

**SIANI**

Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative

siani.se

Summary Report From the SIANI Annual Meeting 2014: Networking in a New Phase



Over 60 people connected to agriculture, food security and sustainable development gathered in Stockholm on the 21st of January 2014 for the first SIANI Annual Members Meeting. This forum is organized by the SIANI secretariat to facilitate a broad discussion of the future development of the SIANI network in its new strategic phase. This report aims to provide a synthesis of the input given from the participants in the Round Table Dialogues and an overview of the issues raised at the full day event.¹

NETWORKING IN A NEW PHASE

As part of a new strategic phase the SIANI Secretariat has been able to implement an idea that surfaced already in the inception phase; that of an annual members meeting to facilitate the interchange on perspectives and ideas on how the SIANI network can grow and achieve more.

In addition to giving the participants a chance to give input to the forthcoming work plan, the meeting, also broadcasted online, created a forum for networking and knowledge-exchange among members discussing important and emerging issues.

Interactive 'Round Table Dialogues' with all participants were interspersed with presentations from the SIANI secretariat and members who shared insights from their diverse sectors (Civil Society, Private Sector, Academia etc.) which related to ongoing global issues linked to food security and nutrition. According to the feedback survey it was a rewarding and

¹ Although impossible to cover all the valuable points raised, this report strives to cover the major themes. However, all ideas have been collected and taken into consideration.

WHAT IS SIANI?

Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative (SIANI) brings together experts in agriculture, forestry, nutrition and related fields to advance knowledge and support effective development interventions focused on sustainable agricultural production. Agriculture is a major source of livelihoods and the basis of food production around the world. With the Swedish government recognizing the importance of these questions, SIANI was founded in 2008 by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and has been hosted since its inception at the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI).

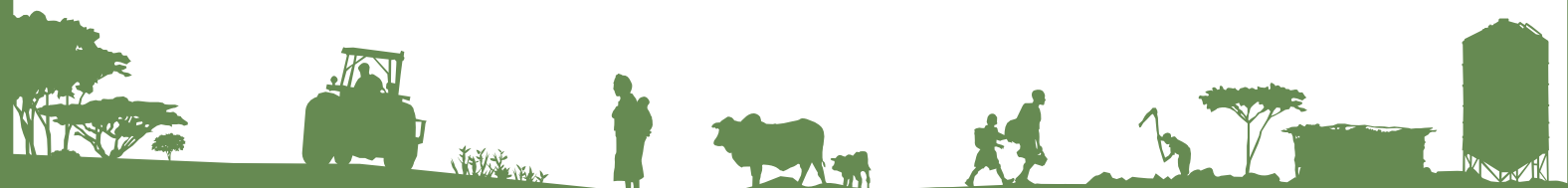
Since its inception, SIANI has organized expert meetings, workshops and seminars; built a library of print and digital resources on agriculture, food security and nutrition – including numerous original publications – and facilitated collaborations amongst Swedish experts and colleagues around the world.

Being an independent member-network with a multi-sectoral approach, SIANI strives to provide an informed debate on agriculture, food security and development. The number of members has grown extensively since 2008 and today reaches more than 870 members with a wide range of skills and expertise from academia, government, private sector and NGOs.

positive experience for all participants, with 96% of the respondents rating it as an excellent event.

ENTERING SIANI PHASE TWO WITH RENEWED SUPPORT

Sida Programme Officer Hanna Marsk opened the meeting by emphasizing the relevance of SIANI's focus in a world where over 1.2 million people live in poverty, lack access



to fresh water, electricity and food. Sida has been working with Food Security related issues for many years, but since the global food crisis of 2007-2008, the concept as such has become clearer and has gained much more attention globally. The most obvious signal to Sida reinforcing this mandate was last year's 200 MSEK allocation from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to a new Food Security initiative. And as a result of that, food security has become more and more mainstreamed into the agency's mandate. When it comes to nutrition, the issue is currently perhaps most incorporated into Sida's humanitarian work. However, Hanna Marsk was hoping to see that Sida in the future would take a more holistic approach even here. In regards to these issues, it's becoming more important to seek cooperation, reflect on the added value organizations can bring and work together more strategically, not least in relation to trends of official development aid playing a minor part in the financial flows going to countries in the south. Here SIANI, with its multisector stakeholders, has a crucial role to play.

Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), has been designated by Sida to host the SIANI secretariat since 2008. The Stockholm Centre Director, Jakob Granit, expressed his appreciation for the positive development of SIANI and assured its continued importance to SEI given that the new phase will be relevant to the work that SEI does. With the SEI focus on creating sustainable livelihoods and sustaining the ecosystem functions that underpin these livelihoods, it is important to reach out to people in the south. The SIANI network plays an important role here, by creating an established network around agricultural and nutrition systems, which hopefully can lead to more action oriented research in the area of food security.

NEW WAYS OF WORKING

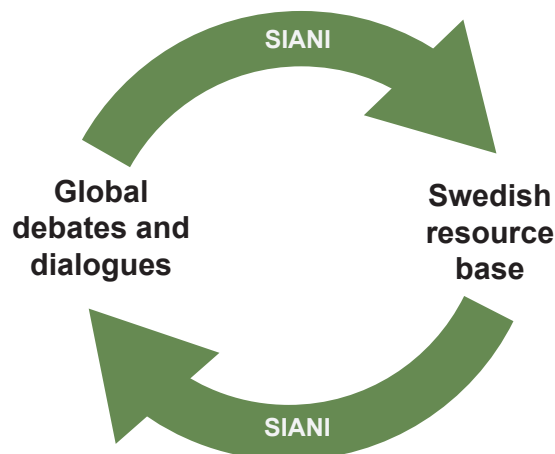
As a result of Secretariat collaboration with Sida and the SIANI Steering Committee, a clear vision and mission for the second phase of the SIANI initiative has been developed. An overview of the new work phase, covering the period from September 2013 to August 2016, was presented by SIANI Communications Manager, Matthew Fielding.

Vision: Sustainable food security and nutrition for all.

Mission: Promote dialogue and collaboration on sustainable food security, with a focus on low income countries.

Aiming to be a link between the Swedish resource base and global debates and dialogues, SIANI brings expertise into, for example, Sustainable Development Goals discussions, to then bring new knowledge on global development back to Sweden. The new developments are then further spread and discussed at seminars and within the SIANI network. Further perspectives from the Swedish resource base are then taken back to the international platform to answer questions such as: how and where can Sweden contribute to this new

development, and with what knowledge? Once again, new insights, ideas and feedback are brought back to Sweden, creating a reinforcing feedback loop.



A new operational structure for this process has been developed for the new phase. This consists of three areas which have either been re-structured or added new into SIANI Phase II:

1. Expert groups
2. Themes
3. Participation

Expert groups, although focused on a specific topic, require a broad participation across the sectors. Expert groups have been used before within the SIANI network, however, the new phase will include five new ones to be run for 12 months. The SIANI Steering Committee will decide on which five new Expert Groups will be approved for 2014/15.

Themes have been developed based on existing pools of knowledge within the Swedish resource base. Themes will focus on a clearly defined issue and it will be the responsibility of the theme host and the SIANI secretariat to collate and communicate the knowledge from these sources. In January 2014 the two themes were:

1. Sustainable agriculture production and food security, together with SLU Global.
2. Forests, landscapes and food security, together with Focali.

Participation was also mentioned as a key factor for the new phase. Whilst existing participation has been excellent with the network, there is a drive to engage with members outside of the Stockholm/Uppsala region, and to look at how we engage with members of the Swedish resource base overseas. It was re-affirmed that the more members are able to communicate with the Secretariat the better the Secretariat can respond with appropriate information and opportunities.





MEMBERS IDEAS ON DEVELOPING SIANI COLLABORATIONS

In the first of two Round Table Dialogues, members were asked to give input and provide the Secretariat with their ideas about how collaboration within the SIANI network could be further improved. Some main ideas that emerged from the discussions were:

- **We need to develop more easily accessible platforms and forums for discussion and member interaction.** For collaboration, knowledge-sharing and new initiatives to take place within the network, members need to be more visible and easily accessible to each other. The SIANI secretariat could function more as a matchmaker, to link members together, both through further developed online functions but not least through arranging more interactive activities and meetings where members get to meet in person.
- **We need to ensure wide participation and representation within the network to secure a true multi-stakeholder dialogue among members.** Including different sectors in international policy dialogues requires an active multi-sector approach in

