

# JOLISAA



## JOint Learning in Innovation Systems in African Agriculture

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On behalf of the JOLISAA team

CTA-CoS-SIS expert consultation  
Wageningen, 4-6 February 2013



# JOLISAA IN A NUTSHELL

# BASIC FACTS

Time line: 02/2010 to 07 / 2013

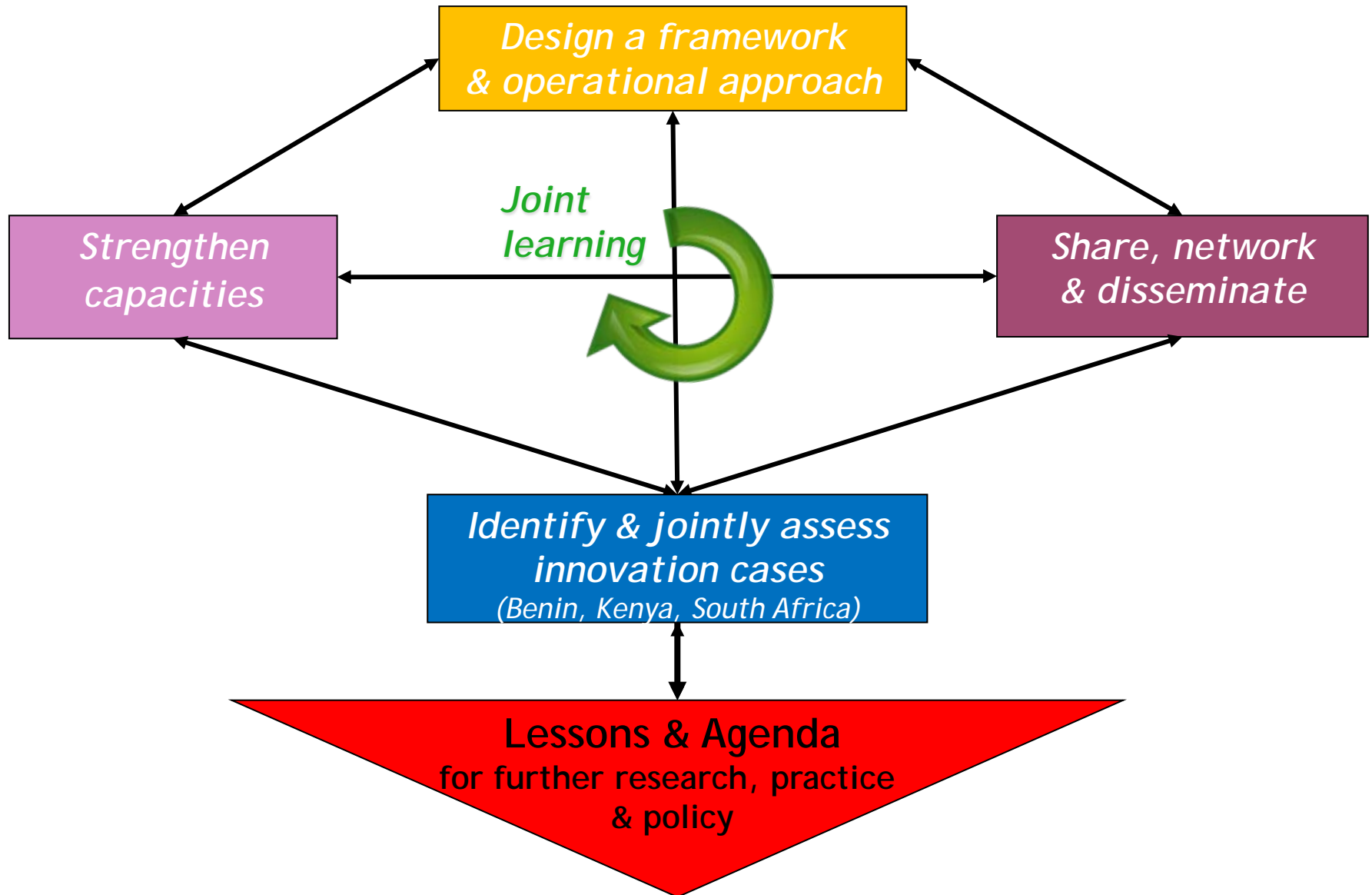
Small project... (< 1 M €, limited staff time involved)

Partners: CIRAD (France)  
WUR, ICRA, ETC (Netherlands)  
KARI (Kenya)  
Un. of Pretoria (South Africa)  
Un. of Abomey-Calavi (Benin)

## Objective:

*To assess & learn jointly from recent experiences across Africa about how innovation processes involving **multiple stakeholders** & **types of knowledge** operate, in order to identify concrete priorities for research, practice & policy for addressing the needs & demands of **smallholders** & other **rural actors**.*

# JOLISAA overall approach & structure



# INNOVATION CASES OF INTEREST TO JOLISAA ...

Cases in which one can « see » & « feel »  
an innovation process *unfold over time*

...starting with a  
(new) idea or  
initiative...

