOR FOOD & NUTRITION SECURITY (SULCI-FANS) PROJECT

PROGRESS NARRATIVE REPORT: 1 OCTOBER 2020 – 31 MARCH 2021



Kenyan women gardening (Photo: Ann Waters-Bayer)

Compiled by Joseph Nchor, ACDEP

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Acronyms

ACDEP	Association of Church-based Development Projects
AfPW	African Partners Workshop
AGC	A Growing Culture
ARD	agricultural research and development
BAC	Business Advisory Centre
CEAL	Centre for Ecological Agriculture and Livelihood
CP	Country Platform
CPFT	Professional Centre for Technical Training
DoA	Department of Agriculture
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
FIPAC	Farmer Innovation Fair in Cameroon
IST	International Support Team
IRSAT	Institute for Research in Applied Science and Technology
KALRO	Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization
LI	local innovation
LISF	Local Innovation Support Facility
LSC	Local Steering Committee
MSP	Multistakeholder Platform
NLF	National Livestock Farming Foundation
NSC	National Steering Committee
NGO	nongovernmental organisation
PID	participatory innovation development
POG	Prolinnova Oversight Group
Proli-FaNS	Promoting Local Innovation for Food and Nutrition Security
SARI	Savanna Agricultural Research Institute
SRC	Subregional Coordinator
SULCI-FaNS	Scaling up Local Capacity to Innovate for Food & Nutrition Security
TmT	Tailor-made Training
WCA	West & Central Africa

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Scaling Up Local Capacity to Innovate for Food and Nutrition Security (SULCI-FaNS) is a three-year follow-on project funded by Misereor, Germany. It is being implemented over three years (October 2019 – September 2022) by Prolinnova Country Platforms (CPs) in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana and Kenya in seven action-learning sites to scale up and consolidate the farmer-led research and innovation approach and results achieved from the first phase. The project objectives are:

- 1) The innovation capacities of small-scale farmers, particularly women and women's groups, are strengthened to improve food and nutrition security and resilience of local communities
- 2) CP partners involved in Proli-FaNS have become better able to co-design and facilitate participatory innovation development (PID) and promote local innovation processes
- 3) The process of regionalisation of the Prolinnova network is strengthened and completed in Africa.

This progress report describes activities and outputs achieved by the CPs, Subregional Coordinators (SRCs) and the International Support Team (IST) members in the period from 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021.

2.0 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED AT COUNTRY PLATFORM (CP) LEVEL

2.1 Farmer-led research

Activities have centred on farmer-led joint experiments or PID, farmers' own experimentation, and out-scaling processes on selected innovations at the action-learning sites. Specific activities included selection of innovations, designing and planning the PID processes, conducting PID processes, training innovators and scaling out previous PID results and innovations with new groups and farmers. In SULCI-FaNS, CPs are expected to select ten innovations per learning site, from which they will conduct PID on four innovations at each learning site. Country-specific achievements are described below.

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Activities were mainly on training; scaling out proven innovations in organic fertilisers and pesticides, local food-processing/preservation techniques and organic vegetable production; providing small inputs to innovators through a Local Innovation Support Facility (LISF); and facilitating local fund mobilisation strategies.

- At the Kari / Dédougou site, 35 women and 10 young men experimented on a common plot using organic fertilisers and pesticides to produce tomato, eggplant, lettuce, chili, onion and leafy vegetables. Other farmers used their own plots. Another 23 women and men acquired skills in agronomic techniques in market vegetable production using organic inputs. A total of 26 participants including 18 women were also trained on improved composting using animal droppings, crop residues and rock phosphate. The beneficiaries are earning more income by using the improved organic production techniques and innovations.
- Participatory evaluation comparing the yields, taste and shelf life of products from organic inputs and chemical inputs was conducted at the Kari / Dédougou site. The results proved positive for organic inputs and now attracting more farmers to try out organic production-based innovations.

- A women’s group in Kari/Dédougou was trained by the Institute for Research in Applied Science and Technology (IRSAT) in food-processing techniques, including hygienic practices for preserving agricultural products. The members now use these techniques when making their products.
- An action research mixed group in Kari/Dédougou was trained on new techniques of processing millet, monkey-bread powder or baobab fruit powder into cake, beverage, couscous and porridge. The members have been supported to acquire raw materials to produce and sell their first products. They have also been provided with working equipment and protective clothing such as smocks, shoes and hats to cover their hair when processing food.
- Innovative strategies for mobilising “endogenous funds” to support women’s income-generating activities were introduced and adopted by Saye women in Gourcy site, leading to an impressive increase in poultry production and income by group members.
- A women’s group in Gourcy was trained in innovative methods of producing and processing Moringa products for nutrition and market. Through the LISF, the group also received small production and processing equipment for producing Moringa foods, medicine and cosmetics products to support the nutrition and income needs of their households.
- At the Gourcy site, two other mixed groups were trained in local poultry breeding techniques (choice of breeds, their habitat, feeding, and hygiene in the poultry yard and treatment of poultry diseases). They were also trained on good practices and techniques for processing Moringa and Baobab leaves for food and nutrition.

