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NEWS

Call for concept notes: Scaling up farmer-led seed enterprises

The **Upscaling and Knowledge Management Programme** of ASARECA seeks concept notes for a regional project that will generate rigorously tested and validated best-bet approaches and models for farmer-led seed enterprises that enhance smallholder access to affordable and quality seeds of improved varieties of African indigenous vegetables in selected countries of the ECA sub-region. For details visit: www.asareca.org or contact the Programme Manager at: l.kimenye@asareca.org. The closing date is 31st July 2009.

Call for part-time time consultant

ASARECA is seeking a part time consultant to support the **Policy Analysis and Advocacy Programme's (PAAP)** policy information generation and dissemination through production of periodic materials for diverse audiences. This work will cut across the different projects that PAAP is implementing. The consultant should be based in Uganda. For details visit www.asareca.org or contact the Programme Manager at: paap@asareca.org. The closing date is 15th June 2009

GOING TO SCALE: ENHANCING THE ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT CAPACITIES OF RURAL COMMUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT IN THE HIGHLANDS OF EASTERN AFRICA

The African Highlands Initiative (AHI) of the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) and the Policy Analysis and Advocacy programme (PAAP) of the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) with funding from the International Development Research Center (IDRC) are implementing a project that seeks to accelerate the uptake of natural resource management innovations in selected highland areas of eastern Africa. The project, to be implemented in Ethiopia and Uganda is premised on a hypothesis that multi-level, multi-stakeholder innovation platforms have positive multiplier effects in scaling sustainable land management (SLM) innovations with spontaneous impacts on livelihoods,

poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. This issue of the newsletter provides an over view of the project.

Introduction

THE highlands of eastern Africa comprise 23 percent of the regional land area yet it is home to over 50 percent of the region's population. Despite producing over 50 percent of the staple foods and most cash crops in the region, agricultural productivity remains low mainly due to pervasive land degradation and poor institutional support to scaling up innovations that have proved successful in pilot sites. With a population projected to double in the next 50 years, there looms a major crisis in the region if corrective measures are not taken now. Despite the ample scientific innovations generated to mitigate natural resource degradation (in this context on farm soil and water), little has been translated into action.

Problem domain

Land degradation is one of the major constraints to improved agricultural productivity and household welfare in most countries in eastern and central Africa. Land degradation processes impair the capacity of ecosystems to provide critical environmental services such as clean water and fertile soils. Consequently, social-ecological resilience is undermined. The problem is more complex in the highlands where land degradation is intricately embedded in the poverty trap and further associated with dynamic rapid changes that increasingly render agro-ecosystems vulnerable to shocks. With increasing mouths to feed arising from a projected doubling of the population in the next 50 years, a major crisis is looming in the region unless corrective measures are taken now. It is estimated that 95 million hectares of land in the region have reached a state of degradation where only huge investments can make them productive again. The total nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (NPK) loss is estimated at 1.5 million tonnes. This is equivalent to US \$ 2.1 million at the US \$ 70 per 50 kilogramme bag of NPK fertilizer in Kenya and Tanzania as of 2008.

Research evidence has shown that farmers in the region can increase their farm productivity by up to 5 times upon adoption of sustainable land management (SLM) innovations. These innovations include: (i) use of legumes in crop rotation, mulching, terracing, biomass transfer, contour bunds; (ii) use of information and communication technology (ICT) for promoting technology uptake (iii) new approaches of influencing policies and learning. However, land degradation interventions have achieved minimal large scale impact in the region. This is mainly attributed to the gap between knowledge and action. This is exacerbated by a combination of complex linked factors that include lack of enabling policies and appropriate institutional arrangements that give incentives for uptake and utilization of SLM innovations. Endemic poverty, fast growing population, migration of the productive social groups particularly

males and the educated, land tenure insecurity and conflicts add to the complexity. Consequently, land degradation not only persists, but is increasing at an alarming rate. This has culminated into household and national food insecurity with severe consequences on vulnerable groups notably women, children and the aged.

