Innovation platforms for agricultural development

RESEARCH PROGRAM ON Roots, Tubers and Bananas

CGIAR

IITA Transforming African Agriculture 50 1967-2017

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

Complex Agricultural Problems

Key characteristics of complex agricultural problems

- Multi-dimensional
- Multi-level
- Multi-stakeholder
- Unsolvable and unpredictable

Multi-dimensional

- Biophysical
- Technological
- Social-cultural
- Economic
- Institutional
- Political

Multi-level

- (Inter)national
- District
- Community
- Household
- Farm
- Plot

Multi-stakeholder

- Farmers
- Private sector
- NGOs
- Researchers
- Government
- Media

Unsolvable and uncertain

- Uncertain how problems develop over time?
- (Un)desirable impact of "solutions"?
- Environmental and human inflicted shocks in the system

Multi-Stakeholder Innovation Processes

An example...

SF1: Purpose

1. For identifying problems and developing and testing innovations with a small group of people
2. For scaling existing innovations to specific types of farmers or agro-ecological areas
3. For 'scaling' existing innovations to reach large groups of farmers
4. Is the innovation platform approach the best way to achieve this?

Take-home messages

1. Innovation platforms are useful vehicles for assessing and overcoming complex agricultural problems
2. There are no silver-bullets; innovation platforms need to be tailored to their specific context
3. Innovation platforms are resource intensive and require new ways of working
4. Platforms should not be given, but build on existing R&D structures and service delivery networks

SF2: Enabling environment

1. Are there adequate human and financial investors (facilitator, funds) to support innovation platforms?
2. Is there flexibility in our project to support innovation platforms (e.g. to change focus)?
3. Is there institutional support to work in a demand-driven and participatory way?

SF3: Build on existing platforms and networks

1. Are there existing innovation platforms or other networks on which the project could build?
2. Are these platforms or networks willing and able to collaborate to achieve joint objectives?
3. Are their mechanisms in place to sustain the platform?

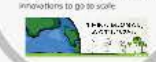
Agricultural Innovation

Integrated analyses and solutions

- Analysing problems/ exploring solutions is unlikely to be successful if dimensions are addressed separately
- Explore technological and non-technological innovations

Multi-level approach

- Intervention strategies that target different levels
- How to create an enabling environment for local innovation?
- Having interconnected multi-stakeholder networks across levels can facilitate local innovations to go to scale



Collective action

- Try to understand the obstacles and the problems that different stakeholder groups are facing
- Have better insights in what type of innovations are feasible, viable, and acceptable for different groups of stakeholders
- Support stakeholder to identify their interdependencies and explore incentives for collective action

Iterative and resilient

- Continuous interaction and learning for current and future problem solving
- Enhanced empowerment, ownership and capacity in stakeholder networks (people know how to find each other)
- Capacity to innovate: develop ability of individuals and groups to assess and overcome to complex problems

More information:

Marc Schut
m.schut@cgiar.org

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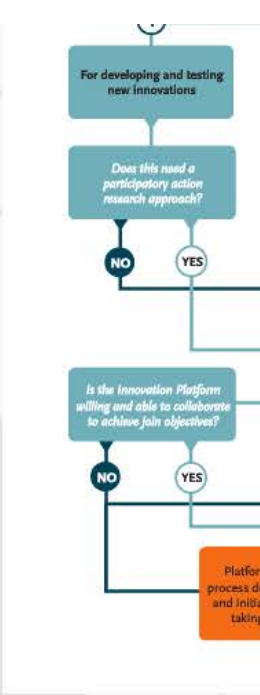

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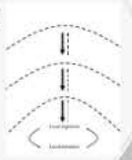

