

What can brokers offer for RAS and Agricultural Innovation?

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Can existing organisations within RAS play the role of brokers?

- Challenge?
 - Though increasing recognition on brokering, very few agencies have the capacity to play this role
 - Traditionally, extension acted as a link between research and farmers, but innovation involves interaction among more
 - *As brokering skills /organisations are in short supply, need to invest in strengthening the capacity of existing RAS providers to play this role*

Extension-Plus

- A framework for strengthening extension to play a bridging/brokering role within the AIS
- **Key elements**
 - **Broad mandate** (beyond technology transfer)-nodal agency providing technological and non-technological services to farmers
 - Extensive use of **partnerships** to fulfill this expanded mandate
 - **Learning** based approach to identify locally relevant strategies and building local capacity to sustain the process
 - Mechanism to represent **clients' interest** at the management level
 - *Examples: KHDP/VFPCK, India; BRAC, Bangladesh*

Towards Extension-Plus: Key Shifts

Aspects of Extension	Shift from	Shift to
Form/content	Technology dissemination <i>Forming farmer groups</i> Market information	Supporting rural livelihoods <i>Building independent farmer organisations</i> Market development
Planning and implementation strategy	Doing it alone	Through partnerships
CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT Extension staff Extension systems	Training <i>Personnel and infrastructure</i>	Learning by doing <i>Developing linkages and networks</i>

Towards Extension-Plus: Key Shifts- cont'd

Aspects of Extension	Shift from	Shift to
Source of innovation in extension	Centrally generated blueprints for wider implementation	Locally evolved with diverse approaches and multiple partners
Introducing new working practices	Staff training	Changing organisational culture through action learning

Lessons learned

- The goal of investment should be:
 - A. broad enough to provide integrated support to producers (technological and non-technological)
 - B. creating or enhancing the capacity of the AIS for interaction and coordinated action
- Need high quality human resources at different levels-
% of HR costs can be high
- Partnering difficult for organisations with long history of independent *functioning- create new entities*

Lessons Learned (cont'd)

- Build user groups/ community-based organisations and shift operation and management - *Invest in capacity development*
- Need sufficient flexibility to deal with administrative and financial issues- *Build mechanisms to share lessons and respond quickly to evolving threats and opportunities*

Investments needed under Extension-Plus

- **Pre-project phase**
 - Institutional diagnosis, develop shared vision
- **Institutional and human capacity strengthening**
 - Diverse set of expertise, organisational culture,
- **Technical support**
 - Technological up gradation along the value chain, experts on secondment, short consultancy
- **Credit and financial support**
 - Address constraints in delivery through piloting new models and /or policy engagement
- **Organisational Development**
- **Market Development**
 - Strengthening farmers capacity to negotiate a better deal

Conclusions

- There is a need to enhance the capacity of RAS providers to play brokering among the large number of actors in the AIS
- Extension-Plus, a useful framework to reform extension agencies to increasingly play this role within AIS