

Sida's Support to the Centre for Information on Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture (ILEIA)

Robin Walraven

**Department for Natural
Resources and the Environment**

Sida's Support to the Centre for Information on Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture (ILEIA)

Robin Walraven

Sida Evaluation 2008:18

**Department for Natural
Resources and the Environment**

This report is part of *Sida Evaluations*, a series comprising evaluations of Swedish development assistance. Sida's other series concerned with evaluations, *Sida Studies in Evaluation*, concerns methodologically oriented studies commissioned by Sida. Both series are administered by the Department for Evaluation, an independent department reporting to Sida's Director General.

This publication can be downloaded/ordered from:
<http://www.sida.se/publications>

Author: Robin Walraven.

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

Sida Evaluation 2008:18

Commissioned by Sida, Department for Natural Resources and the Environment

Copyright: Sida and the author

Registration No.: 2004-000683

Date of Final Report: 2008 April

Printed by Edita Communication, 2008

Art. no. Sida45554en

ISBN 978-91-586-8195-8

ISSN 1401—0402

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: SE-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Valhallavägen 199, Stockholm

Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64

E-mail: sida@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	3
2 Introduction	6
2.1 Purpose of the Evaluation	6
2.2 Questions	6
2.3 Main Findings.....	7
3. The Evaluated Intervention.....	8
3.1 History	8
3.2 Organisation and Stakeholders	9
3.3 Intervention Logic	9
3.4 Purpose of the Intervention	10
3.5 Description of the Evaluated Intervention.....	10
4 Findings.....	11
4.1 Findings Regarding the First Set of Six Questions (results)	11
4.2 Findings Regarding the Set of “General” Questions	17
4.3 Findings on Impact and Relevance	18
4.4 Findings Regarding Women Participation, Gender Equity and HIV/AIDS.....	19
4.5 Findings Regarding Sustainability	19
4.6 Findings Regarding Efficiency	20
4.7 Findings Regarding ILEIA Relations with Institutional Actors	20
5 Evaluative Conclusions.....	21
6 Recommendations.....	23
Annex 1 Results Framework 2005–2008	24
Annex 2 Summaries of Readers’ Surveys and Assessment	26
Annex 3 Distribution of Contributions for the Period 2004 thru 2006.....	30
Annex 4 Terms of Reference	31
Annex 5 Methodology	37
Annex 6 Organisations and People Met.....	38
Annex 7 Documents Consulted	39

1. Executive Summary

ILEIA seeks to be a link that connects local level experiences of low external input and sustainable agriculture to global issues and vice-versa, providing a platform for sharing of information and learning from experiences of different countries, regions and continents.

Through the publication of LEISA magazines ILEIA and its partners seek to stimulate action through broadening the perspective of its readers. The reader is exposed to new ideas; new ways of thinking about agriculture and innovative technologies that have been tried out in the South. The magazine also stimulates participatory approaches and an awareness of gender issues, through providing guidance and presenting experiences.

ILEIA works as a network and a provider of information and seeks to function as a catalyst both for action and for changes in attitude and approach. Together with other organisations working to promote fair conditions and a development based on own priorities for the South, ILEIA aims to contribute to generation of knowledge and insights on which to build a sustainable development strategy.

2005–2007 Sida support to ILEIA served to enable it to achieve its stated long-term objective: “To increase the availability and exchange of information on LEISA and to improve the quality of such information, through an effective sourcing and documentation process, in collaboration with regional partners and other organisations.”

In relation to the above, the evaluation addresses the achievements and effects of ILEIA/LEISA against planned results. It concludes that the achievements are very good. It also concludes that there is impact at ILEIA target group level.

1.1 Main Findings

The evaluation mission finds that:

- ILEIA has achieved and surpassed most of the results set for the 2005–2008 programme. The notable exception is that two new collaborations with regional partners were initiated, instead of three. The mission finds that the reasons given for the difference are wholly acceptable and justify the exception.
- ILEIA has been effective in reaching its intended target audiences and has surpassed expected results.
- The global LEISA edition is of high quality, holds good and relevant material, and is most readable. The website is very good too in most respects. The exception is the discussion forum and ILEIA is currently addressing how it can optimise the function for web-based, world-wide debate and discussion.
- ILEIA has put relevant and effective mechanisms in place for developing the capacities of partners to bring out regional editions of the LEISA magazine. The same is true for documentation methodology developed by ILEIA that seeks to capacitate partners to document LEISA experiences and which is of high quality.
- The complementarity of the various LEISA editions and of the LEISA Magazine and the website is good.
- LEISA has an impact on its target groups and that this serves as a contribution to poverty reduction, improved livelihoods, sustainability and better environment. The mission also finds there is a need to

establish how this contribution translates into effects and impacts on the ground, at farm level, and therefore it supports the Sida suggestion that impact studies need to be undertaken.

- ILEIA/LEISA is relevant and effective. It also finds that possibilities to generate income are limited and that donor support is a pre-requisite for its continued existence and sustainability. Further it finds that ILEIA is efficient in translating resources into results, but that cost-efficiency may need to be studied in detail.
- ILEIA and LEISA address gender and HIV/AIDS matters in a consistent manner. It also finds that the number of female subscribers and contributors is a bit low.

1.2 Main Conclusions

The mission concludes that ILEIA has been very effective and has achieved or surpassed most expected results set in the results framework for the period 2005–2008.

It further concludes that:

- ILEIA has been very effective in reaching its target audiences and in promoting information exchange. The mission cannot conclusively establish that ILEIA has reached the expected result that 50% of subscribers are field practitioners (where known);
- ILEIA has been effective in establishing collaboration with regional partners during the period, but has not reached the expected result of establishing one new partnership per year;
- ILEIA has been very effective in improving the quality of information in the magazines.
- ILEIA has been effective in strengthening the capacity of regional partners to bring out regional editions of LEISA and in their capacities to document LEISA experiences. All expected results have been met.
- ILEIA has been effective in increasing the capacity among the regional partners on documentation of LEISA experiences and has achieved the expected results;
- The comparative strength of the global and regional editions in achieving information exchange and their complementarity lays in a combination of the capability of ILEIA editors to translate sketchy contributions into high quality contributions, the training that ILEIA undertakes in documentation, and the institution of editor meetings, etc, and which combine to raise the quality and relevance topic-wise in all editions. The mission did not identify weaknesses. Complementarity could be further enhanced by using the current approach, but with more new regional editions;
- ILEIA been effective in increasing the outreach of information and the collaboration between partners through electronic means and that the paper edition of the magazine and the website and E-LEISA complement each other both globally and regionally. The expected result “the website is increasingly being used to exchange information about LEISA” has been achieved. There are strong indications that ILEIA has reached the expected result that the number of visits are increasing by at least 5 percent per year. An ongoing independent analysis of the website will provide a conclusive answer thereto;
- ILEIA has achieved the expected result to annually produce and distribute one CDROM containing information from the ILEIA website;
- ILEIA can rightfully claim that its subscribers are capacitated by the Magazine. This is an impact. However a limitation of the impact studies undertaken (and on which the conclusion is based) is that they were not designed to investigate how the target groups (field-level development workers aca-

demics/researchers and policy makers) estimate the effects/impacts of their improved and applied capacities on poverty reduction, improved livelihoods, and sustainable agriculture. Neither were they designed to investigate the effects of LEISA on policy.

- ILEIA is well aware that the link between changes in the behaviour of the readers of LEISA magazines and changes in the situation of agricultural producers in terms of poverty reduction, gender equity, environmental improvement, improvements in livelihoods, etcetera are indirect and that the magazine *may* contribute to changes in people's lives, but such changes cannot be attributed to the LEISA magazine. However, the mission finds that articles in the magazine provide good examples of that LEISA makes contributions thereto. This indicates that ILEIA's work is *relevant* in these respects too. However, the mission fully supports Sida in that in the future specific impact studies should be undertaken;
- LEISA is doing well in promoting gender equity and HIV/AIDS issues. The mission *recommends* that ILEIA keeps the matter of an increase in female subscribers on the radar;
- Considering available human resources, the result and notably the quality thereof have been impressive. The mission therefore concludes that ILEIA has been very *efficient* in converting resources and time to expected results.
- The policy to distribute its Magazine free of charge to subscribers in the South has hitherto been the only feasible option and that the possibilities for ILEIA to generate income from subscriptions and other sources are very limited. The mission concludes that ILEIA is not likely to become financially *sustainable* as well as is likely to always be dependent on outside funding;
- The matter of *cost-efficiency* is difficult to assess and should be established by means of a specialist study.

1.3 Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- ILEIA and LEISA address *gender* and *HIV/AIDS* matters in a consistent manner. The number of female subscribers and contributors is a bit low.
- A Sub-Saharan Africa LEISA edition in English is established soon;
- Future readers' surveys include questions on how the target groups estimate the effects/impacts of their improved and applied capacities on poverty reduction, improved livelihoods, and sustainable agriculture and policy.
- ILEIA keeps the matter of an increase in female subscribers and contributors high on its priority list;
- ILEIA focuses on establishing relationships with large organisations and institutions that work with farmers on a day-to-day basis, with a view to increase outreach and possible impact;
- Sida and ILEIA pursue plans to undertake impact studies;
- A study on cost-effectiveness is undertaken.

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

The evaluation serves to provide Sida with an assessment of the overall performance and relevance of ILEIA's work over the past three years (2005–2007), notably regarding its effectiveness in addressing its three main objectives¹:

1. Increasing the exchange of information on LEISA globally and improve the quality of this information.
2. Collaboration with and capacity building of Southern partners to increase the exchange of information on LEISA, via:
 - i. the production of regional editions of the LEISA Magazine;
 - ii. the documentation of LEISA experiences.
3. Increase the outreach of information and the collaboration between partners through electronic means.

The outcome of the evaluation will be used as a basis for Sida when considering a new funding phase.

2.2 Questions

Sida/ILEIA formulated the following questions that the evaluation shall provide answers to:

- How effective has ILEIA been in reaching its intended target audiences and in promoting information exchange on LEISA and improving the quality of this information? Try to specify results.
- How effective has ILEIA been in establishing collaboration with regional partners and in strengthening their capacity to bring out regional editions of LEISA Magazine? Try to specify results.
- How effective has ILEIA been in increasing the capacity among the regional partners on documentation of LEISA experiences? Try to specify results.
- What are comparative strengths and weaknesses of the global and the local editions in achieving the objective of promoting knowledge and information exchange on LEISA?
What is the actual complementarity between both, and how could it be further enhanced?
- How effective has ILEIA been in increasing the outreach of information and the collaboration between partners through electronic means? Try to specify results.
- What has been the complementarity between the paper edition of the magazine and other electronic means of communication (website, E-LEISA and cd-rom), globally and in the regional context?

In addition Sida also formulated the following “general” questions

- How is ILEIA's work relevant for poverty reduction?
- To what extent has ILEIA addressed HIV-AIDS and wider livelihoods issues in relation to LEISA?

