

# Influencing Rural Advisory Service (Extension) Policies: CTA's Experiences

Krishan Bheenick  
Senior Programme Coordinator,  
Knowledge Management

Technical Centre for Agricultural &  
Rural Cooperation (CTA)



5<sup>th</sup> GFRAS Annual Meeting,  
Buenos Aires, 22-26 September 2014

# 30 years of CTA...



- The 'Knowledge' business is our core competency.
- Knowledge is the common thread that runs through everything we do – create, share and disseminate knowledge.
- Knowledge is a powerful and positive message – knowledge opens the door for transformation, food, prosperity, resilience, and competitiveness.

**Knowledge is...**



**Discover how**  
[www.cta.int/knowledge-is](http://www.cta.int/knowledge-is)



***Celebrating knowledge impact over 30 years***



# CTA's Strategic Goals

- Support well informed, inclusive agricultural policies and strategies in ACP regions
- Promote smallholder agricultural value chains
- Strengthen the information, communication and knowledge management capacities of ACP institutions and networks

Cross-cutting themes: ***Youth & Gender***

# Supporting policy processes

- CTA: Unique EU-ACP institution enables high-level policy dialogue, hence operates at continental and regional level
- no comparative advantage supporting at national/local level
- Share documented experiences in other regions through networking
- Validate approaches that have proved successful elsewhere
- Multi-stakeholder interactions to guide policy process
- Providing the evidence base for stages of policy processes
- Building capacity of the various stakeholders to influence policies (e.g. planners, analysts, communications, advocacy)
- Encourage and recognise ownership of policy agenda by national actors

# Extension Conference 2011

- Nairobi Declaration of 2011 remains relevant in that it identified the need to:-
  - Develop clear policies and strategies for extension and advisory services in a participatory manner and put coordination and quality assurance mechanisms in place
  - Advocate for increased funding within national budgets and develop and implement public, private and donor funding mechanisms that ensure sustainability...
- Progress has been made on development of national extension policies

# The Changing Nature of the AIS

- The changing agricultural context/dynamics and that of its clients
- The changing landscape of extension and the evolving context of agricultural production, processing, marketing and trade
- The emerging role of decision support tools and systems of the EAS stakeholders, ICTs and the adoption of sound knowledge management practices
- Pluralistic extension with focus on the public sector, private sector, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector (NGOs, FOs, Faith-based organisations, etc.) – (4<sup>th</sup> GFRAS Annual Meeting)



