Agricultural Innovation: Common understanding the upcoming SOFA 2014
Content

✓ Definition and common understanding
✓ Conceptual and analytical frameworks
✓ Learning and change
✓ SOFA key message and examples
Innovation is the process by which social actors create value from knowledge

Engel, 2009
Definition and common understanding

- Innovation: The process of creating and putting into use combinations of knowledge from many different sources.
- This knowledge may be brand-new, but usually it is new combinations of existing knowledge.
- Process of constant learning and adaptation
- Occurs through interaction between multiple stakeholders.
- For an invention to become an innovation, it has to be used by farmers! 

Hall, 2001
Farmers are innovators

- Small farmers are innovative, they cannot afford not to be

- From the 70s until now we gradually moved from
  - Production system approach to Farming system
  - From Farming system to farmers first and participatory approaches
  - From participatory to a broader knowledge system (AKIS) approach
  - From AKIS to innovation

Each step acknowledges the complexity and non linear nature of the attempted change and introduced new factors (socio economic, cultural, institutional and political) to understanding the drivers of changes

- Farmers do not need a package of practices but a basket of choice
From a “Linear” view of technical change

...to an innovation System

Agricultural Innovation System

Exporters
Agro-Processors
Producer Organizations
Input Suppliers
Credit Agencies
Land Agencies

Research System

Producers
Farmers

Advisory Services System

Education System

Government Policy & Regulatory Framework

Modified from:
Birner et al. 2006
Analytical framework

Enabling Environment

Private sector

PPP

Public sector

Facilitation & coordination bodies

Farmers

Capacity development

TRIGGERS

Economic, Bio-physical, Socio-political, Technological, Infrastructure/Developmental

Capacity development

Triggers

Enabling Environment

Private sector

PPP

Public sector

Facilitation & coordination bodies

Farmers
Barriers to innovation

- Policy and bureaucracy
- Adverse market conditions
- Resources
- Lack of incentives
- Risk
- Infrastructure
- Attitude and behavior
- Capacity
- Linkages
- Culture
- Knowledge deficiencies

Lack of incentives
Who has to change?

Realizing the potential for innovation in Family farms is not about changing farmers practices... It is about changing the behavior and attitude of the other actors in the system - us included - and how the enabling environment support farmers ability to innovate!

Innovation leads to things being done differently in unpredictable ways.
Key message SOFA 2014

Capacity for agricultural innovation is vital to improve the livelihood and well-being of family farmers and goes beyond technological development.

Innovation capacity can be collective and individual and has four elements:

1. Individual and organizational expertise
2. Attitudes and routines developed through training and trial and error
3. Communication and networks that allow individuals and organizations to access a wide array of ideas and expertise for innovation
4. Policy environment and the way it shapes the first three elements of capacity

The challenge we face today is how to build the capacity for innovation to ensure profitable and sustainable family farming.
PISA Bolivia

Enabling Environment

Private sector

PPP

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