

INSARD

Including Smallholders in Agricultural Research for Development

Including Smallholders in Agricultural Research for Development (INSARD)

is an EU-funded project that is working towards making it easier for civil-society organisations (CSOs) – both non-governmental organisations and farmer organisations – to be actively involved in influencing agricultural research systems in Africa.

Involving CSOs in agricultural research for development (ARD) is a great way for scientists to understand the needs of smallholders. Such organisations are important for shaping ARD because, to have a positive impact on smallholders, the research needs to involve them at all stages: in determining needs, identifying problems and opportunities, designing and testing new possibilities, sharing results, and assessing how the research is done and the results shared.

Incorporating smallholders into ARD in this way will help to better serve their needs and to discover and spread innovations that farmers have been involved in developing.

Some CSOs are already engaged in ARD in different parts of Africa, but they know little about what each other is doing. Their efforts to influence the wider research agenda are not well coordinated. We try to help change that by:

- Designing a method that allows CSOs to participate effectively in regional and international discussions on ARD
- Linking European and African CSOs that are trying to influence ARD policy and practice
- Helping CSOs define research priorities and the best way to communicate these priorities to researchers and policymakers
- Starting to design research interaction between scientists and CSOs, firmly based on smallholders' demands
- Working with key African and European research organisations and donors to strengthen demand-driven ARD and to increase funding for such research.

South–North partnership

INSARD is a partnership between:

- ESAFF (Eastern and Southern Africa Small-Scale Farmers' Forum)
- ETC Foundation
- GRET, Professionals for fair development
- PELUM Association
- Practical Action
- REPAOC (Réseau des Plates-formes nationales d'ONG d'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre).

Start-up study: CSO mapping

In the start-up study, an inventory was made of African and European CSOs involved in ARD in sub-Saharan Africa. It sought to identify the formal and informal linkages among and between CSOs and other stakeholders involved in ARD. It identified potentials and blockages in the ARD system to realising greater participation of CSOs in prioritising, formulating and carrying out ARD. The study also looked into resource allocation for ARD in sub-Saharan Africa, and how and where and by whom the decisions for such allocations are made. This study is meant to contribute to:

- Designing and implementing a consultative mechanism that allows various CSO representatives to participate meaningfully in African, European and international deliberations on ARD;
- Triggering the necessary change in direction of ARD toward a more grounded, demand-led and smallholder-focused research and innovation system; and
- Stimulating greater resource flows to research for and with small-scale farmers.

The study findings and recommendations were discussed during an international consultation workshop in Nairobi in November 2011. Based on the report, the workshop discussions and reflections by the INSARD team, a summary outlining the strategic direction of the CSO coordination and consultation mechanism was drafted. During the first half of 2012, this strategy will be further developed and discussed with the INSARD Advisory Group and then shared widely (see www.repaoc.org/insard for all documents).

During 2012, INSARD will identify entry points for brokerage processes to facilitate national CSO platforms to come together on ARD issues.

INSARD Secretariat c/o ETC AgriCulture

Kastanjelaan 5, POB 64, 3830 AB Leusden, Netherlands

Tel +31-33-4326000 Fax +31-33-4940791

Email: agriculture@etcnl.nl Website: www.repaoc.org/insard