



# Using innovation platforms to stimulate innovation and multi-stakeholder interaction in small ruminant value chains

*Kees Swaans and Saskia Hendrickx*

## Summary

The imGoats project ('small ruminant value chains to increase income and food security in India and Mozambique') was designed to increase incomes and food security in a sustainable manner by enhancing pro-poor small ruminant value chains in the two countries. This brief shares experiences of the project in using innovation platforms (IPs) to stimulate innovation and stakeholder interaction in goat value chains in the two countries.

Results show that platforms can enhance production and marketing by establishing linkages between smallholders and other actors, but they need careful assessment of and adjustment to local contexts.

Generally, IPs are more likely to facilitate innovation in those livestock value chains that have good market access and infrastructure and where there are diverse actors, including input and service providers, and an enabling or supportive policy context. This project shows that even in situations where a value chain is weak, enhanced multi-stakeholder interaction produces positive results in terms of an increase in production and commercialization.

## Innovation platforms

IPs are increasingly used in research and development initiatives to address complex problems that require new solutions and the involvement of multiple stakeholders. An IP is a group of individuals, often representing organizations, with different backgrounds and interests: farmers, traders, food processors, researchers, government officials, etc. They come together to diagnose problems, identify opportunities and find ways to address these problems.

IPs have been used to boost productivity, manage natural resources, enhance value chains, and improve policy development. Depending on the issue of concern, they can be established at different levels: at village or community level, district level, and/or national level; they may also be formed across levels depending on the main focus (e.g. in the case of value chains or natural resource management).

Based on an innovation system perspective, IPs follow various principles (see Box 1). IPs are usually facilitated by a neutral facilitator who can convene and stimulate joint action.

Various phases can be distinguished, starting with a preparation phase and establishment of the IP, to a phase of learning and innovation through regular and iterative planning, action, and reflection, which may lead to shifts in focus and priority, and a final phase of renegotiation of the initial arrangements.

#### Box 1. Principles of IPs

- They are inclusive and follow participatory processes;
- There is a common vision and an agreed set of operating modalities;
- Members are committed and have adequate incentives to participate;
- Diversity of members capacities, resources, skills, knowledge, interests and needs are acknowledged;
- There is an efficient and effective process of communication, knowledge and information sharing;
- There is joint identification of challenges/opportunities, and options to address them through collective action;
- There is an appreciation for learning by doing and monitoring and evaluation.

## IPs in India and Mozambique

The project was implemented from January 2011 to June 2013 (30 months) with the aim to transform small holder goat production and marketing to a sound and profitable enterprise and model that taps into a growing market. The overall project was managed by the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) while the implementation was done by two non-governmental organizations (NGOs): Bharatiya Agro Industry Foundation (BAIF) in India and CARE in Mozambique.

**IP project sites:** The specific project area in India was Rajasthan State with 2600 target households in Jhadol and Sarada blocks of Udaipur district.

For logistical reasons, the number of goat keeper groups participating in the IP was limited to those in the radius of 10-12 km from Jhadol town (IP meeting location). This resulted in 18 project villages being part of the platform, covering about 1000 households (88 groups), with 10-15 families per group. All participating households (9% female headed) belonged to the Scheduled tribes, which are historically disadvantaged groups below the poverty line. In Mozambique, the project targeted 500 households in Inhassoro district of Inhambane Province, of which 38% were female headed households; this represented about 3800 direct beneficiaries in 18 villages. Goat keepers were organized in 23 producer groups. Key characteristics of the project sites where the IP was applied are described in table 1.



**IP formation:** IPs were used to facilitate communication and collaboration and promote joint action and innovation among the actors along the goat value chain. They followed an iterative process and met at regular intervals to discuss and implement opportunities to improve production and market related issues.

The value chain actors in India and Mozambique were identified by respectively BAIF and CARE. Actors were categorized as producers (goat keepers and community animal health workers - CAHWs), input and service providers (CAHWs, retailers/pharmacists and veterinary services), post production actors (mainly traders) and enabling agencies (community leaders, government agencies, NGOs, research and private investors).

The vision and objective were conceptualized by the project partners at the start of the project and shared and discussed during the first IP meeting. This was followed by a participatory process of constraint and opportunity identification by the IP members.