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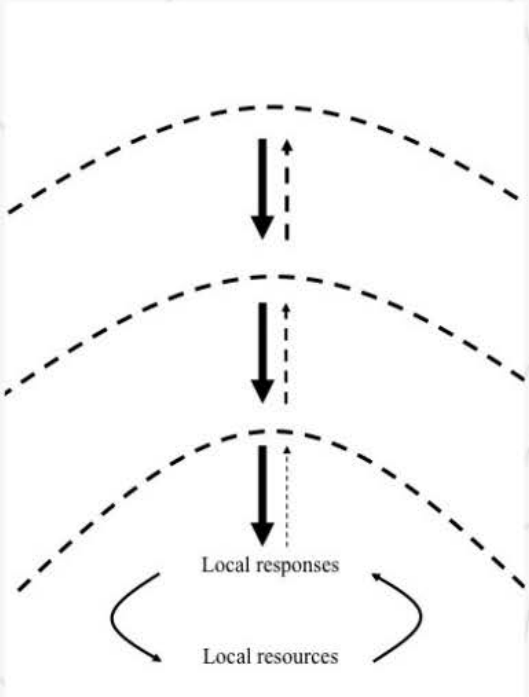

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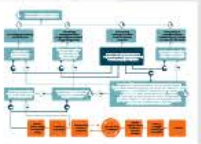

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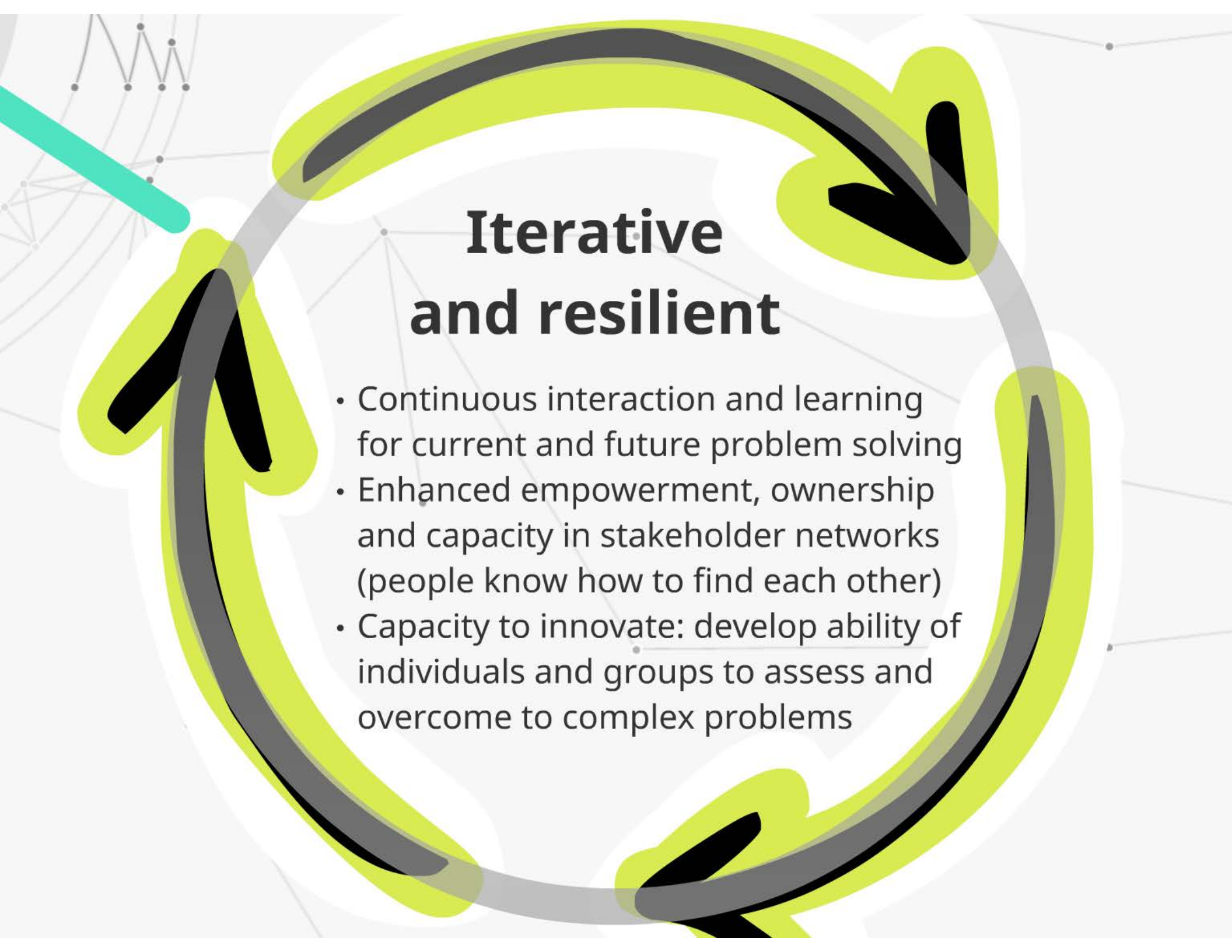
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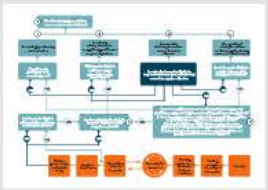