¹ Whereas the TOR refers to three ILEIA objectives, the ILEIA proposal (p25f) and the annual reports (e.g. 2006, p 11) refer to three *activities* that serve to satisfy an objective. The mission noted this difference late in the evaluation process. Based on the documentation provided it has not been able to figure out why this difference exists. The mission notes, however, that the difference has no consequence for the evaluative questions that Sida had formulated and that notably relate to ILEIA's effectiveness and its results.

- How does ILEIA's work contribute to a better environment?
- How does ILEIA work towards sustainability?
- ILEIA's policy has been to distribute its Magazine free of charge to subscribers in the South. What can be said about the functionality of this policy (a) in the light of ILEIA's main objectives, and (b) in the light of its long-term sustainability?

The ToR instruct that the evaluation shall be based on a gender perspective, i.e. analyses made and findings presented shall consider both involvement of women as well as men and the impact and consequences for women and men and their respective roles and responsibilities

2.3 Main Findings

The mission has found that ILEIA has achieved and surpassed most of the expected results set for the 2005–2008 programme². One notable exception is that two new collaborations with regional partners were initiated, instead of three. The mission finds that the reasons given for the difference are wholly acceptable and justify the exception. The other exception is that the mission cannot conclusively confirm that ILEIA has reached the expected result that 50% of subscribers are field practitioners (c.f. annex 1 for a listing of expected results).

The mission finds that ILEIA has been effective in reaching its intended target audiences and has surpassed expected results.

The mission finds that the global LEISA edition is of high quality, holds good and relevant material, and is most readable. The website is very good too in most respects. The exception is the discussion forum and ILEIA is currently addressing how it can optimise the function for web-based, world-wide debate and discussion.

The mission finds that ILEIA has put relevant and effective mechanisms in place for developing the capacities of partners to bring out regional editions of the LEISA magazine. The same is true for documentation methodology developed by ILEIA that seeks to capacitate partners to document LEISA experiences and which is of high quality.

Regarding the questions that relate to the need for, the strength and complementarity of the various LEISA editions and of the LEISA Magazine and the website, the mission has found that complementarity between the various media is good.

The mission finds that LEISA has an impact on its target groups and that this serves as a contribution to poverty reduction, improved livelihoods, sustainability and better environment. The mission also finds there is a need to establish how this contribution translates into effects and impacts on the ground, at farm level, and therefore it supports the Sida suggestion that impact studies need to be undertaken.

The mission finds that ILEIA/LEISA is relevant and effective. It also finds that possibilities to generate income are limited and that donor support is a pre-requisite for its continued existence and sustainability. Further it finds that ILEIA is efficient in translating resources into results, but that cost-efficiency may need to be studied in detail.

The mission finds that ILEIA and LEISA address gender and HIV/AIDS matters in a consistent manner. It also finds that the number of female subscribers and contributors is a bit low.

² Sources: ILEIA Programme Proposal 2005–2008 pp 26–31 and ILEIA annual report 2006 pp 51–56

3. The Evaluated Intervention

3.1 History

In 1984, a small team of enthusiasts in *low external input sustainable agriculture* (LEISA) started the *Centre for Information on Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture* (ILEIA) as a pilot project under the auspices of the ETC Foundation (a Dutch NGO). The project produced a global newsletter (four times/year) and received financial support from the Dutch government/DGIS³.

During the period 1999–2001 ILEIA received financial support from NOVIB for ‘the implementation of ILEIA’s core programme “Building Bridges between partners in LEISA-ILEIA”, and the complementary programme. “Building Bridges to anchor LEISA” financially supported by ICCO and HIVOS⁴. With the specific purpose of guiding the Building Bridges Programme and the “Global network of facilitators, enablers and contributors” that was to realise the programme, a Mandate Analysis Team (1998) was tasked to identify the roles and functions of ILEIA and the immediate objectives of the programme 1) to promote globally the mobilisation, documentation, creation and sharing of knowledge and information on LEISA development, 2) to provide support to Southern local and regional organisations, networks and movements in their efforts to secure the institutionalisation of the development and the promotion of LEISA, and 3) to advocate the incorporation of LEISA inspired policies at the level of main actors in agricultural development at the international, national and possibly sub-national levels.

The three objectives were subordinate to a long-term objective that was formulated as follows: To contribute to the alleviation of poverty, to enhance ecological sustainability and to safeguard social and cultural integrity. Increasing productivity, added values to agricultural outputs, provide food/social/cultural security, reduce financial dependency and prevent/reduce pollution and environmental degradation.

The programme ended successfully in 2002 inclusive of the creation of a Latin American, and the Indian edition of LEISA Magazine, among other things. The long-term objective of the programme remains largely intact to date as the ILEIA mandate.

In the meantime, ILEIA had become a foundation that in 2001 established itself as an autonomous and independent organisation with its own systems and procedures. Initially it still housed in the ETC premises, but it later moved to offices of its own. These were turbulent times draining much needed energy from the mission and operations of ILEIA. Thanks to the skills, patience and vision of ILEIA management, ILEIA eventually was able to establish itself, as well as was able to consolidate and to move ahead.

Sida started supporting ILEIA in 2002. In 2003 ILEIA also obtained programme funding for the period 2003–2006 through DGIS’s newly established TMF programme⁵. These sources of funding gave a major boost to ILEIA’s work enabling it to move on with the regionalisation process (c.f. below) and to more firmly establish itself as an independent network organisation. Sida continued its support 2005–2007 and DGIS approved a second phase TMF financing for the period 2006–2010.

³ Directie Generaal Internationale Samenwerking (the Authority for International Cooperation).

⁴ These three huge Dutch NGO’s are framework partners with DGIS. At times, they function as umbrella organisations (not wholly unlike Forum Syd). DGIS often chooses to fund smaller projects/programmes, in this case the Building Bridges Programme, through the umbrella organisations, or these may choose to fund those themselves (we believe). The mission does not know which mechanism was applicable for Building Bridges. A parallel to the aforementioned was DGIS support to Agricord. First this was financed through ICCO, HIVOS and NOVIB, but now it is directly funded by DGIS.

⁵ Thematisch Medefinancierings programma (programme for Thematic Co-financing); a programme under Medefinancieringsstelsel (Mechanism for co-financing) which is somewhat comparable to Swedish 90/10 financing.

From the beginning LEISA appeared four times a year as a global newsletter only. During the Building Bridges Programme it was developed into a Magazine. During the same period two regional editions came into existence, the Latin American edition LEISA Revista de Agroecologia and LEISA India. These were followed by a West Africa (francophone) edition AGRIDAPE in 2003, a Bahasa Indonesia edition SALAM in 2003, a Brazilian edition Agriculturas, in 2003, a Chinese edition (可持续生态农业) in 2007, and an East African edition (in English) in 2005 (appeared with 4 issues during 2005 only). All in all this means that eight editions have been developed to date. By mutual consent, the collaboration with the Kenyan partner has been terminated, however.

3.2 Organisation and Stakeholders

ILEIA is a foundation under Dutch Law. Its Board currently consists of four members all of which with a solid background in academia, development and development thinking (especially in the agriculture sector). The Board members are selected on the basis of their experience, their general clout in development discourse and their commitment to the promotion of the concept of low external input and sustainable agriculture. They do not represent organisations and/or institutions. ILEIA management informed that it may soon select two additional board members.

At the end of 2007 ILEIA was a small outfit still with expert capacities on the technical and support aspects of LEISA Magazine and Website development. There were: one director, two editors, one information specialist, one information assistant and three support staff⁶.

Building partnerships with likeminded individuals and organisations is central to ILEIA's thinking. The contacts established over the years have resulted in an informal network of LEISA practitioners and promoters who share the vision and cause of sustainable agriculture. The LEISA Magazine is a medium used by this network to gain wider coverage for their experiences and draw the attention of a larger audience to LEISA related issues.

ILEIA works as a network and a provider of information and sees itself as one of a number of partners that work to build up knowledge on LEISA and exchange experiences. Collaboration with ILEIA benefits Southern partners by ensuring increased access to and exchange of information from all parts of the world, thereby providing a global perspective. For ILEIA, collaboration ensures the local relevance of the information collected and disseminated, and makes more information available at a global level.

ILEIA collaborates directly with a number of Southern partners for the production of the regional editions of the LEISA Magazine. These receive technical and financial support through ILEIA while maintaining ownership of and the responsibility for the publication of their regional LEISA editions and their other activities (if any). The regional partners are not part of the ILEIA governance and/or management structure. ILEIA is not part of theirs.

3.3 Intervention Logic

ILEIA seeks to be a link that connects local level experiences of low external input and sustainable agriculture to global issues and vice-versa, providing a platform for sharing of information and learning from experiences of different countries, regions and continents. Being aware that the North is generally better off with access to information – both printed and electronic – ILEIA, together with partner organisations, provides mechanisms to improve the availability of relevant information for development workers in the South.

⁶ Late 2007/early 2008 ILEIA recruited three additional expert staffs: one editor/coordinator for the “Farming Matters” series, one editor/policy analyst, and one communication and marketing specialist.

Through the publication of LEISA magazines ILEIA and its partners seek to stimulate action through broadening the perspective of its readers. The reader is exposed to new ideas; new ways of thinking about agriculture and innovative technologies that have been tried out in the South. The magazine also stimulates participatory approaches and an awareness of gender issues, through providing guidance and presenting experiences.

ILEIA works as a network and a provider of information and seeks to function as a catalyst both for action and for changes in attitude and approach. Together with other organisations working to promote fair conditions and a development based on own priorities for the South, ILEIA aims to contribute to generation of knowledge and insights on which to build a sustainable development strategy.

3.4 Purpose of the Intervention

2005–2007 Sida support to ILEIA served to enable it to achieve its stated long-term objective: “To increase the availability and exchange of information on LEISA and to improve the quality of such information, through an effective sourcing and documentation process, in collaboration with regional partners and other organisations.”

The corresponding strategy to achieve the objective was to: 1) Improve access to information, 2) Improve quality of information on LEISA, 3) Increase outreach, 4) build capacities (of partner organisations), and 5) Seeking collaboration with other like-minded organisations (for advocacy purposes).

Together with the activities (c.f. below), the strategy and the objective shall combine to satisfy the ILEIA mandate: “To contribute to the alleviation of poverty, to enhance ecological sustainability and to safeguard social and cultural integrity of smallholders in developing countries through the further development and promotion of Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture”.

The primary target group are field-level development workers. Secondary target groups are academics/researchers and policy makers.

3.5 Description of the Evaluated Intervention

In its proposal to Sida ILEIA states that it has chosen to focus on its information activities and to together with partner organisations try to develop those even further. With a view to achieve its specific objective ILEIA suggested carrying out its work in the context of three major activities.” (cf. footnote #1).

