



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



# ORGANISING A POLICY DIALOGUE

A practical guide



## **Publications in this series**

### **CDAIS manuals and guidelines**

- *Capacity Needs Assessments – A trainers’ manual (2nd edition)*
- *Innovation Niche Partnerships – A guide to the coaching process*
- *Organisational Strengthening – A guide to the coaching process*
- *Organising a Marketplace – A practical guide*
- *Organising a Policy Dialogue – A practical guide*
- *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning – Concepts, principles and tools*

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- *Building Competence and Confidence in Agricultural Innovation – Stories of Change*
- *Catalysing Innovation in Agriculture – Conversations of Change*

The manuals are intended as working documents. The project supported the development of the Common Framework on Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems of the Tropical Agriculture Platform, and tested it in eight pilot countries. One key finding was that the framework requires adaptation in each country situation, and as such the manuals are intended as general guides only.

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# ORGANISING A POLICY DIALOGUE

**A practical guide**

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# INTRODUCTION

Agricultural innovation is central to sustainable development, poverty reduction, and food and nutrition security in tropical regions. However, many countries need to strengthen their individual and organisational capacities for innovation and foster an enabling environment that stimulates and supports innovation. To address this capacity gap, the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP), a coalition of 45 international, regional and national partners, was established in 2012 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at the request of the G20. Seeking to consolidate the different existing approaches to agricultural innovation, TAP developed a Common Framework on Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (TAP, 2016a,b,c) and pilot tested it in eight countries during 2015–2019. The efforts were generously supported by the European Union (EU) through the project ‘Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems’ (CDAIS), coordinated by FAO and Agrinatura (a consortium of European universities and research institutes), in partnership with national partners. The lessons learnt are being used to fine-tune the approach and to update and expand the accompanying set of tools and guides for using the TAP common framework. *Organising a Policy Dialogue – A practical guide*, presented here, is one these products. The TAP Common Framework addresses capacity development for agricultural innovation systems in three

dimensions – individuals, organisations and the enabling environment – at both local innovation niche partnership and national (system) levels (Figure 1). The local partnerships, which often focus on developing a priority value chain using a participatory multi-stakeholder approach, are at the centre of the innovation process. These partnerships, identified and selected in dialogue with key stakeholders in the early stage of the project, interact with the national system in a ‘dual pathway approach’. The aim is to improve the performance of the local partnerships and the system as a whole by developing functional capacities (soft skills) for agricultural innovation (Figure 2). The inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach contributes to develop capacities to adapt and respond in order to realise the potential for innovation (TAP, 2016a).

## Why a policy dialogue process?

One of the four functional capacities of the common framework is the “capacity to engage in strategic and political processes” (TAP, 2016a). The main vehicle for developing this capacity is a policy dialogue process. At the same time, this process also contributes to other capacities, in particular the capacity to navigate complexity. A policy dialogue process may be included in a specific project on capacity development for agricultural innovation systems, or be

