# TROPICAL AGRICULTURE PLATFORM (TAP)

## Transforming agricultural capacities through partnerships

**PREAMBLE**

The Declaration of the G20 Agriculture Ministers' Meeting held in Paris, France in June 2011 stated *"We welcome the ongoing work by FAO and interested G20 members to develop a platform for capacity building in tropical agriculture in developing countries"*.

Following the endorsement in Paris, a concept paper, summarizing the possible nature and scope of the Tropical Agriculture Platform, was jointly developed by FAO, the CGIAR, EMBRAPA, and others and presented to the G20 Conference on Agricultural Research for Development held in September 2011 in Montpellier, France. The G20 Conference on Agricultural Research for Development set as an **objective** *"to strengthen capacities in agriculture technologies and productive systems for developing countries, optimising complementarities and synergies between the G20 agricultural research systems"*, with the **expected outcome** of *"Improved effectiveness and efficiency in capacity-building programmes to generate, share and make use of agricultural knowledge for developing countries through new and existing tools"*.

In the context of this objective, the Presidency statement published after the Conference said the following about the Platform concept:
*"To contribute to fostering knowledge sharing and enhancing capabilities, the Tropical Agriculture Platform outlined by FAO can contribute, in cooperation with interested G20 Agricultural Research Systems, among other initiatives, to identification of appropriate capacity development practices, the consolidation of best training practices and the promotion of modalities to support continuous learning and improve ownership by national stakeholders in developing countries"*.

Participants at the G20 Montpellier Conference provided FAO with constructive suggestions, which were incorporated into a revised version of the concept paper. The G20 countries invited FAO to organize an Informal Stakeholder Consultation to elaborate a more precise programmatic approach to the Platform, and this Consultation was held in Rome in December 2011, hosted by the Istituto Nazionale di Economia Agraria (INEA). There were a total of 44 participants, including a wide range of stakeholders from global, regional and national organizations involved in agricultural innovation.

At the stakeholder consultation, there was general consensus that since i) tropical areas have a very high potential for increasing agricultural productivity and, consequently, reducing poverty and improving food security, and ii) access to knowledge and weak capacities, at all levels, are the main limiting factors in these regions, the Platform would focus on knowledge sharing and capacity development in the least developed countries in the tropics where food security challenges are most severe. At the same time, there was agreement that the geographical scope of the Platform should not be limited to the tropics, but in due course, be expanded to include developing countries in subtropical and temperate regions.

The current proposal is a result of this consultation.

# 1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

## 1.1 General Context

There is widespread hunger, poverty and malnutrition in the developing world today, with the region home to the vast majority of the world's 1 billion undernourished people. The rate of growth in agricultural production is expected to fall to 1.5% between now and 2030 and further to 0.9% between 2030 and 2050, as compared with 2.3% per year since 1961[1], while the demand for food continues to rise. FAO projections suggest that agricultural production would need to increase by 70 percent by 2050 to cope with the increase in world population[2] and that the majority of that increase in demand will come from developing countries. World food security in the coming years will be further threatened by increasing per capita food consumption, the shift to animal-based diets in emerging economies and the projected negative impact of climate change on agricultural productivity.

The agricultural sector in developing countries is in an era of rapid social, economic, technological and ecological change, with many uncertainties. Further, agriculture in developing countries is not only a means for food security, but it has been and still is indisputably a critical driver of social and economic growth, especially in weak economies. Thus it is not by chance that GDP growth originating in the agricultural sector is reported to be at least twice as effective in reducing poverty as GDP growth originating from other sectors[3].

Agricultural contributions to food security, poverty alleviation and social and economic development, depend to a great extent on the proper functioning of the spectrum of actors and policies, all involved in translating technology and knowledge into real world innovations. However, capacities for agriculture-based sustainable growth and poverty reduction currently vary widely within and between developing countries. Together with poorly-developed linkages between players with complementary knowledge and competences, there are significant deficits in individual and organizational capacities for enhancing the performance of national and regional agricultural systems. Developing the skills and capacities of, as well as enhanced knowledge and information exchange between, the actors involved in innovation, including farmers and their organizations, agricultural research, education and training institutions, extension and advisory services institutions, and the researchers and professionals working in the agricultural sector of developing countries, is thus vital to achieve robust and sustained growth in agriculture and to facilitate its adaptation to environmental, economic and social changes.

The strengthening of tertiary agricultural education institutions, along with research and extension institutions, in parallel with capacity development at the political and senior ministry level, must concentrate on making these institutions more relevant to small-scale farmers and the diverse cadre of actors along the value chain, and more agile to quickly respond to the global challenges in today's increasingly complex and rapidly changing environment. These institutions must supply the knowledge and the skills demanded by growing private and civil society sectors to encourage rapidly evolving socially inclusive national agricultural innovation systems.

Agricultural education, training and other learning methods thus need to be integrated into broader innovative capacity development programmes. These should address the chief organizational capacity gaps and challenges in the enabling environment which can

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[1]FAO (2009). Investment. High level Expert Forum on How to Feed the World, 12-13 October 2009, Rome.
[2]Bruinsma, J. (2009) The resource outlook to 2050: By how much do land, water and crop yields need to increase by 2050? Paper presented at the FAO Expert Meeting on How to Feed the World in 2050, 24–26 June 2009. Rome, FAO.
[3]World Bank (2008) World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development

otherwise impede use of the new agricultural knowledge, technologies and skills by national actors. The development of non-linear dynamic, interactive and flexible agricultural innovation systems with functional linkages to the productive sector is required to bring about real changes to the agricultural scenario in developing countries.

