



GFAR – DURAS Roundtable Discussion on Competitive Grants

Saturday, 03 December 2005
09:00 – 12:00
Salle Karam 5, Lower Level
Palais des Congrès, Marrakech

Introduction

A now commonly used mechanism for funding agricultural research is the Competitive Grants Scheme (CGS). This tool, which has become increasingly popular since the early 1990s has been used to develop, ensure and sustain scientific capacity and to allocate resources to the most important scientific (and development) issues. While a number of such CGS have emerged over the years, the long gestation nature of agricultural and related research makes it difficult to draw conclusions about its efficiency and effectiveness for improving research relevance, effects on national capacity building, and sustainability of research infrastructure (Bie and Elliott, 2005).

It would be useful to learn of the emerging outcomes, if not impacts, of the various CGS currently being implemented as these would provide useful insights in the design and implementation of future CGS. It is in this context that the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), through its Project DURAS (Promotion of Sustainable Development in Agricultural Research System in the South), is organizing this Roundtable Discussion on Competitive Grants.

Objectives

This Roundtable Discussion will focus on the role CGS as a tool for leveraging partnerships as well as for building scientific and institutional capacities. It will also touch on the extent to which CGS contributes to improving research relevance and the post CGS funding scenario with regard to sustainability of research activities. Among the questions that will be tackled include :

- *How are research focus of CGS determined, and do they always respond to stakeholder priorities?*
- *What types of accompanying measures can be put in place to ensure that CGS funds reach the groups that need funding the most?*
- *How effective are CGS in achieving a balance between ensuring adequate capacities to do research (supply side) and mobilizing that capacity in the desired directions (demand side)?*
- *Given the usual short duration of CGS is there any evidence of impact on national research capacities, and how can this be measured?*
- *Is the CGS an appropriate tool for promoting partnerships, and would such partnerships be long lasting and sustainable?*

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DRAFT PROGRAMME

09:00 – 09:05	Opening Remarks Mohammad Roozitalab, GFAR Chair
09:05 – 09:10	Roundtable Objectives and Introduction of Roundtable Discussants Ola Smith, GFAR Executive Secretary
09:10 – 09:20	<i>Setting the Scene:</i> Highlights of the GFAR-Duras Electronic Discussion on Competitive Grants Scheme Oliver Oliveros, DURAS Project Coordinator
09:20 – 09:30	Quick Reactions from the Panel Discussants/Speakers <i>Presentation from the Panelists/Speakers (Part 1)</i>
09:30 – 09:45	CGS: Donor Perspective <i>Dr. Jeff Hill</i> <i>Advisor, Ag Tech Development, USAID</i>
09:45 – 10:00	Programme-level CGS: The Case of the Generation Challenge Programme (GCP) <i>Dr. Carmen de Vicente</i> <i>SubProgram Leader, GCP Capacity building and enabling delivery</i>
10:00 – 11:30	Open Discussion
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee Break <i>Presentation from the Panelists/Speakers (Part 2)</i>
10:45 – 11:00	FONTAGRO: Regional level Competitive Grants Mechanism <i>Dr. Nicolas Mateo</i> <i>FONTAGRO Executive Secretary</i>
11:00 – 11:15	ASARECA: Implementing CGS at the sub-regional level <i>Dr. Clesensio Tizikara</i> <i>ASARECA CGS Manager</i>
11:15 – 11:30	CGS Recipient Perspective: Experience from the DURAS CGS <i>Dr. Merida Roets</i> Collaborator of DURAS-supported project
11:30 – 12:00	Open discussion Conclusion/Wrap-up