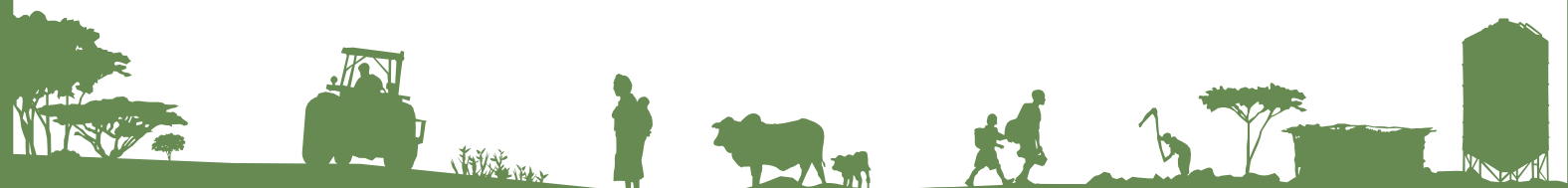
all activities, where a less academic profile could be beneficial in order to enlarge the network with more members, especially from private sector and practice, to make all members feel equally included.

- **We need to engage youth more actively in the network.** Creating a “Youth SIANI” could be a way to include students and younger expertise and perspectives, which would benefit the entire network.
- **We need to become even better at communicating with strategic actors and partners.** To stay relevant and influence strategic partners and investors ; short policy briefs and newsletters with “bite size” information are important not only for government ministries and investors, but also for network members who then can access relevant knowledge more easily and more regularly. In addition to better communicating content and issues, SIANI needs to better define who we are, what we do and what we want, and to strengthen both external and internal communication.
- **We need to make SIANI a global facilitator of change, with a wide geographical representation and collaboration.** Expanding the network geographically within Sweden, i.e. outside of Stockholm, through work and activities within expert groups and themes, is important for building wide-ranging knowledge and representation that will strengthen the voice of SIANI towards Swedish national actors as well as internationally. Being an international network, it is equally important to connect with local actors and partners in low income countries and to embrace a multi-level perspective, working from local to global levels.

Many discussions of activities, actors and communications, tended to focus mainly on structural rather than substantive issues. These discussions provided both members and the network management team with a better overview of expectations of SIANI and how the SIANI network could give members, as well as financiers and strategic actors, what they want to get out of SIANI. Several ideas presented and functions requested from the SIANI secretariat already exist, which can be seen as a strong support for the new work plan, confirming that SIANI is highly relevant and on track, while simultaneously indicating that these functions have to be better communicated.

NEW INPUT ON IMPORTANT AND EMERGING TOPICS

In a second workshop, participants were asked what topics and issues that they would like to explore further with other resource persons within the SIANI network. Many diverse ideas were suggested in the discussions, including important key concepts for SIANI, specific ones to be further



How would you build the SIANI network and collaboration, and how would you ensure members to get what they want from it?

Seven of the ideas voted “most important”:

- Provide short policy briefs and newsletters in “bite size” for Sida and policy makers to access relevant knowledge easier.
- Make SIANI a global change agent.
- Stimulate larger investments: Sida and Ministry for Foreign Affairs’ policies to bigger investments in agriculture development and new ITP-programs.
- Show who is a member more clearly.
- Organize forums (IT-based) for discussions.
- More active expansion of members through Themes, Expert Groups, and local activities outside of Stockholm.
- Engage students more actively in the network.

Seven of the ideas voted “most innovative”:

- Building up the network with national organizations with- in low income countries.
- Reach out to novel members from civil society, schools, NGO’s etc.
- A “live” newsletter (like an interactive conference).
- If taking a fee, SIANI loses marginal members.
- A list of expert speakers for our organizations to use.
- SIANI to serve as a “matchmaker” in this network.
- Innovative interactivity, creating new entry points for members.

problematised from different angles and perspectives but also some innovative combinations of topics as well as some new and emerging topics.

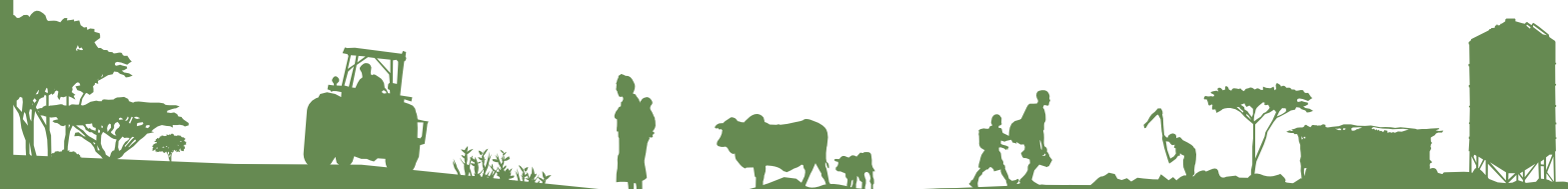
Some of the most important and innovative ideas suggested and voted on by the participants include:

