

Neuchâtel Initiative

Minutes of the

13th Annual Meeting of the Neuchâtel Initiative

Montpellier, 26th to 29th November 2007

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1 Introduction

The Neuchâtel Initiative (NI) is an informal platform of experts for rural and agricultural advisory services that had been established 13 years ago. In this forum, major bilateral and multilateral donor organisations of the North are affiliated; additionally several resource organisations and universities are participating during annual meetings. The initiative is informal in the sense that it works without a permanent secretariat. It meets once a year on a voluntary basis in different locations. Due to the expertise and the quality of NI products (common frameworks), the initiative is leading in policy dialogue on agricultural and rural advisory services. It publishes harmonised common frameworks on policies, implementation and monitoring of agricultural advisory services for development assistance as joint products. These common frameworks are covering various topics of extension (which can be downloaded from the NI website www.neuchatelinitiative.net) and are used as internationally recognised reference documents for the implementation of extension programs and the harmonisation between different stakeholders (e.g. donors) in the development of agricultural services.

2 13th annual consultation meeting of the Neuchâtel Initiative 26th - 29th November 2007

The 13th annual consultation meeting of the Neuchâtel initiative took place in Montpellier, at the “*Hotel de Massane*”. The meeting was hosted and organized by the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD).

The meeting was officially opened by Mr G. Saint Martin, Director of European and International relations of CIRAD. His speech was followed by a speech of Mrs A. Legile (AFD) who introduced the main activities carried out by AFD in the field of rural development.

After the official opening, the facilitator, Daniel Roduner (Agridea), presented the **objectives of the meeting**:

1. To decide on the future of NI; this includes:
 - Review of the current position and commitments of affiliates,
 - Set-up of NI, with regard to the NI resource centre (NIRC)
 - Topics of NI
 - Funding of NI
2. To finalize the common framework on MOAAS;
 - last comments, decision on funding for editing, printing and distribution
3. Exchange and networking

3 The future of NI

3.1 NI and NI resource centre

Exchanges were initiated based on the presentation of Mrs M. Blum (FAO) who reminded the chronology of decisions and activities since the NI annual consultation meeting in Vienna in November 2006.

Mrs M. Blum also presented the NI objectives, outcomes and main activities as they were redefined by the working group who met in Eschborn (March 2007). Based on the concept paper on the NIRC, Magdalena Blum, visualized the proposed formal structure of the NI resource centre, and reiterated FAOs interest in hosting the NIRC.

While the previous agreed objectives, outcomes and activities were not discussed in depth, the discussion crystallised on the formalization issue and specifically on:

- Which organisation / donor agency is interested in supporting such a resource centre? And more specifically,
- How would the resource centre be financed?

The objective of NI needed to be re-assessed before reaching a common understanding on how to formalize its structure, if at all. The potential hosting institution of NIRC was to be discussed subsequently. The NI group was split into two groups: the donor representatives were to discuss and take clear decisions, while the 'thematic expert group' was to prepare a proposal on 'what if NI will change its status'.

Key decisions by NI affiliates (representatives of donor agencies)

- **NI is not a donor consultation group anymore.** NI has functioned like a thematic platform on extension services, and shall be recognised as such in the future.
- **The NI resource centre is not an urgent topic** at the moment; nor the formalisation of NI. As no donor is willing to finance the structural costs of the centre, the discussion of NIRC shall not be continued during the meeting.
- The donor agencies have an **interest in institutional strengthening and capacity building** in NI related topics in the South (especially in Sub-Saharan Africa).
- The NI thematic group shall **elaborate a proposal** on how to interact, exchange, collaborate with partners in the South for building capacities on **pro-poor MOAAS**. The proposal is to be presented to the **GDPRD** towards the end of 2008.

Draft-Proposal by the thematic expert group

- *NI shall remain as a thematic network (for sharing, learning and exchanging)*
- *The NI network can offer expertise in an organised way*
- *There is a vacuum on extension / agricultural advisory services (in policies and programs); NI could fill this vacuum*
- *New forms of collaboration should be discussed (i.e. is the network offering consultation services and becomes an 'NI Ltd', or should it rather foster exchange and learning and remain a platform / loose network*

- *In any case, a clear concept note for attracting funding (collaborative initiatives) with the South are needed.*

These ideas were only commented briefly; many questions regarding the membership, the value added and comparative advantage were raised. Nevertheless, as many ideas were similar to the decisions taken by the ‘donor group’, the participants concentrated on discussing the consequences and next steps related to the new focus of NI.

