



PROLINNOVA

PROMoting Local INNOVation
in ecologically-oriented agriculture and natural resource management

Making Partnerships Work

Insights from PROLINNOVA's work in three countries in Africa

Compiled and edited by

Joseph Ssuuna, Julian Gonsalves and Laurens van Veldhuizen

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countries in Africa

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Acronyms

ARI	Agriculture Research Institute
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CIRAD	Centre de cooperation internationale en recherche agronomique pour le developpement
DGIS	Directorate General for Development Cooperation
EED	Protestant Development Cooperation/Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst
FARA	Forum on Agricultural Research in Africa
ICRAF	World Agroforestry Centre
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IED Afrique	Innovation Environment Development Africa
IIRR	International Institute of Rural Reconstruction
INADES	Institut Africain pour le Developpement Economique et Social
IPW	International Partnership Workshop
JOLISAA	Joint Learning in Innovations Systems in African Agriculture
KARI	Kenya Agricultural Research Institute
KENDAT	Kenya Network for Dissemination of Agricultural Technologies
LISF	Local Innovation Support Fund
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NARO	National Agriculture Research Organisation
NCST	National Council of Science and Technology
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NIF	National Innovators Forum
PELUM	Participatory Ecological Land Use Management
PID	Participatory Innovation Development
PROFEIS	Promoting Farmer Experimentation and Innovation in the Sahel
PROLINNOVA	Promoting Local Innovation
PSO	Personele Samenwerking in Ontwikkelingslanden
SACRED Africa	Sustainable Agriculture Centre for Research, Extension and Development in Africa

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- (c.) Kenya: Nyang'aya A and Nyang'aya CO. 2011. Needs Assessment Report. ProLinNOVA Kenya, KARI, Nairobi, Kenya of KALAUSI Consultants

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1 | Introduction

Introducing this booklet

PROLINNOVA is a global network spanning 19 countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Since its inception in 2003, multi-stakeholder partnerships have been at the core of PROLINNOVA's efforts to promote local innovation and participatory approaches to research and development. In 2006, these experiences in building partnerships at the national and global levels were documented in a publication entitled *Facilitating Multi-stakeholder Partnerships* produced by the network (Crtichley et al., 2006). In 2010, partners endorsed an effort to study, in more detail, country-level multi-stakeholder partnerships.

This report resulted from the review of multi-stakeholder partnerships as they evolved in three East African countries: Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The study built on lessons from the *Healthy Network Analysis*, which focused on PROLINNOVA Nepal (Faber & Wielinga 2011). The study, conclusions and recommendations were derived from an analysis of case research studies.



2 | Background



PROLINNOVA a global partnership

PROLINNOVA is an NGO-led global partnership initiative which aims to build a learning network to promote local innovation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resource management (NRM). The initiative is currently operational in 19 countries. The partnership promotes participatory innovation development (PID) linked to local peoples' own innovation processes by providing a platform through which members are able to gain access to like-minded organisations, community groups, and farmer innovators. PROLINNOVA creates platforms for sharing, learning and capacity development for its members.

PROLINNOVA is organised through autonomous country-level partnerships (sub-networks) bringing together a diverse range of NGOs, farmer organisations, government research and development organisations, and education and training institutes. Countries in Francophone Africa have organised their own sub-network under the name of Promoting Farmer Experimentation and Innovation in the Sahel (PROFEIS). ETC in the Netherlands hosts the International Secretariat and jointly with international resource organisations such as IIRR in the Philippines, Innovation Environment Development Africa (IED Afrique) in Senegal and the Free University in the Netherlands, provides support to partners on issues related to the content and management of the network.

In promoting local innovation in ecologically oriented agriculture and NRM, PROLINNOVA has emphasised the critical role of multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships. Building partnerships between key actors and stakeholders in agricultural/NRM development has been a key strategy of PROLINNOVA from the start. PROLINNOVA believes that, in order to accelerate innovation at the local level, effective, open

and equal operational partnerships are required between resource users and farmers, research, extension, marketing and other organisations. They need to collaborate to pull their knowledge and resources together, identify relevant improvements, experiment with them, analyse and eventually share the results. In short, they need to put the PID approach into practice.

In PROLINNOVA, these are complemented by institutional partnerships between relevant organisations at the (sub) national level to create the necessary conditions for field-level collaboration, and to create support for the process of internalising and mainstreaming the PID approach in the participating organisations as well as in relevant government policy and programming. Though structure and dynamics of these partnerships may differ from country to country, all share a number of common characteristics as in the box below.

Finally, to create a wider platform for learning and sharing of experiences on PID and efforts to institutionalize these, PROLINNOVA also promotes partnership among actors in agricultural development and NRM at the global level.

Common characteristics of partnerships:

- Facilitation provided by a credible NGO working at the national level, hosting the country secretariat
- Formation of the multi-stakeholder partnerships, their agenda and programme of activities are inspired by an inception process that takes stock of who does what, and identify gaps and priorities
- Governance arrangements that combine a higher level, steering committee type of structure with an operational team. Working groups with staff of different organisations handle day to day coordination
- High level of autonomy of country multi-stakeholder partnerships but adhering to principles and agreements jointly taken at global level
- Activities supported by resources provided by participating organisations, special projects funded by the country multi-stakeholder partnerships, or through funds made available through the international secretariat
- Generally relatively low levels of core funding are provided creating momentum to seek partnerships

3 | Facilitating multi-stakeholder partnerships: Guiding principles

Partnership as part of the agenda: A goal in itself

The partnership itself forms part of the primary and wider agenda amongst partners. It needs to be understood from the beginning that the relationship needs building and nurturing, and this must be a conscious effort.

Choosing partners

Conflict is minimized if the partnership is limited to like-minded organisations. However in the interest of mainstreaming, other organisations should be considered.

