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Participatory Process of Developing Performance Indicators in a Global Partnership Programme: The Case of PROLINNOVA

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Summary

Programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E) presents a lot of challenges, especially when one adds to this process the dimensions of participation, partnership and learning. Then, the whole process becomes much more complicated. The PROLINNOVA M&E is a shared evolving process continuously sharpened to meet the needs of the partnership. This paper describes a specific part of that process, the development of performance indicators for the PROLINNOVA programme. The start-up process, already, has offered many insights in terms of creating a balance between the PROLINNOVA programme accountability and partners' autonomy in decision-making and action. Side by side with creating shared ownership of the M&E system is the importance of the partners' roles and responsibilities in making the system work.

Background

PROLINNOVA is an NGO-initiated programme that builds on a global learning and advocacy network for promoting local innovation in ecologically-oriented agriculture and natural resources management (NRM). Conceived in December 1999 during a meeting of Southern and Northern NGOs supported by Global Forum for Agriculture Research (GFAR), the NGO Committee of the CGIAR and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rambouillet, France, PROLINNOVA was a response to the challenge of scaling up existing approaches to participatory innovation in agriculture and NRM. ETC Ecoculture, a Netherlands-based NGO, facilitated the launching of the programme. Those who have joined ETC in this initiative are NGOs from the North and the South that have been engaged for years, even decades, in participatory technology development (PTD)/ participatory innovation development (PID). They had been linked with each other for some time through other networks concerned with sustainable agriculture and NRM.

In facilitating PROLINNOVA, these NGOs create or strengthen platforms of different stakeholders in agricultural research and development (ARD) to reflect on current approaches, methods and policies; to analyse how these are enhancing or hindering local innovation and PID; and to plan and carry out activities to enhance agricultural innovation. Within each country, the focus is on building partnerships at national and

regional levels, while the international platform is used to learn from each other about how to build better partnerships in PID.

The PROLINNOVA programme aims to:

- Demonstrate the effectiveness of user-led innovation for sustainable development;
- Build strong farmer-extension-researcher partnerships;
- Increase capacities of farmers, extensionists and researchers in participatory approaches;
- Integrate participatory approaches to farmer-led innovation and experimentation into institutions of agricultural research, extension and education;
- Pilot decentralised funding mechanisms to promote local innovation;
- Stimulate national and regional policy dialogues to favour local innovation; and
- Set up platforms for reflection, analysis and learning about promoting local innovation.

The programme primarily seeks to strengthen the links between farmers, NGOs, extension, research and other stakeholders in ARD and to increase their capacities to work together to address the emerging challenges on PID in a rapidly changing world.

A global partnership programme

PROLINNOVA is one of the Global Partnership Programmes (GPPs) under the umbrella of the GFAR. It currently operates in nine countries: Niger, Sudan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, Cambodia and Nepal. Because of funding constraints, the launching of activities in the different countries had to be staggered over three years. With funding support from the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), organisations in three countries (Uganda, Ghana, and Ethiopia) embarked on a participatory process of programme design in 2003. With funding support from the Netherlands Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS), organisations in South Africa, Nepal and Cambodia embarked on a similar process in 2004. Another three country programmes (Sudan, Tanzania and Niger) started to receive DGIS funding in 2005. Organisations in Kenya have expressed interest in joining PROLINNOVA and are preparing a proposal for inception activities, as are some organisations in the Andes. The activities are supported by various donors, with some funds flowing through the Secretariat and some directly through country programmes.

The participatory process of designing country programmes (CPs) was carried out through national-level inventories of local experiences in participatory ARD, followed by workshops in which key stakeholders in ARD in each country analysed their experiences and developed national action plans. While these action plans vary because of (1) the differences in experiences within each country and (2) the self-identified strengths and weaknesses of the network members in recognising the dynamics of IK and engaging in PID and participatory approaches, some common elements emerged out of these action plans:

- Developing inventories and databases of local innovations, innovators and organisations working with them;

- Bringing farmers, development agents and formal researchers together to plan and implement participatory experiments, starting from jointly prioritised local innovations;
- Creating national and sub-national multi-stakeholder platforms to share information about local innovations and to learn jointly about PID and its institutionalisation;
- Building capacity to identify and document local innovation and engage in PID, through training workshops for farmers and scientists;
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation of joint activities, outcomes and impacts; and
- Creating awareness (through innovator fairs, radio programmes, etc) and engaging in policy dialogue about agricultural research, extension and education, in order to create favourable institutional and policy settings for PID.

