



## LEAP4FNSSA Project



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## DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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<b>Abstract (for dissemination)</b>	The work in LEAP4FNSSA's Task 3.1 "Clustering projects and Thematic Networks" aims at mapping and clustering ongoing and recently completed projects contributing to the FNSSA Roadmap. A database of relevant projects has been built and it will be used among others as a tool for clustering. The present document elaborates the concept of clustering projects and its capitalisation <i>i.e.</i> to make use of the clustering results for the benefit of end-users, describes the objectives of such activities, and defines organisational forms of clustering workshops in order to reach the goals of LEAP4FNSSA.			
<b>Keywords</b>	Clustering, capitalisation, database.			

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## Abbreviations

AGM	Annual General Meeting
AU	African Union
AU-EU	African Union-European Union
CGIAR	Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research
D	Deliverable
e.g.	Exempli gratia (« for exemple »)
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FNSSA	Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture
HLPD	High Level Policy Dialogue
i.e.	Id est (« that is »)
KMS	Knowledge Management System
LEAP-Agri	Long-term EU-Africa research and innovation Partnership on food and nutrition security and sustainable Agriculture
LEAP4FNSSA	Long-term EU-AU Research and Innovation Partnership for Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
RINEA	Research and Innovation Support for Europe and Africa
WP	Work Package

## Executive Summary

The work in LEAP4FNSSA's Task 3.1 "Clustering projects and Thematic Networks" aims at mapping and clustering ongoing and recently completed projects contributing to the FNSSA Roadmap. A database of relevant projects has been built and will be used among others as a tool for clustering. In LEAP4FNSSA, "clustering workshops" are one of the means to bring together stakeholders working in different FNSSA initiatives and "clustering" is used as a general term for a tool to gather and group information derived from projects, for specific purposes and in particular to better address the Roadmap goals. Two types of clustering are identified, real (bringing physically together project representatives to exchange information for a specific purpose) and virtual (does not necessarily include project representatives actively participating in the process). The tools developed (database, knowledge management system) can be very useful for especially the virtual clustering using basic categorisation items like the roadmap themes and subthemes, the types of projects, the regions/countries, or using more advanced searching inquiries. A number of real clustering activities are planned and described in this document.

## 1. Background

The work being conducted under LEAP4FNSSA's Task 3.1 "Clustering projects and Thematic Networks" has an objective to map and then cluster ongoing and recently completed projects contributing to the FNSSA Roadmap. Additionally, AU Research Grants and other projects funded under EU research and innovation programs have been considered. 1 year after the project's start, mapping and clustering has moderately extended to projects funded through other funding instruments such as bilateral and regional programmes in an effort to build a system encompassing broader funding mechanisms.

Clustering occurs and will occur in different ways through activities within Task 3.1. The first experiences and synergies offered from the clustering activities that will be described below will be shared and evaluated at a later stage in D3.2 "Report on the interactions on clustering with project partners and key stakeholders" (planned to be delivered on M24 of the project). The Grant Agreement of LEAP4FNSSA indicates that clustering can be done in different ways (e.g. based on: project goals; beneficiaries; geographic coverage; development approaches; upscaling theories; partnership management etc.), and that clustering will occur with support from "clustering workshops", based on the projects included in the LEAP4FNSSA database (WP3 work now in progress described in detail in D3.1). The workshops will be organised aiming at "identifying the needs of the participants" and "developing synergies".

There are different methods to cluster projects and these methods depend on the objectives of these activities. The purpose of this document is therefore to:

- i) better elaborate the concept of clustering projects and its capitalisation (*i.e.* to make use of the clustering results for the benefit of end-users),
- ii) describe the objectives of such activities, and

iii) define organisational forms of clustering workshops in order to reach the goals of LEAP4FNSSA.

## 2. Definition of clustering

In a previously funded EU project<sup>1</sup>, a concept note for clustering entitled “FNSSA Project Clustering” was developed with the purpose of outlining the different approaches that could be taken to implement clustering and the ways for catalysing these activities to support the implementation of the Roadmap. This concept note provides a good basis for further developing the concept of clustering within LEAP4FNSSA. In that document, three activities related to clustering are listed: i) coordination of project activities (joint learning); ii) joint participation in projects events and other activities (value adding to project), and iii) clustering workshops (support to M&E process).

In LEAP4FNSSA, we do not adapt a strict definition for clustering workshops referring only as support to M&E process. Instead, we consider clustering workshops as one of the means to bring together stakeholders working in different FNSSA initiatives and “clustering” as a general term and a tool to gather and group information derived from projects for specific purposes to better address the Roadmap goals.

