



**PROLINNOVA–Ghana**

# **Local Innovation Support Fund (LISF) model and upscaling scenarios**

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*SEPTEMBER 2012*

## **PROLINNOVA–Ghana LISF model**

### **Introduction**

Rural small-scale farmers have for long been marginalised in their involvement in and benefit from agricultural research and development (ARD) funds, processes and activities that are targeted at improving their productivity and livelihoods. Yet they are very resourceful, have expert knowledge of their local environment and are constantly innovating and searching for solutions to their problems and to take advantage of emerging opportunities. Against this background, the Local Innovation Support Fund (LISF) approach under the Farmer Access to Innovation Resources (FAIR) project was piloted in Ghana from 2008 to 2011 to explore the possibilities of a sustainable community-based funding mechanism to provide small funds to innovative farmers to improve their innovations, to experiment and to stimulate learning. The initiative sought to ultimately empower farmers and create favourable conditions and opportunities for them to play leading and decisive roles in demand-driven research in sustainable agriculture and natural resource management to improve food security and livelihoods of rural resource-poor farmers.

FAIR is currently coordinated by ACDEP (Association of Church-based Development Projects) and co-managed by the Northern Ghana LEISA Working Group (NGLWG), which is represented by a 7-member core management team. The pilot project was implemented in four designated zones (“LISF zones”), namely; Walewale, Bolgatanga, Tamale and Yendi, where local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) and community-based organisations (CBOs) formed LISF committees that managed and operated the LISFs for small-scale farmers, farmer groups and CBOs. Each LISF zone comprised a number of local government districts/municipals. With significant results achieved during the pilot activities, it has become important to document and consolidate the local experiences and lessons learned into clear feasible models to facilitate the full operation and upscaling of LISFs in Ghana. This paper therefore describes the best and most feasible way to implement and scale up sustainable LISFs in Ghana. It covers the relevant structures at the local and higher levels, decision-making principles, grant-making procedures and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the LISFs.

## **A: District-based LISF**

Ghana has chosen to operate a decentralised model for LISFs to be operated at the district level where an active NGO will coordinate, manage and implement LISF activities together with an LISF Management Committee. This committee, which will jointly own the LISF in the district, will comprise representatives from major development stakeholders/partners such as NGOs working in agriculture and natural resource management (NRM), relevant government agricultural institutions such as MoFA, research institutes, the Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA), already established CBOs and farmer groups that exist and operate in the district or region.

The coordinating NGO will be the custodian of funds and its management and will perform administrative functions including contracting for the project, project implementation and reporting to the national coordination. The LISF Management Committee will make the major decisions for the effective functioning and implementation of the district LISF, including screening and approving farmers' applications; approving plans, budgets and fund disbursements for LISF activities and grants; facilitating learning and capacity building of partners and farmers; admitting new partners; and upscaling to new areas. The coordinating NGO, with guidance and technical support of the district-level LISF Management Committees, will work with local partners such as NGOs, established CBOs and MoFA to implement the project activities at community level with CBOs, farmers and farmer groups.

With regard to fund management, the national coordinating organisation will transfer funds into the bank account of the district coordinating NGOs based on a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and contract, with approval of the PROLINNOVA–Ghana National Steering Committee (NSC). The funds will then be disbursed for LISF activities and to individual farmers and groups based on plans and applications that have been screened and approved by the LISF Management Committee.

In about 4–5 years, LISFs will expand to cover the entire country and operate in three LISF areas – Northern Ghana, Central Ghana and Southern Ghana – maintaining the same national- and district-level structures and fund management approach. By this time, it is expected that the LISF concept would have been better understood by a wider section of ARD stakeholders who want to participate or contribute funds to the Innovation Fund.

The specific roles and responsibilities of district-level LISF partners are as follows:

#### *Coordinating organisation*

- Project administration, financial management and reporting
- Representing the district LISF in national programme activities, including planning, reviews and capacity building, and also links local partners with the national programme
- Sourcing funds to support the LISF activities
- Facilitating the implementation of and reporting on LISF activities at the local level, including planning, review, M&E, documentation and field-level learning.

#### *LISF Management Committee (district level)*

- Making major policy and management decisions for effective functioning of LISF and upscaling
- Approving workplans, budgets and funds for innovation and other LISF activities
- Screening and approving applications to the LISF
- Programme planning, review and monitoring.

#### *Local development partners (facilitating organisations)*

- Community sensitisation and mobilising applications from farmers/groups

- Building capacities of CBOs, farmers and innovators in experimentation, local innovation processes and relevant issues.
- Providing technical support for implementation of field-level activities
- Monitoring and backstopping of field-level and farmer innovation activities
- Facilitating implementation of district-level LISF activities, including farmer-to-farmer learning
- Sourcing supplementary local funds to support LISF activities.

