



JANUARY 2022

TAP Newsletter



8th TAP Partners Assembly

The 8th Tropical Agricultural Platform (TAP) Partners Assembly was successfully organized during the week of November 22-26, 2021. The week-long event consisted of two virtual meetings attended exclusively by TAP partners and seven virtual side events attended by a wider audience.

The TAP Partner meetings were held on November 23 and 24, 2021, and were attended by approximately 35 participants from partner organizations and the TAP Secretariat. The purpose of the meetings was, among other things, to discuss and receive input from members on the third TAP Action Plan 2022-2025, to improve coordination and cooperation among partners and to learn about the progress of the TAP, its key achievements and outreach activities. At the end of the meetings, several key statements were noted by the TAP Secretariat that will serve to further develop the new 2022-2025 Action Plan. Some of these main points were: TAP Engagement and Expansion Strategy is critical to increase partner participation and engagement; synergies among donors are important to meet the global demand for agricultural innovation; integration of TAP Common Framework (CF) into agroecology and higher education curricula is crucial; policy, especially at the individual and institutional levels, is critical to best promote AIS; a focus on the science-policy interface is essential.



Group picture from the 8th TAP Partners Assembly

Side Events

The seven side events of the TAP Partners Assembly were held on November 22, 25 and 26, 2021 and organized as follows:

22 NOVEMBER 2021

Strengthening the policy innovation capacity of food systems: how to engage in the science-policy interface? | organized by Agrinatura, DeSIRA-LIFT, DG INTPA and DeSIRA initiative

This side event was centered around the science-policy interface as a key component of the innovation capacity of a food system. The stakeholders reflected on their experiences with various science-policy interfaces and shared their lessons learned. They then discussed which capacities are required to address policy issues and engage with policymakers, as well as how to build linkages between research and policy. The session concluded with a joint reflection on strategies and actions needed to further strengthen the science-policy interface in food systems. The recording of the event is available [here](#).

Regional insights and challenges in investment in innovation for sustainable agriculture intensification | organized by CoSAI, APAARI, FARA and FONTAGRO

Building on the insights and challenges in innovation in investment from Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean gained from previous regional dialogues, perspectives on the regional strategies were shared and discussed, particularly in the context of global support platforms such as TAP and GFAR. In this way, opportunities for cross-regional learning were identified, perspectives on difficult areas and overcoming challenges were shared, and regional approaches were integrated into the 2022-2025 TAP Action Plan and GFAR's areas of collective action. The recording of the event is available [here](#).

25 NOVEMBER 2021

Strengthening the Capacity of African Agricultural Innovation Systems: towards a Joint Action Plan (JAP) for Capacity Development in Africa's Agricultural Innovation Systems | organized by FARA, AFAAS, ASARECA, CORAF/WECARD and CCARDESA

The side event helped members align their collective capacity development efforts to meet the challenges faced by the African AIS and support actions to address climate emergencies as well as food and nutrition security to drive inclusive agricultural transformation and improve livelihoods. A panel discussion was held with capacity development lead persons from CAAD-XP4 partners and focused on capacity gap assessments of national AIS as well as on individual initiatives and lessons learned. The panel also provided space for a discussion and Q&A with the audience. The recording of the event is available [here](#).

TAP-AIS project: assessing capacity needs of key national organizations | organized by FAO

This event contributed to the current TAP Action Plan by showcasing national experiences on strengthening AIS, including assessments and capacity development. The side event was a unique opportunity to share information, updates, experiences and needs as well as to facilitate mutual learning and networking across country teams. Participants were also divided into three different groups according to region (Western-Central Africa, Southern-Eastern Africa & Colombia and Southern Asia) to discuss, share experiences, and enable cross-learning on AIS in the regions. A plenary discussion followed during which TAP Partners were engaged to address their country needs for strengthening AIS. The recording of the event is available [here](#).

¿Cómo fortalecer la innovación agropecuaria en América Latina? | organized by IICA and RELASER

This side event was carried out in Spanish. It brought together regional research and extension organizations (RREOs) from the Latin American and the Caribbean region and provided them the opportunity to discuss and learn from each other about the TAP Common Framework and its tools on CD for AIS. Shared assessments, lessons learned, and experiences from collaborations among research and extension organizations in the region were highlighted; a typology of interventions to strengthen AIS developed jointly by RREOs was discussed; and a platform was provided to promote collaboration towards a unifying typology and framework for synthesizing regional reports. The recording of the event is available [here](#).