## 3. Why clustering? (objectives)

A good overview of the different clustering purposes is given in the RINEA document. These include the following:

- Bring added value for the various actors involved in the Partnership;
- Building critical mass by enhancing cross-learning between projects;
- Better use of existing knowledge and enhancing research uptake;
- Snapshot of the actions taken towards implementation of the Roadmap;
- Identification where further investments should be made;
- Support the monitoring and evaluation of the Partnership showing project contribution to Partnership goals;
- For programme owners: ensure better use of resources by supporting mutual learning and greater impact by increasing collaboration, or by building on other project results;
- Regional analyses of interventions support by the partnership;
- Road map (sub-) themes addressed by partner projects.

For each identified objective that the clustering of different projects will facilitate, targeted clustering activities are needed to address one or more questions. Each activity needs to be

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<sup>1</sup> RINEA : Research and Innovation Network for Europe and Africa, Grant agreement ID: 645809, Start date 1/3/2015, End date 31/5/2018, website : <https://www.africa-eu-sti-portal.net/>

adjusted to the specific users addressing the question. A detailed list of the end-users and ideas on the sort of clustering activities are presented later in the text.

## 4. Implementation approaches

In RINEA, two main approaches are mentioned for clustering project information: “real” and “virtual”. These approaches are relevant to a certain extent for LEAP4FNSSA. Under the “real” approach, clustering brings physically together project representatives to exchange information for a specific purpose as defined by the categories based on a categorisation procedure. On the other hand, clustering under the “virtual” approach does not necessarily include project representatives actively participating in the process, but categorisation can be based on the broad criteria agreed on by both the European Commission and LEAP4FNSSA.

In developing the LEAP4FNSSA strategy for clustering project information for specific purposes, it is important to take into consideration the tools being developed in LEAP4FNSSA (WP3). The project database developed in Task 3.1 and the Knowledge Management System (KMS) developed in Task 3.2 can be very useful tools for especially the virtual clustering of project information. The LEAP4FNSSA database, in its current shape, gives an idea on how virtual clustering can occur, e.g. “automatically” via the basic categorisation that occurs based on:

- Roadmap themes and subthemes;
- Types of projects;
- Regions/countries;

... but also using the “Search” option that results in a certain relevant list of projects for a specific search term. It can be also used as a base for inviting relevant project/programme representatives for “real” clustering activities. Although the database is under development with 119 projects included so far (January 2020), and more relevant projects to be included soon, it can be already used as an example to realise possibilities ([https://library.wur.nl/WebQuery/leap4fnssa-projects?q=\\*](https://library.wur.nl/WebQuery/leap4fnssa-projects?q=*)).

For “virtual” clustering, the database and the KMS should be sufficient to provide to the different stakeholders with quality information in order to fulfil their own identified priorities or as support to identify these priorities. Expected outputs from the virtual clustering exercise can contain:

- Geographic distribution of AU-EU FNSSA Partnership funded projects, and of other related projects funded by other organisations.
- Investments per region/country in Africa in the Roadmap themes and sub-themes.
- More detailed information from complex queries that e.g. combine several fields of the database.

The KMS is foreseen to fully run after a critical mass of projects is included in the database and when the system is more developed. The work with the KMS will continue with the development of a concept and indicators database, and the organisation of a workshop with the participation of text and data mining experts to develop this approach. Results of this



work will be described in D3.6. As a next step, a model (ontology) that reflects the knowledge mobilised by experts will be designed. This work will be iterative, requiring ongoing adjustments and feedback from FNSSA experts, with a final aim to stabilise the model to answer elaborated questions, to produce new indicators, trends and gaps, and to make “deductions” thanks to a machine learning process (D3.7 – D3.8). All the above will additionally offer options for more elaborate “virtual” clustering, and combinations of using the database and the KMS can result in combinations of “real” and “virtual” clustering.

## 5. Which projects to be selected for information sharing workshops

In RINEA, a limited list of projects was identified for clustering activities, based on the projects that were “supporting the implementation of the Roadmap”. As previously mentioned, in the RINEA setting, where M&E was the most important reason for the clustering exercise, this was a justified choice. Also, LEAP-Agri has clustering of projects as activities included in the work plan (cross-learning and cooperation), and LEAP4FNSSA is planning to contribute to a combination of the two reasons for clustering.