The eastern Africa highlands comprise 23 percent of the total land mass with the highest agricultural potential in the region; accommodating and providing livelihood to over 50 percent of the population. This study will be implemented in the highlands of Ethiopia and Uganda. In the two countries, the highlands provide multiple services not only to the inhabitants, but also to million others in the lowlands. Natural resources play a significant role to the majority rural poor in the region whose economic activity is predominantly agriculture. This, positions SLM as a unique pro-poor rural livelihood strategy to unlock smallholder farmers out of poverty traps. Countries in the region have elevated NRM and specifically land management as a critical research and development agenda. For example, in Uganda, sustainable NRM is a third pillar in the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) and is mainstreamed into the Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) as well as in the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) strategy. In Ethiopia, addressing land degradation has been consistently identified as a major priority in national strategies and policy documents. Most prominent, is the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programs I & II (SDPRP I, SPDRP II and Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty. These countries have adopted the regional poverty alleviation efforts through the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) and the Environment Programme and Action Plan of the New Partnership for African Development. Sustainable land management features prominently in the CAADP Pillar I (water and land resource management) and Pillar IV (agricultural research, technology dissemination and adoption). Further, the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) of the two countries are members of the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA). Natural resource management features as a key component in three of seven ASARECA Programmes; Natural Resource Management and Forestry, Policy Analysis and Advocacy Programme (PAAP); and Up-scaling and Knowledge Management.

Though SLM has been given prominence in national and regional development strategies, land degradation manifested by loss of biodiversity, loss of land cover and reduced access to sufficient and clean water has persisted in the region. The mainstreaming of SLM policies into national development strategies and policies has not resulted into effective implementation of SLM at landscape levels. Studies show that, policies are among the reasons for the limited adoption and wide impact of SLM innovations in the region. Reversal of land degradation demands that governments devise a range of policy instruments that can influence behaviour and practice in a decentralized manner. Sustainable land management related policies are intended to create an enabling environment for collective action, collaboration, networking and

conflict resolution. However, the current institutional set-up, where policies are addressed by different departments does not allow integration at various levels of governance. This proposal builds on the External Review and Impact Assessment (ERIA) of AHI recommendations and lessons from ECAPAPA work to support rural communities for wide scale adoption of SLM innovations in the highlands of eastern Africa. ERIA was funded by IDRC and implemented during 2005-2007. The overall finding of the report was that AHI has successfully implemented integrated natural resources management (INRM) that works. Other observations were;

- AHI has had tangible impact on the livelihoods of participants and, in some cases, of other farmers in the sites, as well as several positive outcomes on farmers and partner institutions. However, impacts are mainly local, and it is timely for AHI to facilitate the up/out-scaling of its methods and approaches by building on multi-level partnerships in subsequent phases to benefit more communities and landscapes.
- The strengths of the program are related to its strong commitment to NRM; informal capacity building of partner institutions and scientists; advocacy for change in research approaches; influencing other actors such as the Sub Saharan Africa Challenge Program (SSA CP); consolidation of system components and their relationships; and the ability to influence communities using social science and participatory tools.
- The institutionalization of the INRM approach is taking place, though at different speeds and with different degrees of effectiveness across sites and countries, depending on specific local challenges. This has been supported by successful facilitation of local level networks at the watershed level and the engagement of different types of stakeholders through training and dissemination methods.
- There is a need to build capacity in action research in INRM for sustainability and landscape level impacts.

The external review and impact assessment came up with the following recommendations:

- Strengthening institutional partnership, influencing policy formulation and establishing linkages that enhance collaboration between national level line ministries and the local governments. Further, build capacities of local governments and organizations to conduct more adaptive research for scaling up and facilitate the benchmark sites to evolve into centres of best practice as a sustainability strategy.

- Building on its most specialized and recognized strengths, i.e., the capacity to foster and catalyze partnerships, to conduct participatory research effectively in order to identify and promote INRM technologies that meet the needs of local users, and to facilitate actions by key local players.
- Investing more in local scientists and organizations as a way to ensure the sustainability of the process it promotes, and to be able to build successful strategies and modalities for future “disengagement” and out-scaling strategies with its partners.

Why Ethiopia and Uganda?

