



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

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The GFAR Secretariat is pleased to provide you with the last issue of its Newsletter for 2004. Indeed, 2004 has been a very rich year in terms of activities, meetings, regional and inter-regional consultations and last but not least, the Retreat in Firenze, in February, involving all the GFAR Stakeholders, which led to the development of the new GFAR Business Plan 2004-2006.

This healthy portfolio of activities was made possible through a renewed commitment of the regular donors to GFAR as well as the commitment of new ones; obviously a positive signal for GFAR. This taking off process is also, for the small team of the GFAR Secretariat, a learning process to better report on these activities to donors and to better fit with the requirements of GFAR stakeholders. The editorial of the GFAR Executive Secretary, outlining the last GFAR Steering Committee meeting held the 15th of December opens this Newsletter, and you will see the Secretariat's commitments for 2005 to foster this two way dialogue.

After the Executive Secretary editorial, you will find some News from the Secretariat pertaining to new colleagues at the Secretariat, Gianna and Rupert, the outcomes of the GFAR Statutory Meetings in Mexico and the activities led by the Secretariat. May I also draw your attention to the minutes of the NARS Sub-Committee meeting and the very rich activities achieved this year by the five Regional Fora. We would like to underline that a significant part of these activities were supported by their apex organisation, GFAR and its Secretariat.

You will find other activities spearheaded by the Regional Fora in the following headings. In the item related to the other GFAR Stakeholders, a special emphasis is placed, as usual, on the outcomes of the meeting held by Civil Society Organisations in Mexico, on Monday the 25th of October. You will also find a profile article on IRTECO and the results of the ASFARNER Workshop on Biotechnology.

An article on the results of the 1st meeting of the GFAR Stakeholder Committee of the Generation Challenge Program completes this Newsletter.

On behalf of the Secretariat Staff let me conclude by wishing you a Merry Christmas, happy holidays and fruitful 2005.

JF.G.

**GFAR Secretariat**

c/o FAO, SDR, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla - 00100 Rome, Italy  
Tel. +39.06.5705.3413 Fax +39.06.5705.3898  
E-mail: gfar-secretariat@fao.org

## End of the Year Message from GFAR Executive Secretary

Dear colleagues and friends,

Here we are at the end of another year which has been busy and fruitful as well. Highlights of what we collectively achieved during the year were presented during the GFAR Steering Committee meeting in October, and have been posted on our website. We are now all winding down and getting ready to celebrate in our various ways, the end of another year.

This will be the final issue of our newsletter this year, and before wishing you seasons greetings, let me just briefly inform you about the very last activity we had this year, a GFAR Steering Committee Meeting which was held at the FAO on December 15th.

This meeting was held to specifically address 4 issues: the financial report for 2004, the programme of work and budget for 2005, a review of the guidelines for the development and implementation of Global Partnership Programmes, and the next GFAR triennium general assembly (GFAR 2006).

While the financial report for the year 2004 was approved, the committee felt that the programme of work and budget (PWB) for 2005 needed to be reviewed, as it currently contained too many planned activities with the risk of inadequate attention being paid to all of them, especially with the current staff strength at the Secretariat. The committee therefore asked the Secretariat to readjust the PWB for 2005 guided by the following parameters.

The budget should make adequate provision for the staffing level already approved by the management team as well as a reserve of funds in the order of US dollars 700,000 to ensure minimal disruption to the Secretariat functioning in subsequent years. The remaining funds should then be allocated to a streamlined, focused and coherent set of activities in line with the Business Plan provisions, and preferably centered on the support to regional fora to foster inter-regional collaboration, collaborative research partnerships and the information communication management pillars, while embedding the identified cross

cutting activities within these pillars. The revised PWB should then be sent for approval to the committee by electronic means latest by January 31st 2005. Finally on the budget issue, the Committee encouraged the Secretariat to put additional efforts into further broadening the donor support base in order to ensure the funding sustainability over the medium term and beyond 2006.

The Committee endorsed the report presented on the review of guidelines for the development and implementation of GPPs and approved the plans presented to complete the exercise by mid-March 2005.

With regards to the next triennial meeting GFAR 2006, the committee expressed its appreciation to the Executive Secretary of APAARI for initiating the contacts with the Indian authorities. Given the encouraging and positive response received to date from these preliminary contacts, the Committee gave a green light to the management team to continue negotiations for the conference to be held in India, and to take necessary steps to set up an international GFAR organizing committee that will work on the theme, programme and budget of the conference.

Under any other business, the committee was briefed on the status of the Civil Society Organization project to be funded by the European Commission (DG AIDCO) and urged the Secretariat to take necessary steps and put in additional efforts to ensure the final approval stages of the project are completed quickly in order to safeguard the pledged funds. The committee also discussed the on-going GFAR Charter review process, and agreed on a set of deadlines that will culminate in a final Steering Committee discussion, amendments and approval during the mid-term Steering Committee Meeting scheduled for Wednesday June 8th 2005 in Uganda, just before the FARA 2005 meeting.

Finally, the committee briefly discussed a review of the organization of future GFAR statutory meetings usually held in conjunction with the AGM of the CGIAR in a way that will ensure adequate and sufficient participation of the GFAR Donor Support Group and encouraged further reflection on this issue.

Let me now wish you a happy and prosperous 2005 that will bring a more cohesive and focused GFAR

family working together to contribute in a meaningful way to improving the lot of the poor, and contributing to the generation of knowledge.

Happy New Year.

O.S.

*New Staff at GFAR Secretariat*

## Welcome to Ms. Gianna de Cesare and Mr. Rupert Best

The GFAR Secretariat is very pleased to present to new members: Gianna de Cesare and Rupert Best.



Ms. Gianna de Cesare is from 15th of September, the newly appointed Secretary to Mr. Ola Smith, the Executive Secretary of the GFAR. She is an Italian national and holds a degree in

Political Science and a M.Sc. in International Relations with specialization in European Studies and International Relations. She joined FAO in 1989. She has worked in several FAO Departments (GI, SD, AG, TC) and has also worked for the Professional Staff Selection Committee in personnel. Before joining the GFAR Secretariat, she has worked for the Horticultural Crops Group, in AGPC. There she used to work for field operations, TCP backstopping missions etc. Now mainly she assists Mr. Smith, but also she provides assistance to the GFAR Secretariat in preparing Letter of Agreements, contracts for consultants, travel arrangements and preparation and monitoring of GFAR Budget, she also deals with the organization of meetings.

