



The Fifth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference 2016

Processes and Practices for Multi-stakeholder Partnerships in Agricultural Research and Development

Concept Note

Background

Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D) and Agricultural Research and Development (ARD) are emerging modes of agricultural research practice in the international development community. As indicated in Mbabu and Hall (2012)¹ the definitions of AR4D and ARD in practice are rather fluid, but the key intent is the direct link of investments in research with tangible development outcomes. From this perspective, and as indicated by Rees *et al.* (2004)² it is clear that AR4D and ARD are premised on systems perspectives on learning, innovation and change with fundamental implications for the way agricultural research is conducted and the way capacity along the value chain is built. ARD presents some compelling principles that resonate with much of recent thinking on innovation systems and contemporary notions of capacity building as a systemic phenomenon. These principles include the need for capacity building to be learning-based and participatory; to be results-driven and explicitly linking research to development; to take a systems view, where research is planned and executed as part of a wider development agenda; to involve partnerships with policy and practice stakeholders; and for it to be continuous process of learning, where capacity building responds to the evolving context of the agricultural sector. Based on these principles Mbabu and Hall (2012) raised the following questions:

1. What type of support program can enable the type of learning-based systemic capacity building of the sort suggested by AR4D?

¹ Mbabu, A.N. and Hall, A. 2012. Capacity Building for Agricultural Research for Development: Lessons from Practice in Papua New Guinea. 274 pp. United Nations University-Maastricht Economic and Social Research Training Centre on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT), Maastricht, The Netherlands.

² Rees, D., Osiru, M. and Nampala, P. 2004 (Eds.). Integrated Agricultural Research for Development – Achievements, Lessons Learnt and Best Practices. (ISSN 1026 – 0919)

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2. Can such a program promote the attitudinal change needed to create an enabling environment for AR4D and ARD?
3. Will such a program be sufficient to ensure the sustainability of the capacity building process put in place and the emergence of ARD as a routine way of supporting agricultural innovation and development?

The Platform for Africa-Europe Partnerships in Agricultural Research for Development (PAEPARD) is designed to in part to respond to the above questions. It supports the development of sustainable African-European multi-stakeholder partnerships in agricultural innovation (www.paepard.org). It aims at building joint African-European multi-stakeholder partnerships in agricultural research for development and is implemented by several stakeholders³.

PAEPARD's user-led process (ULP) has supported farmer organisations in defining research questions and themes based on their needs and priorities. The sub-regional farmer organisations and consortia have succeeded in securing funds to implement projects and they have expressed need to enhance capacity in project management and documentation as part of ensuring smooth implementation of their respective activities.

Aims and Objectives of the side Event

The proposed side-event is part of Work Package Capacities Work Plan for Year 7 under the PAEPARD implementation Plan. The overall aim of the side-event is to enable the members of ULP and consortia funded under CRF and ARF better manage projects and document the change process. The meeting will present opportunity for ULPs, CRF and ARF project teams to engage and network with other actors engaged in ARD and linked to academia in Africa

Approach and Methodology

The training session is part of activities of Work Package capacities, Year 7. Work Plan and will be organised as a side event during the 5th RUFORUM

³ 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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Biennial 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”***. This is in line with PAEPARD mission and aspirations. It specifically relates to Activity 4.2.1 “To develop capacity of consortia and ULPs to effectively implement partnerships and projects”. The side event meeting will build on previous efforts and will address priorities emanating from Year 6 convening events. 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. In addition to the training session, the PAEPARD participants will participate in other week-long events of the RUFORUM Biennial including exhibitions. 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 events will deliver the following outputs:

1. A Synthesis report from the proceedings of the side event;
2. Modules on project cycle management and documentation tailored for multi-stakeholder and innovation processes in ARD;
3. Enhanced networking between ULP and PAEPARD Consortia as well as with stakeholders in higher education particular university research teams implementing community-action research;
4. Enhanced capacity in project management and documentation of ULP, Competitive Research Fund (CRF) and Food and Business Applied Research Fund (ARF); and,
5. 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: 0830-1700, Sunday 16th and Monday 17th and 830-1230 18th October 2016; a follow up session focusing on “Engaging Universities in farmer-led research” will be held Tuesday 18th October 2016, 08:00 – 1300 hrs.

Work Package Capacities will engage participants and PAEPARD leadership to develop consensus on a detailed programme of activities to guide the 2-day training event.

Participants will involve representatives from on-going **Competitive Research Fund** (CRF) and **The Food & Business Applied Research Fund** (ARF I & II) Projects and the ULPs. The PAEPARD Manager, Co-Manager and Grants Officer as well as Work package leaders will attend the meeting. Each Work Package will cover travel, accommodation and living expenses as well as other conference costs, including registration. Work Package Capacities (RUFORUM) and ICRA will use their respective PAEPARD budget allocation to cover conference related expenses.

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 partnerships (led by PAFO) in the implementation of this activity.

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