

G20 Stock taking Exercise

Report on the Tropical Agriculture Platform



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Introduction

1. This report provides an overview of the [Tropical Agriculture Platform](#) (TAP), and its main achievements since its inception in 2012 when it was officially launched by FAO at the first G20 Meeting of Agriculture Chief Scientists (MACS) in September 2012 in Mexico. TAP was created to focus specifically on capacity development in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), more than 90 percent of which are located within the Tropics where capacities for innovation are particularly low, but innovation has a high potential for increasing productivity and farmers' incomes, improving food and nutrition security and reducing poverty.
2. To respond to this innovation capacity gap, the G20 Agriculture Ministers in their meeting in June 2011, had requested FAO to take the lead in developing the TAP, along with the G20 countries and institutional partners. A proposal for TAP, prepared through stakeholder consultations in 2011 was endorsed by the G20 Agriculture and Development Working Groups and by the G20 Leaders' Summit, in Mexico in 2012. The strategic goal of TAP is to contribute to the development of national capacities in agricultural innovation in the tropics. Its objective is to improve efficiency and effectiveness of knowledge sharing and capacity development programmes to strengthen agricultural innovation systems (AIS) in the tropics through new and existing mechanisms.
3. TAP, as a multi-lateral dynamic facilitation mechanism, fosters greater coherence of capacity development interventions in tropical agriculture, strengthening interaction for more harmonized action and greater mutual accountability, and avoiding duplication. It contributes towards strengthening institutions devoted to agricultural innovation in tropical countries through coordinated support focused on (a) developing capacities in all three major dimensions, namely policy/enabling environment, organizations and individuals; (b) strengthening of the relevant technical and "soft" skills of research, extension and education actors; and (c) improving knowledge and information exchange for enhanced linkages.

4. To consolidate the different existing approaches to agricultural innovation, TAP Partners had approved the first TAP Action Plan 204-2017, which included in 2015 the development of a [Common Framework](#) on Capacity Development (CD) for Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS).

TAP Partners and Governance Structure

5. TAP is a coalition of more than 40 global, regional and national partners, including agricultural research, education and extension institutions, private sector, key international agency and regional fora, development banks and funding agencies¹. TAP includes the following organizations of G20 countries: Agreenium (France); ARC (South Africa); ASBRAER and EMBRAPA (Brazil), CAAS and CATAS (China); CREA (Italy); GIZ (Germany); IAARD (Indonesia); INIFAP (Mexico); INTA (Argentina); JIRCAS (Japan); NRI (United Kingdom); USAID and USDA (United States) and the European Commission (European Union).
6. The TAP Partners Assembly (PA), Steering Committee (SC) and Secretariat form the governance structure of the TAP.
7. The TAP-PA consists of the representatives of all TAP Partners. Its functions are to approve the plan of work, budget and annual reports and to provide guidance to the TAP SC. TAP PAs were held in China in 2013, virtually in 2014, in Rwanda in January 2016 (for 2015), virtually in December 2016 and in Lao PDR in 2017.
8. The SC consists of up to eleven members, elected by consensus by the Assembly. The TAP SC meets at least quarterly virtually or physically and is responsible to submit the draft TAP action plan and budget to the TAP PA, monitor the progress made on the implementation of the TAP Action Plan and advise the TAP Secretariat on implementation of the activities.
9. The TAP Secretariat is hosted by FAO in the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit (AGDR), and serves the Platform by coordinating the implementation of TAP activities, organizing and convening meetings of the TAP SC, TAP PA and other TAP bodies, preparing documents and exploring funding opportunities to support its work.
10. The roles and responsibilities of the TAP governing bodies are described in the TAP Charter².
11. In 2014 the TAP Global Task Force (GTF)³ and the TAP Capacity Development Expert Group (CDEG)⁴ were convened to oversee and support the development of the Common Framework on Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation System and the design of TAPipedia.
12. TAP reports progress made to the annual meetings of the G20 Chief Agricultural Scientists (MACS).

¹A full list of TAP Partners is available at the following link:

http://www.tapipedia.org/sites/default/files/list_of_tap_partners2017.pdf

² The TAP Charter developed in 2013 was amended in January 2016:

http://www.tapipedia.org/sites/default/files/tap_pajan2016_ammendedcharter_2016-03-01.pdf

³ Partner members of the GTF are: APAARI, CABI, CATAS, CGIAR, EFARD, FAO, FARA, FORAGRO, GCHERA, GFAR, GFRAS, GIZ, USAID and the World Bank. It was also decided to include AARINENA and CACAARI as observers.

⁴ The TAP Capacity Development Expert Group was initially referred to as TAP CD Community of Practice.