Activity 1: Exchange of information through LEISA Magazine – global edition:

The production of the LEISA Magazine is a recurrent activity within ILEIA which involves a considerable search for relevant experiences and persons who can describe these experiences. It involves interaction with professionals from all over the world and a great deal of capacity building, as most contributors are not very practiced in putting their experiences down in a form and style of writing that can be easily read and assimilated by others. As such, the publication demands a considerable time investment. The global edition also serves as a model and a basis for the regional editions, which take a lot of their material from the global edition and complement it with regional material. LEISA Magazine will continue to be published four times a year and will increasingly try to find collaborating organisations for each theme, in order to reach wider sources of information as well as gaining access to new networks.

Activity 2: Collaboration with southern partners for the production and dissemination of the Regional editions of LEISA magazine:

The activity entails the provision of support for the production of the Regional editions of the *LEISA Magazine* through coordination of the efforts of partners and by building their capacity. The production of regional editions of the Magazine, in languages other than English, seeks to make the content more accessible and relevant to the needs of the readers in each specific region. It also serves as a way of

bringing partners in LEISA closer together through a joint activity, and thereby offers the opportunity of taking the experiences of the respective organisations out to a wider audience.

Activity 3: Wider exchange of information on LEISA through electronic publications:

in its function of being a network facilitator and provider of shared resources in collaboration with partners, ILEIA has made an effort to make its website more functional to the international sustainable agriculture community. As Internet is still beyond the reach of a large part of ILEIA's target group, the website is seen as a complement to the LEISA Magazine, allowing for wider outreach to different target groups and through this, for a greater selection of inputs into the magazine. The website will be developed into an interactive tool with the potential to improve the exchange of information not only between LEISA partners, but eventually between authors, collaborators and other members of the LEISA network.

In order to make information on the website more accessible and to update readers who have access to email on ILEIA's activities, and particularly the global edition, ILEIA also produces E-LEISA, a news alert which comes out four times per year after each edition of the magazine. The website with all its information also offers an excellent opportunity for compilation of relevant material for specific target groups in the form of CD-ROMs, which can be used by those in the LEISA audience who have access to computers, but lack good connections to the Internet.

The result framework is presented in annex 1.

4 Findings

4.1 Findings Regarding the First Set of Six Questions (results)

Objective 1. Increasing the exchange of information on LEISA globally and improve the quality of this information.

Sida question 1: How effective has ILEIA been in reaching its intended target audiences and in promoting information exchange on LEISA and improving the quality of this information? Try to specify results.

The table below presents actual subscription numbers against expected results set in the ILEIA 2005–2008 programme proposal. As the table brings out most expected results had already been exceeded by the end of 2007, despite the fact that ILEIA and their partners cleansed the databases from subscribers that did not pro-actively renew their subscriptions in 2006. The results are:

Table 1. Number of Subscribers⁷

Edition	end 2005	end 2006	end 2007	Target end 2008
Global	15973	15350	17721	17000
India	6245	8492	9911	9000
Brazil	1332	2206	3228	2000
Peru	8200	9800	11274	9000
Senegal	2248	2272	2350	3000
Indonesia	1758	1939	2457	2500
Total	35756	40059	46941	42500

⁷ Sources: ILEIA Programme proposal 2005–2008 and annual reports. Table developed by ILEIA and the consultant.

Of the 17.721 subscribers 428 are paying subscribers (177 institutional and 251 individual subscribers), which amounts to 2.3%. Since the magazine is free of charge for subscribers in the South, the conclusion to be made is that ILEIA has reached its expected result of having a minimum of 90% subscribers that are from the South.

Annex 2 contains summaries of readers' surveys. These not only bring out that that ILEIA is effective in reaching out to its target audiences, but also that subscribers share their copies with others. The studies find that each copy is read by an average of five persons, which means that the total readership of the editions is almost 235.000. In addition, the surveys also establish that subscribers translate articles into local languages. The mission finds this is evidence of effective information exchange on LEISA.

ILEIA also presented the mission with 2008 data on reader categories which establish that LEISA reaches its three target groups:

Administrators/Decision maker	1 529
Development Field staff	5 425
Farmer	1 863
Other	128
Researchers	3 152
Students	221
Teachers/Lecturers	1 168
Total	18 232 (observe this is a 2008 figure) ⁸

The mission *concludes* that ILEIA has been effective in reaching its intended target audiences and has surpassed expected results at the overall level. With reference to the footnote, the mission cannot conclusively confirm that ILEIA has reached the expected result that 50% of subscribers are field practitioners (where known).

Evidence of the fact that information exchange on LEISA is effective is to be found in the number of issues that have been published. The mission finds that not only have all editions reached their annual expected result of 4 issues/year during the 2005–7 period, but also that six issues (50%) of the global edition have exceeded the minimum of 36 pages per issue. In addition, the global and the West Africa editions came out with a fifth issue in 2006 The Special Issue of the *LEISA Magazine* was published and distributed in December, entitled “Farming Matters: Understanding sustainable agriculture”. These two overachievements are indicators of that the demand and the supply of information exchange is high.

Further evidence of the effectiveness on information exchange is embodied in the fact that in 2007 a new, Chinese, edition (2 issues) came into existence. The mission finds it reasonable to infer that the global edition serves as a source of inspiration that results in the expansion of information exchange through new “local” editions. The mission is of the opinion this too is a measure of the relevance and the effectiveness of information exchange.

⁸ During the course of the mission it was noted that the addition function in the database from which these figures are taken is flawed. The indicated total above is not correct and should be 13486. However, this figure is also incorrect as the number of subscribers actually is 18232 as is stated. The 2007 readers' survey calculates that 37% of the subscribers are development field staff and 10% are farmers (p5).

The results are:

Table 2. Issues per edition

Edition	2005	2006	2007	Target
Global	4	5	4	4
India	4	4	4	4
Brazil	4	4	4	4
Peru	4	4	4	4
Kenya	4	n/a	n/a	4
Senegal	4	5	4	4
Indonesia	4	4	4	4
China	n/a	n/a	2	n/a

Source: Annual reports

The contributions to the issues clearly bring out that a variety of organisations from all over the globe contribute to the information exchange. Annex 3 reproduces a table from the 2006 annual report that presents the distribution of the contributions for the period 2004 thru 2006 (geographically, gender-wise and institutionally).

The mission *concludes* that ILEIA has been effective in information exchange on LEISA and has surpassed expected results.

The mission has found that the ILEIA editorial team has implemented the Quality Management System (ISO 9001-2000) and which set standards for the consistent production of high quality magazines. The mission further finds that the physical and web-based editorial meetings serve as a continuous quality assurance and improvement mechanism. However, the real measure of quality is the published issues of the Magazine itself. The mission studied 5 in some detail and eyed through another ten. The mission finds that they hold very good quality content-wise; that they have very good lay-out; and are most readable. The mission concludes that ILEIA is effective in continuously improving the quality of the Magazine.

Objective 2. Collaboration with and capacity building of Southern partners to increase the exchange of information on LEISA, via a) the production of regional editions of the LEISA Magazine, and b) the documentation of LEISA experiences.

Sida questions: 1) How effective has ILEIA been in establishing collaboration with regional partners and in strengthening their capacity to bring out regional editions of LEISA Magazine? Try to specify results. 2) How effective has ILEIA been in increasing the capacity among the regional partners on documentation of LEISA experiences? Try to specify results. 3) What are comparative strengths and weaknesses of the global and the local editions in achieving the objective of promoting knowledge and information exchange on LEISA? What is the actual complementarity between both, and how could it be further enhanced?

During the period 2005–2007 ILEIA established two new partnerships and maintained and further developed the partnerships with, notably, the new partners that came on board in 2003. These are major achievements, but it nonetheless falls short of the ambitious expected result to establish at least one new initiative per year. (Due to staff changes and the need to develop a strategic plan, etcetera, ILEIA decided not to initiate new collaborations regarding regional editions in 2006).

The Kenyan partnership only lasted for one year (2005), but the mission does not find that reflects negatively on the work and effectiveness of ILEIA (it is the attempt that counts). In fact, the mission finds that the mutual partner decision to part ways when the ILEIA and partner agendas and missions no longer converge points to considerable institutional strength.

Meanwhile, ILEIA was also successful in assisting in the consolidation and further development of the three regional editions that had been established in 2003 (Indonesia, Brazil, and West Africa). The ILEIA experience is that it takes up to five-six years for a regional edition to build up sufficient momentum to stand on its own.

The mission *concludes* that ILEIA has been effective in establishing collaboration with regional partners during the period, but has not reached the expected result of establishing one new partnership per year.

ILEIA has launched several initiatives that directly address capacity development of partners. The semi-annual international editor meeting is one of those. Others are the Quality Management System (the joint global/regional evaluation of regional and global editions/issues), capacity building workshops, the editor e-meetings, the internal e-bulletin for regional editors, work visits, etcetera. The mission also notes that one of the new recruitments (2008) has been tasked to develop additional capacity building materials and already has produced the beginning of a series called "Farming Matters" (methodological development) that also will be posted on the web-site. The mission is of the opinion that ILEIA is doing exceptionally well in these respects and that the activities it undertakes are relevant and effective.

ILEIA also provides backstopping to its partners in their development of the regional editions. This includes the provision of advice on how to source materials (e.g. in the ILEIA library and other sources), the provision of advice on editing techniques, and the provision of advice on s and production planning. Technical support is also provided to develop approaches to e.g. the evaluation of written contributions and in developing regional websites.

The mission finds that ILEIA has implemented all of the aforementioned as planned and the mission also finds that it has achieved all stated results regarding coordination and capacity building. The mission therefore *concludes* that ILEIA has been effective in strengthening the capacity of regional partners to bring out regional editions of LEISA Magazine.

In 2004/5 the Peruvian partner took the initiative in developing a methodology for documentation with good results. This resulted in a trial in India in 2005 (and a so-called process document "Documentation in practice" developed by the Indian LEISA Consortium with the assistance of ILEIA), a trial by Dutch farmers in Flevoland, a trial in Tanzania in 2007 and trials in Yemen, Eritrea, Mexico, and Brazil. The initiative is now a project (2007) supported by DGIS and has also resulted in the Manual for Organising, Analysing and Documenting Field-based Information (ILEIA 2007). The mission finds that ILEIA is doing very well in increasing capacities for documentation. ILEIA informed that the documentation process/project has resulted in LEISA articles and has resulted in contacts with new organisations. The mission especially wishes to highlight the 2006 Volume 22, Issue 1 of the LEISA Magazine "Documentation for Change", introduced the documentation methodology to the wider public (reproduces in LEISA India).

The mission finds the methodology sound and most relevant, as it provides prospective recorders of field-experiences with a useful tool to systematically record those. Also the methodology ensures that apples are not compared with pears.

The mission *concludes* that ILEIA has been effective in increasing the capacity among the regional partners on documentation of LEISA experiences and has achieved expected results.