CAMEROON

Field visits were made in December 2020 to the Okong-Mefomo learning site to monitor and support farmer’s own research in palm-tree seed production; two women are involved in the experimentation process. The visits also helped to prepare the SOCOOPACAM farmers’ cooperative to receive a male and female student from Maroua University to engage in joint research with the farmers on two innovations selected by the local multistakeholder platform (MSP). The female student will be doing joint research with Ms Fidèle Belomo on processing cassava root peels into edible flour. The male student will be doing joint research with Mr Pascal Melingui on his method of controlling a disease on cocoa trees. In November 2020, a session of the local MSP to screen and select farmer innovations was organised in Mefomo Village. Two innovations on using palm wine to protect cocoa parasites and innovative cassava-seedling production were selected. In March 2021, three women’s innovations on processing of non-timber forest products into beverages and food products were selected and validated for improvement and promotion from the next quarter onwards.

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PID activities and processes:

- PID activities to explore and possibly improve the nutritive content and diversify the recipes of two local foods (*walsa* and *tubani*) by two women innovators in the Walewale and Bongo sites was conducted with support of two food nutrition experts. It included a 2-day theoretical and practical demonstration training on basic nutrition and food fortification with soybeans for each innovator and her respective group. Actual PID was conducted on the *walsa* food to diversify the recipes and explore ways to possibly improve the flour used for the food. Maize, which is the main carbohydrate component used in the preparation of the flour for the *walsa* food, was combined with millet, sorghum, soybeans, groundnut and sweet potato in different ratios to improve the nutritional content of the *walsa* and increase the income margins of the innovator who sells the flour product. At the end of the experimentation process, six flour products for *walsa* food were produced from the combinations. During the PID, the women learned how to prepare various nutritional *walsa* recipes; this is expected to increase consumption by households and market for the lead innovator’s products.

The PID on the *tubani* food innovation with a woman innovator in Bongo has been fully prepared to be conducted in the April–June period.

- PID protocols were developed for the infants’ porridge (*biisi koko*) innovation by a woman innovator in Walewale. Joint experimentation to find ways to improve the innovation will follow in April–June. Different recipes of the porridge were agreed upon for the joint improvement process.
- PID protocols were developed to explore possibilities of innovations on ruminant livestock feed supplements by a woman and man in the Walewale and Bongo sites, respectively, in collaboration with livestock experts from the Animal Research Institute and local Department of Agriculture. Training in animal nutrition and feed supplementation was held for the innovators and community members as part of the PID process. The full farmer-led experimentation on the innovations will commence in May 2021.
- PID protocols were developed to jointly experiment and validate a woman’s innovation that uses sheabutter processing solid waste (*bruuma*) to control termites on maize farm in the Bongo site. A specialist from the Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI) will lead the process, which will start in June when the planting season starts.

Entrepreneurship training for women’s group at the Walewale site. This training provided an avenue for promising and enterprising innovators to build their business and marketing skills to be able to commercialise their innovations for more income to support their households. A total of 33 (9M/24F) participants comprising women innovators and selected members of their groups participated in the on-site training in March 2021. A staff member of the Business Advisory Centre (BAC) in Tamale facilitated the training. Trainees acquired knowledge in entrepreneurship, basic rudiments in setting up a business, food safety and hygiene, packaging and branding as well as learning about regulatory requirements for packaging and marketing their innovative products.

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In December 2020 and March 2021, eight innovations (four by women and four by men) were jointly selected for farmer-led joint research by the Local Steering Committees (LSCs) and implementing organisations at the Makueni and Kisumu sites. At the Makueni site, the selected innovations (two each by women and men) are in the areas of locally formulated organic fertiliser, making beads from broken pieces of glass for income, automated irrigation system and ethnoveterinary medicine. Also, at the Kisumu site, the innovations (two each by women and men) are in the domains of improved method of hatching fowl eggs, growing sweet potato in vases and raised beds, producing organic fertiliser from cow urine, and a social innovation on passing on hens within a women’s group. Joint meetings have been held at each site with the selected innovators and the PID protocols were developed and inputs identified. The experimentation processes were started and are being monitored by the LSCs. Kenya has selected and profiled 23 important innovations for promotion and development under the SULCI-FaNS project.

2.2 Policy dialogue / advocacy and institutionalisation of the PID approach

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- On account of Burkina Faso’s volatile security situation in the border areas with Mali and Niger and the Covid-19 pandemic, the CP has opted to use community media to provide information and sensitise communities about good innovations based on agro-ecological practices. This was achieved working in partnership with three radio stations operating in the project regions, which broadcast the innovations, farmer-led research results and visibility of the project in all communities covered. Within the reporting period, radio programmes were disseminated in local languages (Mooré, Dioula and Gourmantché Man) on the nine women’s innovations on enriched flour for malnourished children, organic compost from Niéssega and bio-pesticides.

- The CP participated in the Global Farmer Innovation Fair held February 2021 by Zoom with two farmer representatives, technical support team members, National Steering Committee (NSC) members and researchers of IRSAT of Burkina Faso. The innovators presented their innovations and the action-research processes carried out on validated innovations to add value.
- Four capacity-building sessions on the PID approach in the context of gender were conducted for 75 innovators (including 40 women) and members of the three MSPs in the Gourcy, Gomponsom and Kari/Dédougou sites to facilitate integration of the approach within their programmes and activities.
- In March 2021, a workshop was held for 60 students from the Professional Centre of Technical Training (CPFT) of Yako on the PID approach for the development of agroecology. A similar training was held for final year students planning to do internship with partner organisations working in rural development and agroecology.

