#### FEBRUARY 2024



# TAP NEWSLETTER

#### TAP celebrated its 10th TAP Partners Assembly

The 10th annual TAP Partner Assembly took place from November 21 to 23, 2023, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Participants, including partners and key stakeholders, convened for three days to exchange knowledge and learn about the Tropical Agriculture Platform's (TAP) role in addressing agrifood system challenges in low and middle-income countries. This year's theme, "Strengthening Capacities to Innovate toward Agri Food System Transformation," emphasised introducing innovative approaches to meet the needs of small farmers and enhance community resilience in the face of climate change.

Throughout the assembly, over 60 representatives from TAP partners, including GFAR, YPARD, IICA, FARA, APAARI, RELASER, and country-level participants, shared lessons and approaches to scale innovations, practices, and technologies at national, regional, and global levels. Concrete experiences were shared from DeSIRA projects and, notably, from the nine countries and regional organizations of the EU-funded <u>TAP-AIS</u> <u>project</u>, implemented by FAO with the aim of strengthening capacities to innovate in agricultural innovation systems (AIS).

Each day of the assembly featured technical sessions and group work delving into issues such as gender equality, women-led innovations, policy advocacy, increased investments, and youth inclusion in relation to agricultural innovation.

The event also highlighted a session dedicated to the <u>TAPipedia</u> knowledge hub, including the upcoming release of its agro-innovation dashboard, enabling users to navigate key information on indicators related to agricultural innovation. Additionally, the session introduced the TAP E-learning course on capacity development for AIS, developed in collaboration with the FAO e-learning academy and set to be launched in the coming weeks.

More info here: https://www.fao.org/in-action/tropical-agriculture platform/news/detail/en/c/1673 282/.





Group photo during the 10th TAP Partners Assembly ©FAO

#### UPDATE ON TAP PARTNERS ACTIVITIES



#### AARINENA

#### AARINENA'S Date Palm Innovation Platform

AARINENA with other partners in the region took the lead in development and facilitating of innovation platforms in the region to serve and support individuals and build the national capacity of the community to tackle the critical and unprecedented challenges in the agriculture sector. In this context, AARINENA worked on establishing the date palm innovation platform with support from FAO.

Identifying the priorities, needs, and preferences of stakeholders in the design and development of the innovation platform were considered a fundamental factor in the success of the project.

The Date Palm Innovation Platform aimed at elevating date palm farming by:

- Tailoring Solutions: Providing customised digital solutions that cater to the specific needs and challenges of date palm cultivation, including optimised irrigation techniques, pest management, and harvesting practices.
- Collaborative Environment: Facilitating a collaborative ecosystem by bringing together stakeholders such as farmers, researchers, government bodies, and technology developers. The collaborative approach was very important to ensure the holistic and diverse perspective in driving innovation.
- FAO Endorsement: With the endorsement and support of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Date Palm Innovation Platform gains global credibility and access to valuable resources. This strategic partnership reinforces the platform's potential to make a significant impact on the date palm industry in the region.

It is worth mentioning that date palm stakeholders and forums encompass categories of Researchers and Extension Community, Government Organization, Non-Governmental Organizations, Producers/Farmers, Entrepreneurs, Exporters/Traders, Funding Agencies, and Technical & Expertise Groups. Each category finds numerous resources dedicated to its specific interests, enabling them to exchange information and knowledge among themselves.



In addition to its prominent role in employing technology to serve the palm sector, facilitating financial transactions, and obtaining financial services for projects, as well as providing technical and knowledge support to farmers, the platform works on supporting the scientific research aspect. The research community covers several important aspects, including irrigation in date palm under stress conditions, chemical and microbial properties and energy content of Rub Al-Tamr made by traditional and modern methods, promising technologies and innovations, nutrition and health, horticulture, plant breeding and technologies, plant pathology and entomology, economics and marketing, and farm management.

Date Palm Innovation Platform ©AARINENA

AARINENA welcomes further participation and contribution to the platform through the following link: <u>https://aarinena.org/palm/</u>.

#### APAARI



#### APAARI co-designs and co-organizes a regional training on multi-stakeholder policy engagement in agri-food systems

From 18 to 20 September 2023, the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services Network (APIRA) co-designed and coorganised an online Regional Training on Multi-Stakeholder Policy Engagement in Agri-Food Systems. The objective was to strengthen participants' capacities to effectively engage in policy processes and comprehend the potential of innovation in agri-food systems.

The participants, which included representatives of national agricultural research and extension system (NARES), were able to get new skills and knowledge, particularly to:

- Understand the role of policies in agri-food systems and in the context of agricultural innovation.
- Analyse pressing policy issues and engage stakeholders in related discussions.
- Organise multi-stakeholder policy dialogue.
- Communicate and negotiate effectively with policy actors on key policy issues.

The session on **the role of policy in enabling innovation** in agri-food systems facilitated by APIRAS focused on how multi-stakeholder policy engagement can promote improved policies for innovation in agri-food systems, while acknowledging the importance of the enabling environment and policies.