A structure to support coordination and learning

Organisational structures help those engaged in partnerships to organise themselves such that important organisational functions related to thinking, decision-making and doing are carried out efficiently and effectively. In a partnership like PROLINNOVA, sharing these functions is important and critical. The challenge in most partnerships is balancing the need for quick, joint decision-making and accountability with autonomy of the partners and collaboration towards action. This is true not only for PROLINNOVA CPs and within the International Support Team (IST, explained below). Clearly, a structure needed is one that would facilitate providing direction from members with greater vision, skill and experience and one that can transform relationships so that they energise both collaborative and autonomous action.

The PROLINNOVA country programmes

PROLINNOVA CPs developed structures that involve various key stakeholders. Every CP has a *National Steering Committee (NSC)*, the apex structure for accountability at the country level. This is made up of representatives from government organisations of research, extension and education, other NGOs and, in some cases, private organisations and international agricultural research centres. The example in Box 1 show that high-level officials, mostly from government agencies, comprise the PROLINNOVA-Uganda NSC. The NSC provides policy and technical guidance to the PROLINNOVA national programme and plays a key role in advocacy and resource mobilisation.

In each CP, a local NGO hosts the NSC. The stakeholders in each country identify a *Secretariat*, in some cases, a *Core Team* to manage the CP. In some countries, such as Ethiopia and Ghana, the management of activities has been decentralised to regional level. The Secretariat plays a facilitating role in encouraging members of the NSC and regional working groups to play their roles. It is responsible for ensuring that the tasks identified in the action plans are implemented. It is also responsible for providing technical support and training and for popularising the programme at grassroots level through the network members.

Box 1. National Steering Committee: PROLINNOVA–Uganda

PROLINNOVA–Uganda

National Steering Committee

Chair: Deputy Director General, National Agriculture Research Organization (NARO)

Deputy Chair: Executive Secretary, Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations

Other members of the National Steering Committee:

- The Head, CIAT-Uganda
- The Head, Farm Planning, Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries
- The Executive Secretary, Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (a government body in charge of research)
- The Executive Head, Uganda Local Authorities Association (Uganda is operating a decentralised system where planning and resource allocation is at district level, this is an important partner.)
- A Local Innovator (from among the many farmer innovators in the country)
- The Deputy Head, NAADS (National Agricultural Advisory Services, a government parastatal in charge of farmer-led, public-funded agricultural extension in the country)
- The Executive Secretary, Uganda National Farmers Federation (a federation of farmers' organisations)

This level of representation in the National Steering Committee has made Prolinnova achieve greater recognition among key national agencies responsible for promoting agriculture research, extension and education. It is envisioned to foster smooth policy dialogue on integrating local innovations and indigenous knowledge into institutional policies.

Excerpted from the “Progress on Prolinnova since the 13th GFAR Annual General Meeting”, report presented by Fred Kafeero in the 14th GFAR Steering Committee Meeting, Mexico City, Mexico, 25 October 2004.

The International Support Team (IST)

At the international level, ETC Ecoculture is joined by the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) based in the Philippines, the Centre for International Cooperation of the Free University of Amsterdam (CIS-VUA) based in the Netherlands and the Swiss Centre for Agriculture Extension and Rural Development (LBL) based in Switzerland to make up an *International Support Team (IST)*. These institutions have over the years been promoting PID/PTD-related projects and activities in collaboration with ETC. The IST supports country-level activities in terms of international coordination, capacity building, networking, web-based knowledge management, M&E, documentation, publishing and advocacy. It organised two international workshops (the first in Yirgalem, Ethiopia in March 2004 and the second in Entebbe, Uganda in June 2005) and one international training on PID Training of Facilitators (held in the Philippines in June 2004), developed a website and yahoo discussion group as platforms for sharing, tapped funding opportunities, and provided technical backstopping support to the CPs.

PROLINNOVA Oversight Group (POG)

To enhance the partnership towards increased ownership and accountability to the CPs, their constituencies and the donors, the PROLINNOVA partners decided at the first international workshop in Yirgalem to form a PROLINNOVA Oversight Group (POG). The POG is responsible for providing overall guidance on main issues and directions and oversight on behalf of CPs and donors. It is specifically responsible for developing programme strategy, policies and principles in consultation with CPs and overseeing adherence, arbitrating in conflicts between CPs and IST, ensuring that adequate M&E is being applied and ensuring that advocacy activities are conducted effectively at the international level. The PROLINNOVA partners agreed on the criteria for selecting the representatives to the POG. A transparent selection process ensued to fill in the seven slots to the POG. The POG consists of one each to represent the “advanced” CPs that started in 2003, the “new” CPs starting in 2004 and the “emerging” CPs that started in 2005; one slot for the IST member and three slots for “outsider” partners. After an email-based nomination and voting, the seven-person POG was installed for a two-year term. The first face-to-face meeting of the POG was in February 2005 in South Africa and the second in June 2005 in Uganda.