While many developing countries are endeavouring to address these issues, they lack the resources and the capacities to engage in the development of an effective national agricultural innovation system. The situation is particularly exacerbated in the tropical region which is characterized by pervasive poverty, and encompasses all but four of the world's least developed countries. Despite the fact that the tropics account for approximately 33 percent of the world's crop land, and 40 percent human population, tropical agriculture currently only produces approximately 25 percent of the world's cereal, 25 percent of fruits and vegetables, and 20 percent of meat. Indeed one of the most striking characteristics of tropical agriculture is its low levels of productivity in comparison to temperate agriculture (partially explained by the differences in environmental conditions), with agriculture in the tropics producing approximately half as much output per hectare as agriculture in temperate zones.

Nowhere is economic growth, poverty reduction and food security more reliant on agriculture than in the tropics of Africa with a stagnating agricultural sector compared to other tropical regions. While cereal yields per unit land at least doubled in every region of the world over the last 50 years, Africa experienced marginal increase in yields. Unfortunately, tropical Africa is expected to be one of the regions hardest hit by climate change, largely due to its reliance on rain-fed agriculture and its susceptibility to drought. Drought has become more frequent and more severe in recent years and ranks as the single most common cause of severe food shortages, particularly in developing countries of the seasonally dry and the semi-arid tropics. It represents one of the most important natural triggers of malnutrition and famine as currently observed with the food security emergency in the Horn of Africa.

## 1.2 Rationale

Over the course of the past two decades, the international community's understanding of the role of knowledge sharing and learning in developing sustainable capacity has evolved considerably. There is a common perception of a need for change to increase effectiveness of approaches to build capacity in line with international good practices emerging from the Paris Declaration[4], the Accra Agenda for Action[5] and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation[6]. This perception has been reflected in FAO's corporate strategy on Capacity Development[7], with emphasis on longer-term intervention activities which are locally led with mutual accountability, and which address the three dimensions of capacity development namely the enabling environment, organizations and individuals.

Whereas, in the past, it was more common to view stand-alone training as sufficient to develop capacity, increasing evaluative evidence has suggested that such one-off interventions are rarely successful in developing sustainable organizational or institutional capacity. A recent study[8], reviewing the current policies and programmes of the European Initiative on Agricultural Research for Development (EIARD) members in relation to capacity

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[4]http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf
[5]http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf
[6]http://www.aideffectiveness.org/busanhlf4/images/stories/hlf4/OUTCOME_DOCUMENT_-_FINAL_EN.pdf
[7]http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/newsroom/docs/Summary_Strategy_PR_E.pdf
[8]Additional studies on the topic have been conducted in the recent past, for example "Collective Action in CGIAR Capacity Development" by the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in collaboration with various other CGIAR Centres, partners in eastern and southern Africa and the Regional Plan for Collective Action in Eastern and Southern Africa. http://mahider.ilri.org/bitstream/handle/10568/5425/CA_in_CD_final.pdf?sequence=1

development[9], recommends that while support to capacity development in agricultural research for development should be enhanced if agricultural productivity and poverty reduction targets are to be met, capacity strengthening initiatives should focus more on organizational and institutional strengthening and rebalance support at the individual level by prioritizing training programmes that are linked to organizational and institutional development. Further, multi-stakeholder initiatives should be pursued as these are likely to lead to larger impacts. Additional recommendations include the need to link up initiatives in research, higher education and vocational training as well as to facilitate the institutionalisation of capacity strengthening processes and outputs. The study also stresses that currently, the planning, monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment of capacity strengthening initiatives is weak and greater efforts are needed to design and adopt harmonized approaches and to share relevant information.

Experience gathered in the last few years demonstrates that stronger partnerships can improve the quality and impact of scientific research and education and capacity development programmes. In this context, several bilateral and multilateral initiatives have been undertaken to establish partnerships among and within countries, including South-South, North-South and regional alliances. Examples include Agrinatura[10], ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Strategy (APTCS) on Food, Agriculture and Forestry[11], Tertiary Education in Agriculture Mechanism (TEAM) in Africa[12], Platform for African – European Partnership in Agricultural Research for Development (PAEPARD)[13], among others. These initiatives are facilitating the development and use of advanced technologies and the incorporation of traditional knowledge, and the sharing of experiences, information and technologies.

There are numerous existing interventions already in place addressing education, knowledge and capacity gaps. These interventions have different levels of donor coordination, synergies and alignment with country and regional frameworks. All initiatives would gain significantly from more coherent and inter-connected approaches at the global level. There is therefore, a need for a robust mechanism such as the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) that would facilitate establishment and maintenance of international partnerships without creating new institutional structures, as well as foster collective action to enable existing international representative bodies, including the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), the Global Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (GFRAS) and the Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for the Agricultural and Life Sciences (GCHERA), together with regional bodies to work together more effectively, thus offsetting transaction costs and leveraging their resources and connections.

### 1.2.1 Added value of the Platform

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[9]http://www.eiard.org/media/uploads/File/documents/policy%20briefs/EIARD%201.1%20capacity%20developme nt%20for%20ARD%20policy%20brief%20final.pdf

[10]The European Alliance on Agricultural Knowledge for Development, a new entity established jointly by 35 European research and education organizations, forging an active European Research Area that join forces with international partners, especially from developing and emerging countries, for agricultural research and education for development with sufficient critical mass to meet the common global challenges.

