

Piloting Local Innovation Support Funds (LISFs) in 8 countries in Africa & Asia



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Structure of this presentation

1) Local Innovation Support Fund (LISF)

- Background: from LI to PID meant to be farmer led
- Why an alternative funding mechanism?
- How does it work?
- How are we learning from the piloting?

2) Experiences of the 8 PROLINNOVA Country Platforms

- LISF design and management
- Impacts and challenges
- Lessons learnt and outlook



PROLINNOVA Country Platforms (CPs) = Communities of Practice



- In 20 countries
- Made up of diverse stakeholders (state and non-state): farmers, advisors, scientists, academia, private sector and policymakers
- Common vision: World where women and men farmers play decisive roles in agricultural research & development (ARD) for sustainable livelihoods
- Each CP designs its country-specific approach to promote farmer-led **Participatory Innovation Development**

Africa: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda

Asia: Cambodia, India, Nepal

Latin America: Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru

Common elements of all CPs' activities



- **Creating the evidence:** identifying, analysing and documenting processes of local innovation and farmer-led PID
- **Establishing national and subnational multistakeholder platforms** to plan and implement joint activities, share information and learn jointly
- **Building capacity** of all actors in PID, M&E, impact assessment, documentation, etc
- **Policy dialogue** to mainstream PID at local, district and national level

From recognising local innovation ...

- Hundreds of inspiring **local innovations identified & documented**
- Through participatory assessment, most of them **selected for sharing** through:
 - Farmer-to-farmer visits
 - Village workshops
 - Innovation fairs
 - Catalogues
 - Posters
 - Farmer magazine
 - Pamphlets
 - Community radio
 - Video (also participatory)
 - Mass media: newspapers, TV



... to farmer-led joint experimentation (PID) on farmer-specified topics, e.g.:

- Salt lick for cattle using local minerals (Ghana)
- Termite control using local predators (Uganda)
- New ways to manage soil fertility using organic matter (Cambodia)
- Improving traditional ovens to dry fish (Niger)
- Trapping wasps that hinder beekeeping (Nepal)
- Combating bacterial wilt in *enset* (Ethiopia)
- Various herbal treatments for pest control (several countries)



Ethiopian woman compares her local "modern" beehive with introduced one

Why a locally managed innovation fund?

- Still tendency for scientists and rural advisors to dominate in PID process: exploring their, not farmers' questions
- Generally, most "participatory ARD" is still technology transfer: testing scientists' / dev't project's ideas
- Some competitive funds exist for participatory ARD but mainly controlled by scientists
- Can power balance in ARD funding be changed?
→ *farmers "call the tune"*



PROLINNOVA partners learning in action

by exploring complementary ARD funding mechanism:

- so farmers can decide what will be researched, how and by whom:
farmer-led participatory ARD
- to make ARD more accountable to & relevant for smallholder farmers
- to develop, test and adapt models of **farmer-governed ARD** that can be scaled up



Farmer innovators & extension workers at technology fair in Ethiopia

Local Innovation Support Funds (LISFs)

- Piloted by PROLINNOVA partners in:
 - Asia:** Cambodia, Nepal
 - Africa:** Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania & Uganda
- Overarching questions in the action learning:



Can funds for experimentation & learning be efficiently channelled through smallholders?

Can this approach improve their livelihoods and their influence on mainstream ARD?

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LISF works similarly in all countries

- National multi-stakeholder team coordinates piloting of LISF
- It develops LISF guidelines based on exploratory study
- It sets up and builds capacities of **local Fund Management Committees (FMCs)**
- FMCs identify funding criteria
- FMCs make open call for proposals
- Farmers submit simple proposals
- FMCs use their criteria to select grantees and provide resources
- Farmers lead (joint) research
- Farmer researchers share results
- **Participatory M&E and impact assessment**



Similar screening criteria in all countries

- Idea driven by applicant(s)
- Innovation appears sound in economic, environmental & social terms
- Applicable by resource-poor
- Applicants willing to share results (**public goods from public funds**)
- Proposal for **experimentation and learning**, not farm investment



LIFS committee screening applications in South Africa

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Multiple levels of mutual learning

- **Community:** thru local research and M&E by farmer groups and FMC
- **District:** as rural advisors, NGOs, scientists, college staff support farmer-led experiments, organise innovation fairs, facilitate M&E
- **Country:** thru reflection workshops and joint impact assessment by national multi-stakeholder platform, strategising how to mainstream the approach
- **International:** thru international workshops and e-conferences with partners in piloting & non-piloting countries



Design features of LISFs in the different piloting countries – 1

Country	Application by	Approval by	Type of funding	Scale
Cambodia	Farmer groups thru partner NGO to NSC	NSC	Loan, 0 or low interest, pay back to group's revolving fund	10 provinces
Ethiopia	Farmer to CBO	Farmer FMC in CBO, then NSC	Grant; 20% own contribution	5 districts in 3 regions
Ghana	Farmer to zonal multi-stakeholder committee to NSC	Zonal committee, then NSC	Grant	4 zones in 2 regions
Kenya	Farmer to district multi-stakeholder committee to NSC	District committee, then NSC	Grant, own contribution encouraged	4 districts in 2 regions

Design features of LISFs in the different piloting countries – 2

Country	Application by	Approval by	Type of funding	Scale
Nepal	Farmer to district multi-stakeholder committee	District committee; larger grants by NSC	Grant	4 districts in 3 regions
Tanzania	Farmer group thru NGO to regional multi-stakeholder committee	Regional committee	Grant	6 districts in 2 regions
South Africa	Farmer to CBO	CBO board based on recommendation of multi-stakeholder FMC	Grant, 5–10% own contribution	8 communities in 1 district
Uganda	Farmer to CBO	FMC in CBO	Grant	8 districts in 1 region

