



GFAR

GLOBAL FORUM ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Newsletter

Issue 15/2005 – December 2005 / January 2006

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SPECIAL EDITION

"Building on Current Achievements for Future Development"

In This Issue

In this issue, the last for the year 2005, we share with you information on some milestones, activities and achievements during the year.

Early during the first quarter of the year, the Programme Facilitation Unit of the Under Utilized Species GPP with support from the Secretariat teamed up with IPGRI and the M.S. Swaminathan Foundation to organize an International Consultation on the role of agricultural biodiversity in achieving the Millennium Development Goal of freedom from hunger and poverty in Chennai India. The output of the consultation was a ten-point action plan which not only stressed the urgent need for nationally based actions, but also identified some areas of action that will contribute to meeting the MDG related to hunger and poverty. See the article on [page 4](#) for further details.

Mid-way through the year, efforts to support a reorganization and strengthening drive by the Civil Society Organizations associated with GFAR reached a milestone. The Farmers Research Committee was constituted and had a first meeting to develop a forward looking programme of action it believes will ensure it achieves its goal of influencing the ARD research agenda at different levels. At about the same time, the Sub-Saharan Africa NGO consortium was formally set up, and also immediately developed a programme of action followed by a multi stakeholder consultation, under the auspices of FARA, during which different stakeholders including researchers, farmers, the private sector and the NGO community came together under one roof to plan for future collaborative activities that will contribute towards the development of a research agenda for SSA. More details on these issues on [pages 5-6](#).

Towards the latter part of the year, in October, three very

[continues...]



[... from the first page]

important workshops in support of the advocacy and information communication management pillars of the GFAR business plan were carried out in collaboration with a number of partners. The first one under the advocacy and strategic thinking mandate of the Secretariat was the convening, in collaboration with the CGIAR Science Council Secretariat, of an action-oriented workshop on "How can the Poor Benefit from the Growing Markets for High Agricultural Value Products (HVAP)". The overriding goal was to contribute to developing a common understanding about how small producers can obtain the market linkages, technologies, organization and know-how they require to benefit from dynamic markets for high value products, and to form a platform for future action. Participants included strategic thinkers and knowledgeable practitioners from different stakeholder groups including CSO representatives. One of the interesting outputs was the formation of a group dedicated to promoting an initiative to work with farmer organizations to identify ways to build social capital for their organizations and the linkages that are necessary for them to realize the opportunities provided by emerging HVAP markets. More details on this on [page 6](#).

At about the same period of time in October, the Secretariat teamed up with FAO and other partners (CGIAR, CTA and INASP) to organize an expert consultation on International Information Systems for Agricultural Science and Technology. In this issue you will find details on this consultation on [page 8](#).

During the same month of October, the DURAS Project Leaders' Workshop was held in Montpellier. The workshop brought together 2 persons affiliated with each of the 12 funded projects. It was an invaluable networking occasion for these participants. Information on issues tackled during this workshop are on [page 8](#).

At the very end of the year, in early December, GFAR statutory meetings accompanied, as is now the tradition, by

some other activities were held in Marrakech, Morocco.

One of the main highlights of the GFAR Steering Committee meeting in Marrakech was the final approval it gave to the new GFAR Charter. The Steering Committee in consultation with stakeholders had undertaken a review of the Charter which was last reviewed in 2000. More details on this and other highlights from Marrakech on [page 3](#).

One of the mentioned accompanying activities was the Youth Platform for ARD meeting. This brought together a number of young people involved in one way or another with the agricultural sector, and who are interested in and would like to contribute to ARD issues from a youth perspective. Some information on the genesis and activities including this first meeting of the platform which has requested to be under the GFAR umbrella are described succinctly in this issue on [page 9](#).

Another accompanying activity was a workshop organized by the GFAR Secretariat on Competitive Funding Mechanisms (CFM). The Secretariat was mandated by a group that discussed the CFM during the FARA General Assembly in June 2005, to organize a more in-depth discussion on it with the objective of coming up with recommendations that will contribute to improving the utilization of this research financing instrument. You will find some details on this on [page 10](#).

Improving Communications. Some reflection within the Secretariat is on-going as to how to improve our communication strategy in order to extend its reach and impact. We share out thoughts and reflections on this with you in this issue, and solicit your input before we finalize the strategy, including a redesigned EGFAR. More details on this in the two articles on [page 11](#) and [page 13](#).

