



CONCEPT NOTE

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP:

Improving Knowledge Management to achieve integration Entrepreneurship, Climate-Smart Agriculture and Digital Revolution into Public Agricultural Advisory Services: Lessons Learned, Sustainability and Scaling Strategies

13-15 December 2017,
Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)



November 2017

A/ Background

Agricultural and rural advisory services (ARAS) play a crucial role in knowledge brokering and facilitation of interactions between actors and stakeholders of agricultural innovation systems. ARAS are meant to provide adequate and customized support (access to innovation and technologies, capacity building, facilitation, support to decision-making processes) to value chain actors. They also facilitate not only the identification and expression of demands for knowledge, innovations and technologies, but also the participatory development and efficient use of solutions.

In West and Central Africa (WCA), the effective fulfillment of these various functions is key to facilitate changes and innovations required to achieve the objective of agricultural value chains with higher technical, economic and environmental performances as advocated by national, regional and continental agricultural policies and investments. A successful transition towards Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) and vibrant agricultural entrepreneurship (Agripreneurship) is one of the key challenges. The negative effects of climate change and variability on the performance and future of farming are visible and would be even more severe in the years to come if adequate measures are not taken. Fostering entrepreneurship in agriculture is now widely recognized as a key lever to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth and development.

CSA and Agripreneurship will generate the expected impacts only if they are widely adopted. So far, the contribution of ARAS to CSA and the development of Agripreneurship is considered as insufficient. Several initiatives have been taken recently at national, regional, continental and global levels to fill the gap. One can name non-exhaustively the international workshop organized in 2016 by RESCAR-AOC, GFRAS, CTA, GWI, GIZ, MINADER, AFAAS and ACEFA on improving the inclusive responsiveness of ARAS to CSA and Agripreneurship through enhanced knowledge management in ARAS schemes. The 7th GFRAS Annual Meeting held also in 2016 in Cameroon discussed the Role of ARAS for inclusive Agripreneurship. The 3rd AFAAS Africa Wide Agricultural Extension Week organized in October and November 2017 in South Africa explored strategies for ARAS to scale-up CSA while integrating Youth, Women and the Digital revolution.

Agricultural and rural advisory services providers have diversified in recent years with the emergence of actors with more or less specific roles: private sector, NGOs, farmer trainers and producer organizations (POs). This evolution can potentially increase outreach and ensure the delivery of the range of complementary services needed and demanded by value chain actors. Despite this pluralism, the Public Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services (P-ARAS) still have a decisive role in achieving better access and efficient use of knowledge, innovations, technologies necessary to the change in knowledge, attitudes and practices required by the shift to CSA and Agripreneurship. P-ARAS are still the only providers with an important territorial network and nationwide cover allowing them to reach a maximum and a diversity of value chain actors. They usually have a minimum of resources to run their operations and to be able to work on the long term. Their involvement is crucial for the scaling of relevant results and innovations developed by other actors of the innovation system.

While the involvement of P-ARAS is seen as crucial for successful promotion of CSA and agripreneurship, there are currently questions about their effectiveness and the level of this involvement considering their usual low responsiveness. Comparatively to other ARAS providers, the capacity of P-ARAS to adjust or anticipate quickly and timely in line with the varied and evolving demands of value chain actors is generally low. In P-ARAS, Knowledge Management capacities which are central for the responsiveness and efficiency of extension schemes are generally poor.

ICTs have the potential to improve the dissemination of information (e.g. on weather, markets etc.), but also for learning, support to decision making processes. They can also contribute to raise efficiency of extensionists' works (e.g. digital pen) particularly in the WCA

context where the ratio extensionist/producers is very low. P-ARAS unlike other providers are not yet harnessing enough this potential to improve information sharing, learning and make services more affordable and accessible to value chain actors. This weak responsiveness of P-ARAS is often attributed to lack of adequate human and financial resources, poor interactions with agricultural research and other actors in the innovation system, and strong centralization that often makes decision-making processes slow.

