Report on the Regional Agricultural Information and Learning Systems Workshop to establish a National (Kenya) RAILS

KARI Headquarters, 16th – 17th September 2010

REPORT




September 2010

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1. Background

The Regional Agricultural Information and Learning Systems (RAILS) project was initiated by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) in collaboration with Sub-regional Organizations (SROs) – Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), West and Central African council for agricultural research and development (CORAF/WECARD), Southern African Development Community (SADC), and respective National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in the regions. The objectives of RAILS are to:

- Undertake advocacy to encourage increased investment in agricultural information systems (AIS) by African governments and institutions;
- Improve access to information and the ability of African stakeholders to contribute to global agricultural knowledge;
- Facilitate synergies by linking African information conduits to global providers of agricultural information; and
- Develop an African platform for agricultural information and learning systems.

RAILS is funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) (2007-2010) to implement its activities at regional, sub-regional and national levels. In the ASARECA Sub-region, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)-RAILS is working with the Information and Communication Unit of ASARECA and the NARS in the member countries. In 2009, FARA and ASARECA organised a Sub-regional stakeholders meeting in Entebbe, Uganda, where they launched the ASARECA-RAILS project based on the needs identified in the eastern Africa sub region. During the meeting, participants agreed on the need to hold national consultations to establish national RAILS in order to facilitate implementation of RAILS activities. It is against this background that the Kenya RAILS workshop was organised.

2. Participation

There were 26 participants who attended the RAILS Workshop (see Appendix 1). Participants were drawn from 21 institutions in Kenya and included representatives of farmers' organizations, extension, research institutions, education institutions, Media, NGOs, government ministries, international organizations, the private sector and sub-regional organizations. The workshop was held at KARI Headquarters, Nairobi during 16th - 17th September 2010.

3. Workshop objectives

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Create awareness among stakeholders about RAILS and introduce the Africa-wide Agricultural Information System (AIS) being established under RAILS;
- Establish the national learning team to support the development of the national AIS gateway;
- Agree on the roles, terms of reference (TORs) and outputs of the National learning team;
- Select members of the National Core Learning team and agree on its responsibilities; and
- Identify activities to be carried out by the learning team.

4. Workshop structure and design

The workshop structure included plenary presentations, demonstrations, group discussions, question and answer sessions after each session (see Appendix 2) and a planning session (National Core Learning Team). This report captures the key points highlighted at the workshop.

4.1 Session 1: Welcome and opening remarks

Dr. Joseph Mureithi, Deputy Director, KARI conveyed the apologies of Dr. Ephraim Mukisira, Director, KARI and Dr. Wilson Songa, Agriculture Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and welcomed the participants to KARI. He thanked FARA and ASARECA for financial and technical support. The workshop was officially opened by Dr. Mureithi, who underscored the role of agriculture and the importance of sharing information.

4.1.1 Welcome remarks

Africa and Agriculture: Given that agriculture is the mainstay of most African countries, e.g. about 80% of the population in Kenya directly or indirectly depend on agriculture, availing and sharing information of technologies and innovations in is key to advancements in the agricultural based sectors

The role of RAILS in increasing visibility of National Institutions and Agricultural Information Networks; Linkages and supports by RAILS to institutions and Agricultural Information networks, such as KAINET in Kenya, will greatly improve visibility of the institutions and wide accessibility to technologies and innovations in the continent.

Duplication of work: A central platform of agricultural information storage and sharing will be helpful in avoiding duplication of efforts in agricultural research and advancements. Countries will know what is being done and what has been achieved by others; hence investments will be focused to new areas.

Sharing of resources: Inadequate facilities, equipment, human resource and services available have been serious limiting factors to achieving desired advances in different countries. Through RAILS, available resources in different institutions in the regions should be known and possibility of wide sharing explored. These may include trainings in institutions of higher learning, farmer visits, expert exchange (sabbaticals) contracts and laboratory/analytical services.

Industrialization and trade: African agriculture is still predominated by trade/export of raw materials. RAILS will contribute to developments in industrialization of agricultural products to optimize income.

Agricultural products value chains. KARI has adopted Agricultural products value chains (APVC) approach to research and development. Knowledge of products and their value chains in the region will facilitate trade and economic growth.

Kenya RAILS: Kenya RAILS will provide a platform where partners from all over Kenya can share experiences and learn from one another. Linkage to sub-regional RAILS will provide access to relevant information, knowledge, technology and innovations available in other regions of Africa, and subsequently there will be opportunities for testing and adopting relevant ones.

National Learning Teams: Through formation of national multidisciplinary and multi-institutional learning teams by RAILS, KARI will greatly benefit by having an avenue for its outreach and dissemination activities.

Sustainability concern: RAILS project, though important as indicated, is currently being supported and coordinated by FARA. It is therefore important to consider the sustainability beyond FARA supports. These may include contractual agreements/commitments among institutions that form the national learning teams

4.1.2 Opening Speech: Read by Dr. J.G. Mureithi:- The Deputy Director KARI Research and Technology

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Good morning,
First of all, I would like to convey the apology from Dr. Wilson Songa, Agriculture Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Dr Ephraim Mukisira, Director-KARI for not being able to come to this opening session of our workshop this morning.

I am delighted to be here today to preside over the official opening of the Regional Agricultural Information & Learning Systems Workshop. It offers an excellent opportunity to stakeholders in the agricultural sector to share information and make recommendations on how agricultural research can continue to contribute to agricultural development in our country. The Workshop brings together scientists from KARI, other public research institutions, universities, international research centres, NGO/CBOs, Farmer Organizations, News Media and national and regional stakeholders to share information, knowledge and experiences.

As we all are aware, technology has changed how we access, reuse and share information in the 21st century and therefore the need for us to keep abreast with the ever evolving Information Technology. Web 2.0 and social media technologies such as blogs, twitter, face book and blip provide channels to access, share, and use information. For us to meet the agricultural related milestones spelt out in Kenya Vision 2030 blue print, agriculture stakeholders need to facilitate linkages, improve access to, and make use of vital agricultural information and knowledge resources.

Linkages are required between different information and knowledge resources from diverse disciplines in order to empower agricultural actors including researchers, extensionists and farmers. The setting up of Kenya RAILS is therefore timely as it provides a platform where the agricultural stakeholders will contribute, access and share new information, knowledge, innovation and decision-making tools to facilitate learning and adoptions. This allows them to develop new knowledge for innovation. In addition, it is also necessary to identify the most effective technology dissemination pathways for existing African resources. The capacity of stakeholders to upscale localised successful technologies derived from formal research and farmer innovation across countries and sub-regions must therefore also be strengthened.