Rupert Best joined the Secretariat on 15 September as a Senior Program Specialist to work on GFAR's Research Partnership Programmes. Rupert's expertise is in the area



of rural enterprise development, with special interest in research and capacity development on the post-production handling, processing and marketing of tropical crops. Since 1982 Rupert has been employed by the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) based at CIAT's Headquarters in Cali, Colombia and more recently out-posted in Kampala, Uganda. From 1996 to 2004, he co-founded and managed CIAT's Rural

Agroenterprise Development Project which, with national and local partners in Latin America, East and Southern Africa and South-East Asia, developed the territorial approach to rural business development. In the period 1982-1996, he was a member of CIAT's Cassava Program, first as a researcher and then Head of the Cassava Utilisation Section. In 1990, he became the Leader of this global interdisciplinary research and training program on cassava development. Prior to 1982, Rupert worked for 4 years at the Junta del Acuerdo de Cartagena in Lima, Peru where he was responsible for formulating the Andean Pact's Technology Development Project for the Rural Sector. Rupert holds a PhD in Chemical Engineering from the University of Birmingham in the UK and initiated his professional career with the Tropical Products Institute in 1975. At GFAR, Rupert will contribute to GFAR's facilitating and monitoring role in establishing Global Partnership Programmes (GPPs). In particular, he will be looking to enhance the understanding of the principles, experience and good practice in sustaining multi-stakeholder research partnerships, with emphasis on increased involvement of the private sector in these initiatives. Rupert's position is jointly funded between GFAR and CIAT.

GFAR Secretariat

ICM



## Towards a GPP on ICM4ARD

After a set of regional consultations, started in February 2003 and achieved in May 2004, GFAR Secretariat organized in June this year an inter-regional consultation in Rome. This meeting, which was attended by all the managers of the information systems of the five Regional Fora and by Information Officers of FAO Regional Offices, led to the definition of a global framework for action, so-called Information and Communication Management for Agricultural Research for Development, ICM4ARD.

This Global Partnership Programme (GPP) aims at addressing the inequity of access to ICT enabled agricultural

information systems by the GFAR stakeholders.

Indeed, four main issues for intervention to enable greater equity in access to agricultural information globally were identified. These include:

- The need to strengthen the capacity of NARS leaders to **advocate**, articulate appropriate policies and strategies, attract more resources and greater investment for further development of ICT enabled NAIS and lead further development of agricultural information systems (AIS);
- **Capacity development**, in terms of infrastructure, institutions and human skills, among stakeholders to ARD to create, manage, share, exchange and use scientific and technical information, technology related information, research and research management information, extension, outreach and market information etc. for agricultural innovation and development;
- Greater **integration of national and regional agricultural information systems** and easier access to them, especially websites, through a GLOBAL.RAIS Web Ring and cohesive activities for improved management and more seamless sharing and exchange of information, experience and knowledge in agricultural information management through a Knowledge Network;
- The need to establish appropriate **governance structures** such as task forces and steering committees for global, regional and sub-regional AIS of GFAR, AARINENA, APAARI, CACAARI, FARA, ASARECA, CORAF, SADC and FORAGRO to promote and support more equitable access, sharing and exchange of agricultural information through ICT enabled AIS.

This GPP was unanimously endorsed by the Members of the GFAR Steering Committee during the GFAR statutory meetings in Mexico, and now the GFAR Secretariat is moving forward to access to the required funding enabling the effective launching of this Programme. Fruitful preliminary contacts have already been established as of December 2004.

2004 Statutory Meetings



## GFAR Steering Committee Meeting

The GFAR Steering Committee, which is made up of representatives of all GFAR stakeholders, met for its 14th Annual Meeting on Sunday 24 October on the occasion of the Annual General Meeting of the consultative Group for Agricultural Research (CGIAR) held in Mexico City. A short summary of the proceedings is presented here.

The Executive Secretary provided committee members with a report of GFAR's activities in 2004, putting emphasis on the effort by all stakeholders in preparing GFAR's Strategy 2004-2013 and Business Plan 2004-2006. He then went on to highlight some of the major activities under each of the pillars of GFAR's Business Plan: Inter-regional Collaboration; Collaborative Research Partnerships; Advocacy, Public Awareness and Strategic Thinking; and Management Information Systems.

The Executive Secretary's intervention was followed by series of statements and reports from the different stakeholder constituencies present, namely, NGOs, Farmers' Organisations, the International Agricultural Research Centres, the Advanced Research Institutions, the Private Sector, the Donors, and the GFAR Secretariat's host institution FAO. Of particular note was the presence of Dr Arvind Kapur representing for the first time the perspective of the private sector. Dr Kapur, who is the Managing Director of Nunhams Seeds Pvt, underlined the need for the public and private sectors to work together, among other aspects, on policy issues, since these if not fully appreciated could prove to be barriers to the exchange of genetic materials. Ltd. Dr Zhang Lijian, present as an observer at this year's meeting, and representing the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and the President of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, reiterated China's interest in becoming a member of GFAR.

JF.G.

Updates were presented on the three active and on-going Global

Partnership Programs (GPPs): Promoting Local Innovation (PROLINNOVA), Direct Sowing, Mulch-based Systems and Conservation Agriculture (DMC) and Under-utilised Species (UOC). Steering Committee members appreciated and recognised the important advances made by all of these programmes. Suggestions were made as to the need for a) greater involvement of the Regional Fora in their implementation, b) an on-going mechanism for monitoring and evaluation the GPPs needs to be established, and c) more clarity on the GPP concept and the role and responsibilities of Global Facilitating Units.

Brief outlines of three pipeline GPPs were presented: Information and Communication for Agricultural Research and Development (ICM4ARD), The Global Post-harvest Initiative: Linking Farmers to Markets (GPhI) and Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP). The Steering Committee endorsed the continued preparation of the ICM4ARD and GPhI programmes into full GPPs, and recommended that the NTFP programme continue the consultation process to ascertain the true global nature and relative interest of stakeholders in a GPP around the NTFP theme.

In the Closed Session of the Steering Committee Meeting, the Executive Secretary presented the Financial Report for 2004 and the Budget for 2005. The financial situation of GFAR shows a marked improvement compared to that a year ago. Committee members requested additional information on 2004 expenditures be provided and, following further discussions with the Regional Fora, the work programme and associated budget for 2005 be presented in greater detail. FAO recommended a balanced budget and the building up of a reserve to cover those periods when expected contributions are delayed.

Drs Ian Johnson and Francisco Reifschneider, Chair and Director of the CGIAR respectively joined the closed session and addressed the members, highlighting the changing demands being placed on the agricultural sector, and in particular income generation for the rural poor, changing diets and water and land management. Following their intervention and a period of discussion, Dr Johnson indicated that, among the important areas of GFAR-

CGIAR interaction, he saw joint publications on advocacy and public-private partnerships, including partnership with civil society as being of high priority.

