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## INNOVATION ASIA–PACIFIC SYMPOSIUM

4–7 May 2009, Kathmandu, Nepal

### FIRST CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

An international symposium on agricultural innovation systems in Asia and the Pacific, focusing particularly on southern and eastern Asia, will be held on 4–7 May 2009 in Kathmandu, Nepal. It is being jointly organised by CIAT (International Centre for Tropical Agriculture)–Asia, ICIMOD (International Centre for integrated Mountain Development) and PROLINNOVA (PROMoting Local INNOVation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resource management) in collaboration with the PROLINNOVA–Nepal partners LI-BIRD (Local Initiatives for Biodiversity Research and Development) and Practical Action–Nepal. It is being funded by these organisations and Research Into Use (RIU)/UK Department for International Development. Support from other organisations is still welcomed.

The Innovation Asia–Pacific Symposium will bring together researchers and practitioners to share their latest experiences and insights in enhancing innovation processes in smallholder agriculture and natural resource management (NRM), and to draw lessons for policy, research, development and practice. The Symposium will include plenary keynotes, thematic mini-workshops and an interactive information market. It will open with a Nepalese fair on local innovation to celebrate the creativity of women and men farmers, farmer organisations and other local entrepreneurs and institutions.

#### Background

Learning how to enhance innovation processes is key to success in the sustainable development of agriculture and NRM. Valuable experiences are being gained around the world in how to integrate ideas and products from formal research into dynamic innovation processes that benefit resource-poor people, and in how to support the own initiatives of these women, men, households and communities to climb out of poverty in environmentally sustainable ways. There is growing recognition that innovation emerges out of the interaction of people with different types of knowledge and skills, and that innovation processes can be speeded up if this interaction is improved. To be able to be more effective in our work, it is crucial for all of us involved in agricultural and NRM research and development to be in touch with the rapidly evolving concepts of innovation systems, and to understand how they are being and can be applied in practice to improve poor peoples' livelihoods with gender equity.

## Objectives

The major objectives of the Innovation Asia–Pacific Symposium are to:

- Provide an opportunity for researchers, academics, development practitioners, social and commercial entrepreneurs, and local innovators to share and learn from recent research and development experiences in innovation systems in agriculture and NRM
- Demonstrate the importance of building on local initiatives in experimentation, involving both locally developed innovations as well as adapting outputs from formal research to local conditions and purposes
- Develop a better understanding of the implications of an innovation systems approach for research, development and education in agriculture and NRM
- Identify policy options, organisational solutions and capacity needs to enhance gender-sensitive and pro-poor innovation
- Catalyse new partnerships and “communities of practice” for learning and networking of professionals working on innovation in agriculture and NRM.

## Themes

Within the framework of agricultural and NRM research and development, presentations and discussions will be grouped around the following main themes:

**Theme 1: Concepts and methods in innovation systems approaches.** This will include concepts, theories and principles related to innovation processes; methodological issues and challenges; and advances in theory and practice related to innovation systems, with a focus on their role in alleviating poverty in environmentally sustainable ways.

**Theme 2: Building and maintaining partnerships in innovation.** This will address approaches and challenges in catalysing and managing multi-stakeholder partnerships for innovation; ways of integrating different disciplines and knowledge bases; roles of farmer organisations, women’s organisations and other local groupings of stakeholders; and synergies between local and wider innovation systems. It will also look into different types of partnerships needed for effective research and development initiatives.

**Theme 3: Strengthening adaptive capacities through local innovation processes.** This will look at how women and men in 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, social inclusion and environmental sustainability? How does the generation of local innovations relate to conventional concepts of technology diffusion and adoption? What can be scaled up in terms of innovations and innovation processes, and how? Particular attention will be given to experiences with and lessons from efforts to enhance learning and adaptive capacities at community level, with a focus on socially differentiated impacts of innovation.

**Theme 4: Private-sector engagement for market-oriented innovation.** This will address technological, social, institutional and policy issues related to innovation in response to local and international market opportunities: the roles of markets and private-sector actors in catalysing innovation processes; lessons from experiences in enhancing market-related entrepreneurship among poor farmers and natural resource users; strategies to cope with and benefit from globalisation processes; exploration of specialised market niches; institutional change related to marketing; and innovation in private-sector institutions engaging with resource-poor farmers.