Achieving the rapid and widespread agricultural development required to meet the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) target of 6% annual growth in agricultural production will depend on the products of formal and informal research being out-scaled locally and up-scaled across the continent. Because it minimizes

the duplication of research and shortens the time taken for adoption to occur, improving the exchange of technology-based innovations between sub-regions improves returns to investment in innovation and the impact that such investment has. However, achieving this requires better advisory services and dissemination channels that are accessible and efficient. It also requires better knowledge of how to get information to those that need it (such as the advisory services) in efficient and effective ways. In addition to developing and communicating information products, there is also a need to identify why the demand for information is not being met and what mechanisms can be used to overcome this constraint.

To achieve all these there is need to: -

- Strengthen ICT human resource capacity among stakeholders and influence future targeted training for partner institutions.
- Promote and create awareness of the use of emerging ICTs in dissemination of agricultural information.
- Catalyse partnerships among key information professionals and organizations to promote information sharing nationally and regionally using group tools and other available technologies.
- Work with multiple stakeholders to improve information generation, processing and dissemination whilst encouraging the generation, storage and access to information

Successful application of ICTs would lead to: -

- A national agricultural information repository
- ICM capacities built to support effective information and communication management activities throughout the agriculture sector.
- Enhanced visibility and access to national information and innovation.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, today's multifaceted agriculture industry and fast changing world calls for partnerships among Institutions. I hope these sessions will highlight possible avenues for cooperation and also come up with resolutions, which will facilitate capturing, storing and sharing agricultural information, knowledge and innovation.
In closing, I take this opportunity to thank the joint sponsors and organizers of this workshop namely FARA, ASARECA and KARI.

Thank you.

4.2 Session 1: - Presentation

4.2.1 Setting the Workshop Agenda: - Dr. J.O. Ouda

Two background papers were presented. The presentation by Dr. J. Ouda, Ag. Assistant Director, KARI in charge of Information Management and Communication Technology (IMCT) provided some background information on RAILS and highlighted the activities carried out by the *RAILS focal point in Kenya*. The objectives of RAILS are to:

- Undertake advocacy to encourage increased investment in agricultural information systems (AIS) by African governments and institutions;
- Improve access to information and the ability of African stakeholders to contribute to global agricultural knowledge;
- Facilitate synergies by linking African information conduits to global providers of agricultural information; and

- Develop an African platform for agricultural information and learning systems.

KARI was chosen by ASARECA to coordinate the Kenya RAIILS Portal in Kenya and the National focal person is Ms. Rachel Rege, while the national administrator is Mr. Richard Kedemi. The RAILS and Dissemination of New Agricultural Technologies for Africa (DONATA) projects had provided equipment comprising two servers, four computers, two printer-scanners and two UPSs. Dr. Ouda also highlighted the workshop objectives (see section 4.0) and the expected outputs.

Ms. J. Nyagahima, Head Information and Communication Unit, ASARECA made a presentation on *FARA - ASARECA RAILS* project. She gave a brief overview of FARA and ASARECA, and re-stated the objectives and expected outputs of RAILS. Describing the Promotion of Science and Technology for Agricultural Development in Africa (PSTAD) project of FARA, Ms. Nyagahima explained that it has two components:

i) RAILS: which supports an Africa-wide platform for agricultural information exchange; and
ii) DONATA: which facilitates dissemination and adoption of agricultural technologies in Africa.

To achieve the RAILS objectives, FARA - RAILS works with ASARECA in the eastern Africa sub region, which in turn partners with NARS in the region. Ms Nyagahima introduced the concept of 'Learning Teams' and explained that the Learning Teams in RAILS are formed with multi-disciplinary with members from research, extension, agricultural line ministries, education and training institutions, farmer organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector, glued by information professionals. The RAILS Learning Teams were expected to serve as facilitators of change, advocate for a learning culture in agricultural research and development. In addition, the learning teams were expected to build on existing structures and the most appropriate institutions with the proper mandate to coordinate and facilitate information systems in the country were expected to take leadership. The responsibilities of learning teams include:

- Facilitation of information exchange among and within the NARS stakeholders and the building of a national agricultural information and learning system;
- Participation in the development of and maintenance of the national agricultural information portal/gateway on www.erails.net;
- Contribution to the sensitization of NARS stakeholders on the use of international information management and sharing standards;
- Contribution to the building synergies, wherever possible, between RAILS activities and national initiatives undertaken by national partners; and
- Active participation in activities organized within the RAILS.

RAILS has provided ICT infrastructure in terms of computers and accessories, and internet connectivity – VSAT or ADSL as well as local area network for two institutions to ensure that the RAILS learning teams have the required infrastructure to gather and disseminate information and that there is flow of information within and between the different agricultural stakeholders. Online and face-to-face training are also a key activity of RAILS.

4.3 Session 2: RAILS Interventions

4.3.1 Overview of DONATA Interventions in Kenya: - Ms. M. McEewan

Ms. McEwan, International Potato Centre (CIP), Nairobi, gave an overview of the information and learning activities of *DONATA*. The DONATA project is funded by the AfDB and FARA, and is managed by ASARECA (Knowledge Management and Upscaling Programme (KMUS). The project is implemented by the NARIs and backstopped by CIMMYT and CIP. DONATA facilitates the dissemination and adoption of agricultural technologies in Africa and focuses on two technologies – the orange fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) and quality protein maize (QPM). DONATA aims at improving livelihoods and increasing economic growth for resource poor farmers by making technologies available through various uptake pathways including (i) using the best bet approaches for up-scaling of technologies generated and promoted (ii) strengthening the capacities for dissemmination and promotion of OFSP and QPM in the production-to-consumption continuum and (iii) making available information on the two technologies and uptake approaches available to users. DONATA provides innovative platforms for technology adoption (IPTA) by working with diverse and multiple stakeholders organised around value chain and providing a platform for sharing experiences, learning, interacting and documenting lessons learned across the region.

Some lessons learned from the IPTAs include: i) Different type and diversity of IPTA actors; ii) Appropriate governance structures; iii) Partner interaction: learning "space" for innovation as opposed to competition for resources; iv) Coordination, facilitation and conflict resolution skills; v) Coverage: geographical vs. chain segment; vi) How to engage with policy/decision makers for up-scaling the technologies and processes; and vii) Value added vs. transaction costs of multi-stakeholder IPTA approach. Ms. McEwan highlighted the processes carried out by the project with special reference to OFSP and QPM technologies from production to consumption. She pointed out that there were different stakeholders (farmers, input suppliers, transporters, traders, extension services, consumers; researchers, decision makers and IPTAs) involved in the generation of knowledge and in learning processes and explained that gender, age and education level played a role in the processes. Learning and information sharing took place horizontally through community knowledge management, face-to-face, through learning by doing, evaluation and experience, by adapting generic ideas to location specific and through advocacy and lobbying. There were varied knowledge and information needs includind nutrition, varieties for different agro-ecological zones, agronomic packages, prices and market conditions, weather forecasts and consumer preferences.