26 NOVEMBER 2021

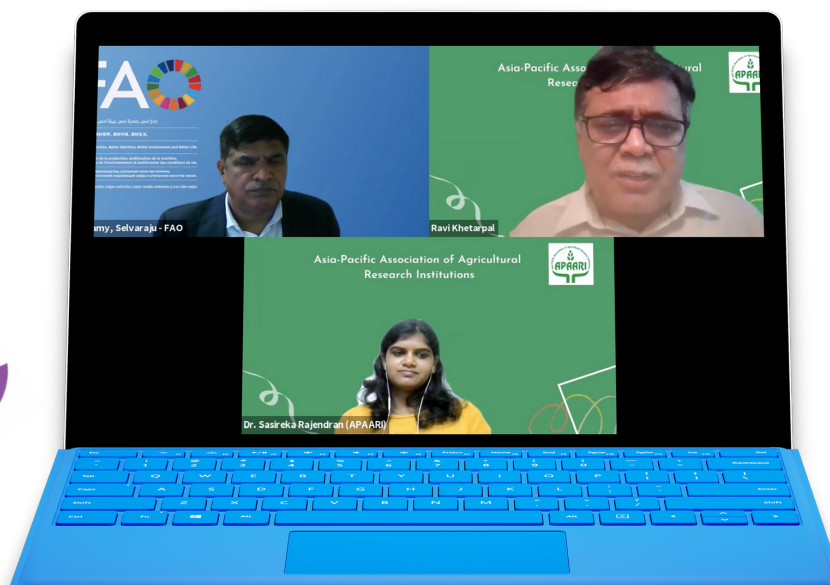
Ways to develop Agriculture Innovation System (AIS) | organized by CATAS and CAAS

This side event highlighted the interaction of industry, education, and research (IER) for AIS. More specifically, it shared experiences on developing AIS via IER collaboration, identified gaps in the existing IER linkage and discussed ways to develop the AIS from industrial sectors, education, and research institutions. Discussions were held on how the integration of the three factors can drive agricultural innovation, and specific ideas and actions were developed to promote AIS to strengthen agricultural development. The recording of the event is available [here](#).

Establishing and Operationalizing a Research, Technology and Innovation Platform for the Date Palm Integrated Production System in NENA Region (DRTIP_NENA) | organized by AARINENA

The coherence and effectiveness of CD in AIS, the research-policy interface and the expansion of innovation were the focus of the event. The Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA) participated in this side event to showcase its key-role with other partners in promoting the date palm crop in the Near East and North African (NENA) region, to highlight the concept and approach of innovation platforms in the AIS and to present and share some of the work done to develop and structure the specific innovation platform for the date palm crop in the NENA region. The event raised awareness around the concept of innovation platforms, specifically for the date palm crop, and lead to a better coordination among AARINENA and other stakeholders in the region. The recording of the event is available [here](#).

Overall, the commitment and valuable contributions of our TAP partners, participants and speakers led to a successful conclusion to the meetings and will contribute to the strengthening of the Tropical Agriculture Platform. Great appreciation is also due to the active participation of the Capacity Development Expert Group (CDEG), the TAP Action Plan Development Working Group, and the TAP Engagement and Expansion Strategy Working Group for the preparatory work done over the past months.



Side event "Regional insights and challenges in investment in innovation for sustainable agriculture intensification" (©FAO)

UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

AARINENA

A Webinar on Innovation Platforms for Agricultural Innovation Systems

FAO and AARINENA jointly organized a webinar for stakeholders in the NENA region on November 3, 2021. The webinar focused on the development of innovation platforms, the conceptual framework and approach of innovation platforms, which provide a model for collaboration among relevant stakeholders and partners on issues related to research, development, innovations, regulations and financing.

AARINENA itself is currently working on the development and launch of a date palm innovation platform. The platform will serve as an information and knowledge hub that effectively connects various stakeholders (e.g., farmers, government and non-government service providers, policy makers, researchers, the private sector) and shares research results, technologies, and available innovations related to the date palm production value chain.