3.1.1 NI to focus on institutional strengthening and capacity building in Africa

To ensure the continuity of the dynamic developed since the beginning of the NI, the participants decided to focus future NI activities on “*institutional strengthening and capacity building*” in Sub-Saharan Africa.

More specifically:

- Activities will be focused on Africa (to start with on Sub-Saharan Africa)
- Activities shall be linked to the framework of CADDP
- NI should propose to the GDPRD (November 2008), where and with whom, a long term (10 years) institutional strengthening and capacity building should be done in the South.

3.1.2 Steps for the proposal elaboration

The rather open statement on “*institutional strengthening and capacity building*” shall be discussed and narrowed down in a working group meeting in February / March, 2008. The hosting will be organised by EU; if possible potential partners from the South (i.e. AFAAS) shall participate.

During the meeting in February 2008, the concrete ToRs of the exploration phase will be elaborated. This includes also the decision on the ‘entry points’ of the exploration itself (i.e. Ministries, Networks, NGOs, and Farmer Organisations).

Roadmap for exploring the role and possibilities of NI in supporting “*institutional strengthening and capacity building*” in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Activity / Output	Date	Responsible
2 page-concept-note is sent to all affiliates	07.12.2007	Ian Christoplos, Guy Faure, Magdalena Blum, Daniel Roduner
Share the concept note with GDPRD	December 2007	Willi Graf (SDC), Lasse Krantz (Sida)
Share the concept note with IFPRI	January 2008	Magdalena Blum (FAO), Joachim Hofer (GTZ)

Activity / Output	Date	Responsible
Joint elaboration of ToR for the exploration phase of 2008; 2 day workshop in Brussels	February or early March 2008	Facilitation: Daniel Roduner (Agridea/SDC) Participants: Interested NI affiliates & thematic resource persons that will conduct the exploration in 2008 ¹
Revise the TOR with the NI core group & GDPRD	March 2008	Daniel Roduner & ADA, Danida, FAO, GTZ, IFAD, SDC, Sida, EU, WB
Exploration missions	May to July 2008	Mandated consultants / competence centres (NI working team)
Elaborate report on findings, opportunities + principles	August 2008	NI working team
Review these with partners (South and North)	September 2008	NI working team
Dialogue between NI and South partners	October 2008	NI core team
Southern partners present the proposal during the NI meeting; final adjustments are made for the presentation for GDPRD	November 2008 in Africa	Facilitation: Daniel Roduner

Comments:

- Participants noted that CAADP has its own reflexion which is animated by IFRPI; suggestions were made to strengthen contacts with IFPRI (already initiated by GTZ and FAO).
- Participants emphasised on the need to deeply analyse activities, functioning and achievements of pillar four of CAADP (*Agricultural research, technology dissemination and adoption*) in order to elaborate proposals which will fit and add value to it.

3.1.3 Funding of the exploration phase

Several NI affiliates (thus far SDC, Sida, GTZ and IFAD) have pledged resources - which they will confirm before the end of 2007 - for this consultation process during 2008.

¹ The members involved in the dynamics of concept note elaboration are: CIRAD, FAO, NRI, GDR, AGRIDEA, inter-réseau (to be confirmed), B.Swanson (as a resource person)

Pledged resources

SIDA	25 000 euros
EC	No commitment during the NI meeting
FAO	2 weeks of work of M. Blum
IFAD	10 000 euros
SDC	25 000 euros + additional amount for moderation
GTZ	25 000 euros + 1 month of work of J. Hofer
ADA	No commitment during the NI meeting
AFD	No commitment during the NI meeting

Even though no precise budget has been elaborated, if the pledged resources are confirmed, there should not be a financial constraint for implementing the foreseen exploration phase in 2008. Nevertheless, the financial means and the time allocation will dictate the level and detail of exploration during 2008.

3.1.4 Hosting of 2008 annual meeting

There is a consensus that the 2008 annual meeting should be held in Africa.