*Coming from whatever source: farmers, NGOs,  
researchers, entrepreneurs, policy-makers, donors*

*with the potential to solve a problem, improve a  
situation or take advantage of an opportunity*

...which gradually develops into  
*new ways of doing things*  
thanks to contributions from  
*diverse active stakeholders*...

*products, methods,  
organization, marketing  
channels, etc.*

...allows to get « satisfactory »  
results....

*...economic, social,  
environmental, etc.*

...and reaches a certain *scale*,  
depending on the « *enabling* »  
*environment*

*...local, national,  
international*

# INVENTORY OF INNOVATION CASES

## Main purposes:

- To compile agricultural innovation experiences in each country (crops, livestock, fishery, processing, marketing)
- To identify relevant cases for deeper assessment & joint learning



# HOW WAS THE INVENTORY MADE?

- Cases identified through several avenues: (grey) literature survey, electronic mailing, workshops, interviews
- Based on set of inclusion / exclusion criteria, e.g.  $\geq 3$  STH involved,  $\geq 3$  years duration, active smallholders' contribution
- Based on common underlying concepts, guidelines and criteria across all three countries
- Developed through an iterative process between JOLISAA national teams and "case-holders"

# USING AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK INSPIRED BY THE IS PERSPECTIVE

## Information included

Innovation: type, nature,  
domain

Stakeholders' roles &  
interactions

Role of local knowledge

Innovation triggers &  
drivers

Innovation dynamics

Scale at which innovation  
taking place

Results and "impact"  
obtained

## Inventory products

- A spreadsheet template  
(semi-quantitative variables)
- A collection of qualitative  
narratives about each case
- National inventory reports  
on process and results
- International cross-analysis



# KEY FEATURES OF NATIONAL INVENTORIES

Country	Benin	Kenya	South Africa
No. of cases	> 40 → 28	28 → 18	39 → 11
Approach to document cases	Lit. review + interviews + field visits	Interviews + field visits + lit. review	Email questionnaire + interviews
Documentation by ...	Young graduates + national team	KARI on-site scientists + national team	National team + case-specific resource persons
Lead stakeholders (acc'g to frequency)	1. Research / Projects 2. Farmers, CBOs, FOs 3. Private sector	1. Research 2. Projects 3. Extension / Farmers	1. Farmers / Research 2. NGOs 3. Extension
Timeline of innovation	Several decades to a few years	A few years to a decade or more	A few years
Main scales of innovation	Local, regional, national, international	Local, regional, national	Mostly local

# A WIDE DIVERSITY OF INNOVATIONS...

Topic	Benin	Kenya	S. Africa
Restoring & managing soil fertility	X	X	X
Capturing more moisture and managing water to boost crop productivity			X
Participatory plant breeding	X	X	
Postharvest conservation / processing	X		
Protecting natural resources by developing new uses and new sources of income	X	X	
Multistakeholder platforms & committees to manage natural resources	X	X	
Contract farming (certified seed production, linking farmers to agro-industry)		X	X
New value chains: e.g. organic cotton, dried mangos, soybean production, ginger drink	X	X	X

# COLLABORATIVE CASE ASSESSMENTS (CCA)

- Of 57 cases in 3 national inventories, 13 selected and assessed jointly by stakeholders:

## Collaborative Case Assessments (CCAs)

- Key steps in CCA methodology:

- Planning meetings with case stakeholders
- Focus-group discussions, semi-structured interviews with individual stakeholders & resource persons
- Multistakeholder feedback workshops
- Review of grey literature



# 13 CCA CASES

Country	# of cases	Case short titles
Kenya	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of Prosopis</li> <li>• Domestication and marketing of Aloe Vera,</li> <li>• Butterfly farming</li> <li>• Large-scale commercialization of lime,</li> <li>• Mango processing</li> <li>• Gaddam sorghum commercialization</li> </ul>
South Africa	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-field rainwater harvesting,</li> <li>• Developing a fertilizer bulk buying system,</li> <li>• Enhancing farmers' capacities for soil fertility management</li> </ul>
Benin	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-based fish farming</li> <li>• Development of soybean uses</li> <li>• Integrated soil fertility management</li> <li>• Rice parboiling</li> </ul>

# ALOE DOMESTICATION & MARKETING IN BARINGO, KENYA

## ➤ Triggers

- Search for livelihood option in semi-arid region
- Overexploitation of wild resource (aloe)
- Change in regulatory framework (export ban on wild aloe products)

## ➤ Main Stakeholders

Farmers / communities, formal research, aloe traders & other private entrepreneurs, government (external donors)

## ➤ Timeline

Aloe a traditional medicinal plants, exploitation of Aloe Sap started in the 1980s, major R&D activities between 2002 and 2008, formal process stuck since 2009, alternative innovation routes on-going.



