Eastern & Southern Africa Subregion: Year 2 ANNUAL REPORT (2020–21)
for the SULCI-FaNS project

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# Extent to which Project Objective 3 has been achieved

The year under review was greatly constrained by the Covid-19 pandemic, which restricted face-to-face interaction. However, there was some progress through virtual interaction, namely in finalising the subregional charter, co-organising and facilitating the African Partners Workshop (AfPW) and the International Partners Workshop (IPW), virtual backstopping of Country Platforms (CPs) and facilitating the election of a new Prolinnova Oversight Group (POG) representative from Eastern & Southern Africa (ESA). This annual report is a summary of the progress made towards achieving Objective 3 and results as per project indicators and targets.

## Objective 3: Prolinnova regionalisation process has been completed in Africa

### **Indicator 1**: Coordination and governance bodies of the two subregional platforms and the African network set up and functioning well.

The ESA subregional taskforce was set up in Year 1 but is not active. The taskforce leader, Zacharia Malley (Tanzania), retired from his employment and therefore could not execute his role effectively. A Zoom meeting of the taskforce members in March 2021 – attended by people from seven of the eight Country Platforms (CPs) in ESA – suggested that the taskforce be transformed into a technical advisory group to coordinate and advise on subregional activities. However, a planned follow-up meeting did not take place because of conflicting schedules. A new taskforce leader has not yet been named.

#### **Target 1.1:** The host institutions of the two subregional platforms identified and confirmed and the secretariats of the two subregional platforms put in place.

Consultation within the CPs and the IST in Year 1 revealed a preference for a virtual subregional secretariat. At its March 2021 meeting, the taskforce agreed to finalise this issue after restructuring the taskforce in Year 3.

#### **Target 1.2**: Modalities for a functioning African regional network (either a regional platform or a system of effective networking between the two subregions to support regional activities) in place

Modalities for a functioning African regional network will be elaborated in Year 3 with support from the International Support Team (IST). Meanwhile, the two Subregional Coordinators (SRCs) in ESA and in West & Central Africa (WCA) continued to work closely on different regionalisation issues including the elaboration of subregional charters, fundraising initiatives, planning and facilitating the AfPW and theIPW as well as participating in monthly IST coordination meetings.

### **Indicator 2:** The roles of each level within the African regional network clearly defined, mechanisms put in place between all levels, which allow bottom-up exchanges, and areas for synergies defined.

#### **Target 2.1:** A document summarising the roles of local, national, subregional and regional entities of Prolinnova in Africa developed and widely shared within and beyond the network.

The ESA Charter, which stipulates, among other things, the subregional governance structure and its relationship with other structures within Prolinnova, was endorsed. Meanwhile, it was felt by the IST that future emphasis should be on strengthening joint initiatives and networking between the CPs in each subregion.

#### **Target 2.2**: Guidelines on the mechanisms for information exchange among the levels/actors and areas for interaction and synergy among actors at different levels elaborated and published.

There are no guidelines yet on information-sharing mechanism among different actors at different levels and in different areas. This will be done in Year 3. However, the SRC, through his involvement in the IST, participated in preparing and executing various information-sharing events including the Prolinnova–AGC (A Growing Culture) Global Farmer Innovation Fair, the AfPW and the IPW. A learning visit between Sudan and Kenya is being organised.

### **Indicator 3:** Networking, fundraising and policy dialogue improved at subregional and regional level.

#### **Target 3.1:** At least 2 multi-CP projects developed by the SRCs (one in each subregion), funded by various donors; and each of the 4 CPs has raised funds for one complementary project under the Prolinnova umbrella.

No multi-CP projects were funded during Year 2. However, a number of CPs prepared and submitted concept notes and proposals for either multi-CP or single CP projects. These included proposals to: 1) David and Lucile Packard Foundation, submitted jointly by the CPs in Uganda and Kenya; 2) UNDP Adaptation Fund Climate Innovation Accelerator (AFCIA), submitted by the CP in Kenya (it has already gone through the first round of evaluation); and 3) Global innovation fund involving AFSA (Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa), AGC, and the CPs in Kenya and Uganda, which has yet to be submitted. Meanwhile, the SRC participated in several IST-level fundraising initiatives including the ongoing one to the GiZ Innovation Fund for Agriculture. He also continued to scout for and share information on funding opportunities with CPs in the subregion. He provided support to development of concept notes especially by the CPs in Kenya, Mozambique and Uganda. Together with the SRC for WCA, he revised the Guidelines #15 on “Procedures for reviewing and submitting concept notes and proposals made in the name of Prolinnova”. The IST endorsed a concept for collaboration between Prolinnova and Natural Livestock Farming (NLF) in joint resource mobilisation.

#### **Target 3.2:** Each SRC attended one subregional agricultural research & development (ARD) and innovation event per year for sharing the local innovation (LI)/PID approach, experience and achievements (i.e. 3 events per SRC for the 3 years of the project).

