

## **Participatory Approaches to Research and Scaling Up**

**Report of**

**An African Soil Biology and Fertility Network (AfNet) Training  
Workshop, Arusha, Tanzania, 28 September to 10 October 2003**

**Presented to**

**CTA**



**November 2003**

## **SUMMARY**

This was the first ever training of AfNet scientists in farmer participatory research (FPR) methods and scaling up (SU). Thirty AfNet scientists from West Africa (Nigeria, Togo, Benin, Mali, Burkina-Faso, Ghana, Niger and Senegal), East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) and southern Africa (Zambia and Zimbabwe) took part in the two-week training, which covered key concepts and tools for applying farmer participatory methods to their soil science research. Two separate field sessions, one in each week, in participatory diagnosis and technology evaluation applied the learning directly in practical settings with Tanzanian farmers.

The workshop was opened by TSBF director Dr. Nteranya Sanginga and AfNET steering committee members who were meeting in Arusha. The workshop had 5 facilitators from both CIAT-Africa's "Enabling Rural Innovation" Team (Colletah, Pascal, Rob, and Elly) and the Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility Institute (CIAT-TSBF) (Joshua).

## **WORKSHOP GOAL**

To develop the capacity of The African Network for Soil Biology and fertility (AfNet) member scientists as far as their knowledge and skill level of Farmer Participatory Research (FPR) & Scaling Up (SU) approaches are concerned and to enhance their ability to apply the FPR & SU approaches in their Research and Development work.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To sensitise and familiarise AfNet Scientists on the concepts and practice of Farmer Participatory Research (FPR) and Scaling Up (SU).
- To build capacity through provision of knowledge and enhancing skill levels of the network member scientists in FPR approaches.
- To build and support active AfNet teams in East, West, and Southern Africa to improve soil management, food production and incomes for poor farmers by bringing together many elements at the level of farmers as decision makers.

Participants agreed to include a further objective, namely:

- To generate ideas on how to follow up FPR and SU approaches within AfNet, particularly within the proposed sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Programme.

## **WORKSHOP DETAILS**

### **Overview**

Thirty participants attended the workshop from East (15 scientists), Southern (5 scientists), and West Africa (10 scientists). The five facilitators were from CIAT Africa's "Enabling Rural Innovation" Team and from CIAT-TSBF and travelled to Arusha over 27-28 September 2003. A meeting was held that evening on arrival with the local AfNet member Dr. Susan Ikera and with CIAT Arusha office to discuss final logistical arrangements, organise the conference room and the two half-day field trips, scheduled for the first Friday and second Tuesday of the workshop.

The AfNet Steering committee also convened its annual meeting at the conference centre the evening prior to the workshop. This ensured that the steering committee members could lend their support to the official opening of the workshop, which was inaugurated on 28 September by the Director of TSBF Dr. Nteranya Sanginga.

The workshop was conducted from 28 September to 10 October inclusive. The facilitators together with the AfNet scientists stayed at the venue of the workshop except for one participant who resides in Arusha. Full details of the workshop programme are included in the Annex. This Annex covers the key points as they were raised in discussion as well as an overview of the workshop's process as it developed.

The workshop was designed to introduce AfNET soils scientists to a novel approach to research for integrated nutrient management, designed to catalyze the incorporation of client-oriented participatory

research methods into very early stages of technology design, with the active involvement of poor women producers. This approach -the resource-to-consumption (R-to-C) framework- takes market orientation and profitability as a starting point for FPR and participatory technology development to identify market opportunities and select options for income generation to provide incentives for investment in natural resource management. More specifically, it links farmer participatory research, market opportunity identification, and development of technologies for integrated soil and nutrient management, with a focus on women and the poor.

Topics covered included:

- Key elements of Farmer Participatory Research and Scaling Up
- Essential communication & facilitation skills
- Tools for Participatory Diagnosis
- Linking ISFM to market opportunities
- Managing social processes & group dynamics
- Selecting and working with farmer research groups
- Community-based ISFM experimentation
- Technology evaluation
- Scaling up ISFM

### **Week 1: Introduction to Participatory Methods**

The first week covered the Basic Tools for Participatory Diagnosis but also placed considerable emphasis on increasing participants' awareness of their own values, expectations, and attitudes. The opening sessions, which allowed the participants to get to know each other better covered both their expectations and fears for the workshop as well as their understanding of "participatory" methods. Since all participants were either soil scientists or agronomists by training, many perceived a divide between "participation" and "conventional" research methods and felt that "more participation" would "dilute the quality" of their scientific activities. Varying degrees of familiarity with FPR meant that a major expectation was acquiring "new tools" (including statistics for analysing qualitative data). The initial sessions therefore helped illustrate how sensitivity to attitudes and values – and in particular, facilitation and communication skills – would also be an important part of the training.

