

## NL-CGIAR programme Seed System Development – kick-off workshop 15 – 17 May 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Report of the internal workshop days

From 15-17 May [nine research projects](#) funded in the NL-CGIAR research call for proposals on Seed System Development came together in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia for their joint kick-off meeting. Aim of the meeting, which consisted of two internal workshop days followed by a day for public multi-stakeholder exchange and an excursion (see report of the multi-stakeholder workshop [here](#)) was to identify cross-linkages and develop joint pathways to outcomes for the programme. Project partners from research, policy and practice took part in the kick-off meeting. The call on seed system development was implemented within the Netherlands' partnership with the CGIAR. It tackled a knowledge gap within CGIAR by employing a system approach to better understand access, production and development of improved genetic varieties. The nine projects funded in this call are covering 9 of the 12 CRPs and 2 of the 3 platforms, addressing 1 country in Asia, and 8 in Africa and are led by 6 different CGIAR institutes and 2 Dutch research institutes. This variety offers a unique opportunity for cross-learning between different CRPs, commodities and countries.



### Acquaintance and cross-cutting issues

The project-team got to know each other via an interactive poster session, where they also identified cross-cutting issues. Pdfs of the posters can be found [here](#).

#### *Cross-cutting issues identified were:*

Connecting with the private sector: The issue of how to increase technology adoption is relevant for many of the projects. It was felt that there is often a disconnection between private sector and extension specialists and provision of information can be challenging. It was suggested to come back together at the end of projects' running time to analyse and discuss different experiences with extension delivery methods. Suggested reading: <https://knowledge4food.net/agribusiness-based-advisory-services-abas-project-report-and-workshop/>

Nutrition: From seed system to human nutrition is a long route, and creating nutrition evidence from a seed project is therefore quite ambitious, also because none of the projects have a direct focus on nutrition. It can be addressed in the programme context via increased availability, affordability and biodiversity. An important issue is how to make seed value chains inclusive. Suggested reading: <https://knowledge4food.net/metrics-and-programming-in-nutrition-sensitive-agriculture/>

Gender and Youth: This is integrated in all projects in quite different manners. A lot of learning is taking place in the projects on this issue and the projects would appreciate an opportunity for joint learning on e.g. what business

approaches favour inclusiveness and outcomes, what gender consultations are important in terms of research, delivery and policy, regarding also different social markers and the role this plays in technology adoption.

Methodology: Sharing of different diagnostic tools within the group would be appreciated so that all can benefit from the development of tools. For the measurement of impact there should be some more discussion on how to attribute impact to the specific project within the wider context; more exchanges on how to measure impact could be useful.

Certification: A prerequisite for certification is the stable availability of easily accessible improved varieties. There are different aspects to be considered when deciding whether a formal or informal system should be preferred, and both come with advantages and disadvantages.

Interaction and communication of learnings outside of project groups: There is a need to share learnings with others working in the same area. Issues that could be considered are e.g. stakeholder engagement, interaction with other networks (within and outside CGIAR), communication of learnings. A concrete opportunity could be to organise side events or sessions at existing conferences.

### Research Uptake and Stakeholder Engagement

Research Uptake and Stakeholder Engagement as understood in the programme were presented to the participants. An integrated approach of co-design and co-creation by transdisciplinary teams employing a Theory of Change and Impact Pathway forms an integral part of the programme's strategy towards impact. Early engagement with all stakeholders from the proposal development onwards is encouraged and facilitated by the set-up of the funding instrument. More information on the topic can be found [here](#).

The group also did an exercise on stakeholder mapping, instructions for which can be found below. The mapping visualizes the alignment and interest of different stakeholders. Many of the teams found that alignment and interest are highest amongst the stakeholders that are already actively participating in the project. Some commented that they realised that it will be necessary to prioritise some key stakeholders over others and try to engage these more fully. The positioning of stakeholders can also change over time or within different work packages. Overall the visualisation of the relationship with stakeholders can help to identify an appropriate engagement strategy and can also facilitate discussions within the consortium.



### Theory of Change and Impact Pathway

A session on Theory of Change (ToC) and Impact Pathway (IP) was introduced and facilitated by Philippe Ellul from the CGIAR system management office who shared his insights and proposed the development of a joint ToC for the SSD projects. The importance of linking the elements of an IP and making sure that all elements feed into each other and the narrative of the ToC was underlined. Individual feedback was provided to all projects and teams were given the opportunity to work on improving their own ToC. Strategic suggestions were posed to try and map project indicators

with the indicators at CRP-level (as outlined in the CGIAR Results Framework) and with the FNS (Food and Nutrition Security) enabler indicators of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The added value of a ToC at project level was recognised as being a tool to discuss, implement changes and monitor how a project evolves over time. Teams started reconsideration of their project IP/ToC with the help of individual feedback provided. In Part 2 the value of working towards a ToC and IP at programme level was considered, especially the identification of common indicators for reporting, linked to those of the CGIAR reporting framework and the FNS enabler indicators. Examples were considered and discussed, such as indicators on innovations, partnerships, outcome-related ones; and issues such as ‘adoption’ instead of ‘use’, ‘positive change’ instead of ‘number of policies influenced’. Development of a ToC/IP at programme level will be continued after the workshop with the input from project team representatives.