Under governance and other issues, the new draft Charter and the GFAR 2006 Conference were discussed. The Charter will be further reviewed by Steering Committee members for their final approval in 2005. Following further consultations, the location and theme of GFAR 2006 will be finalised by April 2005.

#### *2004 Statutory Meetings*

### **Donors Support Group Meeting**

The Donor Support Group meeting was held on the 25th of October in Mexico City, Mexico and was chaired by Mr. Mathur of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), in representation of Mr. Rodney Cooke, Chair of the GFAR Donor Support Group, also from IFAD, and was attended by representatives of more than 20 donor institutions reflecting in this way the commitment and interest that GFAR activities raises.

The meeting was introduced by a brief presentation on some of the main outputs achieved by GFAR during 2004. Above all the approval of the new 2004-2006 GFAR Business Plan, the launching of the DURAS Project, funded by France, the completion of the first phase of the GLOBAL.RAIS project and the continuous activity of strengthening the participation of the CSO community into the global ARD agenda, one of the main missions of GFAR.

Discussions following the presentation mainly focused on the budget for 2005. Participants raised many concerns on the format, which in their view would need to be redesigned and reformulated on more detailed activity basis. It was also suggested to be more strategic in underlying the amount of resources that GFAR is able to mobilize to foster the GPPs development.

In response to these concerns and preoccupations it was decided to act very quickly and to call an Extra-Ordinary Steering Committee meeting that would above all have the task to

present a new budget for final approval and endorsement.

The meeting is scheduled for the 15th of December 2004 and will take place in Rome.

A.S.

#### *2004 Statutory Meetings*



R.B.

### **NARS Sub-Committee**

The NARS Sub-Committee activities in Mexico were divided into two events. The first was a Roundtable Discussion on Stakeholder Analysis for Effective Partnership Building held on Friday 22 October, for a wide range of stakeholders participating in the GFAR Statutory Meetings. The second was the presentation by the Regional Fora of their achievements and future plans, on Saturday 23 October. All presentations can be found in the News from the Regional Fora section.

#### **Effective Partnership Building**

The establishment of efficient and effective collaborative efforts amongst several stakeholder groups is seen as critical for achieving the vision of a multipurpose agriculture that contributes significantly to alleviating poverty, increasing food security and attaining the sustainable utilization of natural resources. The level of success in achieving this goal will depend to a large extent on the strength and quality of the partnerships among different institutions and organisations that need to be created to tackle the many challenges confronting rural and agricultural communities.

With the objective of introducing GFAR members the concepts and tools that can help in understanding and bringing together partners from different stakeholder groups, Dr. Jacques Chevalier of Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada was invited to present and discuss the Social Analysis System (SAS) which brings together a collection of participatory techniques and software tools that show how to integrate social and cultural analysis, and continuous planning, into project activities.

Dr Chevalier explained that the SAS concepts and tools have been

developed as a means of facilitating the resolution of conflicts related to natural resource management and the techniques and tools are especially relevant to projects involving multiple stakeholders.

SAS promotes a 'flexible scale approach' to understanding systems of knowledge and dynamic learning, with Chevalier proposing a balance - or multi-track approach - that combines expert analysis with the use of participatory methods. Chevalier briefly took the participants through the five components that make up SAS:

1. Participatory analysis
2. Integrating research with action
3. Cultural factors and systems of knowledge and learning
4. Process management to plan project activities
5. Action learning and the community of practice to further development of concepts and methods

The SAS prototype ([www.sas-pm.com](http://www.sas-pm.com)) is available in CD-ROM and on-line in both English and Spanish.

Following the formal presentation of SAS and a question and answer session, participants undertook an exercise to illustrate the use of a simple tool for differentiating and grouping different stakeholder types. This exercise was then used as the basis for finding out from different stakeholders their interest in SAS methods and tools, their training needs, and possible strategies for meeting those needs.

All GFAR stakeholder groups manifested interest in the techniques and a training needs and strategies were outlined for each group. The farmers group saw the potential for use of the tools over a wide spectrum of their needs. The national CSO group confirmed the benefits to their members and the need for tailoring the tools to specific conditions in a country or region. The needs of the regional fora representatives and international facilitators were more for understanding both pros and cons of the SAS approach, and especially in the use of techniques for establishing ownership and creating commitment among partners. Farmers and national civil society organisations saw the need for hands-on training and use of the methods and techniques, while the regional fora and donors felt the

need for a broad understanding rather than the ability to use the techniques themselves. The approaches to meeting these needs would therefore need to be distinct. The strategies suggested were not mutually exclusive, and it should be possible to develop a set of strategies that could meet the needs of various stakeholder groups.

GPPs



### **Learning from experience: the Direct Sowing, Mulch-based Systems and Conservation Agriculture**

The Direct sowing, Mulch-based systems and Conservation Agriculture or DMC Initiative is a Global Partnership Program (GPP) which aims to pull together and transform decentralized actions into global initiatives using a bottom-up approach. As such, it aims to strengthen the capacity of key stakeholders to develop suitable DMC systems and to accelerate their wide adoption.

The core of the DMC program is an iterative and participatory process of learning and synthesis based on the development of case studies. Our belief is that systematization, synthesis and in-depth analysis of results and progress achieved by projects and initiatives featuring DMC systems in many parts of the world, complemented by the comparison of lessons learned, and by the identification of errors and gaps - not only with respect to DMC technologies and their performance, but also with respect to approaches and methods used will facilitate the adaptation and adoption of DMC practices by a wider range of users.

Initiated in 2002, today, DMC finds itself in a transitional phase, somewhere in between stand-by, restructuring and revival. This has led to a self-evaluation of the limitations, constraints and other design weaknesses that have affected DMC operation in the belief that

understanding weaknesses is a requirement for enhancing the quality and relevance of future DMC activities.

### **What has worked well**

*Case studies.* DMC has undertaken or been involved in case studies in several countries, including Zambia, Bolivia, Ghana and Tanzania. We have found that whenever the DMC facilitator could participate directly in case study development (i.e. whenever he/she was able to make the corresponding field visits), things went well and the outputs achieved were clearly in line with DMC's stated objectives. While too few case studies have been produced so far to warrant drawing global comparisons and conclusions, there is no doubt that these case studies are very useful and shed light on many aspects of DMC development and promotion. Also, all stakeholders involved in the CS process gain significantly from participating in these exercises.

*Contacts.* Another positive impact of DMC includes the many valuable contacts that were established with organizations involved in DMC. These contacts constitute a fertile foundation for planning and executing DMC future activities.