Two proposals are made:

1. A meeting in Africa organised (not funded) by AFAAS-EU. EU will confirm in December 2007, whether AFAAS is organising a meeting in October / November 2008, where NI could participate and / or attach its joint meeting with AFAAS.
2. A meeting in Nairobi organised (not funded) by GTZ as a fall back option.

4 The common Framework on MOAAS

4.1 Remarks for editing the final draft

The final draft of the CF on MOAAS is commented by the participants.

Remarks for editing	Action
Study is limited to ongoing projects which is different from the real world	This will be commented
Missing: oligopolistic situation in various countries (collection, inputs, markets)	Will be considered
Missing: education of farmers	Will be considered
Missing: in the foreword the aim of the booklet + the benefit of it	Part of the introduction
Missing: key references also in the text	No references in the text (only key references)
Research should be more prominent	Will be considered
Missing: access to financial services	Will be considered
Clarify what projects/regions are the basis of the CF	Part of the annex (list)
Clearer recommendations for donors	Will be reformulated
Missing: what is the role of CBO, farmers org. self-help groups	Will be considered
Is it sufficient to distinguish between public and private? There are other forms, mix of organisations, etc. (agreements)	Difficult to add; Other topic; Will not be considered
There are differences between value chain (geographic, products)	Difficult to add; Other topic; Will not be considered
Should A.S. also address the commodity "labour" ?	Difficult to add; Will not be considered
Foreword: relation to other C.F. (evidences + experiences)	Part of the introduction
Need to mention: it is important to asses the existing system (know all the service providers)	Will be considered
How to ensure to get the poor farmers, when working with de value chain (power relations)?	Will be considered
Terms to look at: certification, hard services	Will be considered
Clarify the ideas of subsidies + ,public reform	Will be considered
How to operationalise the common framework?	Difficult to add; Other topic; Will not be considered; Is part of NI 2008

Green light is given for editing and printing of the final draft of CF on MOAAS, providing the above actions are being undertaken. CTA has offered financial resources for the printing costs of the CF in English, French and Spanish; Agridea will send a proposal to CTA.

A **chronogram** is elaborated, including translation of the CF in French and Spanish by CIRAD.

Activity / Output	Responsible	Date
Adapt the CF (integrate remarks, and comments)	Ian, Sanne, Elisabeth	January 08 (in pdf on the website before)
Final Editing	Agridea	March 2008
Organize printing and finance with CTA	Agridea	March 2008
Translation into French and Spanish	CIRAD	March 2008
Printing	Agridea	June/July 2008
Distribution by Mail	Agridea	August - October 2008
Presentation / Launch of CF MOAAS	NI	Consultation Meeting 2008

The adaptation of the document will not bring any additional cost as there is spare time left on the contract of the editors (I. Christoplos, S. Chipeta, E. Katz). The final version will be available as a pdf file on the NI website in January 2008.

5 Exchanges and Networking

5.1 Draft Framework and Indicators for Possible Worldwide Extension Study, Presentation of Burt Swanson

(The presentation is available from Burt Swanson (swansonb@uiuc.edu) or Daniel Roduner (daniel.roduner@agridea.ch))

NI showed an interest in participating / supporting the study. Several questions must be discussed, before interested agencies (SIDA, SDC, FAO) will make decisions; Burt Swanson is asked to continue bilateral discussions. The study on Indicators on Extension Services is potentially part of the NI program 2008 and could be linked to the exploration phase in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The main comments from the NI affiliates were:

- What is the scope of the study? Many organisms work on extension, it seems to be too broad.
- The focus is on quantitative data. Additional qualitative research is needed
- The purpose of the study needs to be clarified.
- The study looks at the supply side, not at the demand side.
- Quality issues are missing (disadvantages of system?).
- Too ambitious worldwide, better only in Africa.
- Following questions should be integrated: what are current trends? What is working + what is not working?
- Set clear boundaries of what can be achieved with the survey.
- Review of assumptions is proposed.

General comment: The baseline study on AAS can be included in the proposal to GDPRD.

5.2 NI and NI Resource Center - Initiatives, options, issues ; Presentation by Magdalena Blum

(The presentation is available from Magdalena Blum (Magdalena.Blum@fao.org) or Daniel Roduner (daniel.roduner@agridea.ch).

