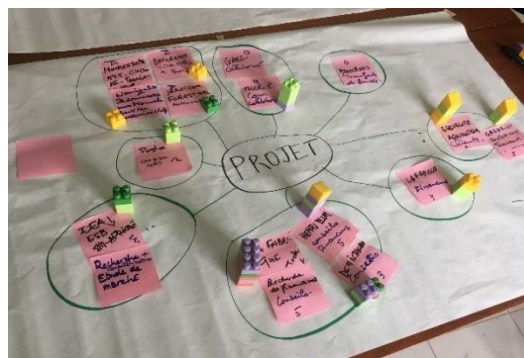


## Objectives of the project

The main objective of the project is to support the creation and deployment of innovation support services in the agriculture sector, in particular those provided by private or semi-private incubators, research structures and extension organizations, in conjunction with research and training centers.

The specific objectives are to:

- ✓ Support and accelerate on-going innovation initiatives by strengthening the linkages between incubation-research-higher education and vocational training,
- ✓ Develop capacities of innovation support service providers (ISSP).
- ✓ Support the operationalization the national innovation strategy (NIS) in the agricultural sector with a view to create more enabling environments for both ISSP and innovators.



## Background

As a Sahelian country, Burkina Faso faces many challenges, the resolution of which requires, in particular, investments in vocational training, technological innovation, skills and the development of entrepreneurship (Integrated Strategy of Nations United Nations for the Sahel, May 2018) to promote autonomous development dynamics.

The CDAIS project (2015-2019) made it possible to strengthen the capacity to innovate at two levels of the national agricultural innovation system: at the policy level and at the level of innovation niches in three key areas (digital agriculture, agroecology and agri-food processing).

On the strength of this successful pilot experience, the MESRSI (Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation) *via* the CNRST (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique) wished to continue efforts during a second phase focused on developing capacities of organizations that provide support services to innovators and on the promotion of open and responsible innovation within research institutions in conjunction with those involved in incubation and in higher education and vocational training.

At the policy level, this involves supporting the operationalization of the National Innovation Strategy (NSI) in the agricultural sector and contributing to the national roadmap supporting the 2030 agenda for the transformation of food systems.

## The Project Theory of Change

In terms of desirable impacts, AcceSS aims to contribute to the deployment of open and responsible innovations that allow agri-food systems to become more resilient and more sustainable while remaining productive or even more productive. To contribute to these impacts, the main change to which the AcceSS project wishes to contribute is an expansion, professionalization and sustainability of agricultural innovation support services (ISS) with better consideration of the principles of openness and responsibility in innovation projects and better articulation between research, incubation and vocational training with policy support.

Thus, AcceSS aims at making the national AIS more efficient by deploying and sustaining ISS that enhance creativity and inter-organizational collaboration, incubation of innovative entrepreneurs, experimentation, evaluation or access to funds adapted to each phase of an innovation process. This involves introducing new support methods that track promising initiatives, facilitate multi-actor

innovation niche partnerships involving public sectors, private sectors and civil society, putting the needs of end users at the center of innovation design, address the issues of ethics, inclusion and anticipation of the impacts of innovations.

For this, the Theory of Change of the Access project is anchored in a multi-level model of innovation capacity development at the country level, which highlights the need for combined learning at the individual, collective and organizational levels, and combined Project activities at the micro, meso and macro levels of the national agricultural innovation system for a systemic transformation.

AcceSS will support on the one hand the establishment of localized ISS ecosystems in three priority areas (agri-food processing, agroecology, and digital agriculture) and on the other hand, the establishment of alignment mechanisms between research, incubation, extension and vocational training, via a platform of service providers and new policy instruments on the financing of innovation.

To set up these ISS ecosystems and promote suitable changes in the policy and institutional environment of agricultural innovation support, the project strategy consists of working simultaneously and in close links with the main actors of agricultural research, higher education and incubation, with the support of about twenty innovation initiatives and the deployment of three ISS ecosystems based in Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouagadougou.

In addition to direct "on demand" support actions to innovators (innovative entrepreneurs and innovation niche partnerships), AcceSS will work as a place for learning-by-doing, offering tailored training sessions, spaces for reflective assessment and experience sharing to all the professionals, researchers, facilitators and coaches who will be mobilized in supporting innovators and in developing the capacities of ISS providers. Different types of technical and functional capacities will be targeted for each of these actors, so as to enable them to play a more important role in open and responsible innovation processes. The lessons learned in terms of skill profiles to be developed, relevant support services, required organizational changes and coordination needs between ISS suppliers to support open and responsible innovation will be formalized and validated by the service provider platform and disseminated with the support of Afric'Innov and FAO.