Both Uganda and Ethiopia are implementing decentralization based on principles of devolution and democratic governance with more powers at district level (Uganda) and Woredas (Ethiopia). However, these levels of governance face many challenges including;

- overlapping responsibilities between central and local government organs,
- Weak enforcement of by laws associated with potential conflict of interest by elected local leaders,
- Limited sensitization about the benefits from enforcement of byelaws;
- Oppressive and inappropriate bylaws
- Conflicting and pervasive policies.

Therefore, there is a need to harmonize different instruments and operating mechanisms to adequately influence, catalyze and promote the adoption of SLM innovations. The success of policies in improving SLM depends to a large extent on a knowledge based adaptation to local conditions, institutions to enforce them and participation of local people in the policy decision making process. The project will therefore capitalize on opportunities and benefits of decentralization and will in addition innovatively address the challenges to leverage support and buy in for effective SLM.

AHI’s attempts at reversing land degradation in the highlands of eastern Africa championed INRM as an approach to address sustainability, productivity and equity concerns in land management. The INRM approach is based on collaborative learning with emphasis on active participation of stakeholders including researchers, extension agents, end users and policy makers. However, operationalizing this collaboration at wide scales, demands a more rigorous process than hitherto used. Lessons from AHI pilot sites indicate that generating wide scale INRM impacts require multi-scale, multi stakeholder engagements that grant access to a large consortium of actors in different institutional settings.

The proposed project will focus on mitigating land degradation by promoting landscape-level SLM. This demands attention on both scaling up and out processes, capitalizing on the mutual connection between the two to address cross-scale linkages. This has not often been addressed in past projects. In scaling-out, the project will critically reflect on; (i) adapting models and approaches for SLM developed and tested from pilot BMS to landscape levels; (ii) investigating the role of local knowledge and institutions in implementing SLM innovations; and (iii) exploring ways in which different institutions can collaborate to expand their influence on SLM. In Scaling-up, the project will pay particular attention to the processes that influence policies and institutional processes.

In addition, more attention will be given to; (i) understanding of the socio ecological status under which alternative SLM innovations can be adopted and implemented at local level; (ii) enhancing social capital among communities and external agencies; (iii) developing effective linkages between key players in technology generation and uptake; and (v) creating enabling policy environment for SLM.

The project builds upon AHI's achievements, and will contribute to ASARECA's NRM strategy, specifically, in the following target areas: (i) strengthened institutions (including farmer organizations), formulation of enabling policies and facilitation of building of social capital for improved natural resource governance; ii) strengthened capabilities and competencies in action research, policy analysis and advocacy; (iii) increased effectiveness in knowledge management, brokering and sharing by leveraging more benefits from existing and new technologies and knowledge; (iv) policy reforms that provide enabling environment in the agricultural sector for increased investments in SLM innovations; and (v) robust cross site synthesis, data and guidelines that can be used to scale up and out SLM technologies and policies that feed into regional policy harmonization processes.

Why and what additional research is required

The need for additional research stems from the fact that wide scale adoption of practices for improved land management has yet to be achieved. Despite the severity and wider implication of land degradation, several decades of NRM research have proved disappointing in their effort to halt the process. The current scenario is that of stressed environments and fragile ecosystems where poverty is endemic. Land degradation interventions are scale dependent. Consequently, their cumulative effects make them an issue on regional and global scales that requires higher level partnerships and collective action. Achieving landscape level impacts is contingent upon addressing the following knowledge gaps which exist at different levels:

- a) At farm level there is still lack of continuity in land management (characterised by patchy conservation) and the lack of a landscape perspective. Farmers' institutions are weak with limited advocacy and lobbying skills and poor representation of the vulnerable groups. More specifically, a gender dimension which explores dynamics in SLM is limited. Further, there are wide gaps in critical information required for SLM and the problem of fixed mind sets among farmers.
- b) There are no effective structures including strategies for linking community level organizations to district and national decision making institutions for landscape level outcomes.
- c) Participation of communities in local level natural resource governance including bylaws reform and enforcement has been minimal despite its huge potential in spearheading landscape level management.
- d) At district level, where farmers groups and national level decision making intersect, knowledge is lacking on the mechanisms for involvement (such as rules of engagement by various stakeholders) and support for integration between the different levels. Currently, district departments involved with NRM are poorly coordinated and subjected to different social political interests. Meanwhile, power and control factors characterise politics resulting in competition and conflicts.
- e) At national level, linkages between research and development institutions are weak and the current institutional set-up limits integrated approaches to land management.
- f) Finally, opportunities from developments in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT) have not been fully utilized to catalyze wide scale landscape level impacts

