

Introduction

PROLINNOVA–Uganda is an NGO-led multi-stakeholder initiative to build a national learning network on promoting local innovation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resource management (NRM). PROLINNOVA–Uganda’s main objective is to mainstream community-led approaches to agriculture and natural resource management. This report reflects on the activities implemented from January to December 2011.

1. Piloting and sharing of innovation

In 2011, two innovations were identified for joint experimentation. These were:

- ✓ Processing of fruit juice from pumpkins
- ✓ Processing of beverage from the mucuna plant.

The innovations were verified using the TEES (Technically effectiveness, Economic validity, Environmental friendliness and Social acceptability) test to qualify for joint experimentation. The objectives of the joint experimentation were to determine nutritional importance and composition indicated by scientific analysis of the fruit juice made from pumpkins and the beverage made from mucuna. The joint experimentation is undertaken in collaboration with Makerere University, Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition; however, there has been delay in completing the activity. The emerging issues are that joint experimentation require a lot of funds and takes time. Partner research institutions have to give more time and co-fund the joint experimentation to reduce on the costs and improve on partners’ participation.

The PROLINNOVA–Uganda secretariat produced the following documentary materials:

- ✓ a booklet in which four farmer innovations (production of fish fries; control of cattle fever and East coast fever in calves, use of amaranthus) are described;
- ✓ 1600 copies of the booklet were printed and distribution is ongoing;
- ✓ 1000 copies of PROLINNOVA–Uganda brochures;
- ✓ 300 copies of flyers on pumpkin juice processing, liquid manure and pesticides and the livestock mineral salt produced in partnership with PELUM Uganda;
- ✓ a DVD on innovations in waste management, banana growing and post-harvest handling of beans in Moyo District.

The materials are meant to market and raise support for local innovations in Uganda. The brochures vividly and clearly show cases for the activities achieved. The brochures are used as a strategy to lobby, advocate and publicise the programme widely to other stakeholders. The main objective was to disseminate information on local innovation to the public.

Lessons learnt:

- ✓ Documentation of innovations increases the publicity of the PROLINNOVA programme;
- ✓ Documentation of innovations enables formal researchers /scientists to select what they are interested in for further scientific validation of the innovation;
- ✓ Innovators feel recognised when their work is documented;
- ✓ More documentation on PROLINNOVA activities needs to be done.

2. Learning and information exchange on local innovations and effective processes

A workshop to review the multi-stakeholder partnership in PROLINNOVA–Uganda was held to share experiences on participatory innovation development, draw lessons and develop strategies. The workshop was for two days from 9–10 August 2011. The participants included the National Steering Committee, Core Team members and other partners. The main objective of the workshop was a reflection on the functioning of the multi-stakeholder partnership. The workshop, attended by 25 participants (9 female, 16 male), identified the following learning points and strategies:

- ✓ Memorandum of understanding (MoU) has to be signed by organisations to streamline PROLINNOVA activities;
- ✓ Periodic reviews of the country programme is necessary;
- ✓ Personal commitment of partner representative is crucial for strengthening the partnership;
- ✓ Mainstream the roles and activities of the programme by the partners and this to be stipulated in the MoU;
- ✓ Strengthen linkages with local government at district and sub-county levels
- ✓ Objective of the programme needs to be clear at all levels in order not to raise high expectations, and joint implementation of activities is necessary at all levels.

Recommendations developed include:

- ✓ The partners should be stimulated to be more interested in programme;
- ✓ The programme should identify and embark on recruiting more partners;
- ✓ Documentation of PROLINNOVA activities should be intensified.

3. Mainstreaming PROLINNOVA approaches within local, national and regional institutions and programmes

PROLINNOVA–Uganda through Environmental Alert organised an exhibition for local innovators to exhibit their innovations in agriculture and natural resource management on 23 June 2011 in Moyo District during World Environment Day celebrations. Innovations exhibited were in crop management, bee farming and animal husbandry. Seven farmer innovators participated (4 female and 3 males). In addition, PROLINNOVA–Uganda through Kikandwa Environmental Alert organised an exhibition for local innovators on 6–8 June 2011 at the African Hotel during the National Fair for Civil Society, under the theme “NGOs’ and Uganda’s quest for social economic transformation”. Two innovators (female and male) participated. The innovations exhibited were in various products of amaranth (pop mara, porridge flour, cookies, snacks, vegetables and flour sources). Local selected seeds of tomatoes, blackberries, fresh tomatoes and eggplants were displayed. The main objective was to disseminate the innovations to a wider community. The observations made and lessons learnt were:

- ✓ During the National Fair, PROLINNOVA was the only organisation that exhibited products of local technology on food security specially produced using local/ indigenous knowledge;
- ✓ The innovators earned income through sale of their innovations;
- ✓ Innovators need to be supported in packaging of their products to attract a market.

4. Effectively implementing PROLINNOVA programme in Uganda

PROLINNOVA–Uganda through Mukono Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MUZARDI) organised monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for partners during 20–30 April and 12–22 September 2011. The field monitoring generated data on PROLINNOVA activities. The

main objective was to monitor the progress of the programme: collect pertinent information on PROLINNOVA activities to be entered into the M&E tables. PROLINNOVA–Uganda identified good innovations that can be commercialised to create more positive impact. The M&E activities have been good avenues for building capacity of local innovators.

The PROLINNOVA–Uganda Secretariat organised two National Steering Committee meetings on 7 February 2011 and 18 August 2011 to guide the programme. Two Core Team meetings were held on 3 February and 10 August 2011. The strategies developed were:

- ✓ Timely implementation of activities by partners; the coordinator physically visits the Core Team members regularly;
- ✓ Collaborate with NAADS (National Agricultural Advisory Services) and NARO (National Agricultural Research Organisation) with the existing projects being implemented;
- ✓ Core partner organisations appoint two staff to be involved with the PROLINNOVA programme;
- ✓ Coordinator writes letters to remind the members who are backsliding; core partners complete assigned activities in a timely manner;
- ✓ Secretariat processes and disburses funds to core partners in a timely manner for implementation of activities;
- ✓ All core partners be involved in fundraising for PROLINNOVA–Uganda programme;
- ✓ Coordinator to organise a programme for Core Team members to follow up FAIR (Farmer Access to Innovation Resources) community-based organisation beneficiaries to be acquainted with what is going on in the field.

The Secretariat has made some efforts to mobilise resources for the network. Concept notes developed during 2011 were:

- ✓ Farmer-led joint research into technologies for water conservation and increased efficiency of water use to improve household food security in semi-arid areas of Eastern and Southern Africa with PROLINNOVA networks of Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa;
- ✓ Strengthening local innovation to adapt to climate change in mountainous areas;
- ✓ Documentation and sharing of sustainable land use management technologies;
- ✓ Promotion of local innovations by women in agricultural value chains.

However, none of the concept notes was accepted by donors.

In 2012, the Secretariat will vigorously continue in responding to calls for resource mobilisation, strengthening the multi-stakeholder partnership, identifying local innovations, documentation and dissemination of publications.