Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

An action-orientated methodology to assess agricultural innovation systems in LMICs (low and medium income countries)

Food for Thoughts for AKIS evaluation in Europe

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A four-step AIS assessment methodology for taking action at country-level

Available at: https://www.fao.org/3/cb8143en/cb8143en.pdf

1-What is the assessment framework ?

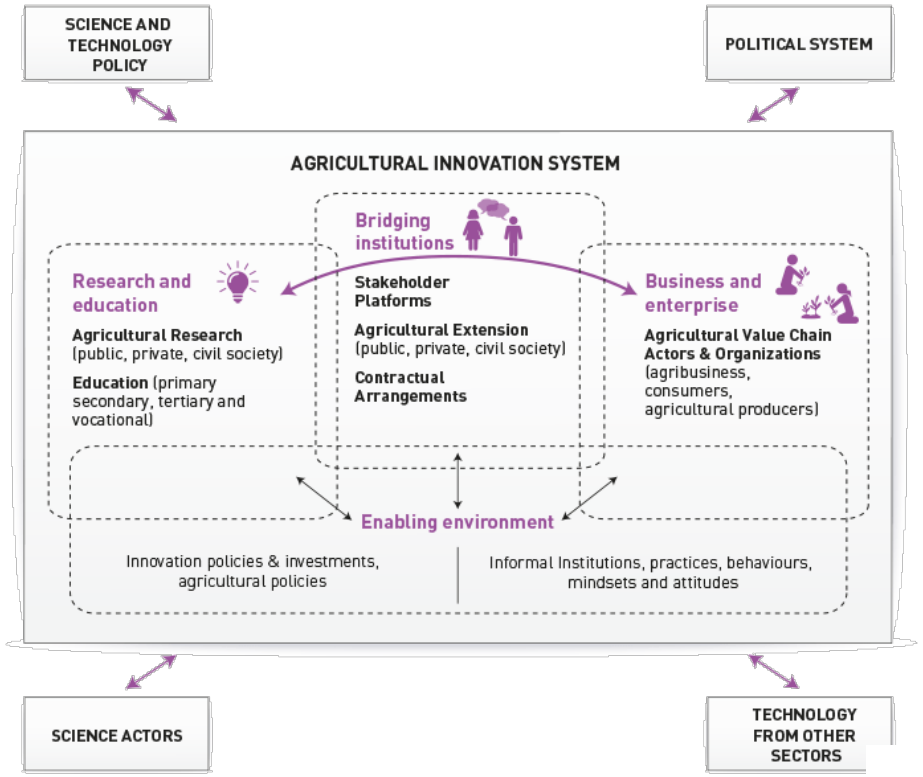
2-How did we design and test it?

3- What are the outputs and outcomes?

4-What are the lessons learnt and pending challenges to consider in the future for AIS evaluation ?

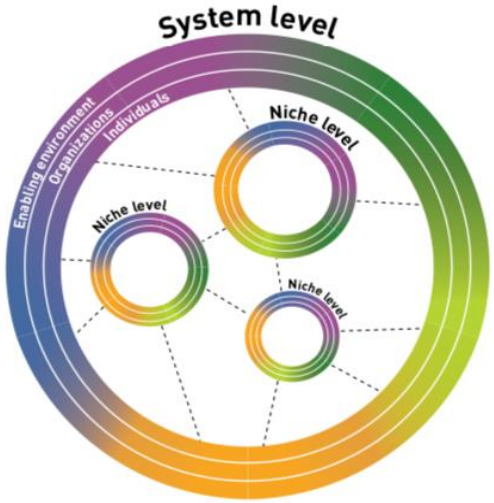
5-Available resources

1-Conceptual frameworks - combined assessment models



Multi-actor view of capacities AIS

Multi-level views of capacities for AIS *(TAP 2016)*



A multi-perspective analysis of Agricultural Innovation Systems

Functional view

AIS mission(s) and functions

Structural view

Actors, interactions, networks and infrastructures

Capacity view

Needed capacities at the level of individuals, organisations, networks and system

Process view

Innovation phases, trajectories of change, support mechanisms and enabling environments at country level (Policies, investments, public institutions)

