



## Phases of Agricultural Innovation Platforms

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#### Introduction

An agricultural innovation platform (AIP) is a forum established to facilitate interaction and negotiation of relevant stakeholders to identify, learn, reflect and source solutions to agricultural problems and opportunities. The stakeholders provide a mix of skills and abilities to address any agricultural challenges at any node of the value chain. Formation of Agricultural Innovation Platforms involves four key phases, namely: Initiation, Establishment, Management and Sustainability.

#### 1. Initiation Phase



This is the first step in the formation of an agricultural innovation platform. It includes site selection, determination of the agenda and the entry points. This first step comprises a study to determine the compelling challenges of the value chains of selected commodities. The process is spearheaded by an initiator or innovation broker or leader who convenes a meeting of stakeholders to discuss and articulate the challenges that limit the performance of the value chain. The initiator could be an individual or a team from the public or private sector, who could be a researcher, development worker or private sector player. The product of this meeting is a description of the context and clear definition of the entry point or compelling agenda.

#### 2. Establishment



The result of the initiation phase determines the stakeholders who participate in the establishment phase. A main platform management committee is formed, and sub committees are established to lead various platform tasks. A platform vision is developed to state the long-term goal of the platform and a business plan is prepared to provide a roadmap with clear implementation framework. Ad hoc task teams led by 'Champions' may be formed to address emerging issues in the platform. Through the relevant stakeholders, the AIP agenda is refined.

#### 3. Management



Following establishment, management of the platform takes place in which AIP stakeholders focus on the vision and business plan in an inclusive and transparent process. They conduct Participatory Innovation Development to test and adapt solutions to confirm that they work. The platform coordinates these testing activities and monitors whether they are successful. Capacity building of different actors is done to equip them with diverse skills. An income stream may be set up for sustainability purposes and this may include hosting of field days and innovation fairs as well as contract farming arrangements, agreed levy on produce sold, proposals to funding agencies among others. All income streams help to build a platform kitty to address various platform issues.

#### 4. Sustainability



As a challenge is solved, old stakeholders leave the platform and new ones join, as need arises. The new issues may be championed by an individual or organization with the expertise in that new area or with knowledge to bring relevant interventions to solve the new challenge and the cycle continues, with innovation being the fuel that drives development in the platform.

<b>Mandate Centre</b>	KALRO HEADQUARTERS
<b>Reference/ Links.</b>	<a href="https://research4agrinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Kenya_InnovationStudy.pdf">https://research4agrinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Kenya_InnovationStudy.pdf</a> , <a href="https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258518012_Makini_FW_Kamau_GK_et_al_2013">https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258518012_Makini_FW_Kamau_GK_et_al_2013</a> Operational Field Guide for Developing and Managing AIPS
<b>Expert's Name</b>	Makelo, M., Kerio, L. and Makini, F.W.
<b>Editors</b>	Kerio, L., Maina F.W., ...
<b>Expert Contact details</b>	<b>KALRO Headquarters, P.O. Box 57811, 00200, Nairobi</b> Email: <a href="mailto:info@kalro.org">info@kalro.org</a> ; <a href="mailto:director@kalro.org">director@kalro.org</a> Telephone:

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