### Thematic exchange on Seed Systems

The thematic exchange on seed systems was introduced by Joe DeVries (CEO Seed Systems Group, former VP at AGRA), who presented his views and vision on the development of sustainable seed systems in Africa. DeVries argued that the main constraint of bringing new and improved varieties to farmers lies in the availability. Farmers should have regular, dependable supply for seed, every season, and with different options to choose from. In order to make projects sustainable, seed systems should be developed with local partners and be demand-driven. While a number of countries have certified seed companies coming up, many countries in Africa do not yet have access to high quality seed.

The seed system value chain: **education -> breeding -> production -> delivery**

#### Innovations that can help scale seed supply:

1. Develop capacity at national level, develop community of practice;
2. Approach seed supply for smallholder farmers;
3. Train African seed companies to produce high-quality seed, at scale, including hybrids – competitive business with multinationals also present in many countries;
4. Increase farmer awareness of the varieties;
5. Make sure farmers have local access to seed.

#### Important lessons learned from working in the field:

1. PPP can work and should be taken further, but everyone needs a clear role;
2. Political goodwill is critical and can be nurtured;
3. There is huge untapped potential for SME growth in African agribusiness;
4. National agricultural research systems are a major, untapped source of innovation, women need to be included in the development and training;
5. Model needs to be introduced separately in each country, does not translate across borders.

During the discussion following the presentation participants stated that it is essential to develop a knowledge base and a deeper understanding of constraining and enabling factors. This is also relevant in order to enhance sustainability. Women’s empowerment is one of the issues that need to be understood better and requires more research. Connections with other existing initiatives should be sought. The SSD projects themselves offer a unique opportunity for cross-learning on overarching issues between different commodities and CRPs. Options for cooperation and joint follow-up activities were discussed (see below) to enhance collaboration between the projects and realise impact on programme level. Any joint activities to be organised must be of added value for those participating and should be based upon a joint demand.

Some of the elements of this discussion came back in the public multi-stakeholder workshop on the next day, in which the research consortia all participated and engaged with other partners from Ethiopia and the global CGIAR network. For the minutes of that public workshop, see [here](#).

## Annex 1

### The nine projects on Seed System Development

**Upscaling improved groundnut varieties through integrated seed systems for improving income and nutrition in dryland of Ghana and Mali:** This project aims to sustainably improve the groundnut seed systems for the upscaling of improved groundnut varieties for improving the income and nutrition in Ghana and Mali by adopting an innovative seed systems model that integrates the formal and informal channels to enhance seed production and marketing.

**CocoaTarget: Using citizen science to improve climatic and agro-ecological targeting of varietal recommendations and accelerating planting material access for cocoa farmers in Ghana.** This project aims to develop a farmer-led business model for the propagation and distribution of cocoa planting material that is more efficient and more responsive to climate change, and capable of providing rapid feedback to breeders in Ghana. The proposal attempts to achieve this based on citizen science, using the tricot approach that has been tested in cereals and legumes and is for the first time being tested in a perennial tree crop.

**Feed and forage seed business models to support further professionalization of the dairy sector in Kenya and Uganda.** The aim of this project is to develop viable business models for forage seed production and marketing that assure economically sustainable access to high quality forage seed to diverse clients in Kenya and Uganda.

**Integrated vegetable seed systems development in ethnic minority communities in Northern Vietnam for enhanced nutrition and income security.** This project aims to address issues related to vegetable smallholder seed systems in Northern Vietnam. Issues mentioned in the proposal are identified as inadequate access to quality seed of exogenous and indigenous vegetables varieties of desirable uniformity, health, and physiological properties, and traits such as disease resistance, micronutrient density, and consumer characters.

**Promoting stress-tolerant varieties at scale: Interlinking the private seed sector and insurance advisory services in Kenya.** This project aims to investigate how different types of market actors in high-quality seed systems can promote their clients' adaptive capacity by interlinking stress-tolerant varieties with innovative financial and advisory services that help resolve key barriers to adoption, targeting particularly female farmers and youths in Kenya.

**Women in business: chicken seed dissemination in Ethiopia and Tanzania.** This project aims to develop, promote and test women-led chicken businesses in Ethiopia and Tanzania with the goal of promoting the economic empowerment of young women, and also of improving the food and nutrition security of their households.

**Accelerating aquaculture development in Ghana through sustainable Nile Tilapia seed production and dissemination.** This project aims to build on the successes in Ghana's tilapia cage culture and to accelerate tilapia development through testing interventions to improve the seed system for small-scale cage and pond farmers.

**Policy and regulatory reform options for seed market development: Expanding the empirical evidence base in Uganda.** This project aims to improve the functioning, integration, and inclusiveness of seed systems and markets in Uganda by strengthening links between the regulatory framework, seed providers, and seed users across multiple dimensions.

