**Transforming Agricultural Extension System and Accelerating Agricultural Productivity Growth in the Democratic Republic of Congo**

**June 26-27, 2012, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo**

**Organized by**

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# Introduction

The workshop, **Transforming Agricultural Extension System and Accelerating Agricultural Productivity Growth in the Democratic Republic of Congo**, organized by the Democratic Republic of Congo Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), with support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), was held on 26-27 June 2012 at the Sultani Hotel in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The purpose of this set of proceedings is to present a diagnosis of the extension system in the DRC and communicate the key messages on strategies to inform agricultural extension reform efforts. This report summarizes the following events of the workshop:

* Opening speech
* Extension experts presentation notes
* Breakout session notes: plenary presentations by working groups
* Panel Discussion notes
* Closing speech

# Session I. Welcome and Official Opening

[The Workshop](http://www.ifpri.org/pressrelease/workshop-examine-agricultural-extension-system-and-agricultural-productivity-democratic) started with an outline of the event by MINAGRI followed by an introduction delivered by the FAO representative noting that the outcomes of this workshop would offer an opportunity to revive the agricultural extension of the country.

## Opening speech by His Excellency, Jean-Chrysostome V. Mukesyayira, the Democratic Republic of the Congo Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development

In the opening speech, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development expressed his gratitude to 127 stakeholders of the DRC agricultural sector including high distinguished government officials, representatives of government agencies, partners of government who have agreed to contribute to the organization of this workshop, NGO, peasant organizations, church-based organizations, private sector, agricultural and rural management councils (CARG), local development committees, universities, research community, and 5 international agricultural extension experts from different countries, for having responded to the invitation.

The Minister began by emphasizing the needs for the country to realize its enormous potentials. The country is facing numerous constraints that have kept the productivity of the sector at a very low level. Among these constraints, the weak institutional and human capacity is the most critical; reflecting in poorly planned and poorly coordinated agricultural support services such as the agricultural extension.

The Government, with the assistance of its development partners and NGOs, has initiated since 2008 organizational and institutional reforms to revive the agricultural sector. Moreover, the Agricultural and Rural Management Council (CARG) was created at the territorial, provincial, and national levels to ensure strong decentralization of development policy and agricultural service delivery processes.

The Minister then indicated that in the past, various initiatives have been taken and different institutions have been put in place to support agricultural production and rural development through the provision of research, training, and agricultural information services. These institutions include the INERA for agricultural research; the National Service for agricultural mechanization (SENAMA) for agricultural mechanization; the National Service of seeds (SENASEM) for the provision of seeds, and national fertilizers and related inputs (SENAFIC) for fertilizer.

Extension services were provided by various public services in the MINAGRI, commercial farms, donor funded projects and NGOs. However, the lack of coordination of extension activities created a duplication and incoherence of interventions. The National Extension Service (SNV) was established in 1989 to coordinate all extension activities in DRC. Unfortunately, the SNV has experienced operating difficulties since 1997 due primarily to donors’ funding withdrawal and lack of government funding commitment. The extension system has experienced since then a serious management of human resources problems, lack of clarity and direction in its mission resulting in poor supervision of farmers.

 The Minister noted that the major challenge is now to identify the best possible options for a better agricultural extension system, capable of contributing significantly to the sustained improvement of agricultural productivity, food security and incomes of farmers.

In this respect, he mentioned that the objectives of the workshop are to:

* Take stock of the extension system in the DRC;
* Identify both institutional and capacity constraints of the extension system in the DRC;
* Share the results of the surveys conducted in the provinces of Bandundu, Bas-Congo and Kinshasa on (1) extension service provision, (2) role of the stakeholder platforms (CARG) in the service provision, and (3) capacity and performance of organizations involved in the provision of agricultural extension services;
* Share the experiences of other countries and identify the conditions under which they can be adopted in DRC,
* Discuss (1) the best transforming policies and institutions options and (2) alternative methods for extension service provision in the DRC.

In closing, the Minister emphasized the [importance of this workshop](http://www.ifpri.org/blog/ifpri-workshop-focuses-agricultural-extension-and-productivity-drc) in the reform process for the agriculture sector and urged the participants to come up with concrete outputs that details practical recommendations at the end of the two-day sessions. He noted that the Ministry is committed to integrate these directives into its reform process.

# Session II. Overview: Taking Stock - Challenges and Opportunities for Agricultural Development in DRC

After the opening ceremony, the first set of presentations focused on Challenges and Opportunities for Agricultural Development in DRC and was chaired by Hubert Ali Ramazani, General Secretary of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Livestock, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The presentations were given by John Ulimwengu, Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Principal Adviser of the Prime Minister, DRC; Thaddée Badibanga, Postdoctoral Fellow, Development Strategy and Governance Division, IFPRI; Ignore Guka Gangale, National Coordinator of the National Extension Service (SNV); Mossala, Director of the National Agricultural Research Institute (INERA).

## Challenges and opportunities for the agricultural development in DRC

John Ulimwengu, Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Principal Adviser of the Prime Minister, DRC

Ulimwengu started by giving selected statistics of the Congolese agriculture sector performance noting the continuous decline of per capita agricultural production since 1960. He explained that relatively low yields in cassava, maize, plantains, rice, the main food crops of the country, contribute to the low level of agricultural production. The maize varieties farmers are using were developed 30 years ago. Regarding the food situation in the DRC, he reported that food imports are increasingly on the rise. Consequently, the level of the Global Hunger Index (GHI) in the DRC shows that the country is the first in the world in terms of undernutrition; this indicator is worsening making DRC among the loser countries in the fight against hunger. He added that there is also alarming nutrient deficiency as indicated by high prevalence rates of deficiency in proteins, calorie, vitamin E, riboflavin, iron, zinc, vitamin B12 (all above 50%).

He then reminded the DRC's paradox given its enormous natural agricultural potential, the existing legal framework, Act 11/022 of December 24, 2011 with fundamental principles relating to agriculture, the process of structuring of peasant organizations (FBO) with the recent creation of the CONAPAC (National Confederation of Congolese farmers), the launch  of the CAADP process (Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme), and the existence of important markets for agricultural production in the DRC at the domestic, regional and international levels.

He highlighted the constraints that underlie DRC’s critical situation and suggested strategies to boost the development of agriculture. He noted the following:

* Institutional and human capacity strengthening;
* Review of provisions of the law on agricultural basic principles;
* Priority support to farmer households to increase their productivity and incomes;
* Development of agronomic research and promotion of agricultural techniques that meet the different ecosystems and take into consideration the climate change;
* Rehabilitation of agricultural road and river routes and the measures to be taken to ensure their sustainable maintenance;
* Improved reliability and quality of statistical data on food and agricultural sector noting that FAO is the only organization which collects price of agricultural products.

## Determinants of agricultural productivity in DRC

Thaddée Badibanga, Postdoctoral Fellow, Development Strategy and Governance Division, IFPRI

Badibanga began by giving a broad outline of the food insecurity and high level of poverty in the DRC which he believes are mainly due to low agricultural productivity. He noted that less than 25% of the potential yields were realized for some tested crops such as cassava, maize, rice, beans, and plantain. He explained that low productivity led to low income from farming activities making accessibility to food difficult. He added that the deficit between food production and food demand should be filled by imports. Unfortunately, the country’s inability to finance food imports led to unavailability of food.