CAMEROON

- The CP has developed a draft policy dialogue and institutionalisation plan, which is yet to be reviewed and approved by the NSC. Also, Dschang University invited the beekeeping innovation group to make presentations at its conference held in November 2020 on the topics: “Beehives evolution through *Fonge* beehive”, “Production of new bee colonies” and “Valorisation of processing”. Three innovations on beekeeping, chocolate making and integrated farming were showcased at the virtual Global Farmer Innovation Fair organised by Prolinnova and A Growing Culture (AGC) in February 2021.

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- In December 2020, the Departments of Agriculture (DoA) at the two action-learning sites collaborated with local implementing NGOs to select 10 outstanding innovators (5 per site) and give awards at the National Farmers Day celebrations held at each district nationwide. The 10 innovators (7 female and 3 male) from the two sites exhibited their innovations and were awarded with certificates and other items by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to recognise their achievements. Their innovations attracted key stakeholders from government, private sector and media, drawing their attention to the local innovation concept. The District Chief Executive for Bongo (local political head) remarked: *“I never knew farmers in Bongo have such wonderful ideas that are used in solving their challenges at their own level in my district.”*
- A three-member internal committee of the NSC was set up in December 2020 to develop a long-term Strategic Plan for Ghana in the context of the Prolinnova 2021–25 strategy. The purpose is to engender a stronger national networking and advocacy on promoting farmer innovation and a participatory farmer-led research approach, guide the development of self-determined programme priorities and a strategic focus, and reposition for financial sustainability. The strategic planning process has started and is expected to yield a full strategic plan by September 2021 for implementation from 2022 onwards.
- In February 2021, the Walewale site NGO partner (CEAL) and MSP members participated in a meeting organised by the District Assembly as part of the preparation of the next Assembly’s Medium Term Development Plans for 2021–24. The CEAL team leader introduced the SULCI-FaNS project and PID approach. A member of the local MSP shared the local innovations identified for enhancing food and nutrition security under the SULCI-FaNS project. The planning officer of the Assembly emphasised the need to learn and incorporate some of the project approach, processes and outputs into the next District Medium Term Development Plans.
- NABOCADO, the Bongo site implementing NGO, held a district stakeholders engagement session and shared the PID approach and innovations identified and documented under SULCI-FaNS and the previous PROLI-FaNS project. Innovators explained their innovations and benefits derived. The

participants, who included various departments/units of the district assembly and traditional leaders, committed to give more support to the promotion of farmer innovation and the PID approach for sustainable rural livelihoods.

KENYA

- In November 2020, the CP held consultative meetings at its two learning sites involving relevant institutions of agriculture, research and education, trade & industrialisation and civil society, as well as members of the LSC and M&E focal person for the Kisumu site. Each site meeting discussed Prolinnova's concepts and approach and the SULCI-FaNS project's objectives as well as Prolinnova–Kenya's achievements under past and current projects, in order to create awareness and promote institutionalisation of the PID approach for planning and programming for rural research, extension and development work. Important outcomes included commitment by the organisations to integrate, support and promote the PID approach and concepts, collaborating with the CP to train field staff, and pledge to support to develop and commercialise some promising innovations.
- In March 2021, stakeholder dialogue meetings were further held in the Makueni site with heads or representatives of key agricultural research and development (ARD) institutions and the LSC members for institutionalising the PID approach. Outcomes included a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to be signed with the County Government of Makueni and a pledge by the stakeholders to support exposure of innovators for recognition and awards. A recommendation was made on the need to enhance the visibility of the LSC and the innovations in the county and to improve information flow across all the relevant departments within the county.
- Prolinnova–Kenya, represented by Martha Opondo (Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization / KALRO), participated in a Maseno University curriculum revision meeting held in March 2021. She made a presentation to provide evidence for inclusion of the PID approach into the University's degree programmes on Agricultural Education and Extension.

2.3 Documentation and shared learning and networking

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Forty-one innovations identified and selected under SULCI-FaNS have been characterised or profiled and a catalogue on the innovations is being developed to facilitate their dissemination widely to others. Twenty brochures each on innovations and results related to organic composting, market gardening, poultry breeding, and poultry feed production have been developed and are being edited for distribution. In addition to disseminating documented innovations from the previous Proli-FaNS project, 50 different brochures have been republished to provide information on the innovations to some institutions, agricultural vocational schools and farmers.

CAMEROON

Three videos were produced in February 2021 and presented at the virtual Global Farmer Innovation Fair organised by Prolinnova and AGC. Recording these videos necessitated three steps. The first step informed innovators of their selection to participate in the global fair. This was followed by the steps of coaching and then recording of the video. The CP has also prepared a beekeeping manual, written by Serge Ayangma (beekeeping innovator). A director in the Ministry of Livestock promised to review and edit the document but has been unduly delayed, and the CP is now looking for another reviewer to replace the person from the Ministry.

