



PAEPARD



 Inclusive, balanced,
demand-led **partnerships** for **ARD**:
A **consultative** process



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Lessons learned

This document presents a summary of the main findings of sector and multi-stakeholder consultations conducted by the Platform for African European Partnership on Agricultural Research for Development (PAEPARD) during 2010-2012. It provides recommendations for the sustainable establishment of partnerships in agricultural research for development (ARD), between African and European partners in particular, to be innovative, balanced and demand-driven. From the consultations all PAEPARD partners agreed that, while the cultures and interests of each sector are often different, points of view need to converge and expertise be put at the disposal of all partners if a multi-stakeholder partnership in ARD is to be successful.

More detailed findings are summarized below:

> A permanent dialogue between researchers and non-researchers

It is critical to develop and institutionalize a framework of mutual respect and permanent dialogue between researchers and non-researchers. This helps identify unifying themes that can be translated into research proposals for high impact solutions, as well as support the creation of sustainable partnerships. Institutional support to farmers' organizations, to help them become bodies able to engage in dialogue with political stakeholders and development partners, has been identified as a priority.

> Time required to achieve sustainability

The construction and ownership of a shared vision of partnership around a unifying theme requires a number of steps. Partnership requires trust between people which has to be established and consolidated, and time is also needed to build a common strategic approach.

> Eligibility and selection criteria

Partners should meet criteria that contribute to partnership sustainability throughout the project (i.e. respect for partners' assigned roles and responsibilities, capacity to manage a partnership, sharing expertise throughout the project and results at the end of the project, search for economic co-partnerships, being open to other areas of expertise, etc.).

> Need to re-evaluate stakeholder needs

Strengthening stakeholders' capacities to work together in partnership and to develop competitive proposals is an ongoing and central activity for multi-stakeholder partnerships. This requires a continual re-evaluation of stakeholders' needs and a constant adjustment of their skills and/or the partners involved.

> Funding for solutions, not the reverse

The search for funding should target the potential for finding innovative solutions to address the challenge of the federating theme

(research issue), as well as the independence of the partnership towards a unique funding source, or external support. A partnership becomes more sustainable if funding sources are diversified, and business activities or services are developed.

> Effective communication

Good internal communication energizes a partnership (smooth dialogue between partners overcoming any language barriers), but appropriate ICT tools (website and intranet, blogs, social media, etc.) should also be used to promote partnership outcomes to external audiences.

> Coordination versus facilitation

Partnership coordination and facilitation are two distinct but complementary roles. The coordinator (chosen internally) coordinates partnership activities and any external support that is required; the facilitator's role (chosen externally) is to mediate, solve conflicts and seek out new partners and funding.





About the **PAEPARD** consultation process



The Platform for African European Partnership on Agricultural Research for Development (PAEPARD) supports the development of sustainable African-European multi-stakeholder partnerships in agricultural innovation. Since 2010, PAEPARD has been working to:

- build multi-actor research partnerships involving farmer organizations, civil society groups, research and education institutes, private companies and policy makers;
- strengthen capacity and improve communication, trust and mutual understanding between partners;
- increase access to funding opportunities and build capacity to develop strong research proposals that address the needs of farmers and entrepreneurs;
- advocate for increased support for demand-led, multi-actor agricultural research.

In order to achieve these objectives, PAEPARD has worked to gather European and African stakeholders in ARD into multi-stakeholder partnerships around common thematic areas. Before recruiting African and European stakeholders into these partnerships, and to better prepare them for working together, PAEPARD organized a series of stakeholder consultations in Africa and in Europe between 2009 and 2013 to provide recommendations to PAEPARD

for the establishment of innovative, balanced and demand-driven partnerships.

Two types of consultation were held with specific objectives established for each one:

Sector consultations - organized around four stakeholders groups (civil society, private sector, diaspora and research organizations) in order to highlight expectations, constraints and recommendations in ARD from each group.

Consultations were conducted using face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and questionnaires. The aim of these sector consultations was to:

- familiarize stakeholders with PAEPARD tools designed to bring about innovative partnership processes;
- collect past experiences of partnerships between researchers and non-researchers;
- identify future cooperation priorities between African and European partners;
- identify stakeholders' needs in terms of communication, partnership facilitation and capacity building for PAEPARD partners.