Badibanga identified the most cited determinants of low productivity in the DRC. These include:

* Low level of public and private investment in agriculture
* Malfunction of the markets of agricultural products due to deterioration of agricultural feeder roads, as well a very serious state of decline of the river and rail roads;
* Weak human and institutional capacity and lack of coordination of the activities of the sector;
* Lack of support services to agricultural sector activities such as research, extension, information and credit;
* Absence and/or inefficient input markets;
* Use of undeveloped technologies and practices;

He noted that given the complexity of constraints to the agricultural productivity growth, priority and realistic intervention should be given to enhancing the agricultural productivity. He suggested promoting the access and use of improved seeds varieties and other inputs that have been tested at the National Institute of Agronomic Research (INERA) and proven to be efficient.

In closing, Badibanga stressed that the impact of improved seeds and fertilizers on productivity cannot be observed without the dissemination of the advantages of their use. For this end, he added that an extension policy oriented towards dissemination of new technologies and practices and training of users is essential. This policy must be accompanied by capacity strengthening of the INERA for continued experimentations, the National Service of Seeds (SENASEM) for seeds multiplication and the National Service of Fertilizers and Related Inputs (SENAFIC) for inputs production.

## National Extension Service (SNV) in the DRC

Ignore Guka Gangale, National Coordinator of the National Extension Service (SNV)

He started his presentation by developing the issues facing the DRC extension system before 1989, year the pilot phase of the SNV started. He noted that at that time, several government agencies in the Ministries of Agricultural, Livestock, and Fishery; Rural Development; and Scientific Research were involved in the provision of agricultural extension services. He recalled the lack of coordination and duplication of agricultural extension interventions of these various agencies. Guka also noted that due to the lack of linkage between research, development institutions, and farmers, extension interventions had very little technical themes adapted to farmers’ needs.

To overcome these methodological and organizational issues, the SNV was created by ministerial decree of 06/03 /1989 and had been charged with the responsibility to coordinate all extension activities in DRC. The SNV started with the pilot phase from 1989 to 1991 and has implemented a new strategy of extension, called the National extension policy. The speaker then described the structure of SNV at the national and regional levels as an organ of the Ministry of Agriculture and supported by other government agencies providers of complementary services to agricultural extension. These agencies include INERA, SENASEM, SENAFIC, PNR, SNSA, the National Service of Agricultural Mechanization (SENAMA), INADES, ISEA, etc. He also noted that the SNV entered into partnerships with peasant associations or contact groups which contributed to the conception and implementation of the extension interventions.

The speaker then pointed out that despite some successes achieved in the first years of its functioning, the SNV’s activities started to decline in 1990/91 due to some donors fund withdrawal; the service ceased operating since 1997 following the withdrawal of UNDP and the lack of funding support from government. He argued that the system could effectively ensure the coordination, the professionalization, and the harmonization of the methodological approaches of the extension activities in the sites it operated. In this regard, the “feuille de route” of DRC Government was created in May 2012 to facilitate the dissemination of agricultural innovation technique. It specified the restructuring and strengthening of the National extension Service.

## Reflections on the trilogy agricultural research - agricultural education – extension in the DRC

Mossala, Director of the National Agricultural Research Institute (INERA)

After giving the generic review of the agricultural potential and performance in the DRC, Mossala presented the development of INERA since 1950s. He indicated that INERA inherited the large dimension structure of INEAC (Agricultural Experimental Research Station), a well-known and one of the best institutions of research in tropical Africa in the 1950s. In 1950, the CRY (old name for INERA) had 200 researchers and 500 expatriate extension agents. Following the withdrawal of the Belgian technical assistance after the independence, INERA experienced a degradation of research equipment; its activities were limited to the maintenance of perennial crops planting materials (cotton, coffee, cocoa...). Since 1984, a reorganization effort was initiated with the ISNAR and a study group composed by Congolese experts, which has led to the reduction of the research stations from 22 to 9, the creation of 5 programs of research on cassava, maize, beans, rice and tuber plants seeds, 5 programs of research on industrial and perennial fruit crops (bananas, cotton, coffee, palm oil,...); 2 programs on the production and animal health (cattle, and fish farming), 3 horizontal programmes (natural resources: soil, agroforestry and climatology, conservation of plant genetic resources and the R&D).

Regarding the Agricultural education, Mossala noted that the impact of the University, the Faculty of Agronomy and the institutes of agronomic studies (ISEAs) and rural development studies (ISDRs) have been limited to professional training and end of study theses. While the mission of the agricultural education is to contribute to a sustainable cultural and socio-economic development of the sector, Mossala suggested that the primary roles of the agricultural education at the universities and ISEAs and ISDRs should be the training of future trainers, farmers, agro-industrial and agricultural companies and cooperatives...

As far as the extension, he gave a broad outline of the SNV sharing the same opinion on the limitation of its structure, its resources, and the approach used by SNV.

He then noted that the efforts made to increase agricultural production did not focus more attention to the synergistic partnerships and mutual interests between research, education, and extension. He suggested that it is important to revitalize this trilogy by:

* Effective and permanent contacts between researchers, extension and trainers of future farmers;
* Capacity strengthening of extension agents and officers;
* Retirement of aging agents, and hiring of young well-qualified staff;
* Mobility of the extension field;
* Facilitation of access to credits to progressive farmers;
* Communication through the media (T.V., radio, videos, side activities, etc.).

# Session III. Agricultural Extension: Concept, Components, Actors, and Lessons Learned

The second set of presentations was entitled “Agricultural Extension: Concept, Components, Actors, and Lessons Learned”. The presentations were given by Burt Swanson, Professor Emeritus of Rural Development, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services Project Coordinator, Worldwide Extension Study; Catherine Ragasa, Postdoctoral Fellow, Development Strategy and Governance Division, IFPRI; Thaddée Badibanga, Postdoctoral Fellow, Development Strategy and Governance Division, IFPRI; Patrick Makala Nzengu, Coordinator of Reform, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Frank Luebeya, national project manager, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); John Ulimwengu, Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Principal Adviser of the Prime Minister, DRC; Patience Rwamigisa, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Uganda; and Mary Kamau, Director, Extension and Training, Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya. This second set of presentations was chaired by Mampuya, Director title.

## Developing Innovative Extension Systems to help Small-scale Men and Women Farmers

Burt Swanson, Professor Emeritus of Rural Development, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services Project Coordinator, Worldwide Extension Study

Swanson started by recalling that agricultural extension can be a key pathway to achieving key goals of national food security and increased incomes of small-scale farm households. This would be possible by helping small-scale men and women farmers learn how to produce and market high-value food products, training farmers how to intensify & diversify their farming systems, how to use sustainable NRM practices, and how to organize into producer and self-help groups.

Swanson then defined agricultural innovation as new way of either reducing costs and/or increasing profits to highlight the new role extension in the 21st Century should play in serving the rural poor, mainly to:

* Focus more attention on process innovations which are especially location specific due to difference in access to markets for different high-value products, local agro-ecological conditions, and the specific interests and resources of small-scale men & women farmers.
* Serve as “facilitators” or “knowledge brokers.”
* Identify and scale up process innovations

After listing the methods for providing advisory services, he explained under what conditions a specific method should be used to deliver a particular type of information. He particularly pointed out the importance of the advisory services for Natural Resource Management noting that most Value-Chain projects do not address these important NRM issues.

He then noted that given that markets for high-value crops/products and agro-ecological conditions are location specific, extension systems should become more decentralized and bottom-up. He added that to make extension systems more farmer-driven, they must formally establish Steering and/or Advisory Committees to identify the specific needs and priorities of representative poor farmers, especially rural women.

