

The changing roles of international agricultural research centers

Research fund allocations no longer depend merely upon outputs, such as natural resource management options, but also upon the uptake and impacts of such outputs.

Consequently, international centers continue to promote knowledge and innovations generated by their own scientists more readily than those developed by other actors.

Institutional innovations are therefore needed that will enable centers to play a role as source-neutral knowledge-broker in regional innovation systems.

Centers need to ensure that multiple sources of knowledge and innovations are valued, built upon and shared through south-south and south-north exchange mechanisms.

Africa Rice Center innovated by:

- Creating a Rice TIME unit (Training, Information Management and Extension)
- Establishing a research program on Learning and Innovation Systems
- Partnering with media professionals and platforms to enhance learning and linkages between multiple actors
- Developing a participatory learning and action research (PLAR) methodology
- Training a local team to develop farmer-to-farmer videos with PLAR farmers
- Facilitating the translation of these videos into 33 African languages that strengthened more than 500 organizations in 44 countries



By creating space for multiple actors and knowledge domains to interact, new technologies, methodologies and policies become more client-oriented and help to strengthen entire innovation systems, not just a few components.