

How to do research in these difficult contexts, which type of partnerships, which specific methodology for interventions? What are the challenges?

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

March 11-13, 2025

Brussels, Belgium



What are « unpredictable situations »?

C*R*O*P

C: context evolution because of a disruptive event

X

R: a new risk for the project

X

O: and/or a new opportunity

X

P: with a probability level (probable vs unpredictable)

Pells, 2009. "Disruptive events! Are you prepared?"
Schroeder & Hatton, 2012, "Rethinking risk in development projects: from management to resilience"



- Security crisis since 2015 with recurrent attacks by armed groups in several regions of Burkina Faso

- ✓ Massive population displacements
- ✓ Food crisis
- ✓ Limited access to essential services
- ✓ Political and institutional instability with changes in regimes and government members



- Health crisis (COVID-19)

- ✓ Slowdown in economic activity
- ✓ Impact on the agricultural sector
- ✓ Worsening inequalities

How to « navigate » in unpredictable situations ?

Many adaptative responses to avoid project crash!

- Be equipped with context (CROP) assesment tools
- Be ready to learn and adapt
- Be innovative
- Put managerial options on the table :

Deeper changes
in agric.
researchers'
mindset &
practices



Level 0-Changing project modus operandi

Level 1-Changing the R&I strategy

Level 2-Changing the R&I objectives

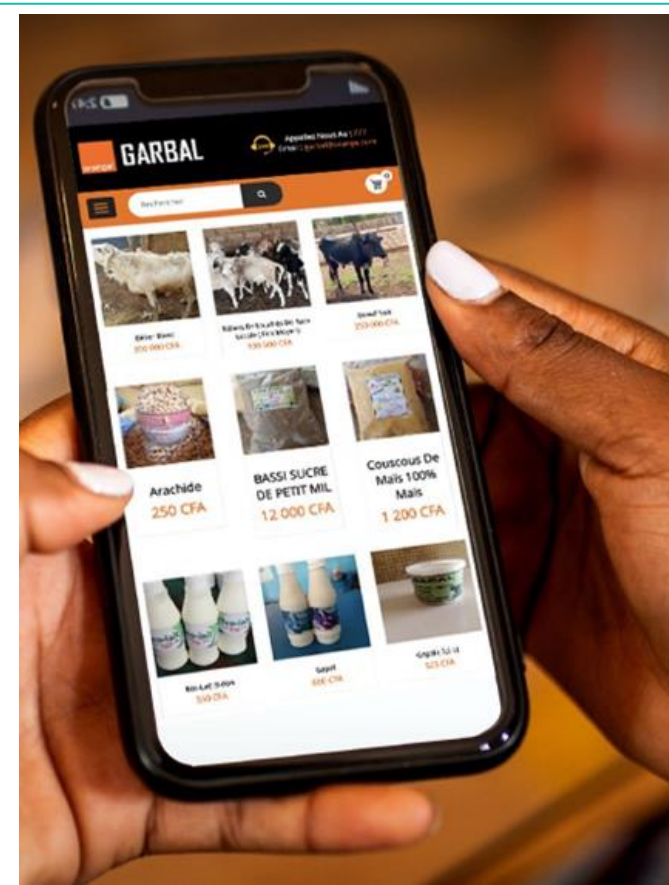
Level 3-Changing research paradigm

How to do innovation research in these difficult contexts?

Adaptative Option A *Changing project modus operandi*

New way of doing research, using innovating tools

- Accessing the field without being here!
- Making use of digital technologies
 - Satellite imagery
 - Drones
 - Mobile phones, call centers
- Mixed survey methodologies
- Empowering local organizations
- Local key informants



Adaptative Option B *Changing the R&I strategy*

Give more space for cocreation and autonomy of end-users :

- Open social innovation strategy
- Multi-actor

Constraint-based thinking

→ taking constraints as opportunities to push forward local innovations :

- Pro-inclusive innovation
- Frugal innovation (low cost adaptation)
- Grassroot innovation (farmer-led)



Adaptative Option C *Changing the R&I objectives*

Take short-term action to protect innovations /ressources

- Protect seed systems in conflict areas

Detect new resilience drivers and create enabling environments for innovators

- Social networks as resilience factors for food systems in conflict areas



Adaptative Option D *Changing ways of managing Research*

Long-term, institutional learning

New paradigm for research institutions:

- From direct knowledge production, to being in support to innovation systems in countries
- Internat. research institutions supporting local research institutions
- On-demand



Adapting Research in Challenging Contexts: Key Partnerships



In such a context, it is crucial to :

- **Strengthen local partnerships** with farmer organizations, cooperatives, community leaders, NGOs, and associations.
- **Collaborate closely with local authorities** to ensure acceptance, ownership, and security of research activities.
- **Create North-South mirror teams**, by recruiting local actors to facilitate liaison and implement certain activities (AcceSS project).
- **Co-develop context-adapted methodologies** with local research centers and universities.
- **Engage local companies** specializing in technology and digital solutions.
- **Enhance dialogue with international actors** through mechanisms of political dialogue and accountability.

Recommendations for innovative research in difficult contexts

Donors :

- Adapt funding to local realities (flexibility, real-time adjustments).
- Support local partnerships and capacity-building for local actors.

Research Institutions :

- Develop flexible and participatory methodologies.
- Train local researchers for autonomous project management.

Political and Institutional Actors :

- Facilitate coordination between institutions and local actors.
- Support political dialogue to influence public decision-making.

Thank you!



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