### **What has not worked so well and why**

*Lack of funding.* This certainly has been the single most important constraint to DMC operation. Almost all of the funding available to DMC came through only one institution, and went primarily into funding the position of the DMC facilitator. But DMC has never possessed a budget for its routine operation. Why no other institutions have been willing to join support for DMC remains unclear. Perhaps one reason is nobody felt a sense of ownership / appropriation for DMC, which was born out of the decisions and desires of an emerging global community (GFAR) whose role in supporting (including financially) an initiative such as DMC remains unclear. Another is that perhaps some saw DMC as a network of the host institution, CIRAD, and preferred to invest in their own networks and projects. And obviously the lack of a natural constituency (other than GFAR itself) for DMC has played a big role.

*Constituency.* While it was certainly to be expected that a new program would not have a constituency at its launching, today it is still very hard to

name who the DMC constituency are, or to even know who are formal, active DMC members. At best a list of contacts and institutions / individuals can be drawn of those who interacted in some way or another with the DMC facilitation Unit, mostly during the course of case study development.

**Governance.** DMC overall operation was limited by the very ad hoc nature of its Steering Committee (SC) which never went beyond being an Interim Structure composed of knowledgeable, good-willing individuals from interested institutions, but with unclear roles and functions and undefined frequency of meetings. What was perhaps most lacking from the SC mechanism is the very idea of accountability: the DMC coordinator to the SC, and the SC to the DMC constituency at large.

**Services.** Besides the case studies themselves and a few on-line description of DMC projects, DMC has not offered any concrete services to its would-be members: no news bulletin, no list of contact, no data bases, nothing that probably DMC projects would have liked to receive. This lack of services did certainly contribute to the lack of active enrolment of members and to the limited appropriation of the very concept of a DMC program by key stakeholders around the world.

The reasons for establishing a DMC Global Partnership Programme remain valid. We consider that these honest reflections, which are in no way meant as a criticism of the individuals or institutions that are or have been involved in DMC, are important for refocusing and restructuring the programme so that it can more effectively meet the objectives for which the programme was originally established.

R.B.

GPPs



## Moving to new phase: the Global Facilitation Unit for Underutilised Species

The Global Facilitation Unit supports and facilitates the work that is undertaken on different aspects of under-utilised species worldwide, with

the aim that they increasingly contribute to food and nutritional security and to poverty alleviation of the rural and urban poor in developing countries. As a facilitation unit, this GPP is not involved in the promotion of particular species. Its tasks are related to the improvement of the frame conditions for the development of underutilized species by dealing with cross-cutting issues relevant for these species in general and in the conceptual support to other organizations working on specific topics and projects. The GFU has been successfully operational since May 2002 as a GTZ implemented project, hosted at the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute IPGRI and financially supported by BMZ.

The major achievements of the GFU over the 34 month period since its inception have been:

1. The development a web portal as a gateway to information on under-utilised species which includes relevant publications, details of specific crops, past and forthcoming events, links to other organisations and a section on 'who is doing what' in the field of under-utilised plant species.
2. Two international workshops have been organised to bring together stakeholders and raise public awareness on the issues affecting the use of potentially valuable plant species. These were 'Underutilised Plant Species and Poverty Alleviation' whose major outcome was the development of key decision steps for stakeholders involved in planning and implementing projects to promote under-utilised species; and 'Marketing Strategies and Capacity Strengthening to Realise the Economic Potential of Under-utilised Plant Species' which identified means to enhance commercialisation of under-utilised species and the strategic areas where human capacity building is required.
3. Together with partner organisations the GFU submitted recommendations to the European Union for an amendment of the Novel Foods Regulation (NFR) that takes into account the interests of developing countries. As presently formulated, the NFR presents a serious obstacle for food products derived from under-utilised species wishing to enter EU markets as it

subjects foods, which have not been used for human consumption to a significant degree before 1997, to a long and complicated admission process.

Following a review of progress, the GPP will enter a second phase in March 2005. In line with its role as a facilitating unit, the GFU does not have a role as a project implementer and nor does it focus its attention on specific species. In the new phase the GFU will pay particular attention to the following areas:

1. Maintaining and consolidating the GFU website as a portal to the most important information systems of other partners and establishing a regular and clearly identifiable news service.
2. Focusing the work of the GFU on analysis of policies, concepts and strategies to support the diversification of crop production and income generation through the promotion of under-utilised species. An assessment of success stories, and some failures, that identify the reasons why and the way in which products of some species have been introduced to the market will be made. The GFU will offer advice to decision-makers on policies that can motivate the identification and development of potentially attractive plant resources that are currently under-utilised.
3. Organising a public awareness campaign together with partners at different levels from high level conferences to educational programmes in schools - to raise the awareness on the importance of maintaining inter- and intra-specific biodiversity where it still exists, and to promote it where is no longer exists.

R.B.

GPPs

## An expanding network: Promoting Local Innovation, PROLINNOVA

The Prolinnova GPP, which is spearheaded by NGOs, seeks to build a global learning and advocacy network on promoting local innovation in ecologically-oriented agriculture and NRM. The focus is on recognising the dynamics of indigenous knowledge (IK) and on learning how

to strengthen the capacities of farmers (including peasant/family farmers, pastoralists, forest dwellers and artisanal fisher folk, among others) to adjust to changing conditions to develop and adapt their own site-appropriate systems and institutions of resource management in order to gain food security, sustain their livelihoods and safeguard the environment.

With support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Netherlands Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS), the key stakeholder organisations in agricultural R&D in Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, Cambodia, Nepal, Niger, South Africa, Sudan and Tanzania have collected local experiences in recognising farmer innovation and experimentation and promoting Participatory Innovation Development (PID). They convened workshops to analyse their experiences and developed action plans to improve and scale up the participatory approaches to farmer-led R&D. in each of their countries.

The national plans and activities undertaken thus far differ, depending on the experience and self-identified strengths and weaknesses in each country in recognising the dynamics of IK, engaging in PID and scaling up the approach. However, some of the common elements include:

- developing inventories and databases of local innovations, innovators and organisations working together with them
- bringing farmers, development agents and formal researchers together to plan and implement participatory experiments, starting from jointly prioritised local innovations
- creating national and sub-national multi-stakeholder platforms to share information about local innovations and to learn jointly about PID and its institutionalisation
- building capacity to identify and document local innovation and engage in PID, through training workshops for farmers and scientists
- participatory monitoring and evaluation of joint activities, outcomes and impacts
- creating awareness (through innovator fairs, radio programmes

etc) and engaging in policy dialogue with key decision-makers in agricultural research, extension and education, in order to create favourable institutional and policy environments for PID.

