

JULY 2020

TAP Newsletter



TAP

■ e-Discussion with the TAP CDEG on the revision of the TAP Common Framework

The TAP Secretariat is planning to organize the first TAP Capacity Development Expert Group (CDEG) e-discussion for the revision of the TAP Common Framework. The e-discussion will be based on the inputs from the Transversal Analysis of the Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) project and experiences of TAP Partners on the application of the TAP Common Framework (CF) and its approaches. The e-discussion will be launched in September until October and will be organized along different weekly topics to be discussed by the experts. At the end of the discussion a summary report will be produced with recommendations and priorities for the revision and amendments of TAP CF and its associated tools and the pathways for scaling up its use.

■ Judith Francis, TAP Chair, steps down and Ravi Khetarpal, TAP Vice-Chair, takes over

During the virtual TAP Steering Committee (SC) meeting, held on 14 July 2020, Judith Francis stepped down as Chair of the TAP SC and Partners Assembly and Ravi Khetarpal, elected Vice-Chair of the TAP, took over the role of the Chair. Ms. Francis and Mr. Khetarpal in coordination with the TAP Secretariat have had several exchanges in the last months to ensure a smooth transition of the TAP Chair. TAP SC members and the TAP Secretariat thanked Judith for her work and engagement throughout the years and recognized her contribution to the strengthening of TAP and the achievements gained so far.



Mr Ravi Khetarpal, new TAP Chair



Ms Judith Francis, former TAP Chair

MESSAGE FROM THE TAP CHAIR JUDITH FRANCIS

COVID 19 Response: TAP Capacity Development for Strengthening Agricultural Innovation Systems Even More Relevant

In July 2020, I shall step down as Chair of the Tropical Agriculture Platform, at a time when the world is grappling with 'the new normal' and countries try to effect structural and systemic changes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This makes our shared vision and commitment to building national capacities for agricultural innovation even more pertinent.

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Continuous learning, applying knowledge, technology, skills and adapting to changing contexts are at the core of innovation processes. Our Common Framework on Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) promotes building 4 + 1 essential capacities to: navigate complexity, collaborate, reflect, learn and engage in strategic processes to realise the potential of innovation. The future success of our efforts in bringing coherence to capacity development for strengthening agricultural innovation systems, will be the game changer as countries respond to 'the new normal' to transform their agri-food and nutrition sensitive system to improve livelihoods, incomes, health and nutrition outcomes.

TAP partners must remain resolute in our commitment to empower actors and build multi-stakeholder coalitions to spur innovation in all aspects of the agri-food system, across disciplines and fields of expertise, and with the active engagement of policymakers to achieve the desired results. TAP partners must remain nimble, flexible and ever open to developing new tools and approaches in response to changing contexts. Our capacity development efforts must contribute to building resilience of farmers/fishers and other agri-entrepreneurs. Moreover, communities who depend on a well-functioning agricultural innovation system, that not only lifts people out of poverty and enables them to nourish and feed their families, also contribute to ecosystem sustainability under a changing climate.

My TAP journey started in 2012, following which I led the Global Task Force, and oversaw the development of the TAP Common Framework (CF) as referred to above.

The CF is the cornerstone for our shared understanding and consensus on key elements on innovation and capacity development. It has been tested in the field through the EU-funded CDAIS project which operated in eight countries and the lessons have been documented and recommendations made for updating the CF.

Earlier this year, the TAP Capacity Development Expert Group (CDEG) was reconstituted and new members were appointed. The CDEG now has the responsibility to amend the CF to increase understanding and adoption of key concepts and introduce new tools and approaches to reach a wider target group across multiple continents. The experts will work closely with the TAP Steering Committee, TAP Secretariat and other experts to produce new material for endorsement by TAP partners. Essentially, this process demonstrates that TAP is a learning organization. We have completed a learning and innovation cycle and are beginning a new phase which will lead to new CDAIS products and services for the benefit of society.

I am proud to have been part of this 2012-2020 learning and innovation journey and I am confident that the TAP Partners, Steering Committee, CDEG and Secretariat will build on the foundation that was created since this G20 initiative was launched in 2012. This will ensure that TAP grows from strength to strength and capacity development for agricultural innovation, especially at national level in developing countries, will be the driver of agri-food systems transformation under 'the new normal' post COVID-19.



APAARI

University professors learn from experts on the role of experiential learning in agricultural education

A webinar on Experiential Learning in Agricultural Education was organized on 2 June 2020, as a collaborative initiative of the Kellogg Foundation Project on Transformation of Higher Education implemented by the Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences (GCHERA), and the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI). The American University of Beirut (AUB) – the project coordinating partner – brought together speakers from the University of Alberta in Canada, the Earth University of Costa Rica, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison in USA; and facilitated the webinar together with APAARI. Around 250 university professors from around the world, mostly from the member universities of APAARI, participated in the webinar and got inspired by current practices in experiential learning applied in various universities aiming to address agriculture and food security issues through education of youth.

During the webinar Dr. Roula Bachour, Project Manager of the [Transforming Higher Education Project](#) from the AUB, introduced the project and its five key elements of success in higher education namely:

- experiential and participatory learning;
- community engagement;
- social entrepreneurship;
- ethical and value-based leadership; and
- conflict resolution through dialogue.