TAP Achievements

13. At the first meeting of partners in Punta Del Este, Uruguay in October 2012, the partners developed an **Operational Framework** and a **work plan** for the inception phase, which comprised preparatory **regional needs assessments of capacities for AIS**. The regional assessment studies for Africa, for Central America, and for Asia were conducted under the leadership of FARA, CIAT and SEARCA, respectively. The studies covered a total of 27 countries, least developed countries (Africa, Asia) or middle income (Central America) (regional reports available in ‘Key Documents’ section). Based on the findings of the regional assessments, a **TAP Synthesis Report** was prepared, with three major constraints identified and recommendations (see Document Section). The common challenges identified through the assessments provided the basis for defining the TAP action plan.
14. The first **TAP Action Plan** was developed and approved by the TAP Partners for the period 2014-2017 (see Key Documents Produced) at the TAP PA in China in September 2013. The TAP Action Plan consists of **three core elements**, which are the three major components of the TAP, as highlighted below.
 - a. **Advocacy and policy dialogues** at global, regional and national level, to advocate for TAP goals and promote dialogue on related policies: the political support for TAP was confirmed at international fora such as the G20 and G8 in 2012 and 2013, specifically the G20 summit, the G20 development and agriculture working groups, and the G20 MACS⁵. TAP SC Partners, staff of the TAP Secretariat and/or TAP Partners participated in numerous advocacy and policy dialogue events to raise awareness of the TAP mandate and promote the TAP Common Framework (see Section below).
 - b. **The Common Framework on CD for AIS** proposes a practical approach to CD for agricultural innovation that aims at harmonizing, through an AIS perspective, the diversity of existing strategies. The Common Framework provides concepts, principles, methodologies and tools to better understand the architecture of AIS, to assess CD needs and to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate CD interventions.
 - c. An **information sharing system, called TAPipedia** (www.tapipedia.org) which aims at increasing accessibility, improving discoverability and enhancing knowledge flows in support of capacity development of tropical innovation systems, capturing success stories, socioeconomic impacts, lessons learned, and innovation outputs.
15. In 2014, as immediate sources for financing the TAP Action Plan were required, **FAO** and another TAP Partner, **AGRINATURA**, developed a proposal for a joint project on **Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS)** and submitted it to the European Commission (EC) for funding. The project, approved in December 2014 has an overall budget of €13,356,851, of which €12,000,000 financed by the EC. The four year CDAIS project was launched in 2015 and it was designed to support the implementation of the TAP Action Plan and CD processes in eight

⁵ The G20 Development Working Group agreed an *Implementation Plan of the G20 Food Security and Nutrition Framework* which suggests that G20 members take further action and encourage their R&D institutes to continue contributing towards implementation of the TAP Action plan. Action 5 of the G20 Implementation Plan focusses on Promoting smallholder productivity growth in LIDCs through the TAP by promoting and applying the TAP Common Framework and tools and by contributing *TAPipedia* with innovative tools, lessons learned and impact analyses.

tropical countries focusing on specific innovation partnerships (“niches”), thus complementing the strengthening of global, regional and national innovation mechanisms with concrete interventions in specific national value chains. The pilot countries, selected after consultations with FAO regional and country offices, government contacts as well as EU Delegations, are: in Africa (Angola, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Rwanda); in South and South-East Asia (Bangladesh, Lao PDR); and in Central America (Guatemala, Honduras).

16. The first year of the TAP Action Plan (2014) was dedicated to prepare the **review of CD for AIS** resources, including approaches, tools, and methodologies. Based on this review the Common Framework was developed in 2015 by the CDEG under the guidance of the GTF. Three key documents which include the main concepts and principles of the Common Framework ([Conceptual Background](#), [Guidance Note on Operationalization](#) and [Synthesis Document](#)) were approved by TAP Partners at **third TAP PA** in Rwanda in January 2016⁶. The documents were first published and printed in English in 2016. In 2017, the three publications were also translated and published in French and Spanish⁷.
17. Following the endorsement of the Common Framework, the validation process of the Framework in eight countries was initiated. Scoping studies, training of national innovation facilitators and capacity needs assessments (CNA) were organized in the eight countries in 2015-2016. At the same time, TAP Partners were engaged to promote and integrate the Common Framework principles in their organizational research and development strategies and programmes and to mobilize resources for new CD projects using TAP Common Framework principles, such as USAID (training of field staff), APAARI (vision, programme and project development, awareness raising); FAO and Agrinatura (programme/project development, awareness raising), ACIAR and CABI (project development), CGIAR (methodologies), ICRA and NRI (project development), as well as share experiences through TAPipedia and Newsletters. More partners ensured their future commitment to TAP in the TAP PA in 2017.
18. In 2017, TAP Partners facilitated by the TAP Secretariat developed a **draft TAP Action Plan 2018-2021**, discussed and amended by SC members and presented to Partners during the **fifth TAP PA** in Lao PDR in September 2017.
19. At country level, CNA validation workshops and marketplace events were held in the majority of the pilot countries and coaching plan development and learning cycles were initiated for selected innovation partnerships.
20. In 2017, the FAO Office of Evaluation conducted an independent mid-term evaluation of the CDAIS Project. The [report](#) has been published in December 2017.

