

Agricultural research engaging in partnerships with non-traditional AIS actors

Isolina Boto, COLEAD/DeSIRA LIFT

25 September 2024

JOURNÉES DeSIRA CONNECT DAYS



#CONNECTDAYST
www.desiralift.org

Non-traditional AIS actors

Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) represent a holistic approach to agricultural development, emphasizing the interconnectedness of various stakeholders working with researchers.

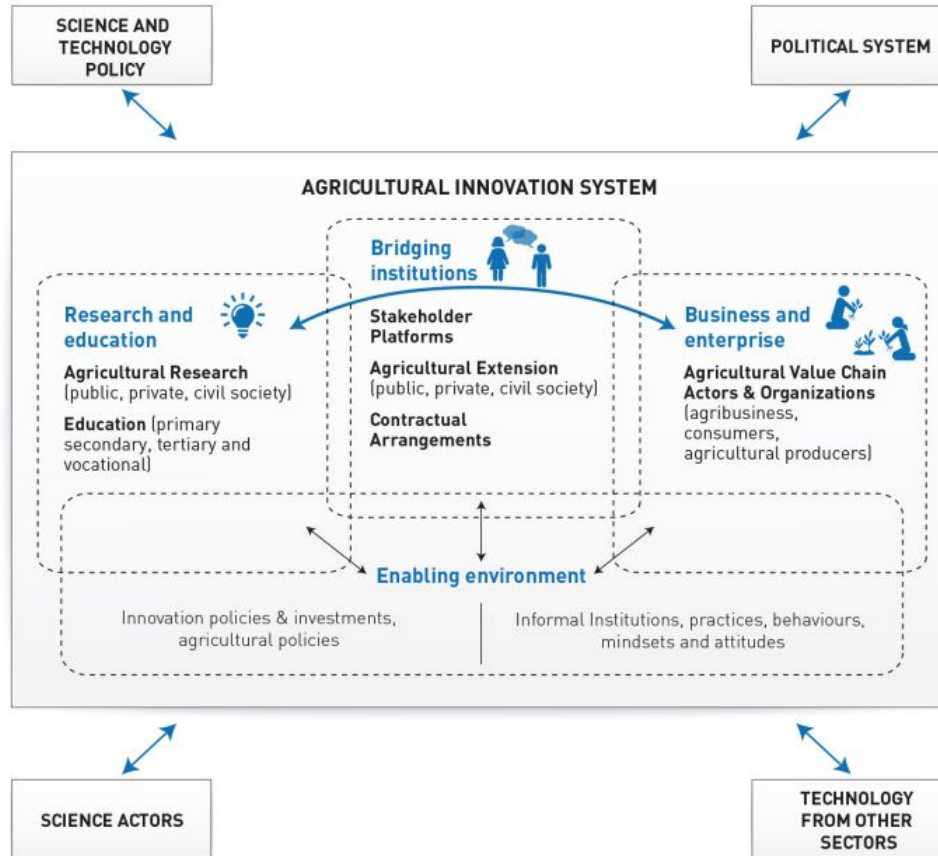
Non-traditional AIS actors encompass a broad range of entities: private sector companies, business enterprises, agricultural value chain actors, agricultural marketing committees, input suppliers, NGOs, community-based organizations, formal and informal bridging institutions (public extension and advisory services, farmers organizations, private extension agents, commodity groups etc.), policy and think tanks, financial institutions



Complementary roles of Non-traditional AIS

actors

- **Extension and Advisory Services:** provide farmers with the latest knowledge & technologies to improve agricultural practices.
- **Innovation Support Services:** finance, marketing, business development needed to bring innovative products to market.
- **Policy and Decision Makers:** shape the agricultural landscape and influence how innovations are adopted and supported.



Benefits of Engaging Non-Traditional AIS Actors

- **Diverse perspectives, expertise and strengths** support innovation.
- Increased **funding and resources** (human, technical, expertise).
- **Cross-sectoral approaches** key to understand FS complexity.
- **Improved adoption & dissemination** of innovations.

Multistakeholder collaboration for a purpose

- Establishing **shared objectives** that align the **interests of all parties**.
- Creating more **equitable solutions**.
- **Learning and problem-solving** is a key driver.
- **Acquiring capacities to improve and scale activities (anticipation)**.
- **Better understanding of roles** (i.e. private sector, **smallholders**).

Supporting sustainable innovation (Food Systems)

- Encouraging practices that are environmentally friendly, socially inclusive, and economically viable and sustainable.
- Sustainability has emerged as a critical factor for consumers linked to specific values and co-creation efforts.
- Understanding what sustainable innovation means, entails and costs. Capacity building and continuous reskilling.
- Innovations supporting new opportunities in booming urban and regional markets and aligned with political agendas.

Considerations (challenges)

- **Coordination and Communication:** common goals & aligning strategies can be complex but is essential for success.
- **Intellectual Property and Data Sharing:** agreements to protect the interests of all parties.
- **Mutual learning and two-way capacity building processes.**
- **New actors in value chains** (entrepreneurs backgrounds)
- **Investment and value** gained.

Need to support system transformation

- System Transformation: Involves a fundamental change in the way agriculture operates, leading to innovations that can address sustainability, climate change, and food security. This requires rethinking and redesigning agricultural practices, policies, and support systems and that each actor plays its role and gains benefits.
- Need to engage (including young and female) entrepreneurs and build upon existing innovations (scaling and financing).
- Need to promote entrepreneurial innovations at EU/Africa level.

Examples

- **Training centers on agroecology** (ROPPA) with direct job creation and market access.
- **Cold storage** rooms in major food production areas, markets and farms. Pay-as-you-store model.
- **Rehabilitate forgotten crops**, and integrate them into local food habits.
- **Digital Agriculture to support smallholders**: real-time information on weather, soil conditions, and crop health improving decision-making & productivity. SOWIT, CIRAD & COLEAD in Ghana

Indigenous under-utilised crops (Morula)



Cold storage



Organic compost

