



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Developing capacities in agricultural innovation systems:
scaling up the Tropical Agriculture Platform Framework

The TAP-AIS project



Innovation, or the process whereby individuals or organizations bring new or existing products, processes or ways of organization for the first time in a specific context, is at the heart of transforming agri-food systems for inclusive growth and shared prosperity. Farmers play a central role in their innovation processes.

Complex and intertwined agricultural challenges call for a paradigm shift from top-down, linear research-extension-farmer links towards **multi-stakeholder and systems approaches** that unleash innovation potential.

Coherent, demand-driven capacity development that combines **technical and functional skills** can unlock the potential of innovation in tackling current global challenges, including climate change, land degradation and impacts of COVID-19. Interventions to **develop capacities** of key organisations and improving the policy environment can strengthen national agricultural innovation systems and drive the transformation of agri-food systems.

The **Tropical Agricultural Platform (TAP) - a global partnership, initiated** by the G20 - developed a Common Framework on Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems. Strengthening regional organisations and networks to scale it up will help to promote agricultural innovation in tropical countries across the globe.

Raising **awareness, promoting tools, advocacy and knowledge sharing** at all levels (global, regional, national) are key to support capacity development efforts for agricultural innovation systems.

DeSIRA contributes primarily to the following Sustainable Development Goals:



The DeSIRA initiative



'Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA), Towards climate-relevant Agricultural and Knowledge Innovation Systems'

DeSIRA is an initiative led by the European Union (EU) to boost innovation in agriculture and food systems transformation with an emphasis on resilience from the effects of climate change, in low and middle-income countries (LMIC). DeSIRA aims at supporting research and innovation projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America to strengthen research capacities and governance involving key actors at national, regional, continental and global levels.

Agricultural Innovation System

is a network of actors (individuals, organizations and enterprises), together with supporting institutions and policies in the agricultural and related sectors that bring existing or new products, processes, and forms of organization into social and economic use. Policies and institutions (formal and informal) shape the way that these actors interact, generate, share and use knowledge as well as jointly learn.

DeSIRA key principles:

- » Joint construction of DeSIRA interventions in line with both European Union & European Union Member States development agendas and national priorities regarding agriculture and food systems.
- » Contributing to the governance of research actors at the African (FARA, CORAF, ASARECA, CCARDESA, AFAAS) and global (GFAR, TAP-FAO, CGIAR, AIRCA) levels.
- » Linking research and innovation with a multi-stakeholder approach.
- » Building strong partnerships involving European, International and National research capacities.
- » Fostering of Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) and national innovation policies with a capacity to innovate based approach.
- » Strengthening national research capacities both at individual and organizational levels.

AIRCA: Association of International Research and Development Centers for Agriculture
AFAAS: African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
ASARECA: Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
CCARDESA: Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa
CGIAR: Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centres
CORAF: West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development
FARA: African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
GFAR: Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation
TAP: Tropical Agriculture Platform

TAP-AIS project 2019-2024

It is a five-year project (2019-2024) funded by the European Union, under the DeSIRA Initiative. The project has the main objective to strengthen capacities to innovate in national agricultural innovation systems (AIS) in the context of climate-relevant, productive, and sustainable transformation of agriculture and food systems in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific. The project supports the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP).

A key tool for the project is the TAP Common Framework, three volumes designed to promote better coherence and greater impact of capacity development in support of AIS in the tropics. The project aims to scale up the approach of the European Union-funded Capacity Development for Agriculture Innovation Systems (CDAIS) project, which successfully tested the Common Framework in various countries from 2015 to 2019.

Key activities include

- » Needs assessment
- » Monitoring and learning
- » Coordination and reporting
- » Community management
- » In-depth Country AIS assessments
- » Communication and knowledge sharing