In the last two years, the PROLINNOVA structure has evolved, sensitively responding to the needs of the partnership. The self-correcting nature of the structure has allowed key stakeholders at CP and international levels to reflect on their functioning, roles and responsibilities and contributions to the overall programme.

Addressing the need for tracking results and learning collectively

The international workshop held in Yirgalem, Ethiopia provided the opportunity for partners to meet face-to-face for the first time. Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) was one of the important agenda items during the workshop.

PM&E is a key concern for PROLINNOVA not just to satisfy donors. More specifically, it is seen as a process of identifying problems, opportunities and solutions towards formulating and implementing courses of action to reach its aims and objectives. Particularly for PROLINNOVA partners, PM&E is a tool for adaptive learning processes needed to improve its work and to remain alert as to whether it is reaching its goals. As a tool, PROLINNOVA partners believe that PM&E empowers stakeholders at various levels – international, national, regional and community – to take action. It informs decision-making at these different levels and raises everyone’s awareness of factors that influence innovation development and sharing.

The PROLINNOVA PM&E aims at providing a framework for systematic programme reporting and collective learning. The Yirgalem workshop laid out key elements to put into action for M&E at international and CP levels. Key themes on PM&E tackled in the Yirgalem workshop include a proposed structure for PROLINNOVA M&E, potential

monitoring activities that should be carried out in the next four years and potential indicators for measuring performance of PROLINNOVA at the international and CP levels.

In both the Yirgalem and Entebbe workshops, concerns related to how PROLINNOVA can be monitored for efficiency and effectiveness were articulated specifically as these relate to supporting CPs, the IST and the POG in decision-making. The partners reiterated the importance of M&E as a tool for accountability and transparency since the programme owes it to stakeholders (farmers, researchers, development professionals and donors) to document not only their use of inputs to produce outputs, but also be able to track outcomes and potential impacts. PROLINNOVA partners also articulated the role PM&E play in collective learning about better programme management, partnership, coordination and facilitation of participatory processes for local innovation.

While there is this attempt to provide a framework, partners are aware that the PROLINNOVA M&E is to be operationalised in different contexts at different levels. Thus, the partners agreed to view the PROLINNOVA M&E as “work in progress”, as the partnership continues to refine various elements of the framework which include the list of probable indicators. They are also aware of the need to learn from the operational application of PM&E processes to be able to develop one that is applicable for the various CP contexts.

Balancing accountability and autonomy: putting together the PROLINNOVA M&E framework

In the Yirgalem workshop, the participants representing all CPs and the IST were divided into four groups. Three of these groups looked at PM&E at the level of PROLINNOVA’s activities, objectives and ultimate impact of CPs while a fourth group looked at these three levels with reference to the work of the IST. The outputs from the group work included: 1) a list of suggested actions for monitoring and evaluation of the PROLINNOVA programme; 2) ideas for implementing M&E of programme activities; 3) suggested indicators at the CP level and the international component of PROLINNOVA; and 4) statement defining impact and outcomes. The initial document to capture the elements of the PROLINNOVA M&E framework also included an annex which listed detailed quality indicators of farmer organisations/groups, an example from INADES (Institut Africain pour le Développement Economique et Social), Tanzania.

The discussion on PROLINNOVA M&E during the Entebbe workshop built on the initial framework described above. Recognising the different contexts in which PROLINNOVA programme performance would be measured, the PM&E framework developed in Yirgalem nevertheless lacked a unifying element in terms of common vision, mission and goal for PROLINNOVA. The collective discussion on the vision-mission-goal of PROLINNOVA in Entebbe in June 2005 revealed that the CPs, being at different stages in programme implementation, have a range of interpretations of what the programme is about in the contexts in which each CP operates.