Number of grants made and percentage approved

Country	Period	No. applications	% approved
Cambodia	2006–11	271	79%
Ethiopia	2008–10	142	75%
Ghana	2008–11	188	52%
Kenya	2008–11	125	30%
Nepal	2005–11	119	87%
South Africa	2006–11	77	32%
Tanzania	2009–11	24	92%
Uganda	2007–11	279	65%
TOTAL		1224	64%

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Grant size and use

Country	Average grant size (Euro)	Range in grant size (Euro)	Used mainly for
Cambodia	61	7–125	Joint experimentation with extension and university staff
Ethiopia	33	13–108	Farmers' own experimentation
Ghana	122	10–410	Improving farmer innovations
Kenya	248	85–550	Improving farmer innovations, payment for external support
Nepal	103	5–500	Farmers' own experimentation
South Africa	956	51–1670	Joint experimentation and learning visits
Tanzania	533	294–1300	Joint experimentation in groups with research and extension staff
Uganda	48	11–295	Improving farmer innovations
TOTAL	76	5–1670	

Percentage of individual applications by women



Country	% applications by women
Cambodia	39%
Ethiopia	not available
Ghana	28%
Kenya	49%
Nepal	57%
South Africa	54%
Tanzania	51%
Uganda	47%
TOTAL	45%

Two main ways of managing LISFs

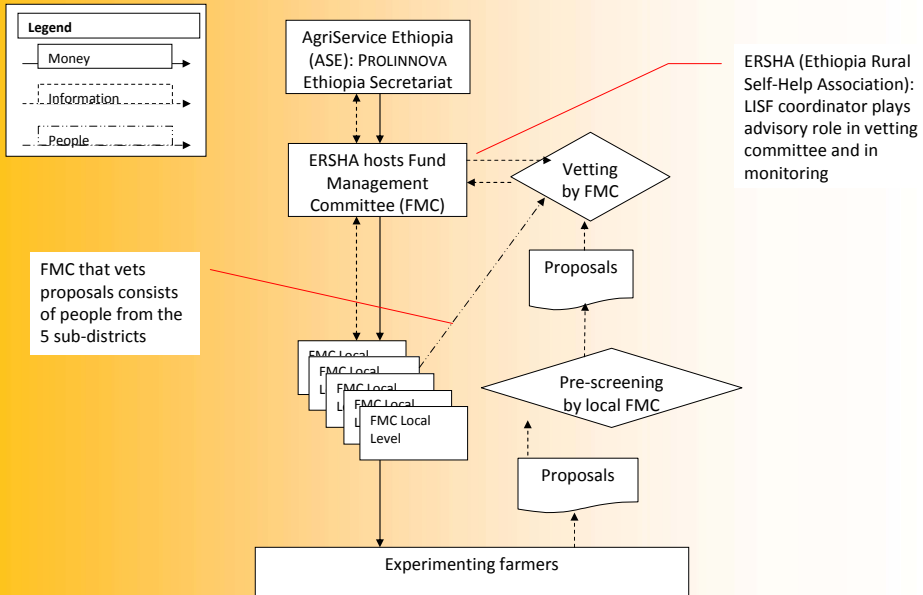
1) More centralised multistakeholder committee (key partner organisations & farmer reps):

- more interactive learning and experimentation
- stronger quality control (screening, implementation)
- slower processing of grant applications
- relatively high operational costs
- less influence of farmers in decision-making

2) Decentralised farmer managed committee:

- less involvement of other actors in farmers' research
- smaller grants (low funds for external expertise)
- low operational costs
- more accessible for smallholders

Example: LISF mechanism in Ambo, Ethiopia



Participatory impact assessment

Involvement of different actors in LISF:



Ethiopian farmer explains his experiment to MoA staff

- **Strengthened social organisation** around managing local ARD and funds for it
- **Built smallholders' capacities** to formulate own needs and access relevant information
- **Increased smallholders' confidence** to interact with “outsiders” in joint innovation
- **Stimulated interest of rural advisors and scientists** to support farmer-led PID

Challenges:

- **Difficult to generate in-country funding:**
 - trying partial repayment
 - but should be public funds available for local learning & public goods
- **Still high transaction costs while piloting:**
 - 30–40% of total budget actually goes to farmers
 - rest for coordination, training, advisory support, M&E etc



* **Difficult to involve scientists:**

- farmers initially want to experiment on own, using local advice
- research institutes have own agenda & little room to support farmer initiatives

but encouraging response from rural advisors exposed to LISFs

Some findings & lessons learnt

- **Smallholders can manage funds for locally relevant innovation development, with appropriate initial support**
- **LISF needs to be custom-made depending on local capacities, degree of community organisation and availability of support services**
- **LISF cannot stand alone: it works best when integrated into existing participatory programme**
- **Involvement in LISF can enhance role of smallholders in governance of publicly funded ARD**



South African smallholders having their say

Perspectives

- *Promising steps toward complementary funding mechanism that gives farmers direct access to funds for innovation according to their priorities*
- LISFs need to be better linked into regular research and extension programmes and organisations – encouraging them to create space for farmer-led experimentation
- Partners now consolidating most feasible models for each country and working out how to upscale them – *while retaining their smallholder focus and farmer-led character*



LISF upscaling scenarios

being explored by PROLINNOVA partners in different countries

- Establishing LISF within **national farmer organisation**
- Integration into **local government** administration
- Integration into MoA **extension** service
- Integration into government **research**
- Establishing **National Innovation Fund** (new legal entity)
- Integration into **many different development organisations**
- Based in self-managed and self-resourced **CBOs**



Vision



**A world in which women and men farmers
play decisive roles in research and development for
sustainable livelihoods**



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