In addition, the speakers presented the foundations, objectives and elements of experiential learning, shared their experiences on the topic, and discussed the roles of the learners and instructors in the learning process.

After the webinar, the organizers collected from the participants, feedback and suggestions for future webinars related to universities, which will be prioritized and integrated in AUB's and APAARI current work plans.



Prof. Michel A. Wattiaux from the Department of Animal and Dairy Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA, explaining the roles of learners and instructors in the learning process

The webinar is available at the following link: <https://sites.aub.edu.lb/transforminghighereducation/events-news/>

APAARI engages in a new partnership to strengthen research-extension linkages to improve agricultural innovation in the Asia-Pacific region

APAARI has recently engaged in an important partnership thanks to its active participation in the TAP. Building on its experience in promoting the Common Framework on CD for Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) under the TAP, APAARI has been included as one of the regional partners in the TAP-FAO Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) project.

In this project, APAARI will partner for the first time with the Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services Network (APIRAS), which implies that the two partners will bring research and science closer to extension and practice. Working at the regional level, APAARI and APIRAS will jointly conduct a rapid appraisal to assess and document the Asia-Pacific region's landscape to strengthen agricultural innovation processes. Both organizations have been engaged in close discussions on the methodology and planning for the assessment.

APAARI-CAAS-FAO laid foundation for a partnership in research and capacity development

APAARI and the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) partnered with FAO to strengthen capacity of CAAS team of researchers to conduct an integrated assessment of Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) in China. The assessment will follow the guidelines developed by FAO and TAP partners to assess AIS. The assessment, which includes structural, functional and enabling environment analysis of the AIS in China, will initially be implemented in one pilot province, providing recommendations on strategies and priorities respectively to National Agricultural Research System (NARS) and government bodies in China, to help address the challenges and facing gaps in the AIS.

The APAARI-CAAS teams have been working virtually to prepare a work plan and guidelines for the scoping study, plan webinars and training with the CAAS team to initiate the assessment. The main part of the study will identify entry points, integrate multiple system perspectives and synthesize them into a model that can describe and predict various ways in which the AIS might react to policy change. Furthermore, an important part of the study will be assessing the contribution of agricultural innovations to development outcomes and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These strategies will account for real world complexities dealt by Chinese agriculture and other important economic sectors of China. The findings will be validated and consulted with key stakeholders, based on which an innovation profile and other documentation is envisioned.

In addition to the expected outputs, the applied process for the assessment and use of FAO guidelines is extremely important to strengthen collaboration, knowledge-sharing and learning capacities for innovation of both APAARI and CAAS, and their key stakeholders. More importantly, the assessment will promote mindset shift of decision and policy makers that is urgently required by the complex, dynamic and rapidly changing agri-food systems.

CAAS

The 2020 China and Global Agricultural Policy Forum held in Beijing

On 3 June 2020, the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) jointly hosted 2020 China and Global Agricultural Policy Forum in Beijing. The China Agricultural Sector Development Report 2020 (CASDR) and 2020 Global Food Policy Report were released by CAAS and IFPRI at the forum, respectively.

The CASDR reviews China's agricultural development in 2019, focused on two main issues, such as the impact of COVID-19 and Fall Armyworm on China's agriculture and farmers' income. It also made an estimate of China's grain output in 2020, which will strongly support the economic and social development goals in 2020.

The 2020 Global Food Policy Report highlights the central role that inclusive food systems play in eliminating global poverty, hunger and malnutrition. It offers recommendations for a more inclusive food system for four marginalized groups: smallholders, women, youth, and conflict-affected people. By analyzing the food system transformation in several countries like Bangladesh and Ethiopia, the report put forward suggestions on development of food systems in different regions worldwide. More than 4 000 people from all over the world attended the forum online.



The China and Global Agricultural Policy Forum in China speakers (in order of appearance): (1) Johan Swinnen, Director General, IFPRI; (2) Huajun Tang, President, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS); and (3) Shenggen Fan, Chair Professor of China Agricultural University, former Director General of IFPRI

Innovative technologies for integrated and sustainable management of the most devastating insect pests and diseases kick-off meeting at the Institute of Plant Protection (IPP), CAAS

On 11 May 2020, a Kick-off Meeting for a FAO project “Innovative technologies for integrated and sustainable management of the most devastating insect pests and diseases affecting smallholder farmers’ production integrating impact of climate change” was held at IPP-CAAS. The project aims to identify 10 of the most important insect pests and diseases affecting smallholder farmers’ production and formulate integrated pest management strategies. According to the work plan, IPP-CAAS has accomplished the first phase and identified top 10 insect pests and the top 10 diseases, respectively.