In March 2004, representatives of the CPs met at the Furra Institute of Development Studies in Yirgalem, Southern Ethiopia, for the first of a series of international workshops. This workshop was hosted by the Prolinnova CP in Ethiopia, known as PROFIEET (Promoting Farmer Innovation and Experimentation in Ethiopia) and was organised by the PROFIEET Secretariat, AgriService Ethiopia (ASE). CTA, Misereor, the World Bank Indigenous Knowledge for Development Program and GFAR provided funds for the workshop and its documentation.

At the workshop and during field visits, Ethiopian farmers presented their experiences in local innovation and participatory R&D that helped them meet their food-security needs. The country-level facilitators of Prolinnova and other governmental and non-governmental research and extension partners shared their experiences in building national multi-stakeholder partnerships to promote local innovation, discussed and compared their national action plans, and defined cross-national learning, networking and other support mechanisms. Thus, the process of participatory planning of the international programme mirrors the approach taken by Prolinnova at the national level and, indeed, at grassroots level. The partners in the different countries are the developers and owners of the programme, which is based on their self-defined needs and interests. The plan of action that came out of the workshop shows priority areas on which Prolinnova will focus as a global programme.

As part of this plan of action, IIRR trained PID facilitators in July 2004 in the Philippines. At least two persons selected by each CP took part and subsequently facilitated training for research and extension staff drawn from public institutions and NGOs in their home countries.

The funding currently available to Prolinnova meets only about 25% of country program requirements. Conventional donors to agricultural R&D still find it difficult - mainly because of internal regulations - to channel funds through a highly

decentralised programme facilitated by NGOs. We will be working together with Prolinnova's principal stakeholders to overcome these obstacles to attract the resources necessary to accomplish our goals.

R.B.



DURAS

## 129 pre-proposals submitted for DURAS Competitive Grants

One hundred twenty nine (129) pre-proposals were submitted by various stakeholders for the DURAS Project's Competitive Grants.

Sixty per cent (60 %) of these submissions focuses on *Agrobiodiversity and genetic resources management for food security* while 40% tackles *Local knowledge in natural resources management*.

This is the first of two Calls for Proposals under the DURAS project. It was launched on 27 July 2004 and was closed on 08 October 2004. Project titles and lead proponents will be posted in the DURAS Project website ([www.duras-project.net](http://www.duras-project.net)), which will be available soon. The idea is to link interested organizations to proposing organizations to facilitate partnership building.

DURAS is a GFAR-Agropolis project supported by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its Priority Solidarity Fund (PSF). It aims to contribute to strengthening the involvement and enhancing the scientific potential of southern stakeholders in agricultural research for sustainable development (ARSD). This three-year project covers 49 countries from Africa, Near East and some parts of Asia that are listed in France's Priority Solidarity Zone (PSZ).

This Competitive Grants Scheme is one of the three components of the DURAS Project. The two others are (1) Support to the facilitation role of the GFAR Secretariat, particularly in its efforts to facilitate priority setting activities of regional and sub-regional fora as well as to the involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs) in these activities; and (2) support to

the development of a functional information communication management (ICM) system at the global and regional level through the electronic GFAR (EGFAR) and Regional Agricultural Information Systems (RAIS).

### Eligibility criteria

Application for the Competitive Grants is open to all stakeholders involved in agricultural research, provided that the Lead Proponent (LP) - a university, national research center or a civil society organization (CSO) - is from a ZSP country covered by the project.

The proposed project should involve (a) a minimum of two (2) countries from the South which may not necessarily be from the same region/sub-region; and (b) at least three (3) stakeholder groups, one of which should either be an NGO, a farmers organization, or small-medium enterprise.

The proponent should also submit Letter(s) of Intent (LOI) from their collaborating organizations stating their willingness and commitment to participate in the proposed project.

*Table 1: Percentage distribution of pre-proposals received per stakeholder, per theme*

Proponents	Theme 1	Theme 2	Total
National agricultural research institutes/universities	3%	3%	4%
Universities	5%	0%	3%
NGOs	0%	0%	2%
Farmers organizations	0%	0%	0%
International research centers	0%	0%	0%
Others	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Review Process

Response to the DURAS First Call for Proposals was presented to the GFAR

NARS Sub-committee (NARS-SC) during its meeting held on 23 October 2004 in Mexico City. Pre-proposals will be reviewed by the DURAS Scientific Partnership Committee on 14 December 2004.

These were evaluated on the basis of over-all project design and feasibility; appropriateness and innovativeness; socio-economic, environmental and sustainability considerations; and partnership quality. All lead proponents will be notified of the outcome of the evaluation.

### Next Steps

Full proposal development and partnership-building stage will be facilitated by the DURAS Scientific Partnership Committee (SPC) chaired by Agropolis. In order to facilitate the dialogue between Southern and Northern partner in this process, DURAS Project has set aside limited funds to support the travel cost of Southern partners who need to meet with their European counterpart. This can be made available to lead proponents of short-listed pre-proposals on a *per request* basis.

Full proposals will be submitted to the DURAS Project Office in April 2005 while the final selection will be made in May 2005 by the DURAS Project's Comité de Pilotage chaired by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Project implementation is expected to start in June 2005.

### Contacts:

Oliver OLIVEROS  
Coordinator, Project DURAS  
Agropolis International  
Avenue Agropolis F-34394 Montpellier  
Cedex 5, France  
Tel: +33 (0)4 67 04 3747  
Fax : +33 (0)4 67 04 7599

Oliver Oliveros  
*DURAS project coordinator*

DURAS



## Project DURAS Competitive Grants Scheme: 2nd Call for Proposals

Stakeholders in agricultural research for sustainable development are invited to submit their pre-proposals for the DURAS 2nd Call for Proposals

on the themes (a) *Agroecology and other sustainable farming practices*; and (b) *Linking farmers to market and support to small and medium agro-enterprises (agri SMEs)*.

### Who may submit pre-proposals?

Application for the Competitive Grants is open to all stakeholders involved in agricultural research, provided that the Lead Proponent (LP) is (a) from a university, national research center or a civil society organization (e.g. NGO, farmers organization), and (b) from a ZSP (*Priority Solidarity Zone*) covered by the project.

### What are the themes covered by the 2nd Call?

As earlier mentioned, the 2nd Call will accept pre-proposals on the following two thematic areas:

#### Theme 1: Agro-ecology and other sustainable farming practices

Pre-proposals under this theme should be able to contribute to food security and the conservation of resources through low-cost farming technologies focusing on labor practices that respect soil quality, increase the incorporation of organic matter and enable good carbon uptake. Proposals for scaling-up agro-ecological innovations developed by farmers and local communities that address these concerns can also be submitted.

#### Theme 2: Linking farmers to market and support to small and medium agro-enterprises (agri SMEs)

This theme extends the framework of agricultural research by taking into account the growing effects of liberalization and the important changes occurring in agriculture and their consequences for rural areas. Pre-proposals that address post-harvest improvement and agricultural value-addition to increase over-all farm economic productivity and rural farm income while taking into account natural resource conservation can be submitted under this theme.