The outcome of the discussions together with the results of the baseline studies informed the final decision on the project interventions.

Although BAIF and CARE took the lead in organizing and facilitating the IPs, local actors were mobilized and trained to take over the role of facilitator and innovation brokers over time (in India three CAHWs were selected, while in Mozambique a committee of four IP members was formed). Initially the project assumed the costs of the IP organization, expecting that at a later stage the members would contribute their own resources to sustain the platform.

**IP implementation:** Figure 1 provides an overview for both India and Mozambique of the key issues discussed or decided in IP meetings, and the main actions resulting from those in terms of activities undertaken by IP members, research and capacity building to support initiated activities.

**Table 1: Key characteristics of the IP project sites**

Topic	Udaipur district, Rajasthan State – India*	Inhassoro district, Inhambane Province – Mozambique
Population density	196/km <sup>2</sup>	11/km <sup>2</sup>
Participating households	About 1000	524
Literacy levels	58.62%	51% (for Mozambique)
Average annual rainfall	600mm	600–800 mm
Livelihoods	Small land and livestock holdings (subsistence agriculture); wage labour important source of income	Small land and livestock holdings (subsistence agriculture); crop production main occupation; cattle numbers very low
Main crops	Maize, wheat, barley, chickpea, rape and mustard	Maize, groundnuts, beans, cassava, millet
Average goat herd size	6.2 (range 1-16)	8.4 (range 1-30)
Marketing practices	During main festive period (October to December) and ad hoc throughout the year to meet household demands	During festive period (December) and ad hoc throughout the year to meet household demands
Nearest goat market	50Km (Udaipur)	200Km (Massinga)
Main goat value chain constraints	Lack of improved bucks; limited access to animal health services; low number of goats available for sale; limited knowledge about improved husbandry practices	Low number of goats; limited access to animal health services; lack of organization of producers; lack of infrastructure; limited knowledge about improved husbandry practices
Main value chain actors	Producers; CAHWs; local traders/butchers; long distance traders; local pharmacist; Animal Husbandry Department; BAIF; research (ILRI, veterinary college)**	Producers; CAHWs; local traders/butchers; local retailers; District (SDAE) and Provincial (SPP) Veterinary Services; CARE; research (ILRI)**

\*The imGoats project worked in 2 of 12 blocks of Udaipur district, but the IP was only applied in one of the blocks; \*\*CAHW = community animal health worker

## Beneficiaries and outcomes

The main target beneficiaries of the project were poor goat keepers, especially women and other marginalized groups. Other beneficiaries included goat value chain actors such as traders, providers of inputs and services and veterinary services.

In both countries producer groups met regularly with the CAHWs and there was an increased interaction with other value chain actors through the IPs. Improved linkages between key actors had positive effects on goat management practices, production and sales.

**Management practices:** In India, goat mortality rates dropped from 30 to 40% in 2011 to around 10% in March 2013. In Mozambique the producers also reported a decrease in mortality figures. This result is related to a mix of technical, organizational and institutional innovations addressing health, breeding, feeding and housing. In Mozambique, the establishment of communal grazing areas has further contributed to stronger social organization;

management committees were established in 8 out of 18 communities with an estimated 100 out of 524 producers using the communal grazing areas.

**Production and sales:** In India, the number of goats kept per household increased by at least 1 or 2 animals. There is also anecdotal evidence of increased herd size among producers in Mozambique but as data collection on production parameters has been a challenge, there is no strong evidence for a systematic change across households. Data from India further shows that producers were selling more animals: from 1 animal on average in 2011 to 2 in 2013, and they received higher prices as result of increased weight and castrating the males.

In Mozambique, producers have also been selling more animals to distant traders due to lack of local demand for goats. In both countries, the organization of goat markets was tried with mixed results and alternative sales strategies were explored (in India producers started transporting animals to Udaipur; in Mozambique distant traders and a nearby slaughterhouse were approached).