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A draft documentation report on 30 identified local innovations, using the Prolinnova documentation guideline, has been completed. It will be finalised in the next quarter and shared with stakeholders and

used for dissemination and policy-dialogue activities. Prolinnova–Ghana participated in the African Partners Workshop (AfPW) held online in October 2020 and shared achievements at the CP level. The draft Prolinnova strategic plan 2021–25 received inputs leading to its finalisation. The CP also took part in the annual SULCI-FaNS project partners meeting held online in November 2020 and shared its achievements and lessons learnt over the first year. Areas for capacity building of CPs were identified to improve project implementation and results. The full report has been shared.

Lastly, the CP participated in the virtual Global Farmer Innovation Fair organised by Prolinnova and AGC on 10–11 February 2021. Three innovators (2 female, 1 male) from project sites shared their innovations on food nutrition security and livestock, including using short video documentaries and oral presentations.

KENYA

Prolinnova–Kenya participated in the Horn of Africa and Sahel Knowledge Share Fair held virtually in October 2020. An innovation on locally formulated dairy goat meal by the farmer Joe Ouko was presented by the CP Coordinator and the innovator in order to share and advocate on the PID approach. The CP also participated and shared its achievements and lessons in the AfPW in October 2020 and the SULCI-FaNS partners’ workshop in November 2020. As part of the plan to strengthen and revitalise the CP membership, networking and knowledge sharing, the CP coordinator initiated discussions with Ms Rossinah Mbenya, new country coordinator of Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (Pelum).

2.4 Project coordination, management and M&E

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- The three local MSPs at the Gourcy, Gomponsom and Kari sites and the national MSP were involved in planning and participation in the annual SULCI-FaNS partners’ meeting held online in November 2020. The monitoring of activities was carried out by the CP partner NGOs, which also provided technical support to action-research activities and dissemination within communities. The project M&E focal point from Réseau-MARP (Mr Gnanou Adama) resigned from his institution, and has been replaced with a new M&E focal point for the CP.

CAMEROON

- Coordination was concentrated on follow-up activities on implementation; assuring administrative and financial progress; personnel management and reporting; and governance of the CP. An NSC meeting was held on 3 December 2020. The members reviewed progress of SULCI-FaNS and integration of the FIPAC (French acronym for Farmer Innovation Fair in Cameroon) in the strategy of institutionalisation. They also reviewed and improved on the application form for farmer innovators to participate in the FIPAC.

GHANA

- An NSC meeting was held on 18 December 2020 to update members on CP and project achievements in 2020 and to discuss 2021 plans and activities. The NSC gave suggestions to improve policy dialogue and networking within Ghana to achieve project objectives. A three-member internal committee of the NSC was set up to develop a long-term Strategic Plan for Prolinnova–Ghana to help achieve the CP’s goals and ensure its sustainability.
- M&E activities: ACDEP through the CP coordinator (Margaret) continued to update CPs’ M&E data on the project database. M&E focal persons of the CPs held a virtual meeting, moderated by Margaret, to discuss baseline data collection for project assessment. Ghana has also prepared a qualitative data collection matrix to be shared with the M&E focal persons to collect data on outcome indicators for impact assessment.

KENYA

- Project review meetings: In the Makueni action-learning site, an LSC meeting was held in December 2020 to assess project implementation in the first year (October 2019 to September 2020). The LSC also discussed the pre-selected innovations for PID and developed a work plan for the January–March 2021 quarter. In March 2021, each site LSC held a quarterly meeting and fine-tuned the criteria as well as plan for the vetting of innovations planned for the PID processes, and also discussed project coordination and management issues at the site level.
- An NSC meeting was held on 15 January for general updates and review of the activities implemented in 2020, as well as fine-tuning the 2021 plans and activities. The committee also confirmed Bell Okello as its Chairperson after his long period in acting capacity.
- A new person, Ms Hellen Mangoi, has replaced Andrew Muendo as the Prolinnova–Kenya focal point person at Inades-Formation (implementing partner in the Makueni site). In the next quarter, she and another support person (Denis Kiplagat) will be inducted and receive orientation and training on the project, Prolinnova approach and their expected duties.

3.0 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED AT SUBREGIONAL AND REGIONAL

3.1 Prolinnova Africa Partners Workshop held online in October 2020

The biennial Africa Partners Workshop (AfPW) was held by Zoom on 26–28 October 2020. The IST developed guidelines to help CPs to prepare their presentations and to also familiarise themselves with the Zoom application. In addition, rehearsal sessions were held with CPs in order to familiarise all selected participants with Zoom and to minimise technical issues that could arise. Participants in the event included CPs, the SRCs for West & Central Africa (WCA) and Eastern & Southern Africa (ESA), IST and Prolinnova Oversight Group (POG) members. Presentations and discussions centred on achievements related to governance, networking, advocacy and policy dialogue on PID. The Africa regionalisation process and subregional charters and structures, as well as networking and advocacy strategies at regional and subregional levels, were discussed. The draft Prolinnova strategic plan 2021–25 was discussed and inputs received, leading to the final strategy which has been shared to use. Topics for Open-Space discussions were identified to be facilitated virtually by the topic “owners” with interested participants.

