

INNOVATION AFRICA SYMPOSIUM
(21-23 November 2006, Kampala, Uganda)

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

An international symposium on agricultural innovation systems in Africa will be held on 21–23 November 2006 in Kampala, Uganda. It is being jointly organised by CIAT (International Centre for Tropical Agriculture), IFPRI-ISNAR (International Service for National Agricultural Research programme of the International Food Policy Research Institute), ILRI (International Livestock Research Institute), IIRR-Africa (International Institute for Rural Reconstruction) and PROLINNOVA (Promoting Local Innovation). The Innovation Africa Symposium will bring together researchers and practitioners involved in innovation systems to share current thinking, experiences, advances and lessons. It will include plenary keynotes, small group discussions, mini-workshops and an interactive information market for researchers and practitioners, who include innovative farmers. Together, the participants will draw lessons for policy, research, development and practice of innovation in agriculture and natural resource management (NRM) in Africa.

We invite original contributions to the Symposium.

Background

Understanding how to catalyse and support innovation is the key to success in agricultural research and development. Valuable experiences are being generated across the world on how to translate research ideas and products into innovations that benefit thousands of resource-poor rural people, and on how to enhance the process of innovation development by rural people themselves. The institutional arrangements that encourage these processes recognise the need for multiple sources of innovation and stimulating synergy between innovation system actors. To be effective in agricultural research and development, it is crucial for us all to stay in touch with the rapidly evolving ideas about innovation systems throughout the world and across various sectors, and to understand how these ideas apply to Africa.

Objectives

We have combined forces to organise the Innovation Africa Symposium in order to:

- Enable researchers, social entrepreneurs, private sector and development practitioners to interact and share experiences on the latest research and initiatives in innovation systems and their impacts
- Gain a better understanding of the implications of an innovation systems perspective for agricultural research and development
- Identify policy options, organisational solutions, capacity needs and the way forward to promote pro-poor innovation
- Catalyse new knowledge-sharing partnerships for learning and networking of professionals working on innovation systems
- Demonstrate the value of building upon local peoples' initiatives in innovation processes.

Themes

Within the broader framework of agricultural research and development, the Symposium will focus on the following themes:

Theme 1: Conceptual and methodological developments in agricultural innovation systems. This will include concepts, theories and principles related to innovation processes; methodological issues and challenges; and advances in theory and practice in the field of innovation systems, with a focus on the role of innovation systems in alleviating poverty.

Theme 2: Partnerships and other forms of social capital in agricultural innovation systems. This will address approaches and challenges in building and managing multi-stakeholder partnerships for innovation, ways of integrating different disciplines and knowledge bases, roles of farmer organisations and other local groupings of stakeholders, and synergies between local and larger innovation systems. It will also look into different types of partnerships needed for effective research and development initiatives.

Theme 3: Institutional, policy and knowledge-sharing mechanisms to support agricultural innovation systems. This will explore experiences in alternative institutional approaches to funding innovation; ways of engaging in policy dialogue to promote innovation systems; and ways of enhancing networking – particularly South-South – and using media to share information and to influence thinking about innovation systems. It will include attention to Intellectual Property Rights. It will also deal with different strategies and mechanisms for strengthening institutional learning and organisational change processes to enable innovation.

Theme 4: Enhancing local innovation processes. This will look at how rural and urban communities manage local innovation processes in agriculture and NRM and what their strategies imply for the types of support needed from governments, civil society, the private sector and international agencies. How do local innovation processes relate to poverty alleviation? How does the generation of local innovations relate to concepts of diffusion and adoption of new technologies? What can be scaled up in terms of innovations and innovation processes, and how? Experiences with and lessons from efforts to enhance community learning and change processes will be explored.

Theme 5: Market-led innovation in agriculture. This will address technological, social, institutional and policy issues that relate to innovation in response to market demands and opportunities: the roles of markets in catalysing innovation processes; lessons from experiences in enhancing entrepreneurship – including social entrepreneurship – and linking farmers and other entrepreneurs to domestic and international markets; strategies to cope with and benefit from globalisation; exploration of specialised market niches; and innovation in market institutions.

Theme 6: Building innovation capacity. This will analyse innovative approaches and initiatives for strengthening capacities within and across all levels (farmers and their organisations, other entrepreneurs, civil society organisations, universities, and government and private sector organisations involved in agricultural research and development). It will also address strategies and experiences in integrating innovation-systems perspectives and approaches into institutions of higher learning and education at all levels.

