

Highlights Note

Side Event Science Days for the UNFSS 2021 Capacity development for AIS - Lessons learned and future action of the TAP partnership 5 July 2021; 14:00-15:30 CET

This Side Event on above topic was organized by Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP)-Secretariat and its partners on 05 July 2021, as a part of the Science Days of UNFSS. The event highlighted the work done by the **Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP)**, as a global multi-stakeholder facilitation mechanism on capacity development for agricultural innovation systems (AIS). The opening session started with Ravi Khetarpal, the TAP Chair introducing the purpose of the TAP partnership, a G20 initiative, composed by 52 partners; followed by Christophe Larose, from European Commission (EU) highlighting the EU support to TAP, through the project Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) and the ongoing FAO TAP-AIS project, a part of the EU DeSIRA initiative. He emphasized the importance of synergies among ongoing activities of the DeSIRA initiative. Then, Selvaraju Ramasamy, head of the Research and Extension Unit of FAO, provided an overview of the TAP action plans and highlighted the key areas to be considered for the next TAP Action Plan (2022-2025).

The opening session was followed by a facilitated discussion on **TAP Partners' perspective on strengthening capacities for agricultural innovations systems**. The panel was represented by Italian Agency for Development and Cooperation (AICS), Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS), DeSIRA LIFT Project led from AGRINATURA, Commission for Sustainable Agriculture Intensification (CoSAI) and European Commission. The key messages highlighted by the partners include:

- Capacity development is critical in the food system transformation. Strengthening functional capacities of local innovation actors to improve agricultural practices, increase organizational capacities and to raise awareness by policy makers are fundamental in order to promote an enabling environment for innovation.
- There is a need to collaborate closely with TAP Partners to support national and regional AIS and supporting innovation processes and system, including DeSIRA projects – LIFT, TAP-AIS, CAADP ex pillar 4 and GFAR.
- Tools to support decision making are needed for investors and managers that can increase effectiveness of innovations. Such decision support tools can be used to better target investment and fill the gaps.
- Going beyond technology development was stressed to take into account the different dimensions of capacity development (individual, organizations and enabling environment) at local, national and global levels.
- Importance of facilitating multi-stakeholder approach and access to funding for innovations was also highlighted.

Regional Research and Extension Organizations' highlighted their efforts to integrate TAP tools and approaches into their work. The panel was represented by Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS), Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services Network (APIRAS), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Forum of the Americas for Agricultural Research and Technology Development (FORAGRO) and Red Latinoamericana para Servicios de Extension Rural (RELASER). **The key messages** emerged include:

- In Africa, FARA and AFAAS jointly carried out a study on strengthening AIS in a framework of TAP-AIS project. The study allowed them to bring more coherence to national programmes and raise awareness of national governments the need of capacity development for innovation.

- In Asia, APAARI and APIRAS shared the experience in applying the TAP common framework, especially with Higher Education Institutions. They have developed several training modules (including an e-learning module, GFRAS-NELK) addressing functional capacity gaps. The two organizations will support universities in the region to develop new modules and to build a “culture” of innovation.
- In Latin-America, IICA and RELASER highlighted their plan to develop practical hands-on guides on strengthening functional capacities adapted to Latin American context, and their work on sensitizing universities to adopt TAP concept in their curricula.

The event was closed by Ms Ismahane Elouafi, Chief Scientist of FAO, emphasizing the importance of science, technology to achieve more efficient, inclusive and resilient food systems at country level. She recognized the crucial role of TAP in facilitating co-creation of knowledge and innovation. Ms. Elouafi thanked the EU for providing funding to TAP through the CDAIS and TAP-AIS projects and encouraged TAP partners to continuously support the TAP Action Plan.