He emphasized the need for Public-Private Partnerships noting that the Non-Governmental Organizations are now hiring the best public agricultural extension advisors with expanded donor resources being invested in value-chains. Most new agricultural NGOs are very successful in both competing for and carrying out donor-driven projects, especially those focused on “value chains, but he questioned whether these new NGOs advisory service providers are sustainable after donor funding ceases.

In closing, Swanson suggested a number of considerations in transforming agriculture extension in DRC:

* Public extension should give priority to process innovations, especially focused on the rural poor
* Public extension must also give high priority to natural resource management (NRM) practices
* To make these institutional changes, public extension systems must become more decentralized, farmer-led and market-driven.
* Finally, pluralistic extension systems can become more sustainable by building public-private partnerships

## The State of Agricultural Extension Service Provision in Western DRC

Catherine Ragasa, Postdoctoral Fellow, Development Strategy and Governance Division, IFPRI.

After a recall of the structure of extension system in DRC, Ragasa presented the results of the surveys conducted in August-October 2011 among 107 extension organizations (AEOs) and 162 extension agents (AEAs) in randomly-selected 156 villages conducted in western DRC.

She started with the analysis of the profile and activities of extension organizations surveyed noting that DRC has about 1,300 farmers per agent. She explained that these figures are not far from farmers-to-agent ratio in most developing countries of more than 1,000:1 suggesting that the major problem seems to be about managing these available human resources. The average age of AEAs in the sample survey is 52 years. The agents in the government are relatively older compared to the AEAs in NGOs and FBOs. Only 5 percent of the AEAs and 7% of the extension supervisors/heads interviewed are women. There was no female supervisor or head from the public sector agencies. Ragasa then said that the activities of the AEOs and AEAs interviewed were very limited.

Regarding the extension delivery method, she indicated that the most common method of interaction with farmers is agent visit to farms, followed by visit and information-sharing at FBO level, and training or demonstration farms. She then added that about half of the AEAs interviewed use demonstration materials or demonstration farms for extension services. About half of AEAs from government reported teaching in farmer field schools; while 64 percent from NGOs and only 17 percent from church-based organizations use farmer field school approach in their extension work.

Ragasa then addressed the factors affecting performance of extension agents. She noted that a large number of AEAs interviewed reported no targets set among agents for their extension work. Those who reported setting targets use membership to an FBO and gender of the farmer as targeting criteria.

Regarding the funding for extension, she said that due to irregularity of release of funds in the government, more than half of government-based AEOs reported no funding at all from government in 2009 or 2010 and only 23 percent of AEOs have received external funding. The greatest proportion of AEOs that received external funding is NGOs. As far as the compensation reported by AEAs, about half of AEAs reported receiving basic salary of 75,000 CF per month on average; about half of AEA interviewed reported receiving some kind of bonus or commission in cash for their extension work, the amount is 22,000 CF per month.

The following institutional constraints and bottlenecks to agricultural extension were drawn from the survey results in the Eastern DRC:

* On capacity: aging extension agents, limited women agents, and lack of technical capacity;
* On factors affecting performance of AEAs and AEOs: limited education and training among agents as results of weak education and training institutes, outdated curriculum and lack of up-to-date training and skills development for extension staff; lack of performance targets, mission-orientation, and accountability measures; unclear vision, mandate and strategic planning; lack of sustained funding from the government although ad-hoc projects from donors or NGOs may happen; lack of communication about ongoing reforms;
* On advisory methods: limited linkages; limited coverage of NGOs and church-based organizations;
* Policy related constraints: weak policy and investments in complementary inputs and services
* Farmers level constraints: access to credit, inputs, markets, land, and equipment/tools are the most common and most consistently mentioned constraints.

The speaker noted that the presence of extensive field staffing, estimated to be about 11,245 agents and technicians with the agricultural inspection system within MINAGRI is an opportunity and asset to be utilized for extension delivery. She also mentioned that there are strong and effective organizations and associations in DRC; these organizations can be good opportunities to utilize for technology transfer, facilitation and demand articulation among rural population. In addition, the NGOs already involved in extension service provision can be strengthened to complement the operations of the public sector.

Ragasa further identified the following implications for DRC:

* Human resource or civil service reform is a priority: Downsizing will be the strategy involving retiring those who are above 60, retraining those with good qualification, and hiring new well-qualified staff
* Complementary investment in reforming the agricultural education and training institutes, such as the ISDR and ISEA. This will require updating their curriculum and promoting greater linkages among extension, research and universities.
* Institutional coordination of extension services
* Complementary of service providers
* Complementary investments & policy reforms in input & output markets
* Funding should be more stable rather than relying on ad hoc projects. Government must invest in extension system.

## Role of the Agricultural and Rural Management Council (CARG) in the Provision of Agricultural Extension Services in the DRC

Thaddée Badibanga, Postdoctoral Fellow, Development Strategy and Governance Division, IFPRI.

Badibanga started by recalling the several models of extension system the country has experienced since its access to independence in 1960 emphasizing again the lack of coordination in agricultural extension activities provided by several government agencies which led to the creation of the SNV. He recalled that since SNV ceased to be operational in 1997, stakeholders including peasant organizations, church based organization, NGO, private sector who used to facilitate SNV interventions have been involved in the provision of agricultural extension services. He particularly highlighted the participation of the Agricultural and Rural Management Councils (CARG) into the provision of extension services. He noted that the CARGs, created in 2008 within the restructuring of MINAGRI framework, was however conceived to be a multi-stakeholder platform of consultation on decentralized management of agricultural policies and strategies.

Badibanga noted that the ability of CARG to succeed in its mission of agricultural extension service provider is controversial. In this respect, he reported the results of the survey conducted by IFPRI among 55 CARGs in Bandundu, Bas-Congo, and Kinshasa in 2011 to identify the role of the new stakeholder in the delivery of extension services and how such role can be evaluated. Agricultural extension services’ provision appears to be the first goal for the majority (33%) of CARG. The delivery methods used are training workshops (30%), farmer field schools and essays/demonstrations in community fields (13%). The training workshops were organized on various issues of interest to the CARG members. Of these issues, the most taught were cultural practices (43% of all trainings) and seeds multiplication (21% of all trainings).

Regarding the evaluation of CARG, he stated that the results on knowledge dissemination seem positive as 53% of participants in the CARG trainings and demonstrations/trials indicated these extensions activities were very useful while 40% indicated they were useful. In terms of knowledge adoption, 60% of farmers participating in these activities indicated they immediately used knowledge learned to their farming activities. However, he argued that despite the apparently positive results, the role of new stakeholders in general and CARGs in particular in the delivery of services of agricultural extension seems to be limited considering criteria for overall effectiveness of the system.

He further noted that lack of financial means was the major constraint to the CARG intervention in the provision of agricultural extension services. The contribution of members constituted the primary source of funding for the CARG, however it was very limited ranging from 0.22 US$ to 5.60 US$ per month in 2011. Also, some CARG were the beneficiaries of financial grants from international NGO but these grant were relatively insufficient ranging from 380 US$ to 450 US$ in 2011.

On the implications of the intervention of new stakeholders on the agricultural extension policy in the DRC, Badibanga suggested the following:

* Take CARG back to its initial mission as it is stated in the legal and regulatory framework, that is, to facilitate consultation on agricultural policies and strategies;
* New national extension policy which defines roles of all new stakeholders involved in agricultural extension is important;
* Develop human, technical, and organizational capacity of the new stakeholders;
* Expand the coverage of extension through recruitment and training of existing extension agents and officers;
* Set appropriate financing mechanisms involving the government, donors, and beneficiaries participation.