Contributions

1. Abstracts for Symposium papers

Interested researchers and practitioners are invited to submit abstracts for Symposium papers relating to one or more of these themes. The papers should draw on diverse fields and disciplines of the social, agricultural and natural resource sciences, and should present good practice in studying and in enhancing the process of innovation for effective agricultural research, development and education. Papers need not be directly linked to agriculture and NRM.

2. Proposals for marketplace exhibits

Contributions are also sought for an interactive marketplace. These

can be in the form of posters, videos, slides, photographs, websites, maps, group interactions (e.g. participatory theatre) and other lively ways of showing how work on innovation systems is being conducted in Africa and elsewhere. The intention is to acknowledge achievements and to encourage sharing of approaches, methods and insights among participants. The marketplace will be organised to maximise dynamic interaction in an open-space format, such as through on-the-spot discussion fora or mini-seminars. The marketplace will also feature the creativity and experience of farmers, farmer organisations and other local entrepreneurs and institutions.

Please identify local actors involved in the process of innovation in agriculture and NRM and encourage them to propose exhibits at the marketplace.

Submission and selection

Abstracts for papers and proposals for marketplace exhibits can be submitted electronically in English. They should not be longer than 500 words and should include the following:

- Theme (referring to one or more of the six themes mentioned above)
- Title of paper or exhibit
- Names, institutional affiliations and addresses of the author(s)/exhibitors, with the name of the presenter underlined.
- Short description of the conceptual or methodological development, partnership, innovation experience or supportive processes and mechanisms; this should include an explanation of the type of innovation involved (technological, social, institutional, etc); the current stage in the process of development, sharing and wider application of the innovation; the actual or potential outcomes and impacts of the work; and conclusions and any recommendations.
- A set of key words, including country or region
- In the case of marketplace exhibits, please describe the form of presentation and any audio-visual support that would be needed.

An international committee of researchers and practitioners will evaluate the contributions on the basis of their originality, relevance and applicability to improving poor people's livelihoods through agriculture and NRM in Africa.

Detailed instructions for authors/presenters will be communicated later to successful applicants. A CD of Symposium highlights and key invited papers will be made available to all participants, as well as on the Symposium website (www.innovationafrica.net). Opportunities are being explored to publish selected papers in a special issue of a peer-reviewed journal.

Costs

The Symposium registration fee will be **USD 120**. We strongly encourage you to seek independent funding to cover travel costs and the registration fee. Partial funding may be available to support limited number of participants from national and local research and development organisations and farmers' organisations from developing countries. When you submit your abstract and/or proposal for marketplace exhibit, please indicate if you would need partial funding to attend the Symposium.

Deadlines

Submission of abstract for papers and marketplace exhibits: **1 September 2006**

Notification of decision: **15 September 2006**

Receipt of completed papers: **20 October 2006**

Symposium dates: **21–23 November 2006**

Please send your abstracts and/or proposals as **Microsoft Word** attachments by 1 September 2006 to the Innovation Africa Symposium secretariat: innovationafrica@cgiar.org with copies to p.sanginga@cgiar.org and ann.waters-bayer@etcnl.nl

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(21–23 November 2006, Kampala, Uganda)**

REGISTRATION FORM

NAME:

TITLE:

INSTITUTION:

FIELD OF EXPERTISE:

COUNTRY:

ADDRESS:

TEL:

COUNTRY CODE

FAX:

COUNTRY CODE

EMAIL:

Field Visit: An optional field visit will be organised on Monday, 20 November 2006. Please indicate below if you are interested in participating in the field visits (Field Visit: YES_____NO_____).

Costs: The registration fee will be **USD 120** to be paid by 30

September 2006 to confirm registration. Accommodation at the Symposium venue (Munyonyo Speke Resort and County Club) has been negotiated at **USD 75** per night for half board (bed, breakfast, lunch and conference teas/coffees).

We strongly encourage you to seek independent funding to cover travel costs, registration fee and accommodation. Partial funding may be available to support a limited number of participants from national and local research and development organisations and farmers' organisations in developing countries.

Please indicate if you would need partial funding to attend the Symposium.

(Partial Funding _____YES _____NO)

Closing date for registration: Send your completed registration form to the Innovation Africa Symposium Secretariat (innovationafrica@cgiar.org) not later than **30 September 2006**.

For more information, visit the Innovation Africa website on www.innovationafrica.net