Figure 1. The dual pathway approach for developing capacity for innovation

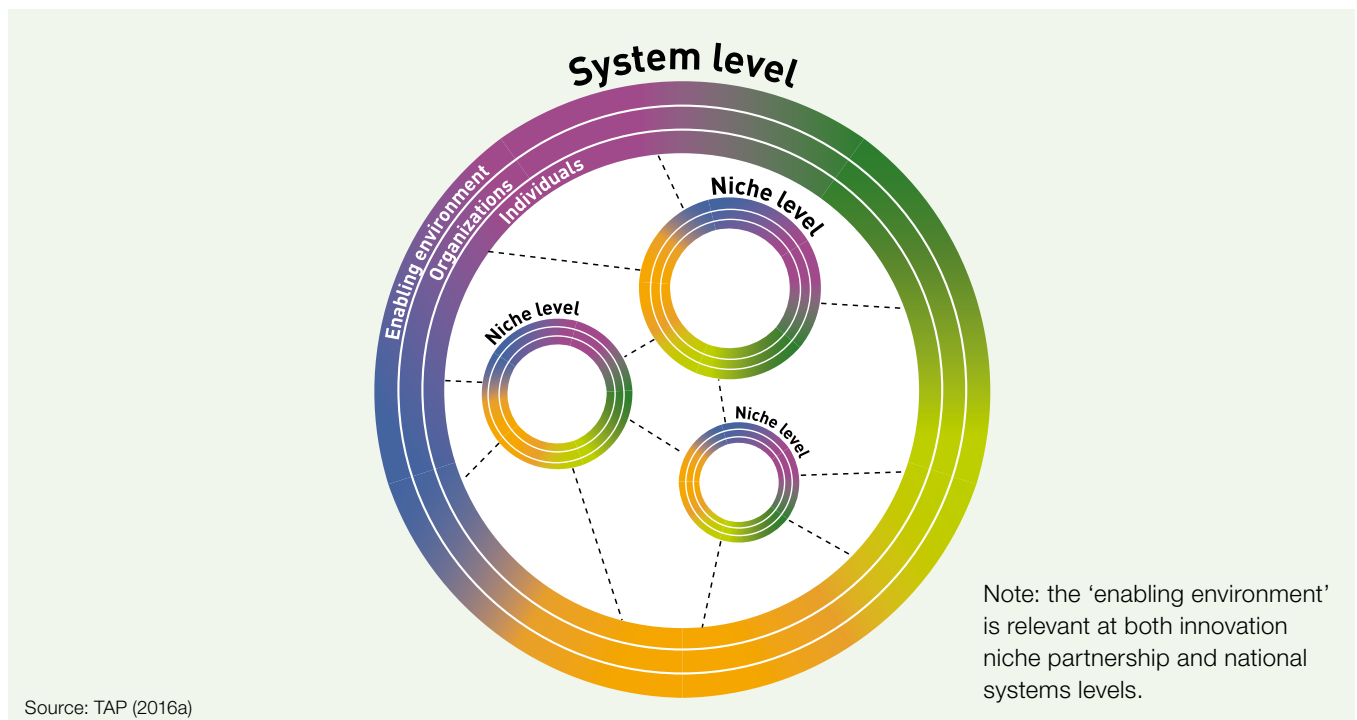
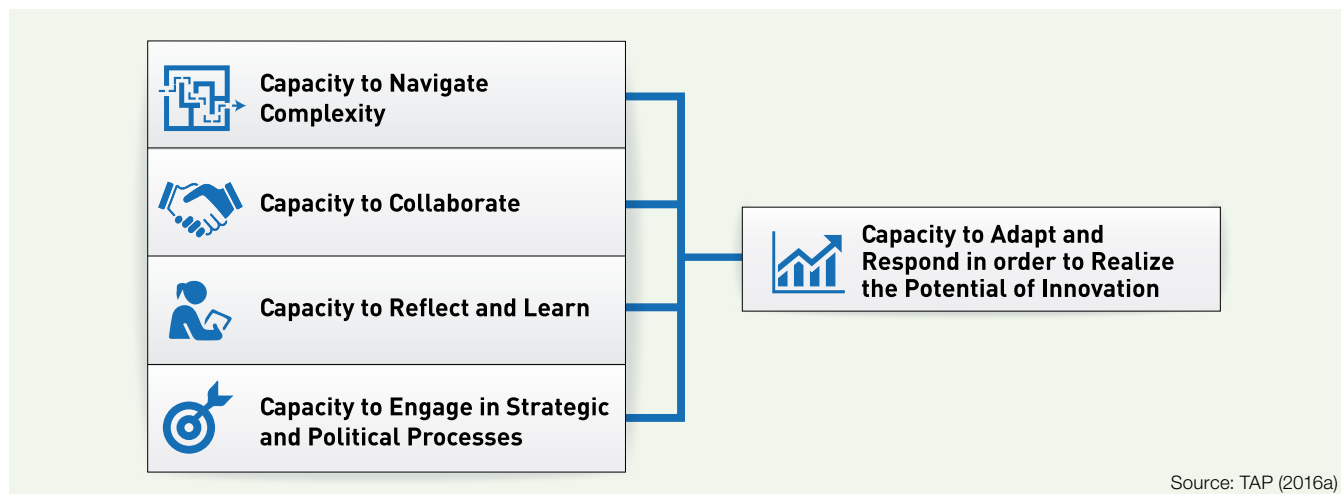


Figure 2. The TAP Common Framework's 4+1 functional capacities



embedded in other national or regional initiatives of relevance to agricultural innovation systems.

This practical guide informs the organisation of a policy dialogue process in the context of capacity development for agricultural innovation systems. The guide targets a range of individuals and organisations involved in, or facilitating, projects and interventions on strengthening agricultural innovation systems. It is a flexible instrument to be used creatively according to the specific country context and needs.