#### *CBOs, farmers/innovators and farmer groups*

- Facilitating community mobilisation for sensitisation, training etc
- Facilitating learning and knowledge sharing with local partners and other farmers
- Implementing LISF innovation activities.

### **LISF structure of support and co-ownership at national level**

The proposed LISF structure at national level will be such that a credible Ghanaian NGO will host and coordinate the programme, under the authority and oversight responsibility of an NSC specifically for the LISF programme, which will also advise on policy direction and decisions for smooth operation of LISFs in Ghana. This NGO will have ultimate authority for approving plans and budgets for running the programme activities and that of the LISF districts or zones. The PROLINNOVA International Secretariat at ETC Foundation will continue to provide backstopping and international networking assistance to the Country Platform (CP) through the national coordinating NGO and the NSC for its effective implementation and update with new global developments and issues.

The NSC for the LISF programme will be composed of senior persons from key relevant national agricultural and research institutions, development NGOs and national farmer organisations. The proposed composition of the committee of eleven members is: national coordinating organisation, MoFA, research – Animal Research Institute (ARI), Savanna Agriculture Research Institute (SARI) Crops Research Institute (CRI), Forestry Resources Research Institute (FORRIG) – a university, an NGO, a national farmer organisation and the EPA.

PROLINNOVA–Ghana will also collaborate with Ghanaian agencies such as the Savanna Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) and other donor/international agencies such as CIDA (Canada), GIZ (Germany) and DFID (UK) to source funds to be able to build up a Local Innovation Fund.

Specific expected roles of key stakeholders in the national structure are as follows:

#### *Coordinating organisation:*

- Coordination and project management, including financial management and fund allocation to local LISFs
- Contracting with and reporting to the PROLINNOVA International Secretariat and international funding partners

- Developing proposals and sourcing funds for the national programme
- Developing country workplans and budgets in consultation with the NSC for the LISF
- Collaborating with the NSC, technical partners and local LISFs to deliver the national programme in line with the planned goal, outputs and targets.
- Organising capacity-building programmes, planning and review sessions
- Facilitating country participation in international and national stakeholder events
- Providing managerial and technical support for project implementation
- Supporting technical training for the local and zonal LISFs
- Providing monitoring support to the national programme
- Facilitating linkage with ARD institutions for relevant assistance and collaboration.

#### *National Steering Committee*

- Making and advising on policies to govern the national programme operation
- Approving projects, budgets and workplans for the national programme and LISF activities
- Representing the Ghana CP in international platforms and PROLINNOVA network activities
- Supporting the sourcing of funds from international and national programmes and funding agencies.

#### *Technical partners (NGLWG, research, university, MoFA, EPA, media)*

- Providing research collaboration and support on specific issues, including laboratory tests, field trials etc
- Providing advisory and consultancy services in specific areas including documentation and publicity work, project baseline, evaluation and impact studies
- Providing specialised training for persons and organisations in the LISF programme.

#### *Development collaborators (SADA, GIZ, national MoFA and rural banks)*

- Providing supplementary funding for LISF at national and local levels
- Being a source of collaboration and networking for learning to enhance the ARD programme and results at farmer level
- Supporting field implementation at district and zonal levels.

### **Division of tasks and roles between the national and local structures**

The basic and clear distinction in roles and tasks is that the national structure will focus on policy issues, project development, sourcing funds, quality control, capacity-building development, facilitating networking among the various LISFs and other stakeholders, and presenting the programme at national and international levels. On the other hand, the local structures will be concerned with operating or implementing an efficient and cost-effective LISF programme at the community level to achieve improved productivity, food security and livelihoods of rural farmers in an environmentally sustainable manner. This includes training (capacity building), community sensitisation, identifying and assisting innovators,

documentation, and creating learning and experience-sharing opportunities for farmers and local partners.