The **panel discussion on policy engagement** cases from the Asia-Pacific region provided an important opportunity for the trainees to discuss policy engagement strategies, experiences and key skills and tools followed by insights from three experts and important policy influencers from around the Asia-Pacific region. Based on the important insights of the panelists, the participants were led to reflect on their own experiences in policy processes and exchange interesting knowledge with other participants. In the session about **problem framing**, participants learned about the basic concept and importance of governance analysis and specifically problem framing for effective engagement in policy processes. They analysed key problems in the agri-food system to identify the underlying drivers and potential solutions as a basis for policy engagement.

Exploring the role of negotiation in communication and policy advocacy processes lead the participants to understand their own negotiation style and ways to improve and how to deal with positive and negative feedback in the negotiation process. Furthermore, psychology of the negotiation, the principled negotiation, and the importance of emotional intelligence were covered and discussed during the session.

#### APAARI participates in the 10th Partners' Assembly of the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) from 21–23 November 2023

The Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) actively participated particularly through three substantive sessions.

In Technical Session 1 on 'Strengthening Capacities of Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS): Approaches, Common Framework, Tools and Methods for scaling-up,' APAARI presented its efforts to operationalize the TAP Common Framework based on its experiences and lessons. The 'blending of technical and functional capacities' is currently implemented through the Asia Pesticide Residue Mitigation Project, Southern Africa Biopesticides Project, Bangladesh Phytosanitary and Biopesticide Development Project (USDA), and Piloting One Health in Asia to Manage Aflatoxin.





APAARI's key strategies for the integration of the TAP Common Framework into these projects include:

- Project co-design: Discussions with technical and functional teams (e.g. technical experts, partners, and KM team) during the co-design stage of each project.
- Orientation sessions: Learning about the TAP Common Framework (AIS thinking, the three dimensions, importance of developing functional capacities along the technical) conducted in the first three months of the start of each project.
- Surveys: Identification of what and whose functional capacities need to be developed in the context of the project and with what envisioned outcomes conducted in the first six months of each project.
- Strategy development: Knowledge management, capacity development and communication strategies how can the development of functional capacities and system thinking best support the overall project objectives to ensure impact conducted in the first year of each project.
- Activity co-design: Joint development of agenda, flow, and facilitation plan discussed and agreed on for each planned technical event.
- Implementation: Developing practical skills to better manage technical and institutional innovations is integrated in each technical training.
- Post-activity support: Mentoring was provided and Knowledge-Attitude-Practice (KAP) surveys were conducted even after the activity/project was completed.

In the second session, APAARI discussed its perspectives and experiences regarding food and agriculture research and innovation strategies. The presentation focused on the key continental-level agri-food research and innovation strategy in the Asia-Pacific region, drawing from the FAO Asia-Pacific Science and Innovation Forum, CGIAR's Research and Innovation Strategy, and APAARI's new Strategy Plan for 2024-2033. The aim was to advocate for additional investments in science, technology, and innovation in agriculture.

During Session 3 focusing on Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) for sustainable intensification in the Asia-Pacific region, APAARI showcased the significant results of its collaboration with the Commission on Sustainable Agricultural Intensification (COSAI). The dialogues yielded five prominent areas, highlighting strategic aspects that can be advanced through the TAP Common Framework:

- Paradigm shift that goes beyond profitability
- · Small-scale farmers at the centre of the paradigm shift
- Smarter investments
- The "How" of innovation
- Development of new business model

Find more about APAARI's participation here.

#### CATAS

#### CATAS Expert Team travels to Sri Lanka for China-FAO-Sri Lanka South-South Cooperation Project

CATAS as the FAO Reference Center for Tropical Agriculture Research and Training with the support of the China-FAO-Sri Lanka South-South Cooperation Project recently dispatched ten tropical agriculture experts to Sri Lanka for a two-year technical assistance mission.

#### TAP NEWSLETTER



Chinese tropical agriculture experts will collaborate with the Sri Lankan agricultural department to establish fruit demonstration farms through practical field training, improve post-harvest processing, marketing, and commercialization of selected fruit varieties. The assistance will also focus on promoting the productivity, yield, and value chain commercialization of the three main local fruit crops of bananas, mangoes, and pineapples. The objective is to increase the production and commercialization of the Sri Lankan fruit value chain and to improve the quality and the value of these fruits in the global market.



CATAS Expert Group ©CATAS



Expert Group Conducted Field Research and Exchange Discussions ©CATAS

#### CATAS training course on the prevention and control technology of Fusarium Wilt of Banana in Cambodia

At the invitation of the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) of FAO, Xie Jianghui, the Vice President of CATAS, visited Cambodia with five banana experts who are members of CATAS. They conducted the FAO project "The Second Phase of Training Course on Quarantine and Prevention of Fusarium Wilt of Banana in Cambodia." A total of 25 officials, technical experts from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries of Cambodia, as well as representatives of banana production enterprises, participated in the training.

