

# Expert Consultation on Successful Agri-Food Innovations in Asia and the Pacific

## Concept Note

### Introduction

The Asia-Pacific region is the home for 60 per cent of the world population. At present, it has 4.7 billion people and 40 per cent of it is concentrated in the rural areas facing problems of poverty, food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition. Despite concerted efforts of the national agricultural research institutes (NARIs) and national agricultural research organizations (NAROs), the CGIAR Institutions, GFAR, FAO and other organizations to increase food production and productivity, there are still enormous problems of access and distribution of food, alleviating poverty and sustainable use of natural resources in the Asia-Pacific Region (APR). Many resource-poor and smallholder producers and rural communities have yet to benefit from improved technologies and agricultural innovations.

### Agricultural Innovation

Unlike invention, innovation system<sup>1</sup> stresses on application of knowledge by different actors to the production of goods and services that are new to them irrespective of whether they are new to their competitors, their countries or the world. The learning and innovation are closely linked with inclusive development which is now considered extremely important for preserving smallholder farming and sustainable agriculture. The Agricultural Innovations can be of diverse types, namely, technological, institutional, organizational, policy oriented, mixed and integrated systems, partnerships, networking, markets, value chains, funding/ investment, capacity development, national and regional integration. The innovation systems approach allows to understand the context including the policy environment as well as the actors, their competencies, habits, attitudes, practices, linkages, needs, gaps, etc<sup>2</sup>. The innovation is needed for social and economic progress. The smallholder producers in different agro-ecological environments need different innovations and hence appropriate strategies need to be developed to meet their needs through such innovations. Therefore, the smallholder farmers must be part of analysis of the options, the decision-making as well as the implementation.

---

<sup>1</sup>As per the definition standardized by FAO Tropical Agricultural Platform (TAP), the **Agricultural Innovation** is the process whereby individuals or organizations bring existing or new products, processes, technology, and forms of organization into social and economic use to increase effectiveness, competitiveness, resilience to shocks or environmental sustainability, thereby contributing to food and nutritional security, economic development and sustainable natural resource management. While **Agricultural Innovation System(AIS)** is a network of actors or organizations, and individuals together with supporting institutions and policies in the agricultural and related sectors that bring existing or new products, processes, technology, and forms of organizations into social and economic use. Policies and institutions (formal and informal) shape the way that these actors interact, generate, share and use knowledge as well as jointly learn.

<sup>2</sup> Judith Ann Francis (2015) Lessons learned and implications for research, innovation and policy. In: CTA Top 20 Innovations that Benefit Stallholder Farmers. CTA, Wageningen, the Netherlands, 76p. For more details, please see the link: <http://publications.cta.int/en/publications/publication/1831>.

In view of this scenario, it is important to focus on successful agri-food<sup>3</sup> innovations and look at their potential for up-scaling and out-scaling for the benefit and wellbeing of smallholder producers and rural communities.

- Up-scaling of innovations will include participation of different actors and organizations along the value chains, from primary production to value addition to consumption, for enhancing benefits to much wider beneficiaries.
- Out-scaling of innovation refers to use and application of innovations in similar or different environments for wider participation and benefits across space.

Features of Successful Agri-food Innovation may include:

- Innovation which is based on and developed around a central concept/ idea and principles of intervention/ change, could be technical, policy, institutional, partnership, etc. in agri-food development.
- Willing participation of relevant actors, partners and organizations in various processes and stages of agri-food innovations, leading to economic, social and environmental benefits and overall sustainability.
- Pragmatic, effective and self-adjusting arrangement of participation, actions and interactions towards positive and sustainable development for the benefit of all partners involved.
- Innovation that has positive benefits to women, youth and the marginalized and disadvantaged groups of the society.
- Innovation that has proven potential to be up-scaled and out-scaled to bring impact at scale for wider benefits.

There are a large number of agri-food innovations developed by researchers, the private sector and NGOs and others. However, not all such innovations are successful and socio-economically viable. A number of farmer-led innovations developed with the use of indigenous technology blended with modern technology are proving to be successful. For realizing the full potential of successful agri-food innovations, it is important to have insights into the key issues/areas that can influence the benefits to the smallholder producers. Considerable attention needs to be given to the best practices and lessons learned using case studies to illustrate the successes and failures. There is also a need to critically assess various types and kinds of agri-food innovations for their strengths, weaknesses, mechanisms and constraints. This will enable identifying the successful innovations for their potential up-scaling and out-scaling to bring an impact at scale for the benefit of smallholder producers, rural communities and overall sustainable agricultural development. Also, crucial is to consider the enabling environment such as information communication technologies (ICTs), capacity development, policies, institutional framework, and markets as important determinants to bring about effective up-scaling and out-scaling.

