INSTITUTIONALISING PARTICIPATORY INNOVATION DEVELOPMENT IN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION: CASE OF TAHTAY MAYCHEW DISTRICT, ETHIOPIA

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Institutionalisation: process through which new ideas and practices are introduced, accepted and applied by individuals and organisations so as to become part of “the norm”. This process requires deliberate change within an organisation.

Participatory Innovation Development (PID) takes local innovation as a point of entry to develop innovations in a farmer-led and expert-supported manner.

PROLINNOVA in Tahtay Maychew District
PROLINNOVA—Ethiopia seeks to integrate PID into institutions of research, development and education. Tahtay Maychew (TM) District Office of Agriculture (DOA) is a partner of PROLINNOVA—Ethiopia in Tigray Region.

Framework for understanding PID institutionalisation

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<th>Mission</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Human resources</th>
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<td>Technical: the nuts and bolts</td>
<td>Planning, design, M&amp;E</td>
<td>Tasks, linkages strategies, technologies</td>
<td>Skills, capacity building</td>
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<td>Political: the power game</td>
<td>Policy, budget</td>
<td>Decision-making processes</td>
<td>Accountability, incentives, rewards</td>
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<td>Socio-cultural: identity and behavior</td>
<td>Organisational values</td>
<td>Routines, norms, traditions</td>
<td>Behaviour, attitudes</td>
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Methods
Case study through interviews and focus group discussion with farmers, extensionists and other stakeholders at different levels; development and testing self-assessment tool to measure PID institutionalisation

Results and discussion
- A non-enabling environment led to limited inclusion of PID in formal work procedures, planning and reporting of DOA
- Individual interest, commitment and change in attitude paved way to internalise PID in DOA
- Existing extension structures could be adjusted to accommodate PID approach
- Partnerships with other line offices and farmers helped bridge gaps, e.g. in budget and skills
- Timeliness and relevance of the local innovations for the priorities of decision-makers facilitated PID integration
- PID self-assessment tool enabled DOA staff to gain clear picture of where they were in the process and to identify factors favouring and hindering institutionalisation of PID

Conclusions
Factors that favoured institutionalisation of PID:
- Capacity development and making DOA accountable for PID
- Close collaboration among PROLINNOVA partners

Factors that constrained institutionalisation of PID:
- Limited room for manoeuvre in formal organisational structure and strategy of regional extension system
- Insufficient resource allocation
- Limited individual capacities to promote PID on wide scale

Recommendation:
PROLINNOVA—Ethiopia multistakeholder platform needs to strengthen links among members at national and regional level and strategise clearly how to institutionalise PID as an approach to extension and thus a process for development.

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