

NIC Reform process in Rwanda

Context

The National Innovation Coalition (NIC) was established in February 2008 as the driving engine of the RIU Programme in Rwanda in order to ensure the sustainability of promotion of agricultural innovations beyond the programme lifetime.

The National Innovation Coalition is a 'Consortium' of the major stakeholders within the Rwandan Innovation System from the public and private sector as well as farmer organisations and the civil society. It is currently comprised of the following 11 members with a balanced representation from suppliers, intermediaries and end-users of agricultural research knowledge:

- **Government institutions**
 - i. Rwanda Agricultural Development Authority (RADA)
 - ii. National Institute of Agricultural Research (ISAR)
 - iii. Rwanda Animal Resources Development Authority (RARDA)
 - iv. Rwanda Cooperative Agency
 - v. National University of Rwanda/Faculty of Agriculture

- **Private Sector**
 - i. Rwanda Development Bank(BRD)
 - ii. Private Sector Federation(PSF)
 - iii. Former Support Center to Small and Medium Size Enterprises(CAPMER)

- **Civil Society**
 - i. Rwanda Development Organisation (RDO)
 - ii. Profemmes Twese Hamwe
 - iii. Network of Farmers' Organisations in Rwanda (ROPARWA)

Strengthening the capacity of NIC was put at the heart of RIU interventions, with a special focus on:

- i. ensuring adequate functioning of the NIC through organisation of regular meetings
- ii. forging a common understanding of its role and responsibilities through facilitating training workshops on specific topics such as the systemic competence development, the innovation systems approach
- iii. inducing a change process aimed at reinforcing its capacity to internalize its role and responsibility in order to deliver as a platform and in support to other innovation platforms operating on the ground.

The NIC has played a key decision making role for the implementation of the RIU Programme in Rwanda. It has also ensured vertical linkages with platforms through active championship of some of its members operating at local level such as:

- i. ISAR local research centres (for all platforms)
- ii. RDO field support officers (Cassava and Maize Platform); and
- iii. ROPARWA members (Impuyaki cooperative for the Potato platform).

Furthermore, the NIC has developed partnership with other organisations/projects dealing with innovations in the agricultural sector (PAPSTA, PANSVA).

In addition to that, NIC members started a self-assessment process and initial findings revealed the lack of strong links between RIU activities and individual members' interventions on the ground. The NIC resolved to undertake a reform process in order to enable it to fulfil its mandate.

The reform process

Step 1

On 3 September 2009, NIC brainstormed on the reform of the institution and agreed to appoint an ad hoc committee to carry out reform process. The meeting discussed in depth how to achieve the new mandate of the institution as a policy dialogue platform at national level.

Step 2

On 10 Thursday September 2009, NIC held a validation workshop of the RIU-Rwanda workplan where milestones and tasks specific to NIC new mandate were agreed upon. It was in particular decided that NIC reform process be finalised by 30 November 2009.

Step 3

On 1 October 2009, NIC appointed an ad hoc committee charged with formalising the reform of the institution specifically with regards to new membership, leadership positions, incentives and members' contribution as well. The committee was composed by Mr Eugene Rwibasira (NIC Chairman); Vincent Nzakizwanimana (NIC Vice Chairman) and Augustin Mutijima (RIU-Country Coordinator).

Step 4

The ad hoc committee recommendations were adopted by NIC general meeting on 12 November 2009. The key features of NIC reform are as follows:

a) Assessment of current NIC members

The following criteria were used for assessing individual NIC member's performances:

- i. Regular participation in NIC meetings
- ii. active participation in NIC meetings
- iii. specific interest for the organisation to be part of NIC
- iv. relevance of membership with regards to NIC mandate.

The table below shows that:

- Four (4) members qualified as 'Excellent': ISAR, PSF, RDO and ROPARWA
- One (1) member qualified as 'Very Good': RADA
- Three members qualified as 'Good': National University of Rwanda/ Faculty of Agriculture, RARDA and Rwanda Cooperative Agency
- Three members qualified as 'Fair': BRD, Pro-Femmes and CAPMER.

Table 1: Assessment of overall performance of NIC members

	Assessment of overall performance			
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair
BRD				X
CAPMER				X
Cooperative Agency			X	
ISAR	X			
NUR-Fac Agro			X	
Profemmes Twese Hamwe				X
PSF	X			
RADA		X		
RARDA			X	
RDO	X			
ROPARWA	X			

b) Actions regarding non-performing members

- A formal letter to be addressed by NIC Chairman to all members who qualified as 'Good' or 'Fair'.
- NIC Chairman and the Country Coordinator were tasked to meet with the new BRD Director General in order to discuss the readiness of this organisation to continue to be a NIC member.
- Contacts with the Dean of Faculty of Agriculture in order to appoint another high calibre representative of the Faculty when he can't regularly participate personally in NIC activities.
- It was furthermore recommended that only 'Senior Manager' will represent their respective organisations in NIC.

c) Proposed new NIC members

- **DUTERIMBERE**
This local women's NGO is proposed to replace Profemmes as a new NIC member. DUTERIMBERE has track records in strengthening women's capacity in rural areas and promoting women to access adequate financial services through its micro-finance branch.
- **ISAE-BUSOGO**
This higher learning institution is training specialists in agriculture, animal production and natural resource management. It will open an Agribusiness Unit in Kigali starting next academic year.
- **Umutara Polytechnic**
This public university is located in Nyagatare District where RIU is supporting the Maize Innovation Platform. There is a high potential for partnership with RIU in that specific geographical area.
- **Rwanda Association of Micro-Finance Institutions**
This organisation is coordinating capacity building activities for Micro-finance institutions in Rwanda. It can significantly contribute to NIC efforts for innovating in the area of financial services tailored to the agricultural sector.

d) Incentives to NIC members

The NIC agreed on three ways of providing incentives to its members:

- i. Capacity development through training and participation in workshops/study tours locally or outside the Country
- ii. Sitting allowances
- iii. Performance–based incentives to be developed later by NIC.

e) Contribution of NIC members

- Fair financial contribution: eg 100 USD per member per annum
- Hosting NIC meetings on rotating basis
- Promotion/co-financing activities that are in line with RIU objectives

f) NIC MoU

- The current NIC MoU is to be enriched by an '**Internal regulations**' document that will specifically deal with details related to functioning and management of NIC.
- A formal signing ceremony of an addendum to the NIC MoU regarding new members as well as the “Internal regulations” document will be organised on 20 November 2009.

For further information please contact

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