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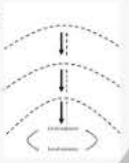

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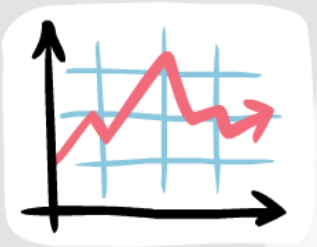

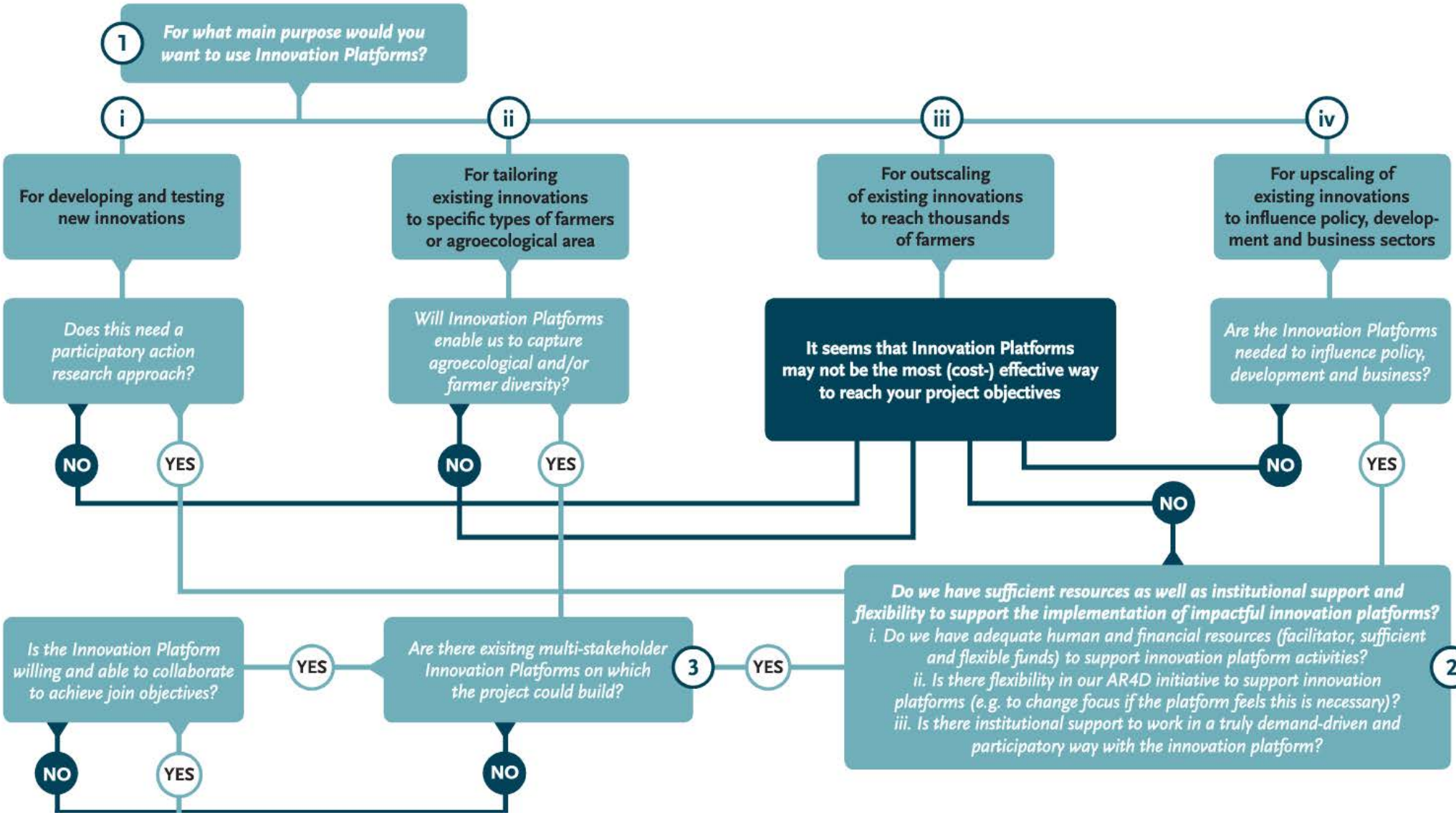
1
For what main purpose would you want to use Innovation Platforms?
i
ii
iii
iv
For developing and testing new innovations
For tailoring existing innovations to specific types of farmers or agroecological area
For outscaling of existing innovations to reach thousands of farmers
For upscaling of existing innovations to influence policy, development and business sectors
Does this need a participatory action research approach?
Will Innovation Platforms enable us to capture agroecological and/or farmer diversity?
It seems that Innovation Platforms may not be the most (cost-) effective way to reach your project objectives
Are the Innovation Platforms needed to influence policy, development and business?
NO
YES
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Do we have sufficient resources as well as institutional support and flexibility to support the implementation of impactful innovation platforms?
i. Do we have adequate human and financial resources (facilitator, sufficient and flexible funds) to support innovation platform activities?
ii. Is there flexibility in our AR4D initiative to support innovation platforms (e.g. to change focus if the platform feels this is necessary)?
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Is the Innovation Platform willing and able to collaborate to achieve join objectives?
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Are there exisitng multi-stakeholder Innovation Platforms on which the project could build?
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Gov extension system: $7,50 f/yr
-> 17,000 farmers