**Enabling agribusiness development for scaling quality cassava seed systems for control of major viral diseases in Rwanda and Burundi.** This project aims to engage in testing, evaluating and upscaling end-user-preferred cassava varieties with strong resistance to Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD) and Cassava Mosaic Diseases (CMD) through different types of cassava agribusiness seed systems (CASS) models in Rwanda and Burundi.

Please find a PDF document with more extensive summaries of all 9 projects [here](#). More information on the respective projects and consortia can be found on the NWO website ([link](#)). In future there will also be individual project pages on the Food & Business Knowledge Platform website, where projects can upload and share information and output.

## Annex 2

### Follow-up activities

#### **By WOTRO/F&BKP/CGIAR:**

- Mid-Term meeting – learning, joint publication, make it count!
- Final meeting
- Trainings/webinars in between these meetings, based on common needs of the projects
- Reporting templates/information shared in time

#### **By SSD projects:**

- Side-event opportunities of larger conferences, e.g. of Africa Seed Trade Association
- Sharing amongst the projects information of available tools – such as RTB toolbox
- Confidential space for sharing – dropbox, LinkedIn?
- Explore the topic ‘how seed sector development can contribute to nutrition outcomes’ and if there is interest, develop joint learning activity around it.
- 

#### **Joint activities:**

- Developing of portfolio ToC/IP (sounding board of one person per project)
- Website (F&BKP) – sharing project updates (interim reports, blogs, findings) Training/joint learning: potentially on measuring impact
- Cross-cutting learning/publication: gender in business approaches
- Collaboration with ISSD – WOTRO/F&BKP to follow up to clarify roles
- Communication with CGIAR - – WOTRO/F&BKP to follow up to clarify roles
- Webinars through which projects can present their evaluation strategy, which can be used to give each other feedback and/or brainstorm with other projects on how we measure impact of the interventions that we are testing/implementing
- Individual project pages on the Food & Business Knowledge Platform website, where consortia can upload relevant information and output, more details about this will be emailed to all projects soon

### Annex 3

## **Group activity on stakeholder analysis and engagement**

### **Enhancing research impact for food security**

#### ***Strengthening knowledge sharing and enhancing research uptake***

Aim of group work (project groups each work on a strategy for their own research project or come together with other participants and choose one project): Identify main stakeholders (of the policy and practices influencing interventions of the research projects) and suggest a possible course of action towards them by the following 4 steps:

**1. List all stakeholders identified so far in your SSD research proposal that may affect the policy/practical outcome of the research project**

- Start with the most relevant and well-known actor.
- Actors may be organizations, networks, groups, departments or teams or even individual experts.

**2. Map Stakeholders onto the AIIM according to their level of alignment and interest**

Alignment:

- Do they agree with the research projects assumptions and with their approach?
- Do they want to do the same things that the research project thinks need to be done?
- Are they thinking what the research project is thinking?

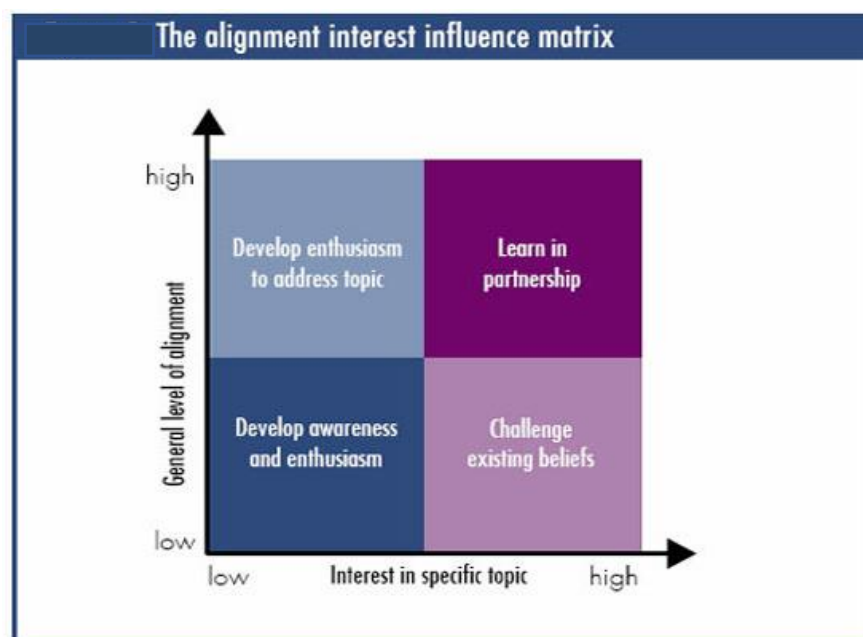
Interest:

- Are they committing time and money to this issue?/ Are they going to events on the subject etc.?
- Do they want something to happen (whether it is for or against what you propose)?
- Are they publicly speaking about this?

**3. Prioritize and consider which of the actors you have identified are the most influential on the policy/ practical process the research project want to influence**

**4. How can you adapt your current target audiences engagement strategy?**

- What consequences do you see for your stakeholder engagement & capacity building (differentiating) strategies?
- What consequences do you see for your (differentiating) communication strategies?



Source: ODI/ DFID 2010