



Development of Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture

INFORMATION LETTER 10

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The DeSIRA initiative (<https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/desira>) contributes to climate-relevant, productive and sustainable transformation of agriculture and food systems in low and middle-income countries. It is largely based on agroecological and innovation systems approaches.

NEWS on DeSIRA

1) The Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the DeSIRA initiative

The Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the DeSIRA initiative has just been designed. It was informed by the projects signed in 2020 and 2021 : [DeSIRA Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework | Capacity4dev \(europa.eu\)](#). This M&E framework facilitates the steering and management of the DeSIRA initiative at global level, it helps determine the extent to which the overarching objectives are being achieved, and it contributes to report and communicate on new approaches to agricultural research and innovation.

The global M&E framework includes initiative-level indicators called Global DeSIRA Indicators (GDIs), most of which are built on existing and approved DeSIRA project indicators. They were selected on the basis of their relevance to the DeSIRA initiative, as a whole, and of data availability at project level. GDIs have been designed in a way that minimizes the amount of calculation and consolidation needed to inform and update them. Not mandatory at project level, GDIs are not meant to substitute project indicators or to support project-level monitoring processes. The global M&E framework comprises 28 GDIs: 7 impact indicators, 13 indicators attached to 4 outcomes and 8 indicators attached to 6 outputs.

A presentation of the Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the EU delegations **will be organized the 2nd of February 2022. Save the date!**

Further information : [DeSIRA Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework | Capacity4dev \(europa.eu\)](#)

News from Desira-LIFT

2) Seed policy review: Current developments in seed laws harmonisation in Africa

A new report [Current developments in seed laws harmonisation in Africa](#) on the status of seed laws, regulations, and treaties on the African continent has been published in November 2022. This report was commissioned by DeSIRA-LIFT, on behalf of the European Commission (DG INTPA F3). The publication responds to the need to decipher the complexity and controversial nature of the policy shifts currently affecting seed laws in Africa. These laws have been under increasing scrutiny since the endorsement of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), and the initiative of the African Union Commission to develop African Continental Seed Harmonisation Guidelines.

The effort to harmonize seed laws across the continent should strive to protect and uphold the rights of all concerned actors in the value chain, balancing the rights of plant breeders and the rights of farmers to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seeds. The report, written by Peter Munyi, reviews the international treaties and policy instruments that determine the plant breeders' rights and farmers' rights to seed. The findings show that current seed policies need to (and can) be made more coherent and operational to support farmer-managed seed systems in Africa. Harmonisation efforts should be predominantly geared towards protecting local biodiversity, thus indigenous seed varieties and landraces, which are maintained and reproduced within farmer-managed seed systems.

A summary of key findings and recommendations mapping out a way forward to make the African seed regulatory framework more inclusive and sustainable will be published in a Policy Brief on the [DeSIRA-LIFT website](#) in the coming months. **Feel free to disseminate this report further.**

3) The launch of the first cycle of service offering for DeSIRA projects

DeSIRA LIFT – Service Area 1 (SA1) - provides on-demand support services to Pillar 1 DeSIRA projects, in order to help project teams to prove and improve their impacts on climate-orientated innovation systems, in line with more sustainable food systems transitions.

- ➔ DeSIRA LIFT – targets five core capacities to manage for impacts of the DeSIRA projects.
[Learn more here: https://www.desiralift.org/capacities-for-impact/](https://www.desiralift.org/capacities-for-impact/)
- ➔ The five core managerial capacities were assessed through participatory workshops and e-survey, that took place between March and June 2022, during our inception phase.
[See here the results of the assessments and related documentation](#)
- ➔ A menu of on-demand support services to upgrade these capacities is gradually adjusted based on the feedback received from projects, as well as their support requests.

- [See here the menu of support services: https://www.desiraliftcommunity.org/training-and-coaching/](https://www.desiraliftcommunity.org/training-and-coaching/)

The support to pillar 1 DeSIRA projects includes different types of training and mentoring of project teams.