Shared ownership

Partnership implies shared ownership of the agenda and activities, and an overall sense of joint responsibility for outcomes of endeavors. Sharing of

ownership and responsibility implies a reduction in the central role of the coordinating organisation. The reluctance of organisations to undertake this step is usually the main reason why partnerships are not successful.

Commitment grows from successful first actions

Partnerships need to be built on a shared will to succeed by pooling together resources, enthusiasm and teamwork - in contrast to individuals (or organisations) working for themselves, in competition with each other. Rapid first successes help build commitment.

Start with looking into what is already there

Commitment of partners is likely to be greater if the new initiative builds on existing initiatives and networks, and gives serious attention to these while



acknowledging them as a valid starting point. Overlap and competition need to be prevented. It is important to allow for a process of inception, consultation and planning in which stocktaking of existing experience is a key element.

A culture of equality

Shared ownership and responsibility in turn implies equality. It is important but challenging in practice to establish a culture of equality amongst actors in a partnership. All partners need to be able to create a balance between accommodating others' interests and negotiating for their own position.

Matching individual interests with the common agenda

Partnerships need to be able to link a common agenda to important institutional and personal interests of the partners. Addressing partners' own institutional interests allows them to create time, and even to provide their own resources for activities of the partnership. From the onset, partners realise that one does not just join the network in order to benefit from resources, but they also have to commit their own resources.

Grow gradually by accommodating new members

The platform needs to be prepared to change partnership composition if and when necessary: that is what is meant by the principle of providing an 'open nucleus' arrangement. The partnership starts with a smaller group of committed partners and allows others to join at a later stage, when there is more evidence of the relevance of the partnership.

Openness and transparency

A partnership cannot work unless there is openness and transparency in decision making. This implies that at the very beginning and to the greatest extent possible, the convener and other partners need to make their interests and expectations explicit.

Breaking down barriers of competition and territoriality

Partnerships only work when competition between agencies with conflicting interests is turned into agencies working together towards a mutual goal. Thus, unless there is a change in mindset (a prerequisite) between agencies that were previously competing, partnerships are difficult, and an illusion.

Role definition: Specialist input, backstopping and facilitation

Roles and responsibilities need to be clear because overlapping roles can be a source of inefficiency, confusion and even conflict. In many cases, there is a need to formalise roles agreed upon between organisations involved. This can be done through the signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). The MOU is not just a formal document; more important is its role in obliging partners to think about - and then agree on - what they expect from each other.

Cost-effectiveness

Partnership can be the most cost-effective way of reaching furthest, and making the best use of the abilities of the various stakeholders involved. It is a way to effectively mobilise a variety of skills and capacities, and cover wider geographical areas. Building partnerships makes the best use of available, financial and human resources.

Learning by experience

To better understand how partnerships can be built and improved, there needs to be a systematic 'learning from experience'. In that process capacities of those new to multi-stakeholder partnerships are also strengthened. It is important for people to keep an open mind, to learn from doing and to regularly shape experiences as they gradually build their partnerships.

Documentation is crucial in multi-stakeholder partnerships

To support such learning from experience, it is extremely important that the process of partnership building and the lessons learnt are carefully documented. The body of experiences generated becomes the point of reference in further developing the partnership.

Ensuring effective communication

Good and effective communication is the central strategy to achieve openness and transparency in the partnership, e.g. through meetings, phone calls, skype calls and teleconferences, emails, reports and other written materials. Though modern information and communication technology greatly facilitates communication, face-to-face meetings remain critical to build strong partnerships particularly with farmers at the community level. Effective communication with organisations outside the network is important too, in order to mobilise wider stakeholders' interest.

Joint planning, monitoring and evaluation

To achieve joint implementation, joint planning and joint M&E are essential: these are characteristics of a genuine and effective partnership. To achieve this, good facilitation is required. Joint M&E, with emphasis on 'joint' is a critical part of this; without it the spirit of partnership will fade.

Governance

The above principles need to be operationalised in governance, structures and processes for decision-making. Who decides on what and how? A partnership implies that some of the power and control from the initiating organisation (which often holds the budget) is transferred to the other partners.

4 | Background to the study on country level partnerships

The organisation and facilitation of multi-stakeholder partnerships has been a key strategy of PROLINNOVA. Notable successes have been observed in terms of increased recognition of the importance of Participatory Innovation Development (PID) and its mainstreaming, yet several country partnerships face challenges. Though having started out well by effectively bringing a range of dedicated partners together, they experienced a weakening of partnerships over time; e.g. committed partners leave or the overall number of partners decrease.

At a 2010 international M&E workshop, country-level partners shared their challenges in facilitating partnerships in their countries. They expressed difficulty in identifying the reasons for the weakening of the partnerships and, as a result, were unsure how to address the issue.

A network research study undertaken by PROLINNOVA (part of a wider action research on the functioning of the international networks funded by the Netherlands-based PSO) also recommended that the partnership approach at country - rather than at the international - level needed to be assessed. A sub-study of multi-stakeholder partnership experiences in Nepal further contributed to the need for more country-level studies.

There was a concerted call to critically review issues surrounding the multi-stakeholder approach at country-levels. In-depth analysis and learning by all the partners in the country networks were to serve as basis for identifying ways to strengthen or change current approaches. The central question was to find out what made some country partnerships thrive (often over many years) and what caused the weakening of others. The findings could be used to build upon the energy present in the network and re-strategise.

The PROLINNOVA International Partnership Workshop (IPW) 2011 held in Morogoro, Tanzania reviewed the findings of the network research. It affirmed the multi-stakeholder approach should continue being the central pillar of PROLINNOVA. However, it was suggested that for this to continue, the status of partnerships at country-level needed to be ascertained. A study was therefore proposed, partly inspired by the Healthy Network Analysis study in Nepal.