Through this training, the participants proficiently mastered the isolation, cultivation, and molecular identification techniques of Foc R1 and Foc TR4, along with the key points of prevention and control techniques. This provides strong technical support for the comprehensive prevention and control of Fusarium Wilt of Banana in Cambodia.



Opening Ceremony of the Training Course ©CATAS

5





Isolation and Specific Primer PCR Detection of Foc R1 and Foc TR4 ©CATAS





Identifying Symptoms of Fusarium Wilt of Banana and Demonstrating Prevention and Control Technology in Field ©CATAS

#### Sub-forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Agriculture

On 15 November 2023, the Sub-forum on S&T Innovation Cooperation of the Second Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Agriculture was held in Sanya, China. The launch of the "Africa's Cassava Production Amplification Initiative" was announced, and CATAS' latest series of books, including "China's Main Technical Standards for Cassava, Banana and Rubber" (English, French and Spanish versions), "China's Main Technical Standards for Coffee, Cashew, Cocoa and Vanilla" (English and French versions) was debuted.

Under the "Africa's Cassava Production Amplification Initiative", CATAS expects to implement five major programs. The programs include cassava breeding localization, seed substitution, seed management improvement, post-harvest loss reduction and comprehensive utilisation, and agricultural mechanization in Africa's major cassava producing countries.



Main Technical Standards of Cassava, Banana, Rubber, Coffee, Cocoa, Cashew and Vanilla Published



#### 2023 China (Hainan) International Coconut Industry Forum

On 12 December 2023 China (Hainan) International Coconut Industry Forum opened in Wenchang city of Hainan Province, China. At the meeting, the Coconut Research Institute of CATAS signed 5 cooperation agreements with 8 domestic and foreign enterprises, including Kokonas Indastri Koporesen (KIK) of Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu Agricultural Cooperative, and Hainan Aerospace City International Trade Co., Ltd.





Cui Pengwei, elaborates the achievements in S&T innovation of tropical agriculture and international cooperation in coconut industry technology ©CATAS



Group photo of special guests ©CATAS





#### CATIE

#### INNOVA-VERDE Contest will fund 21 innovative ideas to reduce carbon emissions in the Costa Rican Coffee Sector

Twenty-one dedicated coffee farmers in Costa Rica have turned an idea into an excellent opportunity to kickstart their dreams. They emerged victorious in the INNOVA-VERDE contest, coffee edition, showcasing their commitment to energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture, and bioinputs. Impressively, 10 out of the 21 finalists were women, highlighting the growing role of women in driving innovation in the coffee sector.

The winning ideas will receive non-refundable funds totaling up to €300,000 euros to support their implementation. The contest is led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), coordinated by the German Cooperation for Development GIZ, and the Environmental Bank Foundation (FUNBAM), with execution handled by the Costa Rican Coffee Institute (ICAFE).

This initiative is part of the TRANSFORMA-INNOVA program led by the German Cooperation for Development GIZ, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Ministry of Environment and Energy, and consortium partners. Within the program, CATIE serves as the leading institution for capacity development in climate-smart, low-carbon coffee production, alongside livestock and banana systems in Costa Rica. The 5-year program is financed by IKI, Germany, and EU-DeSIRA.



Winners of the INNOVA-VERDE contest ©CATIE

#### DESIRA LIFT

#### DeSIRA-LIFT's contributions to the 10th TAP Partners Assembly in Ethiopia

With many TAP partners involved in DeSIRA projects, including the TAP-AIS project, and TAP benefiting from DeSIRA funding, several collaboration avenues can be used to boost the big shift in agricultural innovation systems toward more diverse, inclusive, and responsible innovation approaches which enable agri-food system transformation.

The Agrinatura-led DeSIRA-LIFT facility was invited to join forces for the organisation of the 10th TAP Partners Assembly and take the opportunity to connect DeSIRA project implementers and partners in Ethiopia to TAP. The objectives were to stimulate joint learning and critical reflexion around ongoing multi-actor innovation processes in Ethiopia and other DeSIRA countries, with highlights on the capacity development needs at different levels: at the level of innovative women-led firms, at the level of multi-actor platforms, and at the global level of continental research & innovation (R&I) policies. TAP members identified convergence points towards which they could work together to close these capacity gaps, such as promoting needs-based innovation approaches, successful commercial models, alignment mechanisms for investments and support to identified innovation champions, sustainability of multi-actor platforms set up in countries, and increased partnerships with universities to increase the workforce for agricultural innovation in countries.





DeSIRA project leaders, sharing their experience, with the help of Ms P. Henriquez, DeSIRA-LIFT cluster facilitator, during TAP Partners Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. ©DeSIRA

For a detailed exploration of these collaborative efforts, read the entire news page <u>here</u>.