57 experts from 13 countries discuss date palm cultivation and production

Webinar participants discussed the role innovation platforms can play in knowledge generation, technology transfer and capacity building through better stakeholder integration. How innovation platforms can foster learning processes with multiple benefits, create business opportunities by using new technologies, markets, learning processes and networks and bring about changes in resource mobilization were also discussed topics. In addition, the development of the state-of-the-art date palm platform and its pilot operation in the field were discussed.

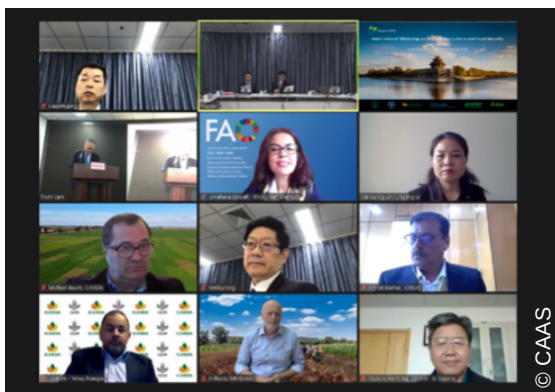
CAAS

Focus on dryland agriculture and food security to promote sustainable agricultural development

On October 23-24, 2021, the International Workshop on Dryland Agriculture and Food Security hosted by the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) was held online. It focused on sustainable dryland agriculture strategies for food security, biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, such as breeding drought-tolerant varieties for water stress and more. About 80 representatives from Chinese and foreign research institutes including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), and the Pakistani Peshawar University of Agriculture attended the meeting.

Professor Mei, CAAS Vice President, delivered a keynote speech on dryland agriculture R&I in China, highlighting actions towards the SDGs 2030 while also pointing out that about one-third of the world's population depends on dryland agriculture. Dryland agriculture plays a unique role in global food security and food supply. However, it is often prone to risk due to, e.g., resource scarcity, ecosystem degradation and climate change. To develop sustainable dryland agriculture, and build a resilient dryland ecosystem, the following actions are key: scientific and technological innovation, global collaboration, and synergistic development to promote agricultural transformation.

To this end, CAAS proposes to strengthen dryland agriculture partnerships, jointly build an international collaborative platform for dryland agriculture research, and jointly seek a sustainable development path for dryland agriculture in the future.



International Workshop on Dryland Agriculture and Food Security hosted by CAAS

CAAS Institute was selected as the sub-center of “China-Africa Joint Centers for Modern Agrotechnology Exchange Demonstration and Training”

As one of the first four centers awarded, the Biogas Institute of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs will take over the operation of the joint center in the Chinese province Sichuan. The center will function as a training and education center for agricultural science and technology, a technology demonstration center, and a platform for technology and talent exchange. It will fully utilize the potential of scientific and technological resources, provide Chinese solutions to promote environmentally friendly agricultural development, alleviate energy shortages and respond to climate change in Africa. In this way, it will facilitate the dissemination of Chinese agricultural science and technology in Africa, promote the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, and deepen relations with the African people.

CATAS

The first group of “China-Africa Joint Centers for Modern Agrotechnology Exchange, Demonstration and Training” was launched

On December 15, 2021, the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS) held the opening ceremony for the first group of four “China-Africa Joint Centers for Modern Agrotechnology Exchange, Demonstration and Training”. The launch of the four China-Africa Joint Centers in China aims at implementing one of the nine programs declared by President Xi Jinping at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and marks an important step in the poverty reduction project. The first group of these centers includes CATAS, the Freshwater Fisheries Research Center of the Chinese Academy of Fisheries Sciences, the Biogas Institute of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, and the SCO Demonstration Base for Agricultural Technology Exchange and Training in the Yangling Demonstration Zone.



Launch of the 4 China-Africa Joint Centers

CATAS initiated “China-Africa Tropical Agricultural S&T Innovation Alliance”

To promote cooperation between China and Africa in the field of tropical agriculture and propel its sustainable development, CATAS, together with relevant agricultural institutions and universities, launched the “China-Africa Tropical Agricultural S&T Innovation Alliance” on November 9, 2021, to build an open and common platform to promote international cooperation in the field of innovative tropical agricultural technologies.