Information was shared through different products and channels including leaflets, brochures, fliers, posters, banners, stickers, calendars, video, photos, scientific publications, technical reports and manuals; sensitisation workshops, trainings, farmer field schools, "Mother and baby" trials; demonstrations and field days, agricultural shows and radio programmes. Some of the challenges experienced were inadequate or lack of ICT infrastructure and connectivity at district and sub-district level, poor culture of accessing, using and sharing of information, the quality of information and sources that were trustworthy, inadequate repackaging and communication skills, insufficient financial resources, availability of appropriate products and channels for women farmers and consumers and low levels of extension-farmer contact and low numbers of farmers that listen to the radio.

RAILS could support the National Learning Team and the IPTAs at district and sub-district levels to access and share information. Some interventions identified and questions posed include:

- Could RALS support district IPTAs to pilot the "info-mediary" concept?
- Could RAILS provide a mechanism for knowledge exchange and the fostering of social processes of learning?; Enhance the ability to work across different levels?; Influence partner organizations' attitudes towards knowledge sharing and learning?
- At meso and national level, could RAILS help forge learning alliances; knowledge sharing platforms; community of practice?
- At local level, how could small-scale farmers link into these knowledge mechanisms? How could the capacity of armer organizations be bridged? How could ICTs be applied?

4.3.2 Overview of DONATA – OFSP Interventions in Western Kenya: - Mr P.J. Ndolo

A presentation by Mr Ndolo of KARI-Kibos on the transfer and dissemination of proven and emerging agricultural technologies in OFSP shed more light on the DONATA project in Kenya in Bungoma and Busia Districts and the formation of IPTAs, where the choice of partners was determined by prior involvement in sweet potato activities, willingness to participate and adhere to project requirements and the contribution made to the OFSP product value chain. The OFSP technologies were promoted through agricultural shows, field days, demontrations, production and distribution of promotional materials and meetings. Capacity was strengthened through training of trainers (TOTs) and farmers and provision of post harvest equipment. Lessons learned indicate that cross learning from different partners enhances better understanding of the project and wider distribution the technologies; also, there is improved sharing of information among partners in the value chain; The key challenges encountered included limited funds for monitoring and evaluation (M&E); delayed reporting; poor documentation by the IPTA members; frequent transfers of extension staff; varying institutional policies among partners; competition of land with other food crops; and procurement procedures were complicated.

4.3.3 Overview of DONATA – QPM Interventions in Kilifi, Embu, Kirinyaga and Makueni: - Mr T. Githaigah

A related presentation made by Mr Githaigah, Catholic Diocese of Murang'a focused on the dissemination of QPM technologies through the IPTA approach in Kilifi, Embu, Kirinyaga and Makueni. Promotion of QPM technologies was done through field days, demonstrations, agricultural shows, trade fairs, print materials and radio documentaries. The interventions of RAILS include:

- Increased feasibility of project activities locally, regionally and worldwide;
- Training on documentation, repackaging, and web design;
- Management of the project website and linkages to other resources; and
- Provision of equipment for web access.

4.3.4 *African portal for Agricultural Information and Learning System (AIS) –RAILS Gateway development (Presentation and demo of http://www.e-rails.net: - Ms J. Ngagahima and Mr R. Kedemi*

Ms Nyagahima's presentation focused on *e RAILS* - the African portal for Agricultural Information and Learning System (AIS), and ICT developments in the region. She highlighted the features of eRAILS and demonstrated the site: http://www.e-rails.net.

The objectives of eRAILS are to:

- Promote local content development, management and dissemination;
- Promote open access to local content;
- Facilitate information and knowledge sharing, and collaboration among African stakeholders;
- Facilitate linkages and access of African stakeholders to major knowledge resources and agricultural technologies; and
- Facilitate learning among RAILS teams across the African region

Individuals and organizations create sites which are linked and searchable through a single gateway. The backend allows a stakeholder to request an account, create a site / sites, edit and design sites and pages, provide links to external web-resources and to classify information. The RAILS national focal points manage the accounts in their respective country. The e RAILS platform provides a list of links to many sites and allows searching and filtering.

The benefits of e RAILS include:

- Easy creation of web sites and fewer concerns about technical aspects such as development and design;
- Programming, hosting, and maintenance of sites ;
- Increased visibility of sites at the continental and international levels;
- Free hosting for institutional / individual websites;
- Ability to receive comments and suggestions from users of your site ;
- Ability to integrate your web site and make it accessible to search engines;
- Being part of a continental community;
- Gains from the experience of other colleagues; and
- Online technical support when needed.

Ms. Nyagahima also highlighted the ICT developments in the region and touched on the fibre optic cables, broadband connectivity, digital convergence and interoperability of mobile and internet technology and some government commitments under implementation. She described some internet tools for sharing information such as Dgroups, Google Groups, Yahoo Groups, Blogs, Wikis, Google docs, file sharing services, video sharing websites, Podcasting, photo sharing websites, VOIP, training and learning tools, web conferencing tools and online surveys.

4.3.5 Question and Answer (Q & A) Session:

Session: RAILS INTERVENTIONS

DONATA

Q.: J. Ouda – Why is DONATA working on two crops (orange-fleshed sweet potatoes and maize) while farmers in Kenya engage in many enterprises including livestock? DONATA needs to handle many more technologies e.g. 20 in a country or part of a country.

A.: M. McEwan – This is because initially two priority crops were identified through a consultative process with SROs and FARA to provide understanding on the most effective approaches to scaling up and scaling out. Subsequently the lessons learned would be adapted for other crops.

Comment: F. Ndung'u pointed out that crops such as sweet potatoes were no longer referred to as "Orphan crops" and the preferred term was "Traditional crops".

Comment: G. Odhiambo – Farmer representation at the local level needs to be linked to the national level in order to have mechanisms for relaying the issues raised at the local level to the national level policy discourse.

Comment: T. Githaigah – noted that the governance structure in farmers' groups was democratic and farmers elected their own leaders and engaged in production of other enterprises and non farming activities. This structure ensured sustainability of the groups beyond the life of a project and product diversity.

e RAILS

Q.: C. Ogada – What strategy is employed by RAILS to avail content in appropriate formats for farmers (repackaging of content in appropriate medium).

Q.: J. Wareta – Based on the challenge raised about low literacy levels and the volume of scientific agricultural information on public domain, it would be advisable to train media professionals working on agricultural programmes with grassroots communities on repackaging.