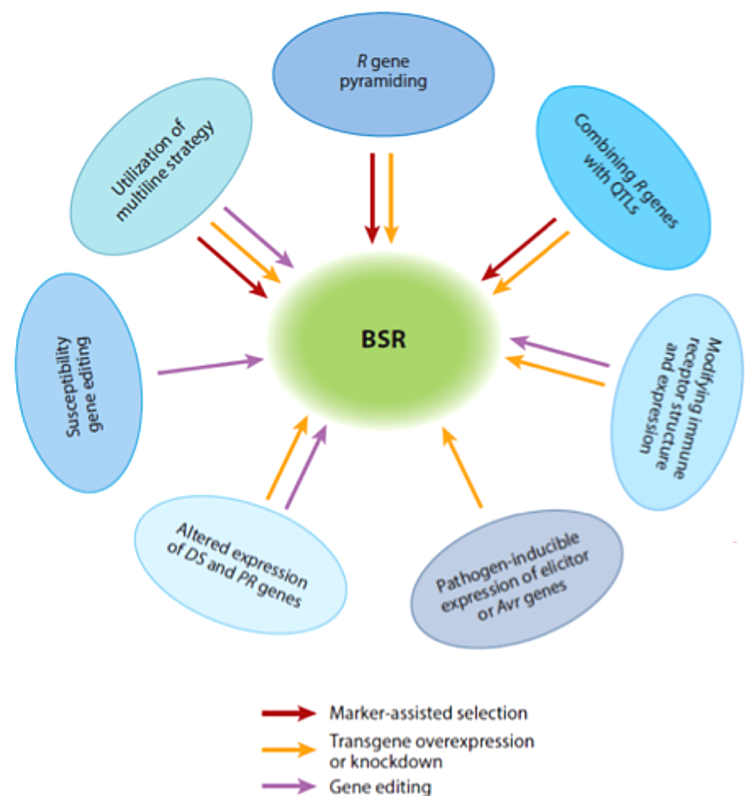
Participants of the kick-off meeting at IPP-CAAS

Exploiting Broad-Spectrum Disease Resistance in Crops: from Molecular Dissection to Breeding

Plant diseases reduce crop yields and threaten global food security, making the selection of disease-resistant cultivars a major goal of crop breeding. Broad-spectrum resistance (BSR) is a desirable trait as it confers resistance against more than one pathogen species or against the majority of races or strains of the same pathogen. Recently, scientists from the State Key Laboratory for Biology of Plant Diseases and Insect Pests, IPP-CAAS published a review paper on BSR in crops: from molecular dissection to breeding.

In this paper, the authors comprehensively reviewed the advances made in the identification and characterization of BSR genes in various species and investigated their application in crop breeding. They also discussed the challenges and potential solutions for utilization of BSR genes in the breeding of disease-resistant crops.

More details are available at the link below:
<https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-arplant-010720-022215>



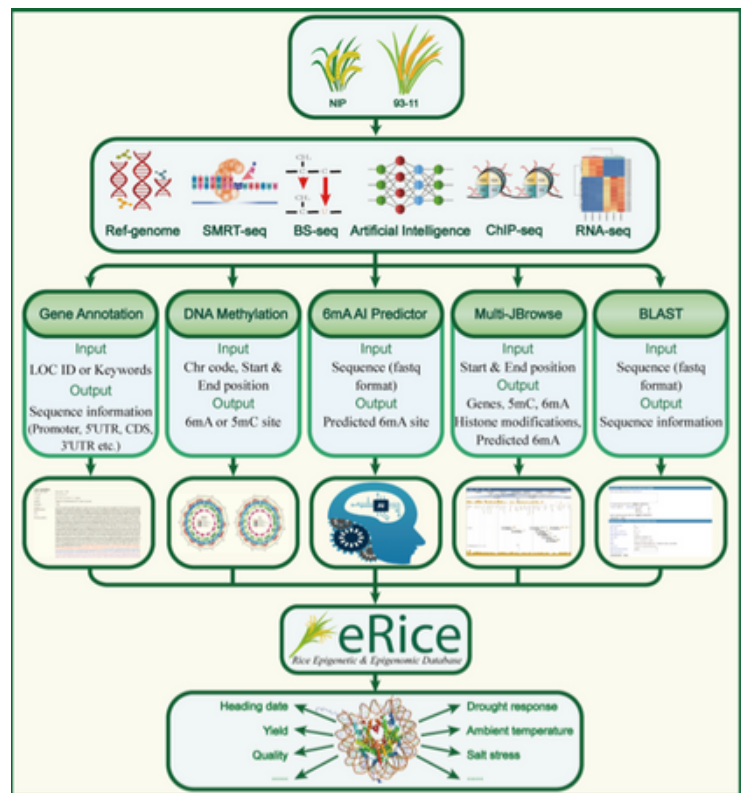
Multiple strategies for breeding BSR in crops. Abbreviations: Avr, avirulence; BSR, broad-spectrum resistance; DS, defense-signaling; PR, pathogen-related; R, resistance; QTL, quantitative trait locus.

Rice Epigenomic Database - eRice promotes intelligent molecular design

Recently, scientists from the Biotechnology Research Institute (BRI) and Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) created the Rice Epigenomic Database - eRice <http://www.elabcaas.cn/rice/index.html> - which innovatively displayed new DNA nucleic acids methylation maps and Artificial Intelligence (AI) models, to predict modification sites, as well as other types of apparent modifications. The eRice database is dedicated to provide efficient and reliable epigenomic and genomic resources for both *japonica* (Nip) and *indica* (93-11) rice cultivars.

The database will continuously update the epigenomics data to extend its functionality and make it a convenient electronic platform for the community of rice researchers, providing information and data support for the intelligent design and improvement of important agronomic traits in rice. The results were published in the Plant Biotechnology Journal:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/pbi.13329>.



