



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

Special Edition Special Edition Special Edition Special Edition Special Edition

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Message from the GFAR Chair



The Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) was established, as a NARS Initiative in 1996, to serve as a neutral platform in which stakeholders from both North and South can discuss and debate on important issues confronting the agricultural sector.

It aims to promote and encourage a bottom-up structure of research systems where non-traditional actors in agricultural research such as farmers' organization, NGOs and agro-enterprises can be involved in various stages of formulating, implementing and monitoring research programmes. Such a set-up is conducive to explore various forms of partnership that address the challenges of alleviating poverty, food security and sustainable management of natural resources.

I am therefore pleased that the DURAS Project, which is consistent with these principles, was conceived to support such an *opening up* process being promoted by GFAR. This DURAS Project *Promotion du développement durable dans les les systèmes de recherche agricole au Sud*, is supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France. It aims to support promoting sustainable development in the NARS through a Competitive Grants scheme and the functioning of the GFAR Secretariat.

The project's Competitive Grants will be an important tool in encouraging multi-stakeholder North-South and South-South partnerships and innovations in themes that are of significance to stakeholders on the ground: agro-biodiversity and genetic resources management for food security; local knowledge in natural resource management; agro ecology and other sustainable farming practices and linking farmers to market.

I must stress that the DURAS project is in itself a partnership endeavour between GFAR and the French Consortium of Agricultural Research Institutions, Agropolis based in Montpellier. It's also a type II Initiative, which is a concrete follow up of the last World Summit on Sustainable Development, WSSD, held in Johannesburg in August 2002.

I am certain that this project will go a long way to contribute positively to the strengthening of Southern stakeholders' involvement in the agricultural research process.

Mohammad H. Roozitalab
GFAR Chair

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Project Overview



What is DURAS

The Project DURAS was conceived in order to support the opening up process being promoted by GFAR and to contribute to strengthening the involvement of southern stakeholders in the agricultural research process and ensuring that their voices are heard at the international level. It also aims to enhance the scientific potential of these stakeholders through the implementation and management of research programmes which they believe to be strategically important for their regions.

The project's three components include:

- Support to the strengthening of regional fora in agricultural research, particularly in enabling relevant stakeholders such as NGOs, farmer groups and small and medium agri-enterprises to actively participate in the R&D process;
- Reinforce functional information communication management (ICM) system and development of Regional Agricultural Information Systems (RAIS);
- Launch a Competitive Grants Systems to encourage as well as promote innovation; and to scale up innovative practices developed in the south.

The first two components are managed by the GFAR Secretariat in Rome, Italy while the third component is implemented by Agropolis International which houses the project office in Montpellier, France.

A three-year project funded by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DURAS is also a Type 2 Initiative under the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) referred to as Partnerships for Sustainable Development. These are voluntary multi-stakeholder partnerships programmes which contribute to the implementation of inter-governmental commitments in

Agenda 21, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. As such, the project will contribute to the empowerment of all stakeholders in agricultural research to make a concrete contribution to the outcomes of the WSSD and other international agreements in furthering sustainable development (SD).



DURAS Components

Component 1

The first component of the DURAS Project aims to support the facilitation role of the Secretariat of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), including support to regional and sub-regional fora to enable them to function as a real forum where relevant stakeholders actively participate. The GFAR Secretariat is mandated by its charter to carry out a number of activities and functions designed to facilitate the implementation of the GFAR Business Plan by its stakeholder groups. Some of these activities include revisiting/updating regional priorities with full participation of all stakeholders, and support to facilitating the involvement and strengthening of civil society organizations (CSOs), i.e., NGOs, farmers' organization and small agri-enterprises in the ARD process.

The DURAS Project has supported a number of activities under this component including the development of the GFAR Business Plan for the period 2004-2006; conduct of Inter-regional dialogue, particularly the meeting of Regional Fora Executive Secretaries held in May 2004 in Rome; and support to regional stakeholder participation in the IFAP World Farmer Congress held in 30 May-04 June 2004 in Washington DC, USA.

