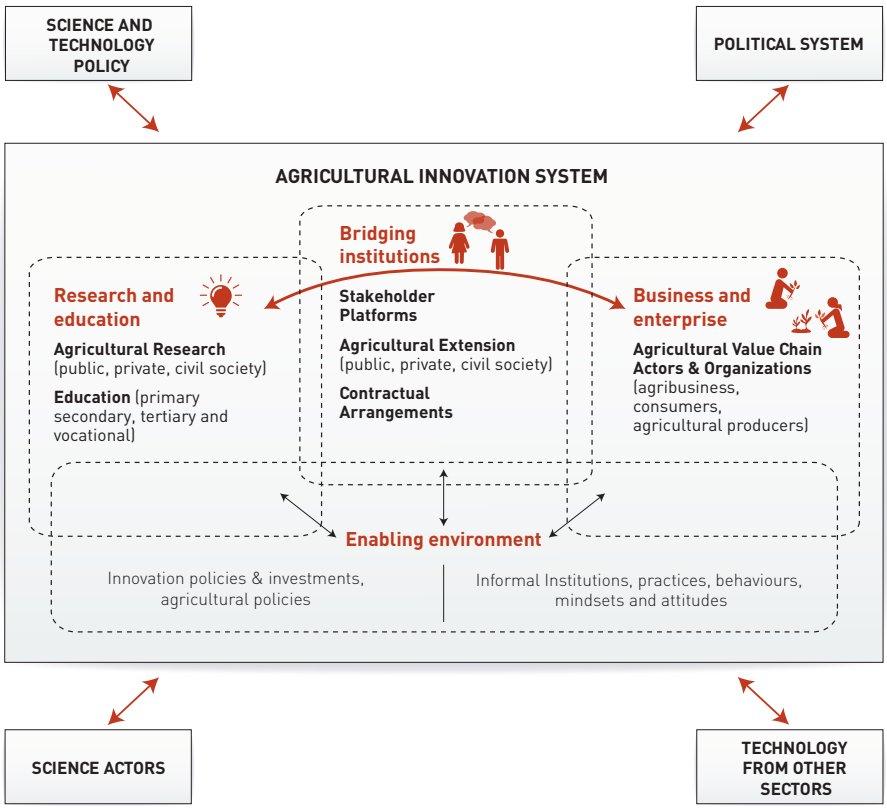
CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

Common Framework on Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems

Why innovation is important?

In the context of a growing world population and climate change, agricultural innovation has a high potential to increase farmers' income, improve food security and allow for a sustainable management of natural resources. As agriculture increasingly involves complex interactions of environmental and socio-economic factors with stakeholders at multiple levels, innovation needs an Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) perspective. The AIS comprises four main components: **knowledge and education, business and enterprise, bridging institutions, and the enabling environment.**



AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION SYSTEM (AIS) is a network of actors (individuals, organizations and enterprises), together with supporting institutions and policies in the agricultural and related sectors that bring existing or new products, processes, and forms of organization into social and economic use. Policies and institutions (formal and informal) shape the way that these actors interact, generate, share and use knowledge as well as jointly learn.

CAPACITY NEEDS IN THE TROPICS: THE G20 ESTABLISHES TAP

Developing countries, 90 percent of which are located in the tropics, often lack the resources and capacities to advance their AIS. To address this gap, the Agriculture Ministers of the G20 in 2012 called for the creation of the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP). With more than 40 partners, TAP is a multilateral dynamic facilitation mechanism, which fosters better coherence and greater impact of capacity development for agricultural innovation in tropical countries. The implementation of the TAP Action plan is supported by the EU-funded project Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS), which is jointly implemented by AGRINATURA and FAO.

The TAP Action Plan includes the development of a **Common Framework on Capacity Development (CD) for Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS).**

How to apply the Common Framework?