**Theme 5: Building capacity and mainstreaming innovation systems approaches.** This will analyse approaches and initiatives for strengthening capacities and integrating innovation-system perspectives and approaches within and across all levels: farmers and their organisations, other entrepreneurs, civil society organisations, education institutions, and government and private-sector organisations of agricultural research, development and education. It will look at different

strategies and mechanisms to strengthen institutional learning and change so as to enable innovation processes.

**Theme 6: Policy dialogue and institutional change to support pro-poor innovation.** This will explore ways of engaging in policy dialogue to enhance innovation systems; intellectual property rights; mechanisms for sharing and managing information to support policy dialogue; ways of enhancing networking and using media to influence thinking about innovation systems; experiences with alternative institutional approaches to funding innovation; and scaling up in terms of institutional change.

***Issues of gender and social inclusion cut across all themes. Contributions that give serious attention to these issues will be given priority during selection.***

## **Contributions**

### **1. Abstracts for Symposium papers**

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 enhancing innovation processes. Although the main focus of the Symposium will be on innovation in southern and eastern Asia, experiences from other parts of the world relevant for these areas will also be welcome.

### **2. Proposals for marketplace exhibits**

Research and practitioners are likewise invited to propose exhibits for the interactive marketplace. These can be in the form of posters, videos, slides, photographs, websites, maps, group interactions (e.g. participatory theatre) and other ways of showing how work on innovation systems is being conducted in the Asia-Pacific region. The intention is to encourage lively sharing of approaches, methods and insights among participants. The marketplace will be organised to maximise interaction in an open-space format.

## **Submission and selection**

The abstracts for papers and/or proposals for marketplace exhibits should be submitted electronically in English. They should be no longer than 600 words and 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)/exhibitor(s), with the name and email address 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 innovation process; the actual or potential outcomes and impacts of the work; the gender issues involved; and conclusions and any recommendations
- Keywords, including country or region
- In the case of marketplace exhibits, description of the form of presentation and any audio-visual facilities required.

An international committee of scientists and development practitioners will evaluate the contributions on the basis of their originality, relevance and applicability to improving poor people's livelihoods in environmentally sustainable ways through agriculture and NRM in the Asia-Pacific region.

Detailed instructions for authors/presenters will be communicated to successful applicants. The international committee may propose revisions to the full papers, to be completed before the Symposium in order to make the papers more clearly focused on the theme cluster in which they will be discussed. Therefore, the deadline for submission will be strictly observed.

Accepted abstracts, full papers and Symposium presentations will be posted on the Symposium website ([www.innovation-asia-pacific.net](http://www.innovation-asia-pacific.net)). A booklet of abstracts of papers and marketplace exhibits will be distributed to all participants. Selected key contributions will be compiled in a peer-reviewed book to be made available to all participants and more widely through a commercial publisher. Opportunities will also be explored to publish selected papers in a peer-reviewed scientific journal, and shorter and more easily accessible articles in a development-oriented magazine.

## **Costs**

A Symposium registration fee of USD 120 will be charged. We encourage you to seek independent funding to cover travel, registration and other costs. At least partial funding will be available to support a limited number of invited participants from national and local research and development organisations and farmer organisations in developing countries. When you submit your abstract and/or proposal for a marketplace exhibit, please indicate if you would need partial funding to attend the Symposium.

## **Deadlines**

Submission of abstracts for papers and marketplace exhibits: **20 December 2008**

Notification of decision: **26 January 2009**

Receipt of completed papers: **12 March 2009**

Symposium dates: **4–7 May 2009**

Please send your abstracts for papers and/or proposals for marketplace exhibits as Microsoft Word attachments by **20 December 2008** to the Innovation Asia–Pacific Symposium Secretariat: [\*\*info@innovation-asia-pacific.net\*\*](mailto:info@innovation-asia-pacific.net) with copy to [\*\*c.wettasinha@etcnl.nl\*\*](mailto:c.wettasinha@etcnl.nl) (those without internet access can use the fax number +977-61-539956 or +31-33-4940791).