



International Conference

Innovations in Extension and Advisory Services: Linking Knowledge to Policy and Action for Food and Livelihoods 15 – 18 November 2011 Nairobi, Kenya

PREAMBLE

Small-holder farmers, especially the resource poor in remote rural communities are not receiving adequate extension and advisory services. Their inability to articulate demand and the failure of other actors to understand their demands act as deterrents to fully benefitting from these services. The diminished role of extension and advisory services as public goods is a hindrance to future agricultural and rural development and urgency is needed for redesigning and revitalizing their role in reshaping the global food system.

After many years of under-investment in agriculture particularly in extension, research, education and training, the tide has changed and governments and the international community are mobilized and committed to urgent action and making funding available to support agricultural and rural development. Revitalizing extension and advisory services, examining their potential and strengthening their linkage with other actors in agricultural value chains and the wider innovation system are fundamental to the future of agricultural and rural development.

Within the past decade or more, there have been reforms to extension and advisory services to make them more pluralistic, demand-driven, cost effective, efficient and sustainable. The success and impact of these changes have not been fully studied and the time has come to reflect on the lessons learned to inform future policy and practice so that extension and advisory services can play a valuable role in assisting countries to respond to the diverse needs of their agricultural and rural communities.

Given the renewed interest in agriculture and the important role of extension and advisory services in increasing access to knowledge and markets especially for millions of small-holder farmers; there is need to take stock of promising initiatives and opportunities, define and promote mechanisms for up-scaling successful models and improve policy and practice to support the global effort to reduce hunger, and improve livelihoods especially of millions of small-holder farmers.

Concerted action is needed to support small-holder producers, including resource poor farmers and women, to develop their capacities and build self-reliance. There is also need for coordination of development actors who articulate and advocate improvements in agricultural extension and advisory services and keep them as priorities on the national, regional and global policy and development agenda.

OBJECTIVE

To provide a **space** for sharing current thinking and practice and building **coalitions** of farmers, practitioners, policymakers and other key actors to **advocate** and implement policy reforms and innovations in extension and advisory services; especially those that benefit smallholder and resource poor farmers, including women and marginalized rural communities.

CONFERENCE THEMES

There are four cross-cutting conference themes.

1. **Policy:** What are the policy lessons from the past two decades of reforms of governance structures, reductions in public funding and increased privatization of extension and advisory services? Have they resulted in increased accountability, efficiency, empowerment and impact? What is the future role of governments in providing extension and advisory services as public goods? What mix of regulations, goods, and services is most appropriate for offering extension and advisory services that meet country-specific goals within any given socio-economic and agro-ecological context? What research is needed to fill the knowledge gaps?
2. **Capacity Development:** What new knowledge, skills, and infrastructure are needed in light of the expanded role of extension and advisory services? How best can the capacity of the actors (farmers, organizations and networks) be strengthened in the short to medium term? What good practices exist in capacity development? What research is needed to fill the knowledge and institutional gaps? What types and level of investments are needed?
3. **Tools and Approaches:** What innovative tools (including the use of ICTs and the mass media) and approaches are proving effective in the delivery of extension and advisory services? How can the islands of successes be captured and the lessons and best practices shared within countries and across regions with policymakers, development actors and extension practitioners? How can they be up-and out-scaled to ensure quality, cost-effectiveness, sustainability and impact of these services on agricultural productivity, sustainable livelihoods and natural resource management?
4. **Learning Networks:** What is the role of learning in enhancing the effectiveness of extension and advisory services and increasing their impact? What institutional arrangements need to be put in place to support lifelong learning by farmers and other key actors for continuous innovation? What form should they take and how should they evolve? What mechanisms exist for monitoring and evaluating extension and advisory services to support learning and make them more accountable and which are feasible? What research is needed to fill the knowledge gaps?

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Shared understanding and enhanced profile of the vital role of extension and advisory services in agricultural value chain and wider innovation system within the context of the present environment for agricultural and rural development.

- Good practice and policy options for improving the future delivery and effectiveness of extension and advisory services clearly defined, endorsed and widely disseminated.
- Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating extension and advisory services to provide lessons for policy and practice and contribute to enhanced knowledge sharing, learning, innovation and accountability identified, endorsed and widely disseminated.
- Priorities for research, capacity development and investments that enhance the impact of extension and advisory services on agricultural productivity, food security, sustainable livelihoods and natural resource management identified and strategies for addressing these priorities elaborated, endorsed and widely disseminated.
- Coalition of stakeholders committed to advancing extension and advisory services to contribute to developing resilience of small-holder farmers and redefining the global food system.

