How can we use the IAASTD?

This handout is to help us think through our work group issues.

Looking at 3 questions:

1. For CSOs, how can you use IAASTD with your funders and partners and in your programmes?
2. What does it mean for national/government policies, what are our key messages to them, how can CSOs and Academia (Natural and Social Sciences) help them change?
3. How can the IAASTD help us in our dealings with international agencies (IMF and WB through to the UNEP and the FAO to the international philanthropies) and negotiations/treaties?

How can we use the IAASTD on a local, regional, national and international level?

- There are two main results of the IAASTD – **its processes** and **its findings**.

We have to traverse a long and complex terrain to convert these into real world outcomes – which will reduce hunger and poverty, and facilitate environmentally, socially and economically sustainable development.

- When we think about how to use the IAASTD, we must be conscious about
  (i) **The ways in which we use it** – multistakeholder, evidence-based, deliberative, democratic, and forward looking.
  (ii) **What we use** – which knowledge systems, technologies or institutional arrangements + why, and how we select these.
- For us, CSOs, industry, academics, and governments concerned about the future of agriculture and the environment, the questions in each context – region or sub-region or specific population/sections thereof (fishermen, indigenous/tribal people, women, elderly, etc.)- are bound to be different. That does not mean that we cannot draw from **the common principles/ lessons that the IAASTD offers** (which are also known in the social studies of science and technology)[1]

1. The report far from being anti-science or dismissive of science and technology (as some media reports (*Science* and *SciDev)* have claimed) is extremely pro-science. It demands more from and of science – perhaps much more than current mainstream agricultural science is willing to concede or has the capacity to offer.

2. In its findings, the IAASTD seems to reinforce the Mertonian canons of science – Universalism, Communality, Disinterestedness, and Organized skepticism.
This affirms the need to 'protect the scientific commons' from the self-interested profit-oriented controls (legal and institutional arrangements) and corresponding content of science demanded by a few dominant/elitist actors, often supported by Governments.

3. The reports show that there are several forms of knowledge (including modern technology) that contribute to reducing hunger and poverty and improving our environment. It is important and possible to allow these myriad forms of knowledge to work together and in harmony.

4. The findings underscore the universally accepted princinple of innovation – that innovation, (defined as the generation, access to and utilization of knowledge in economically productive and socially progressive ways) always involves technological and institutional changes.[2]
Poverty relevant innovation is not philanthropy. Surpluses and profits are important, for the poor,

[1] In keeping with the overall ethos of the IAASTD the following principles that it offers for further questions or action may be seen as my personal views – we have to collectively decide if there are other or different lessons/principles.

[2] Institutional changes – defined as changes in rules, norms, ways of working, habits.

for input/service provides and for the State- system sustainability criteria offer appropriate institutional arrangements.
5. The findings highlight that social and economic inequity as well as environmental quality is worsened by inappropriate and undemocratic choice of technology and institutional arrangements (like property rights, trade rules, banking practices, etc.) that may not be appropriate for local/national contexts.

Table: Suggestions for decision-makers – from the key findings of ESAP

Immediate/short-term	Medium/Long term
Increase national public investment and regional co-operation in AKST	Improve public-private-CSO involvement in AKST with accountability for social and environmental outcomes
Build rural safety nets and non-farm rural employment	Develop macro-level policy changes to enable AKST linkages with development goals
Increase AKST focus on drylands, fisheries, Mountain and Coastal ecosystems, orphan crops, crop-livestock systems, and impacts	Shift focus from production technologies to understanding and enhancing the production and environmental climate change functions of agriculture.
Enhance basic sciences, technological and institutional changes to address water and land problems	Build and reform AKST skill base (basic sciences, social, political and legal knowledge) and innovation capacities of rural communities and consumers

- So what should we do?

An example – please note that this Table is merely illustrative - it is part of the note some of us ESAP authors did for a few of our ESAP governments when they asked for points for action after the ESAP SDM was approved.
Now, if we assume that some ESAP governments may take up 'increased national public investment and regional co-operation in AKST'; what is the role of the CSOs and academics (natural science and social science)? We now need to look at the **how** and **what** questions at various levels;
- enable locally relevant coalitions of actors and decisions – with different stakes (of crop production, gender relationships, rural employment, soil conservation, etc), but common goals of sustainable rural livelihoods; participate and shape S&T decisions, indigenous or local knowledge, etc.; enable innovation capacities;
– enable decision-making by the State about where this new investment will go (which region, crop, issue, technology), what are the complementary investments that must be made (rural roads, drinking water, warehouses/cold storages), what new or modified ways of working are needed (coalitions with CSOs, interaction and effective communication among relevant public sector and private actors, etc.), what policy or institutional changes are needed (trade rules, IPRs – do ESAP countries need to mimick the Bayh-Dole act?), etc.
- enable international institutional tansformations- both in the generation and access to international public goods (scientific knowledge, fair legal/trade systems, etc.) and the capacity of nation states to respond in ways that improve local and global commons (the environment, science, social and economic development, etc.).
We must note that every issue in the sub-Global regions needs local, national and global action plans; and are informed by the principles or lessons outlined above.

(i) expand into S&T coalitions and other knowledge coalitions (just as they have in development coalitions)

(ii) enhance their role as knowledge providers and shapers (not merely limited to technology transfer or intermediary roles).