In order to extend open and responsible innovation support services to other key innovation areas, AcceSS will support a policy dialogue to identify the financial instruments for their sustainability. More broadly, this will contribute to operationalize the National Innovation Strategy (NIS) in the agricultural sector in response to priority challenges set by the 2030 Agenda for the transformation of food systems.

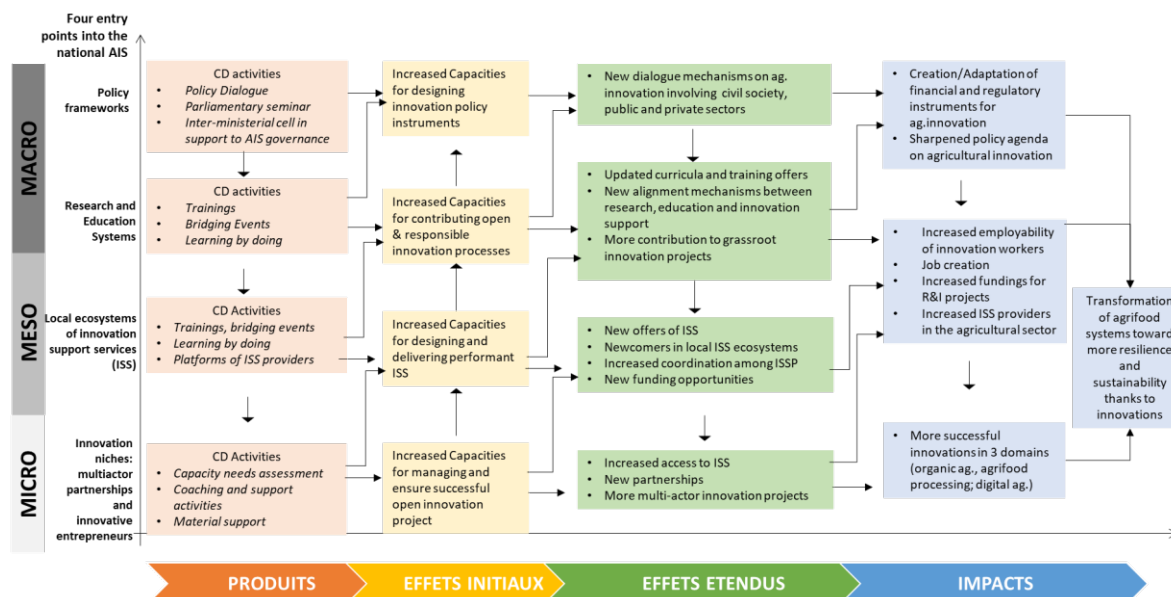


Figure 1 : Ex-ante impact pathway of AcceSS

## Main activities

The activities of AcceSS are summarized in the figure below. They mainly consist of 1) the production of knowledge on the functioning of the national innovation system, on the status of existing support services and the capacity development needs of service providers, 2) the production of knowledge and information on existing promising innovation initiatives in three domains; 3) the use of these information and knowledge in participatory workshops to design CD activities for innovators and for ISS providers; 3) organizing trainings for innovation support professionals and elaborating training manuals; 4) organizing “on-demand” support activities for innovators and for support service providers; 5) the organization of bridging events between innovation support actors; 6) the creation of coordination mechanisms between providers of support services in given areas of innovation; 7) support to an evidence-based policy dialogue on policy instruments for agricultural innovation.