[11]Established in the Ministers meeting of ASEAN plus Japan, China and Korea on agriculture and forestry aims to promote capacity-building and human resource development including accelerating transfer and adoption of new and appropriate technologies as one of the strategic issues that ASEAN+3 should address.

[12]A multi-partner initiative implemented by various African regional bodies and the World Bank, has been recently established with the objective of leading the reorientation and reinvigoration of tertiary agricultural education in Africa.

[13]Seeks to mobilize resources to build joint African-European multi-stakeholder partnerships in agricultural research for development. In particular, it aims to strengthen the capacity of African stakeholders to participate in European-led development initiatives for Africa and to create more responsive development programmes for Africa.

By means of truly effective networking, inclusive partnerships and intense collaboration within an agriculture innovation framework, TAP would contribute towards strengthening tropical agricultural institutions through co-ordinated support focused on (a) developing capacities in all three major dimensions, namely policy/enabling environment, organizations and individuals, (b) strengthening of the relevant technical and "soft" skills of research, extension and education actors, and (c) improving knowledge and information exchange for enhanced linkages.

The TAP, as a multi-lateral, multi-sectoral dynamic open and inclusive broker, would act as a facilitation mechanism. It would link centres of excellence and strengthen interaction, coordination and collective action, while avoiding duplication, fragmentation and working in silos, thus increasing synergies. It would develop customized and consensus-based priority setting in capacity development based on defined national gaps, needs and priorities. The Platform would foster knowledge sharing in tropical agriculture as well as consolidate lessons learned and good practices from various continents and promote them across/between continents. It would capitalize on and add value to ongoing initiatives by maximizing impacts of investments in capacity development, enabling greater efficiency and effectiveness of action, and ensuring greater correspondence with local and regional needs.

The TAP would thus enable institutions and their staff from G20/developing countries and international bodies that are working on relevant fields to act collectively in an agile and efficient way that (a) contributes to sustainable changes in the agricultural capacities of target countries, (b) complements existing capacity development initiatives by providing mechanisms for more harmonized action and support, and c) leads to greater transparency and mutual accountability.

## 1.3 Strategy

The Platform would be in line with the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD) Roadmap[14] that establishes an inclusive, rolling process of reform and capacity development that aims to mobilize the full power of agricultural knowledge and innovation towards meeting agriculture and food-related development needs. It would also be in accordance with the outputs of the International Workshop on Challenges & Innovative Processes for Capacity Strengthening in Agriculture for Development (CIPCAD). Additionally, the "zero draft" of the Rio+20 declaration[15] calls for support for the creation of an international knowledge-sharing platform to facilitate countries' green economy policy design and implementation, including a menu of policy options, a toolbox of good practices in applying green economy policies at regional, national and local levels, as well as a directory of technical services, technology and financing that could assist developing countries. TAP would interface with such a platform through its components such as policy dialogue and TAPipedia (see section 2.2) with collaborative activities and cross-links.

At the regional level, the Platform would be in harmony with integrated regional frameworks that have gained significant traction in the last several years. For example, for Africa there are proven mechanisms for the dissemination and adoption of improved agricultural technologies and investment in agricultural research, thus focused on agricultural research, advisory services and education[16] (Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development

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[14] http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload//290017/The_GCARD_Road_Map_finalized.pdf

[15] http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/370The%20Future%20We%20Want%2010Jan%20clean%20_no%20brackets.pdf

[16] For education in Africa, TEAM-Africa, a mechanism for strengthening tertiary agricultural education (TAE), was initiated in response to a call from the African Ministerial Conference on Higher Education (CHEA) held in Kampala in November 2010. TEAM-Africa will be jointly implemented by two already-established networks of TAE institutions in Africa, the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) and

Programme - CAADP Pillar IV), currently coordinated by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) under the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) mandate. While CAADP has a continental scope, each Regional Economic Community (REC)[17] establishes its own priorities and supports its member countries at various levels with the CAADP implementation. The Platform approach would be aligned to such frameworks as well as on-going processes, according to the differences in the three main continents involved, i.e. Africa, Latin America and Asia.

TAP would facilitate and advocate capacity development programmes, and not directly execute or implement them. The Platform would bring together various stakeholders to share information, experiences, knowledge, technologies and ultimately learn from each other. Global mechanisms, platforms and bodies, such as GFAR, GFRAS, GCHERA and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) would be closely associated with the Platform. The "target groups" that would also form the constituency/partners and be directly affected by the Platform activities would be the national agricultural research, education and extension institutions, the private sector, civil society and farmers' organizations, policy-makers as well as development agencies, while the ultimate "impact groups" of the Platform would be small and medium scale farmers, as well as small and medium enterprises in the agribusiness sector.

Circumstances and conditions vary widely between countries and there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach. It is therefore imperative to consider what new capabilities are specifically required in agriculture and rural development in different environments, including for example foresight studies, enterprise and business skills, social organization, food processing, value addition and reduction of post-harvest losses and the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in knowledge sharing. Based on a thorough capacity and needs assessment, capacity development priorities and objectives would be defined, and a shared vision and strategic action plan would be articulated for the Platform. In conjunction, a common framework and guidelines for capacity development, with coordinated actions by regional and international actors, would be developed.