The PROLINNOVA Secretariat requested interested country programmes to apply for inclusion in an action research effort aimed at examining, reviewing and consolidating country partnerships. Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda were selected from among applicants. Multi-stakeholder partnerships in these three countries became the focus and served as the basis for the study presented in this report. The central idea of the proposed review was to undertake a carefully designed study/analysis and related capacity building process in the three countries. It was agreed that the output of these country processes would be shared and analysed with partners at the global level during the regular annual PROLINNOVA IPW (done in March 2012).

5 | The study and its methodology

In each of the three countries (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda), a study and an interactive workshop of all key PROLINNOVA organisations were conducted by an external researcher to jointly identify lessons learnt and find ways to strengthen country partnerships. The study included activities such as individual document reviews, self-administered surveys of partners, face to face interviews, and consultations with National Secretariat members in each of the three countries.

Overall the study had three main objectives:

- Creating understanding of the key partnership bottlenecks that PROLINNOVA member countries were experiencing.
- Introducing new energy levels, new inspirations and practical interventions for taking the multi-stakeholder partnerships forward.
- Providing learning to the larger PROLINNOVA family that can be captured in a new publication, a sequel to the earlier PROLINNOVA booklet on facilitating multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The study was conducted between March 2011 and April 2012 with most of the work in countries taking place between April and November 2011. Local consultants that undertook the preparatory study conducted national workshops in each of the three countries and wrote the final country reports. The Tanzania report was prepared by Biria Djax of TRACE-OD Facilitation and Capacity Building Center, Dar es Salaam; the Uganda report by Maria Kaweesa, Sarah N. Kimeze and Margaret S. Azuba, private consultants; and the Kenya report by Apondi-Nyangíaya and Crystal Okello Nyangíaya of KALAUSI Consultants. A synthesis and consolidation of lessons learnt across the three country studies was prepared by Joseph Ssuuna. This was presented during the PROLINNOVA IPW 2012 in Mali together with one example of country study: the Kenya case. Feedback was obtained from PROLINNOVA's stakeholders and partners that helped formulate lessons and recommendations presented in this publication.

A number of underlying questions contributed to framing the study as the PROLINNOVA network evolved:

- Is the members' ownership of the network dwindling? If so, why and what could be the causal factors for this apparent loss of interest?
- Where indeed some members became less active and failed to fulfil their commitments, was this necessarily an indication of loss of interest in the partnership?
- Were the coordination mechanisms chosen for the network effective enough to satisfy the varied interests of the membership and if not, why?
- Have contestations over resource allocation in the network significantly affected the overall performance of the partnerships and if so, how?

6 | Multi-stakeholder partnership development in three countries

The Multi-stakeholder partnership processes in the three countries have each had their own unique specific dynamics because of historical, socio-political, institutional or personal factors. Below follows a summary presentation of the multi-stakeholder processes in each country with its key milestones.

Kenya

For several years organisations and individuals in Kenya had followed PROLINNOVA and made efforts to launch activities in Kenya. It was PELUM Kenya that decided to break the deadlock. After a round of consultations PELUM Kenya called for a meeting on the feasibility of establishing PROLINNOVA Kenya.



The inception meeting brought together 25 partners in agricultural research and development, and was facilitated by Fred Kafeero of Environmental Alert, the coordinating NGO of PROLINNOVA Uganda. At the meeting, stakeholders unanimously agreed to start PROLINNOVA Kenya and formed an Interim Task Force to oversee its operation. The Sustainable Agriculture Centre of Research Extension and Development (SACRED) in Africa was appointed by members to host the secretariat on an interim basis. SACRED made available a staff member who served as part-time coordinator. With her support the task force held a series of meetings that resulted to a draft strategic plan, on the basis of which PROLINNOVA Kenya received its first small funding from PROLINNOVA International.

The inception money allowed the task force to organise the first multi-stakeholder national PROLINNOVA workshop in Thika in July 2007 that attracted 50 organisations and individuals. Generating a lot of enthusiasm and based on experiences shared, a strategic direction and draft action plan for PROLINNOVA Kenya were agreed upon. These formed the basis for a second small grant from PROLINNOVA International for focused capacity building on Participatory Innovation Development (PID) and to further networking activities implemented through various organisations that were members of the task force. It also facilitated PROLINNOVA Kenya's involvement in an action research programme on alternative innovation funding mechanism known as Local Innovation Support Fund (LISF) funded by DGIS Netherlands and the Rockefeller Foundation. The three task force organisations became actively involved in the implementation of this action research together with other NGOs and CBOs based in four pilot districts (Machakos, Mwingi, Busia and Nyando).

To start-up the LISF action research programme, a planning workshop was organised attended by PROLINNOVA International and inception studies were undertaken in the chosen operational areas. At each site of the workshops for local stakeholders, local steering committees were formed. Each local steering committee was made up of five farmers, one researcher, one Ministry of Agriculture staff and two NGO staff members; and procedures were agreed upon. The Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) facilitated a national training workshop on M&E for the LISF work. Farmer innovator forums were held at the LISF sites to raise awareness and enhance buy-in from key (especially government) players. In Eastern Kenya, 55 innovators and, in Western Kenya, 120 innovators shared their experiences. A total of 78 proposals were submitted.

However, efforts to attract donor support for the *wider* PROLINNOVA Kenya programme did not yield results. Complications in the relation with the host organisation

prompted the task force to ask another NGO, Kenya Network for Dissemination of Agricultural Technologies (KENDAT), to take on the host function by the end of 2008. They agreed to let one of their staff help coordinate PROLINNOVA Kenya in spite of the low funding base for the wider general PROLINNOVA Kenya programme. These changes and budget position possibly caused uncertainty and thus passiveness of some task force members. With limited possibilities for follow-up and information, maintaining the enthusiasm of the larger group involved in the 2007 workshop in Thika remained a challenge.

From 2009 onwards the LISF action research became the main anchor of activities for PROLINNOVA Kenya. A series of capacity building events in PID were organised for organisations involved at various levels. Farmer leaders and local staff were also trained on how to access and manage the LISF including: basic principles of proposal writing, basic group lending orientation processes at local level, monitoring of funded innovation processes, and screening and vetting of proposals at farmer level. A first draft of catalogue of local innovations was compiled with certain innovations earmarked for further research through PID.