3.2 SULCI-FaNS partners’ annual meeting held online in November 2020

The annual SULCI-FaNS partners’ workshop was held by Zoom on 23–25 November 2020. Thirty-three participants (9 female/24male) from CPs, SRCs and IST members attended. The Misereor Finance Officer for SULCI-FaNS (Susanne Oster) also attended the session on financial issues and helped clarify questions from participants. The workshop assessed progress and results achieved at the CP level with respect to promoting LI/PID and policy dialogue, as well as lessons learnt to further improve the project. Participants also discussed practical ways to sustain PID activities with farmers and others after the end of this project phase. The participants were further exposed to the institutionalisation concept and the LISF mechanism in order to scale up and sustain the PID approach. The workshop also reviewed the project’s monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data sheets to improve their usefulness for collecting data on the indicators of achievement and discussed pertinent financial issues to improve project fund management and reporting to Misereor. CPs’ activity plans for Year 2 were discussed in line with project targets and indicators for achieving the objectives. Lastly, the workshop helped build skills in preparing and presenting reports virtually in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The workshop report has been shared with Misereor and posted on the Prolinnova website

3.3 Global Farmer Innovation Fair held online in February 2021

A Global Farmer Innovation Fair (GFIF) was held online on 10–11 February 2021, organised by Prolinnova and AGC. This event provided a platform for 15 men, nine women farmers, three mixed

groups and one women's group in Africa and Asia to share and showcase their innovations and to learn from others on LI and the PID approach, experiences and results. The farmers and Prolinnova CP stakeholders made oral presentations of their innovations including short video clips to share their experiences and achievements. The presentations were interjected with brief inputs from ARD actors about issues related to innovations, PID processes and policy perspectives. Opening statements were made by Chris Macoloo, Co-chair of the POG on the Prolinnova network and farmer innovation fairs, as well as by Chesha Wettasinha on the local innovation concept. Peter Gubbels, new POG member for West & Central Africa, spoke on the importance of farmer innovation in agroecology, and Ann Waters-Bayer spoke about farmer-led joint research. Closing remarks on Day 1 and Day 2 were made by Mutizwa Mukute of Social Learning & Innovation in Zimbabwe and Friend of Prolinnova, and by Sabine Dorloechter-Sulser of Misereor, who underscored PID as a good approach to agroecological development and building resilient communities.

3.4 Achievements of the SRC for Eastern & Southern Africa (Jacob Wanyama)

a) Dissemination and advocacy (regional/international)

- The SRC provided comments on institutionalisation of the Local Innovation (LI) and Participatory Innovation Development (PID) approach for the CP in Kenya.
- He translated the Proli-FaNS policy brief into Portuguese finalised but still awaits proofreading by the Prolinnova Mozambique Team.

b) Capacity building of CPs on governance and M&E systems

- The SRC participated in a Zoom meeting on M&E and outcome assessment of SULCI-FaNS organised by Margaret Kyiu of ACDEP (Ghana) on 25 February 2021.

c) South–South backstopping

- With support of Brigid and Chesha, the SRC provided support to the CP in Mozambique in selecting, initiating and following up on the PID pilot projects under the Nuffic-funded Tailor-made Training (TmT) Project. He also reviewed the TmT PID training workshop report from the Mozambique team before they shared it with the facilitation team (Chesha and Brigid).
- He participated in a one-day Zoom workshop organised by the CP in Sudan, during which NSC members were debriefed by Sumaia Elsayed on the results of the AfPW in October 2020. The participants proposed that the NSC of Sudan should review the report and come up with relevant areas for Prolinnova–Sudan to follow up.
- He received and commented on communication from Elias Zerfu (member of Ethiopia NSC) that they are working to find a new host for the CP. The NSC intends to arrange a later meeting to follow up on their efforts to revive Prolinnova–Ethiopia.

d) Regionalisation activities

- The Subregional Charter was discussed during the AfPW in October 2020 and comments were incorporated. The revised Charter was then shared with the CPs during a general Zoom meeting in March 2021 with members of the ESA Subregional Taskforce and CP Coordinators from seven of the eight CPs in the subregion. It was agreed that the NSCs of the CPs would take time to peruse the document and endorse it within three months.
- The SRC took part in an African Region SRCs (i.e. ESA and WCA) coordination meeting on 18 February 2021, to discuss and plan for the action points on regionalisation from the 2020 AfPW.
- He held virtual meetings (telephone/Zoom/Skype) with the CPs in Sudan (Mawahib), Kenya (Vincent), Uganda (Joshua), Zimbabwe (Gertrude) and Mozambique (Gilda, Domingos and Romuald). The topics of discussion included: funding opportunities (in case of Kenya & Uganda), revitalisation of dormant CP (in case of Zimbabwe) and initiating of PID TmT Pilot projects (in case of Mozambique).