Strategic analysis for allocation of funds or strategic agenda setting need to be strengthened under the AU-EU FNSSA partnership and its future platform. It is therefore important to include in the analyses activities in the FNSSA domain supported by other organisations to define the strategy and action plan of the platform. For these analyses, the tools developed in LEAP4FNSSA (under WP3) are essential; e.g. the database will include projects that are funded from many sources (EU, AU, bilateral cooperations, CGIAR etc.) and the information provided in the database will be used by the KMS as a tool to assess the available information. Additional projects of relevance will be included to illustrate the commitment of other actors supporting projects in Africa in the FNSSA domain.

## 6. Organizing clustering workshops and other activities

In the actual work plan of LEAP4FNSSA, two “real” “clustering workshops” are scheduled (under WP3). The aim of these events are to bring together “project leaders of identified clusters to develop synergies, identify their priority needs for “clustering and capitalisation”. Forming clusters is one of the project objectives, and this can be done with support of LEAP4FNSSA tools: however, a clear plan on the use of clustered information will need to be developed for each activity. The “user” of the information provided by LEAP4FNSSA is decisive on the wished final outcomes, and a provisional list of these stakeholders is provided below.

These include in the short term:

- The Working Group on FNSSA;
- The Bureau of the HLPD (these two are of course closely linked on political level but having specific responsibilities);
- Members of the Partnership, including the actual members of the LEAP4FNSSA project, through the official project organisation (e.g. the Steering Committee);

... and in the longer term:

- The AU-EU FNSSA R&I Platform that LEAP4FNSSA is now developing and should be operational at the end of our project, represented by its different governance bodies, and individual members of the Platform through its bodies.

Clustering of information obviously aims at different outcomes:

- for a funder, it could be to “balance” investments between topics or regions;
- for an innovator, it could be to build on a project result to further develop an innovative idea;
- for a researcher, it could be to identify what domain has been under-explored, etc.

To achieve several outcomes with minimum cost allowing interactions between the different user groups, an idea could be to organise several sub-workshops during a common event, depending on the scope of the stakeholders/end users. The workshops should ideally occur back-to-back with other events, not only to have an appropriate critical mass but also to go one step further: from clustering and evaluating project information to take action to use the obtained information to make use of “clustering” for the benefit of end-users (*i.e.* capitalisation).

Therefore, during year two of the LEAP4FNSSA project, and in order to reach as many end-users as possible, several clustering activities have been already identified where LEAP4FNSSA will contribute by presenting our clustering initiatives but also receive input on identifying their priority needs for clustering and capitalisation (e.g. on how to best make use of the clustering results for the benefit of end-users). Such activities will occur during:

- The H2020 Projects Coordinators’ day, occurring in Brussels in June 2020 (day to be announced), where the newly selected projects relevant to the AU-EU FNSSA Partnership will be presented. LEAP4FNSSA will present the clustering tools available (database, KMS) and seek for feedback from project coordinators to facilitate better synergies with other relevant-to-their-projects initiatives.
- The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) that will occur in the first half of November 2020 (exact dates not set yet). This will enable participation of a diverse audience in our event, from leading researches to decision makers but also entrepreneurs that usually participate in RUFORUM’s events. During that event, a “clustering-capitalisation” workshop on how to make use of the clustering results for the benefit of end-users will be arranged, including/together with representatives of the different categories of end-users. Our project will be able to fund several important actors in the FNSSA domain, on top of the ones that will be present representing their organisations in the RUFORUM event.
- A capitalisation workshop in 2021 will occur to investigate among other things ways to make use of the clustering results after the end of the project, *i.e.* when support from the EC will not allow active contributions from LEAP4FNSSA members to the database and the KMS. This can occur back to back at the Agricultural Research for Development Conference (Agri4D) in Uppsala, Sweden (September 2021), or at another similar event. The latter event and its theme about future clustering opportunities is not explicitly foreseen in the Grant Agreement but, if budget from previously planned activities is

available (which seems to be the case at the moment), it can be considered as a needed step towards securing the aims of the FNSSA Roadmap.

Additional to the physical events suggested above, end-users will be offered several “services” by our project to allow clustering of their activities with other relevant ones available “out there”. The database is an easily-managed “free-to-use” tool that will not require assistance and support from project partners, and can be used as a first step to identify similar activities. The KMS will be a more elaborate system that is planned to give more specific answers to a topic of interest combining different information sources, and project partners will assist external stakeholders on forming queries that will allow extracting safe conclusions.

To sum-up, using the clustering results for the benefit of end-users, *i.e.* capitalising the clustering activities, is a demand-driven process. The project and our clustering activities will accommodate this process with the help of the tools provided and initially with physical meetings occurring during the duration of our project. After the end of LEAP4FNSSA, the tools produced in WP3 will be available to ensure self-propelled clustering of initiatives even in the future, in particular within the proposed AU-EU FNSSA R&I Platform.