

What have we learnt from the DeSIRA regional conferences in Asia, Latin America and Africa ?

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*Boosting agrifood research and innovation
cooperation for impact at scale*



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The DeSIRA Initiative: activating sustainability transitions through research and co-innovation

The DeSIRA Initiative portfolio

- 82 research and innovation (R&I) projects
- 65 countries, 3 continents
- 2019 -2026
- EU contribution of €340,000,000.
- >1600 researchers involved
- >800 organisations involved, incl. 223 research org.

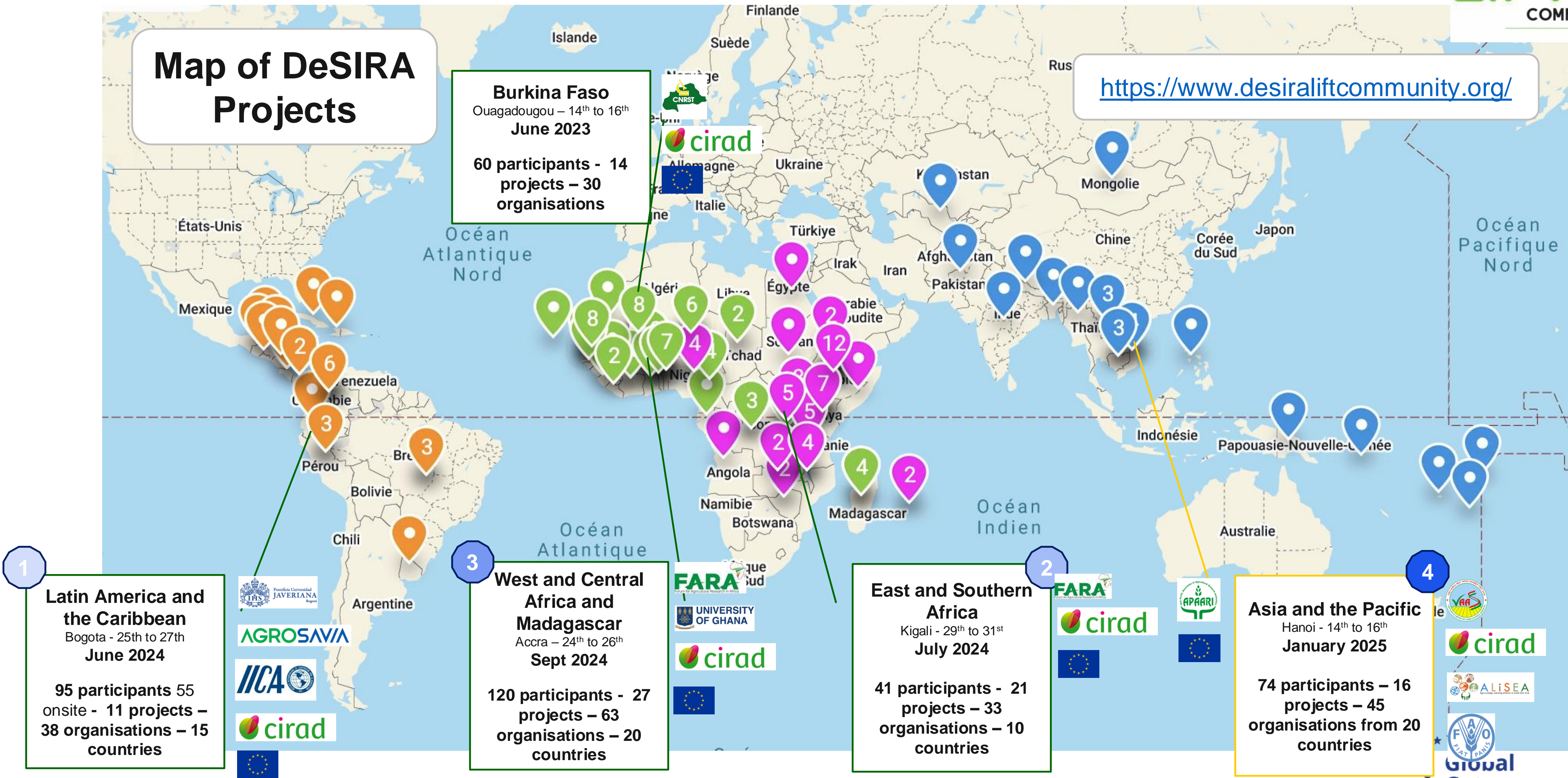
Expectations from research

- Solutions to complex problems
- not only as a provider of technologies
- More proactive role in designing and even managing transformative processes
- Accelerate answers to CC