# Why influence Policies?

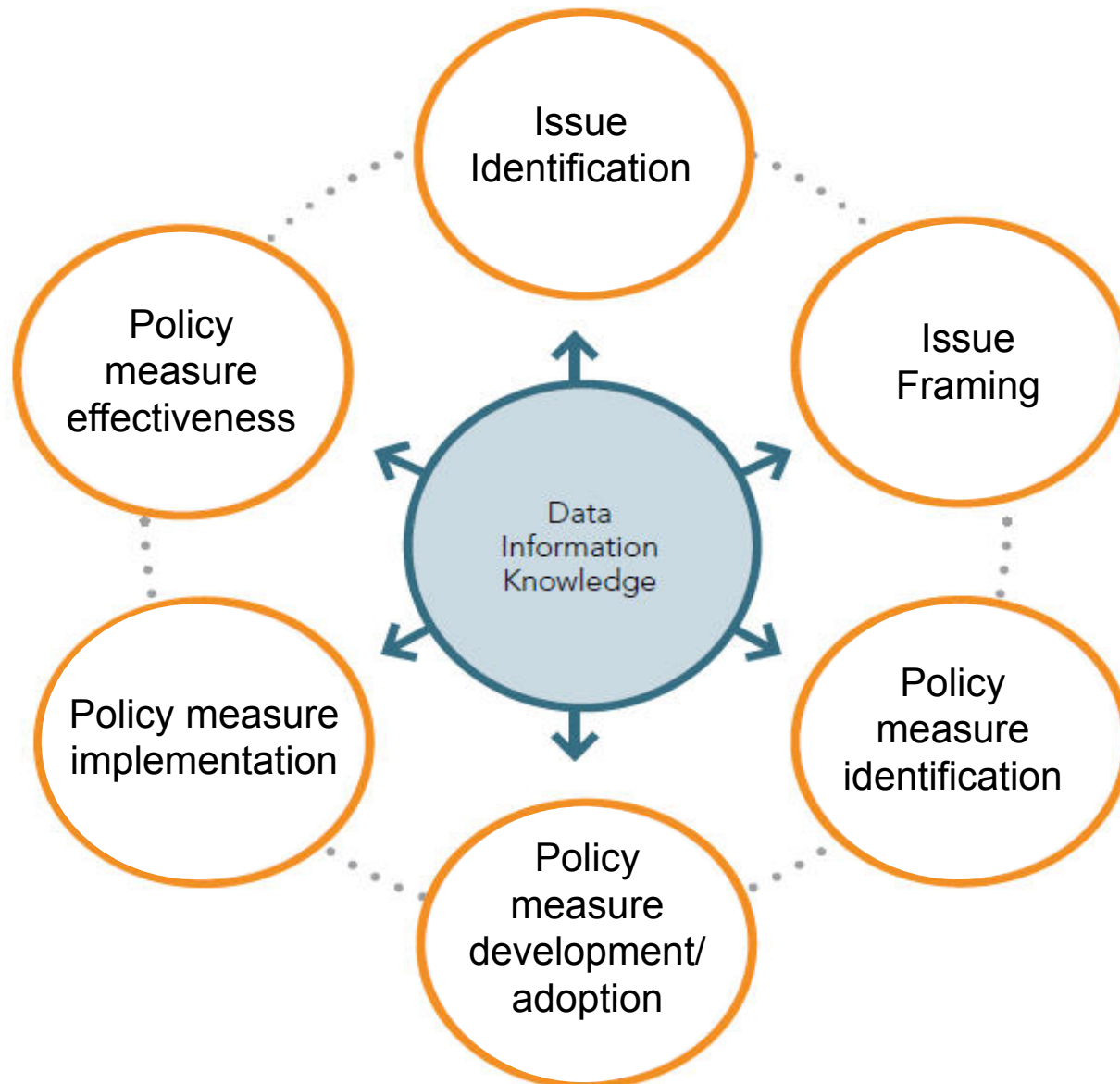
## **The need to:-**

- Influence the general development policies as well as agricultural policies to consider RAS
- Contextualize the linkages between RAS policies and other agricultural (sectoral) policies (e.g. CAADP, Food & Nutrition Security Policy, Food Secure Pacific)
- Support the development of RAS policies
- Ensure coherence and coordination among RAS providers
- Establish a positive feedback loop between influencers & policy makers

***Creating the enabling environment***



# Policy Process Cycle, Actors & Influences



Source: European Environmental Agency (EEA)



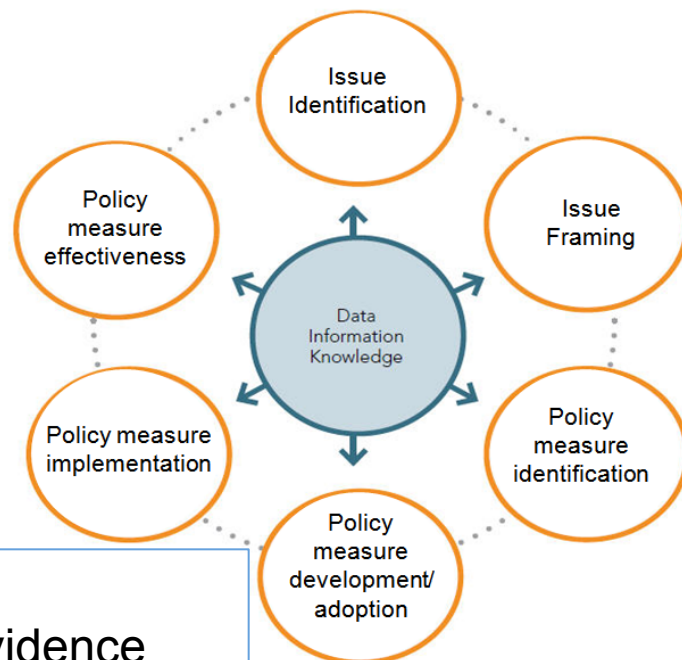


# Enhancing roles of Stakeholder Groups

**Building capacity of the various stakeholders to influence RAS policies?**

## **Academics and researchers**

- Contribute to the provision of evidence
- Ensure robustness of methods, findings and conclusions, advocacy



## **Farmer organisations**

- Access to knowledge to influence policy issue,
- Stronger voice backed by evidence
- Coherent statement from regional representation
- Be present or call for policy dialogue themselves

## **EAS practitioners**

- Contribution to provision of evidence qualitative and quantitative
- Validation of impact of policy on ARD and livelihoods
- Assessment of effectiveness of policy
- Facilitate exchange of knowledge in multiple directions – pluralistic!)

## **Policy/decision makers**

- Briefed on issues in an unbiased manner
- Keeping an open mind
- Providing an opportunity for others to be heard
- Evidence-based policy making

# Cases (I)

## **Experiences in facilitating implementation of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) in Africa:-**

- Farmer organisations (FO) participate in CAADP meetings
- FO strengthen capacity to seek information and knowledge, develop policy position papers, advocacy, communicate using ICT-based platforms, Social reporting
- Facilitate understanding of how activities of the FO are aligned to CAADP pillars
- Monitor implementation of CAADP by FO and seek accountability for non- implementation of adopted policies and strategies
- FO call for the policy dialogue and bring policy organisations to the table, rather than the other way round;

# Cases (II)

## **Policy Capacity strengthening**

- Regional Think Tank in Eastern Africa present in several countries
- Enabled multi-country/ regional dialogue addressing agricultural policy issues while consulting with all stakeholder categories ;
- The results of consultations were then supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and have fed into regional policy meetings

## **Facilitating policy processes at grassroots level**

- e.g. Participatory GIS as a tool for gathering local knowledge on issues
- Evolution of land use in a local community
- Applied in the Caribbean and Pacific regions
- e.g. Farmers Advocacy Consultation Tool – FACT (EAFF & Agriterra)



# Joint RAS Policy influencing...

- What are the larger development policies and agricultural policies that RAS policies need to be associated with? How to establish these linkages in order to consolidate the RAS policies?
- How best can RAS providers establish stronger ties with farmer organisations to influence policies, including RAS policies?
- Which RAS are best carried out through public extension?
- How can we work with FO to advocate for support to public sector RAS while also enabling the environment for private RAS?
- How can evidence and knowledge be provided to support stakeholder positions on policy dialogue?
- CTA can work with GFRAS networks to include RAS in the context of its Regional Business Plans, regional advocacy; apply participatory tools to enhance local voices, strengthen regional networks



# Thank you



**2014, International Year of Family Farming...**  
**... an opportunity for recognition of RAS**  
**in supporting Family Farming...**

