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REGIONAL AND SUB-SYSTEM SPECIALISATION OF INNOVATION SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED IN MADAGASCAR: WHAT KIND OF IMPACT CAN BE EXPECTED FOR FARMERS?

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Abstract: Agricultural innovation is acknowledged as a driver for rural development, particularly regarding southern countries situations, where agricultural sector is the main activity for rural population. The SERVInnov project aims at strengthening innovation support providers' (ISP) capacities to provide efficient and relevant services to innovators to enable them to successfully overcome problems and improve their livelihoods. This communication presents empirical results from Madagascar, by mobilizing AKIS and ISS frameworks. It focuses on organizational and spatial diversity of services provided to innovators. We studied 5 agricultural innovation subsystems (IsubS), namely staple food, exportation crop, organic farming, poultry farming, and digital agriculture. We selected 4 administrative regions, localized in the center highland area of Madagascar, encompassing similar biophysical conditions but with different cropping systems and economic situations: Itasy, Vakinankaratra, Amoroman'i, Analamanga. The method consisted on ISP and services characterization. Then, we identify trends regarding any specialization or homogenization among ISP, ISubS and spatial units. Results show that services provided are specific to IsubS, and rely on several specialized ISP. For example, exportation crops IsubS are mainly composed by market-oriented services, through support to farmers organisations, tracking of food products, contract farming and are mainly provided by private organisations. Staple food and organic farming IsubS are dominated by technical advices provision through training and demonstration plots, mainly provided by public organisations, funded by international donors, whereas poultry farming IsubS focuses on access to resource like inputs, and equipment. Digital agriculture IsubS is a really recent sector, hence services are mainly related to advisory and information sharing through mobile phone, currently provided by private organisations but also by few research centers. Regarding spatial allocation of ISP, exportation and poultry IsubS are mainly localised in regions closed to the capital. Staple food IsubS is mainly concentrated in Vakinankaratra region thanks to its high diversity of staple crops. ISP in organic farming IsubS intervene in specific regions, illustrating an implicit spatial distribution strategy. These results, raise concerns about real efficiency regarding services relevant and able to reach innovators' needs. On one hand, services specialization according to IsubS hinder systemic approach of farming-systems, whereas household's resilience in highland area of Madagascar relies on diversification of farming activities. Then, spatial distribution of services and ISP may imply that provision of services are unequally accessible for farmers, and through different approaches, values and tools.