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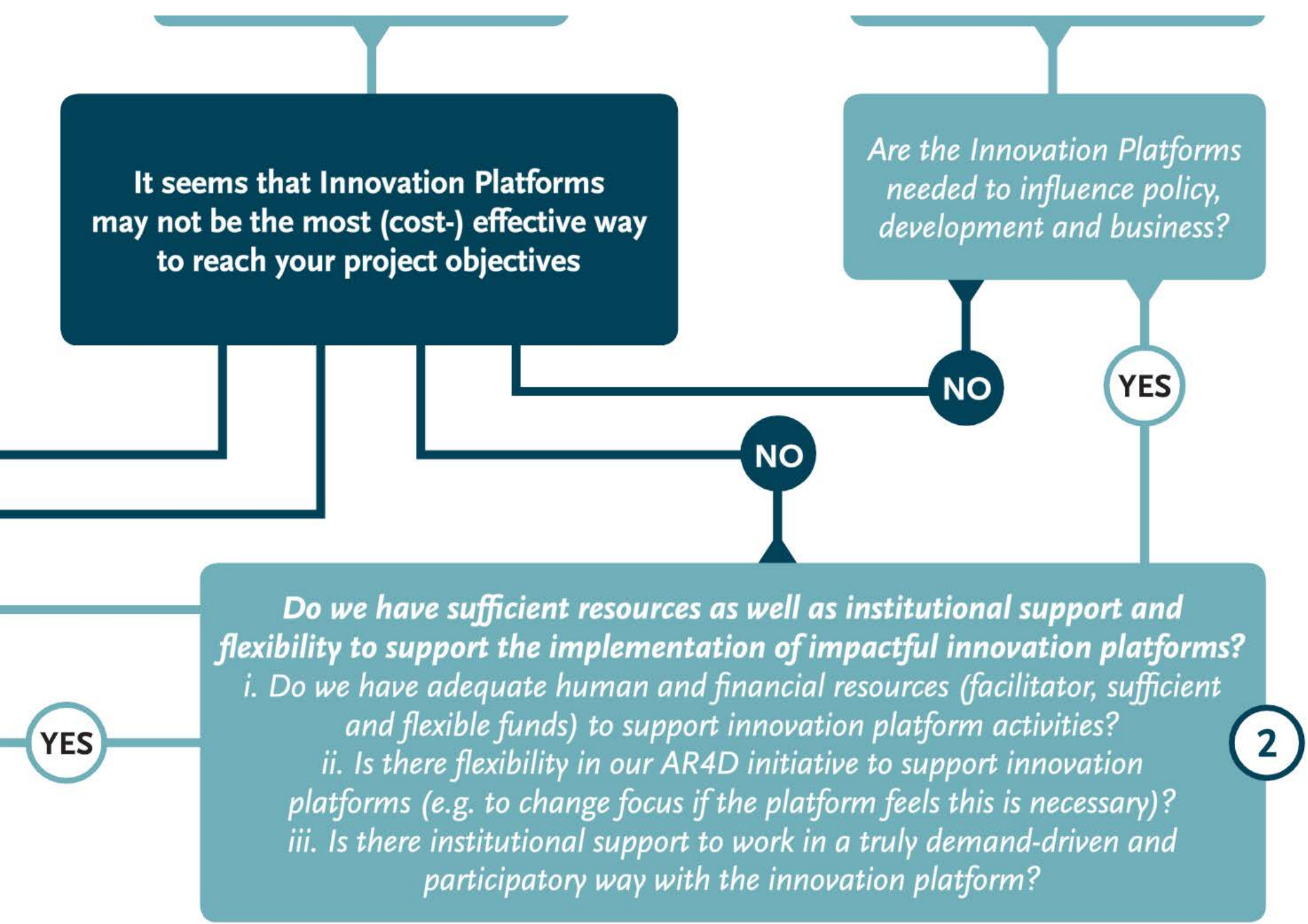
- Innovation platforms - $85 f/yr -> 1500 farmers
- Farmer Field Schools: $53 f/yr -> 2500 farmers
- Gov extension system: $7,50 f/yr -> 17,000 