

Dialogue with continental/regional organisations on Strengthening Institutional Capacity of African R&I Systems through Partnerships – purpose and summary

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Effective and strategic partnerships are critical in strengthening capacity of researchers and institutions. The aim of this EIARD Dialogue was to share information and visions of the African continental/regional agricultural research and innovation (R&I) organisations – [AFAAS](#), [ASARECA](#), [CCARDESA](#), [CORAF](#), [FARA](#), and [RUFORUM](#) – and EIARD members in how to strengthen or build strategic R&I partnerships to enhance institutional capacity strengthening efforts in national and regional agrifood R&I systems in Africa. The exchange enhanced the understanding of the regional/continental organisations' individual and collective vision and facilitated synergies among donors to support R&I for sustainable agrifood systems in Africa.

The EU-funded CAADP-XP4 project has enabled the continental/regional organizations to strengthen mutual synergies, cease duplication, and improve governance and coordination of each organisation. Further improvements in governance and funding mechanisms are needed to strengthen the sustainability of this investment in the future. The CAADP-XP4 organisations strengthened the link with RUFORUM with the aim to work together as one cohesive research-extension-education ecosystem with clear roles and responsibilities for each of its actors. There is a need for a further engagement with other continental, regional and national organizations that also play a critical role in African agricultural R&I.

The CGIAR is important for the continent for knowledge production, technology dissemination and scaling. The 2023 African Action Plan will be important in shaping this partnership. But the regional organisations are also important for the CGIAR because of the political backing from their member states. A fair share of resources is needed to make the partnerships viable.

The continental/regional organisations presented various concrete examples of capacity strengthening efforts. These included capacity assessments at national and regional levels (FARA); support to youth incubation centres (AFAAS) and the regional coordination of World Bank projects such as the Food Systems Resilience Programs and the Agricultural Productivity Programs (ASARECA, CCARDESA, CORAF); the latter established centres of excellence on priority commodities in West, Central, East, and Southern Africa.

This first exchange provided space to discuss some areas and convey this the dialogue will need to continue and other exchanges are foreseen in 2024 for which specific topics for further engagement will be identified.