A.: J. Nyagahima – Capacity building programmes have been set up. Two universities in Kenya (Egerton and University of Nairobi) are implementing the Agricultural Information and Communication Management (AICM) programme under RUFORUM to equip information specialists with repackaging skills. With more and more content being developed and shared on the internet, people trained in content repackaging will be in demand. Organizations also need to invest more in making their content relevant and easy to use. The eRAILS portal will make such information visible and facilitate sharing.

Comment: J. Wareta – Most scientists involve the media when they are launching their findings, which entails information transmission from the newsroom for about 45 seconds. It would be more effective to explore ways of working with production departments to produce longer programmes with greater impact.

Comment: J. Wareta – The radio is widely appreciated by many because of the cheaper cost and availability at local level. However, from experience, there are many television screens in the rural areas and becuase of the effectiveness of seeing and hearing, television programmes are becoming very effective in disseminating agricultural information.

A.: J. Nyagahima – There is a need to develop mechanisms of working with media for promotion and mass use of content.

Comment: J. Odenya – Project sustainability could be enhanced if a proper entry point is clearly defined. Farmers also need to be involved in decision making and leadership is key to success. There is also need for proper resource management.

Comment: C. Ogada – Kenya RAILS should explore mobile phone technology for outreach. For example, a group could be provided with mobile phones for accessing content on the e RAILS portal to facilitate farmers to access e content easily.

Comment: J. Were – What is being done to attract men to training sessions?.

4.4 Session 3: Group discussions on the potential uses of an e RAILS portal to support agricultural information sharing and dissemination

Participants were divided into four groups which discussed the potential use of the e-RAILS fortal to researchers, extensionists, training and education institutions and farmer organizations and associations. The following are the points raised by the groups (listed as they were shared and not in priority order).

Group 1: Research

The eRAILS portal could:

- Provide an avenue for disseminating research findings;
- Serve as a source of information for research purposes;
- Provide access to research conducted nationally thus avoid duplication of effort;
- Help to authenticate findings through comparison / cross checking with others;
- Serve as an early warning system tool;
- Facilitate networking by researchers across regions;
- Serve as a resource that could be utilised by students to compare notes across regions;
- Could save time and money spent on research;
- Could make researchers across different regions visible;
- Provide a mechanism for linking researchers;
- Open up / enlarge the pool of researchers that could be drawn upon to facilitate research;
- Help reduce plagiarism in research;
- Provide opportunity for researchers to publish their findings;
- Spur innovation / increase adoption and replication;
- Stimulate research by providing access to novel ideas;
- Close the gap between researchers and farmers; and
- Disseminate information on technologies to more people quickly.

Group 2: Extensionists

The group members based their deliberations on the assumptions that there was internet connectivity to extensionists and there was awareness about eRAILS. The potential use of eRAILS was discussed under four subheadings – i) How to find information, ii) How to

synthesise information, iii) How to share information and iv) How to disseminate information.
eRAILS would facilitate extensionists to:

- Search for information;
- Share information by creating an account;
- Link tools such as facebook, U-tube;
- Help to check on abuse / misuse of the platform;
- Download relevant content to laptops and other storage media;
- Facilitate the use of real time interaction such as Skype;
- Establish if there was proper representativeness and adequate knowledge;
- Facilitate the share of practical demonstrations.

Group 3: Education and training institutions

The group reported that eRAILS advantages and services include:-

- Provide a good platform for sharing educational materials online;
- Facilitate the sharing of local content generated by educational institutions;
- Provide visibility and marketing of education and training institutions;
- Facilitate feedback;
- Facilitate collaboration and networking between institutions;
- Enhance creativity and quality in terms of services thus encouraging competitiveness with like institutions;
- Provide a platform for virtual learning;
- Enhance currency of information;
- Facilitate improvement of curricula / modules;
- Act as a repository of agricultural information;
- Encourage open access which could bring down the cost of education; and
- Enhance the use of ICTs.

Group 4: Farmer organizations and associations

The group first unpacked farmer organizations as comprising: i) Farmers groups or common interest groups (CIGs), ii) Commodity associations, iii) Farmer federations, iv) cooperative societies and unions and v) Corporate firms or farms.

- Some of the farmer organizations had developed their own websites which could be linked to the e RAILS portal;
- They could use the e RAILS portal to access information on production, value addition, marketing, financial services, lobby and advocacy on policy;
- Use the e RAILS portal to enhance visibility of farmer organizations;
- Access content to help in repackaging of information that is appropriate for farmers;
- Form partnerships with community telecentres / digital villages to share information;
- Provide linkages with media houses to facilitate mass dissemination; and
- Enable farmer organizations to develop their own websites and facilitate the sharing of experiences (individuals / organizations).

4.5 Session 4: Building learning teams / National core learning team

4.5.1 Building Learning Teams /core National learning team: - J. Nyagahima

Ms. Nyagahima's presentation on building *RAILS learning teams for the ASARECA region* explained the types of teams to be established and expressed that the team should aim at: i) developing a strategic plan to provide a road map for a national agricultural gateway which may include lobbying government, identifying a team mix and leadership that is acceptable, resource mobilization, and modalities for M&E and reporting. ii) Work towards making agricultural information resources visible. iii) Work out mechanisms and modalities for individuals and organizations to participate. iv) Establishing M&E mechanisms. The national team should comprise diverse stakeholders such as from research, extension, education, media, social scientists, NGOs/CBOs, private sector, farmer organizations, ICT/M specialists and development partners.

The responsibilities of the team include:

- Planning, M&E, facilitation and coordination;
- Ensuring that national needs are addressed by the gateway;
- Harmonization, standardization and advocacy;
- Training, documentation and reporting;
- Fundraising;
- Identification and adoption of innovations;
- Partnerships and networking.

Ms. Nyagahima also mentioned on possible steps that could be taken to establish learning teams such as holding a national planning meeting and discussed possible ways of sustaining the teams such as institutionalizing the learning teams; motivation including capacity building, facilitation, provision of necessary equipment with clear mandate of use and ownership, recognizing and acknowledge the contributions of individuals and institutions, enhancing regular communication (build a family team spirit), ensuring good leadership, enhancing public-private sector partnerships, integrating teams into national agricultural-sector development plans and by implementing effective M&E mechanisms. Selection criteria could include identifying country champions, individuals who were self-driven and ready to make sacrifices, team players and be servant leaders.

Mr Kedemi demonstrated the Kenya RAILS site and took participants through the process by: -

- Accessing the portal and Kenya country view, the structure of the portal and using some of the features like the search window.
- Setting up RAILS accounts for individual and institutions.
- Creation, administration and management of the individual and institutional website, from adding the different kinds of content, text, images and links to documents.
- How to edit and redesign sites and pages,
- How to provide links to external web-resources

Some participants set up their accounts during this session

4.5.2 Question and Answer (Q & A) Session:

Session: Building Learning Teams

Q.: M. McEwan – What do we mean by a National Learning Team? What are we " learning"? Will these relate to the knowledge generation process with farmers?

