

JOLISAA - Kenya

Joint Learning about Innovation Systems in African Agriculture

e-newsletter – Issue 1- 4/2011

From the editorial team

On behalf of the JOLISAA Kenya project national team, I welcome you to read the first issue of JOLISAA quarterly newsletter. The purpose is to inform you about the occurrences in JOLISAA Kenya and up-date you on issues that have a bearing on innovation systems. In this first issue, we introduce the JOLISAA project; bring you field sites news, overall coordinator field visit and the project plans for April to June, 2011. We welcome any feedback from you geared towards improving this newsletter.

Introduction

JOLISAA is a multi-institutional project being implemented in three African countries namely South Africa, Kenya and Benin. The project is implemented by a consortium of seven institutions consisting of CIRAD (France), ICRA, WUR-LEI, ETC, KARI, University of Pretoria and University of Abomey and officially started in February 2010. A steering committee guides the implementation of the project.

The project is being implemented through six work packages with each being coordinated by various consortium members. These work packages are:

- WP1 -Analytical framework (WUR-LEI)
- WP2 -Case studies(Benin,Kenya,S.Africa)
- WP3 -Capacity building (ICRA)
- WP4 -Networking (ETC Netherlands)
- WP5 -Lessons (All)
- WP6 -Coordination (CIRAD)

The work packages are interlinked such that each package smoothly links with the others with the main aim being joint learning

throughout the process. The project work plan consists of various phases starting from inventory of innovation cases followed by analysis, case assessment and thereafter a detailed field study of selected cases in each country.

In June of 2010, the first global workshop was held in Montpellier France where different countries sent delegates for a four days meeting. This meeting provided a forum where details of the project were reviewed and an action plan was drawn.

In Kenya, the project operates on the PROLINNOVA Kenya platform which is part of an international network with membership drawn from NGOs, government organizations, research institutes and the private sector. The project is coordinated from KARI headquarters in Nairobi. The project national coordination team comprises of Dr Geoffrey Kamau, Ms Violet Kirigua, PROLINNOVA National Steering Committee and an assistant coordinator Ms Teresiah Nga'ng'a.

For field implementation, a multi-KARI centre approach was adopted where work is devolved to five regions of the country rather than centralising it at the coordination level. These include Coast,

Eastern, Central, Rift Valley and Western regions of Kenya where KARI Mtwapa, Katumani, Embu, Perkera and Kakamega respectively coordinate the work. The idea is to harness a repertoire of diverse cases existing in these regions to provide the required joint learning. In each of the centres, there is a lead researcher who works with a team of three to four researchers with diverse specialisation in the research arena and these

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teams work closely with existing networks in their respective regions. In order to formally launch the project a national workshop was held at KARI headquarters from 6th to 9th December 2010. The workshop was attended by international consortium members from CIRAD (Bernard), WUR-LEI (Conny, Jolanda, Bette) Nour (ICRA) and Davo (University of Abomey), the five site teams and respective KARI Centre Directors, policy makers from various Kenyan ministries, Universities and PROLINNOVA Kenya. At the end of the workshop an action plan was drawn.

News from the field sites:

Currently, all the five site teams are busy undertaking the innovation systems case inventory and are at diverse stages of this process. A total of 30 cases have been identified so far and additional cases are expected by the end of this month. Some of the challenges that the teams are grappling with include the intricate process of unravelling the dominant type of innovation within the cases, scanty documentation of cases, the wide assortment of cases to select from, clarity on case details among others. It is however very encouraging to observe the enthusiasm that the project has created as the teams examine the innovation cases through the 'innovation systems lens'. As one of the site team members commented: *'my involvement in this project so far has opened my eyes to the dynamic nature of the innovations environment which I have been taking for granted all along'*. Our wish as a country team is for the above sentiment to apply to many who have been sailing in the same boat!

Visit to KARI Embu with JOLISAA overall coordinator - Dr Bernard Triomphe –

From 28th to 30th March, the overall coordinator of JOLISAA visited Kenya and in



the company of the national team visited KARI Embu site to appraise the situation on the ground. On arrival, the team held a brief meeting with the site team and thereafter visited the Kamurugu Agricultural Development Initiative (KADI) in Embu on the first day and the banana processing project in Meru on the second day. The first case is a mango drying project whose focus is on introduction of a cash income activity in a semi arid part of the district. The project manager gave the team an overview of the project (photo) before conducting them on a guided tour of the demonstration farm and packing plant. In Meru the chair lady and the plant operator of the Wedo Banana processing project gave the team an overview of how bananas are delivered by farmers, processed into flour and packaged.

Important issues that arose during this visit were; the need for a clear definition of the concept 'stakeholders', the cases to be small holder farmer based and the communication to be ensured within the project and to other consortium members.

Project plan -April to June 2011

April - In-country finalization of inventory
 May - Submission of inventory to CIRAD
 May/June -Preparation of cases for G2
 June 20th-24th -Attend G2 in Den Hag,

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