PROLINNOVA Kenya organised the first PID training from 28-30 November 2007 in Nakuru where 28 organisations participated. In August 2009, a Training of Facilitators refresher workshop was held for all PROLINNOVA country programmes and was attended by 25 participants from various other country programmes.

Also in 2010, PROLINNOVA Kenya, through one of its task force members (Kenya Agricultural Research Institute or KARI), became involved in a new initiative: the Joint Learning in Innovations Systems in African Agriculture (JOLISAA) programme coordinated by Centre de cooperation internationale en recherche agronomique pour le developpement (CIRAD) in France. JOLISAA has a case study approach looking at past experiences with participatory multi-stakeholder innovation development to draw out lessons learnt. The JOLISAA funds allowed the hiring of a full time assistant coordinator who was also asked to serve as a volunteer coordinator for PROLINNOVA Kenya. This moved the hosting to KARI and helped strengthen PROLINNOVA Kenya coordination considerably.

By 2011, JOLISAA Kenya was well established and operational. The LISF work continued; funds were disbursed again and innovator grantees participated in innovation fairs and the National Council of Science and Technology (NCST) exhibition, drawing considerable attention in the country. A two-day policy capacity building workshop was held in mid 2011 to

walk the PROLINNOVA Kenya participants through a step-by-step process of review, discussion and consensus building. The participants included new stakeholders with government officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Kenya Industrial Property Institute. The frequency of information sharing from the PROLINNOVA Kenya office increased and the enthusiasm of farmer innovators continued to be the driving force for PROLINNOVA Kenya. Training of the local steering committees and the National Innovators Forum (NIF) workshop played a big role in this. The NIF brought on board the local steering committee from the two regions plus innovators who participated and showcased their products in an exhibition.

The National Steering Committee has remained the central hub of the partnership. The committee meets regularly throughout the year on a voluntary basis in spite of busy schedules of members. The fact that most are based in or close to Nairobi facilitates this.

Through funds available from PROLINNOVA International, PROLINNOVA Kenya volunteered to review its partnership process and explore ways to strengthen and expand it again beyond the relatively small group active in Nairobi. They conducted the study and presented the findings in a final workshop. This helped raise the interest leading to the development of a strategic plan.

Tanzania



PROLINNOVA Tanzania aims at enhancing participatory approaches and farmer centered methodologies, developing innovative methods and approaches for the promotion of local innovation, and upscaling and mainstreaming farmer-led participatory research and development.

The preparations for PROLINNOVA Tanzania started in 2004 after a PELUM Tanzania representative returned from attending the first PROLINNOVA International Partners Workshop in Ethiopia. With a few colleagues, he wrote a proposal for PROLINNOVA Tanzania and submitted this to the Germany-based NGO donor EED and to the PROLINNOVA Secretariat at ETC. Both agreed

to fund PROLINNOVA Tanzania for a period of three years (2005-2007) with EED providing the largest share of the budget. The small PELUM Tanzania Secretariat became the host and both PELUM and its members contributed resources for the implementation. The PROLINNOVA programme was the largest single programme of PELUM Tanzania at the time.

In the first year, a full time programme officer was hired and working mechanisms were established including the formation of a small team to coordinate daily activities. The team was comprised of staff from PELUM Tanzania, the NGO INADES Formation and Sokoine University of Agriculture. The team organised two key events: a national workshop to introduce PROLINNOVA to a wide range of potentially interested organisations; and a sharing and planning workshop later in the year attended by 24 people (farmers as well as representatives of 12 organisations). The workshop developed a Tanzania action plan for PROLINNOVA based on an analysis of the current situation in the country. It also created a national steering committee with representatives of all key stakeholders as overall governance body. With these, PROLINNOVA Tanzania was ready to roll.

In 2006, PROLINNOVA Tanzania started with a review of farmer innovators/local innovations from earlier development programmes in Tanzania. Findings of this review and other activities were shared through the quarterly newsletter *Kilimo Endelevu* produced by PELUM Tanzania. Capacity building formed the major component of activities of PROLINNOVA Tanzania in 2006 and in 2007. These included workshops on policy analysis and advocacy, on farmer-extension-research linkages, PID (with resource people trained during the international training of trainers organised by the global network), and a workshop on documentation skills. The latter was followed in 2008 by two documentation workshops requested by other organisations.

As a result of PROLINNOVA Tanzania's own documentation workshop, five local innovations were documented systematically by member organisations. PELUM Tanzania also organised a one-week international workshop on policy analysis and advocacy for the global network. In 2006 and 2007, a study tour and field visit was organised for farmers. Farmer innovators were featured during the annual farmers exhibition *Nane-nane*. Such activities increased the membership to around 22 organisations, drawing from central and local government, academia, farmer organisations, research and training institutions and NGOs.

In 2008, PROLINNOVA Tanzania became involved in the action research on LISF co-funded by Rockefeller Foundation. A planning and capacity building workshop was organised and activities were initiated in the two regions (Dodoma and Mbeya). The LISF work allowed a larger number of joint experimentation activities to take place with PROLINNOVA Tanzania involving farmers, development officers and researchers. Unlike other activities, the action research implementation was decentralised to PROLINNOVA

members in the two regions with the Secretariat at PELUM providing only backstopping and coaching.

In 2009, the 10 farmer groups selected for support under the LISF action research in the two regions were given facilitation support. M&E of the LISF implementation was systematised as ARI Uyole was brought in to coordinate this part of the work. Documentation and publishing of farmer innovations as well as capacity building continued throughout 2009.

