



# Coordination and Collective Action for Agricultural Innovation

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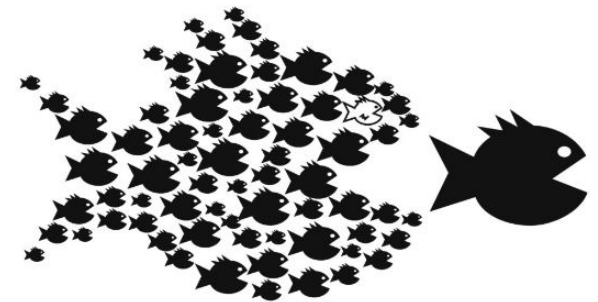
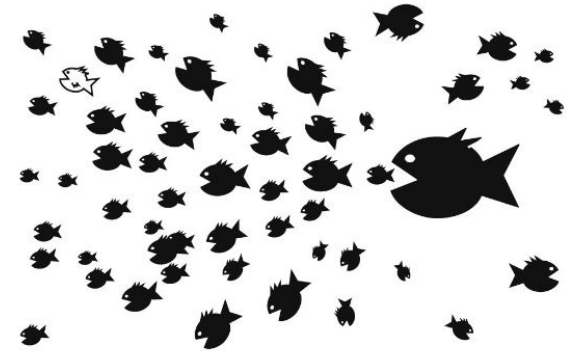
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# Why is coordination important for innovation?

Actors in the AIS do not innovate in isolation but interacting with other actors and the socioeconomic environment

Stronger interaction and coordination can induce all actors in the AIS to be more aware of and responsive to the needs and concerns of other actors

Stronger coordination can also facilitate collective action including sharing resources and information



**ORGANIZE!**

# Why is coordination important for innovation? (2)

Governance improves as policy design and implementation become more participatory

Despite such advantages, coordination has been difficult to achieve for the same reasons that hinder collective action: opportunistic behavior and difficulties in setting and enforcing rules

Coordination for innovation is a social phenomenon and results from the interaction of individual, organizational, social and institutional factors

# Coordination can emerge spontaneously or can be induced

**Spontaneous:** a self-help group, a market, a sub-sector platform

**Induced:** a program to facilitate access to markets for small farmers or on-farm research



Interventions to improve coordination have many consequences, often unintended and difficult to assess

# Examples of coordinating bodies and organizations in the AIS

Informal organizations: self-help groups, innovation networks, value chains



Formal organizations: firms, ministries of agriculture, research councils, innovation parks, farmer organizations



# Effective coordination for innovation requires

- A committed and capable leadership
- Strong innovation capabilities (e.g., motivated individuals, resources for exploration, varied partnerships and organizational learning structures)
- An effective enabling environment
- Appropriate incentives (flexibility, tolerance for failure, recognition for innovativeness)
- Adaptation of public organizations to ease participation in innovation processes

# Some instruments to foster coordination

- mentoring to build capabilities for innovation
- consultations (e.g., joint priority setting or foresight exercises)
- participation in governing bodies
- joint research and/or innovation programs
- promoting innovation platforms and value chains
- innovation brokers
- innovation forums and market and technology intelligence



# Policy issues in fostering coordination

- Key decision makers must understand the concept of innovation and its dynamics, and what they imply for policy design and implementation
- It is necessary to understand the roles of the public, private and nonprofit sectors and their interactions, and support their participation rather than force them into top-down projects
- Research and educational organizations should be reformed so that they can better participate in innovation processes

# What do we know about coordination for innovation?

- Coordination has many benefits but is not costless
- Especially important are the costs of failed coordination efforts
- Coordination for innovation is a protracted process
- Coordination thrives only if it is based on trust
- Building coordination requires flexibility and adaptive management

# Lessons learned about coordination and collective action for innovation

The enabling environment plays an important role in supporting coordination



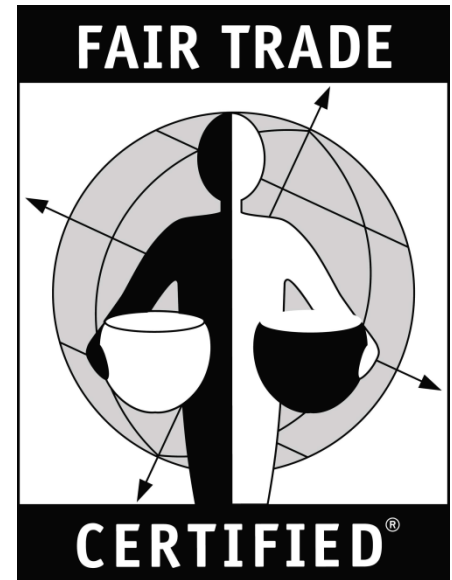
Spontaneous coordination in the form of innovation networks is increasingly important

# Lessons learned about coordination and collective action for innovation (2)

Firms and NGOs are expected to continue being the most effective coordinators in the AIS

Farmer organizations are not always the best instrument to foster coordination

Innovation brokers and key chain coordinators (e.g., supermarkets willing to work with small holders) play essential roles in AIS



# **Lessons learned about coordination and collective action for innovation (3)**

- Interventions should not impose a model of interaction on bottom-up processes
- Social capital should be an important criterion to allocate funds
- In top-down interventions it is important to build appropriate governance and strong management capabilities
- Innovation processes (and coordination) create winners and losers



Thank you