Challenges:

Improving the sustainability and profitability of grain production

Actions:

Facilitate a farmer-centred CA Innovation System

Outcomes:

Increased innovation capacity and sustainability

A FARMER-CENTERED INNOVATION SYSTEMS APPROACH TO STIMULATE ADOPTION OF CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Education and Training

The Grain SA-FIP prioritises the training of key stakeholders actively involved in the on-farm CA Innovation System, since recent experiences have shown that there is a dire capacity need in those 'occupations' that we depend on to mainstream CA in SA. The two actors or occupations intimately involved are *farmers and extension officers.*

Awareness

To initiate and advocate the innovation process, various types of awareness activities are applied.

Access to Info

A clear and 'pure' description of successful CA farming systems practiced in specific areas or agro-ecological zones in the form of a 'living manual'.

Direct, fairly simple and competitive access to funds

Farmer-centred Innovation System

Driven by *innovation platforms* and *social learning* and aiming to mainstream Conservation Agriculture by grain producers to ensure sustainable use and management of natural resources while enhancing national and household food security and income.

Incentive and Market Based Mechanisms

The vision of the CA-FIP is to support initiatives to develop, test, replicate and scale-up innovative IMBMs, such as carbon tax funds, REDD Plus, carbon trading, payment for ecosystem services, offset agreements, and watershed service agreements, which leverage resources for the conservation or improvement of ecosystems services.

On-farm Research

The emphasis is on *on-farm*, *farmer-led research* and the inescapable experiential and social learning that this generates; both of which critically place the *farmer in the central role*.

Farmers are lead or equal partners in identifying research needs, as well as designing, implementing and evaluating experiments; it gives farmers independence, ownership and capacity.

Minimal mechanical soil disturbance

Permanent organic soil cover

Crop diversification