Funding and Contributions of TAP Partners

21. During the inception phase (2012-13), contributions to TAP were mobilized from France, China, Germany and FAO, the latter through the Multidisciplinary Fund and the South-South Cooperation (SSC) fund. From 2014 to 2017, Germany funded an Associate Professional Officer (APO) position to support the TAP Secretariat. As mentioned earlier, from 2015 to 2017, the European Union

⁶ The three documents were previously endorsed by the TAP Global Task Force on 15 December 2015.

⁷ The documents can be accessed online through TAPipedia: <http://tapipedia.org/content/tap-framework>.

supported the implementation of the first TAP Action Plan, and will continue supporting the validation of the TAP Common Framework in the eight pilot countries during 2018.

22. Support by FAO to hosting the TAP Secretariat, TAP awareness raising and advocacy (global Result of the CDAIS logframe) was given in 2015-2017, by GFAR to translation of the Common Framework documents into French and Spanish and their publication in the three languages (2016-2017), the latter supported also by CABI. Support was received by USA for the e-conference and Symposium organized in June 2016 on issues related to the CD for nutrition-sensitive AIS. (See details of all contributions in the table below).

Financial Contributions to TAP and related CDAIS project (2012-17) (in US\$)	
FAO Multidisciplinary Fund (2013)	170,000
FAO South-South-Cooperation (SSC) Fund (2012)	52,040
France (2012-13)	69,000
Chinese Trust Fund for SSC in FAO (2013)	54,098
FAO Agricultural Research and Extension Unit - Regular Programme (2014)	90,603
Germany for APO (2014-2017)	470,935
USA (2016)	40,000
GFAR 2016-2017	50,000
EC through CDAIS that include work on eight pilot countries*	14,117,647
FAO contribution to CDAIS/TAP Global (2015-2018)*	848,526
Agrinatura contribution to CDAIS (2015-2018)*	747,769
TOTAL	16,710,618

*Figures as per Grant Contract, converted into Dollars using the UN operational exchange rate of 15 January 2015 (1 USD = 0.85 Euros).

23. TAP Partners contributed by providing staff and experts to the PA, SC and TAP GTF and the TAP CDEG to develop the Common Framework and promote it.
24. Additionally, the TAP Secretariat explored interest of potential donors to fund new projects on capacity development in interested countries building on the TAP Common Framework, formulated project concept notes and projects that have been submitted to two donors and they are awaiting final approval.

Challenges and Next Steps

25. A key challenge is to keep partners and the wider stakeholder community updated on developments of TAP. The TAP Secretariat with the approval of the SC and partners, supports regular communication

with TAP partners including the production and distribution of TAP newsletters, TAPipedia newsletters and the virtual and face-to-face PAs.

26. In 2014 TAP faced a serious challenge of lack of resources to implement the Action Plan: the joint FAO-Agrinatura proposal addressed the funding problem for the period 2015-2017.
27. Another challenge is to mainstream the TAP Common Framework in agricultural development. The CDAIS pilots help to raise awareness and increase buy-in at policy and programme level in developing countries, and TAP Partners are eager to learn about the results of the pilots to upscale their own CD for AIS programmes. This requires a constant commitment to promote the importance of CD for AIS to national policymakers and development partners, document and share the lessons learned, in order to achieve a mind-set shift from “hard systems thinking” to “soft systems analysis” by key AIS stakeholders.
28. In 2018, a new TAP Action Plan (2018-21) will be finalized, after a consultation process initiated in 2017 by the TAP Secretariat working in close collaboration with the TAP SC and partners. Key elements of the new Action plan, proposed by a task force and agreed to by the SC, include: acknowledgement by countries of agricultural innovation (AI) in national strategies and increased investments on AI; learning and adoption of good practices on CD for AIS; further improvement of the Common Framework and monitoring of CD for AIS interventions. TAP partners agreed that it is crucial to intensify policy advocacy and resource mobilization for greater coherence on CD for AIS and to ensure that the Common Framework is supported by G20 and other international and national development organizations.
29. TAP partners will continue mobilizing funding to support new developing countries in applying lessons learned from piloting the Common Framework at country level.
30. In 2018, TAP partners will also support the first FAO International Symposium on Innovation for Smallholders and Family Farmers, which will be organized in late 2018 in Rome.