PROLINNOVA vision-mission-goal

The PROLINNOVA visioning process used an organisational development tool called “Guided Meditation for Visioning” by Loretta van Schalkwyk of Olive Organisational Development and Training. After “dreaming” about receiving a prestigious award for the PROLINNOVA programme, each participant wrote down key words about how the programme was praised by the award-giving body and by colleagues in development work. In small groups, participants formulated a vision statement capturing the key words that each group member identified during the “dreaming”. The vision statements formulated by the small groups were shared in the plenary. Similarities and differences were discussed, including reasons for why the members of the group thought that the vision statement as formulated by the group captured the essence of the PROLINNOVA programme. One group felt strongly about ‘*transformed roles of farmers*’. All groups saw the importance of the PROLINNOVA approach towards ‘*sustaining farmers’ livelihoods*’ as the end result and ‘*learning*’ as an important process in PID. Having heard all groups, one volunteer from each group formed a small working group to merge the different vision statements presented by the small groups into common vision and mission statements. It was also suggested that the overall goal from the project logframe be reviewed and considered as the PROLINNOVA programme goal statement. The statements were reviewed in the plenary and finalised.

Box 2. Vision-Mission-Goal statements

<p>Vision</p> <p>A world where farmers play decisive roles in research and development for sustainable livelihoods</p>
<p>Mission</p> <p>Foster a culture of mutual learning and synergy in local innovation processes in agriculture and natural resource management</p>
<p>Goal</p> <p>To develop and institutionalise partnerships and methodologies that promotes processes of local innovation for environmentally sound use of natural resources</p>

Agreeing on measures of performance

Categorising objectives. Overall organisational performance is considered to be a function of the interplay of the organisation’s unique motivation, its organisational capacity, and forces in the external environment (Lusthaus, 1998). While there is a notion that performance usually relates to the purpose of the organisation alone, an organisation needs to refer to its achievements also in relation to the resources available to it. In delivering these achievements, an organisation has to recognise that there are factors within the environment that either facilitate or hinder in meeting these desired results. The same principle applies in partnerships.

The PROLINNOVA programme is no different from organisations in the sense that its achievements are dependent largely on the motivations among partner institutions, their capacity to deliver results, and the dynamics of the forces within the environment in which the CPs, the IST and the POG perform. Collectively, partners agreed to define appropriate measures for the PROLINNOVA programme. PROLINNOVA programme performance indicators should be able to measure the extent by which the programme is reaching its objectives.

In the Yirgalem workshop, the question of measures of performance was raised among the partners. Since the different CPs have formulated their objectives differently, the indicators that came out of the brainstorming exercise formed eight categories of objectives that run across the nine CPs in various combinations. Thus, for some advanced CPs, they cover 5–8 of these objectives while for emerging CPs only as few as 2–4. For each objective, the partners identified possible indicators based on their work. Partners agreed to compare the list with their CP objectives and consider only the indicators most relevant to their own situations. The formulation of the performance indicators was complicated by the fact that the PROLINNOVA programme proposal submitted to DGIS listed only four objectives.

Table 1. The CP objectives

As reflected in the logframe of the proposal to DGIS	Categories of objectives being carried out at CP level
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To demonstrate relevance and effectiveness of user-led innovation development for environmentally sound use of natural resources 2. To build the capacities of local resource users, community-based organisations (CBOs) and local NGOs to become effective and equal partners of government agencies in research and development (R&D) 3. To build the capacity of local resource users, CBOs and supporting NGOs to influence effectively R&D agendas related to environmentally sound use of natural resources 4. To establish the innovative and decentralised financing mechanism co-controlled by local institutions to ensure local ownership and long-term sustainability of PID/PTD processes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capacity building of development staff in PID/PTD 2. Adequate documentation of relevant local innovations and innovators 3. PID implementation expanded and improved 4. Relevant government policies include attention to local innovation (LI) and PID 5. PID and LI approach institutionalised 6. Establishing effective multi-stakeholder collaboration 7. Strengthening farmer groups, organisations and local institutions for ARD 8. Sustainable Innovation Support Funds realised

The four objectives in the proposal to DGIS and the eight objective categories defined at the Yirgalem workshop complement each other, with the eight objective categories giving more detail to the four broad objectives (Veldhuizen, November 2004). The first objective on ‘effectiveness and relevance of PTD/PID adequately demonstrated’ is supported by Objective Categories 2 and 3: adequate documentation of relevant local innovations and innovators and PID implementation expanded and improved. The second objective on ‘building capacities of local resource users, CBOs and NGOs to act as equal partners with government, development, research and education organisations’ is supported in detail by Objective Categories 1, 7, 2 and 6: capacity building of

development staff, strengthening farmer groups, organisations and local institutions for ARD, PID implementation expanded and improved and establishing effective multi-stakeholder collaboration. Objective 3 on ‘building capacity of CBOs/NGOs in policy dialogue and lobby’ is supported by Objective Categories 4 and 5: relevant government policies include attention to LI and PID and institutionalisation of the PID/LI approach. The fourth objective is clearly based on Objective Category 8: realisation of the Innovation Support Funds.

