

***Global Forum on Agricultural Research***

***Private Sector Proposed Plan of Action***

Beijing Meeting  
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# Private Sector Proposed Plan of Action

*A draft discussion paper prepared for review at the May 1999  
Beijing meeting of the GFAR Steering Committee*

## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to outline the proposed Plan of Action for the Private Sector constituency for the time period between the May 1999 Beijing meeting of the GFAR Steering Committee and the May GFAR 2000 meeting in Dresden, Germany. This is being proposed as a draft for discussion. Input is welcome from representatives of all of the other stakeholder groups.

### I. What is the rationale for Private Sector participation in the GFAR?

As key players in global Agricultural Research, the Private Sector participation in this effort can contribute toward establishment of a strong cooperative framework as a foundation for forging multi-lateral partnerships which will drive new technology in agriculture from lab bench to farmers fields more expeditiously.

From the Private Sector perspective, GFAR can:

- *Provide a platform* for establishing a long-term dialogue between the Private Sector and other constituencies (IARCs, NGOs, Farmers' Organizations, NARS, ARI's, and Donors) on critical issues in developing markets including:
  - ⇒ Use of Proprietary Technology
  - ⇒ Genetic Enhancement

Facilitation of these types of consultations between the various stakeholders would allow GFAR to make an invaluable contribution toward it's mission, "to mobilize the world scientific community in their efforts to alleviate poverty, increase food security, and promote the sustainable use of natural resources".

- *Strengthen the dialogue* between the public and private sectors to identify fields of common interest for clarification regarding potential complementary partnerships/opportunities.

- *Take advantage of synergies* to enhance overall research investment by both sectors.

The potential exists for organizing investment to increase overall added value. Exchange of learnings across sectors can assist in fostering more cost-effective management of scarce research dollars through technology transfer in multi-lateral arenas. This will assure that end-user needs are met in the most productive manner.

## II. What is the specific advantage of the Private Sector within the GFAR?

Private sector involvement in Ag Research represents a continuum from leading edge, advanced technologies to more traditional technology development. While there are already existing examples of successful partnerships in the more traditional research areas, the opportunity for the GFAR to play a key role as a neutral party, honest broker in the area of establishment of advanced technology partnerships in multi-lateral arenas is viewed as the more critical area of focus. It should be acknowledged that this the more controversial arena with fewer examples of existing successful partnerships.

The key advantages of Private Sector involvement include the following.

- ◇ Leadership of the public sector in some areas and the private sector in other areas allows for clear distinction to achieve complementarity.
- ◇ More efficient utilization of limited research funding can be achieved.
- ◇ Leveraging of intellectual assets of the Private Sector in areas of specific interest to the Public Sector is possible.
- ◇ Adaptation of technologies from Private Sector focus crops to crops of importance to the Public Sector where needs are not currently being addressed can evolve at a more rapid pace.

There are three key segments which should be explored further including *Main Domains of Research, Specific Crops, and Specific Markets*. Each of these segments are defined below.

- *Main domains of research* - Recognizes the differential in levels of investment and progress of the Private vs Public Sector in key research arenas. Within each of these arenas, specific segmentation of the research could be focused along lines of key technical and development competencies of the Private Sector vs the Public Sector. Key arenas for consideration would include the following.
  - ⇒ Biotechnology
  - ⇒ Genetic Improvement
  - ⇒ Environmental Friendly Technology

- *Specific Crops* - recognizes the difference in research focus along crop lines.
  - ⇒ The Private Sector tends to focus on large market crops and key high value cash crops within more developed markets.
  - ⇒ The Public Sector tends to focus on crops of strategic importance to a specific area, generally in less developed markets.
  
- *Specific Markets* - segmentation of crops within markets based on the level of development of the market ranging from *non-commercial* to *transitional* to *commercial*.
  - ⇒ Insect-resistant cassava would be of primary interest in the non-commercial segment while disease-resistant rice would be applicable and important in any of the three segments. It should be noted that these markets are constantly evolving and movement from non-commercial to transitional and transitional to commercial is a continuous, evolutionary process.
  - ⇒ This segmentation also allows for distinction between the needs of small holders vs commercial scale or large scale operations.

Note that the GFAR focus should be on the *non-commercial* and *transitional* segments whose needs are not currently being met by the Private Sector.

III. What are the constraints (i.e. difficulties to be overcome) and conditions (i.e. minimum pre-requisite) for partnerships between the Private/Public sector? Can GFAR serve as a neutral, honest broker to convene the dialogue across constituencies to address these constraints/conditions?