Structure of the eRice website

CAAS celebrated World Bee Day 2020: Bee engaged

The Third World Bee Day virtual celebration, organized by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in partnership with the Government of Slovenia, the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) and the International Federation of Beekeepers' Associations (Apimondia), was held on 20 May 2020.

The theme of this year's celebration is "Bee engaged" with a specific focus on bee production and good practices adopted by beekeepers to support their livelihoods and deliver good quality products. FAO Director-General QU Dongyu made an opening remark, in which he highlighted the significant social, economic and environmental benefits of Beekeeping.

The panelists encouraged governments to support the beekeeping sector since it offers decent working opportunities and income generation to people in extreme poverty.

They also highlighted the vital contribution of bees and beekeepers to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), supporting rural livelihoods, improving food security and nutrition as well as boosting rural economies.



Moreover, pollination has a positive impact on the environment in general, helping to maintain biodiversity and the vibrant ecosystems upon which agriculture and humanity depend. Therefore, safeguarding bees can also help to halt the further loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems.



The Third World Bee Day virtual celebration, for which FAO Director-General QU Dongyu made an opening remark

First International Tea Day Celebration – Tea lovers gather online amid COVID-19

In celebration of the First International Tea Day, Tea Research Institute of CAAS (TRI CAAS) has launched a nationwide campaign starting from 8 May to 21 May 2020 to raise awareness of this special day and promote a healthy lifestyle.

The 21 May 2020 marks the First International Tea Day and China's 12th National Tea Drinking Day. The debut of International Tea Day was celebrated with a high note, following a number of drumbeating events including logging competition, essay contest, knowledge quiz with prizes, tea-tasting webinars and Media Open Day.

The International Tea Day aimed at promoting tea as a beverage, highlighting its benefits across the world, and raising awareness of the tea production's contribution towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), such as the reduction of the extreme poor (SDG 1). This year, various virtual events were held in various countries across the world including Sri Lanka, Australia and the United States of America.



Interviewing a TRI CAAS scientist on the impact of COVID-19 on the tea industry



Cloud Tea Gathering organized by TRI CAAS and China Tea Science Society (CTSS)

CABI

Launching CABI Agriculture and Bioscience: ensuring that today's research meets tomorrow's global challenges in agriculture and in the environment

In June 2020, the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) launched the [CABI Agriculture and Bioscience \(CABI A&B\)](#) as a new forum, publishing rigorous, open access, peer-reviewed research on global agriculture, food security, forestry, environmental and social sciences.

The journal specifically encourages both inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary research connecting traditional subject areas through cross-cutting themes, such as: genomics, big data, climate change, evidence-based agriculture, technology, sustainability, restoration and conservation, agroecology, food security and nutrition, and modelling.

CABI A&B will publish both localized findings as exemplars of good practice, as well as highly interdisciplinary research with a global scope. It will also foster an inclusive and supportive culture, judging each submission on the quality of its scientific content, rather than its perceived novelty or citation potential.

CABI also re-launched [agriRxiv](#) – pronounced agri-archive – with a new website offering researchers and students access to preprints on agriculture and allied sciences. Preprints are research articles drafts that authors typically share with the wider community for feedback before submitting their final version to a journal and formal peer-review. They bring many advantages:

- preprints allow researchers to share their results rapidly, in just a few days;
- they reach a global audience and there is no charge for authors or readers;
- they provide an early forum for discussion and allow authors to get informal feedback on their article prior to submitting an improved version to a journal for peer review.

As well as being able to submit preprints, users will, over time, be able to search and filter records with far more precision and stay abreast of all the latest submissions, news and updates from the agriRxiv platform.



CATAS

CATAS and Kiribati online workshop on: Coconut production and processing technology

On 21 May 2020, the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the Republic of Kiribati and the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS) organized the China (Hainan) - Kiribati coconut production and processing technology online workshop.

During the workshop, participants exchanged information on:

- the breeding and high-yield cultivation of improved varieties of coconut;
- the promotion of coconut value chain;
- the processing technology and equipment of cold pressed coconut oil; and
- the improvement of soil fertility of island countries.

At the same time, they creatively held the physical exhibition of tropical agricultural products.



The online workshop



Kiribati venue



CATAS venue

CATAS participated in the Global 24-hour Digital Marathon

CATAS participated in the Global 24-hour Digital Marathon: Food for Earth organized by the Future Food Institute and the FAO e-learning Academy on 22 April 2020. CATAS expert, Dr. Xu Minggang, made a report on reducing soil acidification through agriculture practices to protect the Earth.

CATAS participating online in the Global 24-Hour Digital Marathon



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FAO

Launch of the FAO e-learning Academy: Strengthening capacity to face global challenges