The mission is not capable of assessing the *exact* complementarity of the various editions since the evaluator does not know all the languages in which the regional editions are published in. However, the mission is satisfied that the approach towards complementarity is sound. It has already been noted that approximately 50% of the articles from the global edition are reproduced in the regional editions. Likewise, the Global edition imports articles from the regional editions. The balance that needs to be struck by all is to ensure relevance for the targeted readership. This means that the global edition tends

to select articles from the regional editions that have a wide application potential and/or address topics that provide a general learning experience. The other way around, the regional editions, apart from having regional specific (ecological, natural resource base, etc.) include articles from the global issue for the same reasons, especially when these are applicable in their region. The 50/50 approach is not written in stone however, and the mix may change in the future depending on the individual development of each edition. Maybe, one or more regional editions become so strong and regionally specific that they may find reason to import fewer materials from the other editions through the global edition in the future (and export more). Maybe they will not and even increase the amount of materials from the global/other editions. In the final analysis this is not really of any consequence, however, as the important thing is that the editions combine to serve as the exchange through which all editions are fed.

Complementarity is also evident when regional partners run into problems, notably in terms of the sourcing of materials. This happened to the Indonesian edition and the problem was solved by simply making the edition lag one quarter behind the global edition, thus giving it time to translate articles into Bahasa Indonesia. Other examples are the exchange of articles between the Peruvian and Brazilian editions.

The approach to have a similar theme for the global and (some or all) regional editions enhances complementarity, as the amount of materials that are sourced increase. This not only provides more materials, but facilitates the selection of the very best materials that thus result in additional depth to the chosen theme. Furthermore the approach enables regional editions to simultaneously present global and regional articles on the same theme in one issue, thus providing the readership with a chance to compare and evaluate.

The mission cannot really identify any weaknesses in the “system” and has no suggestions to make regarding possible improvements. In fact, the mission only sees strength in the system as a mechanism for support between the various editions.

The global edition- as the name implies- only adopts a global perspective, bringing out experiences of general interest. It also caters for the regions that do not yet have a regional edition of their own. Therefore it definitely serves a purpose in its own right. In the absence of an East-African edition, 70% of the subscribers to the global edition are English speaking Africans. Of course this also points to a priority need of establishing an East African edition, a recommendation this mission will return to. In addition, the number of regional editions could be further increased, since there still are large black spots on the map. However, even if/when an East African and other new editions are successfully established, the mission believes that there will always be a need for a global edition that reaches a subscriber/website visitor audience that has a general interest in learning from and contributing to world-wide experiences in low external input/sustainable agriculture. When this happens, the complementarity between the editions could be even further enhanced.

The mission *concludes* that the complementarity between the global and the local editions are strong. The mission did not identify weaknesses. ILEIA did not present expected results or criteria for the activity). Complementarity could be further enhanced by using the current approach, but with more new regional editions.

Objective 3. Increase the outreach of information and the collaboration between partners through electronic means.

Sida questions: 1) How effective has ILEIA been in increasing the outreach of information and the collaboration between partners through electronic means? Try to specify results. 2) What has been the complementarity between the paper edition of the magazine and other electronic means of communication (website, E-LEISA and cd-rom), globally and in the regional context?

During the first half of 2000 ILEIA developed an internet strategy for its new website. An ITC officer was appointed, to be involved in all future electronic publications of ILEIA, both on the website and CD-ROM. The idea was to create an interactive information and discussion platform on the development of LEISA, which would make it possible for outsiders to contribute to the content of the site.

The website is well-structured, versatile and user-friendly. It offers a search option through which the visitor can access the magazines, articles, a library, a list of people and their contact details, documents (e.g. the ILEIA manuals for capacity building and methods development), dossiers (source materials for themes and theme development with links to the magazines/library, etc.), as well as links to other sites/sources. The mission wishes to point out that the transfer of articles to the web-site is not simply a copy-paste exercise, but involves the time-consuming task of translating pdf files into HTML (ensuring that the website remains “light”). It obviously also comes at a cost, irrespective of whether the task is outsourced (as is the case now), or whether it is not. ILEIA has also produces E-LEISA, a news alert which comes out four times per year after each edition of the magazine. The LEISA website was externally reviewed in 2006 and recommended as one of the five top most useful and easy-to-use information sources in the field of agriculture⁹.

The website is currently being evaluated by external specialist consultants (final report due in March/April 2008). Early information reveals that it has 40.000 visitors per month, which –according to the external consultants- is a high number in comparison to comparable websites. The mission notes, if the final report confirms the figure, that the number of visits to the site has increased dramatically since 2006 when the average was 26.000 visitors per month.¹⁰

Taking into consideration that the latest readers’ survey (2007) found that 50% of the readership still does not have (immediate) access to the internet, the number of site-visits/the website outreach must be considered impressive. As more and more readers gain access to the internet, the mission believes outreach is likely to increase further.

Another early finding from the website consultancy is that the profile of the visitors differs from that of the subscribers to the physical publications (apparently the consultants use tools that can identify visitors). Since the consultancy had not been concluded yet at the time of the evaluation, the mission could not learn the proportions of subscribers versus non-subscribers that visit the website. This notwithstanding, the finding on the profile of visitors corroborates the finding in the 2007 readers’ survey that established: “relative to the subscriber database the proportion of more decision-makers visit the site, and relatively less field-level people visit the site.” The two studies combined provide sufficient basis to conclude that there is good complementarity between the paper edition of the magazine and the electronic means of communication.

The website further contains an “open forum” page, the intention of which was to stimulate world-wide discussion. This is the only part of the website that has not really taken off. The number of inputs as well as the number of contributors has been very limited to date. For that reason ILEIA is developing a system (start 2008) in which it will moderate and fuel discussions. ILEIA has recently recruited a specialist that has been assigned the task to accomplish the same.

This last finding notwithstanding the mission *concludes* that the complementarity between the paper edition of the magazine and the electronic means of communication is good and that the expected result “the website is increasingly being used to exchange information about LEISA” has been achieved. There are strong indications that ILEIA has reached the expected result that the number of visits are

⁹ Hurst G Brown (eds), 2006. A good place to start: The IDS knowledge services guide to finding development information on line.

¹⁰ ILEIA informs that comparisons with 2005 are not possible to make because of the method for measuring was different then. ILEIA annual report 2006, p.41.

increasing by at least 5 percent per year. The ongoing website consultancy will provide a conclusive answer thereto.

The website includes a “closed forum” page, to which only partner institutions have access. It is used for scheduled participatory edit e-meetings in which the contents and themes for upcoming editions are discussed. Similar e-meetings are held to evaluate/discuss previous publications. ILEIA informed that its partners and ILEIA itself find the e-based meetings effective and a good value adding complement to physical meetings, such inter alia as the international editor meetings. The news alert E-LEISA (providing pre information about upcoming issues) saw a dramatic increase of subscribers during 2005–2007, which is good measure of the effectiveness of the outreach of the e-based system. In fact, ILEIA believes that the upswing in E-LEISA is partly responsible for the increase in the total number of website visitors.

The mission *concludes* that ILEIA has achieved the expected result of electronic networking and has been effective in increasing the outreach of information and the collaboration between partners through electronic means

Since 2006 ILEIA also produces CD-ROMs that contain all articles published in the magazines. The CDs are sent out to all subscribers free of charge. The rationale for doing so is explained in the 2007 readers’ survey report: “This was done after the results of the former survey (2004) expressed that respondents that maybe did not have access to the internet still had a computer with a cd-rom drive. Similar to the results of the former survey, this survey tells that 64% of the computer users have a cd-rom drive. The survey does not inform about the usefulness of the CDs, and one of the respondents correctly pointed out that “There could have been questions about the use of the cd-rom.”

This omission notwithstanding, the survey report states: “the CD-ROM is also a tool to reach out with information since downloading information from internet may in many cases in the developing countries not be possible due to slow internet access and old computers.” Whereas this may have been true in 2004, and whereas this may still be true in 2007, the mission opines that a lot has happened regarding internet access, also in developing countries, and possibly access to a CD is now of lesser importance to an increasing number of subscribers.

Whereas the mission can see the value of distributing the CD’s to the subscribers both as a service and with the hope that as/if they are shared may contribute to spreading knowledge about LEISA, the mission fears that the time, effort and cost may not justify the benefit. Since subscribers already receive a physical copy of their regional edition, and since all subscribers have access to the ILEIA website and its databases (assuming they can access internet), the additional value of providing them with the CD may need to be re-visited. The mission suggests that the next readers’ survey include questions about the usefulness of the CD’s.

In addition the CD’s are used as promotional materials (dished out at conferences, seminars, meetings, etc.), a strategy the mission supports to the full. Since the CD’s need to be produced for that purpose anyway, possibly the additional time/cost/effort to produce more copies and have these sent to subscribers is negligible/justifiable nonetheless.

The mission *concludes* that ILEIA has achieved the expected result to annually produce and distribute one CDROM containing information from the ILEIA website.

4.2 Findings Regarding the Set of “General” Questions

The questions are: 1) How is ILEIA’s work relevant for poverty reduction? 2) To what extent has ILEIA addressed HIV-AIDS and wider livelihoods issues in relation to LEISA? 3) How does ILEIA’s work contribute to a better environment? 4) How does ILEIA work towards sustainability? 5) ILEIA’s policy

has been to distribute its Magazine free of charge to subscribers in the South. What can be said about the functionality of this policy (a) in the light of ILEIA's main objectives, and (b) in the light of its long-term sustainability?

Combined these questions relate to impact, relevance, sustainability and efficiency. In addition the TOR requires that the evaluation addresses gender equity matters. In what follows the findings and conclusions on the aforementioned are presented in an integrated manner.

4.3 Findings on Impact and Relevance

In annex 2 the mission provides extensive summaries of previous studies done as a basis for this part of the evaluation (two readers' surveys and one assessment). The combined overall picture that the two readers' surveys present is that LEISA has been successful in reaching its target groups; that these appreciate and feel capacitated by the magazine; and that these apply knowledge gained through the magazine.

The 2001 Ethiopian survey found that readers use the information in many practical ways, ranging from training purposes to direct field implementation of certain ideas, technologies or approaches. The study also found that readers use the magazine in research papers. The 2002 assessment presents effects in Latin America. It too concluded that LEISA has positive impacts on the learning effects of the LEISA Magazine on field development workers and highlights that and pragmatic contribution to the sustainable development field. The 2007 readers' survey finds that 94% of the respondents find the magazine relevant/very relevant and use it as a basis for training purposes (46%). The study also establishes that the subscribers are capacitated in a number of ways and that 41% of them have tried out an approach or an idea after reading about it in the magazine.

The mission *concludes* that the studies bring out that subscribers are capacitated by the Magazine. This is an *impact*. This impact also establishes the *relevance* of the magazine for its target groups.

A limitation of the studies is that they were not designed to investigate how the target groups (field-level development workers academics/ researchers and policy makers) estimate the effects/impacts of their improved and applied capacities on poverty reduction, improved livelihoods, and sustainable agriculture. Neither were they designed to investigate whether LEISA has effects on policy, which could be of interest to learn. The mission *recommends* that future studies are designed to include questions that address these issues.

