

A new approach to agricultural research for development

Investing in agricultural research and development can increase agricultural productivity and improve sustainability and food and nutrition security. It can promote economic growth, political stability and rural development. But many developing countries reliant on agriculture cannot hope to realise these benefits because their public innovation, education and advisory processes are weak, fragmented and under-resourced.

The Investment Facility for Agricultural Innovation and Enterprise is a new initiative which aims to strengthen and enhance national agricultural innovation systems in developing countries by bringing together existing and new financial resources, international technical support and national service delivery.

Through nationally-driven processes, the Facility draws on the skills and experience of a multitude of partners, the Facility will support the improvement and integration of research, extension, education, training and enterprise services in-country.

It is this comprehensive approach, driven and led by the national systems, which makes the Facility unique.



Focus: women and youth

The Facility will have a special focus on the economic empowerment of young people and women in poor, rural communities, because they have the greatest potential to transform the agricultural economy in their countries, and the greatest need for resources, skills and support.

Young people now comprise a high proportion of the population in many developing countries and many are unemployed. They see little future in an agricultural career and those who do, lack access to land, skills and support. What's needed is a new vision for agriculture, where innovation and new technologies can help develop different career pathways and other agriculture-related opportunities, well beyond just production.

Nearly half of all smallholder farmers worldwide are women farmers. Increasing opportunities for women can have a powerful impact on productivity and agriculture-led growth. If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20–30 percent. This increase could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5–4 percent and reduce the number of hungry people in the world by up to 150 million people¹.

How it will work

The Facility comprises three key, interrelated elements:

1. **A multi-donor fund**, managed by IFAD, to strengthen national agricultural research and innovation systems by funding organizational, institutional and individual capacity development.

¹ Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

2. **Co-ordinated national delivery** of research, extension, education, training and enterprise services, reflecting national value chains and national demands.
3. **Integrated and networked technical support, drawing on** GFAR networks and partners from all sectors and regions, and working to a common framework based on the GCARD Roadmap and refined through the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP).

Key benefits

- Investment directed to where it's needed most, addressing national priorities, aligned with country development plans, and delivering sustainable economic results.
- Strengthened organizational and institutional capacities in national agricultural innovation systems to enable countries effectively and efficiently deliver development outcomes.
- Research and innovation that is farmer-centred: relevant, appropriate and effective.
- Co-ordinated, collective action by public-private-producer partners to ensure coherency and efficiency.
- Rigorous quality control and supervision by IFAD, the manager of the fund. GFAR will provide oversight of programme activities, and ensure the equitable inclusion of public, private, producer and civil partners.
- Strong strategic alignment with the principles and actions of the GCARD Roadmap
- Social change and demonstration of successes and lessons learned mapped against a robust Theory of Change.

Ticking all the GCARD boxes....

- ✓ 1. Inclusively defines AR4D priorities and actions
- ✓ 2. Invests in equitable partnership and accountability
- ✓ 3. Increases investments in human, institutional and financial resources for AR4D systems
- ✓ 4. Develops human and institutional capacities to generate, access and use agricultural knowledge
- ✓ 5. Effectively links innovation and development programmes and policies; and
- ✓ 6. Demonstrates its value by involving stakeholders in showing and reporting results



Next steps

The Facility has been welcomed by G20 Chief Agricultural Scientists as an opportunity for greater involvement of their capabilities in supporting capacity development in agricultural innovation around the world. It is strongly endorsed by both IFAD and FAO. Initial discussions with a number of country governments confirm there is an urgent need for the kinds of programmes that the Facility will support. We will continue look at how the principles might be applied in-country – in Senegal, CORAF/WECARD countries, Egypt, Palestine, Fiji, Nepal, GAFSP and TAP focal countries, to name just a few of those who are interested.

The most pressing task ahead, however, is to secure the financial support and commitment needed to take the concept forward, and with it, the opportunity to transform the lives of women and young people in poor rural communities everywhere.

If you would like further information about the Agricultural Innovation and Investment Facility, please contact **Mark Holderness, Executive Secretary, and Global Forum on Agricultural Research.** mark.holderness@FAO.org ,Tel: +39.06.5705.3413.