# ALOE - CONT.



## ➤ Contribution of smallholders' knowledge:

- Local knowledge about wild aloe
- Experiential learning in growing aloe

## ➤ Types of innovation

### ▪ Technical:

Aloe nurseries, planting, sustainable harvest  
& management, sap boiling & purity tests, use in cosmetics

### ▪ Organisational / institutional:

Aloe management units, community-owned enterprise, PPP

## ➤ Key challenges encountered along the way

- Identifying and accessing (export) markets for Baringo aloe
- Obtaining “fair” prices
- Interactions & synergies between formal R&D institutions & trader-led Aloe networks
- Transparent & efficient management of aloe factory
- Leadership
- Going beyond public funding

# KEY FINDINGS & REFLECTIONS



# MAIN FEATURES OF INNOVATION CASES

- Predominance of **market-driven** innovation
- **Diversity** of **stakeholders** involved in innovation, playing a diversity of roles
- **Diversity** of innovation **triggers & drivers**
- Several **interwoven dimensions** of innovation
  - technical, social, institutional - over course of innovation process





# RELEVANT TIMEFRAME FOR STUDYING INNOVATION?

- Our initial criterion: **3 years** minimum
- Judging from our findings:
  - Such a short timeframe tends to reflect only initial stages / project framework
  - **10 years** minimum to see unfolding of multi-stakeholder process and impacts
  - In many cases, **several decades** needed for this
- ⊙ Lesson: without taking into account history, innovation processes cannot be understood seriously.  
Question: what about relevant time frame for interventions?

# AMBIVALENT LINK BETWEEN INNOVATION & EXTERNALLY-FUNDED INTERVENTIONS

- **Strong link** for many cases in the 3 countries
- **Contributions** of “projects” to innovation processes
  - Leverage over material, human & conceptual resources
  - Sheltering / buffering against “disabling environment”
  - Creating initial impetus for innovation to emerge / brokering between stakeholders
- **Limitations** of projects to support innovation processes
  - Short timeframes / discontinuities
  - Artificial environment & motivation
  - Dominance of outsiders' agenda & *modus operandi*
  - *No clear / realistic exit strategies*

# JOINT LEARNING: CHALLENGES...

- ◉ How to reach a “sufficient” common understanding of innovation-related concepts among heterogeneous set of stakeholders
- ◉ South-South vs. North-South interactions
- ◉ Can junior “researchers”, students or non specialists master enough of an functional IS perspective and related tools to assess “meaningfully” or “usefully” a complex innovation situation & trajectory?
- ◉ Working in mixed assessment teams: who is willing / able to dig beneath surface of “what went well” story”, and to take critical distance from what one thinks one knows about a case?
- ◉ Availability and access to existing documentation / IP issues

# TOWARDS POLICY IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- African small holder agriculture is moving forward:
  - evidence about the capacity of African small holders and other stakeholders to take advantage of opportunities, to access or create markets, to manage natural resources, despite the many challenges faced.
- The local knowledge, experience and creativity of smallholder farmers make a vital contribution in innovation processes and can improve livelihoods of many households.
  - But such contribution, and the corresponding innovation processes are seldom properly acknowledged → need for more & proper documentation, especially for innovation unrelated to external intervention
- Ultimate success of an innovation process over a realistic time frame (one or several decades) cannot be predicted.

# INITIAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS - 2 -

- ◉ What seems to work best: getting away from rigid and prescriptive schemes and nurturing, supporting and adjusting innovation processes “en route” over an extended period in a dynamic, iterative and flexible manner adapted to the specificities of the context, the stakeholders, the evolving opportunities and the constraints under which innovation actually emerges.
- ◉ Innovation processes can be boosted through appropriate coherent policies and investments and by creating / strengthening linkages among stakeholders
- ◉ Each stakeholder group involved in innovation requires different types of support, training and incentives to be able to contribute.



# NEXT STEPS IN JOLISAA

- ◉ Cross-analysis & lessons of CCA : March-April 2013
- ◉ Developing / refining recommendations for policy, research & practice / policy briefs: April -June 2013
- ◉ International “AIS in Africa” workshop, Kenya, 29-31 May 2013
  - Several of you have or will be contacted about it, your participation & contribution key to success!





### Core JOLISAAA team:

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+ case stakeholders!  
+ JILAC members...

**www.jolisaa.net**

This work is carried out as part of the EU-funded project  
“Joint Learning in Innovation Systems in African  
Agriculture” (JOLISAA). The opinions expressed herein are  
the sole responsibility of the authors. We thank all JOLISAA  
consortium members and partners in Benin, Kenya and  
South Africa for their collaboration and providing data,  
insights and comments.