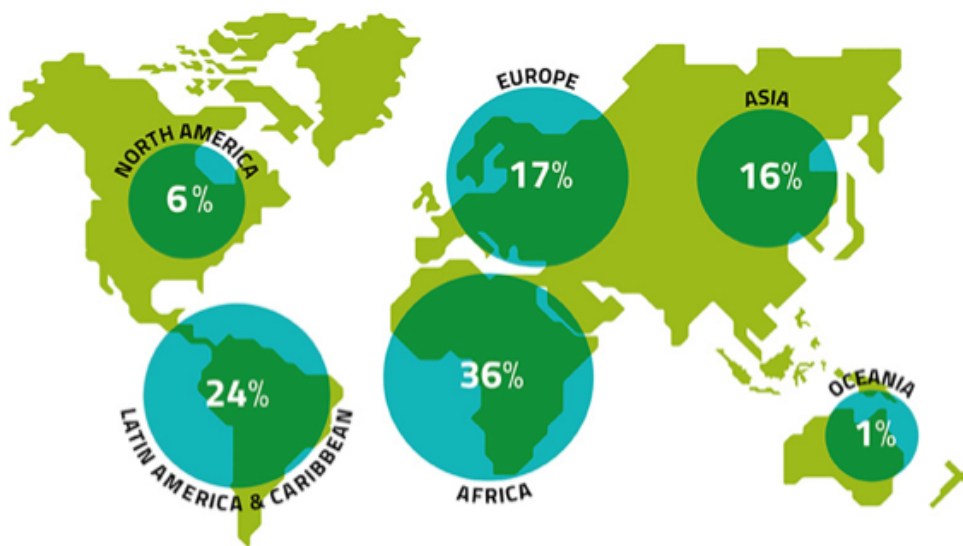
FAO launched on 18 June 2020 the [FAO multilingual e-learning Academy](#), an online platform that offers **350 multilingual e-learning courses**, with the overall objective of strengthening the human capital, through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences, in order to generate competent professionals able to face the global challenges.

The FAO e-learning Academy learning initiatives, interventions and e-learning courses are always free, as a global public good, directly supporting all the SDGs and in particular SDG 4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. This initiative is the result of a collaborative effort which involves over **200 partners** throughout the world. During the launch event, testimonials on the impact of the FAO e-learning courses in policy reform and formulation processes, and national and regional capacity development programmes, were presented.

The FAO e-learning Academy has now reached a global audience of more than 600 000 users. The courses are developed with all FAO technical divisions, across all Strategic Programmes (SPs) and cover the main priority areas of FAO: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), climate smart agriculture, sustainable food systems and nutrition, food safety, food losses, child labour, responsible governance to tenure among others. The courses are fully aligned with the SDG Agenda 2030.

The FAO e-learning Academy has also created, in collaboration with universities and academic networks, a number of joint University Masters’ and Post Graduate Degree programmes, based on the FAO e-learning courses.

The FAO e-learning Academy is the official certifying body of FAO, as it is adopting the Digital Badges Certification System, to certify the acquisition of competencies, in order to progress talents within organizations and increase employment opportunities. FAO Certification is granted bypassing the final scenario-based performance evaluation, now associated to the FAO e-learning courses.



FAO Learners’ regional distribution



FAO Learners’ affiliated institutions

SALSA project final e-Conference: from the field to a virtual closing, the four-year innovative project draws to an end.

The EU-funded SALSA project, which aimed to provide a better understanding of the role of small farms, food businesses and food and nutrition security, had its closing e-conference on 25 June 2020. The project, for which Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has coordinated the communications and joint learning activities, officially ends in July 2020. In the last four years SALSA has pioneered a novel integrated multi-method approach in 30 regions across 19 countries in Europe and Africa using the most recent satellite technologies, transdisciplinary approaches, food systems mapping and participatory foresight analysis. FAO coordinated the communications and joint learning of the project.

During the SALSA final e-Conference, hosted by FAO, the results of the project were presented. Notably, the level of the contribution of small farms to regional Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) was found to depend upon the nature of their connection with the regional food system. The newly formed Office of Innovation of FAO shared its outreach perspective in the project, for strengthening the voice of small farms in the debate on FNS.

The validated SALSA methodology results presented were also used for the:

- identification of small farms crop types, crop area and production estimates, as well as regular monitoring of small farms' production;
- novel typology of small farms identified and their importance within food systems;
- identification and characterisation of enabling governance frameworks for small farms and small food business; and
- tailored and fit-for-purpose multilevel policy recommendations.

To increase the contribution to the regional food availability, areas of improvement were found relating to land access; market opportunities; access to knowledge and extension services, also in cooperation with other farmers.

The e-Conference highlighted some of the weaknesses of the regional food systems discovered during the COVID-19 pandemic, ranging from the need to diversify the production to build higher resilience, and again the necessity to improve the food supply chain.

SALSA's results and publications can be found on [SALSA's website](#). In the coming weeks, two new additional publications will be made available: the *SALSA e-Conference Proceedings* and a publication titled *From Space to Farm: Characterizing Small Farms using Remote Sensing Data*, which illustrates the SALSA innovative work and achievements through the use of satellites for small farms monitoring.



With the technical support of

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

salsa
small farms
small food businesses and
sustainable food security

THURSDAY 25 JUNE 2020
10:00-11:00 (CET); 11:30-13:00 (CET)

SALSA project Final Conference

CAN SMALL FARMS AND FOOD BUSINESSES IMPROVE PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO MORE AND BETTER FOOD IN OUR GLOBALIZED WORLD?

Results and policy recommendations from the EU-funded SALSA project

GFRAS

GFRAS launches a brand-new website

With the support from Feed the Future and the Developing Local Extension Capacity project, GFRAS has developed and launched its new website. With a more modern design, new features and an improved registration process. The new page also offers a community area where registered members can exchange information, share videos and documents, promote events, propose discussion groups, and much more. It is free and allows users to access a database of extension providers, experts in various regions and documents about the status of extension services in various countries.

