



# Contribution of the DeSIRAS to the establishment of the NAIS in Senegal

Highlights from the DISSEM-INN Senegal national workshop, held from 20 to 22 June 2023 in Dakar

## SUMMARY

At present, innovation stakeholders in the agricultural field in Senegal are not sufficiently structured to constitute a system. Faced with this observation, the *Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Équipement Rural et de la Souveraineté Alimentaire* (MAERSA) intends to federate them within an **effective national agricultural innovation system (NAIS)** through the TAP-AIS project launched by the EU DeSIRA initiative. To support it in this process, the other DeSIRA projects implemented in Senegal underline the following strategic points:

- an **inclusive and decompartmentalised coordination framework**, involving all of the sectors and stakeholders concerned, in particular agricultural organisations;
- an **exhaustive national level mapping exercise**, identifying all actors involved, including the holders of endogenous knowledge;
- a **capitalisation system** documenting research findings as well as research processes, **based on participatory monitoring and evaluation**.

## THE GOAL OF MAERSA FACED WITH THE CHALLENGES OF THE NAIS

The analysis of the TAP-AIS<sup>1</sup> project, launched as part of the EU DeSIRA<sup>2</sup> initiative and coordinated by MAERSA in Senegal, has shown that the agricultural innovation ecosystem in the country is currently composed of a dense network of stakeholders and initiatives, as well as of legal and political frameworks. However, at present, these **stakeholders are not sufficiently federated to constitute a system** (DISSEM-INN, 2023)<sup>3</sup>.

An operational national agricultural innovation system (NAIS) is composed of three sub-systems and implies the existence of an institutional framework to guide their articulation in order to guarantee the alignment of their actions (see figure 1 above). MAERSA, through the TAP-AIS project, thus plans to support the structuring of an effective NAIS in Senegal.

The analysis revealed two major obstacles to the current system regarding its primary function of supporting innovation: services that operate **in silos**, and the **concentration of their efforts on the intermediate innovation phase**. As it turns out, other DeSIRA initiative

1. Launched in the context of the EU DeSIRA initiative and coordinated by FAO, the TAP-AIS project aims to strengthen collaborations between agricultural research, advisory services, national institutions, NGOs and inter-professional organisations in order to foster the scaling up of innovations.

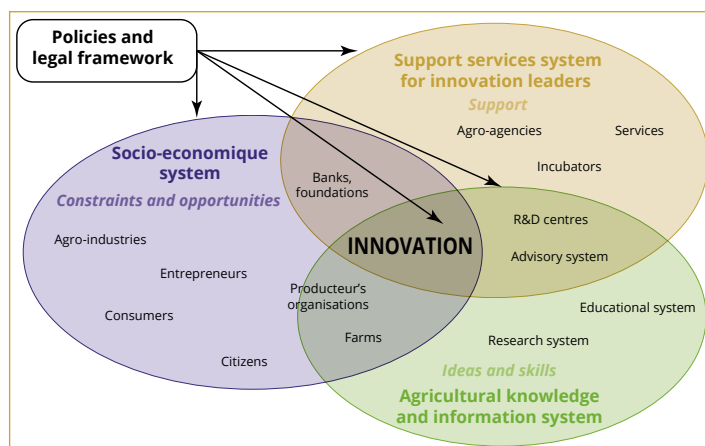
2. Led by the European Commission, the DeSIRA initiative (Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture) finances more than 60 projects throughout the world promoting innovation in agriculture and the transformation of food systems to make them more resilient to climate change.

3. BOURGEOIS R., LESENFANS C., *Rapport de l'atelier Sénégal sur la contribution des projets DeSIRA au système national d'innovation agricole*, DISSEM-INN project, 2023.



For more information

**Figure 1. Diagram of an operational NAIS (TAP-AIS project).**



Color-coded diagram adapted from : FAO, 2023, p. 3.  
<https://doi.org/10.4060/cc3824fr>

projects implemented in Senegal<sup>4</sup> adopt an innovation approach known as “DeSI”, which addresses these challenges, being multi-stakeholder, co-developed and impact-oriented (DISSEM-INN, 2023)<sup>5</sup>. These projects, situated at the heart of the NAIS in that they all involve the Senegalese Institute for Agricultural research (ISRA), offer avenues for action based on their common innovation process to support MAERSA in its structuring endeavour.

## INCLUSIVE, IMPACT-ORIENTED COORDINATION

The establishment of an effective NAIS first requires the development of a common framework to clarify and distribute the roles of all those concerned in order to ensure the coherent coordination of all initiatives. The DeSIRAs suggest that this system should follow a **decompartmentalised and inclusive approach**, involving all ministries and technical services concerned (including livestock farming, fisheries and environment), and **guaranteeing the representation** of all stakeholders, in particular of **agricultural organisations**.