## **B: Process of mobilising, administering and screening applications and disbursing funds**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timing (month)</b>	<b>How</b>
Sensitisation & mobilisation of applications: call for proposals	1–31 Jan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Make announcement on local radio and at community events.</li> <li>2) Organise radio programmes and involve farmers to talk about LISF and the procedure for accessing funds. This will include the criteria that must be met.</li> <li>3) Organise one-day sensitisation workshop at district level, invite representatives of CBOs, relevant NGOs and government organisations (GOs), introduce them to LISF and they will in turn introduce their members to LISF, spelling out the application procedure.</li> <li>4) Sensitised organisations will organise gender-focused fora with community members and pass on the call for proposals. Such meetings and other announcements will be integrated with the regular activities of the identified organisations.</li> <li>5) A certain minimum number of female applicants will be one condition required for proposals submitted by farmers and CBOs to receive consideration.</li> <li>6) The call for innovations will span all themes including social innovations. Stakeholders will be educated on the meaning of social innovation and joint experimentation.</li> </ol>
Administration of applications	1 Jan–28 Feb	<p>Applicants will submit proposals through their CBO or representative organisation to their district coordinating institution.</p> <p>Forms will be kept simple.</p> <p>Forms will be in two parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Personal details of applicant, description of proposal and budget (name, sex, contact, purpose, activities and budget, expected results and cross-cutting themes) to be completed by applicant</li> <li>(ii) Additional information for register (theme, activity, screening result, financial details, and M&amp;E reports) to be completed by the person responsible for managing the register.</li> </ol> <p>CBO executives or representative organisations will support farmers to fill out forms</p> <p>A register will be kept at the district coordinating institution for entering application data.</p> <p>CBOs will be responsible for informing applicants that their proposals have been submitted.</p>
Screening of applications	1 Mar–30 Apr	<p>The following criteria will be used for screening proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ That the proposal has passed the TEES (Technical, Economic, Environmental and Social viability) test</li> <li>▪ Whether the innovation for which the application is made is locally evolved and developed using local knowledge</li> <li>▪ Whether it is addressing immediate local needs or long-term solutions or opportunities</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Whether it has the consent and interest of the innovator</li> <li>▪ Whether it can be easily adapted by another individual or farmer groups</li> <li>▪ Whether it involves the use of easily available/accessible local resources</li> <li>▪ Whether it addresses gender issues, mitigating conflict and minimises risk of HIV/AIDS infection</li> <li>▪ Whether it is a social innovation, or an innovation from a woman/women</li> <li>▪ Whether it is addressing a theme not covered by many applications</li> <li>▪ Whether it will receive the approval of the District, Municipal and Metropolitan Assembly where the innovation would be implemented or tested</li> <li>▪ Amount requested does not exceed the ceiling; if it does, the applicant may be asked to review his/her budget or the application will be disqualified</li> <li>▪ Screening will be done at district level by the LISF Management Committee made up of representatives from CBOs, NGOs and GOs</li> <li>▪ NSC will then give final approval</li> <li>▪ Farmer representation will be increased in the screening process, including female farmers</li> <li>▪ Female representatives will be included in the LISF Management Committees</li> <li>▪ The NSC will also be given gender consideration</li> <li>▪ Individual applicants will be present at the district meeting to review the screening results</li> <li>▪ Final approval or non-approval will be communicated in writing and/or orally through the respective CBOs or partner organisations to the individual or group applicants</li> </ul>
Disbursement of funds	Apr–July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monies allocated to the zones will be distributed into the bank accounts of CBOs with successful applications from their members</li> <li>▪ CBOs and partner organisations will notify successful farmers of the availability of funds in the CBO bank accounts</li> <li>▪ Farmers will submit requests to their respective CBOs and the funds will be released to them</li> <li>▪ In the case of joint experimentation with non-farmer partners, the farmer will still submit the request to his/her CBO</li> <li>▪ Funds will be released to the farmer and the farmer will in turn make available part of the money to the partner involved in the joint experimentation</li> <li>▪ The farmer can request for the money in a number of instalments or one-time payment, depending on the volume of funds and the financial demands of his/her innovation</li> <li>▪ Funds will be disbursed taking cognisance of seasonal imperatives</li> </ul>
Implementation of LISF-funded activities	May–Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Successful farmers can start their experiment at the beginning of the rainy season or other suitable period</li> <li>▪ Farmer innovators will do the day-to-day M&amp;E of their innovation development/ experimentation</li> <li>▪ Farmer innovators will be encouraged to use multi-stakeholder approach to implement, monitor and evaluate in a participatory way</li> <li>▪ Farmer innovators will give progress as well as final reports</li> </ul>