- Sustainable Development Goals (the post 2015 agenda).
- Soil management.
- Effects of so called “right pricing” of ecosystem services.
- The interface between agriculture and forestry, e.g. institutional issues.
- Bioenergy.
- Cattle and climate.
- EU food and agriculture policy.
- Developing business and industries from African agriculture.
- Agriculture and urban growth - policies for transition.
- Professional development courses on system thinking – inter-disciplinary.
- The role of higher agriculture education and research.
- Landscapes and ecosystem services - landscape trade-offs (and synergies) and restoration.

- Livestock research and animal producer use, value chain approach.
- Promoting fair trade and ecological farming concept to benefit farmers and consumers.

In the discussions, some themes surrounding the following key reflections also emerged:

- **SIANI as a leading actor and knowledge resource for Food Security and Nutrition.** The SIANI key concepts food security and nutrition security should be defined in a SIANI context, and become familiar to all members and partners for more strategic positioning in dialogues. With further profiling in these questions, the Swedish government should be able to use SIANI in relation to high-level discussions on food security and nutrition.
- **It’s important to work with new and burning issues.** To stay relevant, both to SIANI members and external actors, it is important to keep up to date with topics and issues that are important and emerging. The Sustainable Development Goals, the concept of Ecosystem Services and what effects that including the “right pricing” could have, as well as transformations in land use and management, for example in relation to generational shifts and entrepreneurship, were some ideas mentioned in this context.
- **Cross-sectoral learning and knowledge bridging methods and activities.** Members discussed how to look at food security across sectors, disciplines, scales and levels (local – global) within SIANI, by focusing on how Food Security connects to other topics such as sustainable development. It could be beneficial for members to build better knowledge in methods and approaches that can facilitate multi-perspectives approach in all SIANI discussions. Cross-sectoral learning, as a work method for knowledge exchange for change, could be a topic in itself, to help connect different knowledge systems better, both within SIANI, but also to better link for example indigenous – local agriculture knowledge with other knowledge systems.
- **Policy relevant, innovation and transformation focused topics.** To be able to move towards the SIANI vision and mission, topics that are relevant and applicable to policy-makers, policy institutions and other change-agents are key. SIANI could connect local innovation and alternative development strategies through bottom up involvement, to engage more successfully in supporting policies for transition in international dialogues. The role of entrepreneurship related to the generation shift in farming, and the agriculture – urban growth development were among the suggested shift- focusing topics.





INSIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE NETWORKS' SECTORS

SIANI's multi-sector approach builds upon an active sharing of knowledge and perspectives. At the meeting, various members from the different sectors represented within the SIANI network, shared insights from their work and its relation to the SIANI vision of *"Food Security and Nutrition for all"*.

Academia:

Professor Magnus Jirstrom from Lund University, informed the participants about the African – Swedish research network, Afrint, which does primary research looking into the intensification of staple crop production in nine African countries. The network began as an effort to explain the yield gap: why the per capita production of food in Africa was going down, while at the same time increasing in Asia. One of the first key results was that a deep political and economic crises were main reasons behind the African food crisis. The study then turned to focus on the potential shown in small holder farming where there were farmers in the study regions that kept up with the average world yield. By repeatedly visiting the same villages and households, studies were able to show changes over time. In a second phase, income data was added. The yield gap for all cereals persisted over time, as did the technology. Results indicated however that while farm sizes were decreasing production was increasing. The main driver of increased production, especially in the case of maize, was marketing. The network is as careful to report back the results to collaborating partner universities around the world as it is reporting back the results to the local farmers.

Private sector:

Katarina Eriksson, Senior Project & Partnership Development Manager at Tetra Laval Food for Development Office, explained how school milk, and agriculture development are linked together and how smallholder farmers can be part of a formal value chain. This was exemplified by the school feeding programmes, developed in collaboration with governments to increase the demand for locally produced milk, driving development both in agriculture and in the private sector in low income countries. The projects, providing school children with milk, also impact health and education by reducing malnutrition while also encouraging children to go to school. By using milk produced by local smallholder farmers, the purpose is also to create an integrated value chain, breaking a pattern of two parallel value chains with smallholder farmers selling unprocessed milk directly to consumers and with the large-scale dairy industry preferring to buy from big farms. School milk programmes also generate jobs - for example 250 000 in Thailand. These projects depend on partners and networks like SIANI, providing a good platform for knowledge.