DeSIRA-LIFT is currently implementing its second cycle of support to DeSIRA projects, composed of four services:

- Service 1: Facilitating the DeSIRA Community of Action & Reflection (CoAR), provides opportunities for joint learning across DeSIRA projects from transversal analysis of the successes and challenges to manage R&I for impact (expert-led learning reviews, stories of change, webinars, online Discussion groups (see <u>here</u>), thematic learning clusters, face-to-face events in countries and <u>a bimonthly community newsbrief</u>);
- Service 2: Training of innovation facilitators in DeSIRA project teams, provides in-person and virtual blended training & coaching sessions for cohorts of innovation facilitators in all regions covered by the DeSIRA initiative. The objective is to enhance project innovation outcomes and equip countries and future projects with skilled innovation facilitators (see <u>here</u>).
- Service 3: Self-paced training on the five core capacities to manage for impacts, online Learning Management System for self-paced training on agricultural innovation system (AIS) and open innovation (OI) thinking and practices for R&I project managers (see <u>here</u>).
- Service 4: Group coaching on Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (see here), provides on demand and ad hoc coaching and mentoring to groups of DeSIRA projects, as well as a helpdesk accommodating specific support requests. This service helps projects with outcome-harvesting, User-Focused Evaluation and AIS-oriented interventions.

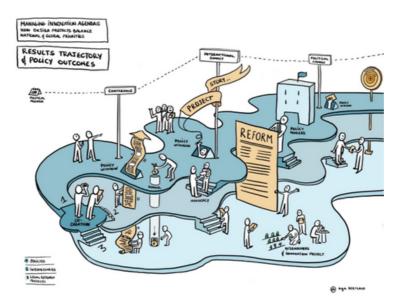
For detailed information, visit the DeSIRA community website.





#### Latest webinars organised by the DeSIRA-LIFT community

On 9 October 2023: DeSIRA Webinar 4: <u>Managing innovation agendas</u>: <u>how DeSIRA projects balance national</u> <u>and global priorities</u>. DeSIRA projects discussed the policy influence of research in advocacy processes and the importance of intermediary organisations capable of facilitating alignment mechanisms between local and global agendas, based on a combination of bottom-up and top-down, regular dialogues and knowledge sharing.



Balancing national and global innovation agendas ©DeSIRA

On 13 December 2023: <u>DeSIRA Webinar 5: Scaling DeSIRA – Innovation processes and scalability</u>. Six DeSIRA projects shared their scaling strategies and reflected upon their strategic scaling partners: civil society, interprofessionals and governments. Follow-up online discussions will continue to give thought to maintaining momentum in innovation trajectories, preserving progress made by DeSIRA projects and avoiding setbacks after project closure.

For other <u>DeSIRA-LIFT Highlights</u> and general or specific <u>updates</u>, please check the <u>DeSIRA-LIFT website</u>.

#### GFAIR

#### Introducing the GFAR/GFAiR Hub

The Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR/GFAiR) has successfully launched a new Knowledge and Learning Hub conceived for and driven by its members and partners: the <u>GFAR/GFAiR Hub</u>.

The Hub welcomes all organisations and individuals concerned with the transformation of agricultural research and innovation systems to achieve more inclusive, equitable and sustainable development. The GFAR/GFAiR Hub is designed as an epicentre of connection, collaboration and co-creation and represents a space where the forum's members can actively engage and interact with each other.

The Hub is made up of three main spaces designed to achieve different goals:

- The Knowledge and Learning Hub: An arena for sharing, reflection, and collective learning.
- The Action Space: A dedicated zone for our members to initiate and drive Collective Actions.
- The Governance Space: Participate actively in determining the strategic course of GFAR.



TROPICAL AGRICULTURE PLATFORM

By joining you will be able to, among other things:

- Connect with a world-wide community of agricultural actors.
- Share your work, experience, interests, and visions through the dedicated sections.
- Join forces with fellow GFAR Members to address common concerns for positive impact.
- Influence the global agenda on research and innovation in agriculture, food, and rural development, through collective advocacy and providing input to policy-making processes.
- Be regularly updated on GFAR projects and initiatives such as Collective Actions to better understand how to best contribute and take action while being aware of new engagement opportunities.
- Better participate in GFAR governance and accountability mechanism for the performance of Collective Actions and its other initiatives/projects.

You can join by signing up <u>here</u>.

If you need guidance on how to register and navigate the Hub you can watch the step-by-step video tutorials <u>here</u> and <u>here</u>.

#### IICA

#### Director General of IICA boosts Americas-Europe Cooperation in Agriculture

The Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Manuel Otero, recently visited Brussels to strengthen cooperation between the Americas and Europe, particularly focusing on agricultural and rural development. During meetings with EU officials, discussions revolved around collaboration in key areas such as the bioeconomy, climate change, digital agriculture, and international trade. Significant emphasis was placed on successful EU-funded projects like PROCAGICA and AGRO INNOVA, which have notably enhanced resilience and food security in Central America. Throughout the discussions, the importance of continuous collaboration for sustainable development and rural well-being was underscored. Furthermore, Latin America and the Caribbean's pivotal role in global food security and environmental sustainability was highlighted. The commitment to expanding cooperation efforts was expressed, with an emphasis on fostering dialogue and partnership between the public, private, and civil society sectors. Overall, the visit served to reaffirm IICA's role as a bridge between the two regions, promoting dialogue and cooperation for mutual benefit.



The Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Manuel Otero (second), and Fernando Vilella (fourth), Argentina's Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, during their visit to Brussels ©IICA

#### New Alliance Promotes Carbon Financing for Sustainable Agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean



ARBON MARKET ORTUNITIES IN AGRICULTURE IN LATIN **RICA AND** ARIBBEAN IICA C

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is ΡΙ ΔΤΙ teaming up with partners from various sectors to boost carbon financing for sustainable agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean. The initiative aims to help governments engage strategically with voluntary carbon markets (VCM) in agriculture.

In collaboration with the Voluntary Carbon Market Integrity Initiative (VCMI), agricultural associations, academic institutions, and financial entities, the alliance seeks to enhance access to private financing and build capacities for inclusive participation in carbon markets.

The alliance will focus on expanding access to financing, strengthening capacities, and establishing institutional agreements to promote high-integrity carbon markets.

It will undertake activities such as designing methodologies, raising awareness, capacity building, and supporting policy development.

This initiative underscores the importance of leveraging carbon finance to drive sustainable practices and climate resilience in the region's agriculture. Interested organizations are encouraged to join the Agricultural Carbon Alliance in Latin America and the Caribbean to contribute to this transformative effort.

Other organizations interested in advancing this issue are urged to consider joining the Agricultural Carbon Alliance in Latin America and the Caribbean. You can write to agcpartnership@iica.int for more information about how to express your interest in becoming a partner.

Read here the report on Carbon Market Opportunities in the Agricultural Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean.

#### JIRCAS

#### Symposium Marks 50th Anniversary Milestone for JIRCAS Southeast Asia Liaison Office

The JIRCAS Southeast Asia Liaison Office, a long-standing pillar of collaborative research, celebrated its 50th anniversary with a symposium held at the Asawin Grand Convention Hotel in Thailand on December 14, 2023. The occasion marked a significant milestone since its establishment in 1972 and, notably, was convened without the hindrance of travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The symposium was divided into two parts. The first part featured extensive presentations by both JIRCAS and its Thai counterparts, highlighting the rich history and consequential results of joint research in soil science, livestock management, forestry practices, food production, plant pest control, aquaculture, and plant breeding. In the second part, the ensuing discussion focused on shaping the future trajectory of JIRCAS collaborative research in Southeast Asia and fostering international collaborations.



JIRCAS Southeast Asia Liaison Office celebrates its 50th anniversary ©JIRCAS

/ February 2024

#### RELASER



Seven good practices for innovation in agricultural systems in Latin America



In early 2023, RELASER, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture -IICA, the Tropical Agriculture Platform TAP-AIS and DeSIRA, launched a call for good practices in skill development for agricultural innovation systems. After receiving information on different success stories and projects in development, seven good practices were chosen to develop their own concept note, with financial aid from the implementing partners. The seven good practices to strengthen and foster innovation for agricultural extension are:

#### 1. Argentina and Uruguay - Virtual rural extension to overcome barriers and frontiers

To promote an international, open, permanent, and international space to exchange knowledge between actors related to agricultural activities and with a focus on family businesses, INTA Argentina and Plan Agropecuario in Uruguay developed a series of tools to accompany actors through:

- Virtual and live events via Zoom
- Development of a WhatsApp group
- The creation of a YouTube Archive with information about the events

#### 2. México: mutual innovation to promote tradition around the pulque in Jiquipilco

With an IAP approach (investigate – participative - action), through the implementation of a Farmer-to-Farmer methodology which allowed the local public to adopt and replicate their yearly crop reforestation and to plant seedlings with acceptable standards of quality, besides generating awareness around the importance of the conservation of these local species.

#### 3. Colombia: building a sustainable future for sugar cane farming

Since 2020, the Investigation Center for Sugar Cane in Colombia, Cenicaña, has led the Integra program, known as the Phoenix program, to train sugar cane producers for the future.

This is a free and voluntary program in which producers are invited to participate, to create a specific action plan that includes personalised visits, assistance and evaluation, and workshop sessions, to promote more sustainable practices.

#### 4. Nicaragua: 'Los Alpes' agro-ecology school

In Nicaragua, agriculture serves as one of the catalysts for economic and social development. Recognizing this significance, a school was established to promote learning and skill development among producers, helping them transition from conventional production to a more sustainable, agroecology-based approach.

#### 5. Colombia, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Honduras: Agro-climate technical fórums

To have information at the reach of Latin-American farmers for decision-making, the Agro-climate technical forums (MTA) were created, with an innovative approach: spaces for debate and conversation that are open and inclusive, in which different parties from both the public and the private sector are involved, as well as the academia, international cooperation, farmers organizations, and independent producers, integrating the scientific knowledge with the local traditions, linking them with climate.