## Reform options on agricultural extension in the DRC

Patrick Makala Nzengu, Coordinator of Reform, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Makala started by recalling the lack of coherence in the extension service provided by various actors including the provincial inspections, SNV, projects and agricultural Centers, NGO organizations, and farmer based organizations. He added that only half of the public extension staff is professional in agriculture, the other half is composed by administrative staff. As for the structure of the human resources by professional qualification, he noted that 28 % is senior executive (cadre superieur), 23% is junior manager (cadre moyen), 27% technical field staff, and 45% support agents.

Makala then explained that deconcentration and decentralization that seeks to redistribute authority, responsibility and financial resources for providing extension service among different levels of governance is one of the basic principles of the restructuring of the Ministry of Agriculture. He pointed out that partnerships between public and private sectors, NGOs and farmers organizations involved in agricultural extension activities are important; and all interventions should be based on a comprehensive development approach taking into account farmers needs and their interactions with other stakeholders.

He then noted that the public service should be limited to the agricultural policy and strategies design, planning, control, legislation, and management of calamities. Economic activities such as acquisition and distribution of inputs are transferable to private sectors. Extension advisory service and support to farmers’ organizations can be subject to partnership.

Recalling of the establishment of CARG as an institutional and organizational framework for harmonization and coordination of agricultural strategies and programs, he pointed out that the CARGs’ new approach for extension based on three pillars (1) the existence of community dynamics, (2) local knowledge of environmental protection, and (3) auto support translating into responsibility towards individual or collective activities, is adapted to the Congolese context.

As for the implementation of the CARG approach and the achievement of its goals, Makala explained that CARG involves stakeholders into the formulation of demand for and supply of agricultural management advice, he noted that participation can be made through inclusion of the farmers into decision making process, participation in information sharing and consultation, and development of linkages with the national agricultural research system.

## Supply and demand for agricultural extension services in Eastern DRC: Experience and lessons from GTFS/RAF/391/ITA project

Frank Luebeya, national project manager, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Luebeya started by describing the objective, strategy, intervention zones of FAO project entitled: “Improvement of Food Security in the Cross-Border Districts of Burundi, DR Congo, Rwanda and Uganda in Support of the Agricultural Modernization within the NEPAD/CAADP framework”. He noted that the overall objective of the project is to improve access to income and standard of living of rural households in the cross-border districts of the four countries through strategic support to profitable production systems, market-oriented and value-added activities.

He indicated that value chain development is the approach used in the project. The strategy and the sustainability of the project are based on partnerships between all stakeholders (inputs suppliers, farmers, processors, wholesalers, exporters, retailers, consumers, etc.). The project interventions are mainly built around the development of technical, organizational, management and financial skills and practices of different actors within the value chain.

After listing the sectors and areas of intervention in Eastern Congo: maize in Goma and its surrounding area in North Kivu, rice in the plain of Ruzizi in South Kivu, and palm oil in Bukavu in South Kivu, he presented the dynamics of agricultural value chains in the Region. He stated that there is evidence that the value chain approach won interest among professional organizations; farmers develop their farm activities, increase their income and improve their living conditions.

However, extension services providers of public sector are poorly equipped to respond to the needs of those actors involved in the various identified expanding value chains; the level of training of non-public extension agents is a fundamental constraint to their role as facilitator and coordinator of various stakeholders in management of the value chain; low level of organization of agricultural producer, most of which are oriented to subsistence farming, makes difficult the formulation of a request for extension services and the signing of contracts with the service providers.

In closing, he summarized lessons that DRC can draw in order to promote an extension system focused on a demand-driven and market-oriented production:

* Investment in farmers’ organization skills helps its members to articulate their demands, seek services that meet the requirements of the market, and seize the opportunities the market offers;
* Establishment of partnership between actors within value chain is a powerful mechanism of a market-oriented extension service;
* Signing of contracts between large wholesaler/processors and producer organizations can be an effective mechanism to involve poor producers to contribute to the cost of the extension if such costs are integrated in the services rendered in a well shared "win-win" spirit
* The development of producer organizations is a social capital which makes it is possible to develop participatory skills for a demand-oriented extension.

## Extension Funding Mechanism

John Ulimwengu, Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Principal Adviser of the Prime Minister, DRC

Ulimwengu started by presenting why identifying agricultural extension funding mechanism is important. He explained that the agricultural sector development begins with the support of farmers through agricultural extension services whose provision is rarely without cost. Since the direct beneficiaries of agricultural extension are not always able to pay and the benefits of the extension do not only pertain to the private domain, he underlined the need for analyzing funding mechanism.

Ulimwengu then described the public or private characteristics of a service or product using excludability and rivalness criteria to explain that if the services delivered are public, there is a strong economic rationale for public funding and vice versa. He gave examples on information on market prices and weather to illustrate his points.

He then presented alternatives for financing extension services, namely:

* Public sector financed and delivered
* Public sector financed and contractor delivered
* User charges financed and private provider delivered
* Marketing margins financed and private provider delivered to outgrowers

He further added that the operations of extension services are another element that participants should consider for their funding options related discussion. These include dissemination of new techniques/technologies of production, advising and training of producers, and monitoring and evaluation, noting that the extension activities should cover all 144 territories in the DRC. Moreover, he highlighted that it is important to identify which goals can be attributed to the system, either the system is charged with boosting agricultural production growth, or it is additionally asked to reduce poverty.

After presenting how much the extension in the DRC costs, Ulimwengu listed the steps to take in order to identify which funding mechanism is appropriate:

* Options on the delivery of extension services: private, public, or mixed
* Definition of the objectives pursued: yields, productions, etc.
* Costs;
* Identification of partners;
* Funding mechanisms

## Agricultural extension reform: Insights from Uganda’s National Agricultural Advisory Services

Patience Rwamigisa, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF)

Uganda in 2001 adopted the most far reaching agricultural extension reform in Africa, the National Agricultural Advisory Services NAADS program, in response to the lack of efficient linkages between farmers, extension service, and research, a key challenge facing agricultural sector. He noted that the NAADS Program adopted a decentralized, farmer owned and focuses on private sector serviced contract extension system;

After listing briefly the principles of Agricultural Extension Reform, he underlined that the objectives of the NAADS reform program are:

* To increase the availability of appropriate advice and information, technologies in sufficient quantities to all the farmer types in an equitable and cost-effective manner;
* To assure the quality of advice and information provided to farmers by service providers;
* To enhance the capacity of private sector service providers to meet farmer advice and information needs;
* To develop appropriate farmer-controlled institutional structures and processes for managing the NAADS at all levels

He then highlighted that NAADS was one of the most “celebrated” extension reforms world-wide, a new model to abolish the Training & Visit approach. However, he said that the program was not successful according various studies. One study conducted over NAADS implementation period initially showed mixed results regarding the performance of the program; agricultural production statistics consistently showed a steady decline in real growth in agricultural output from 7.9% in 2000/01 to 0.7% in 2007/08. The national service delivery surveys conducted over the same period also revealed that only about 10% of the farmers received extension services.

He argued that the reform process is the major factor contributing to these results. In his opinion, extension reform was mainly driven by external actors. He noted that the latter were able to form a coalition with the Ministry of Finance while the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, the most important organization that was needed to support the reform, was largely excluded from the reform process.

