

Objectives of the project

The overall objective of DeSIRA-LIFT is to support the DeSIRA initiative's current and future activities in order to enhance its impacts. The specific objectives are:

- ✓ Supporting country-based DeSIRA project implementers to enhance their capacities to manage change-oriented interventions on climate-oriented innovation systems in line with sustainable agri-food systems transformations;
- ✓ Supporting CAADP XP4 organisations¹, the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR), and the Tropical Agricultural Platform (TAP) in promoting Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS);
- ✓ Making knowledge work for the EC policy (DG INTPA, EU delegations and their partners) and contribute to the policy dialogue on agri-food system transformations for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Background

The key role of agri-food systems in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is increasingly acknowledged. However, this requires that our agri-food systems across the globe become more sustainable, equitable and climate-smart. The DeSIRA initiative (Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture, in short DeSIRA) aims to contribute to climate-relevant, productive and sustainable transformation of agri-food systems in low and middle-incomes countries (LMICs). DeSIRA supports multi-actor research and innovation projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America and strengthens research capacities and research governance involving key stakeholders at national, regional, continental and global levels, following three pillars:

- ✓ Pillar 1: Support to research and innovation in agri-food systems. Projects that support climate-resilient and development-smart innovations in agriculture for sustainable rural transformation through the use, access, and generation of scientific knowledge (combining fundamental research, participatory research and action research based on a plausible Theory of Change).
- ✓ Pillar 2: Support to research infrastructure conducive to innovation. Specific actions to support innovation processes of the African regional and sub-regional institutional architecture of agricultural research for development (with a focus on the CAADP XP4 organisations).
- ✓ Pillar 3: Support to co-create knowledge and evidence to feed policy dialogue and design. Activities that aim at increasing scientific and local knowledge and evidence to feed public development policies, mobilise resources and investment decisions.

DeSIRA-LIFT proposes on-demand and pre-defined support services to DeSIRA implementers, with the aim to meet their various capacity needs for achieving their roles and mandates in line with DeSIRA goals.

¹ AFAAS, FARA, ASARECA, CCARDESA, CORAF/WECARD

Theory of Change

DeSIRA-LIFT is supportive to the overall Theory of Change of the DeSIRA initiative and the Theories of Change of the DeSIRA projects. As such, the Theory of Change of DeSIRA-LIFT focuses on knowledge co-production and innovation capacity strengthening to enhance the performance of AIS actors in their roles and mandates, with the aim to achieve agri-food system transformations that contribute to the SDGs.

DeSIRA-LIFT comprises three support service areas which are aligned with the three DeSIRA pillars:

- ✓ *Service area 1: Support to country-based DeSIRA projects*
- ✓ *Service area 2: Support to CAADP XP4 organisations and partners*
- ✓ *Service area 3: Enhancing policy support*

For the projects under each DeSIRA pillar, DeSIRA-LIFT provides on-demand as well as tailored services that support capacity strengthening, knowledge exchange and mutual learning, partnership building, projects' synergies, synthesis studies and other transversal knowledge products.

The immediate outcomes of service area 1 are increased capacities of DeSIRA project grant holders and their partners in managing and navigating pathways to agri-food systems transformations. The intermediary outcomes are increased capacities of in-country AIS actors in developing and scaling climate-relevant innovations.

The immediate outcomes of service area 2 are increased capacities of regional and continental AIS actors, in particular the CAADP XP4 organisations in Africa, in fulfilling their mandates, engaging in policy dialogue and establishing regional and international partnerships. The intermediary outcomes are enabling regional and continental AIS actors to contribute to the fulfilment of the Malabo commitments.

The immediate outcomes of service area 3 are evidence-informed and actionable knowledge for policy dialogue and for the transformation of agri-food systems. The intermediary outcomes are an enabling international policy environment (focussing on the AU-EU relationship) for research and innovation in agri-food systems.

The achievement of these outcomes will be highly dependent on the relevance and responsiveness of the services offered as well as the institutional landscape within which the DeSIRA partners and stakeholders operate. DeSIRA-LIFT will therefore actively seek collaboration and exchange with relevant DeSIRA partners and stakeholders.