		<p>written or orally at review meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ These reports at each stage will include a financial report</li> <li>▪ The financial report will be on activities planned in the application, the approved budget, actual expenditure per activity and reasons for any deviations</li> <li>▪ Farmer-to-farmer learning will take place</li> <li>▪ Farmer innovators will organise for photos of the innovation development event to be taken before and at the end of funded activity and the cost of this activity may be included in their budget</li> <li>▪ A CBO executive will also pay one or two monitoring visits upon the invitation of the innovator, who will be responsible for bearing the cost of the monitoring visit by the CBO executive; cost of monitoring visits should be included in the budget prepared by the innovator</li> <li>▪ The CBO executives will as much as possible integrate these visits with their regular work in the communities</li> <li>▪ The CBO executives will forward both narrative and financial reports on the innovation/experiment to the zonal office</li> <li>▪ The district level will also organise a one- or two-person monitoring visit at their own cost</li> <li>▪ Experience-sharing and review workshops will be held at district level</li> <li>▪ Documentation and publication of findings will be encouraged</li> <li>▪ Farmer-led documentation of individual innovations/experiments will be the responsibility of the innovator and the cost for documentation may be included in the financial request</li> <li>▪ Documentation may take the form of policy briefs, videos, posters or leaflets</li> <li>▪ Cataloguing a number of innovations will be the responsibility of the district coordinating institutions</li> <li>▪ Members of the district coordinating institutions will also undertake occasional monitoring of innovations/ experiments at their own cost</li> <li>▪ The focal person will carry out M&amp;E of the functioning of the whole LISF based on data from the register</li> <li>▪ Registers will be kept at district level</li> <li>▪ The national coordinating institution will evaluate the programme every three years to assess its impact</li> <li>▪ Innovators will be allowed to include in their budgets money for participation in innovation days and conferences</li> </ul>
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## **Description of the LISF process**

### **Call for proposals**

To begin the LISF process, a call will be made for submission of suitable proposals. Information will be provided to aid the submission of proposals. Calls will also be made on radio programmes and other forms of announcement, and these calls will be extended by CBO executives as well as partner organisations such as MoFA and selected NGOs at farmers' fora and community meetings. Application forms will be lodged with district coordinating institutions for access by CBOs and partner organisations. Applications will be submitted between January and February by interested farmers to both partner

organisations and selected CBOs for onward submission to the district coordinating institution. A date will be set for vetting of proposals.

### ***Persons eligible to submit proposals***

If the proposal satisfies the set criteria, then the innovator can apply through his/her CBO or partner organisation to the LISF. The following categories of persons qualify to submit proposals:

1. Farmer innovators who belong to a recognised registered CBO with a financial (bank) account with a recognised bank can submit individual or group proposals. There should be evidence that the financial accounts of submitting organisations have been audited.
2. Farmer innovators can also submit proposals through MoFA as well as recognised NGOs with certificates of incorporation, registration and/or to commence business. The innovator must demonstrate capacity to undertake the proposed innovation/experiment.
3. Women will be particularly encouraged to submit proposals.

### **Screening and selection of proposals**

Using some selection criteria, the LISF Management Committee will screen applications at district level from March to April. Next, the district coordinating institution will organise a feedback workshop to communicate the outcome of the results. At the session, unsuccessful applicants will be told the weaknesses in their proposals as against the requirements and then encouraged to submit better proposals during the next round. The qualified applications with names of applicants, title of innovation and amount requested will then be submitted to the national coordinating institution for final approval and release of funds. Data on the application forms will be entered into the register at the district level and collated at the national level.

### ***Criteria for screening proposal***

All implementing districts will use the same set of criteria for vetting the proposals to ensure fair and objective assessment, selection and fund allocation to the most eligible applicants. Therefore, the content of each proposal will be subjected to:

1. Passing the TEES (Technical, Economic, Environmental and Social viability) test
2. Whether the innovation for which the application is made is locally evolved and developed using local knowledge
3. Whether it is addressing immediate local needs or long-term solutions or opportunities
4. Whether it has the consent and interest of the innovator
5. Whether it can be easily adapted by another individual or farmer groups
6. Whether it involves the use of easily available/accessible local resources
7. Whether it addresses gender issues, mitigates conflicts, minimises risk of HIV/AIDS infection
8. Whether it is a social innovation, an innovation from a woman/women
9. Whether it is addressing a theme not covered by many applications
10. Whether it will receive approval of the District, Municipal or Metropolitan Assembly where the innovation would be tested
11. Amount requested does not exceed the ceiling; if it does, the applicant may be asked to review his/her budget or application will be disqualified.

## **Disbursement of funds**

Following final endorsement and approval, funds will be transferred to district LISFs, including funds for management costs, through their established bank accounts. The district institutions will, in turn, communicate the results in writing to the successful applicants through their respective organisations. The written document will also contain the rudiments of the programme to prepare them well for the smooth operation of the project. It is, however, not automatic that all the participating districts will receive funds to operate LISF for the year, since receipt of funds will be subject to satisfactory performance of the district in meeting certain targets set in its annual workplan, including timely submission of approved proposals by districts. The zonal coordinating institutions may exercise their discretion and redistribute the LISF to benefit more farmers if they feel that other deserving farmers should also receive financial support. The funds may be paid to the innovators in one or several instalments. Funds will be disbursed to successful applicants from the month of May to coincide with the start of the agricultural season in northern Ghana, but will also be tied to seasonal imperatives.

One LISF grant-making cycle begins from January and ends in December of the same year.

