

May 2009

This email newsletter highlights the latest additions to the site Knowledge for Development.

Dossiers**New dossier: Foresighting**

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/Dossiers/S-T-Issues-in-Perspective/Foresighting/>

We currently face several global crises related to finance, economics, health, environment, agriculture, and energy which raise the question, was there sufficient foresighting used to determine and evaluate the possible futures and take the necessary action? This new folder provides an overview of foresighting in general, and more particularly of the role of foresighting in agricultural development. *Visit this new dossier*

Foresight

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9252>

By Marie de Lattre-Gasquet, CIRAD and ANR (Agence Nationale de la Recherche). The ERA-NET project 'For Society' notes that "there is no generally accepted formal definition of what distinguishes foresight from other future-oriented activities. It is interesting to note that none of these definitions explicitly recognizes the idea that the future is genuinely uncertain, with the implication that foresight has to prepare us for a variety of futures. This has consequences for what sort of shared strategic visions can be formulated." This article explains why few people have been able to prepare countries to deal with the current crises, and why even fewer have listened to those who pinpointed signs of coming difficulties and breakthroughs.

Foresight: A spotlight on future opportunity

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9257>

By Neill Allan, UK Director, Ability Europe Limited. The idea behind foresight is that better investment decisions will be made if the longer term future is taken into account. To do this, there needs to be a receptive and competent culture, resources and a reliable process and methodology to drive forward the policy into tangible benefit. This article reflects on how this is done and provides some results of foresighting work in a few countries.

Scenarios for future scientific and technological developments in developing countries 2005-2015

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9286>

By European Commission Community Research. This document is the final report of the European Commission funded project 'Scenarios of future science and technology developments in developing countries' referred to as SCOPE 2015. This report summarizes the context, the approach adopted and key findings on cooperation policies targeted on selected countries in four regions: The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA); Maghreb and Mashreq (MEDA); and Latin America (LA).

Lessons learned in technology foresight from developing country perspectives

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9293>

This article comes from the proceedings of the 'International Conference on Technology Foresight: The approach to and the potential for New Technology Foresight'. In the conclusion it is said that it appears desirable to give serious consideration to the need for inclusion of local "experts" in future technology foresight studies and exercises, especially at the national level.

GTZ Tool: Scenario technique

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9276>

A step by step tool for scenario techniques which can be applied in strategy development planning. Possible visions of the future are constructed, and the routes which may lead to these scenarios are described.

Developments

African countries build capacity for research and innovation surveys

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9150>

The coordinators of the National Focal Points for the African Science Technology and Innovation Indicators (ASTII) initiative gathered in Johannesburg from 9- 13 March 2009 to harmonize their survey instruments in order to conduct Research and Development (R&D) and Innovation surveys. The outcomes of this programme will contribute towards improving the quality of science, technology and innovation policies at national, regional and continental levels. Comprehensive indicators will translate into a better governance of science, technology and innovation in Africa especially in the context of the current economic global meltdown, where science, technology and innovation are the missing link to assist evidence based policy making. (Source: ASNS, 25 March 2009)

Taiwan offers scholarships to agriculture students on Nevis

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9159>

Students on Nevis who wish to pursue agriculture after secondary school will have the opportunity to tap into scholarships from the government of Taiwan to move into that field of expertise. The opportunity, a top Taiwanese official in St Kitts and Nevis said, was one of several to further deepen their relationships with Taiwan. (Source: Caribbean Net News, 26 March 2009)

NEPAD/SANBio Livestock R&D node launch

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9146>

In Zambia the Minister of Science, Technology and Vocational Training on the 23th of March officially launched the NEPAD/SANBio Node on Livestock Research and Development (R&D) in Southern Africa. The launch of the Livestock node marks the beginning of a process that will see improvement of livestock productivity in the sub Saharan African Countries that are severely constrained by vector borne parasites and the diseases they cause. The Livestock Development Node will initiate and coordinate R&D in Applied Research aimed at 'Reducing the negative impact of Tick Borne Diseases (TBDs), *Trypanosomoses* (Tryps) and their Vectors on Livestock Production in Southern African'. (Source: NEPAD, 23 March, 2009)

Zimbabwe: Researchers developing new ways to purify water

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9154>

Scientists at Bulawayo's National University of Science and Technology (NUST) have embarked on research to develop simple and affordable water purification methods, as more than a billion people live without safe drinking water in developing countries. Water and sanitation experts are currently investigating if a powder made from the seeds of the *Moringa Oleifera*, commonly known as the drumstick or horseradish tree, can be used as a filter to purify water. (Source: IPS, 25 March 2009)