### What are the eligibility criteria?

The proposed project should:

1. Involve a minimum of two (2) countries from the South (which may not necessarily be from the same region/sub-region)
2. Involve at least three (3) stakeholder groups, one of which should either be an NGO, a farmers organization, or small-medium enterprise



3. Submit Letter(s) of Intent (LOI) from their collaborating organizations stating their willingness and commitment to participate in the proposed project.

**How to submit a pre- proposal?**

Proponents should register their pre-proposal(s) by filling in electronic form accessible at the DURAS website. Pre-proposals can be submitted as an attachment through this mode or by e-mail (duras@agropolis.fr).

All applications must, without exemptions, use the pre-proposal format provided in the Annex of the Guidelines which you can find with this announcement.

There is no need to submit paper copies of the pre-proposal. However, original and signed Letter(s) of Intent should be submitted to the DURAS Project Office at the address provided below.

Proponents with internet connectivity problems may, however, send their pre-proposals together with the original and signed Letter(s) of Intent and CVs by post, making sure that it will reach the DURAS Project Office by the set deadline.

**How will the pre-proposals be evaluated? What are the criteria?**

Only complete pre-proposals will be reviewed. These will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- Over-all project design and feasibility (25%) - clarity of objectives, consistency of key activities with stated objectives, realistic and relevant expected outputs, clear and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) process, and likelihood of success.
- Appropriateness and innovativeness (25%) - appropriateness of proposed intervention to address regional priority issue, whether the proposal offers value added and novel solutions, and applicability/viability of the proposed intervention.
- Socio-economic considerations (20%) possible contribution to local/regional development and positive spill-over, demonstrable/promising economic/financial benefits to local communities, and adaptability of the proposed intervention.

- Environmental and Sustainability considerations (15%).
- Partnership Quality (15%) - extent by which the proposed project promotes empowerment of stakeholders, including opportunities provided to enhance their scientific potential.

**How much is the award size and how many projects will be selected?**

Award size vary from a minimum of Euro 20,000 to a maximum of Euro 150,000 over a three-year period. The number of projects may vary depending on the proposed budget of selected projects.

**Why co-financing?**

Co-financing is key element of the DURAS competitive grants component. This mechanism is put in place not only to provide additional resources to finance Southern initiatives but also to foster shared responsibility, co-ownership and accountability.

DURAS will provide up to 73% of the project's total cost while French and/or European collaborators should contribute the remaining 27% either in cash or in-kind.

**What is the timeframe for the 2nd Call?**

Below is the indicative timeframe for the 2nd Call for Proposals:

December 2004	2nd Call for Proposals
24 February 2005	Deadline for submission of Pre-proposals
March 2005	Evaluation of Pre-proposals
March 2005	Notice to Lead Proponent
March-April 2005	Partnerships building and full proposal development
end-April 2005	Deadline for submission of Full proposals
May 2005	Final Screening and Approval, Awards
June 2005	Projects start

*Contacts:*  
Oliver OLIVEROS  
Coordinator, Project DURAS  
Tel: +33 (0)4 67 04 3747  
Fax : +33 (0)4 67 04 7599

Oliver Oliveros  
DURAS project coordinator

Asia-Pacific



**APAARI Progress Report 2004**

APAARI Progress Report 2004 was presented, by the Chair, Dr. Matzuo Iwamoto, at the 14th NARS-Sub-Committee Meeting, during the GFAR 2004 Statutory Meeting in Mexico, 22-25 October. The full report can be found on [EGFAR](#).

APAARI

Europe



**EARD-InfoSys+ Steering Committee Meeting in Bonn**

On November 18th the steering committee of EARD-InfoSys+ ([www.infosysplus.org](http://www.infosysplus.org)) met in Bonn. The objective of the meeting was to discuss future perspectives of EARD-InfoSys+. In the past two years the information system has been completely restructured to display information on organisations, projects, funding opportunities, experts, events and news in European ARD. The project phase ended in September 2004.

To strengthen the sustainability of the information system it has been developed on the basis of consultations with GFAR and partners of the GFAR GLOBAL.RAIS project. The aim was to create a system that would be adaptable to other national and regional ARD landscapes. One of the outcomes of this collaboration was the setting up of the FARA (<http://fara.infosysplus.org>) information system, that is based on the EARD-InfoSys+ technology. In the steering committee meeting it was agreed that the collaboration with GFAR should be extended in the future.

Good news also came from the European Union: The ERA-ARD proposal (FP6) in which EARD-InfoSys+ has been involved from the beginning has now been approved. The aim of ERA-ARD is to better understand the decision-making processes for the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies, strategies, programmes and funding relating to ARD in Europe and to identify some "pilot" national and European programmes and/or themes which would benefit the most from improved coordination. EARD-InfoSys+ is expected to support ERA-ARD by the mapping of programs and provide ICM support for improved coordination of investments into ARD.

EARD-InfoSys+

Europe

### Creation of a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG): ECART



Six European tropical agricultural research organizations have decided to seal their collaboration by setting up an EEIG.

The grouping, known as ECART, the European Consortium for Agricultural Research in the Tropics, is being founded in order to mobilize more effectively the expertise of the following organizations, for the benefit of developing countries:

CIRAD ([www.cirad.fr](http://www.cirad.fr)), Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (France)

NRI ([www.nri.org](http://www.nri.org)), Natural Resources Institute (Great Britain)

IICT ([www.iict.pt](http://www.iict.pt)), Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical (Portugal)

IAO ([www.iao.florence.it](http://www.iao.florence.it)), Istituto Agronomico per l'Oltremare (Italy)

Wageningen UR ([www.wur.nl](http://www.wur.nl)), Wageningen University and Research Centre (Netherlands)

IRD ([www.ird.fr](http://www.ird.fr)), Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (France)

All the ECART members are characterized by a history of extensive field involvement in addressing ARD issues in developing countries.

Through this EEIG, around 4000 total professional staff, covering the whole gamut of agricultural research and development issues could be easily mobilised for specific technical consultancies, joint research bids and training operations, etc.

ECART-EEIG has the following main objectives:

- to play a proactive policy advocacy role for agricultural research for development (ARD) in Europe and worldwide;
- to develop and strengthen strategic alliances and partnerships with the different ARD stakeholders, both in the North and the South;
- to organize, facilitate and implement joint participation in European and international programmes and projects;
- to do all such other things as may be deemed incidental or conducive to the attainment of the Grouping's objectives.

The official ceremony marking the founding of the EEIG will be held at CIRAD head office in Paris on 10 November, attended by the Directors of its member organizations.