In several WCA countries, Agripreneurship, CSA and Digital revolution are considered as emerging topics. Their adequate consideration by P-ARAS is seen as critical for the transformation of agriculture in WCA. Few initiatives were undertaken during recent years to meet this challenge. These initiatives are usually carried out in the framework of projects whose duration and intervention areas are limited. Their impacts are thus also limited because of low outreach and lack of actual and sustainable mainstreaming in the ARAS scheme of good practices developed. It is believed that adequate analysis and documentation of these past or ongoing initiatives can enable the identification and sharing of relevant and robust strategies and good practices to meet the challenge of capacity building of providers and particularly P-ARAS to mainstream and scale emerging topics. The identification of the strategies and practices will also include the analysis of the effectiveness of the role of the Demand and the Enabling Environment considering their high influence on performance of ARAS in facilitating innovation processes. The workshop is in line with this consideration. It is organized jointly by the West and Central Africa Network of Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services (RESCAR-AOC), the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS), the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) and the National Agency for Rural Development (ANADER) of Côte d'Ivoire. Outputs and outcomes will contribute to achieving RESCAR-AOC's vision which is "Effective ARAS mobilized in line with demand to facilitate sustainable development in WCA".

B/ Objective

The workshop aims to promote analysis, lessons learning and documentation of knowledge management improvement experiences in the P-ARAS to develop adequate strategies for meeting the challenge of better integration of CSA, agripreneurship and DR in the contribution of ARAS to sustainable development in AOC.

The specific objectives of the workshop are to:

- Foster experience exchange and lessons learning on integrating Agripreneurship, CSA and DR in Public Agricultural Advisory Services (P-ARAS);
- Discuss requirements and arrangements for sustainability and efficient scaling of Agripreneurship, CSA and DR by P-RAS;
- Develop a policy brief for awareness raising on the need, key intervention areas and contribution expected from different actors to improve Knowledge Management (KM) achieve mainstreaming of Agripreneurship, CSA and DR in PARAS;
- Outline a regional project proposal on improving Knowledge management in P-ARAS through successful mainstreaming of ICTs to raise their delivery capacity;

Further to these objectives, RESCAR-AOC will also use the unique opportunity offering the workshop to discuss and finalize its work plan for 2018.

C/ Methodology and articulation

The workshop will take place during three days articulated in eight thematic sessions (see table 1). After the framing of the workshop (Session 1), activities will actually start by a series of presentations of results of case studies on the integration of Agripreneurship, CSA and ICTs in public ARAS (Session 2). Each case study will be articulated around the six following key

points: (i) Background, genesis and objective of the experience; (ii) Beneficiaries (profile, numbers, selection criteria) and overview of activities conducted; (iii) Partners involved and their respective roles; (iv) Adjustments necessary in the existing extension scheme; (v) Preliminary results / changes observed at the level of beneficiaries and extension scheme and (vi) Challenges, lessons learnt and conditions for scaling and sustainability (see annex 1). Prior to the event, participants will receive and fill a questionnaire including details of their experiences.

Based on content of presentation case studies and related discussions held in plenary, technical and management implications of integrating entrepreneurship, CSA and ICTs in public ARAS will be identified and thoroughly analyzed (Session 3). Four thematic working groups addressing issues of knowledge management and gaps, governance of the scheme, methods and tools, and staffing will be set-up for that. Their results will be presented and validated in plenary.

Conditions for sustainability and scaling will also be addressed (Session 4), first of all through group work on key specific assets, challenges and actions required at the three following levels: (i) Delivery capacity of P-ARAS, (ii) Demand and (iii) Enabling environment. Conclusions of each working group will be shared and discussed in plenary. Results of this Session 4 will constitute one of the key materials of Session 5 dedicated to the drafting of a regional project proposal aiming at mainstreaming ICTs for efficient scaling of CSA and Agripreneurship. The facilitator will lead a collective brainstorming for thorough situational analysis, identification of the desired situation and related objectives and the strategy. The brainstorming will also explore potential technical partners, financial partners, implementing partners, various models of using ICTs for CSA and Agripreneurship, issues of digital literacy to support ICTs use by extension field staff as well as farmers, among others.

A policy brief aiming to raise awareness of policy makers, investors and ARAS professionals on the need, key intervention areas and specific contribution expected from different actors involved to achieve successful mainstreaming of Agripreneurship, CSA and ICTs in P-ARAS will be developed (Session 6).