e) *Policy dialogue, networking and fundraising*

- The SRC was involved in preparing and implementing the AfPW held in October 2020. This included: contributing to IST planning meetings, mobilising CP participation and participation budgets, identifying participants, organising pre-workshop rehearsals, engaging a Portuguese/English interpreter and facilitating workshop sessions.
- He was involved in preparing the Prolinnova-AGC GFIF (10–11 February 2021) by contributing to the preparatory activities by the IST, communicating with CPs in the ESA subregion, translating and sending out event announcements to CPs and helping to identify farmer innovators. He later participated in the GFIF as a moderator and contributed to post-event development of information materials.
- He was involved in preparing and facilitating the annual SULCI-FaNS partners meeting on 23–25 November 2020 by contributing/commenting on programme and participants' presentations, analysing workshop evaluation results and commenting on the workshop report.
- He drew up a partnership concept jointly with the Natural Livestock Farming (NLF) Foundation and shared it with IST members for review. The concept was reviewed by two IST members (Abdel and Brigid) and comments were incorporated for forwarding to NLF for their review.
- He contributed to revision of Guidelines No. 15: "Procedures for reviewing and submitting concept notes and proposals made in the name of Prolinnova".
- He shared information on funding opportunities with the CP in Uganda on Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants for Karamoja, Uganda. He facilitated a joint concept development initiative between AFSA (Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa), AGC and two Prolinnova CPs (in Kenya & Uganda) targeting the Global Innovation Fund. He received and shared with the CP in Mozambique a funding opportunity from the Japanese Embassy in Mozambique on "Grants in Mozambique for Grassroots Projects". He received and shared with CPs a funding opportunity from the Conservation, Food and Health Foundation on protecting natural resources, improving the production and distribution of food, and promoting public health in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.
- He circulated to the ESA CPs a funding opportunity from the United National Development Programme (UNDP) Adaptation Fund under its Adaptation Fund Climate Innovation Accelerator (AFCIA) for their interest and action. Interest was received from Gertrude and Sandra (Zimbabwe), Elias and Yohannes (Ethiopia), Domingos and Romuald (Mozambique) and Violet Kirigua (Kenya). However, because of the short notice, only the CP in Kenya was able to submit a concept note with support from the SRC and other IST members.
- He initiated and facilitated a process of developing a funding concept targeting the Global Innovation Fund (GIF). The draft concept, which is on scaling up PID as an innovation in Africa, has been developed and reviewed by an IST member (Chesha). Plans are underway to approach the GIF representative in Africa (based in Nairobi) to establish links.

f) *Documentation and information*

- The SRC wrote the Prolinnova 2020 Annual Report on ESA activities in 2020, shared it within the IST for comments, revised it and uploaded the final version on the Prolinnova website.
- He took part in the Open-Space discussion on "How to strengthen Prolinnova CPs to communicate about LI/PID through attractive media" – organised by Loren (AGC).
- He participated in a Zoom brainstorming meeting on training in communication on 31 March 2021, organised by AGC.
- He facilitated the translation of a 3-page summary of the Prolinnova 2021–25 Strategy into Portuguese, which has been uploaded onto the Prolinnova website.

- He took part in the Open-Space discussion on: “How to welcome and engage new members (individuals and/or organisations) and revive the engagement of old members of the CPs” held on 4 March 2021 – organised by Lisa.

3.5 Achievements of the SRC for West & Central Africa (Abdel-Karim Ali Mahamane)

a) Dissemination and advocacy (regional/international)

- The SRC translated the Prolinnova website user guide from English to French.
- He took part in the webinar to launch the State Of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) 2020 report by the FAO.
- He developed a PowerPoint (PPT) template for CPs’ reports on networking and advocacy for the AfPW 2020.

b) Capacity building of CPs on governance, M&E systems etc

- He developed and revised a PPT template for CPs’ presentations for the AfPW and drafted a template for the CPs’ PPT presentations for the SULCI-FaNS partners workshop.

c) South–South backstopping

- He assisted Prolinnova–Cameroon in preparing the Farmers Innovation Fair (FIF) to take place in May 2021. This included Zoom meetings with the CP Coordinator (discussion on format, budget, selection of innovators), revision of the innovators application form, discussion on partnership opportunities etc.
- He held discussions with the Mali CP to address the issue of insufficient communication.

d) Regionalisation activities

- The SRC prepared the AfPW 2020 meeting including agenda/budget, draft templates for CP presentations, and facilitation of two rehearsal sessions on Zoom.
- He facilitated sessions during the AFPW and wrote the report together with the SRC for ESA.
- He prepared and facilitated six IST meetings, including writing up the minutes.
- He made progress in the regionalisation process of Prolinnova with the signature of the revised and adopted charters in English/French.
- He led the process to select/elect the new WCA representative to the POG to replace Samba Traoré (from Mali). The new person is Peter Gubbels, who is based in Ghana.
- He drafted the recommendations from the IST members to the Coordinator of SULCI-FaNS after the SULCI-FaNS partners workshop.
- He took part in the meeting to discuss M&E on SULCI-FaNS impact assessment.

e) Policy dialogue, networking and fundraising

- The SRC revised the Natural Livestock Farming (NLF) Foundation concept note.
- He prepared and disseminated a template for the CPs’ policy-influencing strategy for the SULCI-FaNS partners workshop.
- He revised and circulated the funding opportunities table.
- He facilitated two sessions during the GFIF in February 2021.

f) Documentation and information

- The SRC wrote the subregional activities report under the SULCI-FaNS project.
- He translated the Prolinnova 4-pager “journey” (version of December 2020) into French.
- He took part in the meeting on SULCI-FaNS impact assessment.
- He revised the 2-page summary of the Prolinnova strategy 2021–25 document.