Emerging insights from AHI and ECAPAPA show that landscape level impacts can be realised through strong multi-level innovation platforms that use social learning and adaptive management. The concept of social learning refers to learning processes among a group of people who seek to improve a common situation and take action collectively. This understanding effectively extends experiential learning into collective learning. It is a form of adaptive governance, in the sense that NRM governance requires multi-stakeholder participatory processes at different levels which facilitate broad community participation to devise locally appropriate rules, sanctions, and conflict resolution processes.

Gender consideration

The project recognizes that sustainable land management has important gender dimensions. The degradation of natural resources increases women's bulk of work, with longer working hours, shorter resting periods, greater fragmentation of work, and more recourse to multiple occupations than men. The division of labour in land management activities leads men and women to follow different economic strategies and use natural resources differently in their pursuit of livelihood. Women are disadvantaged as in many cases they have insecure land tenure with limited ownership and control of land resource. The project will capture these differences and constraints. Understanding access, ownership and control of land based resources in the communities involved will be crucial in achieving sustainable results. Proactive strategies will be used to ensure active participation of both male and female farmers, and other marginalized groups, and that, benefits from SLM are accessible to all.

Results and dissemination

The proposed project will reach both male and female farmers; the youth and other marginalized rural people in the highlands of eastern Africa, local and national government and non government organisations involved in agricultural research and development, relevant regional and international organisations, and research and development practitioners at regional and international levels. It will leverage upon program 7 of ASARECA (Up-scaling and Knowledge Management Programme), and contribute towards the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) priorities 4 and 5 on NRM and policy, and institutional innovation respectively. The project will also leverage on the Lake Kivu Pilot Learning Site Project under Sub Saharan Challenge Programme of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) on innovation platforms for international agricultural research for development (IAR4D). The project design addresses the challenges of vulnerable social groups and it is expected that by the end of the project most members from this group will have: (i) increased involvement in more income generating activities and control over income streams; (ii) improved social security and status and thus increased visibility and involvement in decision making; (iii) increased voices and choices in the communities; and (iv) reduced time of women and children involved in some domestic chores (for example, collecting water and firewood).

Expected outcomes include change of attitudes, behaviours and practices of land managers and service providers involved in agro-based natural resource management. It is expected that innovation platforms will trigger institutional innovations leading to institutional change in the way they deal with management of agro-based natural resources. This includes mainstreaming the innovation platform into the district level development infrastructure. Proper functioning of the platform will also lead to attainment of landscape level conservation. In the long run, this

project will therefore contribute to improved productivity, income and food security among highland communities in eastern Africa.

The different forms of capacity to be reinforced include; farmers and community's capacity in adaptive management of agricultural based natural resources, researchers capacity in action research for integrated land resource management, facilitating partnership and team work, process documentation, data synthesis, development and packaging of knowledge products appropriate to the different user groups and capacity of development agents such as non-governmental organization, community based organizations and extension service providers in communicating appropriate messages to farming communities and play active role in providing feedback. Capacity in adaptive management of the other actors in the social learning platform will be built so that it (the platform) can provide the right support to rural farming communities in building their resilience to coping with risks and uncertainties associated with land resources management.

The knowledge management and communication framework to be developed in this project will provide a means and structure to facilitate dissemination of project results through social learning. The framework will also identify stakeholder domains for particular dissemination pathways at local, district, national and international levels. These include leaflets, brochure, bulletin (for local communities), policy briefs (for district and national decision and policy makers), quarterly and annual reports (for scientific and donor communities) working papers and journal papers (for scientific communities) among others.

Major outputs expected from the research

The project is expected to produce different outputs. These include; various method guides and frameworks on facilitating social learning in the innovation platforms, models based on patterns and trends in applying adaptive management of agro-based natural resources; working/journal and review papers on social ecological resilience, social learning and adaptive management in the highlands of eastern Africa; database on characterization of trade-offs between adaptation strategies and innovations and different farmer knowledge products.