The presentation aimed at presenting the activities since the Vienna meeting in 2006, as well as NI objectives, outcomes and main activities as they were redefined by the working group who met in Eschborn (March 2007) and the different scenarios for the future of NI (NI as International NGO, NI Resource Centre attached to a host organization as FAO, Interim solutions). The remaining issues were outlined for discussion and decision:

- ◆ What role NI wants/can play?
- ◆ What are the priority areas in which NI wants to engage?
- ◆ What NI structure/resource centre is required?
- ◆ Who represents NI? Who talks for NI?
- ◆ How will decision making be done?
- ◆ How can funding be obtained/secured?

The NI resource centre has the advantages to strengthen the relationships inside the network and to have the capacities to act as think tank, to actively undertake advocacy activities and engage in up-to-date thematic activities to the benefit of

the whole community. Although a majority of NI members were in favour of the NI resource centre in March 2007, some participants and donors are reluctant now to formalize the NI and to finance the resource centre (see 3.1 above).

5.3 Global service framework to family farming; by Guy Faure and Pierre Rebuffel (CIRAD)

(The presentation is available from Guy Faure (guy.faure@cirad.fr) or Daniel Roduner (daniel.roduner@agridea.ch).

This presentation based on case studies analysis carried out by CIRAD provides some key lessons:

- There is not a unique model services
 - services are a social construction that depends on the type of service, the relationships between the actors, and the institutional framework.
- Generally the relationship between providers and farmers is a construction and rarely a spot market transaction, where demand and supply meet
 - there is no explicit demand from the producers, but rather, the demand derives from a process of dialog between producers and other actors
 - there is no explicit supply of services (except in some cases). Supply is derived from the interaction between different stakeholders aimed at designing and providing a service or a set of services
- As a result, different mechanisms coordinate the actors involved in a service system.
 - the market: few cases (extension in high value chains for large farms,...),
 - the State: less and less frequent,
 - the FO: increasing,
 - specific bodies (project, service centre, interprofessional body,...)
 - Network of advisers
 - the mix of mechanisms is quite frequent at different levels / parts of the system.
- The tools used to provide services largely depend on the co-construction of the demand, the supply, and the governance
- The profile of the provider is a key issue that determines the quality of the service:
 - Actors look for a balance between professionalism and insertion in the community as perceived by the main actor.
 - Actors try to promote learning dynamics within the system (network of providers, social capital,...)
- The mechanisms used to finance services are very diverse:
 - Paying for services is a strong constraint for some actors (e.g. small farmers) to access services. As a consequence, producer fees are always limited
 - The mix of financing mechanisms at different levels (OP, supply chain,...) is a key factor to overcome access constraints to services

- The empowerment of actors to participate in the co-construction is as important as the empowerment of the providers to provide services
 - through specific training, exchanges of experiences, platform to monitor and assess the process,...
- FOs play a key role
 - in designing the demand, in financing services, in providing services, in coordinating actors, as intermediaries,...
 - but there are conditions related to the FOs' capacities

5.4 Opportunities for harmonised donor support, by Torsten Andersson (SIDA/Kenya)

The title of the presentation:

Opportunities for harmonised donor support to training and advisory services in Africa through the Neuchatel Initiative : Responding to the need for farmer driven and market oriented activities in Africa within the CAADP framework

The presentation is available from Torsten Andersson (torsten.andersson@foreign.ministry.se) or Daniel Roduner (daniel.roduner@agridea.ch).

The presentation proposed that the NI explores the possibilities for establishing a platform for harmonised investment in farmer driven and market oriented training and advisory service in Africa. The platform would serve to increase the attention and investments, for verifying the impacts in terms of pro-poor growth in the agricultural sector, and to create learning from and between the practices.

One entry point for this could be the FSG initiative as country groups as well as regional groups are already established and currently working on developing action plans that will require a level of funding for start implementation. The purpose for presenting this at the NI meeting is therefore to discuss opportunities for:

1. Creating a platform for NI's cooperation with and support to CAADP in terms of delivery of training and advisory services.
2. Regional institutionalisation and up-scaling of farmer driven and market oriented training and advice
3. Explore the financing options for bankable projects

5.5 Learning to respond to farmers, by Sarah Parkinson (University of Guelph)

The presentation is available from Sarah Parkinson (sparki01@uoguelph.ca) or Daniel Roduner (daniel.roduner@agridea.ch).