Launch of the China-Africa Tropical Agricultural S&T Innovation Alliance (©CATAS)

Representatives from the Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences, Nanjing Agricultural University, Jiangxi Academy of Agricultural Sciences and other Chinese members attended the ceremony. So far, 12 Chinese agricultural institutions and universities and 13 national units from 10 African countries have applied for membership.



CATAS held the “2021 Virtual Seminar on Green Development of Tropical Agriculture and Poverty Alleviation for African Countries”

The virtual seminar, organized by CATAS and sponsored by the Foreign Affairs Office of Hainan Province, was held from December 14-18, 2021. The participants of the seminar included 70 African agricultural officials, technical experts and agricultural entrepreneurs from 12 African countries.

The seminar offered courses on promoting the value chain of tropical agricultural products such as cashew nuts, cassava, and bananas, as well as post-production preservation, storage, and transportation of tropical agricultural products.

COSAI

Completion of CoSAI evidence portfolio

In 2021, the Commission for Sustainable Agriculture Intensification (CoSAI) completed its portfolio of evidence to improve and increase the level of investments for innovation in sustainable agriculture intensification. The evidence portfolio is aligned to the requirements of innovation investors and provides effective evidence to support investment decisions.

These are the studies, reports and policy briefs including their links that have been completed as a result of CoSAI’s work in this area: innovation investment ([policy brief](#), [report](#)), investment gap ([policy brief](#), [report](#)), approaches and instruments ([policy brief](#), [report](#)), innovation pathways ([reports](#)), principles for innovation in sustainable agri-food systems ([webpage](#)), analysis of research publications on small scale farming and post-production food systems in the global south ([policy brief](#), [report](#)), paying for nature and society (will be available [here](#)), urban and peri-urban (controlled environment agriculture in the global south: [policy brief](#), [report](#); urban and peri-urban agriculture).



Estimating investment in innovation for sustainable agriculture intensification (©CoSAI)

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

EU-funded program “Farmers Organizations Leading Research & Innovation on Agroecology for Sustainable Food Systems”

The program was launched on December 17, 2021, and is part of the DeSIRA initiative to promote research and innovation in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The program targets smallholder and family farmers who are members of local grassroots farmer organizations that are part of a consortium led by [AgriCord Alliance](#), which is itself composed of agri-agencies and regional farmer organizations, including: Pacific Island Farmers Organization Network (PIFON); PanAfrican Farmers Organization (PAFO), Eastern African Farmers Federation (EAFF), Regional Platform of Central African Farmers' and Producers' Organizations (PROPAC), Network of Peasant Organizations



and Agricultural Producers in West Africa (ROPPA), The Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU) and Confederation of Family Producers Organizations of the Expanded Mercosur (COPROFAM). In line with the [European Green Deal framework](#), the objective of this program is to strengthen the capacity of farmer organizations to design and implement participatory research and innovation in agroecology at the farm or value chain level.

The program will strengthen local knowledge and exchange with academic research and agroecological principles to improve agricultural production based on ecological processes and promote sustainable and inclusive agriculture that uplifts local communities. It will support 13 action research projects in 16 countries: Africa (Burkina, Mali, Senegal, Cameroon, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Tanzania), Asia (Philippines), Pacific (Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Samoa), Caribbean (Haiti) and Latin America (Brazil and Uruguay). For more information about DeSIRA, please click [here](#).

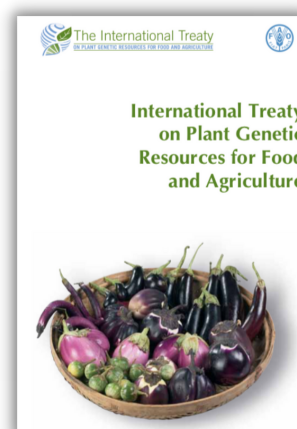


The European Green Deal
(©European Commission)

■ New EU grant funding for “The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture” (PGRFA)

In December 2021, the Directorate-General of the European Union for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) signed a new grant agreement of EUR 4,000,000 with FAO. The grant is a major contribution to a multi-donor "EU Action in Support of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture" of EUR 5,650,000. The action has a duration of five years and will end in December 2026. Although scientists estimate that there are currently more than 7,000 edible plants, FAO estimates that fewer than 200 contribute significantly to global food output, and only nine account for two-thirds of total crop production. The necessary shift towards healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable food systems requires plant genetic resources, which are the foundation for change and further development of the agricultural sector.

