

### LATEST AT LINK

#### EVENTS

#### METHODS WORKSHOP FOR ACTION RESEARCH ON AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION CAPACITY



**L**INK coordinator Andy Hall acted as a resource person in the third of a series of workshops with the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) on the Sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Programme (SSA CP) in Accra, Ghana in September. The first workshop, held in Kano, Nigeria in January, 2007, introduced the innovation systems concept and explained the implications of using this concept for project design, monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment. The second workshop, conducted in Accra in May, developed a research plan for SSA CP to adopt in the 2008-2010 period. In the third workshop, researchers from the SSA CP developed a set of guidelines for conducting action research on how to strengthen agricultural innovation capacity.

#### INNOVATION SYSTEMS ON TV IN BENIN



**L**INK researcher Dr. Daniel Noubégnon Dalohoun, based at the UNU Institute for Natural Resources for Africa (UNU-INRA) in Accra, Ghana, spoke extensively on technology and innovation systems on Benin's Golf TV in September. He also participated in a four-day forum organised by the West Africa Full Gospel Business Men Association from August 15-18 in Cotonou, Benin. Daniel was invited to present on a range of policy and institutional issues concerning, as well as business opportunities arising from, the Africa Rice Center's (WARDA) New Rice for Africa (NERICA) innovation system in West Africa.



*(Right) Daniel Dalohoun makes a presentation on policy and institutional issues concerning NERICA rice in Cotonou.*

### LINK look

*Systems ideas about science, technology and innovation in development policy and practice appear to be experiencing something of a renaissance. The **LINK LOOK** is an update of recent initiatives, projects, programmes and meetings that have moved on from a technology transfer focus and are grappling with the wider innovation perspective — and the capacity building agenda it implies. By tracking different ways organisations are using and interpreting these ideas, **LINK LOOK** hopes to promote awareness of the existence of a diversity of new experiences about innovation and development. It is hoped this will encourage the sharing of ideas between practitioners, researchers and decisionmakers. This bulletin covers recent activities at FARA, GFAR, IDRC, IDS and RIU. We invite contributions to this feature.*

Email us at [info@innovationstudies.org](mailto:info@innovationstudies.org)

#### GFAR TO EMPHASISE INNOVATION SYSTEMS APPROACH



**T**he Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR) announced that an innovation systems approach — focused on poor, smallholder producers — will guide its strategy and future actions. Representatives of stakeholders from GFAR, a multi-stakeholder initiative that contributes to eradicating poverty, achieving food security, and conserving and managing natural resources, announced at its annual retreat in Alexandria, Cairo, in April that they would emphasise an innovations systems approach that involves partnerships of multiple actors in the public, private and community sector to collaborate toward agricultural development.

[http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload/225449/GFAR\\_Retreat\\_Communique.pdf](http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload/225449/GFAR_Retreat_Communique.pdf)

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## FARA BUILDS UP SUB-SAHARAN CHALLENGE PROGRAMME



**F**ARA and its partners have spent much of this year finalising the design of the Sub-Saharan African Challenge Programme. The Programme, to be supported by the CGIAR, is an ambitious attempt to develop new ways of organising agricultural research so that it forms a more effective component of innovation capacity. Striving for "business unusual", the programme has adopted a learning-based approach it refers to as Integrated Agricultural Research for Development — IAR4D. This approach will be used to experiment with innovation platforms as a way of focusing collective action for innovation.

The programme is designed as an action research project where the main question is how to structure the learning needed to help different players — including agricultural researchers — in different operational settings organise themselves into the patterns of linkage and interaction needed for innovation to take place. The research will simultaneously build innovation capacities in its pilot sites in West, Eastern and Southern Africa as well as provide a vehicle to draw generic principles that can be used to stimulate the institutional learning and change needed to develop such capacities in other locations. The programme awaits final approval by the CGIAR Science Council.