The Common Framework proposes a practical approach to CD for agricultural innovation that aims at harmonizing, through an AIS perspective, the diversity of existing strategies. The Framework provides concepts, principles, methodologies and tools to better understand the architecture of AIS, to assess CD needs and to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate CD interventions. This should lead to more sustainable and efficient AIS. The Framework emphasizes the crucial role of facilitation, documentation and knowledge management issues as well as that of reflection and learning for enabling agricultural innovation.

3 DIMENSIONS

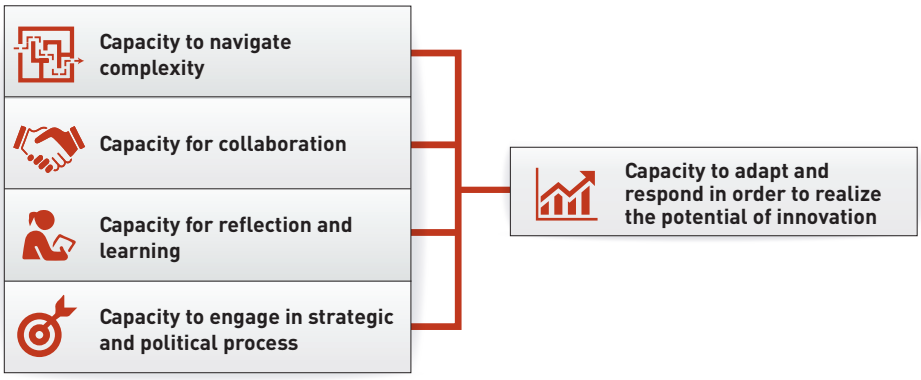
The Common Framework recognizes that **the three dimensions** of CD **(Individuals, Organizations and the Enabling Environment)** must be viewed as interconnected. To strengthen 'system-wide' capacity, all three dimensions must be addressed concurrently. In the context of AIS, the Framework stresses the importance of partnerships and networks in creating that interconnectedness, bringing together individuals and organizations to co-create new knowledge. To this end, the Framework pays special attention to developing the capacity of the enabling environment, which is often neglected.

4 + 1 CAPACITIES

The Common Framework identifies **4 + 1 capacities** for AIS to perform effectively. These apply to all three dimensions of CD. The four fundamental capacities are:

1. Capacity to navigate complexity;
2. Capacity for collaboration;
3. Capacity for reflection and learning; and
4. Capacity to engage in strategic and political processes.

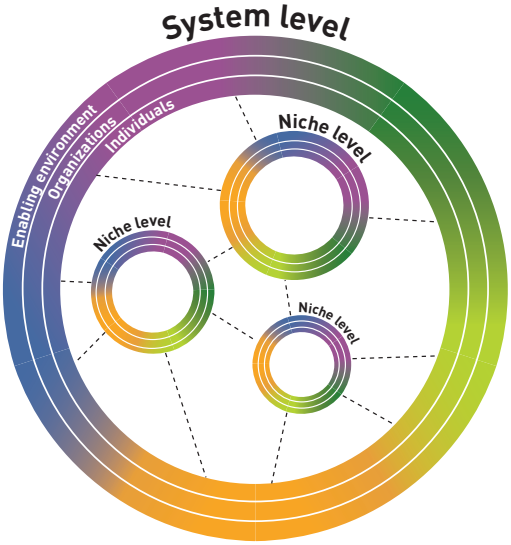
The first four capacities are the core of an overarching capacity to **adapt and respond in order to realize the potential of innovation** shifting focus from reactive problem solving to co-creating the future.



DUAL PATHWAYS APPROACH TO CD FOR AIS

The Common Framework proposes a dual pathways approach to CD for AIS. This conceptual approach includes two aggregated processes: 1) at **system level**, focusing on the functionalities and performance of the system as a whole; and 2) at **innovation niche level**, focusing on spaces of learning and experimentation where CD takes place around a specific innovation agenda. In the innovation niche, actors of all types allocate time, knowledge and resources to achieve change.

CD at system level recognizes the social, cultural and institutional aspects that determine opportunities for different actors to initiate an innovation niche. CD outcomes from the two levels (niche and system) need to be integrated and aligned for the effective functioning of AIS.