1-Analytical framework

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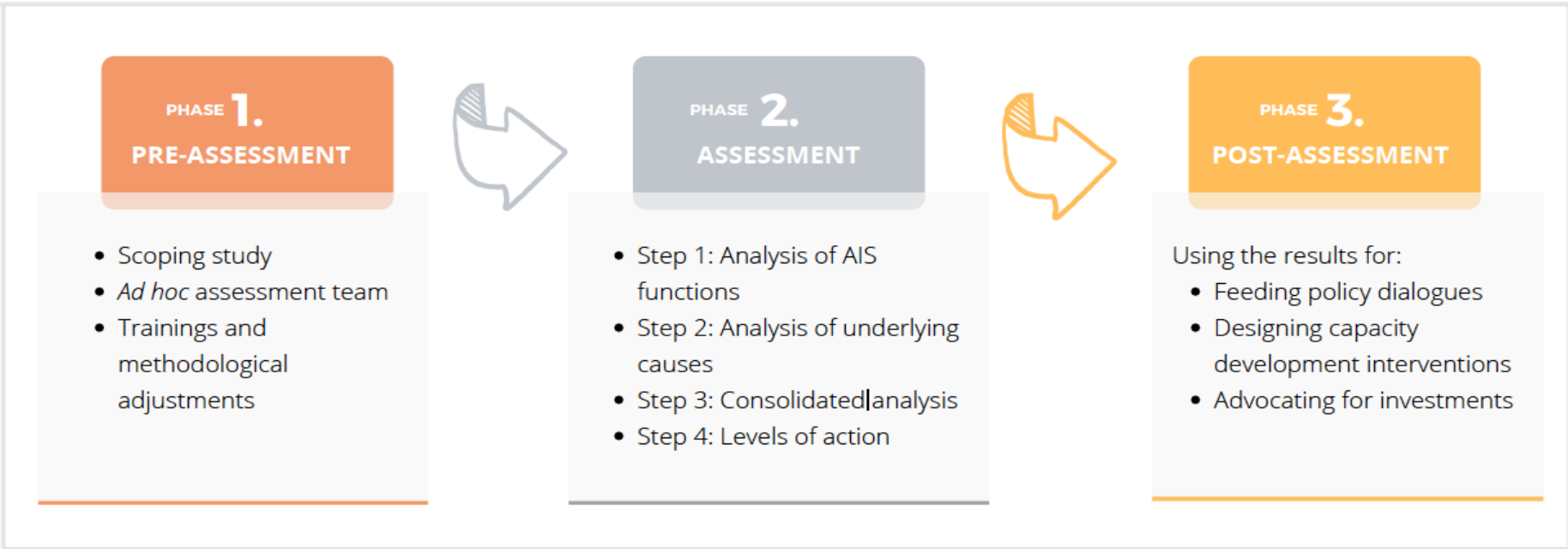
Some Guiding principles for implementors:

- Adapt scoping assessment questions and entry points in the AIS to the country context/expectations
- Innovation case studies are used as proxy of the functioning of the national AIS and as pedagogic support material
- Mix analytical tools involving diverse degrees of consultation, participation and inclusion of the AIS 'actors of change'
- Use indicators for communication, advocacy and future M&E of AIS transformation
- Develop graphic tools for easy visualization of results
- Good balance between internal (country-led and -owned) and external (technically supported by partners) assessment
- Enable AIS key actors to participate (not only the government)

1-Operational framework

A country-owned “fit-for-purpose” approach (utilization-focused)

Generating evidence on conditions for innovation ….



….while developing capacities for AIS governance:

Raise expectations and build the demand toward the assessment – at policy and strategic levels

Engage & empower AIS actors

- Adapt the scope of the assessment;
- Generate evidence ;
- Develop a joint vision;
- Trigger a capacity development process

Take Action

2-How we designed and tested it

STEP 1 (2018-2019)

- Research-led framework design - a consultation process using the DELPHI technic an expert dialogue format with an initial online survey (180 experts) and six rounds of enriched controlled feedback (30 experts)

STEP 2 (2019-2022)

- FAO-led tests in pilot countries

STEP 3 (2022-2024)