Although the ESA SRC did not specifically attend subregional ARD events, he attended 12 zoom webinars on farmer innovations and agroecology. Key ones included a webinar on reducing use of antimicrobials organised by NLF; a pre-COP 26 webinar on current investment in agricultural innovation in the Global South, organised by the Commission on Sustainable Agriculture Intensification (CoSAI); the African Agroecological Enterprises Project presentation, organised by AFSA; and a Seed Rally organised by AFSA and AGC.

#### **Target 3.3:** Each subregional platform cooperates with at least two relevant ARD subregional networks.

The ESA platform has yet to establish a formal and active collaboration with any ARD subregional networks. However, the SRC joined AFSA’s mailing list and attended a number of Zoom webinars on various subjects in agroecology. A formal partnership concept between the Prolinnova IST and the NLF Foundation was finalised, aimed at fostering joint resource mobilisation and networking in farmer innovation in ethnoveterinary medicine (Ethnovet). In Year 3, the ESA platform will seek to establish formal collaboration with networks such as the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS), the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), AFSA and the East African Farmers’ Federation (EAFF).

# SRC’s main activity areas

* Regionalisation (related to Indicator 1)

Ms Violet Kirigua (Kenya) was elected as the new representative from ESA in the POG. The ESA charter was endorsed by six of the eight CPs in ESA. The SRC held bilateral virtual (telephone/Zoom/Skype) meetings with CPs in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Uganda and Zimbabwe on issues of fundraising (Kenya & Uganda), revitalising dormant CPs (Zimbabwe & Ethiopia) and implementation of the Nuffic-funded TMT PID pilot projects (Mozambique). He facilitated one ESA taskforce meeting on signing of the subregional charter and reviving the taskforce. He continued to consult his counterpart in WCA on issues of regionalisation and contributed to preparing and facilitating the IPW 2021.

* Backstopping & capacity building of CPs (related to Indicator 3 & 2)

As it is still not possible to organise physical (face-to-face) backstopping visits because of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, the SRC continued to provide backstopping support to the CPs virtually. The main activity was supporting all active CPs to prepare and participate in the AfPW, the Prolinnova/AGC storytelling training and the IPW. In addition, the SRC provided specific support for each of the following CPs:

* Mozambique: Assisted in planning and facilitating the Nuffic-funded TMT PID pilot projects including reviewing the final workshop report.
* Sudan: Participated in NSC debriefing meeting on results of the AfPW workshop in 2020; also assisted in preparation for a learning visit by CP members to Kenya.
* Ethiopia: Continued to communicate with contact persons on reviving Prolinnova–Ethiopia including discussions with team from Mekelle University, Tigray Region, on setting up a subnational platform.
* Kenya: Reviewed the CP strategy for “Institutionalization of Local Innovation (LI) and Participatory Innovation Development (PID) approach in Kenya”.
* Ghana: Reviewed and edited the Ethnovet project report and the report on profiles of ethnovet innovations, upon request of the Project Coordinator.

It is hoped that, in Year 3, the SRC will be able to make face-to-face backstopping visits to Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

* Policy dialogue, networking and fundraising (related to Indicators 2 & 3)

Policy dialogue remains an area that needs more attention. In Year 2, the SRC edited and provided input on the “Strategy for Institutionalization of Local Innovation (LI) and Participatory Innovation Development (PID) for CP Kenya”. He also translated the Proli-FaNS (Promoting local innovation in Food and Nutrition Security) policy brief into Portuguese for the CP in Mozambique. He participated in many Zoom webinars, during which he posted targeted questions highlighting the PID approach.

* Documentation and information sharing (related to Indicator 2)

Although most CPS did not specifically produce or publish any documentation, the Prolinnova/AGC Global Farmer Innovation Fair, the 2020 AfPW and the IPW provided opportunities for many CPs to document and share their experiences and case studies on PID processes and innovations. The Prolinnova/ AGC storytelling training, besides building their capacities, also enabled the CPs in Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Sudan and Uganda to document their experiences in the form of videos and PowerPoint presentations during the IPW. In addition, the CPs in Kenya, Mozambique and South Africa produced and uploaded onto their Prolinnova webpages their 2020 CP annual reports. The SRC contributed to the drafting of a number of reports at IST level. These included the SULCI-FaNS (Scaling Up Local Capacity to Innovate in Food and Nutrition Security) ESA Annual Report for 2020, the SULCI-FaNS 6-monthly report, and the AfPW and IPW reports. He also developed/edited/ translated and uploaded a number of articles on the Prolinnova website, including a 2-page summary of the AFPW report and a 3-page summary of Prolinnova’s 2021–25 Strategy (and translated it into Portuguese). He also continued to receive and pass on to the CPs various communications on webinars organised by different networks.

# Challenges faced and lessons learned in the reporting period

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to hinder backstopping visits to the CPs. The CPs of Ethiopia and Tanzania are still inactive mainly on account of governance issues. However, there was general improvement in responsiveness of most CPs. Lessons learned here is that persistence and use a variety of channels (emails followed by calling or WhatsApp) pays in enhancing responsiveness from CPs. At least six out of the eight CPs in ESA are more responsive; this provides a basis for accelerating the regionalisation process. Another lesson was that, besides having formally endorsed structures (e.g. charter), it important to put emphasis on multi-CP initiatives such as learning visits, joint resource mobilisation and networking.