Lesson learnt towards building pathways for Innovation: India Chapter

14th October, 2021
Definition of SAI
Transformative changes in agriculture and food systems that enable
▪ meet increasing global needs for affordable, nutritious, safe and healthy food,
▪ while protecting and improving the natural environment and
▪ promoting resilient livelihood and social equity

Innovation
A successful Innovation is an intervention or a bundle of interventions that
▪ has created a long-lasting and transformative change towards SAI outcomes
▪ can be in technology, finance, institutional structures, governance, policy, and business.
▪ is not necessarily a novel idea
▪ has scaled up significantly

Background
Four case studies from India on innovations at scale in SAI
Lesson learnt towards building pathways for Innovation
Lessons learnt towards building pathways for Innovation

- End-user needs to be placed at the center of the innovation via end-user engagement and development of tailored context specific solutions

- Partnerships that are crafted based on the needs of the innovation program, managed rigorously and evolving based on the changing context drive success

- Leveraging formal and informal networks/organization in the producer ecosystem (FPOs, Self Help Groups, etc.) can be an efficient as well as effective way to engage with a broader farmer base

- Support from relevant government stakeholders can come via different channels (funding schemes, new regulations, endorsements)

- Unlocking funding for agri innovations remains a key challenge; innovative investment mechanisms and more patient-capital required
Lesson 6: Leadership drives the direction and success of the innovation

Characteristics of Leaders

- Ability of leaders to influence internal/external stakeholders to benefit the innovation program
  - Replicable: capacity to champion a cause and inspire others, capitalize network, think strategically, etc.
  - Difficult to replicate: Influence from political affiliations and power

Recommendation

- Invest in recruiting/developing the leaders for the innovation program
- Caution against: Innovation models that succeeded because of a non-replicable characteristic of leadership
Lesson 7: Innovations flourish when a mix of formal and informal actions come together

**Mixed trajectories**

- Informal/unplanned actions often sow the seeds for formal trajectories, e.g.
  - CSOs developed the groundwork (a network of farmers or pilots of alternative farming methods) before formalization of innovation programme
  - Private sector leader investing in preliminary development of a sector-wide solution and reaching out informally to other players to set-up a multistakeholder initiative

**Recommendation**

- Invest in creating space for informal action and interaction, e.g. networking platforms, innovation hubs.
Lesson 8: A strategically crafted but continuously evolving bundle of interventions is essential

Complementary Interventions

- Bundling of interventions necessary to address different needs/challenges in innovation trajectory:
  - With in zone of influence (develop market, develop partners, technology development, etc.): Investment from initiator
  - Outside (e.g. policy shift or value chain development required for private sector programme, etc.): Collaborate (multi stakeholder initiatives, PPPs)

- Bundling happens both proactively and reactively
  - Proactive: Determined by initiator’s vision and horizon of planning
  - Reactively: Determined by ability to respond to learnings and changing context

Recommendation

- Invest in capacity of innovators to keep the bundle of interventions effective by
  - strategizing for a reasonable time horizon,
  - remaining responsive to new findings
  - Identifying partners for interventions beyond the zone of influence
Lesson 9: Trust building with key stakeholders is essential for long term sustainability

Trust

- Trust among the different stakeholders
  - Trust between partners
  - Trust of funders
  - Trust of the end-users

- Instruments of trust building:
  - Relevant and targeted evidence generation (e.g. a successful pilot, testimonial from peer-farmers, transparent availability of data on a key concern)
  - Communication and active relationship building
  - Alignment in long-term vision and co-creation

Recommendation

- Investment in instruments that establish trust with all the key stakeholders
- Invest in understanding stakeholder motivation and behaviour to keep the instruments of trust targeted
Thank you.