This **guiding role** should be i) **played by ISRA** – considered to be the linchpin of the NAIS – and ii) politically grounded from the local to the national level thanks to institutional support from the decision-making bodies.

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To support the development of this framework, the **DeSIRA projects** consider creating a consortium and collectively formulating proposals based on their impact-oriented “DeSI” approach. These projects thus **express a strong desire to be involved** in the development of the NAIS impact pathway and in the prioritisation of its guidelines **in the context of dedicated consultations**.

## AN EXHAUSTIVE MAPPING EXERCISE TO GUARANTEE CO-DESIGN

To structure the NAIS in an inclusive manner, according to a co-design approach, prior knowledge of all stakeholders involved and of their interactions at the different levels is a necessity. The goal is to identify the mechanisms that will enable them to constitute a system and which will thus provide tools for the coordination mechanism.

To do so, the DeSIRA projects advocate **conducting an exhaustive national level mapping** of the stakeholders involved in agricultural innovation in Senegal, **taking account of holders of endogenous knowledge**. The mobilisation and completion of this database could be **systematised for every initiative conducted within the NAIS**, and shared so that the map is continuously updated and so that **co-design becomes central to every innovation process**.

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Given that most of the DeSIRAS have already conducted this identification of stakeholders at the level of their project, their consortium could identify a working group dedicated to pooling their databases. But to ensure this mapping exercise is subsequently completed so that it becomes a key tool of the NAIS, **it is essential that a depositary body responsible for making it publicly accessible is mandated**.

## A CAPITALISATION UNIT BASED ON PARTICIPATORY MONITORING-EVALUATION

o fulfil its primary function of supporting innovation, the DeSIRAs suggest that the NAIS should establish a unit dedicated to capitalisation. The idea

4. These projects are: ABEE, BIOSTAR, CASSECS, FAIR, and Health & Territories.

5. BOURGEOIS R., LESENFANS C., *The DeSIRAs in Senegal, a response to the challenges of the NAIS*, Analytical note, DISSEM-INN project, 2023.

is to **collate** not only the **results obtained** by all of the initiatives conducted within the system, **but also the approaches and methodologies mobilised, within a knowledge management platform**, so that they can inform the innovation processes underway.

This mechanism could be accompanied by a **participatory monitoring and evaluation system involving producers to chart the innovation pathways** within an analytical framework, from their emergence to their dissemination. This would help to produce comparative studies according to the environments in which they are implemented, as well as methodological guides – capitalisation outputs that would benefit from being used and disseminated by the agricultural organisations, which are trained to this effect.

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The DeSIRAs all include activities dedicated to capitalisation. Their consortium could thus sow the seeds for such a mechanism by creating a learning group. They could pool their capitalisation methods and organise scientific events on issues of common interest, which could inform the NAIS coordinators about the activities they conduct.

Despite their limited means, the projects feel the need to be supported by a **federating structure** capable of pooling their material and financial resources as well as their expertise. It could also **address their need for capacity building** through training on **capitalisation**, knowledge management, and the application of results.



Photo credit: see the regional exchange workshop Report, page 125.

## About the DISSEM-INN project

Funded by **AFD** and coordinated by **CIRAD**, the project “Dissemination of innovations in the Sahel region (**DISSEM-INN**)” concerns a set of **nine projects** launched under the EU DeSIRA initiative and implemented in the Sahel region. These projects contribute to the development of sustainable, climate-resilient agri-food systems by focusing on innovation processes. DISSEM-INN aims to capitalise on the practices of these nine projects and invites them to collectively reflect on how to scale up their innovations.

### SOURCES

- Rapport d'atelier Sénégal, *La contribution des projets DeSIRA au système national d'innovation agricole*, Projet DISSEM-INN, 2023.
- Analytical note, *The DeSIRAs in Senegal, a response to the challenges of the NAIS*, DISSEM-INN project, 2023.

### FIND OUT MORE

[www.dissem-inn.org/en](http://www.dissem-inn.org/en)

### AUTHORS

Robin BOURGEOIS, DISSEM-INN Project leader  
[robin.bourgeois@cirad.fr](mailto:robin.bourgeois@cirad.fr)  
 Chloé LESENFANS, DISSEM-INN Project consultant  
[ext-chloe.lesenfans@cirad.fr](mailto:ext-chloe.lesenfans@cirad.fr)

## CASE STUDY

This policy brief is based on the conclusions of the Senegal national workshop organised by the DISSEM-INN project in order to identify avenues for advocacy aimed at integrating the “DeSI” innovation approach common to the DeSIRA projects in Senegal into the NAIS. To do so, DISSEM-INN collaborated with the TAP-AIS project and organised working sessions based on the results of its analysis. This led to a certain number of proposals formulated by these projects, which are summarised here and can be found in more detail in the workshop report.