At the international level, the partners formulated three objectives. As in the case of objective categories identified for the CPs, the indicators for the objectives at the international level were also reformulated. The table below compares the objectives articulated in the logframe for the DGIS proposal and the new formulation.

Table 2: Objectives at the international level

Articulated in the logframe of the proposal to DGIS	Reformulation by the partners in Yirgalem
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure high-quality PROLINNOVA country programmes 2. Create strong international awareness and credibility of PROLINNOVA through programme-wide synthesis, analysis, documentation and dissemination of experiences and lessons learnt 3. Manage the learning network efficiently on behalf of its members 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase international recognition and acceptance of PID/PTD 2. Strengthen capacities of country partners at national and sub-national level in programme development, process facilitation and partnership 3. Effective functioning of decentralised democratic network

On the question of impact, the Yirgalem workshop came out with broad parameters for impact that should be considered in the PROLINNOVA programme. The programme impact was particularly related to poverty alleviation and NRM, which includes halting of land degradation and desertification. The main level of impact was linked to farmer-level and community-level changes which include the following:

- Material changes (food, income)
- Attitudinal/behavioural motivations
- Relationships/interactions
- Innovativeness of individuals and groups
- Synergies/support sharing within communities.

The list also refers to changes at the institutional level as well as policy and partnership levels. While the list identified community-level changes, the Yirgalem workshop was not able to identify measures for these changes.

Development of indicators. When discussing PM&E, the Entebbe workshop participants took off from the formulated vision-mission-goal and the output of the Yirgalem workshop on suggested indicators. Before reviewing these indicators, the participants differentiated three levels of results that are of concern in any PM&E initiative: outputs, outcomes and impacts.

Box 3. Three levels of results differentiated

Outputs are deliverables in knowledge, technology, policies, materials or services with an expected date of delivery. They measure results at the activity level of the logframe and are relatively simple to measure, very straightforward

Examples:

- concrete technologies (screens for identifying diseased seeds, harvest storage devices, etc)
- new procedures (detecting seed infection)
- practices (crop management, research, inventory of local innovations)
- information to support policy on local farmers availing of loans at affordable rates
- number and types of people trained in PID training of facilitators.

Outcomes are the changes resulting from the uses of outputs by stakeholders. They refer to improved functionality and/or behavioural change. They normally take longer to realise compared to outputs.

Examples:

- increased agricultural production/harvest
- number of researchers using participatory action research with local people
- farmers actively identifying focus of experiments with researchers.

Impacts are the longer-range social, environmental and economic benefits that are consistent with PROLINNOVA mission and goals. They refer to the combined effects of outputs and outcomes.

Examples:

- reduced prevalence of malnutrition among farmers' children
- improved assets of the farming households.

In three small groups, the participants reviewed the categorised objectives and indicators for the CPs and the objectives and indicators at the international level. Two groups reviewed four objective categories each at the CP level and a third group focused on the objectives and indicators at the international level. The participants recognised the mix of output and outcome indicators, and suggested changes and additions to the list. The participants agreed to assign unfinished review and the continuation of the polishing and prioritising of indicators at the CP levels through the M&E focal persons (explained on page 16). The most current version of the list of output indicators that benefited from the suggestions and comments from the various partners is shown below:

Table 3. Output indicators at the country programme level

Objective categories	Output indicators
Capacity building of farmers and development practitioners in PID indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of workshops, training courses, fora etc ▪ Type and number of people attending, disaggregated by gender ▪ Number of agencies represented in the workshops, disaggregated by organisation types (GOs, NGOs, academe, business, others) ▪ Number of people and institutions implementing PID ▪ Number of realistic action plans