The innovation process must be inclusive; take on board, farmers' circumstances and adopt a longer term perspective. New capacities for research, science, innovation and business need to

---

<sup>3</sup>Agri-food here is taken to cover farming of crops and livestock, fish, pastoralism and forestry/agro-forestry, their production systems and their associated post-harvest food value chains and service industries, with a particular focus on the needs of **resource-poor smallholder producers** (as per GFAR).

be developed and nurtured. The knowledge infrastructure to support the domestication of the innovation systems approach, strengthened policy coherence, strategic visioning, increased investments in research and innovation are also needed.

## **The Expert Consultation**

In view of the above considerations, the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) jointly with the Council of Agriculture (COA), Chinese Taipei (Taiwan); Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), the World Vegetable Center (AVRDC), Taiwan; and the Asian Farmers Association (AFA), the Philippines is organizing an Expert Consultation on Successful Agri-food Innovations in Asia and the Pacific to have pertinent deliberations/discussions and to develop a road map for up-scaling and out-scaling of the potential and successful agri-food innovations in the region.

**Goal of the Consultation** is to promote, up-scale and out-scale successful agri-food innovations to enhance productivity and efficiency of agri-food systems and to accomplish sustainable agricultural development in Asia and the Pacific.

**Purpose of the Consultation is** to catalyze policy/decision makers and sensitize stakeholders in agri-food research and innovations and to embrace successful agri-food innovations for up-scaling and out-scaling in Asia and the Pacific.

### **Objectives**

- To identify and discuss successful agri-food innovations for validating, refining and disseminating for wider adoption.
- To assess the strengths, weaknesses, mechanisms, constraints, and likely impact of successful agri-food innovations.
- To identify the gaps in enabling environment in areas such as technologies, policies, institutional arrangement, and knowledge infrastructure for improving access, applicability and effective use of successful agri-food innovations.
- To assess the need for necessary policy intervention, advocacy and capacity development for up-scaling and out-scaling of potentially successful agri-food innovations for the larger and wider impact at scale for the benefit of resource poor smallholder producers and rural communities, more specifically of women and youth.

### **Expected Outputs**

- Successful agri-food innovations and experiences documented, and shared and the knowledge exchanged among the diverse agri-food research and innovation stakeholders.
- Most appropriate and viable agri-food innovations identified for further refinements as needed, and their adoption for impact at scale
- Need for policy interventions, advocacy and capacity development assessed for out-scaling and up-scaling of successful agri-food innovations for their impact at scale among smallholders, rural communities, women, youth and poor

- A road map on strategies, options and priorities developed for up-scaling and out-scaling, of successful agri-food innovations in the Asia and the Pacific

### **Expected Outcomes**

- Availability of potentially successful innovations in agri-food systems leading to improved production, productivity, sustainability and to enhanced food and nutritional security in the Asia-Pacific region
- Current capacities and gaps in application of successful agri-food innovations assessed and addressed for their up-scaled and out-scaled adoption and impact.
- Strengthened partnership and networking of diverse stakeholders including donors, policy makers, partners and actors in support and facilitation of the use of agri-food innovations for impact at scale.
- Improved national, sub-regional and regional plans and strategies for up-scaling and out-scaling of successful agri-food innovations.
- Resource poor smallholder producers and rural communities, more specifically women and youth are benefitted through the use of successful agri-food innovations in Asia and the Pacific.

### **CO-Organizers**

1. Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI)
2. Council of Agriculture (COA), Chinese Taipei
3. Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)
4. AVRDC – The World Vegetable Centre
5. Asian Farmers Association (AFA)

### **Participants**

The participants will include researchers, policy makers, innovative farmers and representatives of various organizations including NARIs, NAROs Higher Education Institutions, the private sector, CSOs (NGOs, FOs), women and youth representatives, CG Centers, and International Agricultural Research Centres. About 80 participants are expected to participate in this Expert Consultation

### **Venue**

Hotel National in Taichung City, Chinese Taipei

### **Dates**

1-3 November, 2016

## **Expert Consultation on Successful Agri-Food Innovations in Asia and the Pacific**

## **Proposed Technical Program (Draft)**

### **Day 1**

**Forenoon:**                    ***Registration***

Session I                      Inaugural Session/ Introduction to Agri-Food Innovations

Session II                     Case Studies of Successful Agri-Food Innovations

Session III                    Affirmation of Successful Agri-Food Innovations

### ***Lunch Break***

### **Afternoon**

Session IV  
Innovations                    Knowledge Sharing on the Best Practices for Agri-Food

Session V                      Guidelines/Approaches for Up-scaling and Out-scaling Innovations

**Day 2**                            Field Visit- To be arranged by TARI/COA with AVRDC

**Day 3**                            Expert Consultation (Contd.)

### **Forenoon**

Session VI                      Strategies and Way Forward for Adoption of Successful Agri-Food Innovations

Session VII                    Plenary Session

### ***Lunch Break***

### **Afternoon**

14th APAARI General Assembly Meeting

## **Working Group Discussion (Possible Concurrent Sessions -Tentative)**

### **Poster Session**

Posters on Successful agri-food Innovations will also be displayed for the benefit of the participants. Guidelines for preparing the posters will be circulated in advance.