



## International workshop on “Agricultural Innovation Systems in Africa” (AISA), 29–31 May 2013, Nairobi, Kenya

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*Concept note prepared by the International Scientific and Organising Committee, March 2013*

In the wake of a series of recent international events and initiatives focusing on understanding and fostering innovation<sup>1</sup>, there is a growing awareness and interest in applying and making sense of the Agricultural Innovation System (AIS) concept and perspective and what it offers for understanding and supporting innovation systems, processes and networks. This has particular relevance for African agriculture as it faces several challenges, such as increasing and intensifying food production in a sustainable way and nourishing its fast-growing (urban) population, adapting to the consequences of climate change, and finding its rightful place in an increasingly global and complex international scene.

Several key issues deserve urgent attention from researchers, practitioners and policymakers involved with African agriculture and innovation:

- What insights and lessons can be gained from recent experiences and initiatives to promote and support agricultural innovation involving smallholders throughout Africa?
- How are the AIS concepts and approaches being operationalised in Africa? With what successes and challenges? What added value do they bring compared to other approaches to agricultural research and development?
- What are some of the key implications and recommendations for the way forward in terms of policy, research and practice with regard to supporting agricultural innovation in Africa, and how can such recommendations be implemented concretely in the near future?

Several initiatives and programmes seeking to understand and strengthen multi-stakeholder innovation processes involving African smallholders are jointly organising a **series of events** in Nairobi during an “Innovation week” to be held in Nairobi (Kenya) in May 2013 to allow mutual learning and synergies. The EU-funded FP7 project **JOLISAA** (JOint Learning in Innovation Systems in African Agriculture) will bring findings and lessons learnt from case studies about diverse innovation experiences in Benin, Kenya and South Africa. The **PROLINNOVA**<sup>2</sup> network will share its experience in promoting local innovation and farmer-led participatory research, including community-managed funds to stimulate these processes. **CCAFS**<sup>3</sup> will take advantage of the events to expand its network of partners throughout Africa and to address its social-learning agenda. The AusAID-funded project **Food Systems Innovation for Food Security** (FSIFS) will offer its lessons about how to better incorporate research into food security initiatives. Beside their own “internal” meetings, these four initiatives will co-organise two interlinked international events to be held in May 2013: the **Eastern African Farmer Innovation Fair (EAFIF)** and the **Agricultural Innovation Systems in Africa (AISA) workshop**.

This concept note focuses on this second event by outlining the aims and key features of the **AISA workshop**, (see the summary fact sheet about the AISA workshop on p.2).

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<sup>1</sup> For example: the 2006 Innovation Africa Symposium in Uganda; the ongoing Convergence of Sciences: Strengthening agricultural Innovation Systems (CoS-SIS) programme in Benin, Ghana and Mali; the 2008 World Bank Report on Agriculture; the 2009 IAASTD (International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development) report; the 2012 report of the Working Group on agricultural knowledge and innovation systems in the EU Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR); the 2012 World Bank *Agricultural Innovation Systems Sourcebook*; the 2012 Forum on Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) report on multi-stakeholder innovation experiences; the *Renewing Innovation Systems in Agriculture and Food* (2012) book that came out of the Innovation & Sustainable Development in Agriculture and Food (ISDA) conference (2010); and various activities underway for the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) in 2014.

<sup>2</sup> PROLINNOVA: Promoting Local INNOVation in ecologically oriented agriculture, a Global Partnership Programme of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) in 20 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

<sup>3</sup> CCAFS: CGIAR Collaborative Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security, operating currently in Eastern and West Africa and South Asia.

The objectives of the AISA workshop include the following:

- To learn jointly about agricultural innovation processes and systems in Africa
- To identify policy implications and develop policy-dialogue strategies and messages
- To explore perspectives for collaborative action research on innovation in smallholder farming.

## Summary fact sheet about the AISA workshop

Item	Plan
Dates & Place	29–31 May 2013, KCB Karen Centre, Nairobi, Kenya (duration: 2.5 days)
Co-hosting organisations	Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) and CCAFS
Major linked event	Eastern African Farmer Innovation Fair (28–29 May 2013)
Participants	≈ 80 researchers, development practitioners, policy- and decision-makers from Africa and beyond, cross-section of Kenyan stakeholders involved in agricultural innovation research, support and practice
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To learn jointly about agricultural innovation processes and systems in Africa</li> <li>• To identify policy implications and develop policy-dialogue strategies and messages</li> <li>• To explore perspectives for collaborative action research on innovation in smallholder farming</li> </ul>
Main sources of funding	JOLISAA, CCAFS/PROLINNOVA, AusAID, self-sponsored participants
Main outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content for social media</li> <li>• A collective documents outlining lessons and recommendations</li> <li>• Electronic proceedings with poster papers and syntheses of thematic sessions</li> </ul>
International Scientific and Organising Committee	Adewale <b>Adekunle</b> ( <i>FARA</i> ), Alan Duncan ( <i>ILRI People, Livestock &amp; Environment theme</i> ), Wiebke <b>Foerch</b> ( <i>CCAFS Science Officer</i> ), Geoffrey <b>Kamau</b> ( <i>KARI, JOLISAA–Kenya team coordinator</i> ), Laurens <b>Klerkx</b> ( <i>WUR / Convergence of Sciences –Strengthening Agricultural Innovation Systems</i> ), Mary <b>Kamau</b> ( <i>Ministry of Agriculture , Kenya</i> ), Joseph <b>Mureithi</b> ( <i>KARI Deputy Director</i> ), Teresiah <b>Ng'ang'a</b> ( <i>PROLINNOVA–Kenya coordinator</i> ), Riikka <b>Rajalahti</b> ( <i>World Bank ARD</i> ), Luis <b>Rodriguez</b> ( <i>FSIFS/AusAid</i> ), Bernard <b>Triomphe</b> ( <i>CIRAD JOLISAA coordinator, ISOC Chair</i> ), Ann <b>Waters-Bayer</b> ( <i>PROLINNOVA International Support Team</i> )
Local Organising Committee (AISA , EAFIF and related events)	Peter <b>Gitika</b> ( <i>KENFAP</i> ), Geoffrey <b>Kamau</b> ( <i>KARI</i> ), Righa <b>Makonge</b> ( <i>WV</i> ), George <b>Mazuri</b> ( <i>USTADI</i> ), Monica Mueni ( <i>Ministry of Qagriculture, Kenya</i> ), Catherine <b>Mungai</b> ( <i>CCAFS</i> ), Teresiah <b>Ng'ang'a</b> ( <i>PROLINNOVA-Kenya</i> ), Rahab <b>Njoroge</b> ( <i>IIRR</i> ), Bell <b>Okello</b> ( <i>ICRW</i> ), Maren <b>Radeny</b> ( <i>CCAFS East Africa</i> )