## Key features of the policy dialogue process

The actors of any agricultural innovation, whether technical, social, environmental or business-oriented, operate in a given institutional and policy context. This environment could enable the innovation, for example by providing incentives, resources and support services, or, conversely, hinder or slow down the innovation if constraints in the enabling environment are not addressed. Such factors tend to be outside of the control of local innovation actors. Therefore, a dialogue with those who are in a position to influence the enabling environment can contribute to:

- improvement of the process of developing or implementing changes of policies that promote agricultural innovation;
- improvement of dialogue and interaction among key stakeholders to enhance the clarity and coherence of national policies and the policy development process itself, as related to agricultural innovation;
- enhancement of the enabling environment for agricultural innovation.

The specific objectives of a policy dialogue process on agricultural innovation systems need to be tailored to the national and local context in each case, being the following for the CDAIS project.

- To reach a common understanding of the relevance of innovation and role of policy development and institutional issues in promoting agricultural innovation.
- To strengthen the capacity of stakeholders involved in the innovation niche partnership to influence strategic and political processes relevant to their objectives.
- To recommend improvements in the institutional mechanisms and enabling environment that facilitate and incentivise agricultural innovation.

## A policy dialogue in the context of capacity development

A policy dialogue is a reflective process that involves people from different interest groups who discuss an issue in which they have a mutual – but not necessarily common – interest. It assumes that people in different positions will have different perspectives on, and possibly divergent interests in, the same problem. An open dialogue can reach a shared understanding of the problem and the views of other stakeholders, and lead to agreed solutions to a policy-related problem. A policy dialogue process can culminate with, but is not limited to, round-tables or a similar public meeting. Preparations for, and follow-up on, local and national policy dialogue events are integral parts of the dialogue.

At the onset of a policy dialogue process it is important to establish a shared understanding of the concept of ‘policy’.

# INTRODUCTION

In the context of agricultural innovation systems, 'policy' goes well beyond a country's legal framework or official policies; it refers to the enabling environment more broadly, described in the common framework as follows (TAP, 2016a):

*In general terms, the 'enabling environment' is the context in which individuals and organisations put their competencies and capabilities into play. It includes the institutional set-up of a country, its implicit and explicit rules, its power structures and the policy and legal environment in which individuals and organisations function. The concept of enabling environment includes 'intangible' or informal components such as social conventions, values and beliefs, as well as 'tangible' aspects to do with governance, formal rules and regulations, and policy aspects.*

In the context of capacity development for agricultural innovation systems, the 'policy dialogue' concept refers to all above dimensions of the enabling environment, and takes place at both innovation niche partnership and national system levels. Specifically, the partnerships' experience in seeking to improve a value chain can provide evidence to inform policy processes, as in the case of CDAIS. The policy dialogue is therefore a practical and problem-oriented process. It builds on the collective experiences and insights

of the partnership regarding the external environment that influence its performance. It is an analysis of factors beyond the partnership's own control and an exercise to advise policy makers on what needs to change.

The policy dialogue is informed by, and informs, other project activities. These may include a scoping study (which may have a section on the policy environment), capacity needs assessment at partnership and organisational levels (see *Capacity Needs Assessments – A trainers' manual*), and a marketplace event designed to match capacity needs of partnerships with potential suppliers and funders of capacity-development services (see *Organising a Marketplace – A practical guide*). The policy dialogue process builds on and complements such activities, and provides analysis of key policy issues at both local and national/systems levels in a systematic manner.

The identified policy-related issues are discussed with policy makers and other stakeholders at both local and national policy dialogue events, with a focus on identifying 'actionable' recommendations and preparing action plans for both levels. The dialogue also empowers the participants and develops capacity for engaging in policy issues and for navigating complexity.

## Box 1. Lessons learnt in using the policy dialogue as a capacity-development process

- It is one of several tools for applying the TAP Common Framework on Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems, complementing individual and organisational capacity development.
- It should be facilitated by an experienced person with insights in agricultural policies and institutions, and good understanding of capacity-development processes.
- It builds on local innovation niche partnerships, which provide practical experiences from their efforts to develop a commodity value chain, develop a geographic area or achieve a strategic thematic objective. As such, these are case studies on how a country's policy and institutional framework functions in practice.
- It identifies, prioritises and analyses constraints to innovation in the enabling environment, which

are further discussed either locally or nationally, depending on where they need to be addressed.