ILEIA is well aware that the link between changes in the behaviour of the readers of LEISA magazines and changes in the situation of agricultural producers in terms of poverty reduction, gender equity, environmental improvement, improvements in livelihoods, etcetera are indirect. At the magazine level no hard proof can be given of such impacts; the magazine may contribute to changes in people's lives, but such changes cannot be attributed to the LEISA magazine. The mission finds that a number of articles (experiences) in the magazine provide good examples of that LEISA makes contributions thereto. This indicates that ILEIA's work is *relevant* in these respects too. The mission also notes that all articles explicitly and implicitly deal with livelihood issues; that during the 2005–2007 period the LEISA magazine contained three articles dealing with HIV/AIDS-related issues; and that the issues usually contain something about women; and that LEISA is per definition about sustainable agriculture. This notwithstanding, the mission *agrees* with Sida that specific studies should be undertaken in the future that serve to provide a comprehensive picture of the effects and impacts of the magazine.

4.4 Findings Regarding Women Participation, Gender Equity and HIV/AIDS

The 2001 study finds that ILEIA is not doing particularly well in terms of reaching women extension staff and that a dedicated effort is needed. The study nonetheless found it clearly acknowledged by the users of the magazine that gender issues are well addressed and that several men stated that the magazine had increased their awareness and interest in gender issues. One of the two female respondents interviewed particularly stressed her appreciation of the Magazine because “*there is always something about women in it*”. The impact study team recommends –with a view to increase outreach that ILEIA should pursue an active marketing strategy targeting, 1) field-level staff in remote locations and in *particular women*.

The 2002 study does not address gender and/or gender equity issues. The 2007 readers’ survey informs that 8% of registered subscribers in the general database are women (a check by the mission in 2008 resulted in 8.9%). The survey also informs that female respondents, generally speaking, use information in LEISA in the same way as men do and that 46% of the respondents (male and female) state they have become more aware of gender issues.

The mission notes that the low number of female subscribers may very well only reflect a low female presence in agricultural organisations, but it suggests that ILEIA keeps the matter of targeted marketing of women high on the priority list nonetheless. The mission also notes that the magazine, as corroborated by readers, always contains something about women and that respondents to the surveys state that they learn about gender issues through the magazines.

The mission also notes that the average number of female authors that contribute to the magazine is rather low, even though there are large fluctuations between issues (c.f. annex 3). This too may reflect a low female presence in agricultural organisations and in research institutions.

As regards the specific question to what extent ILEIA has addressed HIV-AIDS issues in relation to LEISA, the mission notes that the global edition contained three articles directly concerning HIV/AIDS in the period 2005–2007.

The mission *concludes* that LEISA is doing well in addressing gender and HIV/AIDS issues. The mission recommends that ILEIA keeps the matter of increasing the number of female subscribers and contributors to the magazine on the radar.

4.5 Findings Regarding Sustainability

The mission is of the opinion that overall sustainability of ILEIA hinges on its financial sustainability. With 428 or 2.3% paying subscribers in 2007 and 2008 (177 institutional and 251 individual), income from subscriptions is € 14,240 per annum. Consequently, ILEIA/LEISA is wholly dependent on donor funding. Both the current and the previous directors of ILEIA informed that ILEIA/LEISA always will be donor dependent.

The remaining 97,7% (2007) subscribers are from the South and get their copy for free. Even if many of those were willing to pay a subscription fee, the possibility for many to go to a bank and actually make an international payment are extremely limited, especially in remote areas. In addition, the transaction costs (transport, charges, currency issues, etc.) may be prohibitive and even exceed the subscription cost. This is not a feasible proposition to most. The handling cost for ILEIA is also prohibitive considering the number of subscribers and the small subscription fees.

The mission raised the question if and how the magazine could generate income from other sources than subscription fees, e.g. through advertisements. The discussion brought out that possibilities are very limited. Commercial enterprises would probably not be interested in advertising in a magazine

that promotes low external input and that is spread over a (too) large number of countries, Institutions might want to advertise for seminars, courses, and similar activities, but might a) not want to pay much for it, and b) may not find the timing of the publication of the quarterly issue appropriate. Other sources of income were difficult to identify.

The mission concludes that possibilities for income generation from subscriptions and other sources are very limited and that ILEIA is not likely to become financially sustainable as well as is likely to always be dependent on outside funding.

4.6 Findings Regarding Efficiency

Efficiency is the measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, resources, time etc.) are converted to results. The mission has already highlighted that ILEIA during the evaluated period only had a small secretariat. Considering available human resources, the mission finds that the ILEIA outputs and results (and the quality thereof) have been impressive. The mission therefore concludes that ILEIA has been very efficient in converting resources and time to expected results.

An issue may be the cost-efficiency of the aforementioned. Based on the budget figures presented in the ToR, the cost per subscriber is €51 (all editions). Since the readers' surveys suggest that each issue is read by an average of 5 people, the cost per reader would drop to approximately €10 per reader (all editions). These figures do not consider the fact, however, that there are some 480.000 website visitors/year.

The mission is aware that this is a basic and crude measure for cost-effectiveness. Therefore it recommends that a financial expert be tasked to study cost-effectiveness.

4.7 Findings Regarding ILEIA Relations with Institutional Actors

In its tender, the mission suggested the inclusion of additional questions that together focus on the relationships between ILEIA and organisations/institutions that are active in the fields of farmer's organisation, agriculture research, and/or extension.

ILEIA retains contacts with organisations that have a good track record in influencing policy regarding agriculture and environment. An example is the collaboration with OXFAM and Greenpeace on the website project www.farmingsolutions.org. The mission was informed that the project has not developed as expected and that the last update of the website took place in 2006.

ILEIA also participates in and attends a variety of seminars and networks with many like-minded organisations. ILEIA is a member of organisations (e.g. IFOAM) that promote and facilitate organic agriculture and that combine to influence policies and/or that promote value chain development, services and capacity development of producer organisations (e.g. AgriProFocus).

In the tender Kosana Consulting suggested the inclusion of questions that ask how ILEIA has positioned itself vis-à-vis other institutional actors that directly work with and/or support agricultural extension delivery and farmer organisations. It contacted: 1) Agricord (the alliance of agri-agencies with activities in 105 countries) which is the development agency of IFAP¹¹, 2) The Swedish Embassy in Nairobi and through it NALEP and the Kenya Ministry of Agriculture, 3) The Swedish embassy in Lusaka and through it, ASP, and the Zambia Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MACO), 4) The Neuchatel Initiative, 5) The International Cooperative Alliance¹², 6) The Swedish Cooperative

¹¹ The International Federation of Agricultural Producers-IFAP represents 600 million farmer families in 110 national organisations in 80 countries.

¹² The International Cooperative alliance represents 800 million individuals in 225 organisations (many of which are agricultural organisations) from 87 countries.

Centre. These were interviewed or responded by e-mail. The mission also contacted FAO, CGIAR, KENFAP, ZNFU and SACAU. These did not return calls or respond to written questions.

The programme officer at the embassy in Nairobi (who, incidentally, is the former head of the Kenyan Extension Services) stated he knew of LEISA, but did not subscribe to it. Through him the mission was also informed by the Ministry of Agriculture that its national extension service (NALEP) knows of LEISA, but does not subscribe to it as an institution. It further informed that some of its officers may subscribe to LEISA in a private capacity but that the magazine is not used for training or other purposes. The mission received a near similar reply from MACO in Zambia, with the difference that it stated that LEISA was used in training. This anomaly is explained by the fact that the Swedish capacity development support programme to MACO, the ASP, informed that it has three subscriptions to LEISA and uses the content of the magazine for training/discussion. This programme comes to an end soon, however.

The other respondents stated they had not heard of LEISA. Mrs. Blum of the Neuchatel Initiative, which works with the promotion of pluralistic extension delivery mechanisms worldwide, informed that they had not heard of LEISA and/or discussed its concept. The Agricord/IFAP representative stated it knew of ILEIA/LEISA, but was not aware it still existed. The Swedish Cooperative Centre and the International Cooperative Alliance did not know of ILEIA/LEISA.

The mission is aware that the selection of respondents is limited and that the number of responses is limited too. Discussions with ILEIA management established that ILEIA has not yet had a pro-active approach towards developing institutional links with this type of sector stakeholders, be they national extension services, development programmes, or development support agencies/institutions. The ILEIA database informs that the single largest institutional subscription is 20 copies.

The mission *recommends* that ILEIA in the future has a focus on establishing relationships with large organisations and institutions that work with farmers on a day-to-day basis, with a view to increase outreach and possible impact.

5 Evaluative Conclusions

The mission concludes that ILEIA has been very effective and has achieved or surpassed most expected results for the period 2005–2008.

- Based on the fact that a) ILEIA has succeeded in increasing the number of regional editions by two, b) succeeded in exceeding expected subscription results for all editions, c) and succeeded in exceeding the expected result for the number of issues, the mission concludes that ILEIA has been very effective in reaching its target audiences and in promoting information exchange. The mission cannot conclusively establish that ILEIA has reached the expected result that 50% of subscribers are field practitioners (where known);
- The mission notes that ILEIA has been effective in establishing collaboration with regional partners during the period, but has not reached the expected result of establishing one new partnership per year;
- Based on its findings regarding how ILEIA conducts its editorial work, the mechanisms and routines it has put in place for pre- and post-edition production dialogue with partner institutions, and the methodological development work it initiates and undertakes to continuously improve the quality of all LEISA editions, the mission concludes that ILEIA has been very effective in improving the quality of information in the magazines.