The proposed Platform would document the array of capacity development "offers", aim at consolidating good capacity development practices and promote modalities that support continuous learning and ownership by the "target groups", together with organizational development, and support to collaboration and networks. Selecting multiple methods to achieve the "best fit" would maximize the strengths and mitigate the challenges of the various modalities, ensuring that these support knowledge sharing, learning and change in all three capacity dimensions.

## 2. EXPECTED RESULTS

### 2.1 Development Outcome
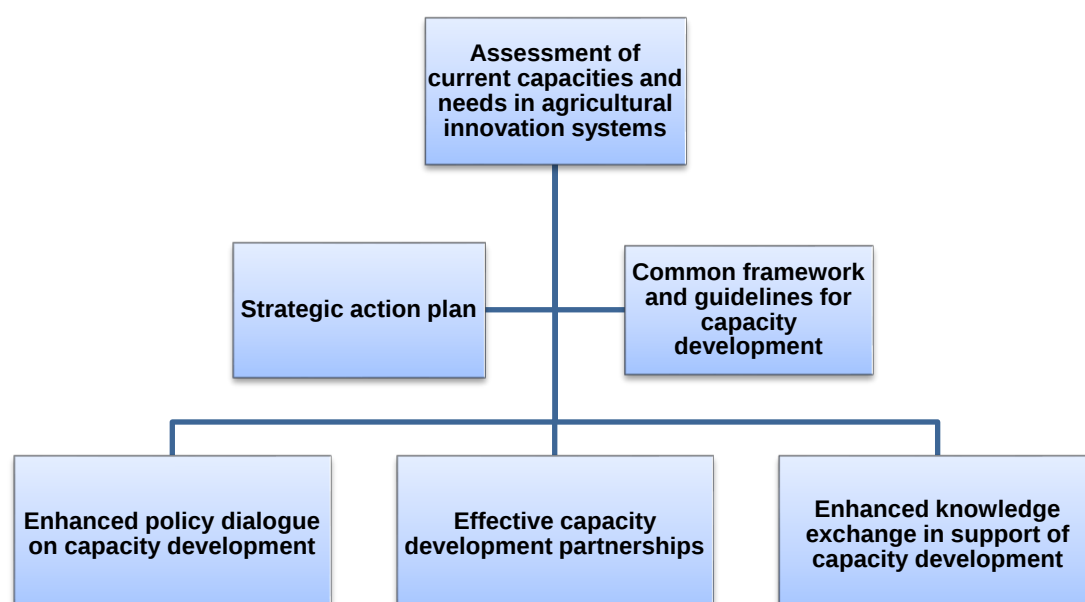
Improved effectiveness and efficiency in knowledge sharing and capacity development programmes to strengthen agricultural innovation systems in the target countries in the tropics through new and existing mechanisms.

### 2.2 Outputs

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the African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE), with support from FARA.

[17]The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa group together individual countries in subregions for the purposes of achieving greater economic integration.

The TAP would have six main outputs as schematized and described below.

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                    │   Assessment of      │
                    │ current capacities and│
                    │  needs in agricultural│
                    │  innovation systems  │
                    └──────────────────────┘
              ┌──────────────┴──────────────┐
    ┌─────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────┐
    │                 │          │ Common framework │
    │ Strategic action│          │ and guidelines for│
    │      plan        │          │    capacity       │
    │                 │          │   development     │
    └─────────────────┘          └──────────────────┘
         ┌───────────────────────┼───────────────────────┐
┌─────────────────┐    ┌─────────────────┐    ┌─────────────────┐
│ Enhanced policy │    │ Effective capacity│    │ Enhanced knowledge│
│ dialogue on      │    │ development        │    │ exchange in support│
│ capacity         │    │ partnerships       │    │ of capacity        │
│ development      │    │                   │    │ development        │
└─────────────────┘    └─────────────────┘    └─────────────────┘
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**2.2.1 Assessment of current capacities and needs in agricultural innovation systems**

Assessments would be compiled through the mobilization of existing global and regional mechanisms such as CGIAR, GFAR, GFRAS, RECs, FARA, etc. on the institutional and individual capacities and needs in agricultural innovation systems in the target countries, to identify and monitor capacity gaps. Gap analyses for policy dialogue would also be carried out to identify champions of innovation systems at the national, regional and global levels, as well as current dialogue mechanisms. All these assessments would be based primarily on existing assessments, reports, etc., supplemented through targeted electronic multi-stakeholder consultations involving key parties. Stock-taking of existing initiatives, in relation to the other components of the Platform, would also be carried out to map stakeholders and partnerships in capacity development in tropical agriculture involving G20 members, as well as regional and international institutions. The assessments would document geographic and subject areas of interest, nature of activities, the effectiveness of linkages with other stakeholders, availability of resources (e.g. skills, learning materials, sharing tools, research and training infrastructure), levels of investment, and plans for expansion and/or contraction of activities.

**2.2.2 Strategic action plan**

Based on the first output, a strategic action plan would be articulated with short-, medium- and long-term capacity development priorities, for strengthening agricultural innovation systems, for collective action, which would then be coordinated by regional and international bodies to achieve further inter-related outputs (see below 2.2.4 - 2.2.6). The action plan would be formulated in close collaboration with the wide range of existing bilateral and multilateral initiatives, aiming to achieve greater effectiveness in a cost effective manner, and would be based on a thorough understanding of current needs and deliverables as well as be tailored to the specific regional and local challenges. The action plan would be reviewed on an ongoing basis, and as appropriate, be updated and revised.

