



NEWSLETTER

GLOBAL FORUM ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (GFAR)

c/o FAO, viale delle Terme di Caracalla, Rome 00100, Italy

GFAR

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Issue 1/2001



EDITORIAL

Just before Christmas 2000, we have circulated the Issue N°0 of this Newsletter. The comments we have received so far are encouraging and sufficient to motivate the staff of the Secretariat to prepare this Issue N°1. Here it is!

We believe that this Newsletter can be greatly improved and we would like to reiterate our request for inputs from you so that we can provide more practical and comprehensive information. The format and the headings can also be easily changed if you believe it would improve the usefulness of this communication media.

When reading it, keep in mind that this Newsletter is your Newsletter. Please do not hesitate to send any comments or suggestions to: GFAR-Secretariat@fao.org.

A GFAR INITIATIVE ON UNDER-UTILIZED AND ORPHAN COMMODITIES (UOC)

On 22 January 2001, the GFAR Secretariat called an informal brainstorming session between a few representatives of FAO, ICUC and IPGRI who were joined by a representative from Germany and one from IFAD, considering their vested interest and commitment to support activities on this topic.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Review progress made by the different institutions in the field of UOC since the Dresden Conference of May 2000.
- Further develop the concept of what could be a "global facilitation mechanism" for UOC.
- Explore how best to start operationalizing such a mechanism and decide on preliminary steps to be taken.

Thanks to the support of FAO-AGP, the group discussions were facilitated by Prof. Vernon Heywood from the University of Reading.

The participants agreed on the need to identify a few concrete activities in order to demonstrate the added value of joining forces in the field of UOCs. A short-term plan of action was approved for immediate implementation. Germany kindly offered to host a second meeting in early July 2001 to review progress made and, if positive, to formally establish a "global facilitation mechanism for UOCs".

GFAR - TAC COLLABORATION ON REGIONAL PRIORITY SETTING

Following the decision taken by the CGIAR at ICW-2000 to take into consideration regional priorities as an input in its strategic planning process, the GFAR and TAC Secretariats have strengthened their collaboration and develop a very constructive dialogue with the different regional fora. A "Compilation of ideas on the regional approach to research planning and implementation" has been prepared jointly and distributed to the regional fora.



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For further information and requests of documents please send a message to GFAR-Secretariat@fao.org or visit our website at www.eqfar.org.



GFAR AND FAO JOIN FORCES TO STRENGTHEN POST-HARVEST SECTOR

The Agro-Industries and Post-Harvest Management Service of FAO (FAO/AGSI) has decided to launch a global initiative entitled: "From Quantity to Quality". The first phase of this programme is to "develop a global perspective of the post-harvest sector through the planning and implementation of five co-ordinated technical regional workshops".

This program has been designed with the active participation of the GFAR Secretariat and the five GFAR Regional Fora will be very instrumental in executing this phase which will end by the formulation of a regional strategy and a concrete regional plan of action for the post-harvest sector. These regional results will also serve as background documents for the second phase of the programme, allowing to build a global initiative which really meets the needs and is owned by the users.

For further information and requests of documents please contact GFAR-Secretariat@fao.org; Francois.Mazaud@fao.org or Rosa.Rolle@fao.org.

AN ITALIAN INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE RURAL INNOVATION



In November 2000, an international seminar was organized by the Istituto Agronomico per l'Oltremare (IAO), in Florence, Italy, to capitalize on the experience of the RESECA (i.e. Network for the Agro-Industrial Development of Peasant Economies) project presented at GFAR-2000 in May 2000.

Since then, IAO took the initiative, in collaboration with other Italian institutions and the government of the Tuscany region, to develop a 3-year project proposal called "P.I.S.A" (Paradigm for Innovative Solutions for Agroindustries) aiming at the establishment of an International Pole for the Promotion of Rural Innovation for Development.

GFAR Meetings

The GFAR Secretariat is organizing the next GFAR meetings which will take place in Durban, South Africa, from 19 to 23 May 2001, prior and during the CGIAR Medium Term Meetings.