In 2010, the LISF system was expanded in the Mbeya region as more districts and more farmer groups were brought in. Several capacity building workshops on PID were organised usually linked to LISF piloting in Mbeya. The PROLINNOVA officer at PELUM was increasingly requested to conduct PID training to other agencies. Three field study visits for research, NGO and local government staff served as a new way for capacity building. Publication activities through the newsletter continued and a consultant was contracted to prepare a summary document on the PROLINNOVA Tanzania partnership.

Capacity building continued with workshops on PID, farmer-led documentation and on record-keeping methodologies. The PROLINNOVA Tanzania partnership started to play a role in mainstreaming PID into government programmes and policies. PROLINNOVA Tanzania organisations led by PELUM have been included in the national pool of trainers of the Ministry of Agriculture. They provided training to researchers nationwide in people-centred innovation system approaches.

Various information materials were produced: a catalogue on local innovations, leaflets, posters, a practical guideline for community/farmer mobilisation, newsletters, a video and, in 2009, 300 PROLINNOVA calendars and 200 FAIR/LISF posters. The main donor, EED, conducted an external evaluation of PROLINNOVA Tanzania. The positive result of the evaluation led to EED's provision of support for another three years (2008-10).

Through all these years the National Steering Committee managed to meet at least twice a year with fairly good participation of members. It provided oversight and leadership to the wider partnership and helped create linkages in the country. In addition to this PROLINNOVA Tanzania organised (almost annually) wider partner/stakeholder workshops to exchange experiences, review progress made and strategise and plan. The 2008 workshop focused on strategising for the next three years. An issue raised several times in both the National Steering Committee and the wider

partners workshops, was the position of the PROLINNOVA multi-stakeholder partnership (facilitated by PELUM) within the wider scope of PELUM as a membership network - i.e. the roles and authorities of the PROLINNOVA National Steering Committee related to those of the

board of the PELUM network. It was agreed that the National Steering Committee would supervise PROLINNOVA affairs with the PELUM Tanzania Board providing a wider advocacy framework.

Uganda



PROLINNOVA Uganda's beginnings can be traced to 2003 when the first national consultative conference, attended by representatives of 34 organisations involved in agriculture and natural resource management, was organised. At that conference and through a participatory consultative process prior to it, Environment Alert was chosen to coordinate PROLINNOVA activities in the country. Those who attended that inaugural meeting became the founders of PROLINNOVA Uganda and many enrolled as members of PROLINNOVA.

A core team was first instituted, followed by the National Steering Committee. The Core Team¹ helped identify the innovators and led the organising of the local innovations training, which enhanced the understanding and appreciation of innovations and their proponents. As a result four farmer innovators worked with formal researchers and extension staff in joint experimentation to validate and further develop the innovations. The experiences in joint experimentation were reviewed and lessons were

drawn at a workshop involving innovators, researchers and extension agents.

A National Steering Committee² was formed to steer and build the multi-stakeholder partnership as a learning platform that was characterised by regular learning and reflection. When the first PID workshop was organised in Ethiopia in 2004, Uganda was represented by four organisations, two NGOs, one research centre and one university.

¹ Comprising of Environmental Alert, Africa 2000 Network, Kulika Charitable Trust, and Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Community Development Resource Network, NARO and Africa Highland Initiative (AHI)

² Comprising of National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), CIAT, National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), Makerere University, Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, Uganda National Council of Science and Technology (UNCST), Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Organisation (DENIVA) and Uganda National Farmers Federation (UNFF) (as per available records)

One of the most significant moments in the evolution of PROLINNOVA Uganda was its participation in the Forum on Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) General Assembly on 6-12 June 2005 in Entebbe, Uganda. PROLINNOVA's visibility was enhanced through its booth at the FARA exhibition where two local innovators showcased their work. Shortly after the FARA assembly, PROLINNOVA Uganda reached an agreement with the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation at Makerere University to include regular topical presentations on local innovation.

A review of their progress in 2005 revealed the need for more capacity building of extension workers, NGO field staff and trainers on PID. In response, PROLINNOVA Uganda organised the first PID training which was attended by about 36 participants. The training helped introduce PROLINNOVA to other organisations.³ Several later joined the core team. During the same period several local innovations, e.g. tefrozia (*Tephrosia*), were supported and studied in more detail, and more activities towards understanding PROLINNOVA were done.

A key initial challenge faced by PROLINNOVA Uganda to realise *true* joint experimentation was inadequate capacity in facilitating PID. PID resembled classical on-farm experiments with researchers playing a dominant role. Joint experimentation however implies drawing up a *joint* agenda and *jointly* monitoring and evaluating the processes and results. In spite of such challenges PROLINNOVA Uganda demonstrated progress in subsequent years. Identification and documentation of local innovations continued and in 2006 alone, ten new innovations were identified and documented, including innovations of farmers living and working in the city. Other PROLINNOVA led activities included: organising training in experimental design, organising farmer exchange visits, participation in World Food Day celebrations, participation in farmer field schools, and hosting and organising an international PID Training of Facilitators workshop.

PROLINNOVA Uganda also hosted student researchers from the Netherlands, contributed articles for the LEISA magazine and continued to dialogue with policy makers and academia on institutionalising PID in government programmes such as the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS). PROLINNOVA Uganda made a presentation to a group of students and lecturers at Makerere University in 2006. In the same period PROLINNOVA Uganda undertook three very significant activities: (a) started piloting and conducting

a feasibility study on LISF; (b) actively participated in organising the Innovation Africa Symposium; and (c) conducted/organised the international farmer-led documentation workshop led by PELUM Uganda.

In 2007, PROLINNOVA Uganda in collaboration with the city council and ICRAF managed to identify and document 39 innovations from farmers in both rural and urban Uganda, and worked with four organisations in implementing their PID activities under the LISF umbrella. A total of 49 farmer-led experiments and two joint experiments were set up and facilitated with one joint experiment having been completed. The 49 farmer-led experiments were supported under the LISF initiative.