- Based on the analysis of the mechanisms that ILEIA has put in place, as well as of the tools ILEIA and LEISA India have developed/produced/shared the mission concludes that ILEIA has been effective in strengthening the capacity of regional partners to bring out regional editions of LEISA and in their capacities to document LEISA experiences. All expected results have been met.
- The mission concludes that the documentation methodology is sound as well as most relevant, and adds qualitative value to the LEISA Magazine as a medium for information exchange between practitioners (e.g. extension services and their staffs). It therefore concludes that ILEIA has been effective in increasing the capacity among the regional partners on documentation of LEISA experiences and has achieved expected results;
- The mission concludes that the comparative strength of the global and regional editions in achieving information exchange and their complementarity lays in a combination of the capability of ILEIA editors to translate sketchy contributions into high quality contributions, the training that ILEIA undertakes in documentation, and the institution of editor meetings, etc, and which combine to raise the quality and relevance topic-wise in all editions. The mission did not identify weaknesses. ILEIA did not present expected results or criteria for the activity). Complementarity could be further enhanced by using the current approach, but with more new regional editions;
- The mission concludes that ILEIA been effective in increasing the outreach of information and the collaboration between partners through electronic means and that the paper edition of the magazine and the website and E-LEISA complement each other both globally and regionally. The expected result “the website is increasingly being used to exchange information about LEISA” has been achieved. There are strong indications that ILEIA has reached the expected result that the number of visits are increasing by at least 5 percent per year. The ongoing website consultancy will provide a conclusive answer thereto;
- The mission concludes that ILEIA has achieved the expected result to annually produce and distribute one CDROM containing information from the ILEIA website;

Regarding the qualitative questions the mission concludes that:

- ILEIA can rightfully claim that its subscribers are capacitated by the Magazine. This is an *impact*. It also notes, however that a limitation of the impact studies undertaken is that they were not designed to investigate how the target groups (field-level development workers academics/researchers and policy makers) estimate the effects/impacts of their improved and applied capacities on poverty reduction, improved livelihoods, and sustainable agriculture. Neither were they designed to investigate the effects of LEISA on policy. The mission recommends that future studies are designed to include questions that address these issues:
- ILEIA is well aware that the link between changes in the behaviour of the readers of LEISA magazines and changes in the situation of agricultural producers in terms of poverty reduction, gender equity, environmental improvement, improvements in livelihoods, etcetera are indirect and that the magazine *may* contribute to changes in people’s lives, but such changes cannot be attributed to the LEISA magazine. However, the mission finds that articles in the magazine provide good examples of that LEISA makes contributions thereto. This indicates that ILEIA’s work is *relevant* in these respects too. However, the mission fully supports Sida that in the future specific impact studies should be undertaken;
- LEISA is doing well in promoting gender equity and HIV/AIDS issues. It is also noted, however that the number of female subscribers and contributors to the magazine is a bit low. The mission *recommends* that ILEIA keeps the matter of an increase in female subscribers and contributors high

on its priority list;

- Considering available human resources, ILEIA outputs and results (and the quality thereof) have been impressive. The mission concludes that ILEIA has been very efficient in converting resources and time to expected results.
- The mission concludes that the policy to distribute its Magazine free of charge to subscribers in the South has hitherto been the only feasible option and that the possibilities for ILEIA to generate income from subscriptions and other sources are very limited. The mission concludes that ILEIA is not likely to become financially sustainable as well as is likely to always be dependent on outside funding;
- The matter of cost-efficiency is more difficult to assess and should be established by means of a specialist study.

6 Recommendations

The mission recommends that:

- A Sub-Saharan Africa LEISA edition in English is established soon;
- Future readers' surveys include questions on how the target groups estimate the effects/impacts of their improved and applied capacities on poverty reduction, improved livelihoods, and sustainable agriculture and policy.
- ILEIA keeps the matter of an increase in female subscribers and contributors high on its priority list;
- ILEIA focuses on establishing relationships with large organisations and institutions that work with farmers on a day-to-day basis, with a view to increase outreach and possible impact;
- Sida and ILEIA pursue plans to undertake impact studies;
- A study on cost-effectiveness is undertaken.

Annex 1 Results Framework 2005–2008

Activity 1: Exchange of information through LEISA Magazine – global edition:

The expected results are:

Result 1: Regular production of LEISA Magazine, global edition.

Criteria: Annual production of four issues of at least 36 pages

Result 2: Balanced contributions from authors of different geographic origins, organisational affiliation and gender.

Criteria: All regions should be represented in each issue, together with a reasonable balance of authors in terms of organisational affiliation, gender and contributions from both North and South.

Result 3: Increasing outreach and information exchange through collaboration with other organisations.

Criteria: At least 2 issues per year produced in collaboration; increasing network of organisations.

Result 4: Increasing dissemination of the global edition.

Criteria: Increase in subscriptions of 5% per year; increase in material known to be used for other publications.

Result 5: Reaching the target readership of the global edition.

Criteria:

> 75% of respondents to reader's survey are satisfied with contents

> 90% of subscribers are from the South

> 50% of subscribers are field practitioners (where known)

– Increasing number of female subscribers

Activity 2: Collaboration with southern partners for the production and dissemination of the Regional editions of LEISA magazine:.

The expected results are:

Result 1: Coordination of Regional editions of LEISA magazine.

Criteria: E-bulletin for regional editors produced six times per year, at least four work visits to take place, regional budgets approved.

Result 2: Building the capacities of regional partners to produce LEISA magazines.

Criteria: International editors meetings held semi annually, work visits to regional partners.

Result 3: Reports from partners.

Criteria: Regular reports received from each partner

Result 4: New Initiatives.

Criteria: At least one new initiative per year

Result 5: Increasing documentation of and networking for LEISA

Criteria: At least one workshop or other documentation activity per year; at least 2 international or regional conferences attended.

Partner results not listed.

Activity 3: Wider exchange of information on LEISA through electronic publications: in its

The expected results are:

Result 1: ILEIA Website increasingly used to exchange information about LEISA.

Criteria: Increasing use (number of visits increasing by at least 5 percent per year).

Result 2: Electronic networking.

Criteria: The use of electronic media to network with other individuals and organisations;

Result 3: Annual production of one CDROM containing information from the ILEIA website

Criteria: Number of CD's produced and distributed

It to be noted that the Proposal 2005–2008, in addition to the above, contains quantitative expected results for the number of issues per editions and the number of subscribers.

Annex 2 Summaries of Readers' Surveys and Assessment

1. In 2001 ILEIA conducted the first readers' survey by means of a "LEISA Magazine Impact Study" in Ethiopia only ¹. The findings/conclusions of the study were based on the responses of 224 Ethiopian subscribers (11%) to a questionnaire, and by means of further in-depth interviews with a selection of respondents: 1) occupying policy-influencing positions in ministries/institutions, 2) belonging to research institutions who claim that the Magazine has influenced their thinking/research, and 3) field workers (government and NGO staffs).

The study found that:

- Many of the remote NGO and government extension offices only receive news (i.e. sector information through one or more of three publications (all available free of charge)².
- Most interviewees were critical towards conventional approaches to agricultural development, e.g. standard packages, top-down approach, technological fixes and high input agriculture.
- The use of the Magazine varies with the position of the subscribers. Some use the information directly in their work, e.g. they try out approaches and technologies directly in their fieldwork. Others use it to get ideas when they write research proposals or development plans. Training and education is another field where articles are often used. Some material is also translated into local languages for training purposes.
- Many of the experts or development agents who begin working at field level on completion of their studies have very limited access to further training opportunities or workshops. Through the Magazine, they are able to get first hand information.
- The approach towards agricultural development promoted through the Magazine is very different from what is (still) taught in most mainstream agricultural education and training institutions; it challenges its readers and gives them an opportunity to search for other explanations and solutions to the problems they encounter in their daily work. Some of the readers stressed that the LEISA Magazine had provided them with 'a second training opportunity'.
- In terms of reaching the target group, the study finds that ILEIA is doing well in reaching field-level staff in remote areas, but that more can be done. In terms of reaching women extension staff ILEIA is not doing particularly well, so a dedicated effort is needed.
- The practise of letting the Magazine advertise itself by word of mouth has advantages as well as disadvantages. Whereas the practice on the one hand ensures that the Magazine is spread through colleagues within the target group, and thereby also is read by the target group, this approach, on the other hand, prevents higher-ranking staff from reading the Magazine resulting in that often these are unaware that their field officers are keen readers of the Magazine.
- An appreciated aspect of the Magazine is its wide geographical coverage content-wise. The impact study team found that most readers find it stimulating and encouraging reading that other countries, particularly within Africa but also from other parts of the world, struggle with the same problems regarding agricultural development and sustainable agriculture.
- Finally, the study finds it clearly acknowledged that gender issues are well addressed. The impact study team claims that several men stated that the Magazine had increased their awareness and

¹ Who needs information? A Study on the Use and Impact of the LEISA Magazine in Ethiopia, 2001.

² SPORE (CTA), PLA notes (IIED) and the LEISA Magazine.

interest in gender issues. One of the two female respondents interviewed particularly stressed her appreciation of the Magazine because “*there is always something about women in it*”.

The impact study team concludes that: 1) the Magazine does serve its purpose as a valuable and accessible source of information on LEISA, 2) the readers use the information in many practical ways, ranging from training purposes to direct field implementation of certain ideas, technologies or approaches, 3) the Magazine is a powerful tool in influencing people’s thoughts and ideas on participatory approaches to development, low input and agro-ecological approaches and recognition of indigenous practises, 4) information has enabled a shift of attitude towards farmers - they are considered as actors and partners in development, instead of as passive “beneficiaries”, and 5) the degree to which readers have been able to bring all these changes into their own organisations varies enormously and is determined by the institutional setting of the organisation and the openness to try out new ideas and 6) the Magazine plays an important role in advocating for change in environments where information access is very limited.

With a view to increase outreach, the impact study team recommends that ILEIA should pursue “targeted marketing (i.e. contacting NGOs and ministries in relevant countries and requesting them to distribute a trial copy and a subscription form to their staff).” This active marketing strategy should also target 1) field-level staff in remote locations and in particular women, 2) Staff of other levels, especially managers of field staff, departmental heads etc, and 3) countries with few subscribers - to counter the tendency for the number of subscribers to grow faster in countries with a large number of subscribers.

2. In 2002 a “Strategic assessment of ILEIA Building Bridges 1999-2001” was undertaken that served to: 1) describe the efficiency, consistency and effectiveness of ILEIA’s in achieving the *immediate* programme objectives, and 2) describe the specificity and potential of the global network (i.e. facilitators, enablers and contributors), notably “within a rapidly changing global development context in which every networking effort has to adjust continuously in order to find, and keep its niche (and added value) among a variety of complementary or even competing initiatives.”

The assessment report contains a number of general and specific findings on the impact that ILEIA/LEISA was having.

- “From all the interviews and reviews the assessment team has done, only positive opinions arose on the value added and impact of the LEISA Magazine. Qualifications from reliable sources stress its huge readership as well as its unique and pragmatic contribution to the sustainable development field. Also, the LEISA Magazine is praised for high quality standards and its significant focus on the relevance and resilience of small producers in poor areas. Within the ILEIA network, everybody seems to agree the LEISA Magazine is the foundation of ILEIA’s success.”
- “From the *Latin American survey* done by the Assessment team, multiple examples are available to underscore the learning effects of the LEISA Magazine. Suffices to say here that the learning effects are diverse and wide-spread. The LEISA Magazine can rightfully claim that its outreach provides its audiences not only with ample opportunities to learn, but that the audiences actually grasp these opportunities and are capable of citing concrete examples of what they learned in the process. Just as an illustration, most respondents are able to cite concrete examples of lessons learned related to LEISA, of practical situations in which they applied something they learned and, what the principal instruments were that had motivated their learning. When asked for concrete examples of use and impact of the Magazine itself, 38 examples are given. In this report some of the examples are used to illustrate particular points...”:
Re: *Valorising endogenous resources*:
- ‘To discover that biotechnological procedures were already in use in local cultures, even before the Colonial days.’

- ‘To have access to agro-ecological systems in other environments.’
- ‘It contributed to the valorisation of the native logic and production techniques for crop and animal husbandry.’
- ‘The diversity of options available for the development of poor communities and the threats these same communities are facing.’