Identification and documentation of local innovation processes (innovations, innovators, partnerships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of innovations, innovators identified ▪ Number and type of documents prepared on LI (e.g. case studies, reports, posters, leaflets) ▪ Number and range of innovations and innovators entered in to PID database, disaggregated by gender
PID implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number and type of PID experimentation and partnerships ▪ Number of farmers directly involved, disaggregated by gender ▪ Number of farmers benefiting, disaggregated by gender
Influence government policies to include LI and PID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing policy reviews done and list of gaps and potential for policies identified and documented ▪ Number of advocacy activities organised and record of their immediate success as evident from people attending, level of discussion, attention by media ▪ Number of lobby documents prepared for PID/LI ▪ Number of farmer innovators supported to participate in official farmer days and the type/description of support provided ▪ Number of informal policy-dialogue activities.
PID and LI approach institutionalised in research, extension and education systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PTD/PID curricula developed, piloted and accepted by education institutes ▪ Number of research institutions or programmes that have and make use of database on innovations ▪ Number and focus of research activities conducted related to PID/PTD ▪ Number of joint experiments with farmers (this is a case where an indicator can be repeated for another cluster)
Establishing effective multi-stakeholder collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of meetings of Steering Committee and attendance and minutes of meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PID/PTD-related issues/concerns discussed during meetings • Actions/decisions undertaken re PTD/PID concerns/issues raised ▪ Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for partners, clear annual workplan prepared and implemented ▪ Annual financial report produced and audited; information-sharing activities regarding financial reporting and audit ▪ Number and type/description of stakeholder collaborative activities emerged outside direct PROLINNOVA plan
Strengthening farmer groups, organisations, and local institutions for ARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of new groups or local institutions for ARD, compared to baseline (per year) ▪ Number of formally organised focus groups (FGs) (constitution, structure, members); FGs workplans and implementation reports. ▪ Number and type of activities to strengthen capacity of local organisations, number of people involved, disaggregated by gender
Sustainable Innovation Support Fund (ISF) realised [see Farmer Access to Innovation Resources (FAIR) programme for M&E details on ISF]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of farmers accessing ISFs ▪ Guidelines and formats for application in place ▪ Management and farmer-led governance system for fund functioning ▪ Fund replenishment realised

Table 4. Output indicators at the international level

Objectives	Indicators	How to measure
Realise institutional and policy changes to embrace the application of PID/LI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased international recognition and acceptance of PID/PTD ▪ PID/LI approaches built into ARD programmes ▪ Donor priorities and resources aligned to support PID/LI ▪ Regular contributions to the PROLINNOVA website 	<p>Number of references in donor documents, policy statements and development literature: Google search annually Academic bibliography indices</p> <p>Proposals developed reflect PID/LI approach Proposal formulation processes involve multiple stakeholders</p> <p>Donor policy documents review – annually</p> <p>Web register of CP contributions Produce annual report on website contributions</p>
Strengthen capacities of country partners at national and sub-national level in programme development, process facilitation and partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understand the concepts of PID ▪ Skills of conducting PID processes in the field ▪ Skills to build and nurture multi-stakeholder partnerships including conflict management and resolution ▪ Skills to engage in policy dialogue to create favourable environment for PID/LI ▪ Communication skills, especially, within diverse institutional contexts and with multiple stakeholders ▪ Applying PM&E methods at all levels 	<p>Adherence to PID code of practice Localised development and use of tools, guidelines, learning materials At CP level, mid-term self assessment</p> <p>Linked to assessment of IST by CPs</p>

<p>Effective functioning of decentralised democratic learning network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective functioning of POG ▪ Clear rules and policies formulated and adhered to (see Terms of Reference for POG) ▪ Active participation of programme partners in international meetings, workshops, conferences, etc ▪ Development and maintenance of a joint reporting system based on CP inputs ▪ Decentralised and transparent resource development and financial management ▪ Effective communication throughout the programme ▪ Regular contributions to the website from CPs; towards decentralised co-management of website by CPs 	<p>Minutes of meetings, decisions made, agreements reached Formulated policies</p> <p>Evaluation feedback Observation of network interactions</p> <p>Compliance to bi-annual and annual reporting Completed reports Funds/resources mobilised at country levels; presence of effective and transparent financial systems at CP levels; multiple funding sources secured; phase over of funding to self-financing mechanisms</p> <p>Web register of CP contributions; produce annual report on website contributions</p>
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The partners likewise reviewed the objectives and indicators at the international level. Notable changes in the above matrix are: 1) the reformulation of objectives and 2) the enhancement on the indicators. The indicators, however, is still a mix of outputs and outcomes.

As can be observed, the two outputs at the CP and IST levels slightly differ in the sense that, at the international level, there was an attempt to include more details in terms of how indicators can be captured and measured. It was quite difficult for CPs to engage in this level of detail because of the contextual differences. However, it was agreed that each CP will have to review the list and select indicators from the list that would be appropriate for it. A follow-up is yet to be made on their progress on this.