Sessions on working with partners led to very stimulating exchanges of experience and knowledge. Facilitating effective partnerships will be an important component of AfNet, which now has over 200 members in close to thirty-five countries. Under the partnership discussion, many scientists felt that it was necessary to maintain core specialities (i.e.: soil biology, soil science) and not become "amateur social scientists". Such an attitude meant that the introduction of participatory market research (PMR) on Wednesday was perceived as a challenge by some, who worried that moving an emphasis from agricultural research for food security to markets was too risky. However, the majority of participants felt that the role of markets was vital to the success of natural resource management strategies and appreciated the opportunity to learn the PMR tools needed to take markets into account. The young scientists in the group were very enthusiastic and appreciated the course, which they noted was timely since they are already facing challenges of including views of farming communities in their PhD studies and proposals under development.

The week concluded with a field practical using the participatory diagnosis (PD) tools discussed earlier.

Participants went in groups to four farming communities in Hai District, Tanzania where CIAT research has been active. The objective of the activity was to evaluate the opportunities and constraints facing agriculture in Hai District, and to identify possible entry points for soil fertility management research. Feedback sessions the following day covered both the content of these field visits, and also the process by which the groups had worked with farmers (and each other).



A mid-workshop (end of week one) evaluation activity revealed that the attention paid to Values and Attitudes was highly appreciated, and that the course was proving to be a useful "eye-opener" of how to use participatory methods and still do "good science". Constructive comments and requests including more



material on working with farmers, gender, PMR were made and more personalised experiences (case studies) were incorporated in the second week's programme.

## **Week 2: Community-based experimentation**

The second week addressed the practicalities of working with farmer groups, particularly with the design, monitoring and evaluation of experimentation activities. The discussion of designing and implementing on-farm experiments led to preparation of how to conduct technology evaluations with farmers. Using the same groups as went to the field at the end of week 1, new villages and farmer groups were visited in Hai District, this time to evaluate technologies that these groups had been testing. Farmers identified different technologies and ranked them using individual and group scoring. Across the board, the researchers teams were much more confident and more responsive in their interactions with farmers, even though most had not



done significantly more preparation ahead of time than previously. The participants later analysed the data collected from the field exercise using various tools such as matrix ranking/weighting and proportions that they learnt in the workshop.

Scaling up/ out ISFM innovations was the last part of the workshop. Participants were keen to know how they can make sure that technologies go beyond the farmers they have been working with. Some of the workshop participants took time to present their own experiences with scaling up and participatory activities and which were important inputs into the training, triggering further

discussions. It was felt that over the years attractive and viable technologies have been developed yet these have hardly reached the farmers. The problem is policy-makers who are not picking up the technologies. Lobbying and advocacy was agreed as one way that would ensure the technologies reach the policy-makers and hence the farmers. Participants even felt the need to change the training curricula in schools to include most of the content of the training workshop due to its relevance to result-oriented research.

## **FACILITATORS' COMMENTS**

The final evaluation of the workshop was overall positive. Most participants agreed that FPR and SU approaches offered great potential for increasing the relevance and impact of their research on integrated soil fertility management. Overall, participants showed considerable enthusiasm and willingness to take on new challenges and interact with farmers (and each other) in new ways. After initial hesitancy about how to reconcile their "scientific" identities with participation, a large proportion showed themselves ready to broaden their range of activities. The training workshop was also an opportunity for further integration between CIAT and TSBF, and particularly for institutionalizing the use of participatory research in integrated soil fertility management.

## **FOLLOW-UP AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Participants agreed that FPR and SU approaches offered great potential for increasing the relevance and impact of their research on integrated soil fertility management. They developed action plans for implementing these approaches in the current work, and will also use their new skills and attitudes to influence AfNet's future research and planning directions. The following are the main outcomes and suggested topic for future training;

- Individual participants committed to start action plans linking FPR to their current work, and also develop proposal jointly with other members through facilitation of AfNet
- Members will do scaling up work on the appropriate technologies already available in their respective working areas.
- Further training on the following aspects was proposed:
  - Gender Analysis,

- Socio-economic issues,
- Advocacy and Lobbying skills,
- Proposal writing,
- Planning experiments and statistical analyses of Social Science data (eg. SPSS)
- Building stronger partnerships with other organisations/ institutions
- Training other AfNet members on Farmer Participatory research and Scaling up/ out.
- Exposure visits be organised where members can visit success stories
- Build and train research teams to thematically address specific technologies regionally. A regional team will be composed of country teams that will have similar research agenda and coordinated regionally.
- Establish database of researchers to aid easy identification of partners based on qualifications and professionalism
- Other recommendations include training of more young scientists, solicit scholarships for formal PhD training especially for women scientists, source more funds for FPR and scaling-up work,

AfNet will present two proposals, one to train other AfNet members on Farmer participatory research and Scaling Up/ Out and a second proposal for follow-up training for those already trained.