## 6. Colombia: handcrafted, alternative diets and self-management lead to the success and the competitiveness of integral farms

Because many of the farmers are located in areas that are difficult to access and far **PLAT** away from the urban regions, the National Ministry of Education and the University of Córdoba in Colombia developed the 'Integral farms' project, in which alternative, plant-based diets are implemented for animal production, contributing to food and nutritional security, optimizing agricultural products and finally looking forward to improving life quality for rural communities in four small towns in this department.

#### 7. Chile: Beekeeping as a model for integrating STEM solutions in educational centers

Through the alliance between the company Honeypro, beekeepers, and the institution of Public Education of the municipality of San Nicolás in the region of Ñuble, Chile, beekeeping was taken as a productive model to promote the interest of high school students in the incorporation of STEM, biotechnological and IoT solutions to solve the beekeeping problem, facing situations of nutritional and environmental emergencies in the area, encouraging scientific training and interaction between participants of the community in rural environments. More information about the seven best practices is available on the website of <u>RELASER</u>.

## A participative process to strengthen capacity-building around agricultural innovation systems at universities

To promote the development of new skills related to agricultural innovation, FAO, TAP-AIS, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture – IICA, DeSIRA, and RELASER implement the initiative "Strengthening the university curriculum to develop capacities for agricultural innovation systems", a participative process that has involved the education sector, to collect important insights, recommendations, and action guidelines to be included at university programs in related areas. The first draft was socialized with the participants in the last meeting of the initiative, which took place on 6 September 2023. The result of this was a series of recommendations to promote mechanisms of participation, foster programs and strategies of articulation for careers related to the agricultural field, and encourage the exchange of experiences and good practices between education centers. Here is the summary of the recommendations:

- To promote the inclusion of a sustainable human development approach in agricultural careers by integrating the know-how of different areas and evaluating the ethical challenges related to food security, welfare, and the conservation of biodiversity.
- Development of a proposal of qualifications on a regional level by implementing a comparative analysis of qualifications in the agricultural sector within the region, accompanied by a feasibility study to grant certificates for extensionists.
- To foster mechanisms to guarantee the participation of relevant entities such as employers, the public sector, users of agricultural innovation systems, students, and graduates identifying their interests, aspirations, and needs, to design processes of assistance and integral education.
- To promote programs and strategies to articulate the curriculums of careers related to the agricultural sector with the systematization of mechanisms for the articulation and assistance of agricultural education.
- Endorsement of the articulation between education centers through the development of a regional observatory for educational institutions with success cases around articulation between actors, accompanied by a diagnosis of the current levels of articulation.
  - Strengthening the pedagogical skills for innovation so the teaching staff can incorporate active and participative methodologies, as well as innovative digital technologies, through formation programs and exchange systems for knowledge management, to share their new findings, challenges and success stories.
  - Analysis of the feasibility of developing a regional program to implement and do follow-ups to these recommendations.





The document that is still under construction will incorporate new items and comments from the participants, but this is a general overview of the main findings after the meetings, research, and implementation of surveys to guarantee a participative process that truly reflects the challenges and opportunities to implement agricultural innovation systems in education.

#### **TAP-AIS PROJECT**

#### Digital Innovation for Agriculture in Senegal

Digital innovation is spearheading transformative changes in Senegal's agricultural landscape, particularly within the organic farming sector. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in collaboration with its partners and supported by the EU-funded TAP-AIS project, is actively contributing to Senegal's agroecological transition through the promotion and improvement of digital technologies.

Two sequential workshops recently took place in Thiès, Senegal, as part of these efforts. The sessions aimed to assess and discuss the potential of new digital tools designed to propel smallholders into the realm of digitalization, fostering social and productive inclusion in agriculture.

The first workshop, conducted from 6 to 8 November 2023, focused on evaluating the applicability of digital technologies developed by the National Agency for Agricultural and Rural Council (ANCAR). Participants, totaling 25, deliberated on the Agricultural Services and Digital Inclusion in Africa (SAIDA) platform, designed as an information and monitoring tool, and Senlouma, an e-commerce platform facilitating market accessibility. The discussions centred on transitioning these platforms from the development phase to national-scale implementation, with an emphasis on enhancing user-friendliness and facilitating access for rural producers.

The subsequent workshop, held from 9 to 11 November 2023, delved into a comprehensive diagnosis of actions to strengthen the capacities of the National Federation for Organic Agriculture (FENAB). Twenty-nine participants collaboratively explored ways to create an enabling environment in Senegal for the flourishing of these digital innovations. Partners like ANCAR were identified as crucial in ensuring the sustainability of these platforms, which, in turn, addresses market-related challenges and enhances rural advisory services, ultimately increasing farmers' income.

With ongoing support from the TAP-AIS project under FAO, these digital strategies are anticipated to foster innovation in Senegal's agricultural sector, renewing the ecosystem. Future initiatives will involve capacity assessment, training, and coaching to facilitate the implementation of SAIDA and Senlouma, offering smallholders improved access to markets, inputs, and services. The successful enhancement of these platforms is poised to instil confidence in the market and contribute to the sustainable transformation of agriculture and food systems in Senegal.