- It fosters empowerment and develops capacity for policy consultation with local and national government and other stakeholders.
- It presents issues of national importance to high-level policy actors and other stakeholders at a policy dialogue event, followed by dialogue on recommendations and required actions.
- It develops action plans for addressing policy constraints to agricultural innovation at local and national levels.
- It includes a significant communication component, to share, promote and follow up recommendations and action plans.

A policy dialogue process on agricultural innovation systems is not...

- ... an isolated policy event.
- ... a policy project.
- ... the development of unrealistic, general policy wish lists.



# How to organise a policy dialogue

## How to organise a policy dialogue

Figure 3. The main steps of a policy dialogue process on capacity development for agricultural innovation systems



### Steps of the policy dialogue process

This practical guide for a policy dialogue process has five steps, involving both innovation niche partnership and national system levels (Figure 3), and may cover activities over a two-year period or more. Hence, thorough planning and management are required. The suggested methodology can be adjusted to fit the needs of each particular situation.

### Overall planning and oversight

A policy dialogue process on strengthening agricultural innovation systems, whether in a specific project or linked to other initiatives in the country and/or region, needs a mechanism for overall design of the process, management and oversight. This involves, among other things:

- developing a concept note, setting objectives for the policy dialogue process and preparing a work plan;
- involving the project's steering committee, technical advisory or reference group;
- identifying and connecting to other ongoing policy-related processes, organisations and platforms of relevance to agricultural innovation in the country;
- developing terms of reference for policy consultants and/or facilitators and hiring consultants;
- documentation, knowledge sharing and communication.

### Facilitation

The involvement of a policy expert (usually a consultant) to help implement the policy dialogue is critical. Choosing the right person with the relevant knowledge and expertise will help to link the project to ongoing policy processes, identify entry points for policy actions and open doors for policy influence. It may also be desirable to involve an external facilitator for the actual national policy dialogue event (as the policy expert will be heavily involved in presenting findings and recommendations). If so, this needs to be planned well ahead of the event. It is important for resource persons to maintain a close dialogue with the project management team and steering committee and not only to prepare and deliver a report on the policy process.

## Step 1

### Scoping study on the enabling policy environment

As part of the capacity development for agricultural innovation systems project's scoping study, an analysis of the enabling environment is carried out by an innovation systems expert, working closely with the project team. The work covers the following actions.

- Review of key policies and their implementation, with focus on their practical influence on agricultural innovation systems.
- Identification of ongoing national and regional policy processes mechanisms and platforms related to agricultural innovation in family farming, with which the project may engage.
- Preliminary study of the enabling environment for (proposed) innovation niche partnerships in the project. A more in-depth study will be carried out when the partnership has matured and gained experience in jointly analysing the external environment constraining innovation.

#### Outputs

A report on the enabling policy environment for agricultural innovation at national and partnership levels. This could be a section of the scoping study report.

## Step 2

### Participatory analysis of policy constraints to innovation

Building on step 1, the policy expert/consultant will lead a deeper analysis of the enabling environment for each innovation niche partnership, as well as at the national level, to provide additional insights on policy-related problems. It is necessary that the partnership has worked together for a while, built trust, and developed a shared understanding of their objectives and the environment in which they operate. This step includes the following.

- Analysis of reports of earlier project activities – such as scoping study, capacity needs assessment for innovation niche partnerships and organisations, coaching plans for innovation niche partnerships and organisations (see *Innovation Niche Partnerships – A guide to the coaching process*) – to capture and organise findings regarding policy constraints to innovation. Close collaboration with the project team, including the innovation facilitators the project may have engaged to work with the partnerships, is expected.
- Identification and analysis of policy constraints at innovation niche partnership level, drawing on the practical experiences of the partnership. A meeting or workshop involving all actors of the value chain is organised to develop a shared understanding of the policy issues facing each partnership. Interviews with key actors could add further insights on the issues.
- Given a potentially large number of issues, priority setting may be needed (it would be ineffective to bring up every issue in the forthcoming dialogue). It is also important to analyse the issues deeper, not simply list them. For example, a 'problem tree' might be one way of determining the policy-related root cause of a particular issue encountered. Such understanding will also help in identifying suitable actions later on. The analysis will also provide information on the level at which the issues should be addressed, locally or nationally (and some countries may have additional administrative levels).
- National level: Follow up and update the policy review conducted during the scoping study. This may involve, for example, study of reports from national-level project activities, such as marketplace events, meetings with the steering/advisory committees and project team leaders, and additional interviews with key organisations that influence the enabling environment.