### ***Type of activities to be supported by LISFs***

The money can be used to cover travel costs (learning or exchange visits, allowances and transportation) and operational costs including stationery, communication, consumables, training as well as disposable materials and equipment. The following activities will be eligible for funding: farmer's own experimentation in which the innovator leads the research and applies part of the funds to cover the fuel costs and time of researchers for technical support and joint learning; farmer-led documentation; joint experimentation with MoFA and research institutions, for which related costs are included in the LISF application; learning visits and training and Farmer Field Schools. Requests for micro-credit, large capital items, and means of transport and infrastructure development that are not innovations will not be accepted. In the application form, applicants will be requested to indicate their own contribution or other sources of funds. If the proposal is not for making profit and the applicant is willing to share his/her results, then the applicant will be eligible for a grant.

### **Implementation and monitoring of innovations**

Innovations will be implemented and validation will be by farmers, researchers and other development workers. Innovations will be monitored and evaluated by the innovators themselves, CBOs, partner organisations, zonal team, focal point, NSC, national coordinating institution and consultants (refer to the M&E section for details). Each district LISF committee will hold quarterly meetings to review progress and plan forward. However, during the implementation of activities such as screening of proposals, disbursement of funds and report writing, additional meetings will be organised.

## **C: Project monitoring**

### **M&E of the functioning of the LISFs**

District coordinating institutions will do the monitoring of the functioning of the LISF by completing the LISF register. This register is software based on MS-Access and used for LISF M&E and administration. Things that will be monitored and evaluated include the applications, personal details of applicants, proposed themes and activities, screening results, fund disbursement, fund utilisation, transaction time and costs, reports, timely delivery of results, follow-up activities, extent of farmer involvement in managing the LISF and degree of sourcing financial resources for the LISF. There will also be monitoring of the percentage of applications approved as compared to the number planned for the year by the district coordinating institution. Suggestions will be made for the improvement of the programme.

### **Overall project M&E**

Farmer innovators will do the day-to-day monitoring of LISF activities in their respective communities from start to finish of the innovation trial. CBOs and partner organisation executives will do two field-monitoring visits in the company of farmer innovators whose innovations are being monitored. They will also monitor the operation of their respective bank accounts. An executive member of the district coordinating unit will also conduct one monitoring visit during the life of the tested innovation. The focal point and also a team from the national coordinating institution and the NSC will also visit a few selected innovation sites. During the monitoring visits, the monitoring teams will evaluate the innovations being tested and make useful suggestions to improve upon their value. Pictures will be taken of both crops and livestock as evidence of the impact of the project on the people and environment. The focal point will collate data from all LISFs and present them to the national coordinating institution with some recommendations.

The national coordinating institution will carry out constant M&E of the entire programme, including M&E of the entire LISF structure and governance. Both the zonal and the national coordinating institutions will monitor capacity-building activities undertaken and tools used. They will also monitor planning and review meetings, operation of bank accounts, monitoring exercises and submission of reports. The reports, which may be oral or written, will spell out the objectives, data collected, findings and lessons learnt. The district coordinating institution will monitor sharing of roles and tasks. All stakeholders therefore will subject the LISF programme to constant scrutiny and modification.

### **Proposed simple M&E activities to monitor and assess that LISF resources have been spent well**

In reporting on the innovation, farmer innovators will state the total funds received from the LISF and their own contributions as well as the total expenditure as at the date of reporting. They will then present a comparison of the budget against actual expenditure for each activity as at the date of reporting, adapting the format below.

### **Format for financial report**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>Explanation</b>

### **Impact assessment methodology**

Impact assessment will be done every three years in a few selected or sampled districts (at least 60% of districts covered) that are implementing LISFs. Competent local consultants will be contracted to conduct the impact assessment. It will start with designing the impact assessment guideline and instrument. An activity plan for the impact assessment will also be drawn up, including timelines and roles among interested parties. Secondary data will be used to help in identifying the innovations, the level of innovation development and the location of the various innovations. It will also help in the identification of the institutions involved and all LISF-related activities. Pretesting of the assessment guideline will be done in the innovation communities.

Discussions with farmers to assess the impact of LISFs will mainly take the form of semi-structured interviews with focus groups. The interviews will revolve around four key questions:

1. To what extent has the LISF led to development of improved practices and systems of agriculture and NRM?
2. To what extent have these practices and systems spread among farmers/ pastoralists and what has been the impact on local livelihoods?
3. What change has occurred in the capacities of farmers and other land-users to access relevant information and to develop technical and socio-organisational innovations?
4. What change has occurred in the openness and interest of ARD agencies to support and work with local innovators and their groups?