farmers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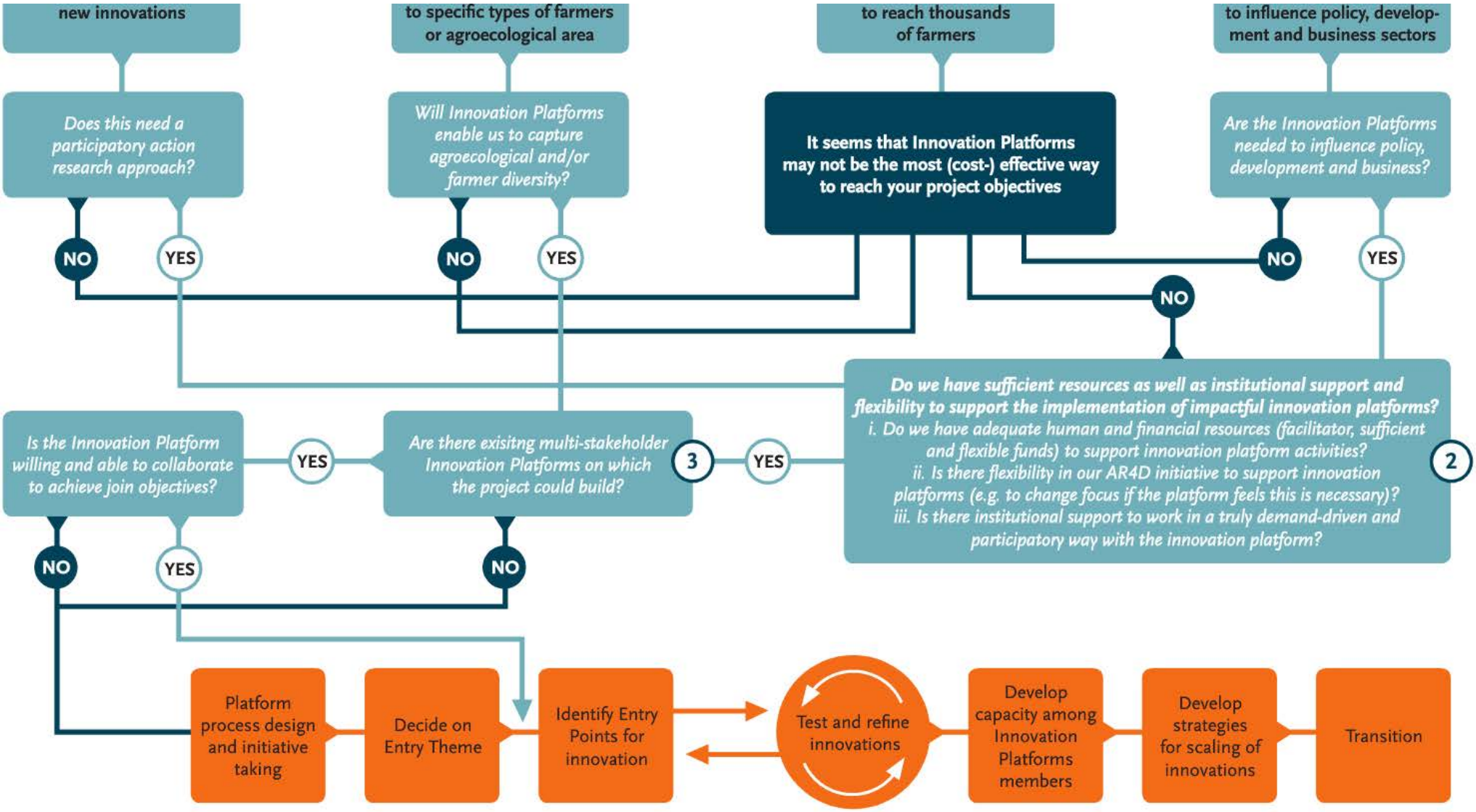
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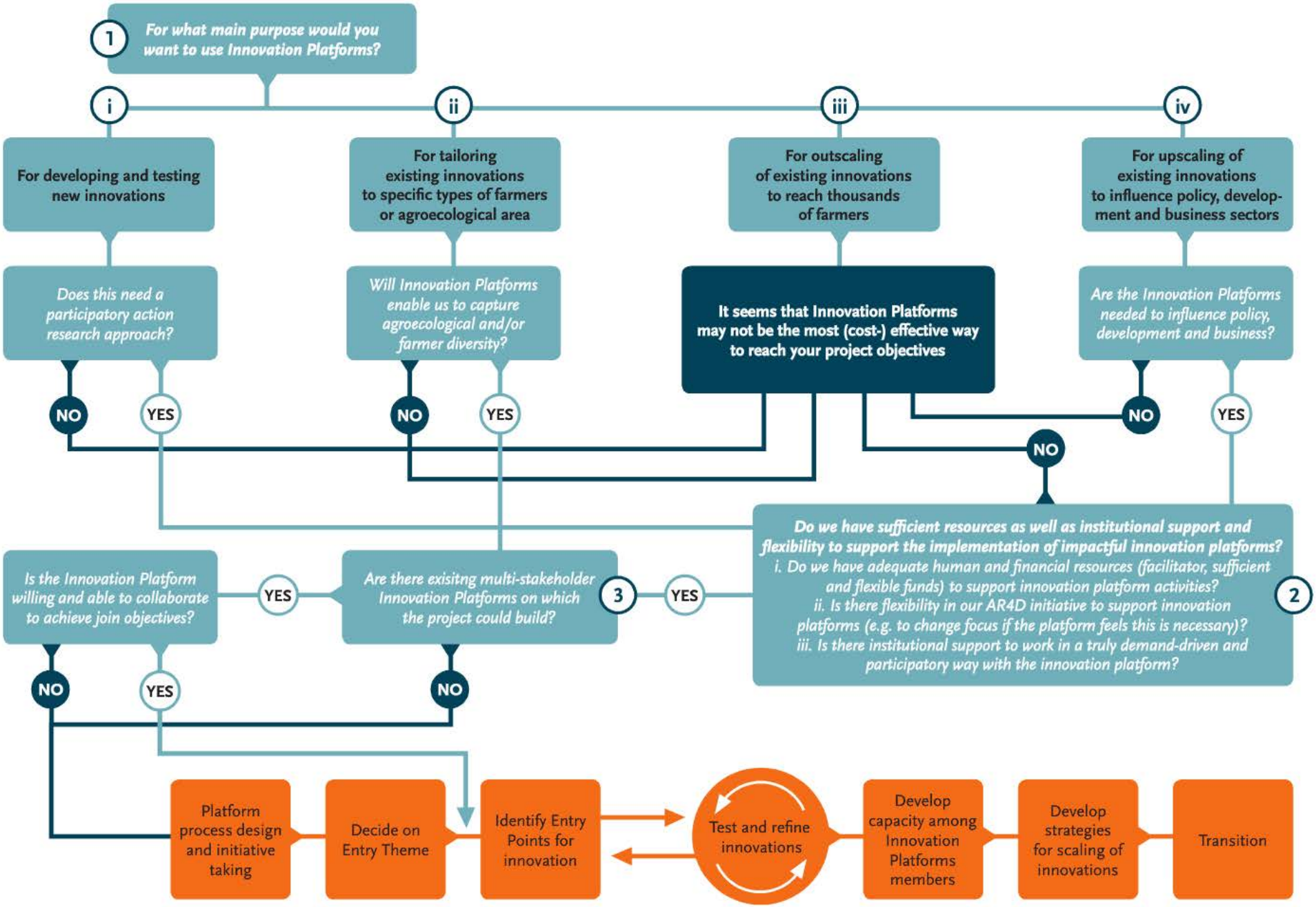
Decide on Entry Theme
Identify Entry Points for innovation
Test and refine innovations
Develop capacity among Innovation Platforms members
Develop strategies for scaling of innovations
Transition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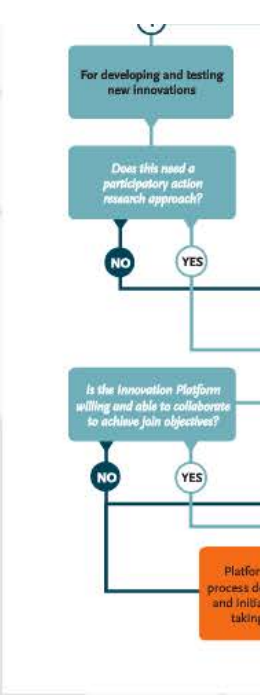