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## Outputs

- Results of an analysis of constraints in the enabling environment in each innovation niche partnership, including priorities and recommendations for addressing them, either locally or nationally.
- Draft report on the national-level review on the enabling environment for agricultural innovation.

## Box 2. Lessons learnt in implementing policy dialogues in CDAIS pilot countries

- The policy review and consultations sometimes partly repeated what had been done in other project activities. It is important to build on earlier project reports and brief policy experts thoroughly on the project context and outputs.
- There is a need to distinguish between issues that could be addressed by the partnership (i.e. part of their 'system') and those that the partnership actors cannot solve by themselves (i.e. outside their system and hence part of the 'enabling environment').
- At partnership level, it is important to analyse the policy constraints with regard to their causes in the enabling environment. Just listing problems using a word or two is not sufficient for a good understanding of the issue and preparation for next actions.
- Given that every country has a range of policies, programmes and strategies related to agricultural innovation, it may be wise for the policy review to focus on a few central ones and, in particular, how their implementation supports innovation. A long list describing all these policies is of limited use for the policy dialogue process.
- Focusing on 'actionable' issues would be more rewarding than making high-level 'wish lists' of policy change.
- In the project cycle, it is important to allow sufficient time for following up on recommendations and the action plan, which must often involve other organisations, platforms, etc.

## Step 3

### Local policy consultation, and national policy dialogue event

Local policy consultations and national policy dialogue events are the highlights of the policy dialogue process. This is where project participants interact with policy makers and other interested parties at both local and national levels, to jointly reflect on and validate priority issues identified and to prepare recommendations and action plans. This step also empowers the innovation niche partnership, and helps develop capacity to navigate complexity and to engage in policy and strategic processes. This phase should include the following.

- **Preparation phase:** Thorough, detailed and early planning is critical to the success of the local or national policy dialogue event. Participation of key organisations is essential. It is very important to identify relevant organisations and representatives and motivating them to attend. The mapping and identification of partners should be carried out at the beginning of the process. For achieving high-quality results, participants will need to be well briefed and prepared in advance.
- **Local policy consultations** are organised in each innovation niche partnership, with local government officials and other invited organisations. The consultation provides a deeper analysis of the policy issues affecting the achievement of innovation objectives in each partnership. Recommendations are prepared and possible actions suggested. The event is also used to decide which issues need to be elevated to the national level. Key criteria include the importance of the issue, the need for action at national level and priority (due to the need to focus the national policy dialogue event on a small number of issues).
- **National-level policy dialogue events** are organised, following local consultations. These carefully planned events aim to create spaces for innovation niche partnerships to engage with policy actors and present the priority policy issues that hinder the partnerships achieving their objectives. Each partnership presents its work and the results of the policy consultation, with a focus on a small number of priority issues that require solutions at the national level. The expected results are a set of recommendations and a draft action plan for enhancing the enabling environment for agricultural innovation in general, and that of the partnership in particular. An example agenda for such events is attached (Annex 1).

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- **Evaluations** of the policy dialogue event are used to get feedback on the process and its outputs. The findings will also contribute to project monitoring, evaluation and learning (see *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning – A guide to the coaching process*). A template for the evaluation form is provided (Annex 2).
- **Project Steering Committees** should be involved at this stage of the policy process.

## Outputs

- Reports from each policy consultation/dialogue event, including recommendations and draft action plans.
- Evaluation report from policy dialogue events.

In the CDAIS project, the policy dialogue events identified a large number of policy issues, some specific to an innovation niche partnership and others of national relevance. A few examples of priority policy issue are given below.

- **Bangladesh:** For mango growers in the Chapai Nawabganj District a key issue is the maund, the weight unit in which mango is traded: the aratders, or wholesalers, use 48 or 52 kg per maund when buying from mango growers. But they sell at 40 kg per maund, raising their profit at the expense of the growers. Although district administration has tried to fix the maund to 40 kg for all trades, law enforcement has not worked well due to the non-cooperation of the aratders.
- **Guatemala:** A new tax, the 'listado taxativo' introduced in 2018 aimed at reducing environmental impact and maintaining ecological services, has had the side effect of adding costs to Guatemala's honey and cacao sectors. For the apiculture sector, small and micro-producers are particularly hit as beekeepers would have to pay an initial tax of 5000 Quetzal (US\$650), effectively wiping out their profit. Only large-scale producers would be able to afford such added costs. This contradicts other policies to strengthen the honey sector in Guatemala.
- **Rwanda:** The cassava innovation niche partnership in Ruhango District identified several related issues in the cassava value chain. Farmers have access to only one processing plant, the Kinazi Cassava Plant, which only processes about 10% of the total cassava produced in the district. The remaining is traditionally processed at farm level without necessarily fulfilling required processing standards. A related issue is the limited diversification of cassava products from processing (only cassava flour), resulting in limited demand for cassava from the factory. All participants in the consultation identified this as a critical issue for policy action.