He then presented the challenges identified during the implementation of NAADS, including:

* Design related challenges: the assumptions that sufficient technical and managerial capacities exist in local governments, critical mass of private service providers exist, public extension staff would be laid off and retooled to private sector service provision, and individual farmers and farmer groups have capacity to demand, co-fund and control the service, were not verified.
* Implementation related challenges: harmonization with other extension projects and programs was difficult
* Capacity related challenges: inadequate capacity at the NAADS Secretariat to take on the functions divested from the local governments; questionable commitment and ability of MAAIF to implement reform measures; need for a new organizational structure for transformation of MAAIF towards technical backup support staffing for the districts;
* Political challenges: political interference during implementation, elite capture of the program, no institutional compliance by other institutions with mandates that complement the reform, the reform program was implemented in a transitory political environment;

He then summarized the following lessons learned from NAADS program experience:

* A far reaching extension reform like NAADS needs to be slowly and incrementally implemented.
* Such a reform needs to be approached from a system perspective where other complimenting components such as agricultural research and education are concurrently addressed.
* Strengthening institutional capacities of key actors is a pre-requisite for successful reform.
* For such a large socio-economic reform to succeed, building the necessary consensus, ownership, legitimacy and institutional coherence among key actors is essential.
* Private sector service provision is possible but needs to be addressed from a more programmatic approach and from an institutional capacity strengthening perspective
* Reform within existing institutions should be preferred to establishment of new institutions. The latter is time consuming and serves as a major source of resistance.

## Transforming Extension Systems within a Rapidly Changing Global Economy: Experience of ATMA

Burt Swanson, Professor Emeritus of Rural Development, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services Project Coordinator, Worldwide Extension Study

Swanson started by giving a broad outline of the traditional India’s extension system noting that it operated at the state level through the different agricultural departments (DOA, DAH, DOH, DOF, etc.) as separate, top-down technology transfer organizations which served different groups of male farmers.

Swanson then presented the organizational structure of Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) indicating that it addressed the following key institutional problems:

* How to integrate line departments, as well as to link advisory service providers with research and the private sector;
* How to transform the extension system from being so “top-down” to being more “bottom-up” and “farmer-driven”;
* How to refocus the extension system so that it becomes more “market-driven”.

He explained that ATMA operates under the direction and oversight of the ATMA Governing Board that included representatives of all categories of farmers within the district, including women farmers. In addition, each ATMA governing board has to include one rotating representative from each of the following organizations within each district: (1) input supply firms, (2) NGOs, (3) rural banks, and (4) any other organizations actively involved in agricultural development activities within the district.

He added that at the village level, different socio-economic groups of men & women farmers are organized into Farmer Interest Groups (FIGs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Their leaders serve on the Farmer Advisory Committees (FACs) and Block Technology Team (BTT) at the higher level which is the block. Many of these FAC leaders also served on the ATMA governing board on a rotating basis. Both the FACs and Governing Boards became increasingly “bottom-up” in orientation as farmer representatives on these

As for the impact of ATMA, Swanson indicated that under World Bank National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP), over 10,000 groups were organized by NGOs and then ATMA extension workers trained & linked each group to market. Also, an additional 17,000 producer groups were organized under the World Bank [Diversified Agricultural Support Project](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=dasp%20world%20bank&source=web&cd=2&sqi=2&ved=0CFgQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.worldbank.org%2Fprojects%2FP035824%2Fdiversified-agricultural-support-project-dasp%3Flang%3Den&ei=b0ALUPnlDoLu0gHJ9-XTAw&usg=AFQjCNE9a5_NTLpyPD0BrM2U-T3EorTe0Q) (DASP). He also illustrated positive impacts with figures on average increase in yields, rural employment and farm income in 28 project districts affecting 7 million farm households between 1999 and 2003.

In closing, Swanson restated the same lessons learned from his first presentation, namely:

* To make these institutional changes, public extension systems must become more decentralized, farmer-led and market-driven.
* To make this transformation, strategic investments in public extension will be needed
* Public extension should give higher priority to process innovations that will enable small-farm households to increase their household income
* Public extension must also give high priority to natural resource management (NRM) practices
* In addition, public extension systems must become financially sustainable

## Capacity Strengthening for a Responsive and Innovative Extension System

Catherine Ragasa, Postdoctoral Fellow, Development Strategy and Governance Division, IFPRI

The extension and education institutions are of particular need to be transformed to support the rapidly-changing agriculture sector. Capacity strengthening of people involved in extension should cover technology transfer, advisory service, non-formal education, and facilitation services.

Capacities strengthening are needed in all the different components and actors involved in the system including extension agents or frontline field workers, subject-matter specialists and trainers, institutional coordination at national and regional levels. Ragasa added that capacities strengthening also extend to links to agricultural systems such as agricultural education and training institutions, agricultural research, farmers and their organizations, input and output markets.

Ragasa underlined that while there is a growing acknowledgment on the need to strengthen the capacity of the extension systems, the latter is facing key issues that can be grouped into four major aspects:

* Long-term investment: Capacity strengthening is often expensive and requires long-term investments, both in terms of financial resources and effort;
* Cost effectiveness: Widely dispersed farmers is not easy to cover and reach;
* Incentive system: Skills upgrading and training without providing motivation and enabling environment for extension agents and subject matter specialists often do not work;
* Prioritization and focus: What type of training and skills needed by various actors in the extension system is often a subject of debate;
* Linkages: While there is a consensus that linkages are needed among extension, it is not often straightforward how to do it and what is constraining the different actors. A challenge is how to provide effective incentive for linkages and collaboration.

She then provided examples of programs and countries experiences that she believes would give light to these issues. They include Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education (SASAKAWA) in in sub-Saharan Africa, the SAFE experience in Ghana, efforts to strengthen extension system in Ethiopia, the US Cooperative Extension Service, the Uganda NAADS program, and the India’s manage.

She drew on the lessons learned from other countries experiences, regardless of the institutional set-up, that may provide specific insights about the reform process of the MINAGRI and the extension system in DRC:

* National coordination is critical, and thus capacity strengthening for this is important
* Clear vision and mandate, with clear targets, M&E system, and effective incentive system – capacity strengthening for this is important
* Institutionalized training and strengthening the AET consisted in skills upgrading, incentives and enabling environment for trainers and teachers, curriculum development that respond to market needs and national priorities, is crucial;
* Both technical and soft skills are needed for extension agents
* Linkages to research, education and training, and universities are key
* Capacity strengthening for FBOs for demand articulation, project/fund management and monitoring, and service provision
* Commitment and sustained funding

## Pluralistic Extension Delivery System

Mary Kamau, Director, Extension and Training, Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya

She stated that Kenya Kenya’s agriculture is dominated by small scale farmers with 75% of the total production. There are wide variations in management practices and husbandry skills among the small farmers. Consequently, she said that provision of high quality extension services is very critical for improvement of smallholder productivity, farm incomes and hence poverty reduction benefits.

In this respect, she noted that the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya over the years has delivered extension through various channels; she also presented the conditions under which a delivery method would be effective.

