

Plenary Session

On 21 June 2022, Innovation Day kicked off the IFAD'22 Conference, bringing together 74 speakers representing the governments of Colombia, Finland, Italy, Israel, Kenya, and the United States, and top executives from the public and private sector, academia, civil society, research organizations and international financial institutions to share knowledge on how to originate, pilot, test, and scale innovative solutions in rural agricultural development.



A great opportunity to share knowledge so that we can find new and innovative ways to solve the most pressing challenges in rural development and climate change adaptation

Dominik Ziller

There is the need to identify solutions that work from the early supply chains to the very end of distribution.

Ville Skinnari

Topic

Ingredients for innovation: the emerging digital agriculture revolution in Kenya

- The session focused on the digital revolution happening in Kenya's agri-food systems: it presented an overview of the ecosystem and the framework, how the government and the World Bank are supporting it, and the role of entrepreneurs in the development.
- The session also aimed to understand how can we learn from this complex and rapidly evolving environment.



Plenary Session

Topic

Interconnected regenerative practices for rural development: the role of Innovation and public-private partnerships

The session focused on building sustainable ecosystems that connect communities and improve overall prosperity. Speakers discussed the need for agriculture to move from the exploitation to the regeneration of soils and the role of innovation and public-private partnership in the achievement of this goal.

Topic

Towards a circular economy: experiences from Southern Africa and Finland

The session presented the circular economy as enabler of the transition to a more sustainable economic model which could decrease the overconsumption of natural resources, and reduce climate change and biodiversity loss. Digitalization and innovation are key drivers in moving towards a circular economy – investments in digital infrastructure and innovation are also needed in the food sector.



We made the mistake of thinking we can overcome the rule of nature with culture and technology; it is not nature or culture, it's nature and culture. We really need to transition to a circular mode working like nature: perfect balance between production and disposal reactions.

Andrea Illy

Circular economy practices help us rethink and transform the way we produce and consume food. Digitalization and innovations are key drivers in the move towards a circular economy.

Tanja Gren

Plenary Session



H.E. Yael Rubinstein, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of Israel to the
United Nations Agencies in Rome

Topic

Applications of geographic information systems (GIS) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) for climate action

In this session, the panelists discussed the opportunities given by new technologies related to climate change action.

GIS and AI will enable the easier identification of projects that will generate an impact thanks to the synergy between IFAD and its partners. The session underlines the areas of application of these technologies which are used for targeting, impact assessment, monitoring, climate change adaptation, climate resilience, marine environment and the blue economy, and food security

Topic

Public-private-producer partnerships (4PS) to foster innovation and climate adaptation

In this session, the panelists discussed the opportunities given by new technologies related to climate change action. GIS and AI will enable the easier identification of projects that will generate an impact thanks to the synergy between IFAD and its partners. The session underlines the areas of application of these technologies which are used for targeting, impact assessment, monitoring, climate change adaptation, climate resilience, marine environment and the blue economy, and food security



We use the European framework programme RISE in Europe to attract the local entities by bringing the funding opportunities to all sectors, in this way we can increase the awareness and bring everybody to co-create innovative solutions.

Hagit Schwimmer

Innovation is everywhere today and the more so in the last two years. But in IFAD, in the Research and Impact Division [...] we are not only preaching but also applying innovation especially in the area of GIS and AI. Those two areas will allow in the future to design projects, especially at targeting stage but also at design stage, to make sure that those projects will be able to generate an impact

Sara Savastano

Plenary Session

Topic

From idea to impact through innovative public-private partnerships

In this session, with the support of the United States Mission to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Agencies in Rome, panelists address the fundamental need for public-private partnerships in any type of economy. Scientific research, when translated to scalable innovation, is critical to address challenges in rural agriculture. Enabling better connections between science and technology innovators will bring solutions more rapidly to the market: in this discussion, panelists share stories and approaches on how to support innovators at early stages

Closing Ceremony

In the final session, the panelists pointed out the community and social value of innovation – which does not exclusively revolve around financing, but around people, since it is people who are the active part of the change that innovation brings to the table. Moreover, innovation relates to the whole ecosystem that needs to be considered when implementing new solutions.