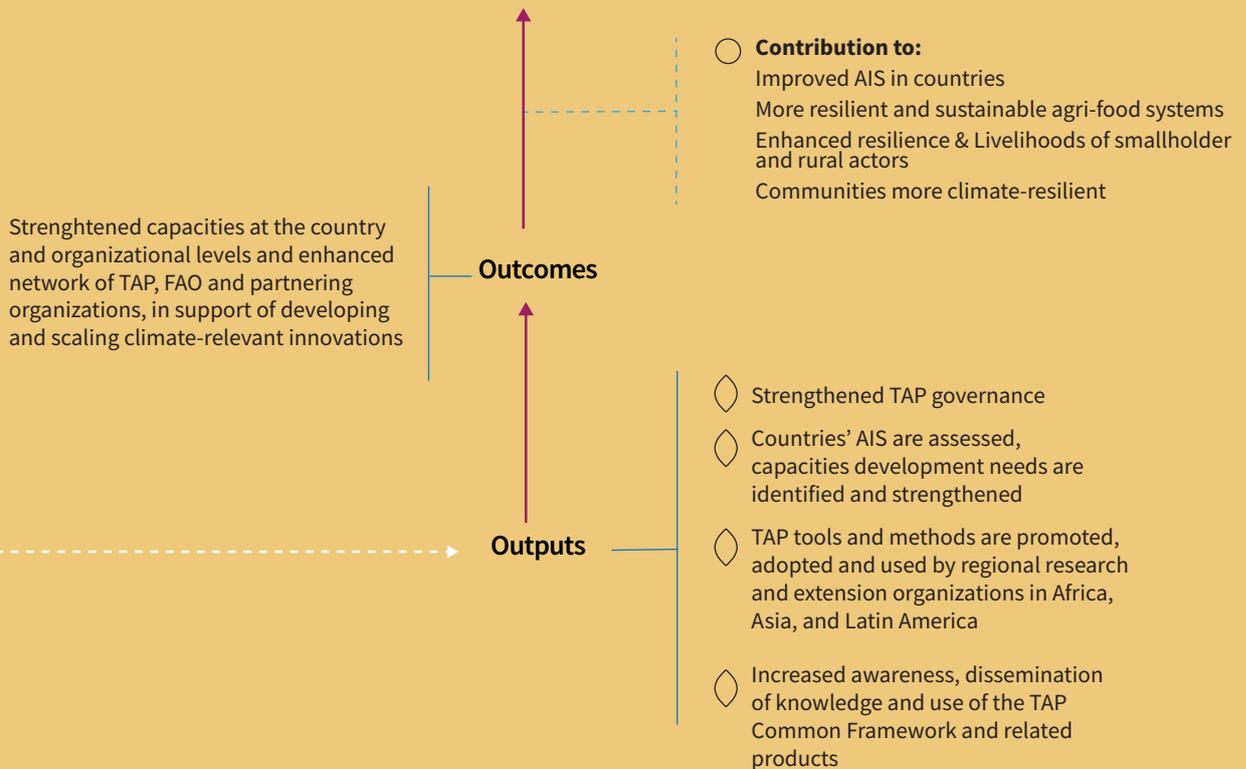
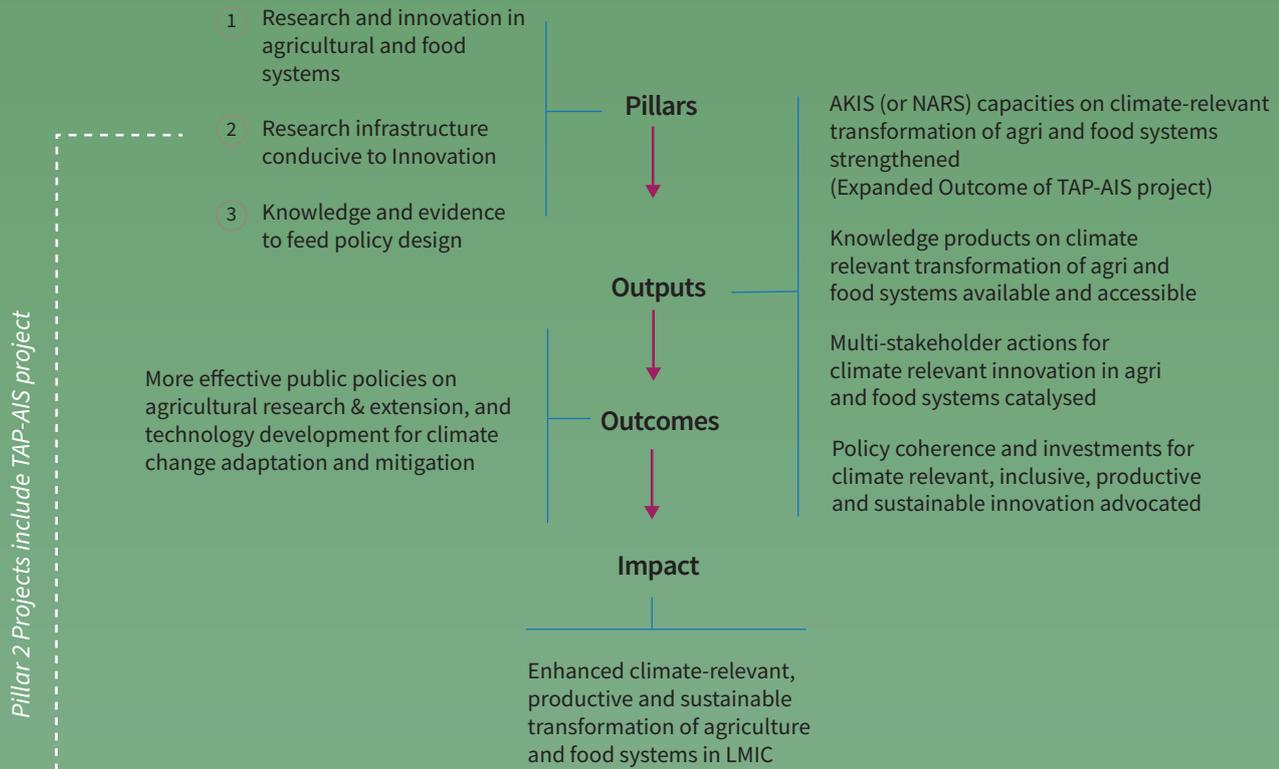
In particular, the project will intervene at various levels:

- » Global: by facilitating the work of TAP, improving its Common Framework, tools and approaches, expanding its network of experts and operationalizing the TAP Action Plan.
- » Regional and sub-regional: by strengthening capacity to analyze and reinforce agricultural innovation systems.
- » National: by strengthening capacities to innovate and the and innovation policy environment in nine countries.

The project will support the uptake and use of the Common Framework at all the mentioned levels.



DeSIRA



Functional capacities in line with the TAP Common Framework, and selected by the project are those needed to work effectively: the capacity to navigate complexity, to collaborate, to reflect and learn, and to engage in strategic and political processes.

TAP-AIS

Why are AIS actors a priority for the response to the COVID-19 outbreak?

The individuals and organizations that are traditionally supporting farmers are best positioned to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic across the agri-food systems and ensure continuity in the agricultural production.

In particular, AIS actors should rapidly adapt their role to the pandemic situation and be open to innovative approaches. For example:

- » Education institutes can adapt their curricula to impart COVID-19 related knowledge in support of community resilience towards agriculture and food security.
- » Research Institutes can re-orient their work to provide quick access to suitable information and data in usable formats and target research to address new challenges, faced by farmers and consumers.
- » Extension and advisory services can assess the situation in the field, raise awareness, support rural

producers, build partnerships to overcome market disruptions, facilitate local access to inputs and markets, help smallholders advance in digitalization.

- » Producers' and other organizations can advocate for local needs in policy arenas and create opportunities for the smallholders in terms of better access to markets, inputs, services and also safety equipment.
- » Business and enterprises actors can help overcome market disruptions, regulating commodity prices, improving access to inputs and essential supplies, introducing new digital tools and payment schemes.
- » Policy actors can formulate policy response to mitigate and fight the effects of COVID-19 crisis in rural areas.

References:

FAO. 2020. *Enabling agricultural innovation systems to promote appropriate technologies and practices for farmers, rural youth and women during COVID-19.*

(also available at <http://www.fao.org/3/ca9470en/CA9470EN.pdf>)

FAO. 2020. *Extension and advisory services: at the frontline of the response to COVID-19 to ensure food security.*

(also available at <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8710en/CA8710EN.pdf>)

Partners and beneficiaries

- » Actors of the agricultural innovation systems (government ministries, research institutes, universities, advisory service organizations, farmers' associations, non-governmental organizations, and private sector value chain actors and smallholders)
- » CAADP ex-Pillar IV organizations (FARA, CORAF, ASARECA, CCARDESA), AFAAS, APAARI, APIRAS, IICA, RELASER
- » GFAR and other Partners of the Tropical Agriculture Platform



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MORE INFORMATION

<http://www.fao.org/in-action/tropical-agriculture-platform>
<http://www.fao.org/in-action/tap-ais/en/>
https://twitter.com/TAP_G20



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This project has received funding from the European Union under Grant Agreement FOOD/2019/406-734