BUILDING UP OF A MEDITERRANEAN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AREA

On 27 February 2001, at the request of some of its stakeholders, the GFAR Secretariat organized a consultation meeting to develop a common approach to agricultural research cooperation in the Mediterranean Basin. This consultation built mainly on the dialogue between EFARD, the European Forum, and AARINENA which took place over the last 18 months and on a more recent initiative taken by INRA, France and NAGREF, Greece. Regional and international organizations closely associated to these two initiatives were also invited to attend.



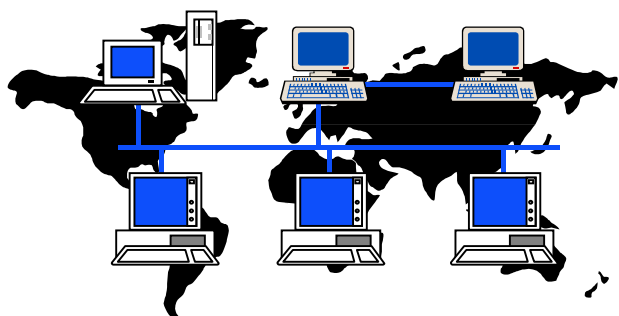
A consensus was reached by the participants on the need to create a Mediterranean Agricultural Research Area and, in order to launch it, a short-term plan of action was elaborated. The participants agreed to review progress made in November 2001 during the 2nd Mediterranean Conference on Agricultural Research Cooperation in Egypt.



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GLOBAL FORUM ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
FORUM MONDIAL DE LA RECHERCHE AGRICOLE
FORO GLOBAL DE INVESTIGACION AGROPECUARIA

5th GFAR Management Team Meeting

On 11-12 February 2001, the 5th GFAR Management Team meeting took place in New Delhi, India, under the leadership of the GFAR Chairman, Dr. R.S. Paroda. The team reviewed the main documents which will be discussed at the next GFAR meetings, in particular the Business Plan, the Secretariat Programme of Work and the revised GFAR Chart. The GFAR Financial situation and funding strategy was also discussed. Finally, the team carefully reviewed the progress made in the finalization of the institutional arrangements with FAO, the host of the GFAR Secretariat.



EMERGENCE OF A NEW EGFAR

In addition to the regular update of the site (www.egfar.org), two significant changes have occurred in EGFAR over the last couple of months: i) EMBRAPA launched on EGFAR, the first "NARS Forum" on funding agricultural research; ii) a NARS Database on Institutional Web Links (NDIL) is being built in close collaboration with the regional and sub-regional fora.

The GFAR Secretariat, in collaboration with FAO/WAICENT has also completed the formulation of a 2-year project proposal to further develop EGFAR so that it can better serve the ARD community. The proposal has been submitted to some members of the GFAR Donor Support Group for their consideration.

From the STAKEHOLDERS

REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL FORA

Asia-Pacific Region

APAARI is actively involved in implementing the recommendations of its 6th General Assembly, in particular in the field of ICT. Two sub-regions (South Asia and South-East Asia) are closely collaborating with the IARCs to plan regional priority setting meetings as part of the CGIAR Change process.

Central Asia & Caucasus Region

Significant efforts have been made by the CAC Forum to disseminate to its members the main GFAR documents in Russian. The CGIAR Facilitating Unit based in Uzbekistan is organizing for early June a Ministerial level meeting to reaffirm the priority given by the region to agricultural research. This event will be very important for the future of agricultural research in the region.

From the STAKEHOLDERS...

Latin America & Caribbean Region

In early February, FORAGRO and IICA organized in Costa Rica a brainstorming session with the IARCs to define a methodology for a regional approach in Latin America. This will be followed by three consultancies to prepare a large consultation on regional priority-setting which is scheduled for early May in Mexico. The GFAR Secretariat, in close collaboration with the TAC Secretariat, has provided some methodological inputs and has agreed to support one consultant.

In mid-February, FORAGRO organized a technical meeting involving its main partners in the field of ICT to further develop INFOTEC, the Regional Agricultural Information System for the LAC region.

Sub-Saharan Africa Region

In January 2001, WECARD/CORAF organized an Executive Committee meeting in Cape Verde, followed by a FARA-CGIAR consultation in Dakar, Senegal, on the IARCs integration process in West & Central Africa.