A.: J. Nyagahima – national learning teams are groups that address certain issues pertaining to common interest e.g. grain associations. These may exist at national level or lower levels such as the distict that feed into national level associations. What happens at the local level from the farmer level is escalted at national level.

Comment: J. Were – There is a need to work hand-in-hand with the media to market e-content, and to ensure sustainability of the learning teams.

4.6 Session 5: Demonstrations of some Kenyan interventions on information sharing

4.6.1 Kenya Agricultural Information Network (KAINet) presentation and demo: - Richard Kedemi

Mr. R. Kedemi's demonstration of the Kenya Agricultural Information Network (KAINet) highlighted the gap between the agricultural information generated by research, extension and intermediary institutions and that which is accessible to users. The KAINet project was a response to challenges identified through international, regional and national consultations to help to establish a national digital repository. Five institutions participated in the pilot phase and were backstopped by ASARECA – RAIN, FAO and CABI with funding from DfID. The objectives of KAINet are to facilitate access to scientific and technical information in Kenya; make full text content available; strengthen national and institutional capacities to manage, disseminate and exchange agricultural information; promote use of standard tools and methodologies and document the process and develop a case study. The KAINet project provided ICT infrastructure, training (TOTs) on workflows, WebAGRIS, web development and document management to the pilot institutions. KAINet is built on WebAGRIS and participating institutions have created institutional repositories which feed into the national repository.

The national KAINet repository was launched in 2009 and provides online access to more than 15,000 records (http://www.KAINet.or.ke), including grey literature held in agricultural institutions; and promotes open access among the KAINet institutions. The KAINet Portal provides linkages to various institutional sites such as KARI's (http://www.kari.org) and the Ministry of Agriculture's (http://www.kilimo.or.ke). KAINet has great potential to improve access to agricultural information and knowledge in Kenya, ECA and Africa. Challenges experienced by KAINet include inadequate capacity in relation to database management and web interface development; CDS/ISIS; integration of open access tools onto Windows platform networks; the fact that many people have not fully embraced the concept of open access; technical challenges in relation to the LAN settings, data entry and the search interface; and ISPs are not willing to run WEBAGRIS on their servers, which limits online visibility.

4.6.2 Ugunja Presentation on using mobile phone technology FrontlineSMS: - Mr. C. Ogada

The presentation by Mr. C. Ogada representing Ugunja Community was on using mobile phone technology (Frontline SMS). It highlighted the role of the NGO plays in empowering vulnerable communities to communicate, learn and share information to improve rural

livelihood and provide options for climate change adoption through use of mobile phones and database driven web systems. He explained that 71% of the people in Ugunja owned phones and hence had access to the right tool to disseminate information. He further explained how they established a strong learning platform using web based data driven modules on health and agriculture. Short learning SMS educational modules are being translated from English/Swahili into the local Dholuo language and sent to community members. The presentation also highlighted how the tool had been used successfully in HIV/AIDS training and that plans were underway to use the tool to aid training in agricultural entrepreneurship and in particular chicken rearing. He demonstrated the setting up, which was easy. Some of the benefits of Frontline SMS include: -

- Free software used for bulk SMS exchange
- Does not require internet – makes use of SIM, Personal Computer and Laptop
- Stores messages and are archived and be retrieved later.
- Easy to install and requires moderate PC specification.
- Can be used anywhere – no geographical restriction.

4.6.3 Infonet-Biovision presentation and demo: -Ms. Anne Bruntse

Ms. Bruntse of Infonet Biovision demonstrated the Infonet Biovision site (www.infonet-biovision.org) which is a web-based information hub for African farmers, trainers and extensionists. She explained the different ways of accessing information on plant husbandry and pest management, animal diseases and treatment, animal husbandry, beekeeping and environmental issues such as soil and water management and sustainable land management. Ms. Bruntse's presentation highlighted the activities that take place in developing content and explained that Infonet Biovision works with partners such as KARI, KEFRI and ICIPE to develop the content on the web which is also available on CD-ROM. She gave a detailed tour of the website www.infonet-biovision.org and demonstrated how to access the different kinds of content on the site ranging from text, uploading publications, audio clips and pictures. She invited other organizations to partner with Infonet-Biovision to expand linkages, provide content, integrate additional services and establish rural resource centres. She also introduced the Infonet Biovision Radio Programmee, where farmers are interviewed and share best practices. Infonet Biovision also produces a magazine "The Organic Farmer", which is distributed free of charge to farmers, farmer organisation and institutions in the agriculture field.

4.6.4 Question and Answer (Q & A) Session:

Session: Unguja community

Q.: F. Wandera – Can the messages sent through SMS exceed 160 characters?

A.: C. Ogada – We limit our SMSs to 160 characters to reduce the cost of communication and make it easy for our clients to read without causing fatigue by making the entire message visible on the screen.

Q.: Mwawasa– What are the characteristics of good information?

Session: Infonet-Biovision

Q.: Who is the target group of information repackaged by Infonet Biovision? Is the target of Infonet-Biovision just the literate farmers?

A.: A. Bruntse – No. Literate farmers help by reading the content and explaining to those who are not literate. They can aslo ask questions and get answers from extension officers. Iliterate farmers find their way around through literate family members provided they know information is available.

Q.: What type of partnerships do you form and how do you partner?
What is the staffing capacity of your unit and how do you manage to repackage content?

A.: A. Bruntse – Infonet-Biovision has MoUs with various organizations such as KARI, KEFRI, ICIPE, ACT, AIRC, KENFAP and Katoloni Mission (CBO), and the MoUs define the type of partnership and complementary activities.

Q.: What is the staffing capacity of Infonet Biovision?

A.: A. Bruntse – Infonet Biovision has limited staff but the number is growing. Partners have different needs and while some are merely seeking visibility, others are complemetary and provide content free of charge. Infonet Biovision welcomes partners to provide and upadate content. All contributions are properly referenced and credit is given accordingly.

Q.: F. Wandera – Given access to the internet and the SMS services for information, is there a risk of duplication or conflict regarding the information available to users?

A.: J. Ouda/ J. Nyagahima – Duplication should not be an issue, the issue should be to make the information available. Second different institution specialize in different kind of information and hence compliment one another and therefore the need to work together.