- Enriching the framework with country tools and practical guidance

2-How we designed and tested it

OUR SPECIFICITIES COMPARED TO OTHER AIS ASSESSMENT METHOGOLOGIES

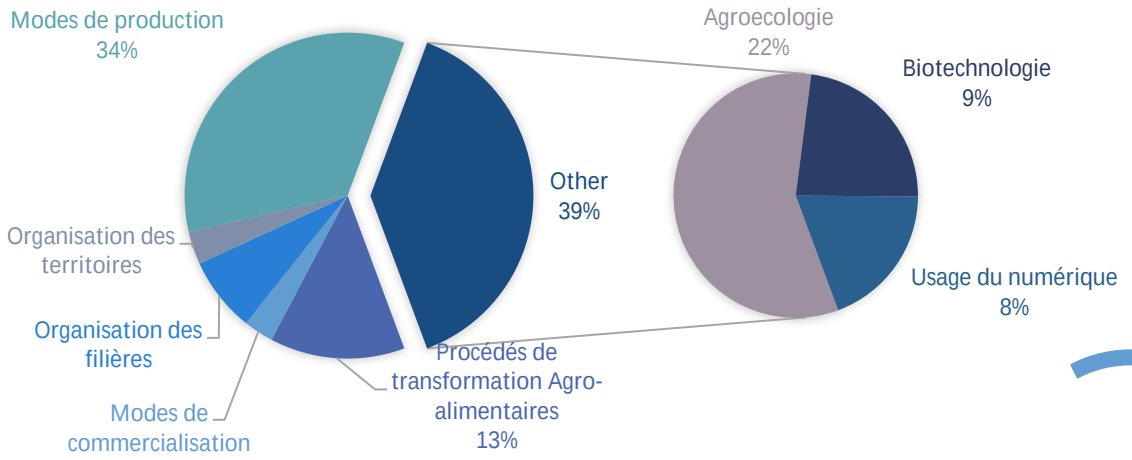
Type of assessment	Type 1 Performance-oriented	Type 2 Failure-oriented	Type 3 Capacity-oriented
AIS transformation challenges	Improving the performance of the existing working of the AIS ('Simple')	Changing the way parts of the AIS interact, addressing systemic failures ('Complicated')	Creating new possibilities/new types of AIS, by developing the AIS actors' capacities ('Complex')
Areas of improvements	- Innovation policies for economic growth - AIS sub-domains	- Innovation policies for governing actors' interactions - AIS sub-systems	- Innovation policies for governing transitions toward sustainability - AIS
AIS assessment process	Informative →		Formative
Assessment use	Ex-post character To allow comparison across countries and decide on investments	Ex-post character To provide visibility to conditions for successful innovation and highlight system failures	Ex-ante character To provide evidence and learning opportunities, embedded with long-term capacity-development interventions
Examples	Spielman and Birner 2008; Rajalahti et al. 2008 ; OECD 2013; Dutta et al. 2015	Klerkx et al. 2013; Lampidorou et al. 2014; Minh 2019; Mathé et al. 2020	Schut et al. 2015; Toillier et al. 2020; Sartas et al. 2020

Toillier Aurélie, Mathe Syndhia, Saley Moussa Abdoulaye, Faure Guy. 2021.How to assess agricultural innovation systems in a transformation perspective: A Delphi consensus study. *Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension*, 23p. https://doi.org/10.1080/1389224X.2021.1953548

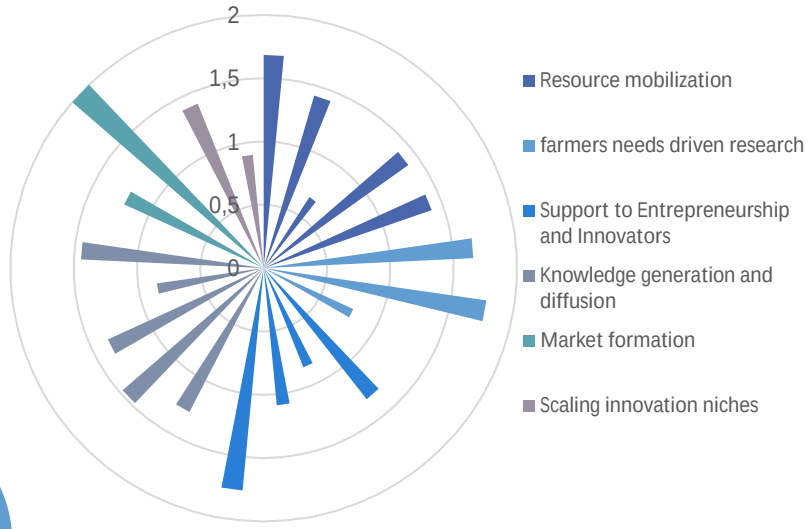
3-Outputs and outcomes of the assessment – some examples

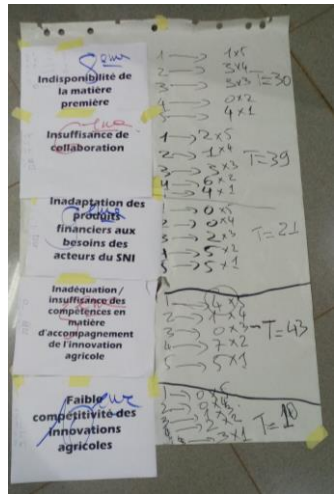
VISUAL TOOLS TO INFORM POLICY AND DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