The ASARECA Committee of Directors organized a retreat to share views and develop a common vision of the medium-term future of agricultural research in the sub-region as well as at the continent and global level.

In early March the SADC Summit took the decision to restructure SADC institutions into four Directorates. One of them will deal with "Food Agriculture and Natural Resources" under which the coordination of agricultural research will continue. This will have direct implications for SACCAR which will no longer be a Sector Coordinating Unit.

Finally, the 2nd FARA/SPAAR joint plenary session took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the beginning of April. **During the meeting the three SROs officially signed the formal and legal establishment of FARA.** It was also agreed that the position of FARA Executive Secretary will be immediately advertised. The agreement with FAO to host the FARA Secretariat in the FAO regional bureau in Accra, Ghana, will also be rapidly finalized.

West Asia & North Africa Region

During this first trimester, AARINENA was deeply involved in the consultation meeting organized by the GFAR Secretariat to create a Mediterranean Agricultural Research Area (see GFAR activities).

With the assistance of FAO/WAICENT, ICARDA, IPGRI and GFAR, a new AARINENA Website has been designed and a plan of action to implement the regional information strategy has been elaborated for submission to regional donors.

From the STAKEHOLDERS

CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (CGIAR)

The Change Design and Management Team (CDMT) established in ICW-2000 has continued its consultations with the different stakeholders. The GFAR Secretariat was requested to widely distribute a penultimate version of the report to all GFAR stakeholders.

At the same time, the IARCs have been actively involved in the regional priority-setting process led by the regional fora and in developing a more "integrated" approach (both programmatic and administrative) of the different IARCs involved in the different regions. For further information, see www.cgiar.org

THE ADVANCED RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS (ARIs)

Europe

In early March, EIARD-InfoSys, the European information system for ARD, organized in Florence, Italy, a meeting of its "core group and associated partners". Significant improvements in the design of the website have been made. The main concern remains the mobilization of the national nodes in feeding the system.

At the end of March, EFARD, the European Forum for ARD, held a Steering Committee meeting in Rome, Italy. **Prof. L. Bianco**, President of the Italian Council for Research (CNR), was elected new EFARD Chairman and **Prof. E. Porceddu**, Vice-Chairman. The main topic on the agenda was the preparation of the 2nd European Forum Conference which is scheduled for 15-17 May 2002 in Rome.

Visit: http://www.dainet.de/european_forum/

North America

A very significant step has been taken over the last couple of months by Cornell University in developing a website for NAFAR, the North American Forum for Agricultural Research. The Canadian institutions have now been approached to seek for their contributions to the system.

For further information, contact Peter Trutmann, pt15@cornell.edu

THE NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs)

In the recent months, an interesting and promising move can be noted with an increased participation of the regional representatives of the NGO community in regional and sub-regional meetings.

At the same time, the NGOs have been actively involved, with the GFAR Secretariat, in the design of a consultation meeting to develop partnership in natural resource management and agro-ecology. This meeting will take place at the end of April and will also provide a good opportunity for the NGO community to further develop and strengthen its dialogue with FAO and IFAD.

THE FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS (FOs)

The IFAP representative to the GFAR Steering Committee, Dr. Leonardo Montemayor, has been appointed Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) in the Philippines. The GFAR Secretariat congratulates him for his appointment and look forward to pursue collaboration with him in his new function. IFAP has nominated Chebet Maikut who is President of the Uganda National Farmers Association (UNFA) to replace him in the Steering Committee.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Mr. Patrick Heffer, GFAR Steering Committee member, has visited the GFAR Secretariat in Rome to explore different options for strengthening the contribution of the private sector in GFAR activities. Some promising avenues have been identified. In addition, Mr. Heffer has also started to identify what could be the content of the EGFAR "industry" homepage and, in the coming months, much more information on this key GFAR stakeholder will be available through EGFAR.

THE DONOR COMMUNITY

IFAD has continued to play its active leading role of the GFAR Donor Support Group. The main challenge remains to develop a multi-year donor support considering the administrative constraints faced by most of the donors. Discussions were also initiated between IFAD, as the Chair of the GFAR-DSG, and FAO, as the host institution of the GFAR Secretariat, to formalize the host agreement.