Mozambique: Government approves National Biofuel Policy and Strategy

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9152>

The Mozambican Government approved on the 24th of March a National Biofuel Policy and Strategy, which is the most important instrument for the launch of production of this activity in the country on a wide-scale. The strategy approved in a Council of Ministers meeting "establishes a regulatory framework for production of biofuels by the public and private sectors, based on principles of transparency, social and environmental protection," said Government spokesman, Luis Covane. (Source: Checkbiotech, 25 March 2009)

Researchers in Ghana work to create biofuels from native tree seeds

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9165>

Biologists at Kansas State University are working with a researcher in Ghana to create biodiesel from the seeds of trees that are common and well adapted to the climate of northern Ghana. Walter Kpikpi from the University for Development Studies, Navrongo Campus, in Ghana visited K-State in November 2008 with funding from K-State's African Studies Center. He is leading a project that will make biodiesel for local farmers in Ghana from seeds collected by local farmers. Proposing that *Jatropha curcas* and *Azadirachta indica* seeds are best suited for biofuels, Kpikpi's project envisions cultivating these trees specifically for biodiesel production on land that isn't suitable to grow food. (Source: AZoCleantech, 29 March 2009)

ECOWAS / AfDB Group supports science and technology education project

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9135>

The African Development Bank (AfDB) Group has re-affirmed its support to the development of science and technology education in Africa with the approval of a grant of 12 million Units of Account (UA*), equivalent to US\$ 17.60 million to finance a Network of African Institutions of Science and Technology Project in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The project aims at providing a regional consolidated response to the need for high-level expertise in science and engineering in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), by expanding equitable access and improving the quality and relevance of higher education and research through the enhancement of a pole of excellence in science and technology (S&T) in the region. In terms of gender equity, specific efforts will be made to attract and retain female students in the schools. (Source: African Development Bank Group, 18 March 2009)

Papua New Guinea: The world's first climate change refugees

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9129>

By 2015 the Carteret islands - off the coast of Papua New Guinea - could well be a mirage. The low lying atoll is sinking and sinking fast as the ocean is rising. Salt water has eaten up the shoreline and invaded the gardens. For many, it's time to pack up and go, but without help from the government, hundreds are stuck on this sinking atoll. Paul Tsube is one of the few who managed to leave early. He didn't wait for government assistance to migrate. Scientists are still debating why the atoll is sinking. Paul Tsube blames global warming and the developed world for what's happened to his island.

Zimbabwe: Scientists urged to utilize research skills and innovations

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9173>

Local scientists must scale up their research activities to bolster national food security and help solve climate change and energy problems affecting resource-strapped farmers in rural areas, Science and Technology Development Minister Professor Heneri Dzinotyiweyi said on March 30. RAEIN-Africa launched three programmes with a budget of close to US\$5 million that would finance project proposals from local research institutions that focus on science and technology and agriculture with a view of developing agricultural and environmental technologies that respond to the needs of marginalized farmers in the country. (Source: The Herald, 31 March 2009)

Mauritius to implement biosafety framework

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9177>

Mauritius will implement a national biosafety framework on the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) to ensure that the health of the population and the environment are not put in danger, Agro-Industry and Food Production Minister Satish Faugoo announced on March 26. He said the government has the responsibility to ensure that the benefits of GMO products outweigh the risks of producing and consuming them. (Source: Checkbiotech, 31 March 2009)

Network to combat climate change impacts on Africa set to be launched

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9190>

Plans are at an advanced stage for the establishment of a Global Climate Change Adaptation Network for Africa to spearhead mitigation of effects of climate change in the continent. The network is set to enhance climate change adaptation capacity of developing countries by mobilising appropriate knowledge and technologies to help build the climate change resilience of vulnerable human systems. The regional consultative forum on the topic, recently held at Nairobi, mandated the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) to set up an interim steering committee to work on the development of an implementation plan of the network. (Source: ASNS, 06 April 2009)

Selected publications

Agriculture and climate change: An agenda for negotiation in copenhagen

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9185>

By Gerald C. Nelson, IPFRI, March 2009.
A campaign to drive agriculture to the forefront of climate change negotiations took a step forward on March 31 with the launch of a document by food policy experts. Agriculture will be "dramatically" affected by climate change, says the paper, published by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). It could also become a potent brake on climate change if the right research and policies are implemented. IFPRI leaders said that agriculture had not featured prominently in the Kyoto Protocol - the current international climate change agreement - because of the "sparse" knowledge at the time about its relationship with climate change.

