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Updates from the Coordination Unit

CORAF/WECARD assumes Lead Institution role for KKM

Following the recommendation of the CGIAR, Donors, and the Program sub-Committee of the Executive Board of FARA to reduce the transaction costs of the SSA CP, FARA held discussions with the various LIs for the transfer of their roles to the SROs. We are pleased to announce the successful transfer of the LI roles from IITA to CORAF/WECARD. The official handing over was held at the IITA campus in Ibadan, Nigeria from the 15th to 17th March 2009. CORAF/WECARD has since commenced the coordination of the three Task forces of KKM but is yet to appoint a coordinator for the Pilot Learning Site (PLS). You will recall that IITA was undertaking the roles of Lead Institution in the KKM on behalf of CORAF/WECARD in the first place. FARA is very grateful to IITA and its relevant staff members for their immense contribution during IITA's term as LI and for their continual support to the SSA CP. FARA also takes this opportunity to wish CORAF/WECARD well in its new role as the LI.

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IAR4D Training of Trainers workshop held in Mozambique

In the bid to further strengthen the capacity of national institutions with adequate knowledge of the IAR4D approach, 24 research scientists from 11 provinces in Mozambique were trained on Innovation Systems approach for agricultural research and development from the 19th – 23rd January 2009. The meeting was organized by FARA and the Ministry of Science



and Technology of Mozambique through the National Research Fund. The training was organized in response to a request by the Honorable Minister of Science & Technology of Mozambique, Prof. Eng. Venâncio Massingue, to the Executive Director of FARA, Dr. Monty Jones. He had requested Dr Jones for assistance in capacity building especially in the area of Innovation Systems Approach. Topics covered during this training included; the definition and importance of an Innovation Platform (IP); how to organize and manage an IP; differentiation of roles of actors within the IP; establishment of IP process; the use of problem and objective tree analysis method to formulate and develop challenges, objectives and action plans. At the end of the workshop, participants affirmed an improvement in their knowledge of the innovation system approach and its potential to improve outputs from agricultural research. As an outcome of the workshop, participating researchers have revised their work plans for current year to integrate the IAR4D framework. Following this, Concept Notes are expected to be submitted to the Mozambican National Research Fund for funding .

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Introducing QueFax Data Management Tool

Mr. Peter Muraya has developed a new data management tool for the SSA CP. Mr Muraya is a member of the Core Research Support Team (CRST) responsible for data management in SSA CP. The tool, named "QueFax", derived its name from three essential keywords in data management- Quality, Efficiency and Accessibility. In the words of Mr. Peter Muraya, QueFax simplifies the handling of complex datasets collected at different locations with varying characteristics, but which are required as a unit for analysis. QueFax is driven by two key technologies, the Logbook assistant and the XML. Currently "QueFax" is in the process of being documented to enhance wider usage. We congratulate Mr. Muraya and the SSA CP family for this toolkit which may constitute an important international public good from the SSA CP.



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Impact Assessment Postdoctoral fellows recruited

Three postdoctoral fellows in the area of Impact Assessment have been recruited by FARA/SSA CP. The postdoctoral fellows will be based within the Pilot Learning Sites and will assist partners in: methodology development, survey design and implementation. The Post-doctoral fellows are also expected to contribute to the development of individual and institutional capacity in the implementation of IAR4D in the region through sharing of experiences and expertise. Drs. Joachim Nyameck Binam (Cameroonian), Judith Oduol (Kenyan) and Stella Makokha (Kenyan) have accepted to work as postdoctoral fellows (PDF) and will be based at the KKM, Lake Kivu and ZMM Pilot Learning Sites respectively. They will assume duty on the 1st of May 2009. We welcome Drs. Binam, Oduol and Makokha aboard the SSA CP

News from Pilot Learning Sites

Data Management Training Conducted Across the PLS



Following a successful completion of the SSA CP data collection from the baseline surveys at the three Pilot Learning Sites (PLS), data management workshops were organized across the sites to provide the taskforces with the required techniques for handling large data sets. Mr. Peter Muraya, the CRST member for data

management, facilitated the workshops held in Kano, Musanze and Harare, for KKM, LK and ZMM respectively. Participants in these workshops included taskforce leaders, Staff members in charge of data management, Project Coordinators, CRST members and staff of the PCU. Each workshop was unique, but they all focused on ensuring adherence to the use of the jointly developed electronic data entry form (e-form) for both the baseline, and monitoring and evaluation data sets. This was to ensure the achievement of the needed coherence in collected data within the SSA CP. Participants at these workshops were introduced to the new data management tool “Quefax” developed by Mr. Muraya.

A visit to an Innovation Platform

Members of the Lake Kivu PLS and staff from the PCU paid a visit to one of its Innovation Platforms (IP) named “Isangano” based in Gataraga, Rwanda within the Lake Kivu Pilot Learning Site. This IP gives an insight into how IAR4D would eventually enhance smallholder’s livelihood and quality of life. The visit was part of the Lake Kivu PLS data management workshop held from 16th – 20th February 2009. The IP is organized around sustainable potato farming on soils susceptible to land degradation by erosion, due to mountainous topography. The IP consisted of farmers, a researcher (Agronomist), an extension agent, produce merchants, an agro-input supplier, a policy maker (municipality director), and a micro credit operator. Their current work plan focuses on the improvement of potato cultivation and maintaining the landscape by fodder cultivation.



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Lake Kivu Taskforces trained on IAR4D

A week training session was organized by the Lake Kivu PLS at the ISAR Campus, Musanze, Rwanda to sharpen the understanding of IAR4D among IP actors and to clarify outstanding issues (e.g. roles of different actors, nature of PM&E, Multi-stakeholder tools to analyze stakeholder importance and influence, development of IAR4D compliant action plans, difference between IP and innovation clusters (IC). The meeting was facilitated by partners within the Lake Kivu PLS. As part of the training, participants visited the Gashangiro Farmers Group that was organized along the Maize value chain rotating with potato located in the Northern Province, Musanze district. Here, one of the Lake Kivu PLS Partner Organization-IMBARAGA has applied IAR4D principles based on past discussions at the project negotiation stage.



Farmers were linked to IFDC for fertilizer supply and to a miller for extraction of oil from maize. The innovation that was utilized here includes; land consolidation, collective marketing and use of improved technologies (Fertilizer, shelling machines etc). It was established during this workshop that Good policies are critical for the success of innovation processes (e.g. subsidy and land consolidation). In addition to this, advocacy, lobbying and negotiation skills were also found to be useful.

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For more information on the above events, please contact Dr. Monty Jones by email: mjones@fara-africa.org

Endnote

Inside SSA CP is a quarterly publication of the SSA CP's coordination unit. It is aimed at sharing information on activities and developments within the SSA CP to promote collaboration in our multi-stakeholder and multi-location program. It will be circulated among insiders and friends of the SSA CP. Information published in *Inside SSA CP* is gathered from activities carried out in the SSA CP's Pilot Learning Sites. Members of these teams are encouraged to contribute news items from their teams by sending such items to the coordination unit.