PROLINNOVA Uganda continued its collaboration with the University to develop a module on 'innovations systems management'. Later, in collaboration with Makerere University, a dialogue was organised between researchers and farmer innovators and National Agriculture Research Organisation (NARO). PROLINNOVA Uganda also supported farmers to exhibit their innovations at the World Social Forum in Nairobi where they also organised a session on integrating indigenous knowledge in scientific research.

During 2008, PROLINNOVA Uganda, in collaboration with International Development Research Centre Canada, undertook PID activities focused on urban waste management. Other significant events organised by PROLINNOVA Uganda during that period included supporting staff from a PROLINNOVA Uganda member organisation to exhibit their innovations at the World Food Day celebration; and supporting the Uganda National Association for the Blind to document innovations in agriculture and natural resource management by the blind.

A Country Programme Partners workshop enabled sharing among country programme members, while 64 farmer innovators received LISF fund support to develop or expand their innovation. Two students from the Free University of Amsterdam conducted a study on the effectiveness of LISF and the lessons were incorporated into the LISF phase two that started end of 2008.

Funds for LISF II were received in 2009. During the same period a PID workshop was organised at Muyenga, in Kampala and was attended by representatives from the International Secretariat. During the workshop, emphasis was on M&E activities

³ such as JIDECCO, Centre for Integrated Development Initiatives (CIDEV) and Uganda Environmental Education Foundation

of LISF (NARO). With more sensitisation by the PROLINNOVA coordinator, more members joined; and more farmers accessed innovation funds.

In 2009 PROLINNOVA also organised dialogue meetings with university-level stakeholders particularly Makerere and Ndejje Universities, on mainstreaming PID into their programmes. In the same period, to stimulate innovation, PROLINNOVA Uganda organised a farmer to farmer exposure and learning visit on waste management during which the cases of 10 innovators were documented and later exhibited at the annual national agricultural show. These innovations opened up new policy advocacy opportunities and as a result two workshops on how farmers could undertake policy lobbying and advocacy were organised.

Training was organised to support the management of LISF. Several organisations were identified to manage LISF at community level. PROLINNOVA Uganda by 2009 was a robust and active multi-stakeholder partnership. However later, during that year, the coordinator resigned causing some delays in fund disbursement.

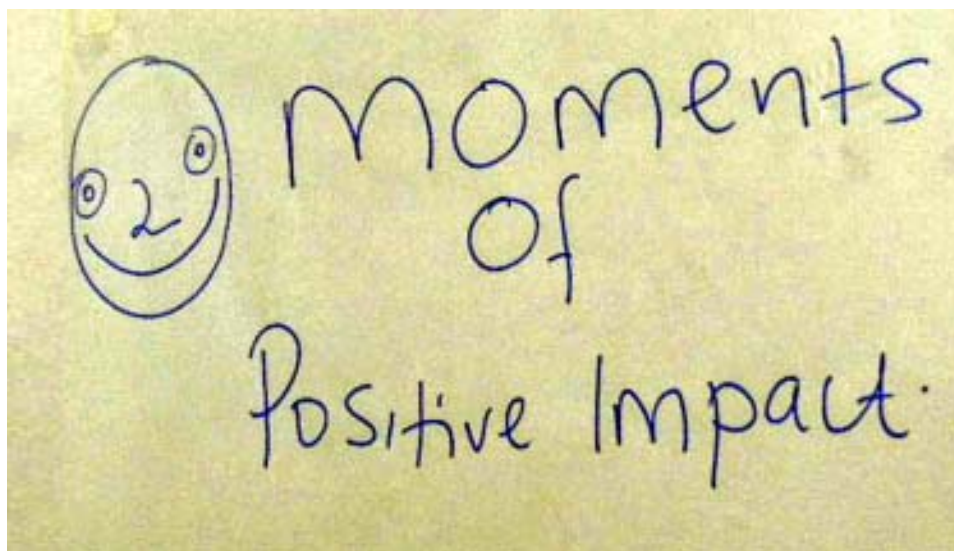
An innovators exhibition was organised in Entebbe and a cross country exchange visit was organised in Ethiopia in 2010. The steering committee was active and farmers were again able to access LISF. M&E received special attention in the last years. Impact studies were conducted in 2011 focusing on: 1) impact of LISF and; 2) impact of wider PROLINNOVA Uganda work. A study was also done on Farmer-Led Documentation. Farmer innovations were featured in local (public) media.

In 2011 PROLINNOVA Uganda focused on documentation of experiences for wider sharing through a booklet on four farmer innovations and a DVD on innovations in waste management, banana growing and post-harvest handling of beans in Moyo district. PROLINNOVA Uganda organised local innovators to feature their innovations in Moyo District during the World Environment Day and the National Fair for Civil Society both in June 2011.



A project to boost household income by improving the management of local chickens

7 | Findings from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda



Achievements of country-level partnerships

The discussion below highlights the major multi-stakeholder partnership success areas drawn from the reviews:

Mainstreaming participatory local innovation development processes into regular programming of partners

PROLINNOVA multi-stakeholder partnerships have been created with the goal of integrating PID approaches into the work of partners via country-level platforms. The work of PROLINNOVA country partners is characterised by their engagement in one or more of the following main areas: studies of local innovation, capacity building on PID and related matters, farmer-led joint experimentation, policy activities and farmer-led documentation.

All organisations were engaged in agriculture and natural resource management with varying attention to PID, thus making it easy for them to contribute time, resources, technical expertise, information and knowledge. Their involvement in the multi-stakeholder partnership led to a strengthening of the PID approach within their organisation and their regular programmes. Partners in all three countries were involved in the action research on LISF. This helped further build/strengthen local control over processes of innovation in sustainable agriculture.

PROLINNOVA mainstreaming in partner organisations is also determined by their level of involvement in multi-stakeholder partnership meetings. If mainstreaming is to be achieved, more than one staff from each organisation should attend meetings to address problems arising from staff turnovers. Although senior leaders in an organisation have the potential to drive the PROLINNOVA agenda, influence decisions and mainstream PROLINNOVA in their organisations, their availability can affect the programme. Hence, the importance of a second (say middle level staff) to represent the partner organisation in the multi-stakeholder partnership.