4.7 Session 6: Election of national core learning team

This session was preceded by a recap of the tentative responsibilities and activities of a national learning team. The criteria for selecting members of the team were emphasized before conducting elections through nomination and voting. The following members were elected as the national (Kenya) Core Learning Team, which later held a brief planning meeting (Appendix 3):

1.	National Focal Point Person (Ag. Assistant Director IDS)	-	Dr. Jack Ouda
2.	Research	-	Dr. John Omiti
3.	Educational Institutions	-	Joel Musonik
4.	Extension	-	Felicia Ndungu
5.	Farmers Organization	-	George Odhiambo
6.	Information Professional	-	Josephine Wareta
7.	International Organization, NGO, Development Partners	-	Anne Bruntse
8.	Kenyan eRAILS Portal Administrator	-	Richard Kedemi

5. RAILS milestones after sensitization and demonstrations

Immediately after the sensitization and demonstrations of the RAILS platform to the participants the following has been achieved: -

- Tens (10) accounts have been opened, with 3 more requests yet to be opened.
- 3 website were created, hence showing the need for more practical demo and sensitization workshops.

- They have been follow-up calls on user support on account creation and web development.
- Requests to create a web presence for the Rice Knowledge Bank project in Kenya, EAAPP and a blog for Dr. Ouda.

6. Workshop evaluation

Overall, the participants hailed the organization and facilitation of the workshop. The majority considered the workshop to be well organised and the location and facilities to be ideal. The facilitation was rated good, interactive and participatory and focused to the programme. Participants said they had learned a lot and that the objectives of the workshop were attained. However, a few participants considered the time accorded to the workshop to be limited. The extent to which the workshop objectives were achieved on a Likert scale of one to five where 1 = not achieved at all and 5 = fully achieved were rated:

- Objective 1: Awareness creation among stakeholders about RAILs and the introduction of the Africa-wide agricultural information system being established under RAILS: rated as 5 by 55.6%, 4 by 38.9% and 3 by 5.6%.
- Objective 2: Establishment of the Kenya (national) learning team to support the development of the national agicultural information system gateway: rated as 5 by 64.7%, 4 by 29.4% and 3 by 5.9%.
- Objective 3: The roles, terms of reference (TORs) and outputs of the national learning team agreed upon: rated as 5 by 41.2%, 4 by 41.2%, 3 by 11.8% and 2 by 5.9%.
- Objective 4: Members of the core national learning team selected and responsibilities agreed upon: rated as 5 by 70.6%, 4 by 17.6% and 3 by 11.8%.
- Objective 5: Activities to be carried out by the learning team identified rated: rated as 5 by 43.75, 4 by 37.5%, 3 by 12.5% and 2 by 6.3%.

7. Way forward

Participants made several suggestions on the way forward for e RAILS including:

- The need for training on development and maintenance of websites to full utilization of the RAILS portal;
- The need for the core team to fundraise;
- The need to create awareness about e RAILS, promote and market it in order to bring more institutions on board to share and disseminate information;
- The need to populate the portal and make it a useful source of current and timely information for researchers, farmers, consumers and the media;
- The need to lobby policy makers to ensure other relevant organizations come on board this innovative platform;
- There is a need for constant consultation between the focal point and member institutions;
- The need to plan carefully and ensure sustainability of Kenya RAILS after the project period;
- The need to bring on board private sector actors;
- The need to make the portal a convergence point for all agricultural stakeholders;
- The need to create avenues for information sharing across regional blocks and globally;

- The National Core Learning Team needs to meet and deliberate on the TOR, responsibilities and activities to be carried out and encourage wide participation;
- There is a need to do more capacity building/training in order to enhance participation and content sharing on the platform;
- There is need to implement the planned activities by developing an action plan with time lines and availability;
- Kenya RAILS needs to work hand in hand with regional and international agricultural organizations;
- There is need to convene another meeting to establish a proper platform; and
- The need to circulate the workshop report to all invited institutions.
- A Dgroup discussion forum to be established for continued working together.

8. Immediate Workplan

There is an immediate need to work on the MOU document - **Action: Dr. Ouda to have draft by mid November, 2010.**

A draft of the vetting criteria to be completed by the end of October - **Action: Anne Bruntse**

Kenya RAILS to create a portal for partners in accordance to the created/listed categories - **Action: Richard Kedemi**

After all the above are put in place, there will be E-mails sent to partners to introduce RAILS and to request them to identify contact persons in their organizations that RAILS would work with. This will be followed with phone calls and finally a training workshop will be organized to train the contact persons.

The Kenya RAILS Core Learning Team will be meeting monthly until this project fully takes off. After that the meeting schedule can be reviewed according to the planned activities.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 3pm. The next meeting will be on **18th November 2010.**

9. Conclusion

The workshop was highly successful and provided an opportunity for agricultural information stakeholders in Kenya to know each other, learn from each other, and establish a platform that would facilitate the sharing and exchange of information, knowledge and innovations. The workshop objectives were achieved and participants remained active and committed throughout the workshop period. They were exposed to various tools that would help them share and exchange agricultural information. A key milestone was the selection of a National Core Learning Team that will work with several sub committees steer the activities of Kenya RAILS.

Appendix 1: List of Participants

Regional Agricultural Information and Learning Systems (RAILS) Workshop
Held at KARI Headquarters
On 16th and 17th September 2010
List of Participants

No.	Name	Designation	Institution/Address	Cell Phone	Email Address
1	John Omiti	Senior Policy Analyst	KIPPRA P.O Box 56445-00200, NAIROBI	0713463443	jmomiti@kippra.or.kejmomiti@gmail.com
2	Foustine Peter Wandera	Ag. Manager ARDF	KARI P.O Box 57811-00200 NAIROBI	4183301-20	fwandera@kari.org
3	Joel K. Mosonik	ICT Operation and Maintenance Officer	P.O Box 3900-30100 ELDORET	020-201-6704/072246193607335065 25	jmosonik@mu.ac.kejmosonik@gmail.com
4	John W. Kimani	Head Documentation	Agricultural Information Resource Centre P.O Box 66730-00800 NAIROBI	0721342918	Jkimani6@yahoo.com
5	Felicia Wambui Ndung'u	Assistant Director of Agriculture	Ministry of Agriculture P.O Box 30028 NAIROBI	0721694675 0731555425	ndungufelicia@yahoo.com
6.	Josephine Wareta	TV Producer	KBC P.O Box 30456-00100 NAIROBI	318823 Ext. 6505/072142 0350	otingajaw@yahoo.co.uk
7	Githaiga Tiras Ndiritu	Development Coordinator	Catholic Diocese of Murang'a P.O Box 734-10200 MURANG'A	0722417903	githaigah@yahoo.com
8	Geoffrey Bittok	Assistant Director	Information and Public Communications P.O Box 8053-00300 NAIROBI	0722218504	bmaiyos@yahoo.com
9	George Odhiambo	Head of partnerships Lobby and Advocacy	KENFAP P.O Box 43148-00100 NAIORBI	0728364945	Odhiambo@kenfap.orgproducers@kenfap.org
10	Charles Oduor Ogada	Program Officer	Ugunja Community Resource Centre P.O. Box 330-40606 UGUNJA	0721963011	charles@ugunja.org
11	James O. Odenya	Assistant Director, Technology Transfer	KESREF P.O Box 44-40100 KISUMU	0721270201	James.odenya@kesref.org
12	Grace Kamau	Information Services Manager	ILRI P.O Box 30709-00100,NAIROBI	0722674329	g.kamau@cgiar.org