Access it at: <https://www.g-fras.org/en/>

GFRAS participation in the webinar *Extension and Advisory Services: At the frontline of COVID-19 response in ensuring food security in Asia.*

The two sub-regional networks of Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services Network (APIRAS) and GFRAS namely, the Agricultural Extension in South Asia (AESAs) and the Mekong Extension Learning Alliance (MELA), shared their experiences in relation to the on-going challenges in South Asia and the Mekong region, in the webinar organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and GFRAS on 19 May 2020 on *Extension and Advisory Services: At the frontline of COVID-19 response in ensuring food security in Asia.* The recording of the webinar is available [here](#).

FAO-GFRAS Final Workshop on Global Capacity Needs Assessment (GLNA)

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in partnership with the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) initiated a process to understand the gaps in learning and capacity among Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) providers in integrating nutrition objectives into agricultural extension programmes and policies. This process consisted in developing, piloting, validating and disseminating a Global Capacity Needs Assessment (GCNA) methodology aimed to assist countries in assessing their own capacity gaps in nutrition and EAS.

The GCNA methodology, the findings and recommendations of its piloting, were presented at the final virtual workshop, successfully concluded on 1 July 2020. The workshop was attended by about 20-25 participants. Five GFRAS regional/sub-regional networks namely, African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS), le Réseau des Services de Conseil Agricole et Rural d'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre (RESCAR-AOC), Red Latinoamericana de Servicios de Extensión Rural (RELASER), Agricultural Extension in South East Asia (AESAs) and Central Asia and the Caucasus Forum for Rural Advisory Services (CAC-FRAS) participated in the event. The findings from the pilot testing at the country level were presented from Malawi, Côte d'Ivoire, Chile, India and Tajikistan. Experiences from the pilot testing, including the type of modifications needed, were also shared in the meeting.



Some of the Participants of the GFRAS Final Workshop on Global Capacity Needs Assessment (GLNA) on 1 July 2020: Z. Mroczek (FAO OIN), R. Sulaiman (GFRAS), A. Islas Ramos (FAO ESN), C. Mthinda (MaFAAS), C. Rybak (ZALF), A. Jennings (FAO ESN), L. Rodriguez Osiac (RELASER), V. Kumari (MANAGE), J. Zeitouny (FAO ESN), N. Rajabova (CAC-FRAS), N. Mittal (AESAs), F. Aguirre (RELASER), H. Ngwenya (Facilitator), H. Hoffmann (ZALF), M. Olupot (AFAAS), D. Chuluunbaatar (FAO OIN), R. Wu (FAO ESN), A. Agbo (RESCAR-AOC), S. Nordin (SANE Malawi).

All participants agreed on the need for more policy advocacy, generating evidence on the role of EAS in promoting Non-State Actor (NSA) at global, regional and national levels, a need for stronger co-ordination among agencies involved in agriculture, health and nutrition.

Supporting curricula reforms in the training and education for extension agents to include nutrition was also highlighted. The participants emphasized the need for reviving the Nutrition Working Group or developing a similar arrangement (a community of practice) by both FAO and GFRAS to take a lead in integrating nutrition into EAS. The final methodology document is now being revised with inputs from the workshop and this will be edited and made available by FAO in the coming months.

ITPGRFA

Ensuring a resilient cassava crop in Tanzania and Kenya, a project supported by the the Benefit-sharing Fund of the International Treaty

Since 2015, the Benefit-sharing Fund of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA, the Treaty) has been supporting ten projects [1] in developing countries. The Treaty deals with the co-development and transfer of technologies for the research and development of crop varieties that are resistant to climate induced stresses that have better yields and higher nutritional value. The ultimate goal of these projects is to improve adaptation to climate change, enhance food security and resilience of vulnerable communities in developing countries.

The likelihood of the technologies being relevant to the needs of vulnerable rural communities is increased if they are developed jointly by partner institutions having complementary expertise and resources. This is the case of the project funded by the Treaty in Tanzania and Kenya:

<http://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1263109/>;

<http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/benefit-sharing-fund/overview/en/>;

<http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/benefit-sharing-fund/projects-funded/bsf-details/en/c/359518/?iso3=TZA>.

The project supported the participatory research and development between farmers and scientists from Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute, Jommo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (Kenya) and NEIKER (Spain) of new and resistant cassava breeding lines, including 24 improved cassava accessions that are heat and disease tolerant. Coupling genetic resources and molecular tools to exploit genetic basis of tolerance against multiple stresses and, incorporating the outputs in breeding programmes, is an innovative approach put through by this Benefit-sharing Fund project to fight food insecurity and climate change.

While more than 270 farmers have received training and capacity building and are now experimenting with planting new cassava varieties and using improved agricultural practices, 1000 among breeders and scientists have access to improved plant material from which to select essential genetic material for future use.



Cassava farmer during a training workshop



Cassava plant

[1] Since its establishment in 2009, the Benefit-sharing Fund of the International Treaty has been supporting a total of 80 projects in 67 developing countries to contribute to food security, adaptation and resilient food systems through the management and conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

RELASER

The RELASER Colombia forum works on its strategic plan

With the participation of diverse member organizations of the RELASER Colombia Forum, such as the IICA Institute, Agrosavia, Fedegán, Ypard, the National Network of Rural Youth, the University of La Salle, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the forum team set the goal earlier this year of having a strategic plan that will guide its actions for the next five years.