Sarah presented the some conclusions of her PHD study on the extension system in Uganda under a new project aimed at strengthening the relationships between services providers and farmers.

The conclusions demonstrate a diverse perception about the new extension methodology depending on the needs of the farmers but also side-effects expected by the farmers through a project funded by public funds.

5.6 Visit of 'wine value chain'

The field trip was an opportunity to visit the SITEVI which is an international event for professionals for promoting the wine value chain in Europe and especially in Languedoc Roussillon region (South of France).

F Dreyfus (Sup Agro) and JM Touzard (INRA) presented the context with a presentation on "The quality shift in Languedoc wine industry : challenging agricultural services". They outlined current issues for agricultural services in Languedoc:

- Technical success but marketing crisis
- External determinants (Euro/dollar, 'New-Wine-World' competition, changes in consumption behaviour
- The crisis reveal the weakness of the existing marketing culture and organisation

Restructuring of producer organisations was one of the main paths the new success:

- Reducing costs
- Enforcement of coordination at the regional level
- Challenging new informational revolution
- Facilitating the selection and acquisition of relevant information rather than bringing ready-made knowledge

The field trip was an opportunity for a joint diner and wine tasting.

5.7 Presentation of NI booklet re-prints

The common frameworks elaborated and published by the Neuchâtel Initiative faced high demand in the recent years. Most of the booklets were out of print in 2006; this includes the first CF on Agricultural Extension, as well as the CF on Demand Driven Agricultural Advisory Services (DDAAS), first printed in summer 2006.

With the financial support of CTA, following booklets were re-printed (1,500 copies of each booklet):

- ◆ Common Framework on Agricultural Extension
- ◆ Note de cadrage conjointe sur la vulgarisation agricole
- ◆ Common Framework on Financing Agricultural and Rural Extension
- ◆ Note de cadrage sur le financement du conseil agricole et rural
- ◆ Demand Driven Agricultural Advisory Services
- ◆ Services des conseils agricoles pilotés par la demande

The translation of the DDAAS into French (Services des conseils agricoles pilotés par la demande) was offered by CIRAD. GTZ translated the same document into Spanish and financed its editing and printing. The DDAAS was also translated into Serbian by the Serbian Extension Agency (supported by OPTO International / SIDA).

6 Annex 1 - Program 2007

The general objectives of the next meeting are:

- Finalize the Common Framework on MOOAS; decide on publication, distribution and funding
- Elaborate on future role and topics of NI
- Review clear positions and commitments of all NI affiliates
- Decide on set-up and funding of NI resource centre
- Exchange and Networking

Monday, 26.11.07	Arrival of participants (evening)
19.00 - 21.00	Get together at the hotel reception
Tuesday, 27.11.07	Opening, Evolution and future of NI
8.30 - 9.00	Registration at Domaine de Massane
9.00 - 10.30	Morning session 1: Opening,
11.00 - 12.30	Morning Session 2: Evolution of NI - Evolution of extension services (global service framework by CIRAD) - New role and new topics of NI
12.30 - 14.00	Lunch break
14.00 - 15.30	Afternoon Session 1: NI and NI resource centre, options & decisions
16.00 - 17.30	Afternoon Session 2: New topics for NI: WDR, role of NI for follow-up; Services for 'changing' countries (from agriculture based to industry and service based); and others....
17.30 - 19.00	Presentation of NI-booklet reprints
Wednesday, 28.11.07	Common Framework on MOAAS & field visit
8.30 - 10.30	Morning session 1: Presentation of the CF MOAAS, comments and feedback on the CF
11.00 - 13.00	Morning Session 2: continuation & final decision on publication, agenda for distribution, funding
13.30 - 18.00	Lunch and field visit
Thursday, 29.11.07	
8.30 - 10.30	Morning session 1: NI / NIRC and FAO/GDPRD; NI and regional networks (CADDP)
11.00 - 12.00	Morning Session 2: Agenda for the new topic, Hosting 2008
12.30 - 14.00	Lunch break
14.00 - 16.00	Afternoon Session: Agenda for 2007/2008 & Closure of meeting

7 Annex 2 - List of participants

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>E-mail</i>
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