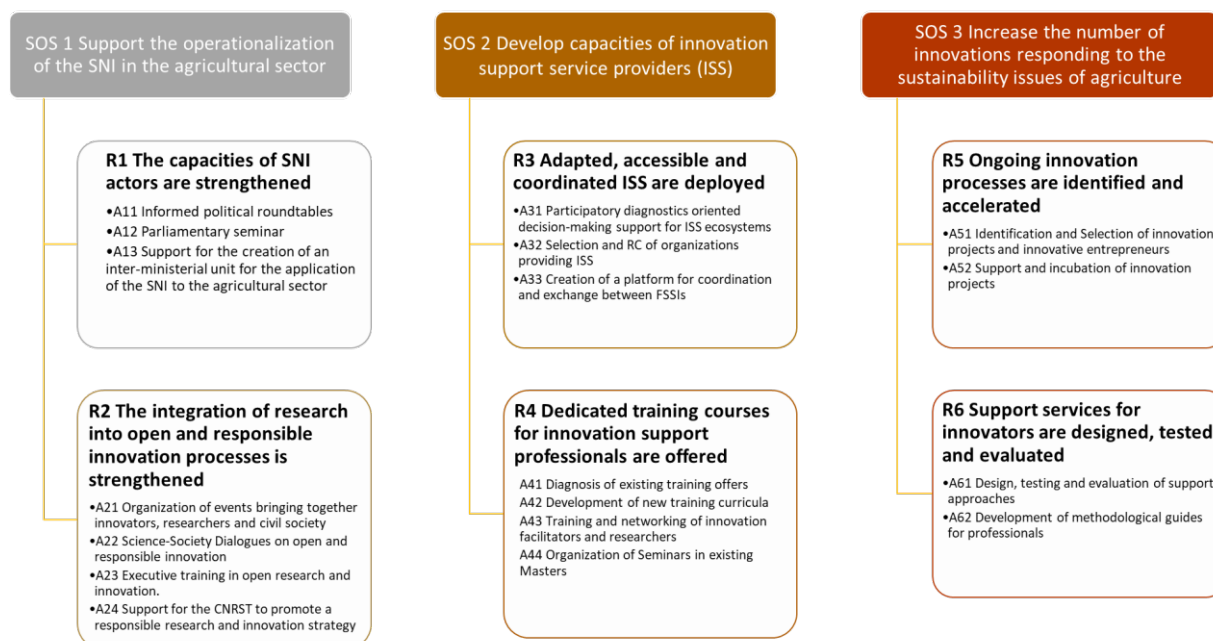


Figure 2 : Project activities

## Organisation

The AcceSS project is led by CIRAD and governed by

- ✓ a coordination unit made up of project managers from each of the consortium organizations; it will ensure the mobilization of direct and indirect project partners, the planning and implementation of activities, communication activities, synergies with other Desira projects;
- ✓ a methodological unit for designing the various capacity development interventions;
- ✓ a monitoring-evaluation-learning unit which aims to monitor capacities in real time and advise on the project implementation strategy to increase its relevance, responsiveness and effects. A technical project monitoring committee will be made up of representatives of DGRSI / MESRSI, DGSUP / MESRSI, DGPER / MAAH, ANVAR, FAO and the EU delegation.

## Consortium

- ✓ CIRAD (<https://www.cirad.fr/>)
- ✓ CNRST (<http://www.cnrst.bf/>)
- ✓ La Fabrique (<https://www.lafabrique-bf.com/>)
- ✓ Experts Synergy Consulting (<http://esconsulting-bf.com/>)
- ✓ Afric'Innov (<https://www.africinnov.com/fr>)
- ✓ CEDRES/Université de Ouaga 2 (<http://www.cedres.bf/>)
- ✓ FAO/Office of innovation (<http://www.fao.org/research-extension-systems/en/>)

## Direct partners

- ✓ From the ISS system : Incub@UO, La Ruche /Mahna, CAP-M, WakaLab, ANVAR
- ✓ From the research system : les organisations du CNRST et ses chercheurs (INERA, IRSAT, INSS, IRSS)
- ✓ From the higher education system: Univ Joseph Ki Zerbo/ Master Agrinovia; CIRDES ; IDR-UPB ; CAP-Matourko
- ✓ From the policy environment : Parlementaires ; agents techniques et leurs divisions du MESRSI et du MAAH ; notamment la DGSUP, DGRSI, DGPER et DGPV ; agences semi-publiques (FONRID et ANVAR) de mise en œuvre de la SNI

## Indirect partners

- ✓ From the ISS system (non exhaustive) : FERT, GRET, CEAS, 2iE, Ecodata, CNABio
- ✓ From the higher education system (non exhaustive) : Univ Joseph Ki Zerbo, Programme STIP; Université de Dedougou
- ✓ From the policy environment (non exhaustive) : Minefid, Ministère de l'Industrie, du Commerce et de l'Artisanat (MICA)

## Region

Burkina Faso

## Funding and co-funding

EU	€ 2,000,000
Total budget	€ 2,000,000

## Duration

4 years (1 October 2021 - 30 September 2025)