



The Fifth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference 2016

Engaging Universities in Farmer-Led Research

Concept Note

Background

Worldwide, millions of farmers are addressing livelihood constraints and exploring new opportunities by experimenting with unique combinations of indigenous knowledge and new ideas from a variety of sources. Their local innovations include both “hard” technologies, such as tools or for example pest management techniques, and “soft” innovations, such as new ways of communications or marketing. These socio-institutional changes are generated by groups rather than individuals. Increasingly, international appreciation for the potential of building on local innovation has grown (e.g., Reij and Waters-Bayer, 2000). However, the current mechanisms for funding participatory research for development, such as competitive grant schemes are largely controlled and focusing on supporting research designed by researchers as opposed to farmer-led/demand driven research. They favour activities that involve farmers in the work of researchers and extensionists rather than involve these user-groups in incorporating ideas to shape research design and implementation. Research users, particularly farmers have difficulty accessing these bureaucratic structures and cannot genuinely influence them.

In light of the above, the Platform for Africa-Europe Partnerships in Agricultural Research for Development (PAEPARD) initiated in 2009 is grounded on the need to mobilize multi-stakeholders actors and equip them to advocate for flexible funding mechanisms that support farmer (End-user)-led Agricultural Research for Development processes. The overall objective of the Platform is to build joint African-European multi-stakeholder partnerships in ARD contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, the different partners in PAEPARD are engaged with a view to ensure “enhanced, more equitable, more demand-driven; and mutually beneficial collaboration of Africa and Europe on ARD with the aim of

Page 1 of 4

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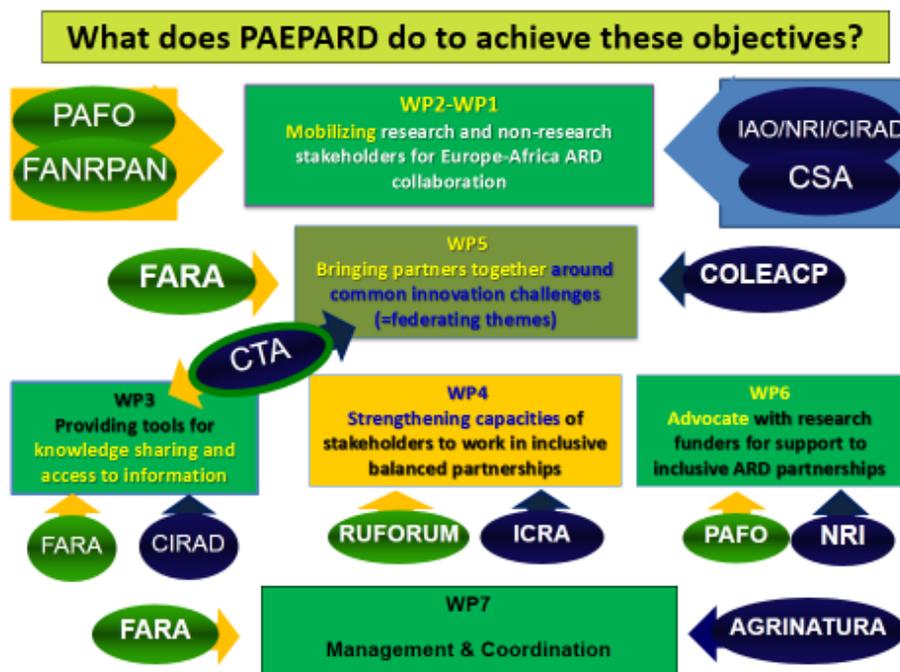


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attaining the SDGs.” The different partners¹ (see Fig. 1) have since 2009, been effectively engaged in implementing project activities.



The PAEPARD implementation activities have in the process engaged several universities in Africa (through RUFORUM) and Europe (through the AGRINATURA). The 5th RUFORUM Biennial and Higher Education week presents opportunity for the Platform to showcase both “hard” technologies as well as “soft” innovations in ARD.

Aims and Objectives of

The aim of the side-event is to showcase PAEPARD achievements as part of process of laying a foundation for continuity of project activities. The side-event will

¹ PAEPARD (www.paepard.org) is coordinated by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), and the other partners include, from Europe: The European Alliance on Agriculture Knowledge for Development (AGRINATURA), coordinating European partners; COLEACP (representing the private sector), CSA (representing the NGOs), ICRA (capacity building in ARD) and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA); from Africa: the Pan-African Farmers Organization (PAFO), the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN). PAFO bring on board members its members, i.e., the sub-regional farmer organizations including EAFF, ROPPA, PROPAC and SACAU.

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the side Event

facilitate reaching out to a wide group of stakeholder in higher agricultural education and practitioners as well as development actors in Agricultural Sector.

Approach and Methodology

The event is part of activities of under the four-year PAEPARD II Extension (PAEPARD II 4YE) and responds to all the Result Areas outline in the project Log frame. It will organised as a side event during the 5th RUFORUM Biennial and Higher Education Week which is Scheduled for 17 – 21st October 2016, in Cape Town, South Africa. The theme chosen for the 2016 Conference is *“Linking Agricultural Universities with Civil Society, the Private Sector, Governments and other Stakeholders in support of Agricultural Development in Africa”*. It will be a facilitator-led meeting and in order to allow for active engagement the facilitator(s) will use both group-work and plenary sessions and encourage use of visual aids including flip-charts and PowerPoint presentation to capture contributions and ideas from individuals and groups. The 5th RUFORUM Biennial will attract over 700 participants from different sub-sectors of ARD, and efforts will be made to reach out and attract between 50 – 100 conference attendee to join the PAEPARD Session. The conference also presents opportunity to package and publish results and experiences of project implementation and it is expected that all invited participants will prepare and submit Extended Abstracts using templates available from www.ruforum.org

Outputs/ outcomes

The side event will deliver the following outputs and outcomes:

1. A Synthesis report with recommendations of “how to effectively engage universities and other academe actors to undertake collaborative research with farmers, as part of the farmer-led research agenda.
2. Enhanced networking between User-Led Process (ULP) and PAEPARD Consortia as well as with stakeholders in higher education particular university research teams implementing community-action research;
3. Visibility of PAEPARD and multi-stakeholder approaches promoted.

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Venue and Participants

Venue: Century City Conference Centre, Meeting Room 10.

Date & Time: 0800-1300, Tuesday 18th October 2016. Work Package Capacities will engage participants and PAEPARD leadership to develop consensus on a detailed programme of activities to guide the half-day event.

Participants will involve different stakeholders in ARD.

Side Event Organizers and Contact

The organizers are the Work Package Leader (RUFORUM, represented by Dr. Paul Nampala, p.nampala@ruforum.org) and Co-leader (ICRA, represented by Dr. Julia Ekong, Julia.Ekong@icra-edu.org) of Work Package Capacities. They will work closely with Session Facilitator(s), PAEPARD Coordination and Management Team as well as leaders of the other Work Packages, particularly that of coordination and Management (led by FARA) in the implementation of this event.

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