ECART-EEIG is established for an initial six-year period and is hosted by CIRAD in Paris, which will also be providing its first Director.

Contacts:  
Christian Hoste  
European and International Relations Service  
Tel: +33 (0)1 53 70 22 30 or +33 (0)4 67 61 75 59  
e-mail: [christian.hoste@cirad.fr](mailto:christian.hoste@cirad.fr)

ECART  
Press Release, 5 November 2004

Latin America & the Caribbean

### FORAGRO Progress Report 2004

FORAGRO Progress Report 2004 was presented, by the Executive Secretary, Dr. Enrique Alarcón, at the 14th NARS-Sub-Committee Meeting, during the GFAR 2004 Statutory Meeting in Mexico, 22-25 October.



The full report can be found on EGFAR.

FORAGRO

Sub-Saharan Africa



### SSA CP proposal accepted at the CGIAR Annual General Meeting in Mexico

The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA - [www.fara-africa.org](http://www.fara-africa.org)) together with the Sub Regional Organizations (SROs) are proud to announce the acceptance by the CGIAR Annual General Assembly of the Sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Program - building sustainable livelihoods through integrated agricultural research for development (IAR4D). SSA CP Phase 1 is accepted for 5 year implementation starting January 2005. A comprehensive review at the end of phase 1 is planned for full implementation of the IAR4D concept.

The SSA CP's purpose is to address the most significant constraints to reviving agriculture in Africa such as failures of agricultural markets, inappropriate policies and natural resource degradation with a new paradigm, Integrated Agricultural Research for Development (IAR4D). This will foster synergies among disciplines and institutions along with a renewed commitment to change at all levels from farmers to national and international policy makers.

The IAR4D approach has three major thrusts; a) a set of principles to address the complexity and heterogeneity of farming systems, b) a new research agenda with an integrated approach to addressing interactions between natural resource management, production systems, and agricultural markets and policies, c) institutional change to forge new partnerships to involve all stakeholders, especially smallholders and pastoralists, women as well as men.

The SSA CP objectives are:

- To develop sustainable technologies for intensifying subsistence oriented farming systems;

- To develop smallholder production systems that are compatible with sound natural resource management;
- To improve the accessibility and efficiency of markets for smallholder and pastoral products;
- To catalyze the formulation and adoption of policies that will encourage innovation to improve the livelihoods of smallholders and pastoralists.

Following the acceptance by the CGIAR, the FARA Secretariat will be working closely with the SROs to initiate the SSA CP implementation process stated in the endorsed full proposal. The primary steps to be made are:

- Establishment of Programme Steering Committee (PSC);
- Establishment of the Program Coordinating Unit
- Formation of IAR4D teams, facilitation and mentoring teams, etc.

A business meeting of key stakeholders e.g. SRO, CGIAR, IARC, ARI and key NARS is being proposed by the FARA Secretariat on 13-14 January 2005 in Accra, Ghana to develop a detailed business plan for SSA CP and also to initiate the selection of the IAR4D teams. Formal invitations will be sent out by first week of December 2004.

We are also proud to announce that funding is secured for the first 12 months from key donors such as the EU, the Netherlands, the UK, France and CGIAR/WB. Several other donors have expressed their interests to support the SSA CP. Consecutive funding will be endorsed pending review and evaluation by the CGIAR Science Council towards the end of the first phase.

FARA and the SROs are grateful for all the support given by all stakeholders during the proposal development up to the approval of the SSA CP program. But our job is just beginning; we hope that the momentum and dedication will continue until we achieve our common objectives and the desired impact.

FARA

*Sub-Saharan Africa*

### **FARA Progress Report 2004**

FARA Progress Report 2004 was presented, by the Executive Secretary, Dr. Monty P. Jones, at the 14th NARS-Sub-Committee Meeting, during the GFAR 2004 Statutory Meeting in Mexico, 22-25 October. The full report can be found on EGFAR.



FARA

*West Asia & North Africa*

### **AARINENA Progress Report 2004**

AARINENA Progress Report 2004 was presented, by the Executive Secretary, Dr. Ibrahim Hamdan, at the 14th NARS-Sub-Committee Meeting, during the GFAR 2004 Statutory Meeting in Mexico, 22-25 October. The full report can be found on EGFAR.



AARINENA

*Civil Society Organizations*

### **Profile Article: IRTECO - Irrigation Training and Economic Empowerment Organization**

Though our life depends on agriculture, very little efforts so far have been seriously put on ensuring sustainable water management and agribusiness projects. Farming practices associated with poor irrigation and agronomic skills has put our farmers to a continuous environmental degradation that has greatly impeded social and economic development in the rural economy of Tanzania.



IRTECO is a Non Governmental, non-profit making Organization established in October 2000 with aim to contribute efforts towards poverty reduction through enhancing irrigation and economic empowerment skills to small-scale farmers (men and women) in irrigation potential areas, through pooling experts together to deliver better irrigation and economic empowerment services.

IRTECO's specific objectives are to strengthen and support self-reliant irrigation improvement activities, promote environmental management, undertake research on resource efficient agriculture (REA), marketing of Agricultural produce and support establishment of a network of irrigation and agribusiness network at national level. The main target group is Small scale self-organized formal and informal groups and individual men and women, leaving in rural and peri-urban irrigation areas in Tanzania who stands to gain from farm yield, improved land use, and better environmental conservation. It puts emphasis on capacitating the Target Groups on the primary responsibility for integrated water resource management and sustainable agriculture by signing and executing short-term contracts with the target communities, the strategy that provides a better route for a long-term sustainability of agricultural activities in the programme areas. It guides and supports the formation of the Network of Irrigation and Agribusiness Groups by sensitizing both formal and informal Water Users groups (WUGs) and Associations (WUA) for ensuring maximum agricultural production in the areas.

**Mission:** "Leading organization in delivering participatory skills on irrigation and economic empowerment with gender and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming to poor strata population in irrigation potential areas in Tanzania" and the

**Vision is:** "Contribute towards improvement of the standard of living of small-scale self-formal and informal organized initiatives of small scale farmers in irrigation potential areas by delivering water, land use management and environmental skills in the area".

**Performance overview:** Poverty reduction is a long-term commitment that needs combination of various development techniques to ensure a continuous increase of income of the

population. IRTECO in collaboration with the government, NGOs and farmers has contributed to this end by carrying out the following are some key activities:

#### *Land and water management improvement*

Through its learning and action strategies, farmers have learnt that, terracing by itself increase the production twice as much as the situation before. Crops that have been planted on terraces are performing much well as compared to those planted on the steep slopes.