Component 2

Facilitating information and communication exchange among stakeholders in agricultural research

is also among the objectives of the DURAS Project. Under this component, the project has supported various activities the Secretariat pursued the twin objectives of monitoring, updating and improving the GFAR website (www.egfar.org) as well as facilitating the development of Regional Agricultural Information Systems (RAIS) in all of the five RF.

Specific activities carried out to date included support to the enhancement of EGFAR as well as in the organization of five regional workshops and a final inter-regional workshop the development of Regional Agricultural Information Systems (RAIS) which were held as follows: Asia-Pacific (November 2003); Central Asia and the Caucasus (January 2004); Sub-Saharan Africa (April 2004); and Latin America and the Caribbean (May 2004); and the inter-regional workshop in June 2004 in Rome. This final workshop brought together all the RAIS managers in all of the five regions as well as representatives from Europe to contribute to the elaboration of a global strategy that will facilitate the interface and sharing of information across these regions. They also recommended the development of a Global Partnership Programme (GPP) on ICM for agricultural research for sustainable development (ARSD) which will aim to achieve more impact for RAIS and national agricultural information systems (NAIS) through collaboration and synergy.

Component 3

The third component of the project is the implementation of a Competitive Grants Scheme (CGS) whose objectives are: (a) to encourage and promote innovation as well as to scale up innovative practices in ARD developed in the south; and (b) to enhance scientific capacity southern partners.

The DURAS CGS will support research proposals on the following themes:

- *Agrobiodiversity and genetic resources management for food security*
To contribute to food security and the conservation of resources through environmental conservation and the sustainable utilization of agrobiodiversity,

especially through the use of plant and animal genetic resources: varietal selection, biotechnology, seed technology and increasing the use of conservation and management practices in-situ and ex-situ.

- Local knowledge in natural resources management**
To understand, evaluate and stimulate the use of local or indigenous knowledge as well as to strengthen local capacities in developing adapting their own systems and institutions in achieving food security, sustaining livelihoods, and managing natural resources; To enable such knowledge to occupy a respected position in the application of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Rural innovation and linking farmers to market**
To contribute to extending the framework of agricultural research work which takes into account the growing effects of liberalization and the important changes occurring in agriculture and their consequences for rural areas, including the health of the small business communities upstream and downstream of agriculture and new areas of opportunity for producers.
- Agroecology and other sustainable farming practices**
To contribute to food security and the conservation of resources through low-cost technologies focusing on labor practices that respect soil quality, increase the incorporation of organic matter and enable good carbon uptake.

Application is open to all national agricultural research systems, universities, and civil society organizations from ZSP countries:

<i>Near East</i>
Lebanon, Autonomous Palestinian Territories, Yemen
<i>North Africa</i>
Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa and Indian Ocean</i>
Angola, Benin, Burkina-Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Ivory Coast, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, DR of the Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Zimbabwe
<i>Indochina Peninsula</i>
Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam

The first Call for Proposals on the first two themes mentioned above was launched in July 2004, with the deadline for submission of proposals last 8 October 2004.

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All pre-proposals will be reviewed by the GFAR NARS Sub-committee composed of representatives from five Regional Fora on Agricultural Research on 23 October 2004. The DURAS Scientific Partnership Committee will also review the proposals in November. The Lead Proponents of the selected pre-proposals will be notified by early December and will be asked to submit full proposals by end of March 2005.

Final selection and project approval will be made in early May, with projects commencing soon after.

Presented below is the timeframe for the first Call for Proposals.

22 October 2004	Evaluation of Pre-proposals by the GFAR NARS Sub-Committee
November 2004	Evaluation of Pre-proposals by the DURAS Scientific Partnership Committee
Early-December 2004	Notice to Lead Proponent (to proceed to full proposals development)
December 2004/ March 2005	Partnerships building and full proposal development
30 March 2005	Deadline for submission of full proposals
Early May 2005	Selection, Approval, and Awards
June 2005	Projects start

The second Call for Proposals will be launched in early 2005 and will focus on the themes *Rural innovation and linking farmers to market* and *Agroecology and other sustainable farming practices*.

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