Challenges for research

- Breaking silos
- Reconnect science to end users
- → engage in multi-actor innovation partnerships and support innovation processes
- → Impacting while transforming itself
- → Through project-based approaches

The DeSIRA Connect Days



What was discussed and why

- **New Paradigms in Research for Innovation** – Enhancing the impact of research through participatory and system-based approaches.
 - **Farmer-Led Innovations and Research** – Strengthening farmer organizations (FOs) as key actors in scaling agroecology and sustainable agriculture.
 - **Creating a Conducive Environment for Scaling** – Addressing food system governance, policies, education, and financing to foster sustainability.
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- > Experience sharing, joint learning and critical reflection, on how to make research work for open and responsible agricultural innovation.
 - > de-silo and identify synergies between projects and outcomes that meet regional strategies.

Four Critical Success factors for impactful Research & Innovation

Effective R&I Project Design & Management

- Early engagement of non-research actors (private sector, farmers, civil society)
- Clear partnerships with shared responsibilities and governance
- Flexible monitoring and adaptive management approaches

Strengthened Agricultural Innovation Systems

- New connections with diverse actors (startups, private firms, civil society)
- Innovation support services (like advisory services) for scaling
- Access to diverse funding mechanisms throughout innovation lifecycle

Multi-stakeholder Collaboration for Co-innovation

- Building on pre-existing innovation platforms and networks
- Demand-based approaches connecting multiple stakeholder levels
- Dedicated innovation facilitators who bridge diverse actors

Enabling Policy Environment

- Evidence-based policy dialogue requiring long-term engagement
- Strategic alignment between R&I interventions and national priorities
- Regional networks enhancing policy coherence across countries

Singular innovation features by region

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

- Evolution of "agricultural frontier" concept to "dynamic stabilization edge" where diverse interests converge
- Emphasis on bioeconomy approaches alongside agroecology
- Strong link between sustainable practices and ecosystem services valuation
- Strategic communication approaches tailored to policy advocacy

Eastern and Southern Africa

- Documentation and validation of traditional knowledge through citizen science
- Strong gender transformative approaches with "model couples" concept and women communities
- Focus on strengthening grassroot innovation communities
- Cross-regional collaborations Africa and Asia-Pacific and Latin America through FOs

Western and Central Africa, and Madagascar

- Community-based approaches to bridge service delivery gaps in rural areas
- Preservation and promotion of agricultural biodiversity through specialized institutions and research centers
- Financial inclusion mechanisms integrated with agricultural innovation
- Regional knowledge management frameworks connecting multiple organizations

Asia-Pacific

- Very strong networks with potential for further connection (Research, FOs, Education, consumers)
- ASEAN's 2024 Policy Guidelines for Agroecological Transition
- Integration of food safety features (wet markets with school-based nutrition initiatives)
- Strong urban food systems focus
- Use of Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) for traceability

A final word

In spite of multiple and complex objectives, multiple contexts, unpredictable and changing external factors; different project set-ups, strategies and consortia, **DeSIRA projects have striking resemblances, in their outcomes and how they generated them.**

Beyond research, **Farmers and Community organisations call for more integration of agroecological principles with traditional knowledge and dual way systems thinking** (bottom-up and top down).

The DeSIRA Initiative has provided worldwide outcomes in its intended objectives as well as extremely **valuable learnings about international cooperation in research and innovation.**

There exists **a vast community of very committed stakeholders** who **calls** on their States and multilateral policy makers, **to keep the DeSIRA agendas as priorities**, not only for money but **to defend outcomes and ensure impact at scale.**

**¡ Gracias !
Murakoze !
Thank you!
Cảm ơn bạn !**

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