

INTRODUCTION

The annual 2022 meeting of the NSC included two days of field visits to Walewale and Bongo action-learning sites on 28 and 29 November before the actual meeting was held at the ACDEP office on 30 November. The field visit was to expose the NSC members to project activities, as well as to learn and appropriately advise farmers, ACDEP, the Prolinnova–Ghana coordination team and project coordinators of both the SULCI-FaNS and the Ethnoveterinary medicine (EVM) project.

Field visits on 28–29 November

The field visits afforded the opportunity of a 5-member NSC team to meet with the two local NGO partners (CEAL and NABOCADO) with their respective multistakeholder institutional teams (MSPs) in each site – Walewale and Bongo. In each site, they also visited farmer innovators including women innovation groups in three communities where they saw various farmers’ innovations that are being promoted and upscaled under the two projects (SULCI-FaNS and EVM). The innovators told their stories regarding innovation processes and impact on their food security, livelihoods and incomes, and showed physical innovation products such as local nutritious foods, livestock supplementary feeds, agro-processed food products, herbal medicines for animals, among others. The team also learned about the local partnerships approach involving staff of the District Department of Agriculture, District Assembly, opinion leaders, traditional authority, technical experts and private-sector actors for field implementation and mainstreaming participatory farmer-led approach. Observations and experiences of the NSC members were then discussed during the final office-level meeting held on 30 November and recommendations offered.

NSC Meeting on 30 November

1. WELCOME AND OPENING STATEMENT BY JOE NCHOR AND MALEX ALEBIKIYA, RESPECTIVELY

SULCI-FaNS project coordinator Joe Nchor welcomed the NSC members to the 2022 annual meeting and apologised for ACDEP’s inability to hold the mid-year meeting due to crowded project activities. Two minutes silence was observed for the souls of the late Dr N. Karbo NSC chair and father of Dr Conrad Weobong, NSC member. Malex, ACDEP Director, welcomed members and apologised for his inability to participate in the two days of field visits due to critical assignments. He commended the members for their sustained efforts and commitment to their role. He expressed a special appreciation to Dr George Essegbey and Dr Franklin Avornyo for being able to travel in from Accra for the meeting.

2. FEEDBACK FROM THE FIELD VISITS TO WALEWALE AND BONGO LEARNING SITES

This was an open discussion with each member taking turns to share their experiences, observations and recommendations to ACDEP for consideration and possible actions. Below are a summary of the key points and recommendations.

- a) **Multistakeholder and partnership implementation approach:** The multistakeholder partnership approach to implementation is very important for promoting learning and

sustaining activities and results. The lead local implementing NGOs such as CEAL and NABOCADO are strong, committed partners with vast potential. They need to be encouraged.

- b) Upscaling innovations for impact:** Unearthing local innovations (LIs), scaling and commercialising them for impact is commendable and needs to be sustained. As we process innovations and upgrade them for commercialisation, we have to go back again and identify more new LIs, some of which may require upscaling the adoption but not commercialisation because they may not be of commercial value or commercially viable.
- c) Formalising and standardising commercial innovations:** Commercialisation drive should be strengthened through facilitating linkage to markets beyond the district to regional, national and international markets. This includes changing mindsets to desire to scale up the products.

There is need to formalise and apply standard requirements for the commercial innovation products to attract the desired markets in Ghana and beyond. This will require developing a trademark or trade logo similar to Fair Trade with the labelling protocol. This issue will require further discussion, investigation and understanding before we decide to do or not to do so.
- d) Community animators to support innovations identification:** Community animators could be delegated and assigned to help in identifying LIs at a wider scale and link up with the projects for support and promotion.
- e) Strengthening the relationship between innovators and academia and research:** Create a strong interface or relationships between innovators and universities and research Institutions for farmers to share their innovations directly with students and researchers for learning and validation. Hence we need to strengthen collaboration with the universities and research institutions to support upgrading, validation and efficacy improvements of LIs.
- f) Adoption studies and assessment:** Establish a monitoring system to assess level of adoption, effectiveness and efficacy of LIs from adopters and beneficiaries of those innovations from the originators. Need to follow up on adopters or adapters to feed back to the originators for improvement in the innovation, if necessary.
- g) Encouraging and sustaining farmer ownership of development initiatives:** The projects' approach enhances self-initiative and ownership of farmers' efforts, which then encourages external joint participatory work with research and development actors. We have to be careful not impose external ideas but to plug into farmers' initiatives for sustainability of development.
- h) Sustain farmers' exchange activities:** The projects have promoted exchange and sharing of ideas and solutions, sharing products and marketing between farmers and innovators across project districts and the regions. For example, Yaw Azure's animal-health remedy is being used by some farmers in other districts.
- i) Laboratory analysis of local innovative foods:** There is no need to conduct scientific or laboratory analysis of local foods to prove their nutritional values because the nutrients are already known as with the major food categories such as protein, carbohydrates, fats and micronutrients.
- j) Need for complementary funding:** We need to explore the possibility of accessing additional funds (Misereor 150,000 Euro window) for additional activities – commercialisation, student research support, LISF, etc.

- k) **Promote Community of Practice approach:** We need to think through and develop a “Community of Practice approach” at community level, institutional level and project level. In this case, local innovation is scaled to families and community-wide involvement, participation and use beyond the individual innovators currently being promoted and supported. A family could use a number of related and inter-connected multiple innovations to solve and address many needs more holistically instead of one specific innovation which is limited in the benefits accrued.

3. BRIEF PROGRESS REPORTS ON SULCI-FANS AND ETHNOVETERINARY (EVM) PROJECTS

The project coordinators of SULCI-FaNS and EVM – Joe Nchor and Foster Awuni, respectively – made PowerPoint presentations on the two projects, highlighting achievements and results, lessons, challenges and status/progress of getting new project phases following expiration of current phases. NSC members remarked and made some recommendations after each project presentation.