## Box 3. Lessons learnt on organising a policy dialogue event

- Prior to the policy consultation at innovation niche partnership level, a pre-meeting may be useful to prepare for the dialogue with local officials the next day.
- Similarly, prior to the national policy dialogue event, it is useful to organise a one-day pre-meeting in which teams from each partnership can be helped to work on their messages to policy actors and prepare good-quality presentations.
- Prior to the national policy dialogue event, it is helpful to send a note to policy actors and representatives from ministries to brief them on the main issues to be discussed.
- High-level officials (at national level) are not likely to have a full day available. One model that seems to work quite well is to have a half-day dialogue event, followed by a joint lunch. After lunch, a smaller group continues to reflect on the morning session to refine the outputs and recommendations, and to further develop the action plan. Careful planning of the agenda helps to maximise time for the actual policy dialogue.

In the CDAIS project, the pilot countries used two variations of the national-level policy dialogue, both with their advantages and disadvantages.

**Option 1.** One national policy dialogue event where all innovation niche partnerships present the key results of the policy consultations. This allows comparison of experiences across partnerships, and identification of general policy constraints to innovation. In Guatemala, for example, this approach was used for analysing policy constraints to innovation in value chains for avocado, bean, cacao and honey, with emphasis on issues that two or more value chains have in common.

**Option 2.** The thematic focus of the partnership is maintained for the national policy dialogue. This thematically focused meeting enables deeper analysis of issues and it was easier to attract subject matter experts on the chosen theme. But it required separate dialogues for each partnership and hence no knowledge sharing or identification of common issues across the partnerships. This approach was used for organic vegetable production in Laos and for malt barley seed system in Ethiopia, among others.

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## Step 4 Preparation of action plans, reports and policy briefs

As the events in step 3 are quite brief, the final action plans for innovation niche partnership level and national level will need to be prepared after the events, by the policy expert/consultant and the project management team. The proposed policy recommendations and action plans need to be realistic, actionable and practical, and will involve the following.

- Detailed action plans for each innovation partnership, with a focus on addressing policy issues at the local level and, if relevant, including the strengthening of capacities related to addressing these policy-related actions.
- National-level action plan, with a focus on addressing policy issues that are specific to a partnership, but which cannot be acted upon locally, and policy issues that several partnerships have in common and hence are of relevance for the country's agricultural innovation system more broadly.
- Action plans are to be included in the report of the policy dialogue process.
- Implementation arrangements for proposed actions are considered, either funded by the project, or facilitated via collaborations and partnerships.
- Policy briefs are prepared to capture and communicate key messages.

### Outputs

- Action plans.
- A final report of the policy dialogue process (by the policy expert/consultant).
- A policy brief on enhancing the enabling environment for agricultural innovation.

In the CDAIS project, the priority issues mentioned in the examples above required the following actions, according to participants in the policy dialogue.

- Bangladesh: The policy dialogue concluded that the issue of variable weight unit for mango trade could be settled at district and upazila (sub-district) levels, through further negotiations with all the stakeholders in the mango value chain. The administration would try again this year to settle the matter. Compliance could be monitored by the local administration at district and upazila levels with the help of the Shibganj Mango Producers Cooperative Society Ltd.
- Guatemala: To mitigate the threat of elimination of small-scale apiculture due to the costs of the listado taxativo, the suggested action was to establish, as a matter of urgency, a dialogue with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, MARN) for them to understand the effect of the tax on the honey value chain. A related action was to develop a national apiculture policy via the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación, MAGA), with technical inputs from the honey innovation niche partnership.
- Rwanda: To address the issue that farmers' cassava production is much greater than the capacity of the processing plant, the following actions should be taken: restructure the existing schemes to support farmers; facilitate and capacitate small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to operate around cassava processing; support diversification of cassava products among processors; establish cassava quality standards for national and international markets; and promote market opportunities for increased consumption. These need to be accompanied by capacity strengthening on product development, marketing, food quality standards, and management.

