

Rural Innovation Workshop

Christian Toelg
Polytechnic of Namibia
Private Bag 13388
Windhoek, Namibia
+264 61 207 2881

ctoelg@polytechnic.edu.na

ABSTRACT

This workshop aims to review current approaches to developing the innovation potential in rural areas, consider lessons learned to date and explore suitable approaches for smaller developing countries, such as Namibia. Participants will brainstorm and collaboratively filter ideas and then, jointly develop an outline for a structure and process for a rural innovation programme. Participants will discuss issues related to the capture, dissemination and commercialization of rural innovations; stakeholder involvement and roles; benefit sharing models; IP ownership models; ICT and other infrastructure.

Keywords

Rural Innovation

1. INTRODUCTION

Innovation is not limited to urban areas with proximity to academic institutions and high tech companies. Rather, there is a wealth of innovation potential in rural areas in the two areas of:

- Indigenous knowledge (IK), especially in the area of medicinal plants, which are known to the local population. Commercialisation, if any, is usually driven by international pharmaceutical companies with no benefit to the local population from royalties or in the form of jobs in production and processing. The objective in this area is to support protection of intellectual property and commercialisation within the local context.
- Grassroots innovations by individuals, e.g. ideas in planting, processing, pest management etc. that are developed by individuals and could be utilised by others. The objective is to identify, document and disseminate such innovations.

Initiatives are under way in a number of developing countries to support the indigenous population in deriving benefits from their knowledge and also to help disseminate information on innovations between them. Examples are India and South Africa:

The National Innovation Foundation [1] and the Honey Bee Network [2] is the largest rural innovation network globally. Originating in India, it has been running successfully for more

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than 15 years and has expanded to four other countries. It uses a network of “innovation scouts” to find small grassroot innovations in rural villages and takes care of intellectual property protection and commercialization with a share of the revenue going back to the inventors or knowledge providers.

The Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) in South Africa has a similar objective, documenting indigenous knowledge. A documentation center IKSC has been established at the University of Zululand [3].

2. AIMS

The objectives of the workshop are to:

- Review current approaches such as those mentioned above in scope, processes for capture, dissemination and commercialization of rural innovations, stakeholder involvement and roles, benefit sharing models, IP ownership models, ICT and other support infrastructure being utilized as well as results and lessons learned to date.
- Brainstorm suitable approaches for smaller developing countries such as Namibia or others
- Collaboratively filter ideas
- Jointly develop the outline for a feasible structure and process for a rural innovation programme in smaller developing countries.

It is not the objective of the workshop to discuss the concrete innovations other than using them as examples in the discussion.

The workshop should have a maximum of 30 participants. It is open to participants from any country; such as, rural innovators, academics, NGOs and rural outreach organizations, IT practitioners, business development professionals, IP professionals, industrialists, government institutions and individuals with interest in rural innovation.

Results will be documented and shared with the participants.

3. ORGANIZATION

The workshop proposed for the IKTC 2011 will combine:

- Short presentations of cases in other countries, the models adapted and experiences gained:
 1. The National Innovation Foundation and the Honey Bee Network in India
 2. The Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) in South Africa
- Interactive brainstorming, filtering and road-mapping to meet the objective of the workshop. The interactive part will use methods such as brainstorming, group work, voting, scenario development.

3.1 Duration

The workshop will last 120 Minutes which covers:

- 2 presentations of 10 minutes each (20 min)
- Groups (5 max) working on scope, processes for capture, dissemination and commercialization of rural innovations, stakeholder involvement and roles, benefit sharing models, IP ownership models, ICT and other support infrastructure (25 min)
- Presentation of results by group (50 min)

- Voting by all participants (10 min)
- Review of results, final Q&A and closure (15 min)

4. REFERENCES

- [1] National Innovation Foundation India Website <http://www.nifindia.org/>
- [2] Honey Bee Network Website www.sristi.org/hbnew/
- [3] IKSC Website <http://www.unizulu.ac.za/iksc/>