The strategic plan will focus on advocating for public policies and research on rural outreach issues in Colombia, and contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals. It will count on the participation of key actors with an inclusive role in the forum, and will provide an analysis of the needs and actions in the field of rural extension within the framework of the health emergency generated by Covid-19.



Representatives from the member organizations of RELASER Colombia

RELASER Ecuador forum presented results on rural farming services assessment tool

The RELASER National Forum aims at highlighting the issue of rural extension in the national debate, by identifying, classifying and mobilizing key actors relevant for the joint creation of a work plan, which could generate a greater impact on the country policies.

In Ecuador, the RELASER National Forum is integrated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) through the Directorate of Management and Transfer of Agricultural Innovative Knowledge, along with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

In March 2020, the Forum presented the evaluation of the Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Systems (ATER, by its acronym in Spanish) with RAS tool methodology, which seeks to characterize the ATER services of the multiple service providers. With this background, by 2020, it is intended to strengthen ATER actions, in coordination with other related actors in the country.



Meeting participants during the presentation of the ATER evaluation, organized by RELASER Ecuador in March 2020.



OTHER UPDATES

TAP-FAO DeSIRA project

At country level, good progress has been made in the second quarter of 2020: project teams have been established and meetings have been organized in Rwanda, Burkina Faso, Cambodia and Eritrea. Letters of agreement are being signed in support of the assessment of agricultural innovation systems in these four countries, the process will start during the third quarter of 2020. A five-day training programme has been designed to capacitate the national assessment team. The training will be delivered remotely and supported by a national facilitator. In Senegal, Colombia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Malawi, country project managers have been recruited and work plans are being developed.

In June and July 2020, a series of virtual training sessions were designed and implemented, targeting the country project managers, coordinators and members of the country team. The training pursued two main learning outcomes:

- a) improved understanding of the project and ability to effectively manage the country component of the project;
- b) shared knowledge and understanding of key concepts and approaches (e.g. agricultural innovation, agricultural innovation systems, capacity development, TAP Common Framework, etc.).

Four virtual training sessions were organized as follows:

- Session 1. Strengthening Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) through a project-based approach (18 June 2020)
- Session 2. Identifying and strengthening organizations that provide Innovation Support Services (30 June 2020)
- Session 3. Strengthening capacities at policy level (16 July 2020)
- Session 4. Introduction to AIS assessment (29 July 2020)

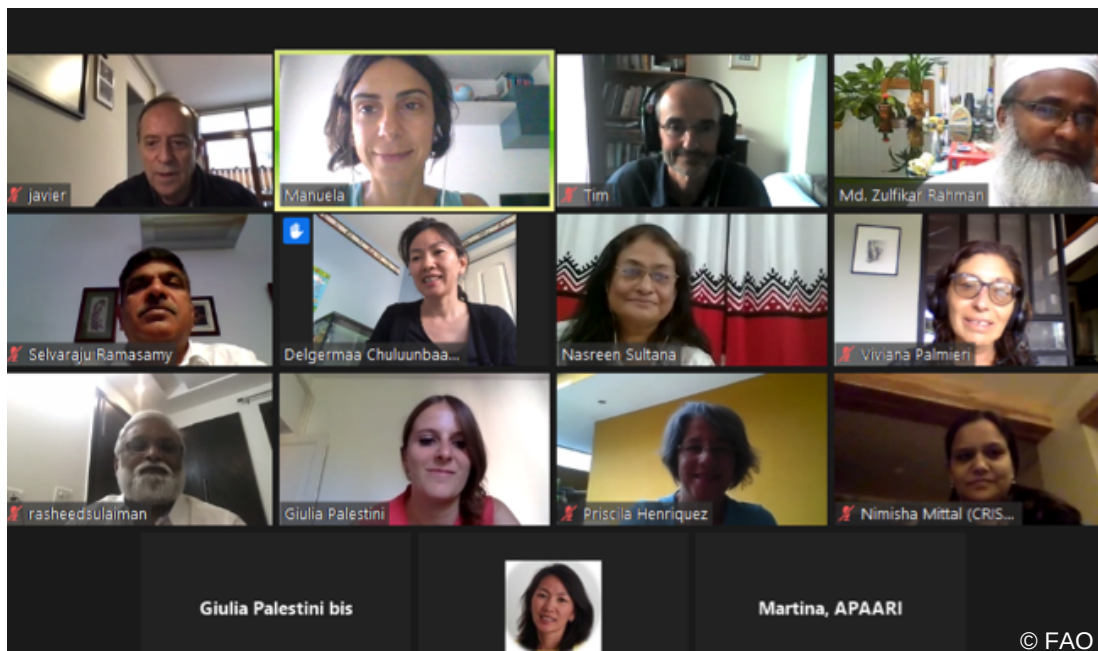


Participants of the Virtual Session on 29 July 2020: A. Saley Moussa (FAO HQ), M. Bucciarelli (FAO HQ), J. C. Gutierrez Herrera (FAO Colombia), Souleymane Traore (FAO Burkina Faso), C. Chhan (Cambodia), A. Toillier (FAO HQ), B. Thol (FAO Cambodia), A. Tsitsi (FAO Malawi), A. Sempore (FAO Burkina Faso), M. Gnomou (NPC Burkina Faso), M. Lima (FAO HQ), G. Palestini (FAO HQ), I. Gomez-Pineda (FAO HQ), S. Sarr (FAO Senegal), S. Haile (FAO Eritrea), G. Kayitare (FAO Rwanda).