3.6 Achievements of other IST members (Ann Waters-Bayer, Annie Secretario, Brigid Letty and Chesha Wettasinha)

a. Support to SULCI-FaNS project implementation

- Had regular meetings and email exchanges with the project coordinator on matters related to implementation and management of the SULCI-FaNS project
- Supported the preparation of and participated in the AfPW, facilitated several sessions and commented on and edited the workshop report
- Supported the preparation of and participated in the SULCI-FaNS annual partners meeting, including facilitation of session on M&E, and edited the workshop report
- Facilitated a follow-up meeting with SULCI-FaNS partners on M&E
- Revised Prolinnova guidelines #8 on minimum commitments to network and #15 on procedures for submitting concept notes and proposals in the name of Prolinnova.

b. Support to SRCs

- Held regular e-meetings with the SRCs to deal with various issues in the African Prolinnova network in general and the SULCI-FaNS project in particular
- Continued to introduce SRCs to important contacts at CP and regional level
- Provided ongoing e-mail support on any questions that arose
- Supported the SRCs on finalising the charters for the two subregions
- Supported SRCs in planning for and facilitating the virtual Prolinnova AfPW
- Provided support to the SRCs in their attempts to revive dormant CPs in their subregions (e.g. Niger, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Mozambique).

c. Follow-up to Open-Space sessions from African Partners Workshop

- Prepared an overview of the Open-Space sessions and allocated the topics to the organisers (“topic owners”)
- Followed up with organisers to set dates for the sessions
- Participated in the sessions and followed up on actions in two sessions on improving LI/PID communication and how to engage new members and revive old members in CPs.

d. Planning for the International Partners Workshop 2021

- Prepared an overview of possible venues/ countries with pros and cons
- Discussed and decided on South Africa as possible venue, got quotations and made tentative reservation; made change to hold virtual IPW due to the increasing Covid-19 infections and restrictions in South Africa.

e. Support to Etoa in organising Farmer Innovation Fair (FIF) in Cameroon

- Continued to provide support to Etoa on organising the event
- Provided comments on the call for innovators
- Supported Etoa in additional fundraising for the event with other donors.

f. Planning and implementation of the virtual Global Farmer Innovation Fair (GFIF)

- Coordinated the overall event from the initial idea to the completion of the event
- Liaised with AGC on all aspects of the event and held regular weekly progress meetings; worked on the Terms of Reference and contract for AGC
- Prepared and revised the programme on an ongoing basis until the final iteration
- Worked with SRCs and CP coordinators on different segments of the event
- Identified and liaised with presenters of the opening and closing statements and session moderators

- Commented on the virtual brochure prepared by AGC after the event and shared the finalised version with different audiences.
- g. Fundraising for and implementing other projects involving CPs in Africa*
- Supported Prolinnova–Senegal in preparing and submitting a proposal for an FIF to the Netherlands Embassy in Dakar
 - Supported Prolinnova–Kenya in making a submission to GEF for the International Climate Initiative call
 - Prepared and submitted a proposal for capacity strengthening in LI/PID with partners in Prolinnova–Kenya to Nuffic
 - Participated in two e-meetings with CPs from East Africa and AGC in developing a proposal for the Global Innovation Fund
 - Orange Knowledge Programme (OKP) Nuffic-funded LI/PID training programme for the Horn of Africa: conducted first virtual workshop on LI/PID for participants in South Sudan; worked together with Prolinnova–Sudan partners to get the first bank transfer made to Sudan
 - Conducted a meeting to monitor the LI/PID pilots being implemented as a post-training assignment by the trainees after the virtual training workshop on LI/PID for food and nutrition security in Maputo, Mozambique
 - Prepared and conducted the second and third e-training sessions in the OKP Nuffic-funded project on LI/PID for teachers in Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education Training (ATVET) colleges in North Benin – in October and December 2020, respectively; mentored the trainees in their post-training assignments
 - Discussions with GIZ (German Agency for International Cooperation) about possible partnership in Fund for Promotion of Innovation in Agriculture.
- h. Interactions with external parties interested in Prolinnova*
- Took part in a panel discussion organised by the University of Guelph, Canada, on farmer-led research
 - Participated in the YALTA (Youth in Agriculture and Business Learning Track Africa) regional advisory meeting – a project within the Netherlands Food Partnership
 - Continued to follow up with the editor of *Appropriate Technology* on the article based on the Proli-FaNS policy brief
 - Contributed a case study based on the Proli-FaNS policy brief to FAO’s SOFI 2021 (State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World) report on the theme of transforming food systems for healthy diets
 - Continued interaction with World Rural Forum on activities to promote farmer-led innovation during the United Nations Decade of Family Farming
 - Communication with Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) on possibility of joining the Prolinnova Community of Practice.
- i. Maintenance of website/Facebook page and e-list*
- Uploaded documents on the website and kept it updated
 - Provided support to those who wished to make their own posts
 - Edited and uploaded CPs’ annual reports on the website
 - Continued to manage the Prolinnova GoogleGroup
 - Posted information on activities that took place in the network on the website and Facebook page and through the Prolinnova GoogleGroup
 - Identified and circulated information on promoting local innovation, especially for advocacy and funding

- Coordinated and revised summary of Prolinnova strategy 2021–25 and its translation into French, Spanish and Portuguese for posting on the website and dissemination to the network
- Revised French translation of Prolinnova website users’ guide made by SRC in WCA
- Regularly updated Prolinnova 4-pager (“journey”)

4.0 PROGRESS OF ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: The innovation capacities of small-scale farmers, particularly women and women’s groups, are strengthened to improve food and nutrition security and resilience of local communities

All CPs have, together with communities and local MSPs, completed selection of their target number of innovations and are undertaking dissemination activities to share the innovations to more farmers and among other ARD stakeholders for adoption or adaptation. Innovations to be explored, tested and possibly improved in PID have been identified based on project targets and criteria, and are at various stages in the PID process within the different CPs. Related activities include training, input provision through LISFs to innovators/groups, and outscaling of PID-tested or -improved innovations to increase benefits related to food, nutrition and incomes. These activities have contributed to building farmers’ capacities in innovation and farmer-led research towards improving their situation.