[http://www.sciencecouncil.cgiar.org/publications/pdf/SSA\\_CP\\_MTP\\_2008\\_2010.pdf](http://www.sciencecouncil.cgiar.org/publications/pdf/SSA_CP_MTP_2008_2010.pdf)

## DFID LAUNCHES RIU PROGRAMME



**T**he UK Department of International Development (DFID) had the official launch of its Research Into Use Programme (RIU) on June 14, 2007 during the Forum for Agricultural Research In Africa (FARA) Fourth General Assembly and Africa Agricultural Science Week held in Johannesburg, South Africa between June 10 and 16. The first programme to come about under DFID's new Strategy for Research on Sustainable Agriculture (SRSA), RIU plans to use novel modes of implementation to explore the complex issues involved in moving research into use, including "changing attitudes and behaviour, not only those of potential technical innovators such as farmers, but also those of policy makers and other influential people". RIU's approach is to shift the focus of attention away from the generation of new knowledge to the ways in which that knowledge can be put to productive use through innovation. Central to RIU's strategy for promoting wide-scale use of earlier research outputs will be the formation of national innovation coalitions, which will empower potential users to articulate their demand for innovation. Within the RIU, this will involve working with existing agencies to facilitate their formation into coalitions through which the demand can be channeled.

<http://www.researchintouse.com/index.php?section=15>

## LINK look

## STEPS CENTRE SET UP IN SUSSEX

**F**unded by the Economic and Social Research



Council (ESRC), the STEPS Centre

is a new interdisciplinary global research

and policy engagement hub. Its aim is to develop a new approach to understanding, action and communication on sustainability and development. It is based at the Institute of Development Studies and SPRU Science and Technology Policy Research in the UK. STEPS hopes to address two issues: how to challenge environmental sustainability with better livelihoods and health for poor people, and how to make science and technology work to reduce poverty and increase social justice.

<http://www.steps-centre.org/>

## DSA ON HOW TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP POOR



**T**he UK Development Studies Association (DSA) held its annual conference, titled "Connecting Science, Society and Development", at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex in the UK between

September 18 and 20 to debate how technology can help the world's poorest people. Prominent development experts, including Judi Wakhungu, Executive Director of the Nairobi-based African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), Sir David King, the UK Government's Chief Scientific Advisor, and Pedro Sanchez, of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York spoke on topics such as genetically modified crops, innovation in the IT industry and e-governance.

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/news/index.html>

## IDRC FUNDS INNOVATION RESEARCH



**U**nder its Innovation, Technology and Science (ITS) Initiative, Canada's International Development Research Centre

(IDRC) has stepped up its commitment to support research on science, technology and innovation policy issues. IDRC hopes to enhance the understanding of innovation processes and functioning of innovation systems, and ultimately use evidence-based research to suggest policy changes in developing countries. IDRC supports research and research-related activities with three explicit objectives — "improving understanding, capacity and inter-linkages of innovation system actors (organisations and individuals) in developing countries"; "supporting the development of explicit and implicit S&T policies contributing to improved functioning of developing country innovation systems"; and "strengthening socio-economic impact analysis, social inclusion and learning capabilities in support of innovation and the governance of new technologies".

[http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-100117-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-100117-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)



## ANDEAN INNOVATION DYNAMO



**L**INK coordinator Jeroen Dijkman visited Condesan (*Consortio para el Desarrollo Sostenible de la Ecorregion Andina*) in Lima, Peru in September to advance a joint Condesan-LINK initiative known as the Innovation Dynamo. This initiative, currently needing investors, seeks to build learning links between technology/innovation-based rural development initiatives and relevant area of development and S&T planning. The goal is to promote the learning needed to strengthen the policy and operation frameworks in which interventions are conceived and executed — and, in this way, strengthen rural innovation capacity. The initiative is also aimed at assisting Condesan, traditionally a broker of technology, to assume a new role as facilitator of institutional and policy learning on rural innovation.

## IAASTD SUB-GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF EAST-SOUTH ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION



**L**INK associate Rajeswari S. Raina will be the resource person and Coordinating Lead Author for the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development's (IAASTD) sub-global assessment in the East-South Asia and Pacific region, between November 2005 and January 2008.



## UPCOMING

**D**aniel Dalohoun will participate in a seminar, organised by WARDA, on "Innovation System Perspective to Scaling-up Agricultural Innovations: Policy & Institutional Issues arising from NERICA Diffusion and Adoption in West-Africa — The Case Studies of Benin and Guinea" in November, 2007.

