



Deutscher Tropentag, October 9-11, 2002, Witzenhausen
“Challenges to Organic Farming and Sustainable Land Use
in the Tropics and Subtropics”

Agroindustry R&D Partnerships in Chile and Uruguay: Cases of Public-Private Partnerships for Agroindustrial Development

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Abstract

This paper explores existing and emerging patterns of institutional innovation in agroindustry research and development (R&D) in Latin America. It elaborates on examples for public-private partnerships for agroindustrial R&D in Chile and Uruguay. This is done at a time when many small to large private companies around the world but also government institutions involve in various kinds of partnerships, for strategic reasons motivated by the aim to increase their innovative potential on more complex and more competitive global markets.

Though there has been a lot of thinking about the objectives and expectations regarding partnerships in R&D, little attention has so far been paid to the empirical question how partnerships actually function and what the effects of those partnerships are. In particular, there is no formal and accepted way of evaluating the value of partnerships, be it to the private agroindustry company, the research organization, and the society as a whole. Our study aims to contribute to the understanding of how public-private partnerships in agro (industry) research create and evolve and which factors lead to their success. The study describes examples of successful agroindustrial research partnerships in Chile and Uruguay and analyzes their contribution to agroindustrial development.

We suggest that public private partnerships for agroindustrial research develop in a cycle in which we see five subsequent steps. We then highlight the difficulties of evaluating R&D partnership and in response to those we suggest a holistic partnership evaluation approach which includes three evaluatory dimensions: **(i)** output evaluation, **(ii)** process evaluation, and **(iii)** evolutionary evaluation.

Having set this methodological framework for partnership evaluation we present two case studies, which support our position that institution issues warrant much greater attention if productive partnerships and successful technology development from R&D are going to take place. Main success factors for partnerships are identified. On a whole the case studies presented suggest that the partnership approach for agroindustry research is a means of development that can be used by governments and donors who focus on development of the agricultural sector with widespread impact on the actors in agrichains.

Keywords: Agrichain, agroindustry, Chile, Latin America, partnerships, public-private, research, Uruguay