OPERATIONALIZATION: THE 5 STAGES OF THE CD CYCLE

The Framework proposes a **cycle** that aims to stimulate learning and interactions between the three CD dimensions. The cycle comprises **five main stages** for the operationalization of CD interventions. The cycle will take place at the level of innovation niches, within networks of organizations and individuals, and addresses the enabling environment. This approach will support the development of an AIS that is capable of adapting and responding to new and emerging challenges.

CD FOR AIS TOOL BOX

The Common Framework provides a number of tools that may be used to implement the various stages in the proposed CD cycle. These tools are flexible and should stimulate thinking on how best to approach a certain area of CD for AIS. The toolbox includes, among other things, an "Action Plan Matrix" (to formalize commitment and provide a plan for action), a "Circle of Cohesion" (to identify healthy interactions within a network), a "Capacity Focused Tree" (to clarify capacity-development objectives that interventions aim to achieve), a "Sector Network Analysis" (to map institutional linkages and visualize relationships between actors) and "Self-Assessment Questionnaires" (to assess capacity needs at various levels).

FACILITATION
is a continuous process that enables the interaction of actors in the system and strengthens capacities for change

REFLECTION, LEARNING & DOCUMENTATION (RL&D)
happens among the actors in each stage and feeds into the M&E process

MONITORING & EVALUATION
aspects need to be considered in each stage in order to effectively track and assess the performance of interventions

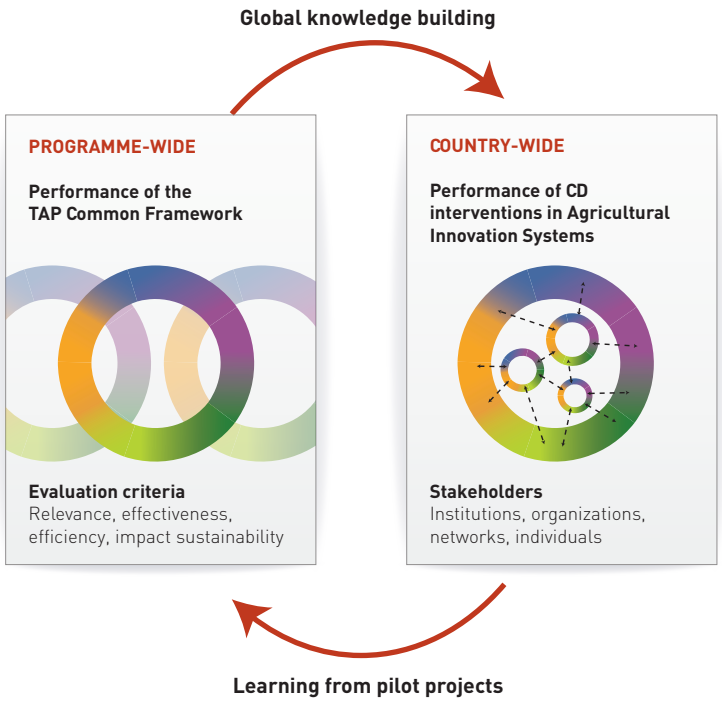
How to monitor and evaluate performance?

The Framework sets out an integrated Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) architecture consisting of two elements that are interconnected through learning cycles:

1. A system for monitoring and evaluating performance of CD interventions in AIS at country level;
2. A system for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the TAP Common Framework at programme level.

The first element refers to M&E of progress and results at each of the five CD stages laid out within the Common Framework, whereas the second element evaluates the success of the Common Framework approach in its entirety (its overall performance as a new approach to CD for AIS). The two elements of the M&E architecture are integrated by design: empirical evidence, findings and learning from one element feed into the other and vice versa. The implementation of the Common Framework undergoes continuous adaption through the use of M&E approaches that encourage and facilitate collective knowledge building and adaptive learning.

M&E of CD for AIS at programme and at country levels – dynamically linking the two elements for continuous learning and improvement



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The TAP Secretariat is hosted at FAO HQ in Rome, Italy

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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