Objective 2: CP partners involved in SULCI-FaNS are better able to co-design and facilitate participatory innovation development (PID) and promote local innovation processes

Through the national MSPs, core technical teams and local MSPs, there was active involvement of local ARD stakeholders in facilitating and learning more about innovation and PID activities with farmers, although integration of the PID approach within ARD and education systems is still quite low. It is projected that ongoing policy dialogue and advocacy activities will help to improve the level of integration and institutionalisation of the concepts within formal research, extension and education systems by the end of Year 2 to impact more widely on rural food security and livelihoods.

Objective 3: The process of regionalisation of the Prolinnova network is completed in Africa

This 6-month period has registered important achievements particularly in the process of regionalising the Prolinnova network such as organisation of the AfPW, adoption of the subregional charters and increased strengthening of the CPs. The period also saw increased networking with other regional and funding institutions, through which many funding opportunities were identified and responded to by submission of proposals by CPs with support of the SRCs.

5.0 CHALLENGES FACED AND LESSONS LEARNED

The Covid-19 pandemic still continued to pose a challenge and slowed down the pace of implementation of project activities and achievement of expected results. However, increased use of ICT tools has helped to improve communication and information sharing with and among field partners, stakeholders and farmers. The scale of community and stakeholders meetings was limited. The project coordinator, SRCs and other IST members, as well as Misereor staff have still not been able to undertake backstopping and monitoring visits to project countries on account of Covid-19 restrictions. The virtual approach to monitoring and providing technical support for implementation cannot be said to very effective in achieving monitoring and backstopping objectives. Late submission of progress and financial reports by some partners has yet to improve, often resulting in late reporting to Misereor and consequent delay in fund disbursements to partners.

Country-specific challenges and lessons:

Burkina Faso: The M&E focal person for SULCI-FANS resigned his job with Réseau-MARP and has been replaced by a newly assigned staff member. The second quarter of the year saw a decline in Covid-

19 disease infection in Burkina Faso. As a result, it was possible to improve project implementation, especially training and scaling-up activities. Late transfer of funds from ACDEP did, however, adversely affect or delayed some activities.

Cameroon: The end-of-year festivities and the annual cocoa harvest season limited farmers' participation in meetings during the reporting period. A major lesson is to ensure some flexibility when planning activities with farmers.

Ghana: On account of global funding challenges, local NGO implementing partners are still not adequately resourced to provide the expected complementary funding to SULCI-FaNS activities. This has implications for sustainability of the approach and results at community level after the project ends. Local government authorities, through policy-engagement meetings, are beginning to show interest in the project approach and results achieved at farmer level. This gives hope that they would be motivated to channel part of their Central Government budget allocations to support sustainable food security initiatives being implemented under SULCI-FaNS and other projects.

Kenya: There are high prospects of institutions and/or individuals to adopt and integrate the LI /PID approach in their operations. The available information on the approach in Kenya is limited, but can be improved through evidence-based and site-specific case studies and well-done documentation that can further support in spreading information and providing more convincing information on the approach. The institutionalisation of the PID approach is achievable but progress will differ from organisation to organisation. For example, it will not be rapid in institutions that are interacting with the approach for the first time. Widening our nets to reach many and diverse ARD institutions will add positive synergy in the institutionalisation effort.

SRC-ESA: The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic continues to hinder backstopping visits to the CPs. In addition, CPs such as the one in Zimbabwe have mentioned that this challenge, in addition to lack of funding, is affecting their efforts to revitalise their CP. The CPs in Ethiopia and Tanzania continue to remain inactive mainly because of governance issues. The main lesson learned is the importance of establishing good rapport and being able to mobilise the CPs. It is important, during this period when physical meetings are not possible, to be persistent and use a variety of channels (emails followed by calling or WhatsApp) in order to ensure good participation by CPs in meetings, trainings and learning.

SRC-WCA: Most of the meetings organised during the period have been virtual. This led to a total shift in the way these gatherings were organised. One positive aspect is the adaptive capacity developed to face such an issue, although there are still weak points (i.e. the reporting in a virtual meeting) that need some improvements.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Progress in project implementation and achievement of expected results is good despite the ravaging effects of Covid-19, which we have learned to cope with and accommodate within project implementation. All project partners are enthusiastic and committed to sustain their activities to achieve the objectives. The delay in getting funds to partners because of lengthy inter-bank transfer procedures, coupled with the slowness of some partners in submitting reports to ACDEP, has remained a problem affecting the project, for which solutions are still being sought.

During the next project period (April–June 2021), the CPs will focus on continuing farmer-led joint experimentation, dissemination and policy engagements with relevant target institutions and persons towards mainstreaming and institutionalising the PID approach to increase farmers' and women's agricultural productivity and household food security more sustainably.