Recommendations on SULCI-FaNS project

There is need to institutionalise the Local Innovation Support Facility (LISF) approach to make it sustainable in leveraging local funds or other resources to support innovation, farmer-led research and scaling of innovations. We should explore opportunities and access available funds at local government projects and other NGOs with similar interest and focus in order to build the fund/facility.

Comments/recommendations on EVM project

Ethical clearance: The project coordinator was grateful that he has been successfully linked by Dr. George Essegbey with Professor Yaw Osei-Atweneboana, Director of Water Research Institute (WRI) of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and a member of the CSIR Institutional Review Board for ethical clearance. Prof Yaw Osei-Atweneboana has indicated his readiness to offer ACDEP the necessary support to get the ethical clearance for the research work in our EVM project.

Malex added that the application for ethical clearance needs to be submitted to the Board with the protocols and clearance received before start of the research. Due to our peculiar challenge and hope for a follow-on project, we decided to use the current experiments to learn and to do things properly in the next phase. That means, we have to start the process of getting the ethical clearance as soon as the new phase is approved.

4. EXPANDING THE PROLINNOVA PLATFORM AND NETWORKING IN GHANA

We revisited the previous discussions on the need to expand the Country Platform (CP) beyond northern Ghana partners with respect to policy dialogue and networking activities in order to give the CP a national character. We could not achieve this under the current project phase due to staff deficit, coupled with crowded project management and field activities. A new follow-on phase provides the impetus and compelling need to pursue this goal. ACDEP also plans to employ a permanent project coordinator for the CP. The planned expansion and further diversification of membership of the NSC will help to achieve this and draw in more like-minded R&D institutions and networks.

5. REVISING AND EXPANDING MEMBERSHIP OF THE NSC

The death of the hitherto chair of the NSC, Dr Karbo, requires a replacement in this position. New persons are also needed in the body to help strengthen policy dialogue/advocacy, networking,

participatory development, farmer innovations and endogenous development, etc. Furthermore, with respect to the EVM project, it was deemed necessary to expand the NSC to include experts who can additionally provide strategic management and technical advice on the project. Consequently, the meeting proposed the following persons with relevant professional backgrounds to be contacted for inclusion in the NSC:

- i. Dr Sugri of CSIR-SARI (Manga sub-station), who is the RELC (Research-Extension-Farmer Linkage Committee) coordinator for Upper-East Region
- ii. Madam Hawa Musah, Northern Region Director of Department of Agriculture and coordinator of Northern Region RELC
- iii. Mr Edgar Drah, Bongo District Director of Department of Agriculture
- iv. Mr Bern Guri, Executive Director of Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development (CIKOD).
- v. A farmer representative to replace Joe Abarike; three nominees to be identified by Joe/CEAL Manager for selection
- vi. Dr George Essegbey, current NSC member and a former national Director of CSIR-STEPRI to serve as new chairman of the NSC.

6. MEETING DATES FOR 2023 AND ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Mid-year meeting to be held in **April 2023** to commission new members, revisit NSC roles, launch Prolinnova–Ghana 2022–26 Strategic Plan, and plan NSC 2023 annual work plan
- ✓ End-of-year meeting to be held in **November 2023** to review progress, plan for 2024 and undertake field visit to project sites
- ✓ Review and implement recommendations from the field visits.

APPENDIX 1: FIELD VISIT PROGRAMME AND ITINERARY: 28–29 NOVEMBER 2022

Date/Day	Activity/location	Responsible persons
27 November; Sunday	Arrival of Dr George Essegbey and Dr Franklin Avornyo from Accra and check-in at Arewa Guest House by 2pm	Joe Nchor /Mary/ Driver
28 November; Monday	Travel to Walewale learning site and work (10am–4pm) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Meet with local NGO partner (CEAL) and staff/MSP membersField visit to Ghani, Kpabugu and Boayini to meet innovators/groups and see innovationsTravel to Bolga by end of day and sleep	Joe Nchor and Issifu Sulemana (CEAL Manager)
29 November; Tuesday	Travel to Bongo learning site and work (9am–3pm): <ul style="list-style-type: none">Meet with local NGO partner (NABOCADO) and staff/MSP membersField visits to three communities to meet innovators and see innovationsTravel back to Tamale by end of day	Joe Nchor and Dominic Abugre (NABOCADO-Bongo Manager)
30 November; Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hold National Steering Committee meeting in ACDEP office from 9am–3pmDeparture of members after meeting	Joe Nchor and Foster Awuni

APPENDIX 2: AGENDA FOR 30 NOVEMBER 2022 MEETING

1. Opening prayer
2. Welcome by Joe Nchor
3. Opening statement by Malex Alebikiya
4. Review of the agenda by Joe Nchor
5. Feedback from field visits to Walewale and Bongo project sites by NSC members
6. Action points from December 2021 meeting by Joe Nchor
7. Brief report on SULCI-FaNS (Ghana and international) + highlights on new phase by Joe Nchor
8. Brief report on EVM project + plans for new phase by Foster Awuni
9. Revisit the issue of expanding the institutional partners and networking to national scale
10. Revising and strengthening the membership of the NSC
11. Any other business
12. Conclusions and next steps

APPENDIX 3: List of participants

No.	Name	Organisation
1.	Franklin Avornyo	CSIR-ARI
2.	Hajara Ibrahim	Taimako
3.	Foster B. Awuni	ACDEP
4.	Conrad Weobong	UDS
5.	George Essegbey	CSIR
6.	Malex Alebikiya	ACDEP
7.	Joseph Nchor	ACDEP
8.	Patricia Fafa Formadi	UDS