A meeting will be arranged with representatives of the district coordinating institution. The meeting will focus on choice of community to conduct the assessment, basic information about the place, choice of innovations and the order of the interviews. In the communities to be visited, the first interviews will be with a group of 3–5 funded applicants. This will be followed by interviews with 3–5 non-applicants or unsuccessful applicants. Finally, there will be interviews with 1–5 representatives of the local authority. One case story will be developed. Interviews with CBOs and partner organisations on issues, including fund management, will be done in their respective offices.

After completion of the interviews, multi-stakeholder workshops will be organised for the LISF stakeholders at national level to share the results with them. Feedback will be obtained from the stakeholders to improve upon the results. The stakeholders will then be asked to answer the four key questions mentioned above, providing concrete examples with their answers. The additional information generated will be added to the impact study report.

## **D: Cost of the proposed model per year**

For the structures to function smoothly, the total costs of LISF operation at national and local levels, excluding cost of capacity-building activities and funds to farmers, is captured under D1 and D2, respectively. Funds to farmers for innovation activities and for capacity building are captured under D3 and D3, respectively. The total estimated annual budget is **GH¢303,500** (or €126,458).

### **D1: COST OF LISF OPERATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL (excluding capacity-building events)**

ITEM/ACTIVITY	AMOUNT	
	Ghc	Euro
1. Personnel & administration costs	48,000	20,000
2. Transport & equipment	15,000	6,250
3. Project management + M&E	29,500	12,292
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>92,500</b>	<b>38,542</b>

### **D2: COST OF LISF OPERATION AT DISTRICT LEVEL (excluding capacity-building events)**

ITEM/ACTIVITY	AMOUNT	
	Ghc	Euro
1. Personnel & administration costs	33,000	13,750
2. Transport & equipment	14,000	5,833
3. Mobilisation, screening, processing of LISF applications	5,000	2,083
4. M&E & documentation	20,000	8,333
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>

### **D3: LISF FUNDS FOR DISBURSEMENT TO FARMERS and FOR CAPACITY BUILDING**

It is assumed that 2–3 districts can be grouped together and coordinated by one institution at district level. In this case, at least **200** applications are expected to be approved for funding annually. A recommended average amount of **GH¢300** will be disbursed to each successful applicant. Therefore, the total amount of funds recommended for the LISF system per year is **GH¢60,000** (€25,000).

### **D4: CAPACITY BUILDING**

ITEM/ACTIVITY	AMOUNT	
	Ghc	Euro
Inception workshop for stakeholders on LISF	4,000	1,667
Workshops to plan LISF activities	4,000	1,667
Train partners, farmers on LISF concept & group dynamics	5,000	2,083
Train farmers, groups, CBOs and partners on co-management of LISF	3,000	1,250
Train farmers, groups, CBOs in record keeping, data collection, financial management and proposal writing	3,000	1,250
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,000</b>	<b>7,917</b>

**Conclusion:** The above implies that, for an LISF operating with four district LISFs under a national coordination, the total annual budget will be GH¢303,500 (or €126,458) out of which GH¢60,000 (i.e. 19%) would be available for disbursements to farmers.

## **THE UPSCALING SCENARIOS AND STRATEGIES**

### **A: Recommended process of introducing and launching LISFs in new areas/districts**

Having piloted LISF operation in Ghana at a limited scale, PROLINNOVA–Ghana is ready to introduce the LISF model in new districts. Experience has shown that LISF introduction and implementation can be successful only if a number of conditions and criteria are met and if a carefully designed step-wise introduction process is taken, as detailed below.

#### **Criteria for selecting new areas or districts to start LISF implementation**

For an LISF to function successfully and yield expected results, the following conditions should exist. These form the criteria for selecting districts to participate in the project:

1. Availability and willingness of a trustworthy, credible and reliable local NGO with experience and understanding of farmer-led agricultural development to host and coordinate the LISF project
2. Availability of partners committed to farmer-led agricultural development to support implementation of the LISF activities and be willing to participate in all the activities, include capacity-building, planning and reviews at district and national level, sharing experiences and results, joint field monitoring and learning visits etc
3. Commitment of partners' resources to support LISFs and also mainstream the LISF into their rural development programmes in agriculture, NRM and livelihoods improvement as well as complement or add value to the LISF fund and activities
4. Availability and interest of strong CBOs and farmers including potential innovators to engage in local innovation and farmer-led experimentation to improve and sustain their productivity and livelihoods
5. Willingness of innovators and CBOs to share their innovations and outcomes with other farmers and development collaborators
6. Peaceful areas or districts free from political, ethnic and social conflicts and unrest that can negatively affect or disrupt LISF work or development work in general.