Application of water on terraced land has proved much easier and water infiltration and moisture retention capacity has been improved. For fertility improvement, the applied farmyard manure on a conserved land stays in place due to the reason that the steep land has been converted into a flat land. At the area without conservation stunted crops of different varieties are easily seen. Other associated activities include: Survey and design of irrigation and water harvesting systems, Conduct dialogue meetings on land and water resource, training village para-consultants on sustainable agriculture, train groups on conflict resolution water management and establishment of home stead and group tree nurseries.

#### *Temperature moderation and sustainable agriculture*

Farmers have been mobilised to strengthen the multi-storey agroforestry system. Introduction of agroforestry system including catchment afforestation and river bank protection and planting of trees at home staid areas improved the temperature. This package includes planting of multipurpose tree on the same land with crops increased number of farm products in terms of fruits, medicine, fuel wood and timber. The animal that are kept within the same area are fed by the crops remains and produce farm yard manure that could be applied on land to improve the soil fertility and therefore utilized by the plants/ crops. This circle creates a good environment for organic farming and hence improved sustainable agriculture.

#### *Strengthening the communication and networking between irrigation and agribusiness groups*

This is done through preparation of training materials and dissemination to the target groups, networking and exchange visits.

#### *Provision of planning and leadership skills*

This includes appraisal, preparation and guide the approval and translation of project documents as well as train and support CBOs and groups in the formulation of Community Action Plans (CAPS) and Group Action Plans (CAPS) project proposals. It also supports to conduct evaluations of community and donor supported projects/programmes for advising on more future success and facilitates different PRAs sessions at grassroots levels.

#### **National and International**

**collaboration:** IRTECO is very much involved in some relevant governmental programmes among others the Task Force of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security responsible for resource allocation and investment at local authorities level. IRTECO is a member of African Stockpile - Tanzania Branch and has been able to contribute to IPEN and GAIA discussions especially on areas concerning biological agriculture. Under collaboration with SODNET Kenya, IRTECO was supported by Norwegian Church Aid to participate to An Eastern African Position meeting about a global convention on water held in Nairobi that was attended the Eastern and horn countries. The concept of Irrigation and Agribusiness groups network fits with principles of the African Social Forum. As an open space forum, ENDA has supported IRTECO in attending different meetings and is fully committed in facilitating principles regarding culture sovereignty and agrarian movements at farmer groups levels. IRTECO also contributes to informal consultations regarding Pan African Engagement on G8 commitments to Africa.

**Challenges:** Interpretation of several national and international policies in line with indigenous farmers' competence needs intensive joint trainings. Weak link of elements of agricultural cycle i.e. production-value adding-marketing - policy in supporting small-scale farmers and agribusiness groups in solving the problem of poverty in rural areas. Lack of demand driven savings and credit Fund to allow sound accessibility for investment loans to facilitate a sustainable irrigation and agribusiness groups network. Sometimes there is conflicting interests between domestic use of forest resource and public interest on environmental protection that leads to over-harvesting of trees for domestic

purposes which causes diminishing water discharge from the source.

Mwadhini O. Myanza  
*IRTECO Tanzania*

#### *Civil Society Organizations*

### **GFAR CSOs Focal Points Meeting, Mexico**

The GFAR Secretariat organized a Civil Society Organizations meeting on 25th October in Mexico City, during GFAR 2004 Statutory Meeting in Mexico City (22nd-25th October). The meeting was presided by GFAR Vice-Chair Ms. Monica Kapiriri and attended by all GFAR farmers' organizations and NGOs regional focal points. The main objectives of the meeting were to provide for CSOs an opportunity to a) develop a plan of action that will enable them to contribute to the implementation of GFAR 2004-2006 Business Plan and b) to share and exchange information on recent developments in agricultural research in their sub-regional or regional constituencies.

Each FOs and NGOs Regional Focal Point briefly reported on their activities at national, sub-regional or regional level and the extent to which they were involved in various ARD processes in their respective regions. CSOs representatives also highlighted, during their presentations, priority issues in their respective regions, what actions need to be carried out to address these as well as on-going initiatives that could contribute to the process.

GFAR Executive Secretary made presentation of the Business Plan highlighting activities to be led or championed by the CSOs under each pillar of the plan. He reported that during the consultative process undertaken in developing the business plan, it was suggested that the issue of CSOs engagement in all of GFAR's activities be made a cross-cutting issue i.e. CSOs involvement should be reflected in all 4 pillars of the BP namely: i) Inter-regional Collaboration, ii) Collaborative Research partnerships, iii) Advocacy and Public Awareness and Strategic Thinking and finally, iv) Information and Communication Management Systems. Also, a brief overview of the DURAS Competitive Grant was presented to the group by the project coordinator. The main objective of the presentation was to clarify to the

group the procedures, rules and regulations of the competitive grant in order to increase CSOs participation in the second call for proposals.

During the afternoon session, the discussion focused on i) CSOs roles and responsibilities, ii) the structure of working groups and iii) resources needed to mobilize the CSOs in the implementation of the business plan.

N.A.

#### *Civil Society Organizations*

### **ASFARNER Workshop on Biotechnology**

Asian Farmers Network (ASFARNET) in collaboration with the International Service for Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) convened a workshop on "Biotechnology Promotion and Exchange on Agriculture" during November 28 -1 December in Bogor, Indonesia. The workshop was attended by representatives from FAO, Bogor regional authorities, ISAAA, national and regional farmers groups, Indonesian Biotechnology Research Centre and regional seed associations. Some important issues that were discussed during the workshop include:

- views on Agri-biotechnology through genetic engineering
- a need for more farmers' education on the benefits of the agri-biotechnology in the product quality, production system efficiency and product continuity
- direct field observations to several Biotechnology Research Centres and private companies
- experienced-based discussions between farmers on the implementations and biotechnology-crops marketing
- developing ASFARNET Plan of Action

The proceedings of the workshop can be found on EGFAR.

ASFARNET

#### *IARCs*

### **GFAR Stakeholder Committee of the Generation Challenge Program**

The 1st GFAR Stakeholder Committee of the GCP meeting was held in Rome, 29-30 November. The Committee, during the meeting, developed their annual program of work and selected the Chair and Vice-Chair to serve for a period of one year. The Committee acts in an advisory capacity, and is expected to facilitate the articulation, promotion and presentation of the views of various stakeholders to the GCP governance and management structure in order to contribute to the policies, strategies, research priorities, and program activities of the GCP. The proceedings of the meeting can be found on EGFAR.

N.A.

#### **GFAR Secretariat Staff**

Nur Abdi  
Rupert Best  
Fulvia Bonaiuti  
Maria Cristina Esuperanzi  
Gianna de Cesare  
Jean-François Giovannetti  
Antonio Schiavone  
Ola Smith