Typologies of innovation domains and promotors

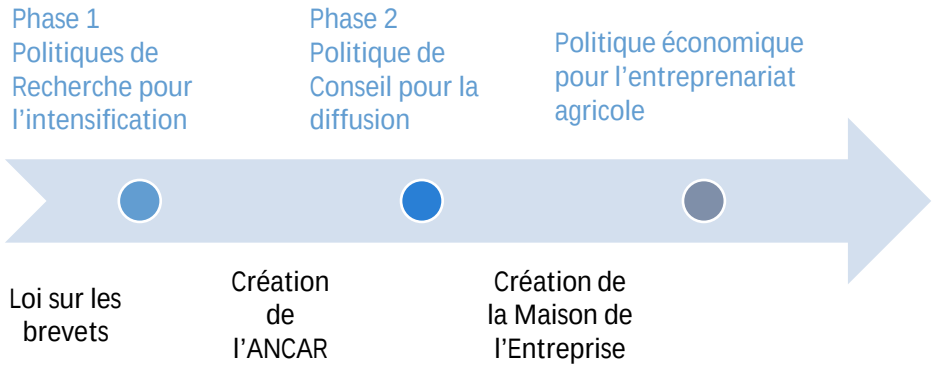


Scoring of the AIS functions (for M&E purposes)

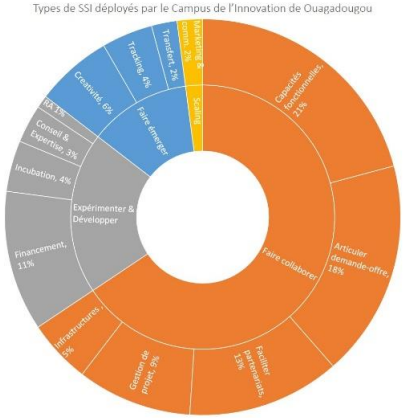




Timeline of 'innovation institutions and policies' (St&I ownership)



Mapping of innovation support service providers in some priority innovation domains



4-Lessons learnt: pitfalls; tips and tops

Work in Progress

Major limitations of the methodology across the nine countries:

- Risk of being too descriptive and failure-oriented (gaps, weaknesses, etc.), lacking the AIS transformation perspective
- Long, complex
- Uneven efforts in the different steps of the assessment
- Value of method packages to develop capacities not demonstrated yet

4-Lessons learnt: pitfalls; tips and tops

Work in Progress Pitfalls in some countries – tips& tops in others

	Pitfalls	Tips and tops
Analytical framework	• No good case studies selected • Lack of technics and methods to make sense of results and use them in a decision-making process – outputs remain very descriptive • Results are too much failure–oriented (weaknesses, gaps, etc.) – lack of emphasis on enablers, triggering factors and "success stories" that could serve as basis for policy-making • Process view (enabling environments) poorly used – lack of managerial perspective (how innovation happens)	• Research-driven customization by a national organization, with the support of international backstopping • Limit the scoping assessment questions (1 or 2) – provide some examples • Include a baseline situation analysis in the pre-assessment phase • Provide more concrete guidance with examples
Operational framework	• Expectations were difficult to raise when the 'AIS terminologies' were too far away from reality; (expectations raised at the end of the assessment process that acted as a training / new knowledge exposure) • Composition of the AIS assessment teams : lack of skills; dominated by governmental actors; lack of legitimacy (independant consultants) • Participatory process takes time and may be jeopardized by time-bounded project • Limited embeddedness of the AIS assessment in on-going policy making	• Ad-hoc Coaching rather than Trainings • Diversify profiles in the assessment team: facilitators, researchers, policy makers • Anchor the assessment process in short-term expectations –make it useful for certain key actors; • Selection and engagement of AIS actors as important as data collection and analysis • Make each analytical step participatory to ensure progressive refinement of expected outputs and ownership • Make available toolboxes with practical guidance

BETTER
PRODUCTION

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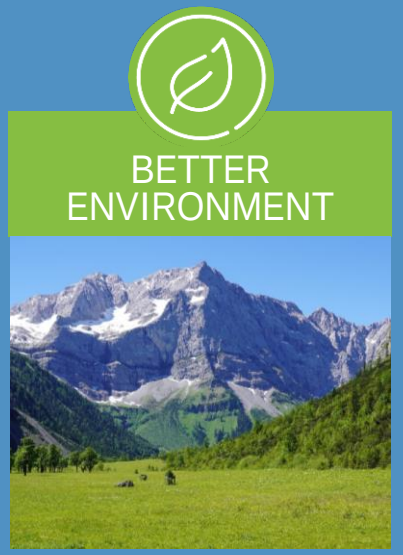
NUTRITION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Thank you