A

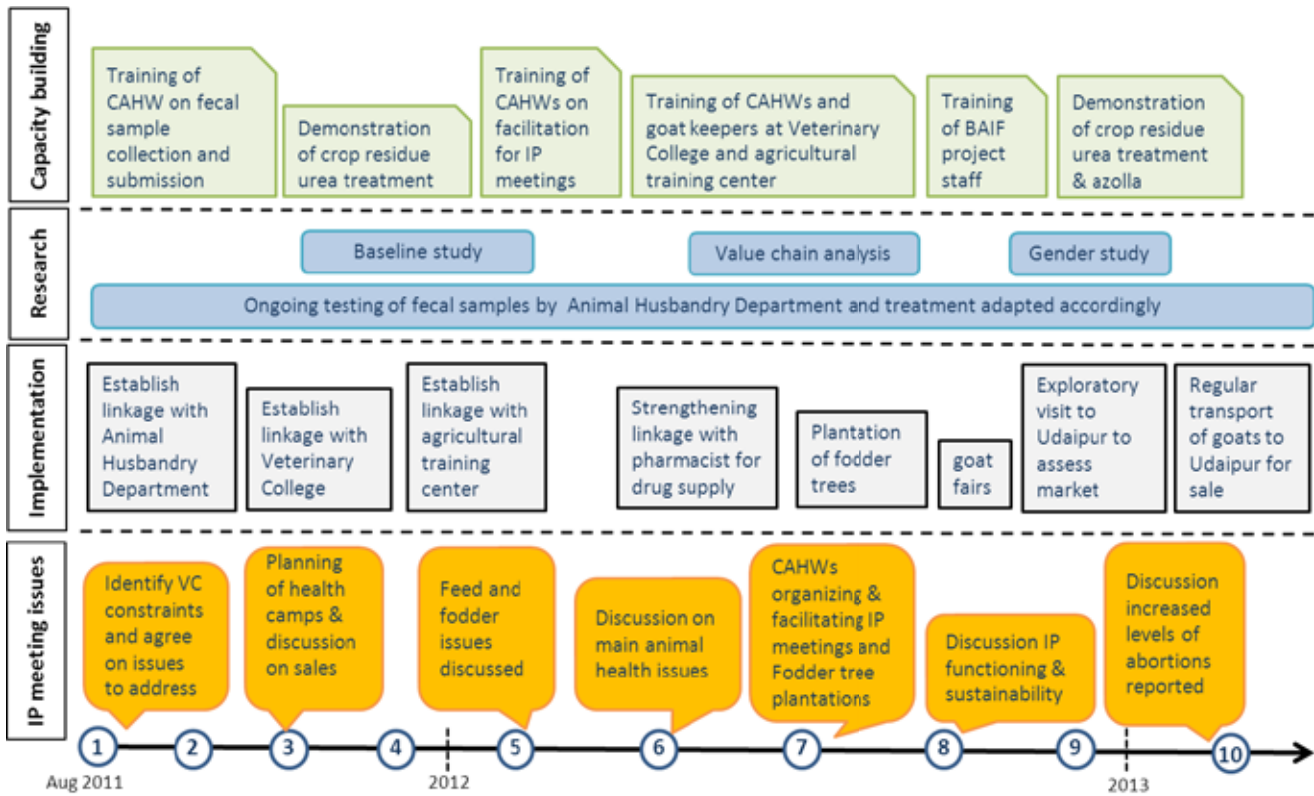


Figure 1A: Timeline of IP meetings (O), key issues discussed and resulting activities (implementation, research, capacity building ) in Udaipur district, India.