**2.2.3 Common framework and guidelines for capacity development**

Based on the first output, the TAP partners would also develop a framework for their work in capacity development, comprising a set of principles and values, with guidelines on preferred modalities and good practices in interventions at local, national and regional level. The guidelines would ideally be illustrated by examples and case studies. This common framework would be compatible with and add value to existing capacity development frameworks such as those developed by FAO, World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and AU/NEPAD.

The framework would provide the basis for coordinated actions by regional and international actors in support of developing local and national capacities in the target countries. The framework and guidelines would also provide indications for developing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks and socio-economic impact studies, specific for capacity development initiatives, to examine results as well as impact levels – measuring benefits for the target groups and the ultimate impact groups. The common framework and guidelines would be reassessed on a continual basis and modified, as necessary.

## 2.2.4 Enhanced policy dialogue on capacity development

To contribute towards enhanced policy dialogue, a "Policy Dialogue Space" would be created with the objective of fostering an integrated programme of multi-stakeholder policy dialogues around capacity development in tropical agricultural innovation systems. The programme would enable change by catalyzing actions, taking into account political and social issues, and enable advocacy sponsored by individuals championing priority issues. The precise design of this component would be developed through the assessment, but a close relationship with the Global Foresight Hub[18] would be ensured.

The participants in the Policy Dialogue Space would be policy-makers, from Ministers to senior public servants engaged in agricultural innovation policy and support, as well as Rectors and Vice-Chancellors of Universities, Directors of Agricultural Research Institutions and of Rural Advisory Services, and private sector actors. At the country level, inter-ministerial dialogues on agricultural innovation would be fostered. At the regional level, centers of excellence would be supported to conduct policy studies and dialogues promoted through the Economic Commissions and regional research and advisory services forums. At the global level, the G20, the United Nations (through FAO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) would foster dialogue.

The TAP partners would commission "toolkits" for the various dialogues at different levels, with policy briefs and background information.

*Format of Dialogues*

The Dialogue Space would primarily comprise face-to-face events where capacity development is the focus, with the potential expansion to online dialogues in due course. These may be specifically organized with particular partners acting as hosts (e.g. national entities, development assistance agencies, etc.), or alternatively they may be organized in association with scheduled international events (e.g. Rio+20, GCARD 2012, G20 Meetings, etc.).

## 2.2.5 Effective capacity development partnerships

The Platform would broker partnerships for effective capacity development through the creation of a "Marketplace", with the objective of matching offers and demands for capacity development services in tropical agriculture and food security. The Marketplace would also

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[18]http://www.egfar.org/our-work/shaping-future-together/global-foresight-hub

provide an opportunity for stakeholders to aggregate and promote their existing offers of training opportunities for the identified priority topics on the virtual platform space. This would allow scaling up of existing training efforts throughout the tropics and foster knowledge sharing among countries and organizations. Ideally, the Marketplace would also link to existing Marketplaces[19], drawing on their content interactively, in effect creating a series of linked Marketplaces.

On the demand side, organizations, ministries and target groups could request capacity development advice and assistance in areas such as research, advisory/extension services, and education. The Marketplace would have two dimensions, online and face-to-face. The design would be based on the outputs of the initial survey in terms of (a) a definition of the audience for, and users of, the Marketplace; and (b) an analysis of user group requirements and existing information resources compiled through the needs assessment in target countries.

The Marketplace would address the two dimensions of capacity to enhance capabilities and sustainable development prospects and improve professional opportunities and livelihoods:
• individuals: comprising offers/demands for training programmes and courses aimed at developing the knowledge and skills of key individuals such as policy-makers, scientists, educators, public and private extension agents and technicians in agricultural domains, and encompassing technical and functional capacities/skills;
• organizations/institutions: comprising offers/demands for collaboration in capacity development, curriculum development and reviews of courses in agriculture offered by tertiary education institutions[20] as well as vocational and technician training institutions, fostering organizational learning, redefining institutions, and policies' support in areas such as rewards/incentives to encourage staff development and production of training materials.

This component of the Platform would ensure that the following standards are met: (a) the training corresponds to target groups' needs; (b) the training is interactive and learning orientated (action learning, field trips, fairs, workshops, seminars, conferences); and (c) the content of the training can be more efficiently and effectively applied through mentoring and post-training support as well through networks of professionals involved in agricultural innovation.

*Online Marketplace*

The online manifestation of the Marketplace would be a web-based information system in which stakeholders could post capacity development "products" in the form of offers and demands for which visitors could "bid". The products in the Marketplace would cover capacity development in technical (agriculture, etc.) and functional (soft) skills and include, amongst other things: training of trainers, short courses, fellowships, scholarships, PhD and Masters programmes, Post-Doctorate positions, practical exposure and experiential learning, and calls for proposals for funding programmes. Contributors of product content would be responsible for the quality of that content, although a set of guiding principles would be developed to ensure pertinence and coherence.

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[19]For example, the Africa-Brazil Agricultural Innovation Marketplace is an international initiative supported by different donors aiming to link Brazilian and African experts and institutions to develop cooperative projects (http://www.africa-brazil.org/). Partners include FARA, Embrapa, Brazilian Agency for Cooperation (ABC), United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), The World Bank, and African national and sub-regional agricultural research and development organizations.
[20]This work would be undertaken in the context of existing regional and national initiatives where such exist, including especially the TEAM-Africa initiative.