## PLANNING WORKSHOPS ON DESIGNING ACTION RESEARCH ON FODDER INNOVATION

**U**NU-MERIT, the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and their partners in India and Nigeria are investigating the nature of innovation capacity required to address the perennial problem of livestock fodder scarcity. A series of workshops have been held to refine the research design and develop the action research approach that is being used to investigate this issue. Next, rapid assessments of existing patterns of fodder innovation capacity will be undertaken in eight pilot areas in the two countries. These assessments will inform action plans on how to address institutional and policy challenges and expand on promising existing initiatives. The three-year study aims to develop principles that will help others stimulate the institutional and policy changes needed to strengthen fodder innovation capacity in different situations where livestock is important to the livelihoods of poor people.

## ACTS-LINK WORKSHOP ON A NEW PERSPECTIVE FOR PUBLIC POLICY



**L**INK Ph.D Researcher Ekin Keskin gave a presentation on "Insights on Innovation Systems: An Ethiopian Case Study" at a workshop organised by the Science and Technology Policy Analysis and Training Institute of the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) in Nairobi, Kenya on April 4, 2007. Ekin was also a facilitator for a course, titled, *Science, Technology and Innovation: A New Perspective for Public Policy (The Case of Livestock)*. LINK researcher Mirjam Steglich, who helped organise the event with ACTS, and associ-

ate Norman Clark also participated.

The event had as its theme "A New Perspective for Public Policy — The Case of Livestock". The workshop brought together a wide range of participants — from the public and private sectors, from civil society, research organisations, NGOs and the media — to discuss the idea of innovation systems and learn how to apply it as an aid to public policy. The learning process was assisted through a series of case studies drawn from the livestock sector that illustrated the properties of successful innovation systems.

(Left) Ekin Keskin gives a presentation at the ACTS-LINK workshop in Nairobi.

## LINK RESEARCH IN FOCUS

A SPOTLIGHT ON CURRENT WORK BY LINK RESEARCHERS

### *Innovation response capacity, but does it help the poor?*

One reason why innovation and innovation capacity have become so economically important for developing countries is because globalisation-induced links to international market expose them to ever-changing consumer demands, patterns of competition and regulatory changes. As part of a cluster of studies on the nature and organisation of innovation response capacity, Dr. Mirjam Steglich has been exploring the Kenyan horticultural sector. Her findings suggest that economic success may have been achieved at a social cost.



**Dr. Mirjam Steglich**  
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The Kenyan horticultural sector has historically had two defining features. The first is a very strong representation of small-holder producers, despite the existence of large commercial companies. The second is a high degree of organisation and coherence in the sector — Dr Steglich describes this as a sense of ‘we are one’ — with the existence of various associations as well as a range of scientific research organisations and private technical services. The story of the sector is also probably typical of many countries in the post “rolling

back the state” era, with the Kenyan government adopting a fairly hands-off approach. The last decade has seen the horticulture sector face a series of shocks, including competition from other countries, quality and phytosanitary demands from its main market in Europe, and ethical concerns about the welfare of employees. The sector has been relatively successful in innovating around these challenges and it continues to thrive. However, this study suggests that innovation has often involved moving away from the small-holder production base and favouring more intensive plantation modes of production. The study concludes that while the Kenyan horticultural sector does have an innovation response capacity, it does not, however, always meet social objectives. In this case, as in many others, the State has a responsibility to intervene and ensure that modes of innovation not only maintain Kenya’s international competitiveness, but do so in a way that also achieves social development goals. The study, which will be published in early 2008, points to some options on how this could be achieved.

### *Service innovations to better service innovation*

The significance of service innovation is increasingly being recognised in the study of innovation processes. LINK Ph.D scholar Lina Sonne’s research on the financing of rural innovation in India is helping to fill in some of the gaps in understanding the role and organisation of financing.

This study involves looking at both sides of the financing of innovation: The finance suppliers (usually microcredit organisations, but also rural venture capital initiatives) and rural micro-enterprises searching for finance for innovation.

Her preliminary findings suggest financing arrangements work best when there is a co-evolution of



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financing arrangements and the expanding and multifaceted financing requirements for innovation — even within micro-enterprises. The expansion reflects the increasing recognition that innovation requires different forms of learning — all of which have costs in addition to the usual cost associated with the reorganisation of production and purchase of technology. Successful microfinancing organisations are those that have links to micro-enterprises and are in touch with their changing needs. Moreover, they also have links to national policymaking to argue for changes in the banking system. Fieldwork for this research will be completed by the end of 2008.

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