B

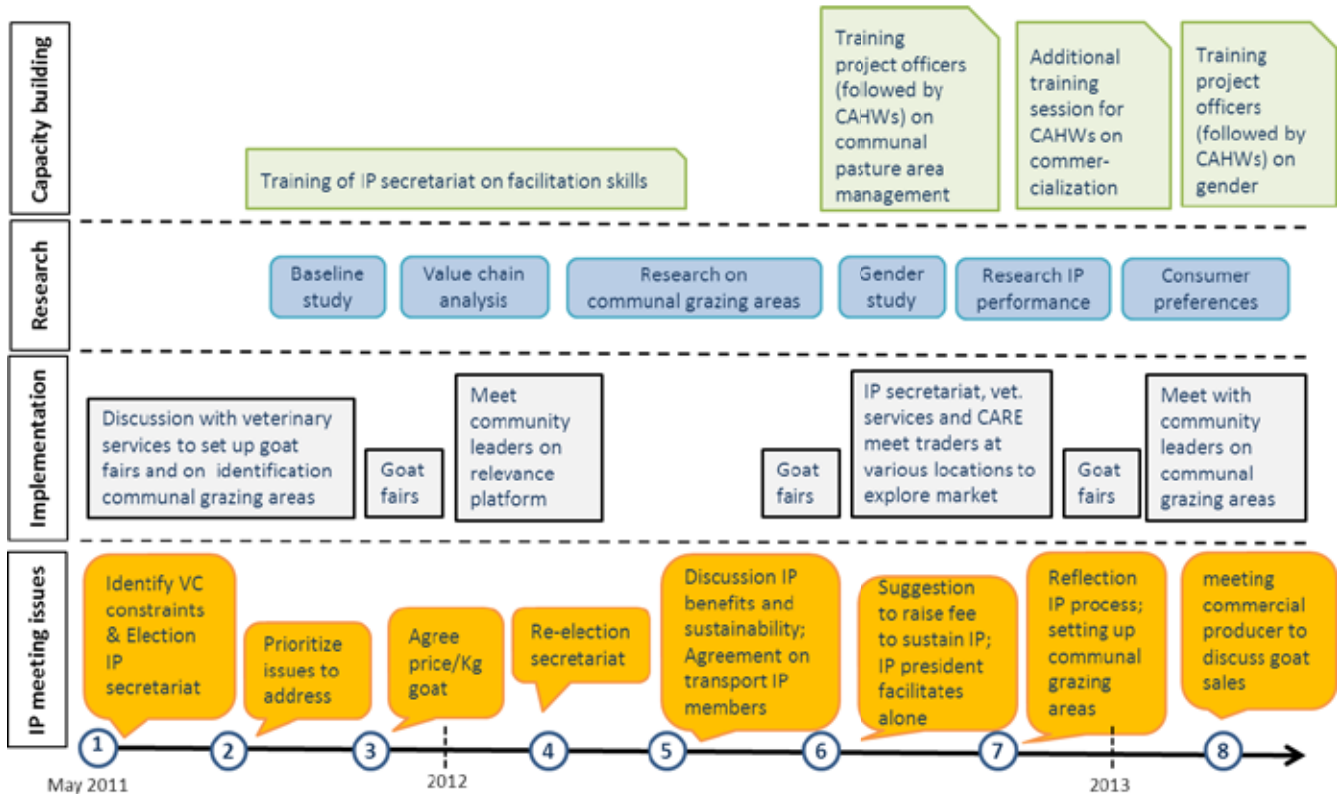


Figure 1B: Timeline of IP meetings (O), key issues discussed and resulting activities (implementation, research, capacity building ) in Inhassoro district, Mozambique.



## Challenges and lessons

Despite the positive experience, there are some key issues that need to be considered when implementing IPs in livestock value chains for pro-poor growth.

**Inclusion and representation:** The design of the platform may unintentionally lead to exclusion, rather than inclusion of the poor or women. In India, IP meetings were held in Jhadol town, making it difficult for women to attend for cultural reasons. In Mozambique, cost and availability of transport to the meeting venue were a constraining factor. The set-up of IPs and their implementation needs to be adapted to and negotiated with intended beneficiaries, as living conditions and contextual factors (long distances, gender inequality, illiteracy rates, use of local languages, etc.) directly affect the functioning of the platform.

**Incentives:** Markets provide important incentives for farmers to invest in goat husbandry practice, but the incentive for traders was less clear. In India, traders already had established networks of producer clients, and they were only interested if farmers could provide something new, such as larger animals of improved breeds. In Mozambique, there was a lack of local demand for goat meat, which made it difficult for local traders to benefit from the platform. Especially in the context of value chains where actors have different objectives, it is critical to develop a common vision and a pathway to achieve that.

**Connecting to spaces for experiential learning:** IPs need to be connected to a system that allows for information exchange, experimentation and learning among producers. In the two case studies, CAHWs acted as a 'link' between IPs and producer groups by sharing the topics discussed. However, there was a limited input from the communities providing issues to be discussed at the IPs.

