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EU-World Agroforestry Center Collaboration for Developing R&D Capacity in Agroforestry: Key Highlights from 2011–2016

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Abstract

Since its foundation in the 1970's, agroforestry science has evolved from defining key concepts, approaches and flagship technologies towards its increasing contribution to ecologically sound land use, food security and income generation in the global North and South. With the launch of Sustainable Development Goals in Paris in 2015, most agriculture related efforts to adapt to and mitigate the effects of changing climate in developing countries call for moving away from “monoculturation” of agricultural landscapes towards “integration” through agroforestry systems at various scales where crops, trees and livestock enterprises are integrated to provide economic, social and ecological resilience, as well as opportunities for reversing land degradation for smallholder and family farms. To make such integration possible, the need for research-based agroforestry solutions at farm, landscape and national scales is thus ever more urgent.

Capacity development in agroforestry, like many other fields, can take place in multiple ways. Education and training (formal and informal, basic and higher), internship opportunities, study visits, advisory and extension services, partnerships, knowledge networks and leadership development for individuals and organisations are some of the ways in which capacity gets developed. The aim of all such efforts is to effect changes in knowledge, behaviours and attitudes. All capacity development efforts are aimed at fostering innovation, discovery and delivery at individual, organisational and system levels.

The aim of this paper is to summarise the highlights of capacity development efforts between the European Union and the World Agroforestry Center towards developing capacities, particularly for research in and for development across various continents. Key areas for further deepening such collaboration are also identified.

Keywords: Agroforestry, capacity development, European Union, World Agroforestry Center