# TAP-AIS project approaches featured at FAO's webinar on Governance and Policy Innovation

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is championing innovation as a key driver for the transformation of agrifood systems, recognizing its crucial role in addressing interconnected challenges such as food insecurity, malnutrition, conflicts, and the climate crisis. Emphasizing governance and innovation as strategic "accelerators," FAO recently organized a webinar on 9 November 2023, where policymakers, experts, researchers, and practitioners shared insights and experiences from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malawi, and Uzbekistan.

David Laborde, Director of FAO's Agrifood Economics Division, stressed the need for comprehensive evidence to guide decision-making and highlighted the significance of incorporating governance and innovation across programmatic interventions. The webinar, attended by over 200 participants, underscored the importance of inclusivity in multi-stakeholder dialogues, ensuring representation and empowerment of all actors, including youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, and minorities.

Vincent Martin, Director of FAO's Office of Innovation, emphasized the necessity of hearing from often overlooked voices and implementing a "whole of society" approach. Nevena Alexandrova-Stefanova, Agricultural Extension Officer at FAO's Office of Innovation, highlighted key words related to governance and policy innovation: multi-actor, evidence-based, forward and system thinking.

The webinar showcased practical examples of policy and governance innovation, with Indonesia presenting a fiscal transfer system to tailor food systems transformation agendas to local contexts. Sean Woolfrey from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) discussed a unique modeling approach providing analytical insights for optimal policy interventions in Indonesia's agrifood sector, funded by FAO's Flexible Voluntary Contribution.

The TAP-AIS project demonstrated its impact, identifying institutional bottlenecks in **Malawi** and facilitating inclusive multi-stakeholder policy dialogues in **Cambodia**. In Uzbekistan, FAO supported the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System, achieving transformative impact through labs focusing on data, foresight, and behavioural science insights.

The webinar highlighted the need for a conducive environment for innovation, with speakers emphasizing the importance of collaborative understanding, diverse sources of evidence, and a mindset change. FAO remains committed to creating more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agrifood systems, aiming to leave no one behind in pursuit of a better life.

## Strengthening capacities for policy engagement in agricultural innovation systems in the Asia-Pacific region

FAO's Office of Innovation, in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) and the Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services Network (APIRAS), organized a regional training (18-20 September 2023) on *"Multistakeholder policy engagement in agrifood systems"*. This virtual training was designed and implemented within the framework of the EU-funded TAP-AIS project; similar trainings have already been implemented at the national level in six countries, but this was the first time the training was adapted to the regional level (Asia-Pacific), targeting government and non-governmental representatives from education, training, research and extensions institutions in the agrifood sector.





Strengthening the capacity to engage in strategic and political processes is crucial for stakeholders in agricultural innovation systems (AIS) and is a key component of the TAP-AIS project. This regional training, as well as previous trainings at the national level, have been organized to address this need among key AIS stakeholders.

Twenty-five participants from 13 countries in the Asia-Pacific region attended the training, which aimed to improve their understanding of policy processes in general and provided them with practical tools and approaches for basic analysis of policy issues, negotiation and communication with policy actors, among others.



Training participants and facilitators on the final day of the virtual training ©FAO

#### Piloting Multi-actors Agricultural Innovation Platforms in Malawi

The multi-actors agricultural innovation platform (MAIP) is developed based on the implementations of TAP-AIS Malawi and other European-funded value chain development project in projects (https://doi.org/10.4060/cc8111en). MAIP is a co-innovation platform established in rural communities where farmers and key value chain actors are empowered through co-innovative interactions, which include participatory on-farm research, new technology generations and demonstrations, and interest group or clubs and market connections. It links educationists, researchers, extension agents, private enterprises, market actors and smallholder farmers.

Since 2022 till today, TAP-AIS project in Malawi in close partnership with Sino-Africa Science and Technology Backyards (STB) program has trained 17 MAIP facilitators from the extension system of Malawi. The TAP-AIS project has established an alliance with the strategic partners within FAO OIN teams and China Agricultural University to pilot MAIPs on maize and bananas value chains in 2024. Eight MAIPs facilitators had been deployed in the fields in Kusungu and Blantyre districts of Malawi, they are facilitating and operating eight MAIPs, with over 420 smallholder farmers and key value chain actors participated. A fresher training of MAIP facilitators course is also planned in April 2024 by the TAP-AIS project in Malawi to strengthen this MAIP piloting initiatives.







MAIP training course ©FAO

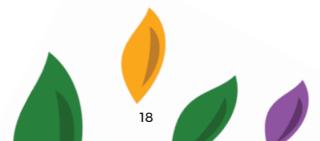
#### Stakeholders' engagement and co-innovation event in Asmara, Eritrea

The TAP-AIS project in Eritrea had organized a two-day workshop on stakeholders' engagement and coinnovation event from 14 - 15 December 2023 in Asmara. The overall objective of the event was to support partners from the different national institutions of the honey value chain and other relevant stakeholders in the national AIS to engage in multistakeholder policy dialogue and processes more effectively and identifying and facilitating new collaborations and partnerships that support functioning of the honey value chain.