*Face-to-face Marketplace*

The Marketplace would also have a face-to-face component, comprising events at various levels targeted to reach and involve the principal audiences and users. These events would offer opportunities for priority setting, networking, competition (for uptake of offers), and also resource mobilization for capacity development demands. The events would be organized to address and stimulate demand observed through the online Marketplace, and they would be announced on the website. The events would also be linked to the component on Policy Dialogue.

## 2.2.6 Enhanced knowledge exchange in support of capacity development

Knowledge exchange in support of capacity development would be enhanced through the creation of a TAP information system, the "TAPipedia", with the objective of presenting the actors, success stories, socioeconomic impact reports, lessons learnt, activities, information, training capacity and opportunities related to capacity development in innovation systems for tropical agriculture. The TAPipedia's contributions would comprise sharing of agriculture innovation trajectories, information, knowledge and experiences on activities to increase synergies between actors, easier access to public goods on sustainable agricultural practices, creation and/or strengthening of communities of practice and networks in key thematic areas, and access to information and databases on existing technologies including for practitioners at rural level.

The TAPipedia would be based particularly on the use of virtual collaboration tools and media, and would build on existing networking initiatives wherever possible. The knowledge sharing activities would provide crucial linkages that connect the other components of the Platform aimed at strengthening individuals' and organizational capacities respectively based on needs, and would enhance learning activities and programmes. The knowledge sharing activities would additionally contribute to identifying niches and demands for new areas of research.

The concept of the TAPipedia would be developed based on the premise that content arises in part from contributions from stakeholders. It would include repository(ies) into which content and information could be uploaded by users. It would be centrally coordinated and maintained, but content management would be decentralized, with an architecture and design that encourages use. The TAPipedia would link to the other two components on Policy Dialogue and Marketplace.

The TAPipedia's design would be based on the outputs of the initial survey in terms of (a) a definition of the audience for, and users of and contributors to, the TAPipedia; (b) an analysis of user requirements and information needs; (c) an inventory of existing information resources compiled through the needs assessment in target countries and at the global level; and (d) a review of existing systems (e.g. ASTI[21]) and systems under development that are relevant. Decisions on design would need to be taken sufficiently quickly for the study findings to still be valid.

Stimulating content flows initially and maintaining continuing flows of content would depend on awareness raising and the identification and highlighting of tangible benefits for contributors. In addition, the monitoring and quality control of content contributions would be

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[21]ASTI (Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators) is a comprehensive and trusted source of information on agricultural research and development (R&D) statistics. ASTI compiles, analyzes, and publicizes data on institutional developments, investments, and capacity trends in agricultural R&D in low- and middle-income countries worldwide. http://www.asti.cgiar.org/home

critical, given that resources would be coming from a wide variety of users/sources, and automated quality management tools should be developed as part of the TAPipedia.

*Information resources*

Training materials of various types would be presented in an online repository of Open Educational Resources, and guidelines on good practices in capacity development would be offered at various levels. Both these components would be adapted from and draw on the content of existing programmes/activities already offered by partners. The content offered through the TAPipedia would include a wide range of resources including a database/inventory of organizational focal points in capacity development, a database/inventory of capacity development programmes/projects, a virtual inventory of technologies (for example TECA[22] and GAP[23]), a collection of good practices and lessons learned in capacity development[24], e-learning resources[25] to complement and supplement the face-to-face mechanisms, and links to other sources of information (e.g. AGORA[26]) on agriculture. New learning resources would be collaboratively designed and offered on key subject areas where gaps have been identified. Co-ordination across existing tools, for example the Regional Agricultural Information and Learning System (RAILS)[27] in Africa, would be imperative in order to ensure that value is added to existing systems and duplication is avoided.

There would also be knowledge sharing and management facilities and tools, and Web 2.0 technologies would be used to foster interaction between users with tools such as e-forums.

## 2.3 Website characteristics of the Platform

The website for the Platform would be highly interactive allowing users to post their offers/demands as well as information, and to conduct targeted searches of all the site content. In terms of procedures, there would be standardized templates/formats for uploading content, guiding principles for quality control of the content, and users would be required to register before being able to post information. Content/products would be tagged by contributors from pre-selected lists of thematic areas, keywords, etc. to facilitate discovery by interested users. The website would use automated (RSS) feeds to disseminate content to TAP partner websites, and TAP partners themselves would be encouraged to use such feeds to automate their contributions to the content.

## 3. THEORY OF CHANGE

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[22] TECA (Technologies and practices for small agricultural producers) is an FAO initiative aiming to address the needs for practical information at rural level and to enhance the adoption of technologies and practices in agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry thus addressing food security, climate change, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. http://teca.fao.org/

[23] Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) are "practices that address environmental, economic and social sustainability for on-farm processes, and result in safe and quality food and non-food agricultural products. FAO GAP activities around the world seek to alleviate potential barriers to trade, by providing member countries with information, policy assistance and the capacity necessary to deal with these issues. http://www.fao.org/prods/gap/index_en.htm

[24] For example, the Capacity Development Good Practices Case Studies Series document FAO good practices in capacity development in FAO's areas of expertise. http://www.fao.org/capacitydevelopment/good-practices/en/

[25] For example, FAO has been developing e-learning materials in support of Capacity Development in FAO Member States. http://www.fao.org/capacitydevelopment/e-learning-services/en/

[26] The AGORA (Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture) program, set up by FAO together with major publishers, enables developing countries to gain access to an outstanding digital library collection in the fields of food, agriculture, environmental science and related social sciences. http://www.aginternetwork.org/en/index.jsp

[27] An African Development Bank (AfDB) funded project designed to fill current gaps in the rural community–NARS–regional–continental–global information chain. It is guided by an assessment of agricultural information systems in Africa and consultations with stakeholders, including sub-regional organizations and international information service providers.