## Box 4. Lessons learnt on policy action plans and their implementation

Keep action plans realistic, concrete and ‘actionable’. Supporting long-term policy change processes is beyond the scope of a CDAIS project. Activities that require such high-level, long-term policy process are best avoided in the action plans. The policy dialogue contributes to understanding policy dimensions of agricultural innovation systems and highlights policy issues that need to be addressed. While much of the implementation of the action plan is outside of the scope of the CDAIS project, some ‘seed money’ may be provided to catalyse activities (e.g. budget for meetings).

## Step 5 Communication and application of action plans

The last step of the policy dialogue process involves promotion and communication of the outputs and recommendations, to facilitate the implementation of the action plans at national and local levels. In this regard, success depends on ownership of the process and commitment to, for example, linking it to ongoing policy processes, platforms and partnerships. This may involve the following.

- Identifying key stakeholders, i.e. those who can engage early in the dialogue processes and influence ongoing policy processes and existing platforms and partnerships, and can also play a key role in implementing the policy recommendations.
- Developing communication strategies for reaching out to target groups who decide upon policies and act on their implementation.
- Providing project support to implement selected activities in the action plan, depending on resources.
- Multimedia communication activities.
- Monitoring, reflection and refinement of communication approaches.

### Outputs

- Records of communication actions.
- Communication strategies.
- Promotion of selected priority activities in the action plan, at local and/or national level.

## Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Monitoring, evaluation and learning is a key element of the TAP Common Framework approach. This is a specific methodology developed to track changes in the capacities of the stakeholders involved in each innovation niche partnership, organisation and, broadly, at the innovation system level (see *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning – A guide to the coaching process*). A project team is specifically assigned to oversee the process.

At the end of the policy dialogue process, it is important to assess whether expected outcomes have been reached and whether other unexpected outcomes have been generated. The CDAIS project also tested a methodology to assess how the policy dialogue process contributed to enhancing the enabling environment for agricultural innovation, to what extent functional capacity for policy engagement was developed, and which changes in policy use, implementation/enforcement or formulation were achieved or initiated.

The objective of the monitoring, evaluation and learning element of the policy dialogue process is to provide a narrative for the process and for changes achieved or in progress in each country, to better explain the impact pathway.

The specific evaluation questions to be answered are as follows.

- Did the project contribute to increase the awareness of policy makers about the relevance of innovation for sustainable development?
- Did policy makers and innovation actors increase their awareness of the role of public policies and institutional issues in agricultural innovation, and the role they (i.e. the policy makers and innovation actors) can play in addressing constraints on policies related to innovation, in terms of their use, implementation or formulation?
- Have policy makers and innovation actors improved their capacity to innovate by engaging in strategic and policy processes for agricultural innovation?
- Has the dialogue between key actors and policy actors continued beyond the local and national policy dialogue events to achieve the desired objective of creating an enabling environment for agricultural innovation?
- Has the relationship between policy makers and the actors changed? How could this change be described?

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To answer to these questions, several activities are implemented.

- Build an output timeline for each country (chronology of all outputs related to the policy dialogue process and outcomes stemming from the policy dialogue) and validate it with the project management and with facilitators, as an input to build the country impact pathways (see *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning – Concepts, principles and tools*).
- Interview key actors (about 15 per country) that were involved in the policy consultations at local and national levels, to assess whether there has been any change in their perspectives and to better understand the perceptions of policy makers with respect to the individual changes as well effects on the system/enabling environment of the policy dialogue process.
- Carry out an in-depth analysis of selected partnerships to showcase specific impact pathways in which the policy-related dimension is particularly interesting.

In the CDAIS project, to what extent did the policy dialogue process contribute to developing functional capacity to engage in strategic and policy processes? Preliminary findings from the monitoring, evaluation and learning of the policy dialogue process indicate, for example, that innovation niche partnerships in Bangladesh learnt how to communicate better with policy makers and that, by listening to rural stakeholders, the policy actors increased their understanding of the enabling environment.

In Honduras, the involvement of national counterparts from El Programa Nacional de Desarrollo Agroalimentario (PRONAGRO) in the project and in the policy consultations resulted in an increased awareness of the importance of strengthening functional capacities. These aspects have been included in PRONAGRO projects that support the CDAIS innovation niche partnerships in the country. However, the analysis is still at an early stage and many other findings of the policy dialogue process are expected to emerge from the eight countries.