The first set of Training & Coaching sessions - cycle 1 - started in October 2022. From then on, online courses will be run several times a year targeting different DeSIRA project clusters, organized according to region, language and thematic criteria.

The SA1 trainings are announced few weeks ahead, via emails and on the DeSIRA-LIFT website, to allow for timely online registration and assure the mobilization of project teams.

To better understand the service offer available to DeSIRA projects, please visit our website here:

- [Our support service offer.](#)
- [Our delivery approach and time line.](#)

To follow the Training&Coaching programmes, please consult:

- [Updates](#) and [calendar](#).

For more information, please contact: info@desira-lift.org

4) The launch of the DeSIRA-LIFT Community of Practice

The DeSIRA-LIFT Community of Practice (CoP) has been set up with the twofold goals:

- Sharing DeSIRA projects' challenges and practices to manage for impacts.
- Bridging projects' support needs with adequate international expertise.

The CoP gathers team members from DeSIRA projects, DeSIRA-LIFT experts, other experts from Agrinatura and from the regions and countries where projects are located, as well as the various stakeholders of the DeSIRA projects.

The CoP objectives are to stimulate peer-to-peer learning, capture and diffuse existing knowledge and practices on managing for impact in Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS)-orientated interventions, enhance possible cross-support between DeSIRA projects, facilitate the elaboration of transversal knowledge products in a collaborative manner across projects.

Transversal cross-project learning reviews will examine how DeSIRA (Pillar 1) R&I projects deal with "participatory research and innovation" and to what extent they operationalize the components of AIS thinking in order to make research more embedded into innovation processes and to increase research contributions to transformative systemic changes in AIS and in food systems.

The CoP operates through working groups, community events and activities – online and in the field – rooted in the reality of the various contexts of DeSIRA projects. The [CoP website](#) will be gradually updated to document "what worked for whom, in what circumstances, and how?" under different formats: stories of change, participatory videos, interviews, infographics, maps and briefs.

To follow the Community of Practice activities, please visit here: <https://www.desiraliftcommunity.org/>

DeSIRA Events

5) Webinar on 'Strengthening AIS: learning from past and present research interventions'

On 13 October as part of the FAO Science and Innovation Forum, the Community of Practice of the DeSIRA-LIFT facility organized an online side event on 'Strengthening AIS: learning from past and present research interventions'.

The aim of the webinar was to review the contributions and challenges of previous experiences built upon research partnerships, such as the [CDAIS EU-funded project](#) and present three new patterns of research partnerships aimed at generating more long-term transformative outcomes in agricultural innovation systems in countries: a farmer-led research partnership, a living lab as a new multi-actor innovation facility, and partnerships between research and policy makers. Three DeSIRA projects were invited to present these new patterns. There were also important interventions from invited panelists (CIRAD, FARA, DG-INTPA and DeSIRA-LIFT), emphasizing key challenges and lessons learnt on making research partnerships work for AIS strengthening:

- AIS strengthening requires more long-term research partnerships with farmers' organizations, civil society, private sector and policy makers, beyond traditional project duration, in order to align their innovation agendas and collaborate further;
- The risk to invest in technological innovation leaving behind social innovation;
- The importance of engaging farmers early in the research projects as drivers of R&I agendas, then reversing the research processes for transforming agri-food systems, through on-demand research approaches led by civil society and farmers' organizations;
- The need to shift learning models from science-based approaches to experience-based approaches where scientists co-learn and co-develop knowledge with their partners and AIS actors while developing innovations;
- The need to accelerate knowledge sharing on multistakeholder innovation experiences in order to make national and international communities move together at the same pace for boosting agricultural innovation;
- The need to develop innovation policies as capacity development policies, targeting three levels of the AIS (innovation niche partnerships, innovation support service providers, and policy actors), creating more enabling environments for innovators and enabling new accredited job profiles to facilitate multi-actor collaboration and innovation processes.