At regional level, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) contracted the Natural Resources Institute (NRI) to develop a common methodology for a Joint Rapid Appraisal (JRA) by Regional Research and Extension Organizations (RREOs) in Africa, Asia Pacific and Latin America.

The purpose of the appraisal is to better understand the regional landscape for strengthening AIS, and identify entry points for integrating and scaling use of TAP Common Framework and its tools and approaches for AIS capacity development. The methodology was developed in close consultation with RREOs and the JRA will be carried out starting from the first week of August. FAO is arranging to sign Letters of Agreements (LoAs) with IICA, RELASER, APAARI and APIRAS for the conduct of the appraisal.

A virtual two-day orientation training was held on 28 July and 29 July 2020, on the JRA methodology to the RREOs focal points as well as to regional experts who will carry out the appraisal. Approximately 15 people participated to the two sessions and shared their appreciation for the training. Materials and recording of the sessions are available [here](#). The appraisal reports and joint action plans by RREOs are expected to be completed by the end of September.



Participants to the virtual two-day orientation training on the JRA methodology on July 28-29, 2020: J. Ramírez-Gastón Roe (IICA-RELASER consultant), M. Bucciarelli (FAO HQ), T. Chancellor (NRI), Z. Rahaman (APAARI-APIRAS Consultant), D. Chuluunbaatar (FAO HQ), N. Sultana (APAARI-APIRAS Consultant), V. Palmieri (IICA), R. Sulaiman (APIRAS), G. Palestini (FAO HQ), P. Henríquez (IICA-RELASER consultant), N. Mittal (APIRAS), M. Spisiakova (APAARI).



TAPipedia - www.tapipedia.org

New resources and soon the launch of a revamped version!

TAPipedia, the global knowledge sharing platform of TAP in support of Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems, includes now **more than 3,500 online resources!**

The TAP Secretariat is working on a **revamped version** of TAPipedia to be launched in the next weeks. Its improvements will include a new layout and more user-friendly functionalities. Furthermore, the visibility of TAPipedia on the major web search engines (e.g. Google) is being boosted and the website speed is being further enhanced.

We encourage TAP Partners and their networks to benefit from, and to contribute to this unique repository on agricultural innovation systems!





PUBLICATIONS

**Elsevier Weather and Climate Extremes - FAO Special Issue
Innovations in managing climate risks and building resilience in agriculture**

Vol.27, March 2020 Edited by Selvaraju Ramasamy PhD, Head, Research and Extension Unit of FAO

Managing climate risks is essential to improving the resilience of agricultural systems and eradicating hunger. Knowledge systems including agricultural research and extension systems, national meteorological and hydrological services and stakeholder platforms together with agricultural enterprises, policymakers and investors play a critical role in managing climate risks. Innovative approaches and methods for climate data analysis, crop and pasture monitoring, climate information downscaling, hotspot analysis, impact assessments and early warning systems are continuously evolving.

This FAO special issue of the Elsevier Weather and Climate Extremes journal presents innovations related to the approaches, tools and methods with case studies and examples of climate risk management and resilience building in agriculture. This special issue contains contributions from 42 authors representing 21 organizations and institutes around the world.

Link to Special Issue: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/weather-and-climate-extremes/vol/27/suppl/C>



PAST EVENTS

- Agreenium, the FAO e-learning Academy and UN-ESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) have jointly organized a series of technical webinars to provide a holistic and comprehensive view of current trends in thematic areas related to global challenges, by combining development research and innovation perspectives. The two last international technical webinars were held in May and June 2020, respectively:

- Climate Smart Agriculture, 27 May 2020: [Loss of Biodiversity and the Uncertainties associated with Climate Change.](#)
- Sustainable Soil and Land Management for Climate Smart Agriculture, 24 June 2020: [Preventing and Mitigating Land Degradation.](#)

- The FAO's Research and Extension Unit published in June 2020 a policy brief on *Enabling agricultural innovation systems to promote appropriate technologies and practices for farmers, rural youth and women during COVID-19.*

The document is available [here](#).


 UPCOMING

- AGRINATURA and the FAO's Research and Extension Unit are planning a [webinar on 10 September 2020 on: Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems: Scaling Capacities to Innovate for Greater Impacts on Agrifood Systems Transformation.](#) The webinar aims at sharing the key lessons from CDAIS project and shaping visions and actions to mainstream functional capacities for AIS in the development agenda at global and national levels.

- EU DEVCO will organize the [first virtual launch of DeSIRA projects on 8 September 2020.](#)



Contact the TAP Secretariat

TAP is a G-20 initiative launched in 2012 to promote agricultural innovation in the tropics. TAP has formed a coalition of more than 40 partners. Its main goal is to strengthen agricultural innovation systems (AIS) in developing countries through coordinated multi-stakeholder interventions.

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Since August 2019 the EU supports TAP Action Plan through the project "Developing capacities in agricultural innovation systems: scaling up the TAP Framework" (TAP-FAO DeSIRA), implemented by FAO.