The process for this will consist primarily in a collective brainstorming session articulated around the four guiding questions hereafter: (i) What have been the added value of the involvement of public RAS in the promotion of Entrepreneurship, CSA and ICTs? (to what impact is this drive contributing to? what are the evidence to demonstrate this); (ii) Why and how could agricultural policies and investments contribute to mainstreaming of Entrepreneurship, CSA and ICTs in public RAS? What would be the consequences of inaction i.e. if no efficient measures are taken to support P-RAS achieve their digital revolution and be more involved and effective in the promotion of Entrepreneurship and CSA; (iii) What changes are necessary at the Demand side and Enabling Environment to increase efficiency and sustainability of interventions of public RAS in Entrepreneurship, CSA and ICTs? (iv) What role for RESCAR-AOC and CF play in mainstreaming Agripreneurship, CSA and ICT in Public RAS in WCA? How should they work in partnership with other stakeholders to achieve this objective?

Arguments and evidence gathered from discussions around these questions will be used to draft the policy brief that will be fine-tuned through an iterative process amongst a small core team set-up purposefully at the end of the workshop. Session 7 will consist in deciding on the way forward for the finalization of outputs of the workshop, the facilitator will animate plenary discussion around remaining or subsequent actions and the adequate timeline for

their achievement. RESCAR-AOC will take advantage of the opportunity of the workshop to address some internal functional and planning issues. This will include drawing lessons of the e-conference on country fora, outlining the strategy for AEW and Generally Assembly planed in 2019 and finalizing the action plan for 2018.

Table 1. Agenda of the workshop

Time	Activities	Responsible
Day 1: 13th December 2017		
Session 1: Opening and framing of the workshop		
8h00-8h15	1.1/ Welcome and installation of participants	Organizing committee
8h15-8h30	1.2/ opening remarks 1.3/ Background, objective and articulation of the workshop	Dr Sidiki Cissé Patrice Djamén
Session 2: Presentation of case studies		
8h30-10h00	2.1/ Examples and lessons learnt of integrating Agricultural Entrepreneurship in activities of Public Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services (4 presentations, 15min each, and 30min of discussion)	Delegates of different countries
10h00-10h30	2.2/ Examples and lessons learnt of integrating Climate Smart Agriculture in Public Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services (4 presentations, 15min each, and 30min of general discussion)	Delegates of different countries
10h30-11h00	Coffee-break & networking	Organizing committee
11h00-11h45	2.2 (cont.)/ Examples and lessons learnt of integrating Climate Smart Agriculture in Public Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services (3 presentations, 15min each, and 20min of general discussion)	Delegates of different countries
11h45-13h00	2.3/ Examples and lessons learnt of integrating ICTs in Public Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services (3 presentations, 15min each, and 30min of general discussion)	Delegates of different countries
13h00-14h00	Lunch-break & networking	Organizing committee (OC)
Session 3: Technical and Management implications of integrating new topics in P-ARAS		
14h00-15h30	3.1 Good practices and arising issues: four working groups (part 1): (i) knowledge gaps / areas needing further understanding and documentation; (ii) Methods and tools; (iii) Governance of the extension scheme and linkages with actors of innovation systems; (iv) Staffing (profile and competencies at field and management levels)	Working groups
15h30-15h45	Coffee-break & networking	Organizing committee
15h45-17h00	3.1/ Good practices and arising issues (Part 2): presentation and discussion of results of working groups (10min/working group, 25min of general discussion)	Facilitator
Day 2: 14th December 2017		
Session 4: Conditions for sustainability and efficient integration and scaling of Agripreneurship, CSA and ICTs by P-ARAS:		
8h00-9h30	4.1/ Identification of key specific assets, challenges and actions required at various components. Three working groups (i) Delivery capacity of P-ARAS, (ii) Demand and (iii) Enabling environment	Working groups
9h30-10h30	4.1/ Identification of key specific assets, challenges and actions required at various components. Plenary presentation and validation of results of working groups (10min/working group, and 30 min of general discussion)	Facilitator