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- Intervention strategies that target different levels
- How to create an enabling environment for local innovation?
- Having interconnected multi-stakeholder networks across levels can facilitate local innovations to go to scale

Collective action

- Try to understand the obstacles and the problems that different stakeholder groups are facing
- Have better insights in what type of innovations are feasible, viable, and acceptable for different groups of stakeholders
- Support stakeholder to identify their interdependencies and explore incentives for collective action

Iterative and resilient

- Continuous interaction and learning for current and future problem solving
- Enhanced empowerment, ownership and capacity in stakeholder networks (people know how to find each other)
- Capacity to innovate: develop ability of individuals and groups to assess and overcome to complex problems

More information:

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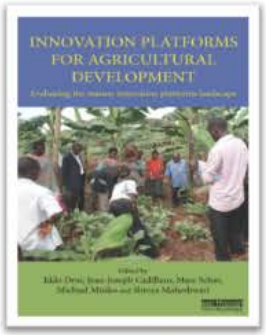
More information:

Science papers

SPP 2017 online

PLOS 2017 12(2)

Books



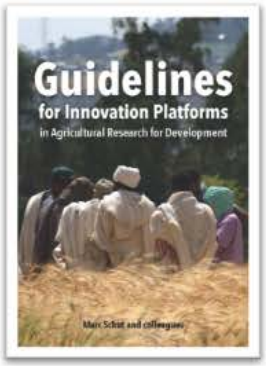
Earthscan 2016

Case studies

Farming Matters

Exp Ag 2017 online

Exp Ag 2016 52(4)



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