Multi-stakeholder consultations - bringing together farmers' organizations (FO), non-governmental organizations (NGO), research, the private sector and diaspora, which involved face to face meetings and workshops (Table 1). The aim of these was to:

- share sector consultation outcomes with the participants selected by PAEPARD partners and to draw up common recommendations;
- validate the multi-stakeholder mobilization strategy and lead a reflection around the innovation processes in partnership;
- familiarize stakeholders with PAEPARD instruments and activities;
- summarize PAEPARD partners' needs in terms of communication, partnership facilitation and capacity building.

The exchanges that were organized in the course of the sectoral or multi-stakeholder consultations allowed participants to express their vision on the phases and elements that they felt were indispensable for the construction of a balanced and sustainable partnership.





Table 1. List of the PAEPARD consultations for mobilising African and European stakeholders to the multi-stakeholder partnership approach in agricultural research for development (ARD) between Africa and Europe

DATES	PLACES	TITLES OF THE CONSULTATIONS	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
August 2010	Windhoek	Internal multi-stakeholder consultation for FANRPAN constituency (Sub-Saharan Africa)	65	
September 2010	Brussels	Consultation of the European NGO	30	16 NGO re-represented
October 2010	Brussels	Consultation of the European private sector	11	4 companies represented
Sept.-Oct. 2010	Electronic	Consultation of the private sector	46	37 Africans 11 Europeans
Oct. 2010-Jan. 2011	Electronic	Consultation of the European research actors	161 invited	10% response
November 2010	Yaoundé	Central African multi-stakeholder consultation	18	
November 2010	Nairobi	Eastern African multi-stakeholder consultation	25	
March 2011	Firenze	Multi stakeholder consultation in Europe	42	32 Europeans 10 Africans
March 2011	Conakry	Consultation of the West African ARD institutions	40	
May 2011	Nairobi	African multi-stakeholder consultation	33	27 Africans 6 Europeans
September 2011	Brussels	Consultation for European NGO and FO	48	17 NGO or FO represented
May 2012	Brussels	Consultation for European NGO and FO	35	21 NGO or FO represented
May 2012	Brussels	European multi-stakeholder consultation	40	30 Europeans 10 Africans

Evidence in support of the consultation findings

The lessons drawn from the multi-stakeholder consultations do not provide ready-made solutions that can be applied to every circumstance. On the contrary, the consultations highlighted the degree to which specific contexts (socio-economic, geopolitical, historical and socio-cultural) influenced relations between stakeholders as well as the innovation process. A research result, however important, will not be adopted if it does not take root in a favourable environment unless either the environment, or the result, changes.

However, during the course of the consultations, the foundations were laid for successful partnership construction.

The need for effective dialogue

The need for a shared vision between NGO, producer organizations and the research sector is critical. Some have insisted on the importance of mechanisms for participation and dialogue which, beyond a shared vision, would deliver improved participation of farmers' organizations (FO).

Experiences in Finland¹ and Senegal², for example, have shown that it is essential to put in place proper structures at national level to ensure dialogue and exchange between government, research and FO, to allow the latter to play their role.

¹ The experience of the MTK (Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners) was presented by Kati Partanen during the 2011 consultation (http://www.csa-be.org/IMG/pdf_Kati_Partanen.pdf).

² The Fonds national de recherches agricoles et agroalimentaires du Sénégal (FNRAA) was set up by the Senegalese government in 2005 with the aim of funding agricultural research, supporting FO in deve-



In West Africa, a permanent framework for dialogue between researchers and FO was proposed in order to build consensus around common research topics³. In order to achieve this, a political will is needed to address farmers' needs, as well as the existence of strong FO, since political will also results from the power balance established between the state and farmers. The existence of 'allies' within the research sector is also necessary.

Collaboration between researchers and non-researchers may also prove challenging, particularly as there is often a rift between research and development actors (e.g., NGO). Whilst this is partly due to lack of 'mixed' funding, which might allow a research project to unfold alongside a development project, conflicts around sensitive issues (e.g., genetically modified organisms, means of production) have often resulted in a communication breakdown between researchers and NGO. This dialogue needs to be restored if NGO and researchers are to work together in successful partnerships.

Time required to achieve sustainability

Achieving consensus and a shared vision around common goals can often prove to be a delicate process and may take considerable time. This was cited as a particular challenge during the East African partner consultations, in order to ensure a better involvement of all partners.

To bind consortium members together, a partnership-building phase is required that enables partners to reflect and agree on:

- A process of identification and targeting of issues that can open out into research topics which should

respond to the real needs expressed by research users.