The CP and the IST are currently reviewing the outcome indicators. Initial comments have been received. The most recent version is as follows:

Table 5. Outcome indicators at the CP level

Objective categories	Outcome indicators
Capacity building of farmers and development practitioners in PID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of farmers the trained farmer innovators trained ▪ Number of action plans implemented including brief description of focus ▪ Number of farmers experimenting on their own or with others after the training

Adequate documentation of local innovation (innovations, innovators, partnerships, processes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of users of documentation per month ▪ Content of feedback from users ▪ Innovations to documented innovations or partnership-building processes/ methodologies reported by users
PID implementation expanded and improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number and range of farmer-led PID partnership initiatives ▪ Number and types of improved local innovations ▪ Number of farmers adopting/adapting improved innovations, disaggregated by gender
Influence government policies to include LI and PID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of policy reviews recommending to include/enable PID/LI ▪ Number of formal government documents with reference to LI/PID ▪ Number of farmer innovators participating in policy formulation, disaggregated by gender
PID and LI approach institutionalised in research, extension and education systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resources are allocated by the institutions for PID/LI ▪ Shift in roles of professionals ▪ Participatory research that builds on local innovation incorporated into research policy ▪ Recognition of innovators by researchers and research centres ▪ Learning, interaction and exchanges between research, extension and education institutions
Establishing effective multi-stakeholder collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adjustments within partner organisations to accommodate partnership arrangements ▪ New joint initiatives outside of the PROLINNOVA planned initiatives ▪ Number and focus of partnerships sought with other research, education, farmers, NGO groups
Strengthening farmer groups, organisations and local institutions for ARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of other farmer groups organised by current FG partners ▪ Number and type of service providers proactively engaged by farmer groups ▪ Number of FGs represented in local research and/or development boards ▪ Kind of demands/requests FGs put forward to service providers
Sustainable Innovation Support Fund (ISF) realised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fund replenishment realised (included in the output indicators list but seems to be appropriately considered as outcome indicator) ▪ Systems and process adjustments contributing to fund sustainability

In the Entebbe workshop, the partners also had the chance to identify potential impact indicators. To do this, they were asked to refer to the formulated vision-mission-goal, the broad parameters described about impact in the Yirgalem workshop and the list of suggested output and outcome indicators at the CP and international levels. Through a brainstorming process, participants identified potential impact indicators along three key components: 1) poverty alleviation/sustainable livelihoods; 2) improved NRM; and 3) better agricultural research, development and education systems. The list that came out of that exercise was a mix of outcome and impact indicators. The list below is a “cleaned-up” version but still has to undergo considerable review by the M&E focal points.

Box 5. Potential impact indicators for review

Poverty alleviation/sustainable livelihoods

- Increased household income
- Diversified nutritional security
- Improved coping strategies to deal with shocks and stresses (e.g. AIDS)
- Reduced vulnerability to identified problems
- Increased resilience to drought
- Good health

Improved natural resources

- Hectares of reforested degraded land
- Number of regenerated springs that dried from deforestation
- Size of biodiversity change in a particular target ecological unit
- Mobile land use in seasonally-dry areas accepted in land-use policy

Agricultural research, development and education systems

- Increase in the number of financial institutions supporting PID initiatives
- Scientific validation of farmer innovations
- Farmers setting agricultural research agenda and key actor in allocating research funding

The variance in the interpretation of potential impact is understandably a function of the contexts in which the PROLINNOVA programme is implemented. Thus, in dry areas like Sudan, an impact indicator that would make sense is increased resilience to drought. Countries in Africa also linked potential impact to coping abilities of families experiencing stress such as those afflicted with AIDS. The Nepal CP, on the other hand, interprets the PROLINNOVA programme in terms of reforestation and increased biodiversity. This variance between countries is one of the biggest challenges in the M&E of the programme.

Monitoring and evaluation focal points

At the IST level, the partners have already identified a M&E focal point. This person at the IST level is responsible for coordinating M&E between CP M&E focal points and initiating discussions towards refining the PROLINNOVA programme M&E framework and guidelines. The framework provides the CPs the general principles, potential indicators to select from and ideas on practices in PM&E including tools available and applicable for the programme.

Each CP identifies its M&E focal point. The tasks of the CP and IST focal points are not to carry out all M&E activities but to ensure that M&E is done at both levels.