* Farm Demonstration: most effective with farmer groups with low literacy capacity and who appreciate and learn faster and easily through observation; it is favored by farmers since it is done on the farmers field;
* Tours and visits: gives both staff and farmers an opportunity to visit a successful farmer/ trial sites and share experiences; this works best with organized farmer groups to areas with similar enterprises and challenges
* Farmers Field School: also favorable for farmer groups that have interest in a common enterprise as the group learns together throughout the whole season or cycle of enterprise;
* Individual Farm visits: appropriate for farmers who may not be members of any farmer groups and who require specific personalized extension; highly skilled farmers who only require backstopping benefit more;
* Agricultural shows and Fairs: good fora for exchange of information amongst farmers, processors, agro dealers, marketers; it plays a critical role in relaying policy decisions;
* Use of mass media such as radio, TV: good for disseminating urgent key messages; it is easy to communicate messages that do not need a lot of elaboration
* Information desks and plant clinics apply where farmers congregate in large numbers such as during markets days or at watering points.
* Farmers field days are good fora for exchange of information amongst farmers, processors, agro dealers, marketers

Following the presentation of the conditions within which a method is appropriate, Kamau presented examples of Kenya’s delivery method experience:

* NASEP advocates for a value chain approach to extension, recommending extension systems that promotes empowerment of beneficiaries, partnerships among the stakeholders in the value chain. It also advocates moving towards a commercially-oriented, private sector-delivered extension. This can only be achieved using a variety of delivery methods.
* Some project trained selected farmers to become Farmer Trainers (FTs) and equipped them with start-up kits for their work- the method reached relatively few clients

In closing, she presented the following lessons learned from Kenya’s experience:

* Farmer field days method is ranked highly and is effective as it brings stakeholders along the value chain together, with high attendance it brings down the cost per participant.
* The information desks/ plant clinics have a good potential to reach large numbers of clients and at a low cost and may in the future cater for a great deal of the information flow to clients.
* Individual farmers visits is popular with individuals interested in specific farm plan but may not be members of any group

## Formulating Extension Policy, Kenya’s Experience

Mary Kamau, Director, Extension and Training, Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya

Kamau developed in this last presentation in this the experience of the Kenyan National Agricultural Sector Extension Policy (NASEP) which was created by key sector ministries with the objective of making extension service delivery more effective and efficient. He noted that the NASEP has strong focus on promotion of pluralistic and demand driven extension service. It addresses funding modalities and regulation of extension services. She also mentioned that a participatory M&E and impact assessment framework is being developed.

Kamau explained that the preparation in 2001 of the National Agricultural Extension Policy (NAEP) and the framework for its implementation involved consultation with stakeholders in public, private and the civil society. The policy was reviewed to bring it in line with the recent national and sectorial policy development. It also emphasized the need for the policy to make it more encompassing in terms of ownership by all key actors.

Regarding the policy validation, she indicated that the document was subjected to two national stakeholder workshops with participants drawn from government, commodity parastatals, universities, colleges and research, producers, processors and exporter, individual farmers, NGOs and Development Partners.

As far as the implementation of the policy, she pointed out that harmonized extension programmes/projects are under implementation; the policy embraces pluralism and use of ICT in extension services delivery. The policy promotes transparency and accountability in resource utilization to the client. It facilitates decentralization of decision making processes, strengthening of research-extension-client linkages and feedback mechanism, gender balance in service and mainstreaming in training.

Kamau further indicated that overall implementation of the policy is monitored by the Agricultural Sector Coordination Unit (ASCU); progress is reported to the Inter-ministerial Coordinating Committee. All extension staff is under Performance Appraisal System (PAS) which integrates work planning, target setting, performance reporting and feedback.

In closing, Kamau draw the following lessons for the implementation and monitoring of extension policy in DRC:

* Adequate resources is required for a policy to produce effect
* There will be resistance by non-change agents in the system
* Policy needs gradual implementation
* Wide consultation is necessary to ensure it is supported by all stakeholders
* It takes long and bureaucratic since it has to pass through parliament
* Coordination under one body such as ASCU is preferable.

## Reform options for DRC - Working Groups

Following the plenary session, participants were invited to participate in one of the four breakout session. These sessions provided an opportunity for participants to bring their various experiences into the discussion to identify constraints and suggest solutions on (1) institutional set-up, (2) funding mechanism, (3) capacity strengthening of extension service providers, and (4) delivery method and tools.

### Working Group 1. Institutional set-up

The working group 1 started by listing the structures forming the national extension system:

* SNV
* Technical support structures
* Management structures
* Peasant organizations

The working group 1 identified the following institutional related constraints:

* The SNV activities in decree place since 1988 but no positive impact has been observed
* Lack of vision and realistic policy
* Lack of resources
* Multiple actors with incoherent approaches

The working group 1 made the following recommendations for the government:

* Resize the institutional and legal framework
* Reinstate a new vision based on the public-private partnership, decentralization where the State plays its regulation function
* Involvement of researchers, subject-matter specialists and trainees from both public and private organizations

Regarding concrete actions, the working group1 suggested the following:

* Organize decentralized fora of all stakeholders in the extension system
* Development of value chain approach within the community dynamics
* Enhance capacity of both public and private actors
* Adequate funding for the structures of the extension

### Working Group 2. Funding Mechanism

The working group 2 identified the following funding related constraints:

* Low national budget allocated to agriculture
* Inconsistency in the national policy of agricultural extension
* Weak contribution of farmers organizations
* Lack of financial institutions for agricultural credit (banks)

The working group 2 made the following recommendations:

* Increase the national budget allocated to agriculture
* Operationalize the National Agricultural Development Fund through the Agricultural Law recently promulgated
* Import tax and duties levied on food imports
* Donors contributions
* Encourage public-private partnership
* Allocate budgetary resources of the provinces and the E.T.D
* Promote funding from agricultural financial institutions
* Grant agricultural subsidies to farmers

The proposed actions to be taken are:

* Request of the MINAGRI to Parliament to the increase national budget allocated to agriculture
* Allocation of the taxes levied on agricultural products
* Operationalize direct withhold of a portion of mining revenue for extension funding

### Working Group 3. Capacity Strengthening of Extension Service Providers

The working group 3 started by giving a background of the structure of the extension system, it is composed by the following:

* SNV
* Technical support structure: INERA, CRENK, SENASEM, PNR, SENAQWA, NSH, SNCOP, SENAMA, SENATA, SENATRA, ONC, INADES
* Supervision/management structure
* Provincial agriculture inspection
* Provincial inspection of rural development
* Agro-industrial Company
* Projects and NGOs

The working group 3 identified the following capacity related constraints:

* Lack of qualified staff both qualitatively and quantitatively
* Absence of training and retraining program
* No physical resources including extension materials
* Bad allocation of already very limited budget
* Low organizational and managerial capacity
* Lack of coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the impact of extension service
* Lack of professionalization of peasant organization;

The working group 3 made the following recommendations:

* All the capacity strengthening programs will need a capacity assessment to identify the needs for each institution
* Recruitment, training and reallocation of staff at all levels
* Retirement of aging staff
* Development of a program for training and retraining of extension
* Acquisition and allocation of appropriate equipment and materials
* Construction and rehabilitation of basic infrastructure
* Increase and better allocation of extension budget
* Development of coordination, monitoring and evaluation framework
* Capacity strengthening of peasant organization

As for the concrete actions to be taken, the working group 3 suggested the following:

* Identify staffing needs and priorities
* Educate and retrain staff
* Provide appropriate services tools and materials
* Build and rehabilitate infrastructure
* Put in place a coordination of monitoring and evaluation of capacity development interventions

 **For peasant organization:**

* Form OP
* Support the agricultural micro-credit
* Matchmaking experience
* Training on new technology and practice

### Working Group 4. Delivery Method and Tools

The working group 4 started by identifying the extension delivery tools, including:

* Writing tools: books, newspapers, magazines, leaflets, band
* Audio-visual tools: radio emissions, songs, films and documentaries
* Social communication tools: theatres, meetings, training courses, visits, shows and fairs

The working group 4 then identified the following capacity related constraints:

* Inadequacy of the tools currently used in the extension
* Bad or underutilization of available tools
* Low/inadequate level of training of farmers

As for extension methods:

* Identify constraints and needs reported by farmers’ group, surveys and statistical analysis, workshops, listening club (promoting bottom-up approach, demand-driven and business and market-oriented approach of extension).
* Classify /clarify farmer’s needs (knowledge, competence, behavior)
* Develop a participatory approach by building on local knowledge
* Choose an adequate method: farmer to farmer extension campaign

The working group 4 suggested the following actions:

* Create interest groups (OP, NGOs and donors)
* Collect reliable statistics and develop a database of the farm (State and OP)
* Do cultural zoning (State, OP, NGOs and donors)
* Develop mechanisms for linkage between researchers, extension workers and farmers organization (OP)
* Establish a system of appropriate and accessible information with use of ITC
* Deploy/allocate new recruited and trained extension agents to organized interest groups within a value chain
* Develop a clear and progressive policy of agricultural extension

# Session IV. Developing a Policy Agenda for Agricultural Extension Service

Various panel discussants deliberated in plenary session on the “Role of Different Stakeholders in the New Policy Agenda for Extension Services”.