**Workshop Programme: Participatory Research Approaches and Scaling Up Workshop for African Soil Biology and Fertility Network  
29th September-10th October 2003, Arusha, Tanzania**

Date	8:00 – 10:30 am	11:00 - 1:00 pm	2:00-3:30 pm	4:00 - 6:00 pm
<b>29 Monday</b> Developing change from within	Registration • Welcome & opening remarks <i>N.Sanginga; A Bationo</i> <b>①Introductory session</b> • Introductions (expectations & fears) <i>C Chitsike</i> Objectives & programme <i>CC / J Ramisch</i>		<b>②Common understanding of participatory approaches</b> • River code General discussion (what =the river, the steps?)... Small groups • Self awareness (what =values, how created?); story for reflection)	
Introduction (sniffing) * Name for wkshop, country, expectations, fears... TEA... Marrying expectations & objectives (on chart)... expectations & avoids lead to logistics (local information, language, times (negotiate spilling over – may need common note-taking?) (how to vote/agree/reach consensus), breaks / food, behaviours & involvement = <b>contract setting</b> ) Learning logs <b>Experiential learning</b> introduced...				
<b>30 Tuesday</b> Basic Tools: Participatory Diagnosis	<b>Reflection</b> (learning logs); seating arrangement, speaking process; on-going questions <b>②Common Understanding (continued)</b> Facilitation (& Communication skills) – read hand out & discuss; Inter-personal communication	<b>③Key elements Farmer Participatory Research &amp; Scaling Up</b> ERI Framework; Resource-to-Consumption Approach; Farmer Participatory Research; Quality of Participation (types and stages); Participatory Market Research	<b>④ Selecting partners &amp; sites</b> (specific to own team) <b>Applying inter-disciplinarity in our work</b> (building a team) Problems with ‘team’ (who is demanding? payment/contracting? thinking of someone as the ‘donor’? ... get group information re problems with partnerships / multidisciplinary	
<b>1 Wednesday</b> Profitable ISFM <i>JR, PS to Hai?</i>	<b>Reflection</b> <b>⑤Planning Participatory Diagnosis</b> • Different types of opportunity analysis	<b>⑥ Linking ISFM to market opportunities (PMR)</b> <i>Elly Kagganzi</i> • Collecting & analysing market information • Assessing income generation options • Case study (small groups) • Feedback and presentations (to 18:30)		
<b>2 Thursday</b> Gender & Tools for PD	<b>⑦Working with farmers</b> Gender awareness (“roles/sex” cards) CC; Group dynamics PS; Criteria for selecting groups (after PD get nominations & reasons – all ages, M/F); IDRC group examples; Unhelpful group behaviour CC	<b>⑧ Tools for PD</b> <i>P.Sanginga</i> Overview; Problems: “what would you do?”; Include ‘What makes a “good” PRA?’; Gathering & understanding local ISFM knowledge (Folk Ecology) JR	<b>⑨ Preparation for fieldwork</b> <i>P.Sanginga</i> • Checklist • Who does what (facilitator, report, observer) • Ensure Kenyan or Tanzanian in group What to include? 1. Venn diagram of institutions 2. Crop calendar (crops, labour, roles) 3. Social and resource map	

<b>Date</b>	<b>8:00 – 10:30 am</b>	<b>11:00 - 1:00 pm</b>	<b>2:00-3:30 pm</b>	<b>4:00 - 6:00 pm</b>
<b>3 Friday</b> Field work #1	<b><u>Field work #1: Community participatory diagnosis</u></b> Analysing the Biophysical Potential of the region to produce or supply certain commodities. Identifying food security needs and market interest Identifying farmer experimentation promising solutions			Preparation of field reports
<b>4 Saturday or 5 Sunday</b>	<b>Saturday AM:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of field visits reports and critiquing process and content</li> <li>• Introduction to Action planning: Applying participatory diagnosis to existing activities</li> <li>• Observations on community organisation, social differentiation...</li> </ul>			<b>Sunday AM:</b> Tarangire NP visit
<b>6 Monday</b> Farmer research groups & experiments	<b><u>Designing and Planning Experiments with farmers</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflections from exposure visit and presentations</li> <li>• Gender implications for experimentation?</li> </ul>		<b><u>Evaluating Technologies</u></b> Methods and guidelines for effective evaluation preparation for field work for evaluating technologies. PS	
<b>7 Tuesday</b> Technology evaluation	<b>13) Field Work Evaluating technologies with farmers</b>			Preparation of reports
<b>8 Wednesday</b> Field work #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Analysing scoring data</b></li> <li>• <b>Feedback</b></li> </ul>	<b><u>Preparation of reports</u></b>	<b><u>Presentation of reports</u></b>	
<b>9 Thursday</b> Scaling up ISFM	<b>15) Scaling up ISFM technologies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key concepts &amp; principles</li> <li>• Strategies for scaling up ISFM (examples) – PS</li> </ul>		Introduction to Action Plans Brainstorm on	Preparation of action plans by the teams
<b>10 Friday</b> Action plans  <i>RD, PS to Hai...</i>	Preparation of action plans		<b>17) Presentation of action plans &amp; discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refining action plans</li> <li>• Future steps (inter-team feedback, facilitator visits, future training??)</li> </ul>	<b>18) Evaluation and closure of workshop</b>

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