For more details, contact the team leader, Dr. Joy Tukahirwa j.tukahirwa@cgiar.org, Implementing partners: Dr. Jeremiahs Mowo (AHI) j.mowo@cgiar.org; Dr. Michael Waithaka (PAAP) paap@asareca.org, Dr William Wagoire (NARO Uganda) wagoire1@yahoo.co.uk or Dr. Kindu Mekonnen (EIAR Ethiopia) kindumeko@yahoo.com.

COMMUNICATION

Research grants

ENDURE, a European Network that brings together more than 300 researchers in the fields of agronomy, biology, ecology, economics and the social sciences has launched an international call for applications for grants for two scientists from International Cooperation Partner Countries (ICPC) who wish to spend a period of up to three months working at one of the ENDURE research or university participant institutions. For more information on participating institutions plus a list of the ICPC countries, visit: http://www.endure-network.eu/human_resources/staff_mobility/external_mobility The deadline is 1st July 2009.

PAAP received this information from Dr. Sarah Perryman, Rothamsted International, UK. She is gratefully acknowledged.

Partners Pledge US\$30 Million to Strengthen African Think Tanks to Inform Development Policy

Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation today announced US\$30 million in grants to 24 think tanks in East and West Africa. The Think Tank Initiative (TTI) will support independent policy think tanks in developing countries, enabling them to provide sound research that informs and influences national policy. The three donors have committed a total of \$90 million to the initiative.

Policymakers in developing countries often lack credible, objective information to address increasingly complex social and economic issues. Independent think tanks can play a critical role in supplying this information and improving the national debate about policy options. TTI will give core funding to local think tanks, helping them produce high-quality research that will lead to better policies and, ultimately, more equitable and prosperous societies.

For more information about the Think Tank Initiative, visit www.idrc.ca/thinktank

PAAP received this information from Daniel Karanja of the Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa, he is gratefully acknowledged.

Nominations sought for the Ernesto Illy Trieste Science Prize

TWAS, the academy of science for the developing world, is seeking nominations for the 2009 Ernesto Illy Trieste Science Prize. The Prize, sponsored by Trieste-based illycaffè, has been established to give international recognition and visibility to outstanding scientific achievements made by scientists living and working in the developing countries. In 2009 the prize will be given for outstanding achievements in: Climate change and its impact on agriculture in developing countries. The prize carries a US\$100,000 monetary award and a plaque. The deadline for receiving nominations is 31 May 2009. Further details on eligibility criteria and submission procedure are available online: http://www.twas.org/honor/TSP_info.html where the nomination form can also be downloaded. For additional information, please contact: prizes@twas.org

PAAP received this information from Daniel Karanja of the Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa, he is gratefully acknowledged.

Vacancy: Communications Manager

The African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) seeks to recruit a Communications Manager who shall be based at AWARD's office in Nairobi, Kenya. Under the supervision of the Project Manager, the Communications Manager will bring in-depth experience in the use of electronic and print media for the effective delivery of project outputs. Applicants are invited to send a cover letter illustrating their suitability for the position with a detailed curriculum vitae with names and addresses of three referees, including telephone, fax numbers and e-mail addresses. All correspondence should be addressed to the Human Resources Unit, World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), P.O. Box 30677, Nairobi, Kenya or via e-mail: icrafhru@cgiar.org Deadline for applications is 01st July 2009 and should indicate "Application for a Communications Manager - AWARD" on their application letters and email submissions. For more information about the opportunity, please inquire directly from Donald Onyoni at d.onyoni@cgiar.org

PAAP received this information from Sipalla Florence, CGIAR Gender & Diversity Program, Nairobi, Kenya. She is gratefully acknowledged.

This newsletter is an attempt to use e-communications to provide to a broad audience within and outside Eastern and Central Africa a mechanism for distribution and exchange of information relevant to agricultural policy issues. This newsletter is being sent to you as PAAP's stakeholder. We want to respect your privacy and desire not to have your e-mail inbox filled with unwanted correspondence. If you do not want to receive this newsletter please send us a note at paap@asareca.org, and we will remove your name from the distribution list.