FUTURE PROCESS

The intention is that by hosting this meeting annually the secretariat will be able to formally consult a representative group of members to obtain feedback and suggestions on current and future work plans. Improved communications between the secretariat and members is key for leveraging the right outputs, and the right opportunities that directly impact work within the Swedish resource base. The outputs from this meeting in 2014 will inform the next Secretariat Work Plan and facilitate greater collaboration and participation in relevant work areas.



NGO:

Anders Ölund, Policy Advisor at the Church of Sweden, represented Civil Society and presented an overview regarding the Swedish church's international work related to food security and agriculture in low income countries. This overview, covered a wide range of diverse projects dealing with water, forest, land, energy, and air. The church's engagement has often started as a reaction to crisis, for example in the Horn of Africa and West Africa, often emerging from natural disasters such as droughts or floods. The inter-linkages between conflicts and the availability of food are complex. Access to water (from irrigation structures, dams and gravity pipelines) is important in order to improve food security. The church has supported the construction of a large number of such systems in dry areas in countries such as Zimbabwe, Eritrea and Ethiopia over the past 20 years. Policy briefs and seminars are also produced by the church.



THE ROLE OF NETWORKS IN GLOBAL POLICY PROCESSES - THE POST 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Annika Söder, the Executive Director of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and former Under-Secretary-General at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), shared her reflections and insights on Food Security, Nutrition Security and the role of networks in the ongoing process with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). In September 2015, the 193 United Nation member states will hopefully be able to decide on new universal goals to succeed the Millennium Development Goals.

Networks such as SIANI can help to influence and shape the process of the post 2015 agenda. If able to make a strong case, networks can be very credible actors in a policy process such as the SDG formulation. However, one of the challenges for SIANI is that the field the network represents is very broad. If we are to influence the SDG agenda then we have to influence a number of goals as food and agriculture is really about everything, according to Annika Söder.

Millennium Development Goals consist of eight goals, with the first one focusing on food, including a component on hunger. However, there are many valid goals to be considered, besides food security. There is stiff competition over resources and interest among the different potential goals and the ongoing negotiation process for the new goals is equally competitive. The issue of developed versus developing countries is a central challenge, but the main concern may not be defining new goals but to find a balance in how to implement goals and distribute resources for implementation, said Annika Söder.

SIANI Program Manager Madeleine Fogde, stressed that hunger is one of the most pressing issues that the world is facing and that, in the complex global food system, hunger and food security are also linked to all kinds of crises. The Sustainable Development Goals process is moving us towards new universal targets for all, and will hopefully be able to incorporate that complexity.

"SIANI's role is to link up local policy with global dialogues and to make Swedish resources visible in the larger context. Today's remarkable possibilities to communicate, also directly with school children and farmers all around the world, leaves us with a huge potential to improve the situation", said Madeleine Fogde and encouraged all members to share their knowledge and experience through multiple channels accessible via SIANI.

WELCOME WITH YOUR IDEAS AND INPUT

Presentations and videos from the event as well as policy briefs, member pages etc. are available at www.siani.se.

Did we miss anything, in your view? Or do you have other ideas that you want to share with the SIANI secretariat or with other members? We welcome your feedback, both on a global level, and in the Swedish context in particular.

Further comments and questions should be directed to the SIANI Secretariat. Please contact:

Matthew Fielding, SIANI Communications Manager,
matthew.fielding@sei-international.org.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all the members who participated in the meeting for joining the discussions and for all the valuable ideas that were shared. We are particularly grateful to our speakers; we hope the seminar will result in new and innovative partnerships.