The new EU co-financed action will support the Fifth Project Cycle of the Benefit Sharing Fund (BSF-5) of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. It is intended to fund activities under three outputs as follows: Under Output 1, adapted plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) will be managed or improved with farmer participation. Under Output 2, improved local value chains will be supported to enhance production and consumption of adapted PGRFA, and under Output 3, mechanisms will be strengthened to enhance sharing of PGRFA materials and data, including lessons learned and best practices.



The official text of the treaty in different languages is available [here](#)

GFAR AND YPARD

GFAR Talks

GFAR Talks will be a showcase for debates on challenging and provocative topics related to agri-food system transformation, climate change and innovation in agriculture. These debates will make use of GFAR's global platform to put farmers, women, and indigenous and marginalized communities at the center, resulting in a lively and all-inclusive experience.

For this initiative, GFAR is partnering with YPARD (Young Professionals for Agricultural Development) to ensure that youth is represented, and their voices are heard. Youth representatives will be invited to contribute to the webinars as participants, experts, moderators, or panelists. For more information, please click [here](#).



©GFAR

IICA

Activities to promote the TAP Common Framework in Latin America: Training of Trainers and hands-on guide in Spanish

As part of the commitments for the current year in the TAP-AIS project, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Latin American Network for Rural Extension Services (RELASER) continue to promote the use of the TAP Common Framework in Latin America. First, a five-week "Training of Trainers" course has been facilitated by two innovation experts and attended by 25 professionals from nine countries. Participants came from research, extension and development organizations working directly with farmers and other partners and developed their skills in facilitating innovation processes. The course will be converted into an online resource and made available in the future.

A second outcome is a hands-on guide in Spanish for strengthening functional capacities for agricultural innovation, developed by a qualified consultant in collaboration with IICA and RELASER experts. In addition to highlighting the usefulness of the Common Framework, the guide includes links to Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CD for AIS) and TAP resources. It also includes case studies based on real-life situations to promote the critical thinking and skills professionals need to facilitate change and innovation in local settings. This guide will be launched in a webinar on February 8, 2022, and both IICA and RELASER will promote its use among their partners.

JIRCAS

Japan International Award for Young Agricultural Researchers (Japan Award) 2021

Established in 2007, the Japan Award is organized and presented by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS). The aim of the award is to motivate young researchers to contribute to research and development in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and related industries in developing regions, which is promoted by Japan for the benefit of these countries. This year, three researchers were awarded the prize. The award ceremony was held on November 16, 2021. More information on the award is available [here](#). To access its recording, please click [here](#).

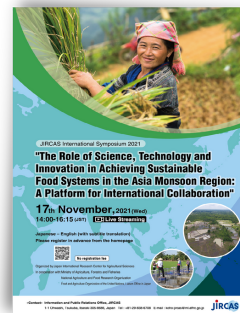


Virtual awarding ceremony of the 15th Japan Award

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JIRCAS International Symposium 2021

The JIRCAS International Symposium 2021 featuring the theme "The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation in Achieving Sustainable Food Systems in the Asia Monsoon Region: A Platform for International Collaboration" was successfully held in webinar format on November 17, 2021. For those who were not able to attend and those who want to check the contents of the presentations, the video of the symposium is available [here](#). More information on the symposium is available [here](#).



Flyer of the JIRCAS International Symposium 2021 (©JIRCAS)

N4G Official side event "Fruits and Vegetables – Research and Action Opportunities for Human and Planetary Health"

On December 6, 2021, JIRCAS successfully hosted another symposium entitled "Fruits and Vegetables – Research and Action Opportunities for Human and Planetary Health". The symposium focused on fruits and vegetables as contributors to health, development, and environmental outcomes, with particular emphasis on advanced technologies and the context of low-income countries. The symposium was an official side event of the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021. The video of the symposium is available [here](#). For more information on this symposium, please click [here](#).