The first presentation was delivered by Rasha Omar, Program Officer at IFAD-DRC.

The [International Fund for Agricultural Development](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=ifad&source=web&cd=1&sqi=2&ved=0CFoQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ifad.org%2F&ei=zOoNUMTiGaTM6wHjxoDQCg&usg=AFQjCNF3B2RyP7zAoSvfvswL8pvhK0pBew) (IFAD), a specialized agency of the United Nations finances agricultural development projects. She highlighted that IFAD is not involved in project implementation. Drawing on IFAD experiences on decentralization project in Sudan, with a return of $4 to investment in extension of $1, she recommended for DRC the following:

* DRC should choose a model coherent with the country’s budget constraints
* Value chain approach would not work in DRC as the country is too atomized
* The institutional set-up that includes the three components: (1) regulating government, (2) organized farmers, and (3) service providers, would be well adapted to the DRC context.
* IFAD contributions to the Government would consist in support to farmers’ organizations in providing agricultural loans and knowledge sharing.

The second presentation was given by the Deputy Governor Kasai Orientale.

He started with sharing rich experiences of the province: following a period of food shortage, the application of the provision in the legal institution (decree) stating that farming is compulsory was effective. Such specific measures increased the production of maize in most of the territories. The province is even exporting to Kasai oriental and Katanga.

He indicated that Kasai Orientale province has also a monitoring and evaluation system of its agricultural development. The province holds a regular agricultural conference in dry season for assessment of the performance during the previous cultural calendar. The increase in production of cotton is an example of the impact of such M&E initiative.

He also addressed the synergic issues on the field. There is an extension policy defined by provincial authority within it the “plan directeur” requires development partners to refer to the program established by local authority to ensure coordination of interventions.

Finally, he suggested that the role that provincial authority should play include: regulation and quality control, harmonization of all stakeholders’ interventions, and development of a consultation framework.

The third presentation was given by Palukulumbe, representative of farmers’ organization in North Kivu involved in the PIC project 2010 supported by the Belgian government. He addresses the following points:

* There is a trade union (SYDIP: Syndicat des paysans) for the development of farmers working on 12 specific enterprises: Coffee, papaya…
* Main issues relating to their business include : (1) same extension service has been delivered to various agroecological zones: lower, medium, very high, (2) the production of coffee is attacked by disease – tracheomycose , and (3) regeneration of seeds;
* The organization looks for profitable venture; it imported disease-resistant seeds from Uganda through World Trade Association, CAPSA, SENASEM in collaboration with other organizations working on coffee in DRC)
* Regarding the extension tools the organization used, the latter gives training to number of agents, good farmer or farmer model. In addition, the organization uses farmer visits, media (radio) WAKULIVA which is operational at provincial level; the trainers learned and received skills from their parents and regional agents, and friend farmers from Holland, Uganda, Rwanda.
* As for the challenges that the organization is facing: he mentioned (1) lack of involvement of the government, no follow-up or support on what the organization is doing; (2) no ownership of agricultural techniques among farmers “this new person, what does he know? Technicians, they come from school and do not know local knowledge”, (3) no access to financial resources;
* Extension will work only if all stakeholders are involved: business people, researchers, CAPSA, etc…

The fourth presentation of this series was delivered by Alain Huart, technical advisor, Belgian Technical Cooperation

He pointed out that the extension system in the DRC is a complex development model. In this respect, he suggested the following points:

* The best approach would be to identify what was working and not working – disseminate those that were working after validation through pyramid consultation from village to national thematic groups;
* There are already concertation organ with involvement of special groups SYDIP for women, and for youth. Coordination between different structure levels: territories – sectors – village to disseminate the models that work after validation through farmers’ research is also critical. Rural radio is the most important tool to disseminate if the goal is to reach a great number of farmers.
* A typology of model would respond better to the specific needs and priorities of farmers
* Education system – primary, secondary, ISDR, universities – can take a booklet for extension; examples
* Simple models but coherent, conceived by farmers should automatically consider value chain approach.
* Regulation role of government

FAO representative: while the FAO’s support to the National Agricultural Extension (SNV) has been disrupted since 1998, due to donors funding constraints, FAO is still contributing to the development of the agricultural extension in the DRC by its seed multiplication and producer organizations capacity strengthening projects.

## Closing remarks

Thaddée Badibanga, IFPRI Representative

Badibanga noted that this two-day workshop finally allowed participants to identify constraints that prevent effective agricultural extension in DRC and to devise reforms for eliminating such constraints. Of these constraints, the most important have been institutional, financial, human and technical capacities, and policy related.

***Institutional constraints and appropriate reform***

The legal framework, the Agricultural Law, grants the DRC government a monopoly in the coordination of extension activities through its extension agency, the SNV. This agency had been charged with the responsibility to ensure harmonized implementation of extension activities in all the provinces of the DR Congo. Unfortunately, since its disruption due to funding constraints in 1998, one of the most remarkable gaps is the lack of coordination in the intervention strategies of multiple actors, providers of inputs and complementary services to agricultural extension. Moreover, the lack of strong relationships between the agronomic research institution (INERA) and these new providers of agricultural extension did not facilitate the access of farmers to new technologies.

The major institutional reform consists of modifying the legal framework to include partnership between the government and its agencies providers of services in support to the agricultural sector (research, mechanization, input use regulation, etc…), and the organizations of farmers’ supervision (peasant organizations, church-based organizations, NGO, etc…). The partnership will also include the CARG which will be in charge of consultations for policy designs and implementation, and of monitoring and evaluation.

***Financial constraints and appropriate reform***

Government financial support to agricultural extension has been quasi inexistent. On the other hands, the financial means of the farmers’ supervision organizations consist in the limited contributions and grants from international NGO and donors that do not allow a large scale intervention in the provision of agricultural extension services.

The creation of the National Agricultural Development Fund through the Agricultural Law recently promulgated is a major step toward adequate financing of the agricultural sector in DRC. This fund will be financed by the proceeds of customs duty on imported agricultural and food products, proceeds of plant quarantine service, government budget allocations, donors’ contributions, and donations and bequests.

Beside government funding, donors’ contributions will be an important source of funding for agricultural extension in DRC. There will be a need for mapping donors’ extension interventions through the CARG in order to guide new donors in search for areas of extension intervention and to prevent the juxtaposition of several extension projects in the same areas of interventions.

There will be a need for raising awareness within the organizations of farmers’ supervision on the necessity for farmers to contribute financially to the provision of agricultural extension services. Contribution mechanisms such as a direct withhold of a portion of proceeds of sales of the farmer and a voluntary contribution should be considered.

***Human and technical capacity constraints and appropriate reform***

Capacities of the agencies providers of supporting services are not improved to reinforce the connection between research, extension, and information. Thus, there is a need for a broader capacity building program that promotes greater linkages among them. The first step would be a systematic capacity assessment to identify the needs for each institution.