#### **Best process for selecting a new area district for launching LISF**

The sequential steps for selecting a new area or district to introduce LISF are as follows:

- Undertake preliminary and reconnaissance visits to become acquainted with the physical features, social structures and set-up, political environment and arrangements, development activities etc
- Meet key persons of authority and influence, personally; including political leaders, heads of ARD institutions such as MoFA directors and agricultural NGO managers, opinion leaders, chiefs, women leaders and farmer leaders, to brief them on the project and relevance to the local development agenda, and solicit their support and cooperation.

- Organise district-level sensitisation workshop for key stakeholders, including community and farmer leaders, to present the LISF concept and approach, and to understand major development issues, identify opportunities for collaboration and seek support for LISFs.
- Identify key and interested development partners to collaborate and participate in the project, present the project goal, objectives, approach and expectations from the partners, at a focused partners' workshop.
- Identify and select the institution to coordinate the project, hold meetings with this institution to discuss modalities for collaboration and to secure firm commitment, and sign partnership agreement.
- Support/collaborate with the coordinating institution to launch the LISF with key stakeholders, including political leaders, farmer leaders and the potential partners.

### Best process for introducing LISF in new areas and making it work

The process of introducing and operating an LISF in a newly chosen area for a 4-year project:

Project phase	Setting up and piloting		Regular operation	
	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Initial visits to the district for acquaintance, to identify and meet key stakeholders</p> <p>Hold stakeholders workshop to introduce project and design the local structures (as spelled out under A: 1)</p> <p>Conduct capacity-building workshop for partners on local innovation, LISF concept &amp; process etc</p> <p>Call for applications using channels described under B: <i>LISF Process</i></p> <p>Joint screening by local and national teams and disbursement of funds</p> <p>Conduct regular M&amp;E and technical support visits to innovators</p> <p>Documentation and reporting</p>	<p>Hold partners workshop to review experiences of Yr 1</p> <p>Re-design and plan for Yr 2</p> <p>Specific training based on identified needs &amp; gaps, refresher training to improve skills</p> <p>Second round of applications, screening and funds disbursements</p> <p>M&amp;E + backstopping + partners/farmer-to-farmer learning visits</p> <p>Review /experience-sharing workshop and planning for Yr 3</p>	<p>Expand project to include new communities, CBOs and farmers</p> <p>Identify and mobilise supplementary funds</p> <p>Capacity building for new entrants/refresher training for partners</p> <p>Third round of applications, screening and disbursement</p> <p>M&amp;E + backstopping + reporting</p> <p>Hold district-level policy /innovation fair</p>	<p>Planning workshop for Yr 4</p> <p>Last round of call for proposals, screen, disburse funds</p> <p>M&amp;E and backstopping</p> <p>Annual report + end-of-project lessons-learned documentation</p> <p>End-of-project evaluation of local LISF (as part of overall national project evaluation)</p>

## **B: Proposed scenarios for upscaling and institutionalising LISFs in Ghana**

The LISF approach puts local farmers in the driving seat of ARD processes and interventions aimed to improve their situation. After four years of piloting in Ghana funded by international donors, now upscaling and embedding the approach in farmer organisations and formal ARD systems and programmes (tapping where possible regular Ghanaian funds for agricultural and rural research and development) is the way forward to sustain it and achieve greater farmer empowerment for sustainable food security, NRM and poverty reduction for rural smallholder farmers.

PROLINNOVA–Ghana will explore and implement three complementary strategies to upscale and institutionalise LISFs in Ghana:

- Integrating into MoFA extension
- Establishing LISFs as an NGO-led programme
- Integrating into local government system.

### ***a) Integrating LISFs into Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA)***

MoFA is responsible for formulating and implementing national agricultural development and food security policies and programme in Ghana. The programmes and policies are delivered by regional and district/metropolitan/municipal MoFA directorates or offices through various units such as Extension, Crops, Animal Production, Veterinary, and Women in Agricultural Development.

If the LISF were integrated into MoFA, a farmer innovation unit would be created at both the regional and the district offices and overseen by a fully dedicated staff member from the extension unit. He or she would liaise actively with the regional and district Research-Extension Liaison Committee (RELC) coordinators for effective integration and harmony. MoFA would be required to contribute part of its central government budget allocation and other special projects into the LISF fund to support farmer-led experimentation and innovation activities.

LISF would be integrated into MoFA extension and research programmes through the district and regional RELCs. The farmer innovators and NGO LISF partners participating in RELC meetings as well as MoFA and research institutions would implement the LISF activities and report on the activities and outcomes at RELC meetings. Additionally, national farmers awards will include best innovators at the district- and regional-level events in order to promote the concept and encourage local innovation and farmer-led initiatives in agriculture. Hence, RELC would provide an avenue and opportunity for sharing information on LISF activities and outcomes, as well as enhancing and encouraging scientific testing and validation of the best farmer innovations by agricultural extension experts, managers and researchers. This is expected to ultimately influence ARD programmes and approaches in favour of an LISF approach and farmer innovation.