Specifically, the M&E focal points at the CP level are responsible for:

- Maintaining a running list of PROLINNOVA activities in the country which indicates components/sub-activities and who would be responsible for these activities; and

- Making a list of the country PROLINNOVA CP objectives, the planned outputs resulting from the activities needed to pursue these objectives and the intended outcomes anticipated in using the various outputs. The list should also indicate who is doing what in terms of M&E objectives.

Training in PM&E and participatory impact monitoring (PIM) so that farmers/local people can use M&E tools to maintain a strong farmer/local people-led focus in M&E at the country level is an important element in enhancing capacities towards M&E among partners. The M&E focal points are therefore expected to play a role in coordinating and facilitating these training activities.

Challenges

For the last two years, the PROLINNOVA programme has been a platform for partnership, learning and meaningful participation for all partners at various levels. The following are emerging challenges to the current M&E system.

A set of programme indicators to choose from

The PROLINNOVA programme indicators list is at best recommending output, outcome and impact indicators that would be useful to the programme at the CP level. The list of indicators at the international level seems to cover appropriate measures of programme achievements at that level. Given a range of eight objective categories, the partners have yet to agree which of these objectives should be given priority in most of the CPs. Common impact indicators are yet to be agreed upon or the partners has yet to affirm whether selecting appropriate impact indicators for each CP from a list of agreed impact indicators for the overall programme would be the way to go.

Data-collection gaps

While there is an existing framework for M&E that provides details for data and information collection on the various elements of PROLINNOVA, there is a gap in terms of actual data collection in relation to specific required data such as number of training activities, number of joint experiments, number of farmers involved, number of hits in the PROLINNOVA website, etc and analysing these in relation to the programme goals and objectives. Currently, data are mostly generated through the annual reports and questions coming from ETC, as the NGO responsible for preparing the overall report to DGIS, the major donor at this point in time. This raises two questions as far as operationalising the PROLINNOVA M&E framework is concerned:

- 1) Is there a need to prepare a list of minimum required data according to which PROLINNOVA should be accountable to donors at the CP and international level?
- 2) Should we invest in a simple software that would allow us to collect those data, making compilation for the overall report easier and enabling analysis of data over time? (Veldhuizen, Sept 2005).

Gender disaggregated data

The partners were able to identify some indicators that require gender disaggregation (see the list of output and outcome indicators). While there are expressions and intentions on how some CPs specify gender disaggregated data, to what extent this is carried out is not yet known. One of the partners suggested a matrix for gender-related data collection.

Purposive documentation of learning

In an electronic M&E meeting in December 2004, partners expressed that much information is being shared already with the network. However, direct information exchange between countries without IST facilitation needs strengthening (Wongtschowski, December 2004). This information exchange can be enhanced further through the website and yahoo e-group discussion. This being so, still documentation of learning within the network is still wanting.

As described earlier in this paper, one of the purposes of the PROLINNOVA M&E is learning from each others' experiences mainly through various methods used during the international meetings. Papers written by various individuals, members either of the CPs or of the IST, have captured key processes in use and results out of these processes that are important for the partnership. While there are these attempts for individuals to capture the PROLINNOVA experience in papers presented in various fora, identification of a specific learning agenda for the CPs, the IST or the PROLINNOVA programme in general is still lacking. It needs a purposive design for learning as a basis for data collection and documentation of experiences at various levels.

Energising CP M&E focal points towards PM&E initiatives at the CP level

Each of the CPs has identified a focal point for M&E, but the momentum is still at the international level. The challenge is for the various M&E focal points to see their role as active catalysts to develop further an M&E system appropriate not only for CP level but also influencing the M&E of the PROLINNOVA programme as a whole. The M&E focal points are barely in place for the last six months. The challenge is still how to stimulate them to initiate M&E at the CP level, especially when the local partner organisation responsible for coordinating the M&E is different from the partner organisation responsible for coordinating the implementation and financial management of the CP. The same applies at the international level, where IIRR is responsible for coordinating M&E whereas ETC is responsible for managing the GPP.

Lessons

1. Co-ownership is key to the PROLINNOVA programme. M&E as an important component of every programme has to be owned by all the partners involved. Experience shows that the process of creating co-ownership has to be built on trust. Usually, this is created by an environment that no one partner is dominating the programme agenda and its actual operation.

2. Incorporation of M&E facilitation into country-level backstopping is an important role a country backstopper has to take. S/he should review the M&E framework and the process of data collection and analysis in collaboration with the core team or NSC in each country, not only with the M&E focal point.
3. Context largely defines desired performance indicators by partners. Recognising differences in contexts has to be carefully considered in designing M&E of a partnership programme.

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