Appendix 1: Participants list

Last Name	First Name	Organization
Bauner	David	Renetech AB
Benzie	Magnus	Stockholm Environment Institute
Bessonova	Ekaterina	SIANI
Celander	Thorsten	Swedish Forest Agency
Dzebo	Adis	Stockholm Environment Institute
EHRENPREIS	DAG	NAI
Ekenger	Mats	Fi
Eliasson	Peter	Lund University, Physical Geography and Ecosystem Science
Eriksson	Katarina	Tetra Laval Food for Development Office
Fielding	Matthew	SIANI
Fogde	Madeleine	SEI
Fones Sundell	Melinda	SIANI
Fredriksson	Roland	Stockholm University
Frid	Göte	Swedish Board of Agriculture
Gerremo	Inge	Agrigo
Goffner	Deborah	CNRS (French National Research Agency)
Granit	Jakob	SEI
Granlund	Anders	Sida
Gustavsson	Björn	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Hjälsten	Marika	SEI/SIANI
Härlin	Kjell	SU
Höök	Karin	Naturskyddsföreningen
Ingemarson	Fredrik	SIFI
Jirström	Magnus	Lund University
Johansson	Maud	Forum Syd
Johansson	Karl-Erik	SLU
John	Adam	Institute of Agricultural and Food Policy Studies
Jones	Mike	CBM
Jürisoo	Marie	Stockholm Environment Institute
Jönsson	Håkan	SLU
Khan	Babar	MGPO
Larsson	Maria	Afrikagrupperna
Malmer	Anders	SLU Global
Malmer	Pernilla	SwedBio at Stockholm Resilience Centre
Mane	Fatou	Takkou Liggey
Marsk	Hanna	Sida



Mastroianni	Kristina	NIRAS
Nordquist	Niklas	Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet / SLU Global
Nordström	Anna	Ecoloop
Ochieng	Caroline	Stockholm environment institute
Osbyer	Kristina	SLU
Porsani jarkvist	Juliana	Södertörn University
Ran	Ylva	SEI
Rönn Jensen	Isabelle	Sida
Salomonsson	Lennart	SLU Global
Schaefer	Marcus	Rainforest Alliance
Shoaib	Mohammad	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences Uppsala
Sundin	Anneli	The Beijer Institute
Söder	Annika	The Dag Hammarskiöld Foundation
Tidåker	Pernilla	JTI - Swedish Institute of Agricultural and Environmental Engineering
Uggla	Arvid	SLU
Walsh	Tom	Renetech AB
von Walter	Susanne	SLU
Åberg	Mathilda	Ministry for Rural Affairs
Ölund	Maria	Focali / GMV
Ölund	Anders	Church of Sweden

Key to color codes

Academia

Private sector

NGO

Government organisation

Meeting facilitators



SIANI's mission is to enable sustainable food security and nutrition for all. SIANI is a member-based network that supports and promotes Swedish expertise and provides an open and interactive platform for engagement and dialogue in a global context.



SIANI

Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative





How Can We Develop and Sustain our Network Collaboration?

ETHOS There is no such thing as an **EXPERT**
STATEMENT: We **COLLABORATE** to **LEARN**



BRANCH OUT to members **OUTSIDE** of **ACADEMIA**
especially to **CIVIL SOCIETY** and the **PRIVATE SECTOR**
- **make it less academic**



SHARE KNOWLEDGE on platforms like **FACEBOOK**
where members can choose to be **PASSIVE** or **ACTIVE**



Communicate on the **WEBSITE** and/or through **NEWSLETTERS:**
(**MEMBER UPDATES** on new postings, new projects new alliances etc.)



BUILDING UP the network
with **NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS** within **low** income countries



Ask all **SIANI members** to **SUBMIT** their **TOP 3 INTERESTS** in agriculture



Provide **SHORT POLICY BRIEFS "BITE SIZE"** and **NEWSLETTERS** in **SIZE"**
for Sida and policy makers to access **relevant knowledge** more easily



Create **MECHANISMS** for **INTERACTION**
between **SIANI Groups, Sida** and the **Ministry for Foreign Affairs**



CREATE TRAINING for the different **STAKEHOLDER SECTORS** (mixed) in collaboration with partners





What Future Work Topics Should be Raised in the SIANI Network?

**PLANETARY
BOUNDARIES** 
for **PRODUCTION**

PARTICIPATE 
in/initiate **DIALOGUE**
about **Sustainable
Development Goals**
(the post 2015 agenda)

Methods to

**MEASURE
SUSTAINABILITY**
(resilience assessment,
LCA, ecosystem services,
spider webs etc.)

Try to **CONNECT**
different aspects of
the **complex concept**

**"FOOD
SECURITY"** 
with **connection**
to **sectors**
of **production**

NUTRITION information to
SCHOOL CHILDREN 
and others about the importance
of a **GOOD DIET** and **recipes**

CROSS-LEARNING:


a work method for
**KNOWLEDGE
EXCHANGE** for
CHANGE

 Effects of
so-called
**"JUST
PRICING"**
of **ECOSYSTEM
SERVICES**

 **RURAL
and LOCAL**
agro-processing hubs