Main activities

The three support services areas of DeSIRA-LIFT comprise the following activities:

Service area 1: Support to country-based DeSIRA projects

The purpose of Service Area 1 is to enhance the impacts of the country-based DeSIRA projects, by promoting AIS thinking and practice, and the use of developmental evaluation approaches for managing transformative changes and developing capacities for AIS in a diversity of contexts. The service activities include:

- ✓ *Service 1.1: Support to the design, implementation and / or improvement of in-project MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning) approaches and tools;*

- ✓ Service 1.2: Support to strengthen participatory research, innovation and innovation support services;
- ✓ Service 1.3: Facilitation of cross-project mutual learning and networking;
- ✓ Service 1.4: Elaboration of Knowledge and Communication Products.

Service area 2: Support to CAADP XP4 organisations and partners

The purpose of Service Area 2 is to support CAADP XP4 organisations, GFAR and TAP in their respective AIS-related roles. DeSIRA LIFT will complement and add value to the EU-funded projects and initiatives managed by IFAD, FAO and GFAR, the One Planet Fellowship Program and other partners. The service activities include:

- ✓ Service 2.1. Assist CAADP XP4 organizations to enhance their capacities, and those of their member countries, to support and manage AIS that deliver impact;
- ✓ Service 2.2. Assist CAADP XP4 organizations to enhance their capacities, and those of their member countries, to provide effective input in the implementation of Malabo-CAADP commitments and the EU-AU R&I partnership on FNSSA;
- ✓ Service 2.3. Strengthen linkages with the HLPD (High-Level Policy Dialogue) – FNSSA process on the Africa AR4D (Agricultural Research for Development) side;
- ✓ Service 2.4. Provide support to develop effective, sustainable and long-lasting multi-stakeholder partnerships between African and European organizations which focus on AIS in the context of agri-food system transformations.

Service area 3: Enhancing policy support

The purpose of service area 3 is to feed scientific and local knowledge and evidence into policy dialogue and design. It will also serve to support pillars I and II related projects in connecting to, and aligning with, relevant (emerging) European Union, African Union, and wider policy imperatives. Service area 3 focuses on synthesising the combined knowledge and joint lessons from service areas 1 and 2, and translating them into supportive actions that will help DG INTPA, EU delegations and their partners in their on-going contributions to initiatives such as the Green Deal, the coming EU Africa Strategy, and other initiatives. The service activities include:

- ✓ Service 3.1: Elaborate syntheses on the achievements of agricultural innovation support-related EU projects and programmes;
- ✓ Service 3.2: Support DG INTPA to play an active role within the European and international communities regarding research and innovation for development (specifically EIARD);
- ✓ Service 3.3: Advising the EC (DG INTPA HQ and EUD) and policy makers (on demand services). Providing evidence-based recommendations on the role of research and innovation in Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) to DG INTPA, EU Delegations and their partners.

Organization

DeSIRA-LIFT was launched in June 2021 (end date: May 2024). The project management of DeSIRA-LIFT is conducted by Wageningen University & Research who is the lead partner and responsible for the project management on behalf of Agrinatura-EEIG. A steering committee (composed of representatives of Agrinatura, DG INTPA and the DeSIRA LIFT project team) is responsible for the monitoring of the planning, implementation and results of DeSIRA- LIFT.

The implementing organizations, on behalf of Agrinatura-EEIG and EFARD, are:

- ✓ Wageningen University & Research (WUR)
- ✓ Centre for international cooperation research and development in agriculture (CIRAD)
- ✓ Instituto Superior de Agronomia / University of Lisboa (ISA)
- ✓ Comité de liaison Europe-Afrique-Caraïbes-Pacifique (COLEACP)
- ✓ Natural Resources Institute / University of Greenwich (NRI)
- ✓ Swedish Agricultural University (SLU)

Main stakeholders

The stakeholders of DeSIRA-LIFT are manifold and is foreseen to expand over the lifespan of the project. Stakeholders include amongst others:

- ✓ DeSIRA project grant holders and national partners
- ✓ African and Sub- Regional Organizations: FARA, AFAAS, ASARECA, CCARDESA, CORAF/WECARD
- ✓ International Organisations: FAO, IFAD
- ✓ Multistakeholder global mechanisms: TAP, GFAR
- ✓ European networks and fora: Agrinatura, EIARD, EFARD
- ✓ Other stakeholders working at national level with the research organisations (e.g. farmer organisations, private sector, public institutes, civil society organisations)

Region

Global

Funding

EU	€ 6,500,000
Total budget	€ 6,500,000

Duration

3 years (June 2021-May 2024)