Re: Enriching working methods, technological options and information:

- ‘To learn to diagnose systems and situations’
 - ‘As an institution we have enriched our practical training methods, we have learned not to limit them just to improving the technical knowledge and skills of the peasants, but also their capacity to observe, innovate or adapt external knowledge.’
 - ‘Farmer-to-farmer methodology.’
 - ‘The use of inputs that are available locally.’
 - ‘Agro-flower systems, home gardens, low lands management.’
 - ‘Participatory farm planning, optimising the use of local resources; diverse soil and water conservation practices.’
3. Unlike the 2001 survey, the 2007 Readers’ Survey (draft) is a global survey and to a large extent a statistical exercise, presenting graphs and percentages.

Its main findings are:

- 94% of the respondents expressed that the information provided in the LEISA magazine is relevant to them. The satisfaction level is corroborated by responses to the open questions that bring out that the Magazine is highly appreciated and seen as a useful source for agricultural information.
- Apart from LEISA, the other main sources for agriculture information for the respondents are books and journals.
- Respondents read an average of 7 articles per magazine out of a mean of 12. The editorial section is one of the most readily read.
- A majority of the respondents find the magazine relevant in their professional and/or daily life.
- Development field workers are the highest represented occupation among the respondents. Most work for government agencies and NGO’s. 41% have tried out an approach described in the Magazine.
- The LEISA magazine is used in discussions and teachers are often using it as training material. It is also translated into local languages (mostly to be able to use the magazine for training and as lecturing materials, and/or in order to share it with example (sic!) farmers that do not understand English.
- In addition to the subscribers, respondents share their copy of LEISA Magazine with 5 other readers in average. In this way the information is reaching by many people and is also transferred to the new generation of farmers and other agriculture practitioners. The magazine has not only helped respondents with increase of agricultural knowledge but also with social concepts which has led to more cooperation and organised activities.

- Generally speaking, female respondents use information in LEISA in the same way as men do. The only difference is in practically trying out the approach and/or in discussing agriculture). 46% of the respondents claim they have become more aware of gender issues.
- The conclusions the investigator draws from the answers to the open questions are that a) respondents have increased their awareness and knowledge about organic- and sustainable agriculture by reading the magazine, b) have learned about new methods and concepts from all over the world, c) suitable ones have been tried out, and d) the result of the new approaches/methods in farming and organisation was indicated in the questionnaire as successful and shared with others (sic!?).
- 65% of the respondents regularly use a computer, 48% regularly use email and 45% regularly use internet. This is an increase since the 2004 survey. Even if overall computer among respondents is at the same level as in 2004 there has been an increase in the use of internet and readers visiting the website.
- There is a decrease of respondents that read every issue of the magazine. They are instead reading the issue when they find a theme related to them and their interests. There is also a decrease in the number of respondents that fully understand the ideas and concepts in the magazine.
- Since the majority of respondents and subscribers are from African countries they request that the magazine include more articles from Africa. Most of the topics presented in LEISA are about crop production and respondents indicate they rear and work with livestock and have a need for more information about it.

Annex 3

Distribution of Contributions for the Period 2004 thru 2006

Statistics Leisa Magazine Global Edition							
General	Issue 2006 22.1	Issue 2006 22.2	Issue 2006 22.3	Issue 2006 22.4	Average 2006	Average 2005	Average 2004
Number of articles	18	12	14	12	14	14	12
Number of short articles (½ page or box)	1	0	0	1	0.5	1	1.8
Field Notes	1	1	1	0	0.75	1	0.8
Origin of experiences							
Asian	5	2	3	3	3.25	6	3
African	2	5	6	4	4.25	4	5.3
Latin American & Caribbean	6	4	5	3	4.5	4	3.5
Other area	4	2	1	1	2	0.5	1.3
General articles	3	0	0	1	1	2	1.5
Authors							
Northern	7	8	3	4	5.5	5	4.8
Southern	8	5	6	5	6	7	7.5
Combined	5	0	6	3	3.5	3	2.3
Gender distribution							
Male	10	8	9	9	9	9	9.5
Female	2	4	2	1	2.25	2	1.5
Combined	8	1	4	2	3.75	5	3.5
Affiliation of the author(s)							
Bilateral or multilateral Project/ Programme	3	1	4	0	2	2	2
Local NGO	11	6	6	2	6.25	5	4.3
International NGO	1	1	4	1	1.75	2	1.5
University/ Research Institute	2	3	1	7	3.25	5	4.3
Other	3	2	0	2	1.75	1	1.8
Not indicated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8

Source: ILEIA Annual Report 2006

Annex 4 Terms of Reference

1. Background

ILEIA's mandate

The mandate for the Centre for Information on Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture (ILEIA) is to contribute to the alleviation of poverty, to enhance ecological sustainability and to safeguard social and cultural integrity of smallholders in developing countries. Its over-all objective is the development and promotion of Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA), and its main strategy is to increase the availability and exchange of information on LEISA and to improve the quality of such information, in collaboration with Southern partners and other organisations. It has been pursuing the objective of promoting LEISA since its inception in 1984. ILEIA's flagship has always been the *LEISA Magazine*, a tool in the promotion of knowledge and information sharing.

'Regionalisation' of LEISA Magazine and LEISA network

In 1997 ILEIA started establishing partnerships with NGOs in various regions who started publishing regional editions of the Magazine. Six regional editions saw the light since then. The first one was the Latin American edition *LEISA Revista de Agroecología*, in Spanish, set up by ETC–Andes in Peru in 1997. After this followed: *LEISA India* (in English), by AME Foundation in Bangalore (1999); the francophone edition *AGRIDAPE*, by IED Afrique (then IIED Sahel) (2003), the Bahasa Indonesia edition *SALAM* by VECO-Indonesia (2003), and *Agriculturas*, the Brazilian edition by AS-PTA (2003). The most recent entrant is 可持续生态农业 (*LEISA China*) implemented by CBIK, a Kunming-based support NGO (2006). Discussions are presently under way with some African organizations regarding the possibility of supporting existing African initiatives in publishing "LEISA-like" magazines.

Meanwhile, ILEIA continues publishing its own 'global' edition of the *LEISA Magazine*. There has been a steady increase over the years in the numbers of subscribers, though this got somewhat flattened out since the regional editions gathered momentum. A landmark was reached in 2006, when the regional editions had together more subscribers than the global edition (24.000 vs 15.350). All magazines together are expected to reach more than 200.000 readers, keeping in mind that on average each magazine is read by five or more people.

As the number of regional partners grew rapidly, ILEIA has been making concerted efforts to establish a common vision, mission and objectives, and good working relationships between and amongst all partners. The International Editors Meeting, organised twice yearly since 2003, is the main forum to discuss and review contents of the magazines, to establish collaboration, and for capacity building. Since 2007, complementary electronic means are being used more intensively, hence the frequency of the International Editors Meeting has been brought down to one per year.

The website

Complementary to the *LEISA Magazine* is the www.leisa.info website, which is connected to the six regional websites and gets about 40,000 visitors per month. In a global review commissioned by IDS it was rated as one of the top five websites on agriculture¹. This website provides free access to the database with LEISA material. More than three thousand articles published in all the Magazines are available to download free of charge, in line with the open access ideology of ILEIA and partners. ILEIA has commissioned a review of its website, which is under way as of January 2008.

¹ Hurst, G. and C. Brown, eds (2006) A Good Place to Start. The IDS Knowledge Services Guide to Finding Development Information On-line. <http://www.ids.ac.uk/index.cfm?objectId=25867CA5-0C86-CEA8-B366F50BE0E71705>.

New initiatives

New initiatives in ILEIA include the *Documentation Project* and *Farming Matters*. During the past few years ILEIA and partners have been giving increasing importance to enhancing the capacity of field-based organisations to document experiences with LEISA. This should result in an enhanced documentation capacity among NGOs in general, and more relevant articles for the LEISA Magazine specifically. ETC-A, ILEIA's Latin American partner, developed a methodology for documenting LEISA experience, which has been tested, adapted and translated into English, French, Portuguese and Chinese. In the past one and a half years, the ILEIA team engaged in a number of 'Capacity Building for Documentation' workshops in Africa, Asia and Europe.

Farming Matters is a newly starting series of educational materials on the key principles of LEISA, which ILEIA will be developing in collaboration with its partners from 2008 onwards.

The ILEIA organisation

ILEIA has firmly established itself as an organisation, after having formed an independent foundation in the year 2000. In 2007, ILEIA's team consisted of a director, two editors, an information specialist, an information assistant, an office manager, a secretary/subscriptions officer, and an administrative officer. In Jan–Feb 2008 the team is being expanded with three new staff: an Editor/ Coordinator *Farming Matters*, an Editor/Policy analyst, and a Communication and Marketing Specialist.

A quality management system is in place, for which ISO 9000 certification was obtained in 2006. ILEIA's Board meets on a six-monthly basis to review progress and discuss the strategic direction of ILEIA.

Previous evaluations

An evaluation carried out in 2002 was in general positive to ILEIA's work for global knowledge and information networking for sustainable agriculture (ECDPM, 2003). The magazine has been able to maintain high quality standards and the focus continues to be on the relevance and resilience of small producers in poor areas.

Readers' surveys, carried out by ILEIA every three years (most recently in 2007), consistently indicate that the magazine reaches many readers with no or very limited access to internet and other sources of agricultural information, especially in Africa.

Funding

A stable funding relationship with two long-term donors, DGIS (the Dutch Government) and Sida, has enabled ILEIA to invest in the future of the organisation and of the entire network. At present ILEIA gets 70% of its funding from DGIS through an MFS² grant (2007–2010; total grant 6 M Euro) and 30% from Sida (Sida Agreement No A7320104; total grant for this period is 12 M SEK = about 1,2 M Euro). Funding of ILEIA's partners' LEISA programmes is canalised through ILEIA. Some of them fund a limited part of their LEISA programme from other sources.

The present funding phase of Sida is coming to an end (with a budget neutral extension of four months) by April 2008. An independent evaluation was foreseen towards the end of the funding phase, hence, these Terms of Reference.

² MFS = System of Co-financing of Netherlands-based NGOs by the Dutch Government.

2. Evaluation Purpose

The general purpose is to evaluate the overall performance and relevance of ILEIA's work. The evaluation's findings and recommendations will be used as a base for Sida when considering a new funding phase.

3. Stakeholder Involvement

Although it is an external evaluation it is important that the views of ILEIA and their partners are taken into account in the evaluation process since the evaluation can also contribute to the internal dialogue within ILEIA about their work. ILEIA has for example participated in developing these Terms of References.

4. Scope of the Evaluation

This evaluation will specifically address the development of ILEIA's programme over the past three years (2005–2007) which is the period of the present Sida grant to ILEIA.

Main aim of this evaluation is to assess ILEIA's effectiveness, during this period, in addressing its main objectives:

1. Increasing the exchange of information on LEISA globally and improve the quality of this information.
2. Collaboration with and capacity building of Southern partners to increase the exchange of information on LEISA, via:
 - a. the production of regional editions of the LEISA Magazine;
 - b. the documentation of LEISA experiences.
3. Increase the outreach of information and the collaboration between partners through electronic means.