A Theory of Change model is provided in Appendix 1, which will be revisited after the initial assessment (section 2.2.1) and may be adjusted.

## 4. RISK MANAGEMENT

| Risk | Impact | Probability | Mitigation[28] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. No/weak G20 endorsement of the TAP programme. | TAP is not established and objective not achieved. | Low | G20 express their commitment to TAP and endorse its mandate. |
| 2. Weak ownership of and engagement in TAP by relevant actors. | TAP does not contribute effectively to capacity development in tropical agriculture in developing countries. | Low | Principal TAP partners advocate for engagement with agencies in G20 and developing countries. A wide range of stakeholders are engaged during formulation and inception of the programme. The benefits of participation are clear and tangible. |
| 3. Assessment studies not precise/clear enough in identifying needs and gaps. | TAP outputs based on incomplete or unreliable information. Missed opportunities for targeting of capacity development initiatives. | Low/Medium | Adequate and comprehensive participatory planning, needs and context assessment, including mobilization of existing global and regional mechanisms. |
| 4. Actors not willing to participate and share through the TAP components. | TAP does not achieve credibility. Knowledge sharing and partnership between relevant actors not improved by TAP. | Medium | Relevant actors involved from inception with participatory decision-making where possible. TAP has simple mechanisms for participation. TAP quickly brings together a critical mass of actors and content, including drawing on existing systems. The benefits of participation are clear and tangible. |
| 5. TAP's capacity development activities and tools do not address requirements of national systems adequately. | Sustainability of capacity development interventions impeded and roles by national or regional experts not fully developed. | Low/Medium | TAP partners' interventions in capacity strengthening of individuals and institutions based on thorough assessments and customization to meet the specific needs of different target groups. |

## 5. WORKPLAN

A detailed workplan for the six outputs will be developed after consensus on the approach. A tentative schedule for the TAP is provided in Appendix 2. The tentative schedule refers to the first five years, i.e. the starting-up phase of the Platform; subsequently a rolling workplan will be developed.

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

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[28]Mitigation activities will naturally be based also on close cooperation with the TAP partners.

## 6.1 Institutional Framework, Partnerships and Coordination

The Platform would be launched based on letters of intent from institutional partners. The members of the Platform should ideally comprise a coalition of willing and committed partners/constituents including the national agricultural research, education and extension institutions as well as the private sector, civil society and farmers' organizations in the G20 and developing countries, and the key regional and international fora, networks and agencies. International representative bodies such as GFAR, GFRAS, GCHERA, CGIAR and the Young Professionals' Platform on Agricultural Research for Development (YPARD) would be partners as well as contributors to the Platform.

The governance structure of TAP would be light, flexible, open, inclusive, and based on simple operating procedures. The Platform would be facilitated by a Secretariat located in and managed by FAO. Given that the Secretariats of various mechanisms including, among others, the CGIAR Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC), GFAR, the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on food security and nutrition, and YPARD are housed in FAO, TAP would benefit from such a favourable environment. A management board comprising representation from institutional partners in G20 and developing countries would guide development of the platform, with a smaller advisory committee to oversee the Platform activities. National and regional focal points could also be appointed for providing regional, national and local information for more harmonized and collaborative support.

The TAP Secretariat would be responsible for developing and maintaining the Platform website, drawing on already available expertise from amongst the TAP partners wherever possible, and for hosting the website. The Secretariat would also be responsible for organizing and administering the Policy Dialogues, and where necessary working through ad-hoc groups co-opted at the local level. The face-to-face dimension of the Marketplace would be jointly organized by the Secretariat, advisory committee, as well as participating research, education and training organizations.

The Platform would also establish close linkages with relevant existing multi-partner initiatives that promote coherent institutional approaches, such as those being implemented by regional bodies and international agencies.

## 6.2 Budget and inputs of partners

The Platform would link many different types of resources already employed in existing activities that relate to the proposed components of the Platform, such as bilateral or multilateral partnerships for South-South Cooperation and Fellowship programmes offered by certain countries and institutions.

The Platform would also need to harness new resources to support the mechanisms that would promote and sustain coherent and complementary approaches to capacity development, and support priority activities which are not currently fully resourced including the Secretariat. Contributions of such resources could be both financial and in-kind through mechanisms such as staff secondments. The scale and scope of the Platform's components, including interface languages, would be determined by the nature and size of new resources that become available.

## 6.3 Technical and Operational Support

Individual activities under the components of the Platform would be led by major national education, extension and research organizations in G20 countries with direct experience in tropical agriculture, as well as by advanced international and regional education, extension and research organizations that can provide opportunities for learning and knowledge

sharing. The Platform would optimize complementarities and synergies between the efforts of G20 members to support development, and would encourage and foster the involvement of institutions from non-G20 countries.

## 7. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

An inception report will be prepared by the TAP Secretariat at the end of the three months preparatory phase of the Platform, reporting on the preliminary list of institutional partners and a more detailed workplan. Monitoring will be conducted through six-monthly progress reports that will be prepared as per standard FAO procedures and will contain:
•        an account of actual implementation of main activities compared to that scheduled in the workplan and the achievement of outputs,
•        identification of any problems and constraints encountered,
•        recommendations for corrective measures, and
•        a summary workplan for the following reporting period.

