



**Two-day Workshop
on Inclusive
Partnerships for
Agricultural
Research for
Development**



**Briefing Calls
-Initial DRAFT* Summary-**

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* Please note the final Summary will be available on the website the morning of Feb 2nd.

Most participants, in one or another way, pointed out the difference between the need for and role of partnering and (more formally structured) partnerships. This concerns the fact that Agri-Research Partnerships don't and can't happen in isolation, but need to be aware and consider the (changing) context they are surrounded by. In the end partnerships, desired and achieved outcomes themselves bring about and drive change in a market/ region. As partnerships evolve and progress is made, there might be a need for additional players to be involved - on an informal basis - to consider the relevant social/market dynamics. Hence, it is the notion of partnering and the need to partner, rather than the concept of partnerships that mattered to participants; to allow for the needed flexibility and help overcome some of the challenges related to the current static view on partnerships.

In this context, most participants pointed out the importance to measure success but stayed away from using the term 'evaluation'. This was mainly driven by the notion that it is about 'good management' to achieve the identified development goals rather than evaluating the performance of the partnership. This, participants felt helps shift the focus from the traditional measuring of (isolated, pre-defined) outcomes, to the proactive management of the partnerships. In the end, it is about the effectiveness of the partnership, considering their evolving context and wider processes in order to contribute (solutions) towards the desired (development) goals. Hence, establishing and agreeing that 'good management' practice should be a key principle for partnerships was considered a great outcome for the two-day workshop.

In particular and related to the above 2 major themes, individual participants shared the following challenges and thoughts:

- **NGO's are too often just an afterthought.** Invited to join a project, as a partner to help with the dissemination and extension dimension, but with not clear and realistic budget line assigned in the project proposal and plan. This in turn often results in smaller partners feeling disempowered to candidly engage as they are worried about the risk of losing the small funding assigned. Can this be addressed adding relevant criteria to donor/ funding calls for proposals? Could the identification of the problem that needs to be addressed be accompanied by a mapping of key actors, to ensure realistic allocation of resources and capacity building?

- **Overcomplicated metrics focused on isolated outcomes.** Don't overcomplicate the measuring of partnership outcomes, often done as an afterthought by trying to define complex metrics. Even if it is done engaging all players. Rather develop and implement good management practice. How can we better use agreed development goals as cornerstone for the partnership? What can we learn from established good project management practice?
- **Social/ market dimension too often left out/ unconsidered.** This concerns the current isolation of many partnerships/projects from the evolution and change they bring about in any region or market. How can one bring the needed flexibility into today's formalized partnerships' design, practice and management? What is the role of learning platform/ networks focusing on a specific dimension, related to Agri-Research, to support the above?
- **Speed of change and the role of entrepreneurs/ visionaries.** With climate change the speed of change required is much higher. There is a lot of innovation in the system, and often it is one actor who carries the innovation patriotically, partnering flexibly with a variety of other actors. While this can result in controversy, and it often does as such movement apply much less formalized engagement practices, it can help speed up and carry change. What is the role of entrepreneurs, visionaries? How can one accommodate for the flexibility they need, while better utilizing the momentum they create; linking them into broader agendas?
- **Private sector involvement to help drive broader change.** There is a real need to secure more private sector involvement. How can we overcome the language and practice barrier we face, and which makes the private sector stay away to-date?
- **Equality means accountability.** Too often partnerships involve hand-picked experts, who are accessible and known to public funders/ donors but not the real actors who represent and are subsequently held accountable by those they represent. Overloading the few experts that are known and willing to go the extra mile supporting change in addition to carrying out their job, is another challenge here. Centered on individuals it often also risks that important connections are not made across an issue or community. How can we encourage more 'accountable' diversity to the currently 'static' community engaged in partnerships?