## Participants

About 80 participants are being purposefully invited, with a view to allow intensive interaction, using learning- and output-oriented facilitation methods. The actual number of participants will depend primarily on funding available for sponsorship, as well on the willingness and possibility of a number of invited participants to cover their own costs to take part in this event.

Among them, participants will represent a broad range of professional profiles and experiences. They will come from major stakeholder groups concerned with innovation in smallholder agriculture in Africa, including researchers and academics, development practitioners, farmers; and policy- and decision-makers from Africa, the EU, Australia and the USA.

Specifically, the organisers of the AISA workshop will invite persons involved in the following programmes and institutions, among others: JOLISAA (a consortium including CIRAD, WUR, ETC, ICRA, KARI and the Universities of Pretoria & Abomey-Calavi), PROLINNOVA, CCAFS and its associated members (such as Africa Rice, ILRI, CIP, ICRISAT, IFPRI, WorldFish and the ILAC initiative), AusAID/CSIRO (FSIFS), FARA/PAEPARD and its sub-regional fora (ASARECA, CCARDESA and CORAF), the World Bank, the Wageningen University and Research (WUR) Co-SIS programme, Agropolis Foundation, CTA, the European Commission, GFAR, GFRAS/AFAAS, IFDC, EU-funded projects such as INSARD (Including Smallholders in Agricultural Research for Development) and SOLINSA (Support of Learning and Innovation Networks for Sustainable Agriculture), KIT, RUFORUM, the East African Farmer Federation and a selection of Kenyan organisations.

## Structure of the AISA workshop

The AISA workshop will focus on sharing experiences with understanding and strengthening multi-stakeholder innovation processes and the role of smallholders in innovation, and on identifying and discussing priorities and recommendations for research, practice and policy. Oral presentations will be kept to a minimum. Presentation of lesson-focused posters will allow for extensive and wide-ranging facilitated discussions and intensive social learning among participants.

The workshop will be structured around five thematic sessions:

1. Opening and facilitated participation in the **Eastern Africa Farmer Innovation Fair** (dialogue with farmer innovators)
2. **Reflecting on conceptual issues / frameworks** for assessing innovation experiences (Collective keynote paper, followed by buzz-groups and facilitated discussions)
3. **Sharing main results and lessons** about innovation processes & cases (about 6–8 oral, brief overviews of key experiences and lessons on AIS in Africa, plus several posters presented during “marketplace” session, with facilitated discussions in groups and plenary)
4. **Policy implications and policy-dialogue** strategy and messages (Facilitated dialogue among representatives of major stakeholder groups: policymakers, donors, researchers, farmer innovators, private sector and innovation practitioners)
5. **Identifying the way forward** (World Café)

## AISA workshop products

The AISA workshop will develop and deliver three main types of products:

1. Content to be shared instantaneously via electronic social media prior to and during the workshop
2. A collectively authored synthesis of lessons, experiences and recommendations for policy, research and practice about AIS in Africa
3. Electronic proceedings made available online on relevant websites within three months of the workshop and including an introduction, the collection of edited poster papers (4 pp each), syntheses of the five thematic sessions, a general conclusion and way forward, and a policy statement.

## Key deadlines

- 29 March 2013: Terms of reference of papers and posters sent to all invited participants
- 3 May 2013: Participants to send proposed posters / papers to AISA organising committee
- 31 July 2013: Final poster papers sent by authors for inclusion in electronic proceedings
- 31 Aug. 2013: Publication of electronic workshop proceedings

*For further information related to this event, please contact*

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- Geoffrey Kamau, KARI, [gkamau@kari.org](mailto:gkamau@kari.org)

AISA Workshop wiki site: <http://aisa2013.wikispaces.com/ais+workshop>

See also JOLISAA / PROLINNOVA / CCAFS / KARI websites  
[www.jolisaa.net](http://www.jolisaa.net) / [www.prolinnova.net](http://www.prolinnova.net) / <http://ccafs.cgiar.org> / [www.kari.org](http://www.kari.org)