**Innovation:** Technical innovations – not necessarily new, but new in the context – were important (e.g. animal treatment, improved management practices); but critical to their success was the extent to which these were supported by

organizational changes (producer groups, communal grazing areas, health camps and goat fairs) and reinforced by existing institutions (legislation, rules).

**Capacity building:** In both countries producers had limited knowledge and skills of improved goat husbandry practices and marketing. Conventional training sessions and exchange visits were highly appreciated, but also the discussions that took place within the IP were considered valuable, especially learning through regular monitoring and reflection allowed challenging and addressing underlying constraints.

**Facilitation and management:** The organization and facilitation of the IPs required a lot of support of the project team in the initial stages to ensure proper functioning. Handing over to local actors is crucial for continuity, but it requires time, capacity and respect from other members of the platform.

Overall, IPs are a promising model for innovation and pro-poor development, but it requires a careful assessment of the local context. A scoping exercise, including value chain and gender analysis during the inception phase of project is important to gain a better understanding of the context, as well as constraints and opportunities.

## Areas for further research

Several questions emerged during the course of the project, which require further research:

- The project took place on a limited scale and more knowledge and insight is needed on IPs in different type of contexts (in terms of biophysical, socio-economic and political settings);
- Especially the issue of incentives for participation is crucial, which requires research on business models as part of IPs to sustain innovation processes

## References

Bendapudi, R. and Hendrickx, S.C.J. 2013. Characterization of small-holder goat production and marketing systems in Udaipur district, Rajasthan State, India: Results of a baseline study. ILRI Research Brief. Nairobi, Kenya: ILRI. Available from: <http://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/21698>

Boogaard, B.K., Hendrickx, S.C.J. and Swaans, K. 2012. Characterization of smallholder goat production and marketing systems in Inhassoro District, Mozambique: Results of a baseline study. ILRI Research Brief. Nairobi, Kenya: ILRI. Available from: <http://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/32699>

CGIAR Research Program on the Humid Tropics. 2013. Innovation Platform practice briefs. Nairobi, Kenya: ILRI. Available from: <http://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/33667>

Makini, F.W., Kamau, G.M., Makelo, M.N., Adegunle, A., Mburathi, G.K., Misiko, M., Pali, P., and Dixon, J. 2013. Operational field guide for developing and managing local agricultural innovation platforms. Nairobi, Kenya: KARI.

Nederlof, S., Wongtschowski, M., and Van der Lee, F. (eds.). 2011. Putting heads together: Agricultural innovation platforms in practice. Bulletin 396. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: KIT publishers.

Swaans, K., Taye, H., Boogaard, B., Bendapudi, R., and Hendrickx, S. Operationalizing inclusive innovation: Lessons from innovation platforms in livestock value chains in India and Mozambique. (forthcoming)

Swaans, K., Boogaard, B., Salazar, Y.A., and Hendrickx, S. 2013. Goat value chains as platform to improve income and food security: The case

of imGoats in Inhassoro district Mozambique. Proceedings of KARI/ACIAR Experience Sharing Workshop on innovation platforms, 28–31 January 2013. Nairobi, Kenya: KARI.

Pali, P. and Swaans, K. 2013. Guidelines for innovation platforms: Facilitation, monitoring and evaluation. ILRI Manual 8. Nairobi, Kenya: ILRI. Available from: <http://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/27871>

## Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the European Commission through the International Fund for Agricultural Development - grant C-ECG\_45-ILRI

## Contact:

Saskia Hendrickx  
International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)  
Caixa Postal 2100  
Maputo  
Mozambique  
Email: [s.hendrickx@cgiar.org](mailto:s.hendrickx@cgiar.org)  
<http://www.imgoats.org>



[ilri.org](http://ilri.org)

*better lives through livestock*

ILRI is a member of the CGIAR Consortium

Box 30709, Nairobi 00100, Kenya  
Phone: + 254 20 422 3000  
Fax: +254 20 422 3001  
Email: [ILRI-Kenya@cgiar.org](mailto:ILRI-Kenya@cgiar.org)

Box 2100, Maputo, Mozambique  
Phone: +258 21 462 454  
Fax: +258 21 462 454  
Email: [ILRI-Mozambique@cgiar.org](mailto:ILRI-Mozambique@cgiar.org)