As ILEIA and its partners cover a large and diverse range of areas and activities, it will be difficult to assess all of these in detail within the limited time frame of this evaluation. Therefore this evaluation will focus on ILEIA's *contribution* to making information on LEISA widely available and on patterns of information dissemination and sharing, rather than on trying to reach a detailed quantified understanding of effects and impact. This raises the question about attribution vs contribution. In the present globalised information arena it will be impossible and even irrelevant to uniquely attribute changes in individuals' and organisations' behaviour to ILEIA or its Magazine. It will be more relevant and productive to develop an understanding of the ways in which ILEIA has been contributing to behavioural change of various types of actors (e.g. various readers categories) at different levels and in different contexts, where and how it has positioned itself vis-à-vis other important institutional actors in this field, whether and to what extent it has contributed to the larger debates on Sustainable Agriculture.

For this evaluation there will not be any in-depth case studies in specific geographic areas about the impact of ILEIA. However, ILEIA is already preparing for conducting impact studies. If Sida decides to support another phase this will be an important part to include.

Questions

Objective 1:

- How effective has ILEIA been in reaching its intended target audiences and in promoting information exchange on LEISA and improving the quality of this information? Try to specify results.

Objective 2:

- How effective has ILEIA been in establishing collaboration with regional partners and in strengthening their capacity to bring out regional editions of LEISA Magazine? Try to specify results.
- How effective has ILEIA been in increasing the capacity among the regional partners on documentation of LEISA experiences? Try to specify results.
- What are comparative strengths and weaknesses of the global and the local editions in achieving the objective of promoting knowledge and information exchange on LEISA? What is the actual complementarity between both, and how could it be further enhanced?

Objective 3:

- How effective has ILEIA been in increasing the outreach of information and the collaboration between partners through electronic means? Try to specify results.
- What has been the complementarity between the paper edition of the magazine and other electronic means of communication (website, E-LEISA and cd-rom), globally and in the regional context?

General:

- How is ILEIA's work relevant for poverty reduction?
- To what extent has ILEIA addressed HIV-AIDS and wider livelihoods issues in relation to LEISA?
- How does ILEIA's work contribute to a better environment?
- How does ILEIA work towards sustainability?
- ILEIA's policy has been to distribute its Magazine free of charge to subscribers in the South. What can be said about the functionality of this policy (a) in the light of ILEIA's main objectives, and (b) in the light of its long-term sustainability?

The evaluator may consider other questions for the evaluation. Such should be spelled out in detail in the tender documents.

Based on the answers to the questions above the evaluator should formulate lessons learnt and recommendations on how ILEIA could improve its work.

5. Methodology

The evaluation shall be carried out through (1) analysis of program documents and other relevant documents and (2) interviews with key informants who can be considered stakeholders in the global LEISA scene (for example ILEIA staff, board members, DGIS representatives, selected readers, authors, experts in the field of LEISA).

The evaluator may consider other methods for the evaluation. Such should be spelled out in detail in the tender documents.

The evaluation shall be carried out based on a gender perspective, i.e. analyses made and findings presented shall consider both involvement of women as well as men and the impact and consequences for women and men and their respective roles and responsibilities.

6. Workplan and Schedule

The work is expected to be carried out immediately after contracting, mainly in March (see details under reporting below).

The timeframe for the evaluation is estimated to 4 weeks:

- Desk study/preparation: 7 days
- Interviews with ILEIA staff & board and other key informants (involves traveling to the Netherlands): 5 days
- Reporting & debriefing: 8 days

Total nr of days: 20 days

7. Reporting

The evaluation report shall be written in English and should not exceed 25 pages, excluding annexes. Format and outline of the report shall follow the guidelines in *Sida Evaluation Report – a Standardized Format* (see Annex 1). The draft report shall be submitted to Sida electronically no later than 31 March 2008. Sida and ILEIA should submit comments on the draft report no later than the 14 April 2008. Within 1 week after receiving Sida's comments on the draft report, a final version shall be submitted to Sida electronically and in 3 hardcopies. The evaluation report must be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing. Subject to decision by Sida, the report will be published in the series Sida Evaluations.

The evaluation assignment includes the completion of *Sida Evaluations Data Work Sheet* (Annex 2), including an *Evaluation Abstract* (final section, G) as defined and required by DAC. The completed Data Worksheet shall be submitted to Sida along with the final version of the report. Failing a completed Data Worksheet, the report cannot be processed.

8. Qualification of the Evaluator

The evaluator shall be an international consultant with comprehensive experience of LEISA and be familiar with agricultural knowledge systems thinking. The evaluator should not have been involved or linked with the implementation of the evaluated project.

In addition, the evaluator shall have demonstrable competence in the following areas:

- Natural resources management
- Information exchange
- Project evaluation and analysis

The evaluator has the overall responsibility for the evaluation and the report.

Resource Materials

ILEIA: Final Report TMF Phase 2003–2006. June 2007

ILEIA Strategic Plan and Programme 2007–2010. April 2006.

ILEIA Work Plan 2008.

ILEIA Monitoring Protocol 2007–2010.

ILEIA Progress reports 2005–2007.

LEISA Magazines (global and regional editions).

Who needs Information? A Study on the Use and Impact of the LEISA magazine in Ethiopia. ILEIA, 2001.

ECDPM (2003) Strategic Assessment ILEIA Building Bridges.

Rizopoulos, M. (2007) Readers Survey 2007. ILEIA, The Netherlands (draft).

Learning to Value LEISA: Experiences in Global Knowledge Networking for Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture. Paper Presented at Farmer First Revisited Workshop, 11–14 December 2007, IDS, Sussex (draft).

Annex 5 Methodology

The evaluation was carried in accordance with the suggestions made in the ToR:

The evaluation shall be carried out through (1) analysis of program documents and other relevant documents and (2) interviews with key informants who can be considered stakeholders in the global LEISA scene (for example ILEIA staff, board members, DGIS representatives, selected readers, authors, experts in the field of LEISA).

The evaluator may consider other methods for the evaluation. Such should be spelled out in detail in the tender documents.

The evaluation shall be carried out based on a gender perspective, i.e. analyses made and findings presented shall consider both involvement of women as well as men and the impact and consequences for women and men and their respective roles and responsibilities.

Annex 6 Organisations and People Met

Agriculture Support Programme (ASP), Zambia	Mr. R.Shula
Agricord	Mr. I. Coussement
CGIAR	did not return calls
DGIS	Dr. F. van der Wal
FAO	did not return calls
FAO, Mrs. Scialabba	did not respond to e-mail
ILEIA	All staffs
ILEIA	Dr. P.Engel (Board member)
International Cooperative Alliance	Mr. J-E Imbsen
Kenya National Federation of Agricultural Producers (KENFAP)	Mr. Zyambo
Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Zambia	Mr. R. Kamona
Neuchatel Initative	Mrs. A. Blum
Sida	Mrs. A. Ingevall
Southern Africa Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU)	Mr. I. Sunga
Swedish Cooperative Centre	Mr. G. Johansson
Swedish embassy, Nairobi	Mr J. Kiara
Swedish embassy,Luska	Mr. P. de-Figueiredo
Zambia National Farmers' Union (ZNFU)	Mr. J. Mutunga

Annex 7 Documents Consulted

Bedömningpromemoria. Sida April, 2005.
Documentation in Practice. LEISA India Consortium Programme on Documentation and Communication, June 2007.
ECDPM (2003) Strategic Assessment ILEIA Building Bridges.
Farming Matters Series. Concept Note, March 2008. Draft.
ILEIA assessment and Strategic study 2002.
ILEIA Monitoring Protocol 2007–2010.
ILEIA Programme Proposal 2005–2008.
ILEIA Progress reports 2005–2007.
ILEIA Strategic Plan and Programme 2007–2010. April 2006.
ILEIA Work Plan 2008.
ILEIA: Final Report TMF Phase 2003–2006. June 2007.
Influencing policy for smallholder agriculture. Possible role of ILEIA. March 2008. Very first draft.
Learning from Experience. A manual for organising, analysing and documenting field based information. Chavez-Tafur et al. March 2007.
Learning to Value LEISA: Experiences in Global Knowledge Networking for Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture.
Paper presented at Farmer First Revisited Workshop. December 2007, IDS, Sussex (draft).
LEISA Enthusiasts Meet. Building possible 'Alliances'. LEISA India, January 2008.
LEISA Magazine (global edition), random selection of issues 2005–2007.
Readers Survey. Rizopoulos, M, 2007 (draft).
Who needs Information? A Study on the Use and Impact of the LEISA Magazine in Ethiopia. ILEIA, 2001.

Recent Sida Evaluations

2008:07 Sida's support to Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) for development

Alan Greenberg
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation

2008:08 Capacity Building for Decentralisation and Local Self-Governance, phase II, Mongolia, 2001–2004

Staffan Engblom, Nicklas Svensson, Peter Westermark
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation

2008:09 African Universities Responding to HIV/AIDS

Daniel K. B. Inkoom
Department for Africa

2008:10 Sida Funded Initiatives Targeted at Gender Equality in Georgia

Gabriella Byron, Ruth Jacobson, Nino Saakashvili
Department for Europe

2008:11 External Analysis of Forum Syd's Country Programs in Central America

Pierre Frühling, Francesca Jessup
Department for Latin America

2008:12 Financial Management Cooperation Project in the Eastern Cape Provincial Administration through Support from the Swedish National Financial Management Authority (ESV)

Chris Albertyn
Department for Africa

2008:13 Policy Guidance and Results Management of Sida's Education Support

Henny Andersen, Steve Packer, Michael Ratcliffe
Department for Evaluation in collaboration with Department for Democracy and Social Development

**2008:14 Challenges when Shaping Capabilities for Research
Swedish Support to Bilateral Research Cooperation with Sri Lanka and Vietnam, 1976–2006, and a Look Ahead**

Jan Annerstedt, Shantha Livanage
Department for Research Cooperation

**2008:15 Sida's Support to the Eastern and Southern African Regional Office of UNICEF
Mainstreaming a Rights Based Approach to Safeguard the Rights of Children Orphaned by HIV/AIDS.**

Robert N. Sinclair, Nishu Aggarwal
Department for Africa

2008:16 Regional Air Pollution in Developing Countries (RAPIDC) 1998–2007

John Magne Skjelvik, Haakon Vennemo
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation

**2008:17 Outcome Mapping Evaluation of Six Civil Society Projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Summary Report**

Steve Powell, Ivona Čelebičić, Esad Bratović, Ajla Šišić
Department for Europe

Sida Evaluations may be ordered from:

Infocenter, Sida
SE-105 25 Stockholm
Phone: +46 (0)8 779 96 50
Fax: +46 (0)8 779 96 10
sida@sida.se

**A complete backlist of earlier evaluation reports
may be ordered from:**

Sida, UTV, SE-105 25 Stockholm
Phone: +46 (0) 8 698 51 63
Fax: +46 (0) 8 698 56 43
Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY
SE-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Fax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64
E-mail: sida@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>