No.	Name	Designation	Institution/Address	Cell Phone	Email Address
13	Jacinta Were	Deputy University Librarian (Technical)	University of Nairobi P.O Box 30197-00100, NAIROBI	0720853427	Jo_were@yahoo.com
14	Margaret McEwan	Research Leader	International Potato Center P.O Box 25171, NAIROBI	+254-020 4223611 0733681155	M.McEwan@cgiar.org
15	Solomon Maleche	Librarian	JKUAT P.O Box 62000-0200, NAIROBI	0723101588	maleche4@yahoo.com
16	Laila Abubakar	Senior Research Officer	Kenya Marine & Fisheries Research Institute-Sagana P.O Box 451-10230, SAGANA	4442841/072 2760070/073 2760070	labubkar@uonbi.ac.ke
17	Eddah Wasike	Information Specialist	ICIPE P.O Box 30772-00100, NAIROBI	0733771295	ewasike@icipe.org
18	Paul K. Tuwei	Information Officer	KEFRI P.O Box 20412, NAIROBI	0722740830	ptuwei@yahoo.com
19	Jacqueline Nyagahima	Head of Information and Communication	ASARECA, P.O Box 765, Entebbe Plot 5, Mpigi Road	+256 77246010	J.nyagahima@asareca.org
20	Hilda Munyua	Executive Director	Knowledge Trends Ltd, P.O Box 1110-00621, NAIROBI	0733925148	munyua@iconnect.co.ke
21	Antony Biegon	Database Manager	KARI HQTS P.O Box 57811-00200 NAIROBI	0722437592	abiegon@kari.org
22	Richard Kedemi	Systems Administrator	KARI HQTS P.O Box 57811-00200 NAIROBI	0727910422	Rkedemi@kari.org
23	Ann Bruntse	Regional Coordinator Infonet, East Africa	Infonet/ Biovision P.O Box 30772-00100, NAIROBI	0723822145	infonet@icipe.org
24	Jane Frances K. Asaba	Coordinator, Information & Communication for Development	P.O Box 633-00621 NAIROBI	0733750526	J.Asaba@cabi.org
25	Thomas W. Mukhebi		Kenya Agricultural Commodity Exchange (KACE) P.O Box 59142-00200 NAIROBI	4441829	wekulo@kacekenya.co.ke
26	Elizabeth Simwa	Administrative Secretary	P.O Box 57811-00200 NAIROBI	0722444569	esimwa@gmail.com

Appendix 2: Programme

Regional Agricultural Information and Learning Systems Workshop to establish a National (Kenya) RAILS

16th – 17th September, Nairobi Kenya

Programme

DAY 1	**THURSDAY**	
SESSION TIME	**ACTIVITY**	**RESPONSIBLE**
08:00 – 08:30	**Registration and Review of Documents**	
SESSION 1	**Welcome and Introductions Remarks**	Dr. Jack Ouda / Hilda Munyua
08:30 – 08:50	Introductions	Hilda Munyua
08:50 – 09:10	Welcome Remarks and Introductions	Dr. Joseph Mureithi
09:10 – 09:40	Workshop Opening Remarks	Dr. Wilson Songa
09:40 – 10:00	Update on RAILS FOCAL Point Kenya	Dr. Jack Ouda
10:00 – 10:30	FARA/ASARECA RAILS Presentation	Jacky Nyagahima
	Rapporteurs	
10:30 – 10:50	**HEALTH BREAK**	
SESSION 2	**(i) RAILS INTERVENTIONS**	
10:50 – 11:05	DONATA	Margaret McEwan – (CIP – Nairobi)
11:05 – 11:20	DONATA-KENYA Presentation	Charles Bett
11:20 – 11:35	DONATA-KENYA Presentation	Philip Ndolo
11:35 – 12.20	African portal for Agricultural Information and Learning System (AIS) –RAILS Gateway development (Presentation and demo of http://www.e-rails.net	Nyagahima/Kedemi
12:20 – 1:00	Q&A about the e-rails.net presentation	Hilda Munyua
	Rapporteurs	
1:00 – 2:00	**LUNCH BREAK**	
2:00 – 2:45	Group formation for discussion on potential uses of a e-RAILS portal to support Agricultural Information sharing and dissemination	Hilda Munyua
2:45 – 3:30	Group presentations on potential uses of a e-RAILS portal to support Agricultural Information sharing and dissemination	Hilda Munyua
3:30 – 4:00	Building Learning Teams /core National learning team	Jacky Nyagahima
4:00 – 4:30	Discussion on Learning teams	Hilda Munyua
4:30 – 5:00	Setting up of e-RAILS accounts for participants	Richard
	Rapporteurs	
	HEALTH BREAK	

Programme

DAY 2	**FRIDAY**	
	(i) Demonstrations of some Kenyan interventions on information sharing	
08:30 – 09:00	Presentation & Demo on KAINet	Richard Kedemi
09:00 – 9:15	Ugunja Presentation on using mobile phone technology FrontlineSMS	
09:15 – 9:30	Presentation on Infonet-Biovision	Anne Bruntse
9:30 – 9:45	Presentation on Media for Environment, Science, Health and Agriculture Association in Kenya (MESHA)	Susan Mwangi
9:45 – 10:30	Discussion Q/A	Hilda Munyua
	Rapporteurs	
	HEALTH BREAK	
11:00 – 12:00	Elections of Core National Learning Team	Hilda Munyua
12:00 – 12:30	Closing Remarks	
	Rapporteurs	
	LUNCH BREAK	
	(ii) FOCAL POINT TEAM MEETING	
2:00 – 2:30	Core National Learning Team Meeting	Hilda Munyua
	DISCUSIION	
	HEALTH BREAK	

Appendix 3: Minutes of the RAILS Core Learning Team Meeting
17th September 2010

PRESENT
Jack Ouda
Hilda Munyua - Chairing
Jacqueline Nyagahima
Anne Bruntse
Dr. John Omiti
Felicia Ndungu
Joel Musonik
Josephine Wareta - Taking minutes

ABSENT WITH APOLOGY
George Odhiambo
Richard Kedemi

AGENDA
The way forward for the newly elected RAILS Core Learning Team

AOB

There was general discussion on the tentative TOR and activities of the RAILS Core Learning Team, what needs to be done and how the team needs to work on its TOR.

