eConversation summary

Shaping the Future of the #ATIO Knowledge Base

eConversation #7, 2nd Series

Collaborating organisations

Hosted on the Digitalisation for Agriculture or D4Ag dGroup, this eConversation has been run by the FAO Office of Innovation in collaboration with the Digital Agri Hub.

eConversation framework

The Agrifood systems Technologies and Innovations Outlook (ATIO) Knowledge Base (KB) is being built by the FAO Office of Innovation as a qualitative-information catalog of agrifood systems technologies and innovations developed by actors across the full spectrum of stakeholders, including grassroots communities. Its coverage is going to be global and spans the whole innovation life cycle and all relevant use cases in the agrifood system. It will be neutral, partnership-driven, participatory, and open access. Content will be both federated from trustworthy relevant sources and crowdsourced, with intensive but carefully guided use of artificial intelligence (AI) to enrich and categorize information.

Its objective is to assist policy makers and other agrifood systems stakeholders in making informed decisions to support the prioritization and upscaling of technologies and innovations to accelerate agrifood systems transformation.

Some stats

Dates

- Starting: 9/12/2024
- Closing: 31/12/2024

Number of posts: 43

Number of contributors: 13

New members: 80

The ATIO KB will be a component of the FAO Science Technology and Innovation (STI) Portal. At this early stage, when FAO is writing a design document and building an early prototype, it is the right time to consult potential users. The ATIO team wants to co-learn and co-design to implement a service that meets the needs of its users.

The purpose of this eConversation is to understand use cases and scenarios in which the ATIO KB is deemed to be useful, and seek guidance and gather feedback on the current design of the prototype from diverse actors – starting from the basic use cases / personas that have been initially identified, hoping to discover more:

- **decision makers** for policy formulation and investments planning
- **producers,** through their organizations, for awareness as well as critical assessment of solutions' relevance and adoptability
- **researchers and innovators** in general willing to further advance the knowledge available
- **digital service providers and agripreneurs**, for the identification of trends and gaps.

Summary of the exchanges

This is a short recap of the feedback received on the ATIO Knowledge Base in the eConversation:

1. **"How do you think the platform can help you and users like you? What should it do? Describe one or more specific use cases that you wish the KB would address."**

2. **"Does the innovation record contain the information you would expect and need? Which other dimensions are useful to describe and categorize an innovation? Is AI enriching the records in a meaningful way?"**

Questions 1 and 2

From the answers to questions 1 and 2 we collected the following expectations from participants:

Use cases and functionalities:

Finding innovative solutions:

- Searching for products supporting farmers with credit and insurance in specific countries (Agwe Brent)
- Identifying research gaps and emerging trends in agrifood systems (Jonathan van Geuns)
- Assessing solutions against adoptability criteria and maturity levels (Agwe, Peter Ballantyne)
- Finding local and grassroots innovations (Mercy Moyo)
- Supporting evidence-based policy and advocacy with categorized qualitative information (Jonathan)
- Finding also policies that produce/support innovations (Ashish Gupta-jee)
- Finding what others are doing in similar contexts and learning from their experience with the solutions (Krishan Bheenick)

Collaboration and partnership:

- Facilitating collaborative research and innovation between stakeholders, also through collective capitalization of experiences (Jonathan, Mercy, Krishan)
- Enabling partnership formation through "Open for partners" labeling (Anna Vittoria Spadoni)

Assessment and evaluation:

- Evaluating applicability of innovations in different contexts (Jonathan, Krishan)
- Assessing solutions against socio-economic, environmental, and cultural conditions (Jonathan, but implicitly many others)
- Understanding scalability and transferability potential (Jonathan, Peter B.)
- Documenting both successful and failed initiatives for learning (Jonathan, Gupta-jee)

Design recommendations:

Knowledge Management, content model and classification:

- Get inspiration from existing exercises like the ones conducted by the CG on the structure of "cards"/factsheets for the evaluation and scoring of solutions, or the CG "scaling readiness" approach (Peter B.)
- Include detailed geographical zoning aligned with agroecological zones (Krishan)
- Add classifications for "promising practices" beyond good practices (Krishan)
- Document security and privacy considerations for technologies (Anna Vittoria)
- Include assessment of non-technological readiness (social, organizational, legal) (Tomaso Ceccarelli)
- Capture ease of understanding/use (Tomaso)
- Provide regular status updates and validation mechanisms
- Always highlight when AI is used and mention source (Gupta-jee, Jonathan)
- Enable tracking of technology evolution patterns (Jonathan)
- Support bundling of complementary solutions (Peter S.,)
- Link to SDG impacts (Gupta-jee)

User interface:

- Implement more user-friendly filter selection methods (Tomaso)
- Consider conversational AI/LLM interface for intuitive searching (Peter Schelstraeter)
- Enable public editing and feedback (Wikipedia-style) (Gupta-jee)
- Support input from users of solutions (Jonathan)
- Participatory validation of AI suggestions (Jonathan)
- Provide offline access or SMS-based options (Mercy)
- Ensure interoperability (Jonathan)
- Question 3 was more elaborate, and it didn't spark a new discussion.

3. **"Under technological innovations, many are commercial branded products, and data sources like patent databases or commercial catalogues even have records for the different models of a product. In this context, how would you expect to see commercial products treated? Would it be overwhelming to have a list of results with each model of a branded product? Would it be perceived as promotion? Are you interested in the actual branded products or in the brand-agnostic descriptions of the innovative ideas (maybe with related products shown in a side box)?**

Question 3

Gupta-jee replied to question 3 suggesting that a way of avoiding bias is listing the 'pros' and 'cons' of the innovations, and highlighting the role of the public sector in collaborating with or facilitating the private sector in innovating. He also hinted at the fact that patents for inventions/innovations may not be suitable content for the ATIO KB.

Outcome of the exchanges

In conclusion, from most contributions emerged a clear vision for ATIO as a dynamic, collaborative platform that goes beyond being just a catalog of innovations. The emphasis on including detailed contextual information, and even both successes and failures, suggests a commitment to practical utility rather than just showcasing innovations. The suggestions for including multiple dimensions of readiness and adoptability criteria show that participants share the understanding that successful innovation in agrifood systems requires more than just technological advancement - it needs to consider social, institutional, and environmental factors as well.

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