At the end of 5 years, a formal, rigorous and participatory evaluation will be carried out by an independent, third-party evaluation institution that is acceptable to all the TAP partners. A Terminal Report will also be prepared by the TAP Secretariat for submission to the donors in line with regular FAO procedures.

## 8. SUSTAINABILITY OF RESULTS

The Platform will strengthen and facilitate multi-institutional partnerships as well as inter-country and inter-regional collaboration, so that resources on offer are better leveraged and applied. The expected outputs, defined in Section 2.2, will provide the basis for creating more effective farmer responsive agricultural innovation systems in each participating country and region. This multifunctional Platform will contribute to more effective transformation and development of capacities in tropical countries and regions, and it will create networks and foster partnerships for knowledge sharing and capacity development that will be sustainable.

Once the value proposition has been established, it is also envisaged that the Platform will transition from a donor-funded programme to a sustainable financing model, based on contributions from the partners (that are able to contribute) that are benefiting from the Platform's activities.

Ideally, this process will be further fostered by the expansion of the Platform to include other developing countries in subtropical and temperate regions.

# APPENDIX 1

## Theory of change

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### The problems at stake

Many developing countries are endeavouring to address the major challenges facing agriculture and natural resources management. However, they lack the resources and the capacities to engage in the development of effective agricultural innovation systems. The capacity gap is particularly exacerbated in the tropical region which is characterized by pervasive poverty, and encompasses all but four of the world's least developed countries. At the same time, tropical areas have a very high potential for increasing agricultural productivity and, consequently, reducing poverty and improving food security. Experience gathered in the last few years demonstrates that stronger partnerships can improve the quality and impact of scientific research and education and capacity development programmes. There are numerous existing interventions already in place addressing education, knowledge and capacity gaps. Nevertheless, these interventions have different levels of donor coordination, synergies and alignment with country and regional frameworks.

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### The TAP approach

The TAP would be a multi-lateral, multi-sectoral dynamic facilitation mechanism. It would capitalize on and add value to ongoing initiatives by strengthening interaction, avoiding duplication and fostering collective action for capacity development in tropical agriculture. The TAP would thus complement existing initiatives by providing mechanisms for more harmonized action and support, and enable greater transparency and mutual accountability. TAP would work through a multi-pronged approach:

1. Assessment of current capacities and needs in agricultural innovation systems to ensure alignment with national and regional needs and priorities.

2. Formulation of a strategic action plan with short-, medium- and long-term capacity development priorities, tailored to the specific regional and local challenges.

3. Development of a common framework and guidelines for capacity development for coordinated actions by regional and international actors. It would also include indications for developing M&E frameworks and socio-economic impact studies.

4. Enhanced policy dialogue around capacity development in tropical agricultural innovation systems through the creation of a "Policy Dialogue Space".

5. Effective capacity development partnerships through the creation of a "Marketplace" that would match offers and demands for capacity development services in tropical agriculture, aggregate and promote existing offers of training opportunities, and allow scaling up of existing training efforts throughout the tropics.

6. Enhanced knowledge exchange in support of capacity development through the creation of a TAP information system, the "TAPipedia" that would present success stories, socioeconomic impact reports, lessons learnt, activities, information, guidelines on good practices, training capacity and opportunities related to capacity development in innovation systems for tropical agriculture.

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### The difference we make

The Platform would contribute to improved effectiveness and efficiency in capacity development programmes to strengthen innovation systems in tropical agriculture. The TAP's approach of selecting multiple methods to achieve the "best fit" would maximize the strengths and mitigate the challenges of the various modalities, ensuring that these support knowledge sharing, learning and change in all three capacity dimensions. It would bring together various stakeholders, encompassed by global mechanisms, platforms and bodies, such as GFAR, GFRAS, GCHERA and the CGIAR, regional bodies in the tropics, and a broad constituency of stakeholder groups at national level, to share information, experiences, knowledge, technologies and ultimately learn from each other. The "target groups" that would be directly affected by the Platform activities would be the national agricultural research, education and extension institutions, the private sector, civil society and farmers' organizations, policy-makers as well as development agencies, while the ultimate "impact groups" of the Platform would be small and medium-scale farmers, as well as small and medium enterprises in the agribusiness sector.

**Tentative schedule for the TAP**

| OUTPUTS | YEARS | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **Output 1. Assessment of current capacities and needs** | ▓ | | | | |
| **Output 2. Strategic action plan** | | | | | |
| Articulation of the plan | ▓ | | | | |
| Update and revision | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ |
| **Output 3. Common framework and guidelines for capacity development** | | | | | |
| Development of the framework | ▓ | | | | |
| Update and revision | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ |
| **Output 4. Enhanced policy dialogue** | | | | | |
| Design of the policy dialogue space | ▓ | ▓ | | | |
| Policy dialogues and studies at the global, regional and country levels | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ |
| **Output 5. Effective capacity development partnerships** | | | | | |
| Development of the virtual infrastructure and initial implementation | ▓ | ▓ | | | |
| Expansion through major institutional and individual capacity development activities and additional partnerships | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ |
| **Output 6. Enhanced knowledge exchange in support of capacity development** | | | | | |
| Development of the virtual infrastructure and initial implementation | ▓ | ▓ | | | |
| Consolidation with inclusion of networks and knowledge content from additional providers to offer a wider scope of subject coverage | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ |
| **Expansion of the Platform beyond tropical countries** | | | | ▓ | ▓ |