VENUE AND DATE

The International Conference will be held at Hotel Intercontinental, Nairobi, Kenya from November 15-18, 2011.

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS/PAPERS/VIDEOS/CASE STUDIES/PHOTO COLLAGES

The participants are encouraged to submit their abstracts/papers/videos/case studies/photo collages relevant to one or more of the themes of the Conference. Please send to extension2011@cta.int with a copy to FARA (info@fara-africa.org) and GFRAS (info@g-fras.org) or visit the Conference website <http://extensionconference2011.cta.int> for more details.

PARTICIPANTS

The Conference is open to extension practitioners from public, private and civil society organizations including representatives of farmers' organizations and commodity associations, policy makers, the research and development community, academia, processors, traders, donors, financial institutions and the media. Financial support will be restricted to invited individuals and participants who meet the established criteria for sponsorship. Self sponsored delegates are welcome to attend.

REGISTRATION

Participants seeking sponsorship and self-sponsored participants are requested to register in advance via the Conference website <http://extensionconference2011.cta.int>. The registration deadline for participants seeking sponsorship is July 15th 2011. The registration deadline for self-sponsored participants is September 9th 2011.

For those unable to fill in the online registration form, please download the pdf form and send it as an email attachment to extension2011@cta.int with a copy to FARA (info@fara-africa.org) and GFRAS (info@g-fras.org).

IMPORTANT DATES

- Submission of registration form for participants seeking sponsorship – 15 July
- Submission of abstract/video/case study/photo collage – 15 July
- Submission of registration form for self-sponsored participants – 09 September
- Submission of full length papers – 30 September

REGISTRATION FEE FOR SELF-SPONSORED PARTICIPANTS

- Local Delegate (Kenya):
 - o 1 Day - USD 25.00 / Euro 19.00
 - o 2 Days – USD 50.00 / Euro 38.00
 - o 3 Days – USD 75.00 / Euro 57.00
 - o Full conference - USD 100 / Euro 75
- International delegate – Developing Country (for example: Africa, Caribbean, Pacific, Latin America):
 - o 1 Day – USD 37.50 / Euro 30.00
 - o 2 Days – USD 75.00 / Euro 57.00
 - o 3 Days – USD 112.50 / Euro 85.00
 - o Full conference - USD 150.00 / Euro 113.00
- International Delegate – Developed Country – (for example: Australia, Europe, Japan, North America):
 - o 1 Day – USD 90.00 / Euro 70.00
 - o 2 Days – USD 180.00 / Euro 140.00
 - o 3 Days – USD 270.00 / Euro 210.00
 - o Full conference - USD 300.00 / Euro 225.00
- Student
 - o 1 Day – USD 20.00 / Euro 15.00
 - o 2 Days – USD 40.00 / Euro 30.00
 - o 3 Days – USD 50.00 / Euro 38.00
 - o Full conference - USD 75.00 / Euro 57.00

LANGUAGE

The official language of the Conference will be English. Interpretation services will be available in French and Spanish.

ACCOMMODATION AND TRAVEL

The main Conference venue is Hotel Intercontinental. Hotel reservations will be made for sponsored delegates. Self-sponsored participants are responsible for their own hotel bookings. The organizers will negotiate a group rate at the various hotels and provide assistance where possible. Alternatives to Hotel Intercontinental are:

- The Hilton Nairobi Hotel
- 680 hotel
- Meridian Court Hotel
- Hotel Embassy
- Kenya Comfort Hotel

ORGANIZERS & PARTNERS

ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), The Netherlands (Chair International Steering Committee)

The Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS), Switzerland, (Co-Chair International Steering Committee)

The African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS), Uganda

The African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE), Kenya

The European Initiative on Agricultural Research for Development (EIARD)

The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), Ghana

The Faculty of Science and Agriculture (FSA), University of the West Indies (UWI), Trinidad & Tobago

The International Centre for development oriented Research in Agriculture (ICRA), The Netherlands

World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF), Kenya

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Italy

The Institute of Research, Extension and Training in Agriculture (IRETA), Samoa

The Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), Kenya (Chair Local Planning Committee)

The Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya

NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NEPAD Agency), South Africa

INTERNATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

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