# HOW TO ORGANISE A POLICY DIALOGUE

## References

**Tropical Agriculture Platform (2016a)** *Common Framework on Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems: Synthesis document*. CAB International, Wallingford, UK.

**Tropical Agriculture Platform (2016b)** *Common Framework on Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems: Conceptual background*. CAB International, Wallingford, UK.

**Tropical Agriculture Platform (2016c)** *Common Framework on Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems: Guidance note on operationalization*. CAB International, Wallingford, UK.

See also selected tools for capacity development, used in connection with applying the TAP Common Framework: <https://tapipedia.org/framework/cd-tools>

## Draft agenda for national policy dialogue event

**Duration:** 1/2 day

**Participation:** Innovation niche partnership representatives, national government, other relevant stakeholders

**Facilitation:** External facilitator, in collaboration with policy consultant and the national project team

Session	Expected results	Suggested methods/approaches	Duration
1. Opening session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting the scene</li> <li>Good relations with national government</li> <li>Getting to know each other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome address of government hosting the event</li> <li>Welcome address by FAO</li> <li>Very short self-introduction of participants</li> </ul>	30 mins
2. Introduction: the enabling environment for agricultural innovation systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Familiarity with the TAP Common Framework on Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems</li> <li>Shared understanding of government policies, programmes and initiatives on agricultural innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation by national project team</li> <li>Presentation by government representative</li> </ul>	20 mins
3. Presentation of policy consultations at local (innovation niche partnership) and national levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Validated list of major policy issues that hinder agriculture innovation</li> <li>Shared understanding of earlier project work of relevance to the policy environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentations of key policy constraints in each value chain/ partnership by their representatives</li> <li>Presentation of draft report on policy issues and recommendations (policy consultant)</li> <li>Questions and answers</li> </ul>	60 mins
4. Validation of priority policy issues and options for addressing them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Priority policy issues identified and validated</li> <li>Shared understanding of what the policy options are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group work on key policy issues (by partnership)</li> <li>Plenary presentations and discussion</li> </ul>	60 mins
5. Recommendations and action plan for implementing policy options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed policy recommendations</li> <li>Agreed draft action plan(s) (to be further elaborated after the event)</li> <li>Suggestions on how partnership could engage in policy processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plenary discussion, led by facilitator</li> </ul>	40 mins
6. Closing session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summary of workshop results</li> <li>Next steps of the policy dialogue at partnership and national levels</li> <li>Feedback on workshop results and process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation of workshop</li> <li>Closing remarks</li> </ul>	20 mins

## Evaluation form

### Evaluation of national policy dialogue on 'Agricultural Innovation Systems'

Please take a few minutes to respond to the workshop evaluation questions below. Your feedback is valuable to us!

#### 1. What stakeholder category do you represent?

- 1. Producer/farmer
- 2. Processor
- 3. Private sector
- 4. Service provider (e.g. seeds, technologies, finance)
- 5. Marketing, sales, export
- 6. Government agency
- 7. Research/university/academia
- 8. International organisation
- 9. Other, please specify .....

#### 2. How would you rate the overall results of the policy dialogue event on agricultural innovation systems?

- 1. Very poor
- 2. Poor
- 3. Fair
- 4. Good
- 5. Excellent

#### 3. How would you rate the methodology used at the policy dialogue event?

- 1. Very poor
- 2. Poor
- 3. Fair
- 4. Good
- 5. Excellent

#### 4. Which workshop session/aspect was the most valuable or interesting? Why?

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#### 5. Which workshop session/aspect was the least valuable or interesting? Why?

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#### 6. To what extent has the workshop enhanced your capacity to engage in strategic and political processes?

- 1. No change
- 2. To some extent
- 3. To a fair extent
- 4. To a great extent

#### 7. How will your organisation benefit from this policy dialogue on agricultural innovation systems?

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#### 8. What policy aspect of importance to agricultural innovation systems was not discussed at the workshop, if any?

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#### 9. How could we improve the organisation of similar events in the future? Please give your suggestions.

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Thank you!

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC)



### Burkina Faso

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### Ethiopia

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- Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR)



### Guatemala

- Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (AICS)
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### Honduras

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### Laos

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### Rwanda

- Natural Resources Institute (NRI), University of Greenwich
- Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MinAgri)



# COLOPHON

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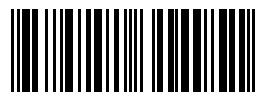






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