First, an effective extension system will need a critical mass of service providers whether in the public sector, private sector, NGOs, or farmer-based organizations. There is a need for effective strengthening of the extension system to produce this critical mass.

Second, reforms in INERA consist of rehabilitating its experimentation stations, training or retraining of its technicians and other professionals, and improving communication with regional research institutions for better access to foreign technology packages relevant to the DRC conditions and constraints. The SENASEM will need to be strengthened in human and institutional capacity to reinforce its role in ensuring control and providing advisory services, and in harmonizing the DRC seed systems. The SENAFIC will also have to go through institutional and human capacity strengthening to improve its capacity for testing fertilizers and promoting the use of local inputs for fertilizer production.

Finally, there is also a need for reforming the agricultural education and training institutes, such as the ISDR and ISEA, as they are the critical institutions that train and breed the new sets of agricultural extension agents and officers. This will require updating their curriculum and promoting greater linkages among extension, research and universities.

***Policy related constraints and appropriate reform***

An agricultural extension policy has been missing in the recent years in DRC. Without any policy on agricultural extension, there are no well set goals for agricultural extension.

Such policy should target a large participation of all the stakeholders of the agriculture in the policy designs and planning in order to improve the quality and the coherence of the agricultural policy in general and the extension policy in particular. Such reforms have been ongoing and facilitated by the newly created CARG through its multi-stakeholder processes of consultation on agricultural policies and strategies.

Such reforms should also embrace the implementation aspects of the agricultural extension policy. There will be a need for the implementation of coherent agricultural extension programs with clearly defined objectives in the short, medium, and long terms. Through the CARG processes, the stakeholders will choose tools and methods of agricultural extension adapted to each local context for achieving the set objectives.

## Closing Speech by the Minister

In the closing speech, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development praised the workshop and emphasized that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is fully committed to integrating the outputs and recommendations from the workshop into the reform process.

The Minister discussed the country's legal framework for a coherent consultative system at the national, provincial, and territory levels and the existence of a national funding mechanism for the promotion of agriculture. He also highlighted that the Ministry is committed to intensifying its training of service providers and farmer-based organizations using research-based methods and approaches that takes into consideration farmers’ knowledge.

He also mentioned that the ministry is preparing to sign a seed decree that will put in place a seed certification system. “The certification scheme will give score to those that are excellent and those that are not doing well in the seed production and distribution.  In September, we will publish the results.  We need to think in a holistic and comprehensive way. Agricultural extension is important and this should be accompanied by improvement in the seed system and other input provision,” he said.

He took the opportunity to call all participants to take the recommendations and adapt them to their specific context.  The Minister also encouraged the organization of similar discussions and dialogue at the provincial level that could lead to concrete plans to advance the agriculture sector in their provinces.

# Annex 1. Agenda

**National Workshop on Transforming Agricultural Extension System and Accelerating Agricultural Productivity Growth in the Democratic Republic of Congo**

**Organized by**

**The Democratic Republic of Congo Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the International Food Policy Research Institute**

**AGENDA**

June 26-27, 2012

Hotel Sultani, Avenue de la Justice No 30, Kinshasa/Gombe, République Démocratique du Congo

***Day 1, June 26, 2012***

07:30 - 08:30: **Registration**

08:30 - 09:00: **Arrival of Distinguished Guests**

09:00 - 10:15: S**ESSION I: Welcome and Official Opening**

 **Speakers:**

* H.E. Minister of Agriculture
* Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

10:15 - 10:30: **COFFEE BREAK**

10:30 - 12:00: **SESSION II: Taking Stock: Challenges and Opportunities for Agricultural Development in DRC**

 **Plenary Presentations**

* Challenges and opportunities for the development of agriculture in DRC, John Ulimwengu, Research Fellow, IFPRI (20 minutes)
* Constraints to agricultural productivity growth in DRC, Thaddée Badibanga, Postdoctoral Fellow, IFPRI (20 minutes)
* Agricultural Extension in DRC: constraints and opportunities, Ignace Guka Gangale, National Coordinator of the National Extension Service (SNV);
* Reflections on the trilogy agricultural research - agricultural education – extension in the DRC, Louis Mossala Makambo, Director of the National Agricultural Research Institute (INERA).

 **Open Discussion (30 minutes)**

12:00 – 17:00: **SESSION III: Agricultural Extension: Concept, Components, Actors, and Lessons Learned**

 **Plenary presentation**

* Developing Innovative Extension Systems to help Small-scale Men and Women Farmers, Burt Swanson, Professor, University of Illinois (20 minutes)

 **Open Discussion (10 minutes)**

12:30 – 1:30: **LUNCH BREAK**

13:30 – 15:00: **Extension System in DRC**

 **Plenary presentations**

* The State of Agricultural Extension Service Provision in Western DRC, Catherine Ragasa, Postdoctoral Fellow, IFPRI [20 minutes]
* Role of the Agricultural and Rural Management Council in the Provision of Agricultural Extension Services in the DRC, Thaddée Badibanga, Postdoctoral Fellow, IFPRI [15 minutes]
* Options for reform on agricultural extension in the DRC, Patrick Makala Nzengu, Coordinator of Reform, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
* Supply and demand for agricultural extension services in Eastern DRC: Experience and lessons, Frank Luebeya, national project manager, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) [15 minutes]

**Open Discussion**

15:00 – 15:15: **COFFEE BREAK**

15:15 – 17:15: **Global Experiences in Extension Reforms**

 **Plenary presentations**

* Funding mechanism, John Ulimwengu, Research Fellow, IFPRI (10 minutes)
* Experience of NAADS, Patience Rwamigisa, Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda (15 minutes)
* Experience of ATMA model, Burt Swanson, Professor, University of Illinois (15 minutes)
* Capacity strengthening for service providers, Catherine Ragasa, Postdoctoral Fellow, IFPRI (15 minutes)
* Pluralistic extension delivery system, Mary Kamau, Director, Extension and Training, Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya (20 minutes)

**Open Discussion**

**Set up of working groups**

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**Day 2, June 27, 2012**

08:30 – 10:30: **Extension Policy Reforms**

 **Chair: FAO Representative**

 **Plenary presentation**

* Formulating extension policy: Kenya’s experience, Director for Extension, Kenya, Mary Kamau, Director, Extension and Training, Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya (20 min)

**Open Discussion**

10:30 – 10:45: **COFFEE BREAK**

10:45 – 12:30: **Reform Options for DRC - Working Groups**

* Institutional set-up
* Funding mechanism
* Capacity strengthening for service providers
* Delivery methods and tools

12:30 – 14:00: **LUNCH BREAK**

**Plenary Presentations**

 **Open Discussion**

14:00 - 16:00:  **SESSION IV: Developing a Policy Agenda for Extension Service**

**Panel Discussion: Role of Different Stakeholders in the New Policy Agenda for Extension Services**

 **Chair: Permanent Secretary of Agriculture**

**Panelists: IFAD, Deputy Governor of Province of Kasai-Oriental, CONAPAC-SYDIP (federation of farmers’ organizations), Belgian Technical Cooperation.**

 **Open Discussion**

16:00 – 16:30: **Summary of Highlights and Way Forward**

16:30 – 17:00: **Coffee Break & Arrival of Distinguished Guests**

17:00 – 17:30: **Closing Ceremony**

 **Chair: Permanent Secretary of Agriculture**

 **Closing Remarks**

 Thaddée Badibanga, IFPRI Representative*,*

 **Closing Speech**

H.E. Minister of Agriculture