Introducing Participatory Innovation Development into government policy and research and development programmes

Looking beyond their own programmes, partners have managed to integrate PID into ongoing government policies and programmes. In Tanzania where PROLINNOVA NGOs and the Ministry of Agriculture interacted within the multi-stakeholder partnership, PROLINNOVA has been able to support the mainstreaming of an Agricultural Innovation System into national agricultural research and development programmes. It has also contributed substantially to the national training programmes for researchers by introducing modules of Local Innovation and PID. PROLINNOVA has influenced the local research establishment on the way they undertake research. Where introduced, LISF paved the way for farmer innovation and joint experimentation to gain recognition at both the local and higher levels. As a result, parts of the research community have become more open to the participation of farmers in the research process.

PROLINNOVA contributed to small shifts in research policy by instilling a greater recognition of the role of farmers as innovators. PROLINNOVA member organisations are also able to undertake more formal research to provide evidence for the value of local innovations and related processes. To support this, PROLINNOVA provided policy analysis and advocacy training to its members in two of the three countries.

PROLINNOVA served as an effective platform for networking

PROLINNOVA has served as a platform for networking within the countries and, through this, with the global PROLINNOVA network. Partner organisations were provided new insights and exposed to new avenues through access to the PROLINNOVA International Secretariat as well as to PROLINNOVA country programmes across the world. Within countries,

stronger collaboration has emerged including among those that hitherto had been working independently. For instance, CBOs and NGOs have since established new partnerships with research organisations such as NARO, National Agriculture Research Institute, and government departments such as Ministry of Agriculture even in activities that are outside of the PID sector. Platforms with disparate membership (e.g. Kenya) offer a particularly rich range of expertise/resources to tap and work with.

Building of partner capacities

PROLINNOVA has emerged as a major platform for partners to acquire a better understanding of the value of PID and action learning, reflection and analysis in general. A variety of training and other capacity building events helped to strengthen PID/local innovation capacities at different levels. International partners workshops and training events proved very valuable but were few in number and were only accessible to a limited number of people per country.

Local Innovation Support Fund: making the partnership work on the ground

The LISF that channels innovation funds directly to farmers for own and joint experimentation serves as one of the most tangible ways for linking partners with local communities and with each other. It helped nurture more localised multi-stakeholder partnerships to handle the LISF and link farmers to support agencies. The LISF thus helped operationalise and demonstrate PID on the ground.

Ownership by partners: Balancing commitment to the partnerships with the demands of regular jobs

An impressive number of members have been linking up with PROLINNOVA since inception, showing varying but considerably high levels of commitment. Although their passion for the central principles and approaches of PROLINNOVA and their shared ambition for its agenda drive their continued involvement and commitment to the multi-stakeholder partnerships, busy schedules sometimes affect commitment and involvement. PROLINNOVA is often an added responsibility for most partners. In spite of this, members' commitment grew especially with those that remained in the network for longer periods. When new people joined, e.g. to replace those that moved to other jobs, their initial orientation has not always been adequate, affecting their levels of commitment. Enhanced visibility of PROLINNOVA partner organisations and farmer innovators and their innovative work through involvement in publications at the national and international level has served to further inspire commitment.

Challenges of getting the multi-stakeholder partnership to function

Hosting PROLINNOVA: courtesy of local organisations

Member organisations host the coordination activities of the PROLINNOVA country multi-stakeholder partnership and administer and manage contracts on behalf of it. On taking up hosting responsibilities, a member commits human and financial resources that are usually not budgeted for. PROLINNOVA thus depends on the benevolence of its hosts for the implementation and administration of its activities/programmes. Member organisations that fully mainstreamed PROLINNOVA activities into their strategic planning and budgets find it easier to address such issues as they arise.

Staff of the host coordination agency often need to combine PROLINNOVA work with other regular tasks. Country coordinators generally felt that the management of PROLINNOVA was heavy, demanding and sometimes described as 'overwhelming'. They referred to challenges balancing their regular work with the PROLINNOVA work. Delays in decision making and funds dispersal were often explained by such conflicting work responsibilities and schedules.

Lack of a legal structure

PROLINNOVA multi-stakeholder partnerships are not legally registered and usually operate through informal agreements and working arrangements. The lack of registration is a limitation as it weakens the network's ability to mobilise additional funds. Some donors are less inclined to channel their funds to an informal network. While the original proponents of PROLINNOVA might have valued the 'informality' of the network, practical considerations appear to have affected country programming and operations. The issue of creating a permanent secretariat was raised in all three countries. This was thought to help in clarifying roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders. Through a formally recognised structure, roles and responsibilities and rules and regulations could be better defined. Lack of MOUs has been one of the factors affecting the commitment and possibly contributing to the declining interest of the membership over the years.

Multi-stakeholder partnership facilitation and coordination

The skills and competencies needed to manage and facilitate a multi-stakeholder partnership are challenges in itself. They were not necessarily

available in the countries or the host organisations. Hence, those tasked with a facilitating role for the multi-stakeholder partnership were not always adequately equipped for the task. They learned by doing. The multi-stakeholder partnership functioning often depended on the enthusiasm and commitment of the steering committee and the leadership of the host organisations. Added to this and partly due to resource constraints, the country 'secretariat' is usually comprised of only one, often part-time person lacking daily face-to-face contact with partners/colleagues. An active working group of key partners such as in Uganda has helped fill such gaps. Capacity building and coaching on multi-stakeholder partnerships deserve attention and support. Though these were given some attention via the annual visits from the International Secretariat, when coordinators are replaced, such capacity is lost and not easily built-up again.