The LISF approach and farmer innovation (beyond technologies) would also be made a major agenda issue for regular monthly regional MoFA review and planning meetings for district MoFA directors. Farmer innovation (activities, outcomes) would be reported at monthly MoFA review and planning meetings for district MoFA directors by tasking agricultural extension agents to capture innovations in their respective zones and also by involving the district directors in innovation development activities in their districts.

### ***b) Establishing LISF as an NGO-coordinated programme***

This appears to be the most feasible scenario for now. The LISF programme would be hosted at the national level by an NGO that would act in the capacity of a national coordinating institution. This institution would obtain funds from local sources including relevant research and development government programmes, e.g. Savanna Accelerated Development Authority (SADA), Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), and from multilateral donor funds to support the programmes. Some of the strategies it would adopt include the constitution of an NSC with members drawn from the headquarters of the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology, MoFA, MLGRD, a dynamic national farmer organisation, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), EPA, the Forestry Commission, a university and an NGO. The members of the NSC would be the National Directors, who are more capable of influencing national policy, thereby increasing access to government resources for promoting farmer innovation. The national coordinating institution would enter into an alliance with NGOs or projects that share in the farmer-led innovation development and research agenda. These, which include SCI-SLM (Stimulating Community Initiatives in Sustainable Land Management), CARE-Ghana and the ACDEP network of NGOs (GOAN, CECIK, CIKOD<sup>1</sup>), will have their own sources of funds to contribute to farmer-led innovation. They will constitute the district coordinating institutions. Each district coordinating institution will have a desk officer for innovation.

The district coordinating institutions would organise a stakeholders' workshop and sensitise stakeholders about the LISF concept and the method to access funds. The stakeholders would be representatives of CBOs, MoFA, District Assembly, NGOs, research and universities. Conferences would also be sponsored to raise awareness on the paradigm of farmer-led innovation development. Products of innovation would be displayed at fairs, festivities, demonstrations and exhibitions organised by other organisations. The Ghana RELC members would also attend LISF meetings, workshops and events to build their capacities in facilitating the LISF process. Innovation results and processes would be documented, published and disseminated. Farmer innovators would attend RELC meetings to share experiences with the other stakeholders. Funded CBOs and partner organisations would enter into collaboration with their respective District, Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies to execute the LISF activity. The coordinating institutions would organise for the capacities of research and university staff to be built to mainstream farmer innovation and participatory innovation development in the university curriculum.

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<sup>1</sup> GOAN: Ghana Organic Agriculture Network; CECIK: Centre for Cosmivision and Indigenous Knowledge; CIKOD: Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organisational Development

CBOs and partner organisations would share the task of awareness creation, which they would carry out in their respective operational areas and integrate into their normal activities. The LISF approach would be scaled up to new communities as capacities are built. New CBOs would be encouraged to apply for LISFs and should have a bank account as one pre-condition. Partner organisations and CBOs would also be linked to other funding sources.

### **c) Integrating into local government structures**

Governance is decentralised to the local level to district, municipal and metropolitan assemblies, headed by a local political head (a Chief Executive) who directs the implementation of the government and development policies, programmes and activities, with funds allocated from the central government (District/Municipal/Metropolitan Common Fund), to achieve social, economic and infrastructural development at the local level, including communities. Projects and programmes are based on development plans designed by the assembly to address its peculiar development needs and challenges in infrastructure, agriculture, education, health, water and sanitation etc. With the new move to decentralisation, government's subsidised institutions, including the MoFA, Forestry Department, Department of Cooperatives, Ministry of Women and Children, will access their budgets/funds from the District's allocation to implement their programmes and activities and will be accountable to the local authority.

In the long term, PROLINNOVA–Ghana can take advantage of the decentralised local government system and structures and seek to integrate the LISF approach within identified relevant departments of the district, municipal or metropolitan assemblies to enhance development impact at the community level. It would lobby to establish an innovation support fund (LISF) within the local Assembly, where a percentage of the Assembly's common fund is expected to be contributed to support farmer innovation and capacity building. In this sense, the Assembly would own the fund, to which additional funds would be sourced from relevant development organisations operating in the area to expand it. MoFA, led by its local director, together with the Assembly's planning officer, would be responsible for its operation, including sourcing for additional funds and utilisation of and accounting for its usage. However, because the allocation of central government funds to its departments, agencies and decentralised district and metropolitan assemblies is often inadequate and irregular, the likelihood of fund availability to adequately support LISF activities under this arrangement is uncertain, thus making this scenario least feasible.

**PROLINNOVA–GHANA LISF MODEL**

