

Follow the Innovation: Participatory Testing and Adaptation of Agricultural Innovations in Uzbekistan

It is still very common that innovative ideas and technologies generated through research are not implemented or adopted in practice because they do not address and/or match the real-life complexities faced by farmers. This is the case in Central Asia as well as in many other parts of the world. To overcome the lack of fit between scientifically generated innovations and local realities, participatory approaches to innovation development in which local and scientific knowledge interact systematically offer much potential.

The interdisciplinary research project “Economic and Ecological Restructuring of Land and Water in the Region Khorezm (Uzbekistan): A Pilot Project in Development Research”, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and implemented by the Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, Germany, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), undertook to develop and put into practice a participatory approach to innovation development adapted to the realities of Uzbekistan. As this approach consists of a series of logical steps to systematically bring relevant stakeholders and end-users into the innovation process and to further develop the innovation at hand in a collaborative way, the research team coined it the “Follow-the-Innovation (FTI)” approach.

These guidelines bring together the main lessons learnt with regard to the design and implementation of FTI in the post-Soviet setting of rural Uzbekistan. They are meant to inspire researchers involved in finding appropriate innovations for agricultural development in and around Uzbekistan as well as other governmental and non-governmental organisations involved in promoting innovative agricultural practices within the region.



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