- A methodology structured in well-defined steps to ensure that applicable solutions are reached.
- Expanding the partnership to include other members able to contribute appropriate expertise in the search for solutions.
- Internal rules to ensure a balance between research and 'non-research' partners in the distribution of roles and responsibilities, where the common interest is a factor of cohesion and motivation.
- Balanced sharing and application of the research results among all partners.

Eligibility and selection criteria

The opening of a consortium to multiple and varied partners, as well as a sufficiently long period of funding, are all elements that will favour the creation of sustainable multi-stakeholder partnerships. However, during the consultations, some partners expressed reservations about current funding mechanisms that fail to take into account ARD specificities (in particular the number and balance of stakeholders involved) and as a result undermine the balanced partnership model proposed by PAEPARD.

The establishment of eligibility and selection criteria for the funding of projects is therefore essential to ensure favourable conditions for partnerships. The selection of eligibility criteria should meet clearly identified and prioritized objectives. The attribution of a weighting to each criterion, according to its importance, ensures consistency between the scores obtained by the projects evaluated and prioritization of objectives.

During the European NGO consultations, the following criteria were identified as favouring the establishment of balanced partnerships:

- Team composition: Imposing a minimum number of different stakeholders or the presence of a particular type of stakeholder (FO, private sector, NGO) can favour the creation of multi-disciplinary teams.
- Leadership: Defining a type of leader, or the specific conditions that a project leader should meet, can encourage stakeholders that are typically disadvantaged in partnerships (e.g. non-traditional agricultural research stakeholders such as FO or NGO) to take the initiative. This criterion can be used to avoid these stakeholders simply being used, making sure they don't just appear in a team in order to tick the boxes for required participation, thus

oping and formulating requests, and ensuring the dissemination and transfer of technologies developed from agricultural research. FNRAA's experiences of providing an innovative mechanism of public funding for agricultural research was published in 2012 (http://www.csa-be.org/IMG/pdf/Le_FNRAA-etude_de_casFINAL.pdf).

³ West African multi-stakeholder consultations.



promoting their genuine involvement in the project's implementation.

- Geographical criteria: Defining priority or compulsory zones (for example the simultaneous participation of African and European stakeholders) can favour geographical diversity within projects.

Stakeholder capacity

The capacity of each stakeholder to respond to the expectations of the partnership is decisive. To ensure this, it is essential to facilitate capacity building according to needs so that each partner is able to meet the responsibilities assigned to them within the partnership and make a real contribution particularly as the different parties involved in multi-stakeholder partnerships are used to working in isolation and need training to work in partnership. Training in human resources is necessary and clear capacity building programmes are needed to help partners in the development of research proposals. This may mean immediately starting analysis for capacity building needs as soon as a partnership is set up and for this to be reevaluated as the partnership evolves.

The capacity strengthening is not only one way, Europe to Africa, or researcher to non-researcher: since innovation is made of appropriate interactions between stakeholders in an enabling environment, the knowledge and knowhow exchanges shall be established in both ways. Cultural behaviour is for instance equally important as knowledge on mycotoxin organisms in addressing the health issues of aflatoxin contaminated food in Africa.

Funding

Multi-stakeholder partnerships between African and European partners in ARD will only work and be sustainable if they have the necessary financial support. However, when the funding of a project stops, partnership activities also stop or are severely affected. Funding is also rarely adapted to the needs of multi-stakeholder partnerships, often restricting partnerships to formal research organisations (rather than opening out to other innovation stakeholders), and demanding a multi-country partnership that might be difficult to manage. Moreover, funding tends to be short-term and does not offer sufficient time for a partnership to develop.

Participants in the consultations reflected on this constraint and agreed on the need to conduct advocacy and lobbying of states and regional institutions for greater ARD funding. To this effect,

a list of institutions was drawn up with which to raise awareness of the importance of increasing funding for ARD. In addition, participants insisted on the role for PAEPARD to disseminate information about funding opportunities and to pursue its advocacy activities in favour research projects that have a stronger ARD direction and in favour of funding mechanisms that are more appropriate for multi-stakeholder partnerships. The establishment of various forms of incentive funding (e.g. expert studies to deepen the priority challenge and suggest research questions, small workshops to strengthen a partnership, exchange visits etc.), the orientation of funds towards national research systems and the setting up of a monitoring system for ARD budgets ('budget-tracking', Paris Declaration) are among other potential options proposed by the consultation participants. Each member of a consortium should be also encouraged to bring their own resources and bilateral funding opportunities should be sought.