IFPRI policy brief: Knowledge and innovation for agricultural development

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9211>

By Kwadwo Asenso-Okyere and Kristin Davis, March 2009.

Every day, millions of rural people who depend on agriculture confront technical, economic, social, cultural, and traditional obstacles to improving their livelihoods. To cope with these obstacles, the rural poor draw on indigenous knowledge and innovate through local experimentation and adaptation. Indigenous knowledge alone, however, is not enough to deal with the complex problems facing the agricultural sector. Emerging issues such as high food prices, climate change, and demands for biofuels require complementary knowledge from formal agricultural research and development (R&D) and support from policies and other institutions. Formal and informal knowledge and innovation must therefore be linked to accelerate sustainable agricultural development.

Measuring agricultural innovation system properties and performance: Illustrations from Ethiopia and Vietnam

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9122>

By David J. Spielman and Dawit Kelemework, March 2009.

The rapidly changing nature of the global food and agriculture system suggests the need to rethink how innovation can contribute to developing-country agriculture. While scientific and technological changes in agriculture can help foster productivity growth and poverty reduction, their contributions are incomplete without commensurate changes in the wider system of which they are a part. A more systems-oriented understanding of how innovation occurs in a society and economy is critical to promoting dynamism, responsiveness, and competitiveness in developing-country agriculture and, ultimately, to enhancing productivity and reducing poverty.

Events

The Innovation Asia-Pacific Symposium (IAPS)

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9213>

Dates: 4-7 May 2009

Location: The Everest Hotel, Kathmandu, Nepal

The Innovation Asia-Pacific Symposium (IAPS) will bring together researchers and practitioners in innovation systems in smallholder agriculture and natural resource management (NRM) to share their latest experiences and insights. Particular attention will be given to supporting the initiatives of women, men, households and communities to climb out of poverty in environmentally sustainable ways. The symposium will allow knowledge sharing by integrating plenary keynotes, small-group discussions and joint reflection on experience – including case studies – with a balance between theory and practice. The main focus will be on innovation processes in southern and eastern Asia, but experiences from other parts of the world relevant for these areas will also be welcomed.

Food security in a climate of change: The CABI global summit

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9217>

Dates: 19-21 October 2009

Location: London, UK

By 2050 it is estimated that we will need to grow double the amount of food to feed the world's people, as population growth and changing food preferences increase pressures on land and water availability. This high-level meeting will bring together senior agricultural ministers, representatives from development organizations and the corporate sector to look at developing policies, practices and technologies that will enable us to grow more and lose less of what we already grow.

Jobs for ACP scientists

IFPRI Senior Research Assistant

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9223>

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) seeks a qualified candidate to serve as a Sr. Research Assistant (SRA) for a one year, fixed-term, renewable appointment for its Development Strategy and Governance (DSG) Division. This position is based at IFPRI headquarters located in Washington D.C. No application deadline.

CIFOR Scientist, impact assessment

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9225>

The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) is looking for a Scientist, Impact Assessment (Natural Resources Impact Assessment, Monitoring and Reporting) based in Bogor, Indonesia. CIFOR is an international research and global knowledge institution with a mission to contribute to the sustained well being of people in developing countries in the tropics. Applications will be considered until a candidate is

hired.

Fellowships and Grants

NZDS: Scholarship opportunities for African students

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9231>

The New Zealand Development Scholarships (NZDS) scheme offers the opportunity to people from targeted developing countries to undertake development-related studies at tertiary education institutions in New Zealand. Citizens from various parts of Africa have the opportunity to apply for a scholarship to pursue a Postgraduate, Graduate, or Masters' degree in health, nutrition or micro enterprise development. Closing dates are from 30 April to 25 June 2009.

The Ernesto Illy Trieste Science Prize

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/9233>

TWAS and Illycaffè award a high-level prize, the Ernesto Illy Trieste Science Prize, to honour outstanding scientific achievements made by individual scientists from the developing countries. The prize is awarded annually and rotate among the following fields: Climate change and its impact on agriculture in developing countries (2009); Energy (2010); Materials science (2011); Human health (2012). The deadline for receiving nominations for the 2009 prize for outstanding contributions in Climate change and its impact on agriculture in developing countries is 31 May 2009.

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