

Operationalizing R4D and Innovation Platforms in East and Southern Africa

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Key messages

Research for development and innovation platforms bring together various research and development partners for synergy, in identifying barriers and constraints to adoption of agricultural technologies and practices. Platforms are responsive to small holder farmers' changing needs through network building, social learning and conflict management; thus an appropriate tool for fostering demand driven research and innovations. While R4D platforms promote technological, social and institutional changes simultaneously at systems level, innovation platforms focus more on context –specific issues and involve a narrower range of stakeholders in response to farmers needs ,such as resolving challenges along a specified commodity value chain.

Key results

Babati district: Formed a strategic platform at district level (JUMBA) under the district council but managed by an executive committee composed of key stakeholder categories; drew a constitution and identified priority areas for immediate action

Kongwa /Kiteto districts: The Kongwa-Kiteto innovation platform brings together multi-stakeholders to jointly identify problems, device solutions, implement R4D agenda and evaluate progress and outcomes of R4D investments. It focuses on maize, groundnuts and pigeonpea as the priority value chains. The platform has been operational for three years. To date, research priorities for the target crops, and livestock and the partnerships needed for research to delivery, have been formed. Meetings with district policy agencies have been held to inform scaling-up efforts.

Malawi: The Malawi R4D platforms are were formed around the District Agriculture Coordinating Committee (DAECC) , a coordinating structure of all agricultural activities in the district. Members are drawn from heads of different NGOs, agricultural technical departments and agro-dealers. Africa RISING provides technical backstopping to this diverse group, that has resulted in successful interfacing of development partners and researchers. The R4D platform successfully organized field trips to Africa RISING research.

Significance and scaling potential

Africa RISING has validated a number of impact based/tailored integrated technologies for scaling out. Platforms do link a range of organizational actors that can promote the simultaneous technological, social and institutional changes needed for sustainable technology uptake under sustainable intensification.

Objectives and approach

Africa RISING program is about increased agricultural productivity, enhanced food security, nutrition, income and conservation of natural resource base, through sustainable agricultural intensification; but its operational time frame is limited. This shortfall calls for an innovative approach that can effectively stimulate sustainable adoption beyond A-R lifespan. Research for development platforms (R4D) and innovation platforms are considered to be suited to play this role (Sidi et al, 2015, Leeuwis, et al, 2014, Hillbur et al, 2015). Platforms are responsive to complexities surrounding technology uptake as influenced by farmer typologies under diverse agro ecologies, social–cultural networks, information access and institutional factors.



Photo a. JUMBA members participate in discussion on research outputs of vegetable theme during the General Meeting in Babati. November 2016. (Photo credit :Gloriana Ndibalema/IITA)

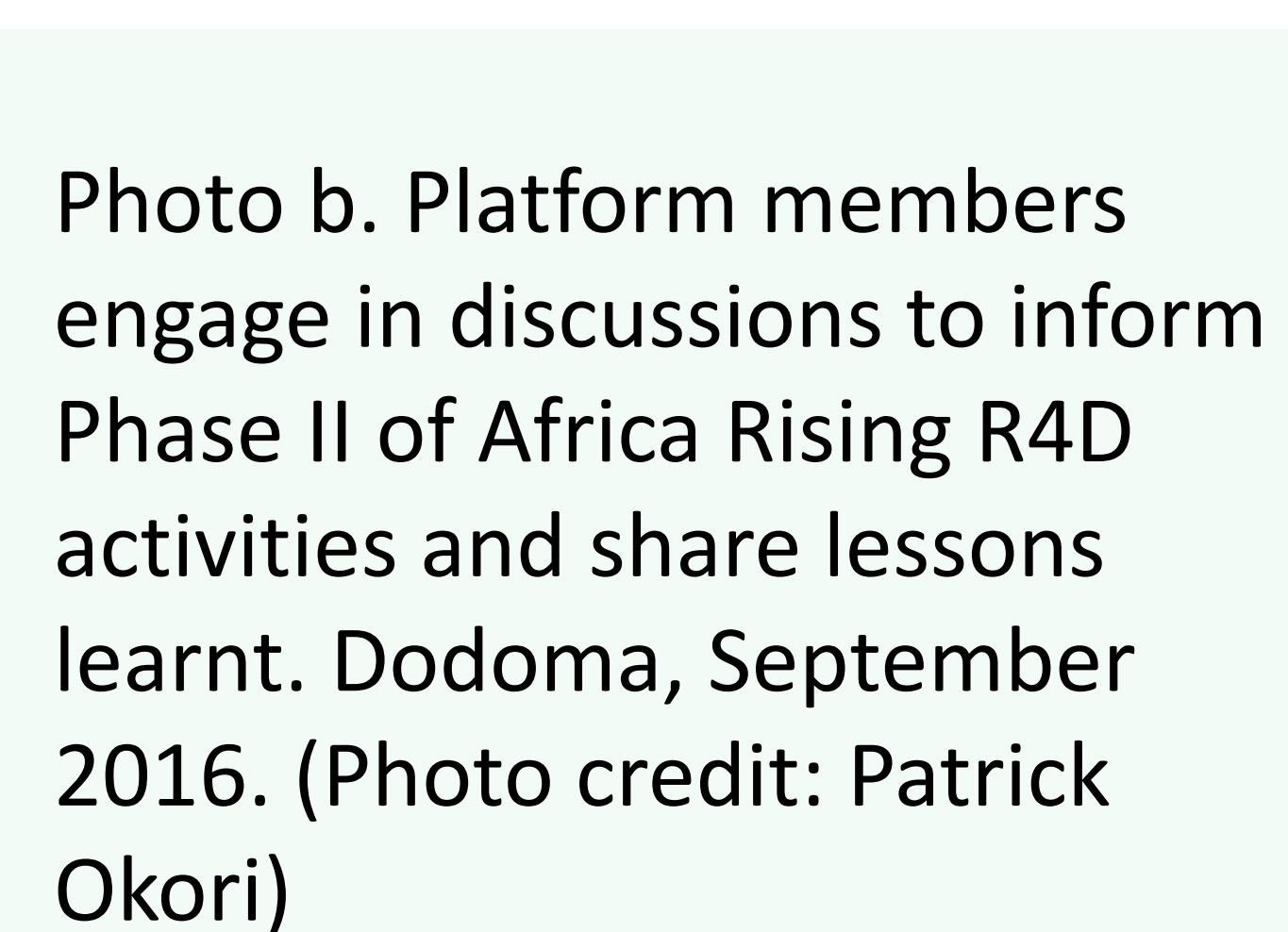


Photo b. Platform members engage in discussions to inform Phase II of Africa Rising R4D activities and share lessons learnt. Dodoma, September 2016. (Photo credit: Patrick Okori)



Photo C. Platform members visiting an Africa RISING research site in Linthipe , February 2016



Partners