Documentation of PROLINNOVA Country Programme evolution, growth and findings

Documentation is important not only for innovations and innovation processes but also to capture and learn from the multi-stakeholder partnership processes. Generally the documentation of the process and evolution of the partnership have been weak. This deprives partners of the opportunity to look back and learn how the multi-stakeholder partnership developed or how it can be improved.

Limited resources: Not enough to involve all

With the exception of Tanzania (which had funding from Germany from the onset), the funding of the PROLINNOVA country programmes relied on funds received through the International Secretariat of ETC. Often, particularly in Kenya, such funds were earmarked for specific projects such as JOLISAA and LISF action research. The amount of funds received was never sufficient to keep all partners actively involved. This created tension between those who took on lead roles in implementation and those that could not become involved. Declining partner engagement was noticed among members not receiving funding for their activities.

Handling diverse membership interests and motivation

PROLINNOVA country partnerships are composed of CBOs, NGOs, government departments, etc. They are

all introduced to the partnership in the same fashion: by invitation. Although their differences are appreciated, there seems to be an underlying assumption that their expectations and motivation to join PROLINNOVA are necessarily similar. This assumption does not hold true in practice. For some members, being in the PROLINNOVA partnership helps enhance their own work agenda, while for others it serves as source of projects or funds. Such differences in expectations have had an effect on the way the members perceive and respond to their roles and obligations to the partnership.

Clarity on members

There is reference in the three studies to the issue of a lack of clarity on who exactly are the members. This may be the result of wanting to remain as an open platform for sharing and learning that allows anyone to join at any time. People or organisations do not sign up to anything that ascertains membership.

The challenge of multi-stakeholder partnership monitoring and evaluation

In all three study countries monitoring of the partnership itself has been weak. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) training was offered by PROLINNOVA, and M&E tools relevant to multi-stakeholder partnerships were developed and shared with the country coordinators. The extent to which these were

used remained unclear. Country multi-stakeholder partnerships seemed to have reviewed their functioning and respective M&E frameworks occasionally but it was difficult to ascertain the impacts of these on the partnership and its promotion.

Declining engagement

In spite of the decline in participation of some founding members, PROLINNOVA is still active in all three countries. Reasons mentioned for declining engagement included the fact that PROLINNOVA work is secondary to their own primary work. Other members regarded PROLINNOVA more like an informal network (as there is no written agreement that binds the organisations together) while a few considered PROLINNOVA as being monopolised by a few organisations.

Organisational commitment has been low in cases when it was not clear whether invitations to join PROLINNOVA were individual or organisational. Sometimes even when invitations to the partnership were extended to relevant institutions, they were often viewed as individual (personal) invitations. The differences in perception could have been a factor influencing organisational commitment resulting in representation gaps especially when faced with staff turnover. It could also have had a bearing on the eventual failure of members to fulfil commitments especially in cases where their organisations were not supportive.

8 | Recommendations

- Consider pursuing legal registration of PROLINNOVA country platforms. This would allow a permanent secretariat, clear policies and administrative procedures, a management structure and a secure financial resource-base. As a legal entity, fundraising efforts could be enhanced. Care should be taken that the chosen legal structure allows active engagement of government agencies.
- Establish or improve member or partnership arrangements. Arrange for the signing of MOUs by member-organisations. Such MOUs could be semi-formal agreements but one that commits the members to the principles, vision and objectives of the platform. This would form the basis for establishing flexible operational structures: rules, regulations and policies acceptable to a varied membership.
- When a new member or organisation joins the partnership it is essential to conduct a simple induction 'programme' in which roles and responsibilities of all parties are clarified. Ensure that key country documents are shared and roles and responsibilities of all parties are clarified at that early stage. Periodic inductions and orientations should also be done to keep members updated.
- Systematically introduce the processes for institutionalisation and incorporation of PROLINNOVA approaches into the core business of member organisations. This could be facilitated by developing and providing practical guidelines.
- Strengthen partner-to-partner collaboration between individual partners without having to rely on the National Secretariat to take the lead. Explore practical measures that strengthen synergies between members within broader country-level partnerships.
- Participation of key partners and national steering committee members should be enhanced through their involvement in hands-on learning, training and workshops. Allow as many partners to join PROLINNOVA International Partners Workshops to expose them to innovative concepts, approaches and practices.
- Arrange for more than one staff per member organisation to be engaged in activities ensuring regularity of organisational representation and better institutional memory.
- Conduct visits to partner organisations to make presentations to CEOs and directors of the various organisations to strengthen the links with PROLINNOVA and to obtain feedback. This strategy will foster wider organisational ownership of PROLINNOVA.
- Meaningful and more equitable allocation of funding should follow from active engagement of partners in fundraising efforts. The International Secretariat should increase the involvement of country programmes and their members in fundraising activities by engaging them in joint strategy-setting and concept paper development. This will have the double benefit of building local capacities while also ensuring that country programmes are not passive recipients of externally raised funds.
- Expand fundraising locally to increase the number of activities that the membership can undertake. Emphasise joint implementation of funded actions. Strong alliances among PROLINNOVA partners can serve as a way to leverage resources.

- Use available information technology such as websites, e-magazines, newsletters, mobile phones or email lists to inform members and activate their participation. Focus the communication strategy on reaching small scale farmers at community level. Where needed, translate information into local languages and include translation costs in funding proposals.
- Organise monitoring and evaluation components for every project/activity and for the platform and its National Steering Committees. Use participatory monitoring and evaluation methods that PROLINNOVA has already helped build capacity in.
- The International Secretariat should maintain and scale up its current efforts to support/assist Country Programmes to think and plan strategically. This could be done through more formal/regular interaction, e.g quarterly Skype conference calls. Strengthen the current engagement of the International Secretariat so it transcends its current emphasis on fundraising/allocation to providing strategic guidance/direction.
- Country multi-stakeholder partnerships and their coordinators should increase their interaction with other PROLINNOVA countries to learn from them on how they deal with multi-stakeholder partnership challenges.

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