Workshop participants ©FAO

Various stakeholder took part in this event which included, on day 2, a marketplace event. During the networking session, participants engaged in lively discussions and knowledge sharing, exchanging practical experiences and best practices in the honey value chain. They emphasized the importance of peer learning and the need for platforms that facilitate knowledge exchange among beekeepers, producers, and other stakeholders. After the marketplace event, there was a stakeholder's dialogue around the challenges of the sector, and they came up with possible solutions. Weak integration and coordination among actors in the honey value chain was the top prioritized challenge that is impeding the potential of the beekeeping sector in Eritrea. After a thorough discussion and dialogue, stakeholders concluded that a multi-actor's innovation platform in the honey value chain should be established with the overall objective of enhancing coordination and integration. Stakeholders also requested the TAP-AIS project to lead the process. Accordingly, a concept note is in place and establishment of the multi-actors innovation platform is underway. Various partners including the MoA, the representatives of the UN agencies working in Eritrea (IFAD, EU, UNDP, and FAO) and other partners expressed a strong interest to provide the needed support (financial and technical) to the honey value chain initiatives.





PUBLICATIONS

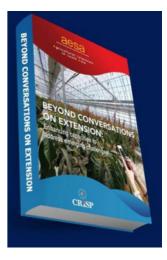
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#### AESA - Second volume "Beyond Conversations on Extension: Enhancing Capacities to address Emerging Challenges"

AESA released in 2019 the inaugural, "Conversations on Extension: Taking Stock and Shaping the Future," organizing the first 100 AESA blogs under 11 different themes. This publication was a response to the demand from our readers to consolidate these blogs into a single volume, making them available as a comprehensive reference document for a diverse audience involved in Extension and Advisory Services (EAS).

The recently published second volume "Beyond Conversations on Extension: Enhancing Capacities to address Emerging Challenges" represents AESA ongoing effort to compile the next 100 AESA blogs (101-200) and Field Notes published between 2019 and 2023. The blog conversations in this book focus on enhancing the capacities of EAS to support its clients, primarily farmers but also other actors in the Agricultural Innovation System (AIS), in addressing emerging challenges.



You can download the book here.

#### Collection of posters from the TAP-AIS project

At the 10th Partner Assembly of the Tropical Agriculture Platform, a series of posters summarizing the key aspects and results of the TAP-AIS project was presented during one of the technical sessions, receiving an enthusiastic reception. Following the Assembly's success, the <u>collection of posters</u> was then published in the knowledge hub of our TAPipedia website to help foster collaboration and create synergies among key partners.



The collection gives an overview of the 9 countries of the project: Colombia, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Lao PDR, Malawi, Rwanda, Pakistan, Senegal, and Cambodia plus one poster focusing on the regional level. The aim of these posters is to shed light on the innovative work taking place in the agriculture sector of these regions over the last few years. They provide a brief outline of the context, constraints, interventions, and ways forward to achieve the projects' main outcomes.

Whether it's workshops to strengthen policy dialogue or a need for more inclusive and sustainable agricultural practices to ensure continued capacity strengthening in AIS, the posters identify capacity needs and suggest feasible solutions to continue transforming agrifood systems. With more functional capacities and strategic frameworks, we can continue to find innovative ways to increase benefits for smallholder producers and the farming community at large.



#### TAP has landed on LinkedIn

TROPICAL AGRICULTURE PLATEORM

We're thrilled to announce that TAP has joined LinkedIn! This move represents our commitment to enhancing our online presence and fostering stronger connections. We invite you to follow our page and join us in this exciting journey. Your support in promoting our <u>LinkedIn page</u> among your network would be greatly appreciated, and we also welcome your contributions directly to our page.

Together, let's engage, network, and collaborate on LinkedIn to better promote agricultural innovation!

# **TAP**on Linked in !



## **Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP)**

FAO-led global mechanism with over 50 members/donors promoting agricultural innovation, especially in the tropics.

https://www.linkedin.com/company/tropical-agriculture-platform-tap

## **Contact the TAP Secretariat**

TAP is a G-20 initiative launched in 2012 to promote agricultural innovation in the tropics. TAP has formed a coalition of more than 50 partners. Its main goal is to strengthen agricultural innovation systems (AIS) in developing countries through coordinated multi-stakeholder interventions.

TAP Secretariat, Office of Innovation (OIN), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153, Rome, Italy E-mail: <u>Tropagplatform@fao.org</u>. Website: <u>www.fao.org/in-action/tropical-agriculture-platform</u>.





Since August 2019, the EU has been supporting TAP through the project "Developing capacities in agricultural innovation systems: scaling up the TAP Framework" (TAP-AIS), implemented by FAO.