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Assessment of the Demand Supply Match for Agricultural Innovations in Africa

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Abstract

This report presents the findings of an independent assessment of the matches for demand for innovations by African farmers and supply of innovations produced by international agricultural research in Africa with focus on food security and climate change adaptation. This was done by collecting quantitative and qualitative information in 17 African countries from 152 farmer organisations, 141 intermediaries, and 91 scientists and 24 representatives of International Agricultural Research stations. The findings were presented and discussed during three regional African workshops and two international workshops in Feldafing and Nairobi.

It was found that the research output of internal research centres is very broad. The direct match with the farmer needs showed a varied picture. While some outputs are highly adapted and also affordable to smallholder farmers, a good proportion of research outputs require higher investments and thus would require credit of additional subsidies by Government or NGOs to promote these innovations on a larger scale. While many innovations promote high yield solutions, farms favour medium low to medium input solutions and demand more solutions to address marketing problems.

A central problem is that most innovations are currently not readily available in the market and they can only be accessed via selected NARS/NAES or the international centres. Among the 109 innovations reviewed closely, 16 were selected as very good matches. This included among others several adapted OPV seed varieties of millet, seed testing and distribution via crowd sourcing, agroforestry systems in evergreen agriculture and micro dosing of fertiliser.

The analysis of collaboration between the various actors in innovation development and diffusion showed that in particular the extension and diffusion function is underdeveloped.

The study was commissioned by GIZ-ITAACC project with a view to promote collaboration between all stakeholders involved in innovation development in Africa. The combination of data collection through interviews and validation at workshops enabled considerable level of learning and interaction among a broad range of stakeholders.

Keywords: Agricultural innovations, extension, farmer needs, food security, innovation platforms, innovation transfer into agriculture-adaptation to climate change (ITAACC), perception, research, up-scaling