Time	Activities	Responsible
10h30-11h00	Coffee-break & networking	Organizing committee
Session 5. Outlining of a regional project proposal to mainstream ICTs in Public ARAS for efficient scaling of CSA and Agripreneurship in WCA		
11h00-13h00	5.1/ Clustering and in-depth analysis of factors limiting the delivery capacity of P-ARAS in harnessing the potential of Digital Revolution in the promotion of Entrepreneurship and CSA 5.2/ Identification of the core problem, causes and effects to be addressed by the project	Participants
13h00-14h00	Lunch-break & networking	Organizing committee
14h00-15h30	5.3/ Statement of the desired situation and objectives to achieve 5.4/ Exploring models of using ICTS for CSA and Agripreneurship, 5.5/ Outlining of the strategy and impact pathway	Facilitator
15h30-15h45	Coffee-break & networking	Organizing committee
15h45-17h00	5.5/ Outlining of the strategy and impact pathway (cont. & end) 5.6/ Exploration of potential partners and opportunities for their engagement	Facilitator
Day 3: 15th December 2017		
Session 6: Drafting of a policy brief on mainstreaming Agripreneurship, CSA and ICTs in P-ARAS		
8h00-9h30	6.1/ gathering of arguments and evidence. Four working groups: (i) specific added-value of the involvement of P-ARAS in the promotion of Agripreneurship, CSA, DR; (ii) why and how should policies and investments contribute in this drive, what would be the cost of inaction; (iii) key changes/improvements necessary at the Demand side and Enabling Environment; (iv) Role of RESCAR-AOC and CF and modalities for partnerships with other stakeholders	Working groups + Facilitator
9h30-10h30	6.2/ gathering of arguments and evidence (cont. & end): plenary presentation and validation of results of working groups	Facilitator
10h30-11h00	Coffee-break & networking	Organizing committee
Session 7: Way forward for the finalization of outputs of the writeshop		
11h00-12h00	7.1/ Drafting of an action plan to keep the momentum created and enhance documentation and learning from of P-ARAS activities related to Agripreneurship, CSA and DR 7.2/ Elaboration of the Road map for the development of the regional project and finalization of the policy brief	Facilitator
Session 8: RESCAR-AOC Planning meeting		
12h00-13h00	8.1/ Finalizing and drawing lessons of the e-conference on efficiency and sustainability of country fora (1h)	Facilitator
13h00-14h00	Lunch-break	Organizing committee
14h00-15h30	8.2/ Brainstorming on the strategy for a successful AEW and RESCAR-AOC General Assembly in 2019 (45min) 8.3/ RESCAR-AOC work plan for 2018 (45min)	Facilitator
15h30-15h45	Closing of the workshop	Patrice Djamen Dr Sidiki Cissé

D/ Participants

The workshop will bring together about fifteen participants, representatives of RESCAR-AOC members, resource person and partners involved in the development of agricultural and rural advisory services, and particularly those funded and managed by central and/or local government services. To capitalize and build on past activities, participants to workshop will be mainly those who were supported by CTA in 2015 to attend the African Forum of Innovation in Agriculture in Durban (South Africa) and who have already started reflecting on strategies to improve the performance of public ARAS through the harnessing of the potential of ICTs.

E/ Dates, venue and logistics of the workshop

The workshop will take place at the meeting room of the Headquarters of ANADER in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire). It will run from 13th to 15th December 2017. All participants are responsible to ensure their own medical insurance. Application for entry visa to Côte d'Ivoire can be submitted online. The processing time generally takes a maximum of four days. The organizing committee will arrange pick-up and transfer from Abidjan international airport. For further information about this event contact p.djamen759@gmail.com

F/ Main organisers

RESCAR-AOC, GFRAS, CTA, ANADER

G/ Annexes

Annex 1. Articulation of the power point presentation of case studies

15 min, each power point presentation should have a maximum of 10 to 12 slides maximum addressing the following points. 15min will be allocated for each presentation

Key points to address	number of slides (max)
A/ Background, genesis and objective of the experience	2
B/ Beneficiaries (profile, numbers, selection criteria) and overview of activities conducted	2
C/ Partners involved and their respective roles	1
D/ Rationale of actions undertaken by Extension and how these actions are adding value / catalyzing activities of other actors involved in the initiatives?	1
E/ Adjustments necessary in the existing extension scheme: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Staff: profile, competencies, number- Methods and tools used- Relationship with other actors (e.g. Research, POs, Private sector etc.) of the innovation system	2
F/ Preliminary results / changes observed at the level of beneficiaries and extension scheme	2
G/ Challenges, lessons learnt and conditions for scaling and sustainability	2
Total slides (max)	12