Samuel Rothenberg, Alternate Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Agencies in Rome



Bringing emergent technologies forward to improve productivity and efficiency of rural food production systems more quickly and more efficiently is facilitated by enabling connections between the science and technology innovators and the needs of markets that they need to serve.

Phil Weilerstein

It's really important, if we want to build the synergies with the private sector, for there to be agencies who stand up tall and take the risk and, clearly IFAD is one of those.

Jo Puri

We need to move from a paradigm of individual innovation challenges, that are launched and last a few months, to a paradigm of innovation hubs and collaboration hubs that bring together actors in a more permanent and sustainable way working together to achieve the objectives that are so clearly set in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Francisco Jose Noguera Cepeda

Side Events

Topic

APPLYING FRONTIER TECHNOLOGIES TO SECURE LAND RIGHTS

This session featured potential applications of frontier technologies in land tenure systems.

The panel concluded with three big ideas to the aforementioned question:

1. No lone rangers – technologies are most effective when used in combination.
2. Is there an afterlife of the project? Does it fizzle out and die once it's concluded? Issues of maintenance capacity and planning.
3. It's not about the technology that gets you to where you need to go.



Topic

GOVERNMENT POLICIES THAT ACCELERATE INNOVATION: LESSONS FROM INNOVATORS IN ASIA AND AFRICA

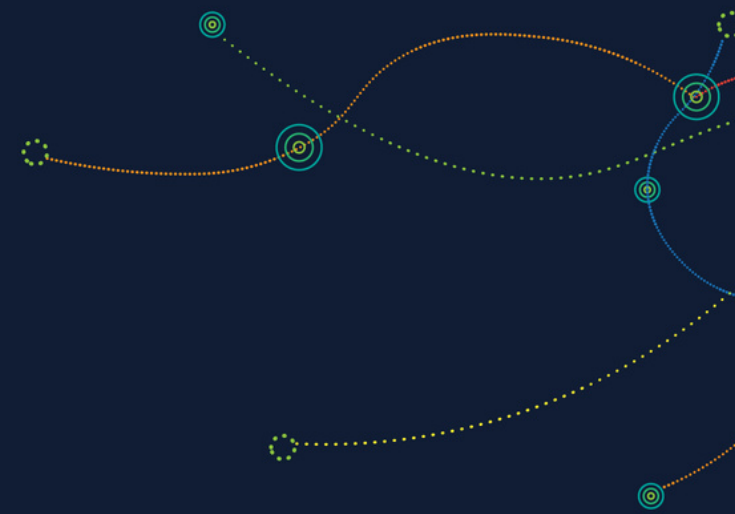
In this session innovators from NGOs and firms working in India, Indonesia, West Africa and East Africa discussed the opportunities and challenges of innovators and the role that governments and donor organizations can play in the supporting and adopting of new ideas.

Side Events

Topic

LEVERAGING ADVANCED ANALYTICS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

This session explored the potential of advanced analytics, including artificial intelligence and machine learning, to deliver more impactful and cost-effective operations within their organizations.



Topic

INNOVATION, FOOD SYSTEMS AND SUSTAINABILITY

- This side event looked into the role of innovation in nutrition-sensitive agriculture and placed special focus on the Mediterranean cuisine, as an example for a traditional healthy diet.
- An interactive panel discussed the role of innovation in sustainable diets, and the importance of building on traditional knowledge in the context of climate transition.



Partnerships and collaboration, particularly in the Mediterranean region, are extremely important. As heard from Angelo Riccaboni, "We are a family. The Mediterranean is really a unique community. We share the same history, but also we are sharing the same challenges, and we share the same future. So, we need to work together to deal with challenges in terms of a loss of biodiversity, unsustainable agricultural practices, impacts of climate change, and I think it is important that we work together."