- **Constraints**

Three key constraints have been identified. These include:

⇒ *Use of Proprietary Technology*

One of the major barriers which has currently stifled progress of multi-lateral partnerships is in the area of *Use of Proprietary Technology*, specifically as it relates to genetic enhancement. GFAR can play a pivotal role in assisting the stakeholders in trying to find a common ground to forward the dialogue and lead to resolution of this issue. It should be acknowledged that this is a significant undertaking which will take time to progress and will be measured by small incremental improvements.

The first step toward resolution is coordination of a consultation of the stakeholders in order to first articulate the divergent positions and identify the key issues. Once this dialogue is established at the Global level, Regional symposia can be pursued.

⇒ *Bureaucracy* is another constraint that slows the process of cross-sector partnerships down. Research is very dynamic. In order to remain nimble, a streamlining mechanism for fast-tracking dialogues in order to rapidly resolve issues is essential.

⇒ *Hidden Agendas* of the various constituencies is a third constraint identified as a barrier to progress in multi-lateral partnering. With recognition of the strong contribution of each partner and transparency of the process for establishing partnerships and measuring progress of the joint efforts, this constraint can be overcome.

- **Conditions**

Recognition of a common overarching goal which will move Ag Research forward globally is a pre-requisite for partners to come together.

Pursuant to that, a voluntary “code of conduct” which applies to all partners and is directly aligned with each party’s obligations and responsibilities must be put in place and adhered to in order to develop and foster trust. This code of conduct should support both the obligation of the Public Sector in the role of “responsible trustee” as well as the fiduciary obligation of the Private Sector to its stockholders.

#### IV. *How can the Private Sector implement/organize its participation? (i.e. move from discussion to action)*

GFAR is a large, loose coalition of various stakeholders driven by a Steering Committee made up of representatives of each of the stakeholder groups. Implementation must be at the level of the constituents in order to ensure that decisions of the Steering committee are supported by a broad segment of the constituency. This should be a consultative process which results in “ownership” of the final recommendations/decisions by the broader constituency.

The Private Sector is made up of an extremely large, diverse number of constituents. In order to assure broad participation and gain perspective from across a representative group of these constituents, a significant effort will be required to expand the opportunity for input from across the constituency.

Following is an outline of the “Process” and the “Substance/Actions” to be considered to move this effort forward.

- Process
  - ⇒ Build awareness of the GFAR to the Private Sector constituency through consultation re: Private Sector objectives.
  - ⇒ Incorporate an appropriate mechanism to allow for a dialogue to be initiated in order to allow for reaction/input regarding the GFAR agenda from a broad segment of Private Sector constituents.
  
- Substance/Action
  - ⇒ Share current models (3-4)
    - ◇ Identify key learnings regarding what's working well and what needs to be improved
    - ◇ Potential examples: ISAAA (Sweet potato), SEA Papaya (Other ideas???)
  
  - ⇒ Identify new potential "pilot" partnerships
    - ◇ Fill gaps (Needs to address multi-lateral partnerships in non-commercial or transitional markets)
    - ◇ Experiment with new approaches based on learnings from current approaches
    - ◇ Potential examples: Pro-Musa, International Sustainable Cocoa, World Bank Banana Disease (sigatoka, black spot), (Other ideas???)
  
  - ⇒ Establish measurable goals for the Private Sector constituency as an outcome of GFAR 2000

V *What are the actions to be undertaken from now to GFAR 2000?*

The overall objective is to drive the consultation process to:

- Enhance awareness
- Obtain feedback through various channels (e.g. EGFAR, Workshops, etc.)
- Gain support across the constituency to achieve "ownership" and consensus of shared Vision.

These objectives will be accomplished through the following proposed set of actions to be undertaken from now to GFAR 2000.

- Development of a window on the EGFAR (the Electronic Global Forum on Ag Research website) home page

- ⇒ Website will be utilized as a “discussion” site for broader input from constituents across the Private Sector.
- Organization of workshop(s) around approaching calendar of Regional events/meetings already scheduled to be targeted to:
  - ⇒ Develop awareness of the GFAR and the Private Sector role in the GFAR (i.e. dissemination of information).
  - ⇒ Gain input and explore further private/public partnership models for consideration.
    - ◇ Case studies (current/past)
    - ◇ New global opportunities for pilot partnerships which are of regional importance
- Contribution to the development of the GFAR vision
  - ⇒ Private Sector view on the draft vision (will assist in development of awareness across the constituency)
  - ⇒ Contribution to ensure Private Sector perspective is reflected in the Vision of GFAR.
- Joint sponsorship (by GFAR and other organizations) of a Global Workshop to bring all stakeholders together to identify the varied views on critical issues.
  - ⇒ Initial meeting in Washington DC to address use of proprietary technology
  - ⇒ Regional meetings to follow