Effective communication

Effective communication is essential, as much for project transparency and openness as for the implementation and coordination of its activities. Costs and time for communication should be taken into account in project planning.

In order to facilitate adherence to the project, it is necessary to communicate effectively and regularly, both internally and externally, following a properly planned strategy and work plan⁴. A communication space should be established to allow the exchange of information and sharing of knowledge. A wide range of ICT tools are available to ensure properly functioning exchanges and meetings between partners. However, direct exchanges between partners should also be encouraged, rather than through the intermediary of a secretariat.

A communication forum managed by the partners themselves, with a facility that enables exchanges in several languages (French, English, local dialect) can also help to support communication within a consortium. Whilst the linguistic aspect⁵ can be a constraint to the cohesion and sustainability of a partnership, this should be overcome in order to avoid divisions and discouragement.

Coordination versus facilitation

The growing insistence among agricultural research and development partners on the need for accountability to beneficiaries and other stakeholders has generated the need for balanced



⁴ European NGO consultations + Central African multi-stakeholder consultation

⁵ European NGO consultations + Regional African multi-stakeholder consultations



motivations, must meet around the table to both contribute and listen. This requires (intercultural) brokerage and negotiation skills that researchers do not always have.

Agricultural innovation facilitators (AIF) may be brought in to play a central role in the identification of common agricultural issues, due to their knowledge of the sectors and the players involved. Either as a consultant or attached to a producers' organization, the AIF knows how best to support the creation of

partnerships. However, connections cannot be created automatically, some kind of brokerage or facilitation mechanism is required. In addition, the coordination and management of a partnership must be ensured in the short-, medium- and long-term by people with the necessary skills within the partner organisations.

The facilitator often has a crucial role in the coordination of activities. It is essential to be aware of the continuous need for partnership mechanisms and the involvement of all the partners throughout the duration of the project and the necessary tools and resources must be provided to ensure this. This is particularly the case as a joint analysis of shared problems and objectives is essential. European and African organisations, with different interests and

partnerships, how to lead them, to avoid or resolve conflicts, as they have been chosen and accepted by the stakeholders themselves.

The AIF's involvement complements that of the partnership coordinator, who manages activities in line with an agreed agenda. The facilitator can help by systematically making available the necessary working documents to those 'disadvantaged' partners and by briefing them on the agenda, in advance of meetings, so as to allow them to better participate and make interventions in the meetings. Moreover, the facilitator handles relations with donors during the provision of funding for research. The AIF takes part in the translation of agricultural problems into research proposals and in identifying possible funding sources.

Conclusion

The main finding of the European researcher consultation is that more needs to be done to communicate the concept of brokerage⁶ by PAEPARD and to make European research organizations more aware of the concrete opportunities offered by the programme. The African multi-stakeholder consultations mainly contributed that PAEPARD is now a real space for dialogue and consultation between the different stakeholders involved in ARD, space where the idea is being forged that the farmer – like all the other partners – is a stakeholder who contributes to the production of innovations, and is not just a beneficiary.

⁶ PAEPARD policy brief N°2 (2016). Facilitating innovation in agricultural research for development: Brokerage as the vital link., 8 p.



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The Platform for Africa-Europe Partnership in Agricultural Research for Development (**PAEPARD**) is a 8-year project sponsored by the European Commission (80%) and partners' own contribution (20%).

It is coordinated by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (**FARA**) since December 2009, and extended until end of 2017.

It aims at building joint African-European multi-stakeholder partnerships in agricultural research for development (**ARD**) contributing to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. On the European side, the partners are **AGRINATURA** (The European Alliance on Agriculture Knowledge for Development, coordinating the European partners), **COLEACP** (representing the private sector), **CSA** (representing the NGOs), **ICRA**, specialized in capacity building in ARD, and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (**CTA**). On the African side and in addition to FARA, the partners are the Pan-African Farmers Organization (**PAFO**), the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (**RUFORUM**) based in Kampala, and the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (**FANRPAN**) based in Pretoria. PAFO involves its members that are the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (**EAFF**) based in Nairobi, the Réseaux des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs d'Afrique de l'Ouest (**ROPPA**) based in Ouagadougou, and the Plate-forme Régionale des Organisations Paysannes d'Afrique Centrale (**PROPAC**) based in Yaoundé. The Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (**SACAU**) is an associate partner of **PAEPARD**.



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