Key Documents Produced

- [TAP Action Plan 2013-2017](#), September 2013
- [Regional Needs Assessment Reports](#), 2013
- [TAP Synthesis Report](#), 2013
- [Report on the Review phase for the development of the Common Framework, 2015](#)
- [CDAIS](#) project proposal, 2014
- Common Framework Publications in English: [Conceptual Background](#), [Guidance Note on Operationalization](#) and [Synthesis Document](#), 2016
- Common Framework Publications in [French](#) and [Spanish](#), 2016
- [Revised TAP Charter](#), 2016
- [Trainer’s manual on Facilitating Capacity Needs Assessment](#), 2017
- [Factsheets on CD for AIS cycle](#) and [tools](#), 2017

Major Advocacy and Awareness Raising Events

31. Since its inception, TAP SC Members, staff of the TAP Secretariat and/or TAP Partners representatives participated in numerous advocacy and policy dialogue events, where the TAP Common Framework and/or CDAIS was presented and promoted.

TAP Partners Assemblies:

- First TAP PA in September 2013, China
- Second TAP PA in December 2014 (virtual)
- Third TAP PA in January 2016, Rwanda
- Fourth TAP PA in December 2016 (virtual)
- Fifth TAP PA in September 2017, Lao PDR

G8 and G20 events:

- G8 Open Data for Agriculture Workshop, Washington, April 2013
- G20 Meeting of Chief Agricultural Scientists (MACS), Moscow: Presentation on TAP progress, August 2013
- Participation of TAP Secretariat in the G20 MACS meeting in Brisbane, June 2014)
- Participation of TAP Secretariat in the G20 MACS meeting in Izmir, Turkey, July 2015⁸
- 5th Meeting of G20 MACS in Xi'an, China (June 2016)
- G20 Meeting of the MACS from 14-16 November 2017 in Potsdam, Germany.

Regional and Global fora:

- 4th Global Forum of Leaders for Agricultural Science and Technology (GLAST-2013), Beijing, June 2013
- Africa Agricultural Science Week, Accra, July 2013: Africa Stakeholder Consultation on TAP (at which the findings of the Africa regional needs assessment were presented)
- TAP side event at the GFRAS meeting in Argentina, 2014
- Presentation of TAP to higher education and training institutions in Western and Central Africa, July 2014
- Participation of TAP Chair in the GFRAS Annual meeting and organization of a TAP side event, September 2014
- APAARI promoted the Framework at the High Level Policy Dialogue on Investments in Agricultural Research in Bangkok on December 2015⁹
- 42nd Committee on World Food Security: joint side-event by France, the EC, NEPAD and FAO on CD for AIS “Revisiting Capacity Development for greater impact on Food Security and Nutrition”, in Rome, October 2015
- GCARD3 Meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, April 2016
- FAO/TAP e-conference (April/May 2016) and the International Symposium (June 2016) titled

⁸ The G20 Report “Inclusive Growth and Development: 2015 Antalya Development Roadmap, highlights the work of the G20 Development Working Group (DWG) in 2015, looks ahead to 2016, and states that the G20 will continue to support successful initiatives such as TAP. <http://www.gpfi.org/publications/inclusive-growth-and-development-2015-antalya-development-roadmap>

⁹ The TAP Secretariat was invited to the dialogues and presented a paper on “Developing capacity for change to enhance the potential of investments into agricultural innovation”. In addition, APAARI presented the draft TAP Common Framework at two events APAARI organized in Bangladesh and Thailand.

“Innovation systems for food security and nutrition: understanding the capacities needed”¹⁰

- 19th Review Conference of the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) in Egham, UK, July 2016
- African Green Revolution Forum in Nairobi, Kenya, September 2016
- FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG, September 2016), Speakers Corner on CD for AIS framework for delegates and FAO staff.
- RUFORUM conference (South Africa, October 2016), presentation on developing capacity for change of students and staff in higher education, and joint PAEPARD/TAP/CDAIS exhibition stand
- GFRAS 7th Annual Meeting Cameroon, October 2016
- 23rd European Seminar on Extension and Education (ESEE) in Greece from 4 to 7 July 2017
- Harvest Plus LAC Annual Meeting, 13 June 2017 (Virtual Participation)
- Presentation on the Common Framework at the 8th Annual meeting of RELASER, December 2017.

Seminars and Webinars organized by TAP Secretariat and TAP Partners

- TAP Secretariat, GFAR and PAEPARD webinar on the role of facilitator for capacity development, March 2017
- TAP Secretariat, APAARI, GFAR webinar to promote TAPipedia in the Asia/ Pacific region, November 2017
- TAP Secretariat, APAARI, GFAR and GCHERA webinar, on the Common Framework targeting higher education institutions in the Asian/Pacific region¹¹, November 2017
- FAO seminars for HQ and decentralized offices on Monitoring CD for AIS, March, July and December 2017.

¹⁰ The event organized by FAO/TAP was supported by the United States in the framework of the USA-Brazil agreement to promote, via TAP, the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

¹¹ Synthesis report: <https://www.apaari.org/web/webinar-with-universities-cdais/>