Speakers of the virtual symposium on December 2, 2021



WORLD VEGETABLE CENTER

When business enables food security: DeSIRA SAFEVEG project strengthens vegetable value chains in West Africa

In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 50% of fruits and vegetables are lost due to poor storage and handling practices. Weak and poorly coordinated value chains are the main cause. The project "[Safe locally-produced vegetables for West Africa's consumers](#)" (SAFEVEG) aims to improve this situation by strengthening the relationships of smallholder vegetable farmers with other value chain actors through a networking approach called "Vegetable Business Networks" (VBN). The project, which is being implemented in Benin, Burkina Faso, and Mali, is part of the European Union's DeSIRA program and is co-funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is being implemented by a consortium led by the World Vegetable Center in collaboration with Wageningen University & Research (WUR), the French Agricultural Research Center for International Development (CIRAD) and national research organizations in Benin, Burkina Faso, and Mali.

The project creates business opportunities for women and youth in vegetable value chains. SAFEVEG uses an inclusive approach and builds an environment of trust for all value chain actors to develop sustainable business relationships. In Benin, SAFEVEG aims to support 70 vegetable networks within five years, benefiting around 2,000 smallholder farmers and other commercial actors. By the end of 2021, the project had trained 20 business coaches

on technical aspects of vegetable production, business aspects, and functional capacity development. These coaches will work closely with the selected “Vegetable Business Networks” in the coming years. The same approach will be followed in Burkina Faso and Mali from 2022.



Participants at the business coaches training



Facilitation of the business coaches training session

PUBLICATIONS



We are pleased to announce that FAO has recently released four TAP-AIS publications:

A PREVIEW OF ACTION-ORIENTATED ASSESSMENT OF AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION SYSTEMS - PUBLISHED IN JANUARY 2022

This note is about the agricultural innovation systems (AIS) assessment methodology which is being tested in the nine countries of the European Union-funded TAP-AIS project, in the context of the DeSIRA initiative. It presents the rationale, steps, expected outputs, and outcomes of the methodology.

The publication is available [here](#).



ASSESSMENT METRICS FOR AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION SYSTEMS (AIS) AND EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICES (EAS) - PUBLISHED IN DECEMBER 2021

This report is on the technical workshop held at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, November 18-20, 2019. The overall objective of the workshop was to present the guidelines on AIS and EAS assessments and the results at country level as well as to design and develop a framework of indicators to complement those assessments. Specific objectives were to:

- Present and discuss the draft AIS and EAS assessment guides and the results/feedback from country implementation and testing.
- Map and analyze existing indicators and metrics approaches with relevance to both AIS and EAS.
- Identify gaps in the existing indicators and recommend a revised set/framework of indicators for the AIS and EAS assessment that track progress, provide insights on the performance evaluation, and allow for knowledge and experience sharing among countries facing similar challenges.

The publication is available [here](#).



A WAY FORWARD FOR SUPPORTING AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION IN THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
- PUBLISHED IN DECEMBER 2021

This report introduces the reader to the concept of agricultural innovation systems (AIS) and the TAP-AIS project being implemented by FAO in nine countries, including Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). The results of the AIS assessment for Lao PDR are presented, highlighting key barriers and opportunities for agricultural innovation in the country. The results of the first in a series of TAP-AIS policy dialogue events in Lao PDR, held on October 25, 2021, are also summarized and a path forward for the policy dialogue process is outlined, including priority recommendations from the AIS assessment to support agricultural innovation in Lao PDR.

The publication is available [here](#).



NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION SYSTEM ASSESSMENT IN MALAWI
- PUBLISHED IN JULY 2021

The report follows a national assessment process of the agricultural innovation system (AIS) in Malawi using a framework of four types of analyses: functional, structural, capacity and enabling environment analysis. The assessment uncovered key functions that enable innovation and structural barriers in the system, documented enabling and hindering factors related to policy and regulatory instruments, and identified capacity gaps among AIS actors within the system.

Based on the findings of the assessment, the report recommends refocusing research to develop a systems thinking approach and move from supply-driven to demand-driven research. The report also suggests providing AIS stakeholders with knowledge and skills in marketing and advocacy. Higher education institutions and research institutes need to be proactive and engage in networking activities with other AIS stakeholders in Malawi.

The publication is available [here](#).



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.

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[Tropical Agriculture Platform Channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)



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.