The meeting started with a brief review of Ms. Nyagahima's presentation on the TOR and activities for the core team. It was unanimously agreed that the guidelines can change and be made country specific.

It was agreed that the feedback obtained from the workshop evaluation from the participants on the way forward for Kenya RAILS would also be used to guide the team in arriving at comprehensive TORs, activities and in developing an action plan.

The issue of resources for organizing meetings was raised and the team was informed that FARA was aware of the need to support the local RAILS Learning Teams and to market the RAILS activities nationally.

It was also agreed that FARA be requested to categorize the RAILS pages based on the value chain on issues of interest to users e.g. by commodity to facilitate retrieval and to provide the contact addresses of authors. This would make the RAILS portal user friendly and attract interest from the private sector as they will find information on their topics of interest on one site, making it a one stop-shop.

The task of bringing on board the private sector may be huge but relevant as the agricultural information users/consumers would have links to comprehensive information frommost agricultural service providers.

It was also agreed that there is need to have a higher focal point, probably FARA, to coordinate all the National Learning Teams in the region to meet and learn from each other.

As an immediate-term measure, each Core Team member was tasked to disseminate information about RAILS among fellow workmates or the associations they belong to. This would assist in marketing Kenya RAILS.

The next meeting was set for 13th October 2010 from 9 am, where the core team would set some milestones with time limits. The Focal point contact would send out the tentative agenda and any other information

There being no other business the meeting ended at 3 pm.

Appendix 4: The Kenya Rails Core Learning Team's Meeting – Minutes

13th October 2010

PRESENT

Dr. Jack Ouda - Chairing
Anne Bruntse
Felicia Ndungu
Joel Musonik
George Odhiambo
Richard Kedemi
Josephine Wareta - Taking minutes

ABSENT WITH APOLOGY

Dr. John Omiti

AGENDA

(i) Review and adoption of previous minute
(ii) Terms of reference for Kenya RAILS Core Learning Team
(iii) Recruitment of partners
(iv) AOB

The meeting started with Anne Bruntse shortly standing in as chair for Dr. Ouda who was held up in another official meeting.

Min.1/13/10 - Previous Minutes

The Team went through the previous minute and the following observations were made:
AOB could have been a typing error as it was wrongly placed

The meeting sought to find out if there was any official communication from FARA about the facilitation of meetings. It was then agreed that the focal point team be tasked with the responsibility to follow up with FARA on the issue.

The meeting also sought to find out apart from the formulation of the Kenya Rails Core Learning Team, what other activities FARA RAILS had planned for. It was then agreed that the focal point team and RAILS portal System Administrator be tasked with the responsibility to follow up with on the issue.

Min.2/13/10 - Kenya Rails Core Team's Terms of Reference

The Team adopted wholly the TOR laid down by FARA (Annex 2), with an addition on criteria for vetting all the information posted on the repository by the partners. The information must be related to agriculture.

Any information or promotional material posted should not impact negatively on the other players' information or products.

The players must maintain and update their information regularly. The Team will request FARA to put up a facility to fix a date on every postage or request every individual / organization to put dates on every postage they make.

All these will be administered through an MOU between the organizations / individuals and the RAILS Core Learning Team.

Min.3/13/10 - Recruitment of Partners

The importance of RAILS having a national outlook could not be underscored. Therefore the Team had to define the institutions that will be recruited to help realize this objective. Later as the work progresses and expands to the grassroots, these same organizations and others will give contacts of their networks at the county level to ensure that consolidated and concrete information gets to the consumers at all levels.

The Core Team is also to use their networks to sensitize people about eRAILS and how to open their own sites.

LIST OF PARTNERS

1. UNIVERSITIES

(i) Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT)
(ii) University of Nairobi (UON)
(iii) Moi University
(iv) Egerton University
(v) Maseno University
(vi) Kenyatta University (KU)
(vii) Masinde Muliro University

2. RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

(i) Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI)
(ii) Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI)
(iii) Kenya Marine Research Institute (KEMRI)
(iv) Tea Research
(v) Coffee Research
(vi) National Irrigation Board
(vii) ILRI
(viii) ICRAF
(ix) ICIPE
(x) CYMMIT
(xi) CIP
(xii) ICRISAT

3. MEDIA

(i) Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC)
(ii) Royal Media Services

4. FARMER ORGANIZATIONS

(i) KENFAP
(ii) Cooperative Alliance of Kenya

5. PRIVATE EXTENSION SERVISE PROVIDERS

(i) Biovision
(ii) Farming Systems Kenya
(iii) Farm Inputs
(iv) Heifer International
(v) Land-O Lakes
(vi) Ngoma

6. PROCESSORS

(i) Brookeside
(ii) KCC
(iii) Kenya Meat Commission
(iv) Unga Mills
(v) Sigma Feeds

7. MARKETING AGENCIES

(i) KTDA
(ii) HCDA
(iii) Coffee Board
(iv) Pyrethrum Board
(v) Kenya Cereals Board
(vi) Kenya Sugar Board

8. FINANCING INSTITUTIONS

(i) Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC)
(ii) Equity Bank
(iii) Micro-finance Institutions

9. REGULATORY BODIES

(i) KEPHIS
(ii) KEBS
(iii) HCDA
(iv) NEMA
(v) Directorate of Veterinary Services

10. INPUT PROVIDERS

(i) Kenya Seed and other Seed Companies
(ii) Mea Ltd
(iii) Athi River Mining
(iv) Kenya Farmers Association
(v) Ndume Industries
(vi) LIMA Ltd

11. AGRICULTURAL SECTOR MINISTRIES

(i) Ministry of Agriculture
(ii) Ministry of Livestock
(iii) Ministry of Cooperative
(iv) Ministry of Water and irrigation
(v) Ministry of Lands
(vi) Ministry of Regional development
(vii) Ministry of Environment

A.O.B

IMMEDIATE WORK PLAN

There is an immediate need to work on the MOU document - **Action: Dr. Ouda to have draft by mid November, 2010.**

A draft of the vetting criteria to be completed by the end of October - **Action: Anne Bruntse**

Kenya RAILS to create a portal for partners in accordance to the created/listed categories - **Action: Richard Kedemi**

After all the above are put in place, there will be E-mails sent to partners to introduce RAILS and to request them to identify contact persons in their organizations that RAILS would work with. This will be followed with phone calls and finally a training workshop will be organized to train the contact persons.

The Kenya RAILS Core Learning Team will be meeting monthly until this project fully takes off. After that the meeting schedule can be reviewed according to the planned activities.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 3pm. The next meeting will be on ***18th November 2010.***