

# *les dossiers* **d'AGROPOLIS** INTERNATIONAL

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## **Agroecological transformation for sustainable food systems**

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## Supporting the ecologization of agriculture in the light of open innovation challenges

Interorganizational collaboration between public, private and civil society organizations is key for boosting social innovations that address core problems related to ecological intensification implementation in local contexts. The main challenges concern the ‘openness’ of organizations, i.e. the essential trade-off between competitiveness, control, ownership and short-term achievements and, on the other hand, knowledge and value sharing, creativity, uncertainties and broader achievements<sup>(1)</sup>. CIRAD seeks to meet these challenges by supporting institutionalized multiactor innovation platforms, project innovation partnerships or loose innovation networks, that propose coordination mechanisms and a learning environment for open innovation. In Burkina Faso, three of these different coordination mechanisms were supported in order to solve different types of problems: a research-led innovation platform that was developed to test a conservation agriculture model at the village scale<sup>(2)</sup>; a facilitated network

of membership-based organizations promoting agroecology that has developed the first organic label at the country level; and an end-user-led innovation partnership for the development of agroecology advisory services by farmer organizations<sup>(3)</sup>.

**The outcomes highlighted that interaction protocols were strongly needed to help the diverse range of organizations share a common vision on aspects requiring change while aligning their objectives and activities to achieve viable solutions.**

The most immediate outcomes were increased collaboration capacities through mutual trust and a joint innovation agenda. Longer-term outcomes, especially new technology-related ones, were hinged on the quality of the facilitation process by third parties—when external facilitators were able to manage joint knowledge production and material resource availability in a timely manner, this boosted the pace of the design and scaling

of innovative viable solutions<sup>(4)</sup>. Based on these new insight regarding success factors for open innovation, CIRAD developed an R&D agenda at the crossroads of innovation management and organizational studies to promote the coproduction of knowledge with practitioners on third-party mediated open innovation to accelerate agroecological transitions in the Global South.

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### For further information

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### ◀ Facilitation techniques to support open innovation.

Top: Facilitating bridging events between innovators and policymakers (CDAIS project) © CIRAD  
Bottom: Facilitating social network analysis (CDAIS project). © CIRAD

### ▼ Factors of success of interorganizational collaboration for open social innovation.

Adapted from Toillier et al. (2019)