This issue of the newsletter, the last one for 2005, is rich in activities, milestones and achievements, on which we hope to build in the coming years.

Bonne lecture.

O.S.



Highlights of the Marrakech Meetings



The **GFAR Statutory Meetings** were held in Marrakech, Dec. 1st - 4th 2005

Approval of new GFAR Charter

The annual statutory meetings of GFAR were held in Marrakech from December 1st to 4th 2005, prior to the CGIAR AGM. The GFAR Steering Committee (SC) during its meeting on the 4th of December, gave its final approval to the new GFAR Charter. A review of the GFAR Charter was discussed and approved by the SC during its meeting in Nairobi in October 2003, and following some preliminary reviews carried out by a three-person team, the SC subsequently reviewed the Charter, and gave its final approval to the revised version during the Marrakech meeting. Some of the new provisions in the new Charter are;

- a) Transformation of Advanced Research Institutes (ARIS) to Regional Forum. The ARIS from Europe and North America are classified in the new Charter as regional forum from Europe and North America. The term ARIS therefore no longer exists in the new Charter. The stakeholder constituents of GFAR now comprise the following categories: National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) through their Regional Fora, the European Regional forum, the North American Regional Forum, International Agricultural Research Centres, Non-Governmental Organizations, Farmer's organizations, the Private Sector, the Donors' Community, and the Facilitating Agencies.
- b) Transformation of the NARs Sub-Committee to a Programme Committee. In the new Charter, the NARs Sub-

Committee is now a Programme Committee with a new composition and functions that would allow it play a more programmatic role.

As for its composition, the Programme committee comprises: two representatives from each of the five southern RF and one representative from each of the northern fora. One of the representatives from the southern fora should be the Executive Secretary of the fora, and the other from a stakeholder group other than that of the Executive Secretary, with at least one from each of the non-research groups (NGO, Farmers' Organization and the private sector), for a total number of 12 members.

And as for its functions, the main one now is to oversee planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation of agreed GFAR programs at global, regional and/or sub-regional level.

- c) Specified tenure of office for Chairs and Vice-Chairs of committees. The chairs and vice-chairs of the SC and the PC will now serve for one three-year term only
- d) Clarity in terms of the role of the SC in the appointment of the Executive Secretary and his term of office. With regards to the appointment, the text states: "The SC will select and propose a ranked shortlist of up to three candidates for the post of Executive Secretary of GFAR to FAO's Director General for appointment. The appointment will be made from this shortlist, unless a legal impediment intervenes, or the proposed



appointment is not consistent with the provisions of FAO's Administrative manual. With regards to the term of office the text states: "The Executive Secretary will serve for an initial period of three years renewable in line with the host institution's rules and regulations, and based on an assessment and decision of the GFAR Steering Committee for up to a maximum of 9 years".

The Steering Committee finalized a process set in motion during the Entebbe Mid-year meeting, for the selection of a new chair and vice-chair of GFAR. The current incumbents are nearing the end of their terms of office. The SC approved the election of Dr Adel El-Beltagy as the new chair of GFAR to take effect from May 2006, and Mr. Jack Wilkinson as vice-chair of GFAR to take effect from December 2006.

O.S.

New Chair and Vice-Chair for GFAR

The full text of the new Charter is available on line:
www.egfar.org/tools/pdf/GFAR_charter_2005.pdf

News

High Level Consultation on Biodiversity and the Millennium Development Goals

The Global Facilitation Unit (GFU) for Underutilized Species with support from the GFAR Secretariat teamed up with the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) and the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) to organize an International Consultation on the Role of Agricultural Biodiversity in achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of freedom from hunger and poverty. The consultation took place in Chennai, India, from the 18th to the 19th of April 2005. It had about 100 participants from 25 different countries, representing a cross section of people with varied background and expertise. The consultation focused on drawing attention to the unique contribution agricultural biodiversity can make to improving livelihoods (if properly utilized and protected, noting that current losses in biotechnology may threaten future food and nutritional security and adversely impact on achieving the MDG).

A major output of the consultation was a ten-point action plan on conserving biodiversity which provides suggestions and advice that will help national governments and international agencies in their efforts to



respond to and meet challenges of the MDG. The action plan called for improved collaboration on a global basis for the conservation and sustainable utilization of agricultural biodiversity, and for the need to promote local markets and facilitate access to international markets for food products derived from these crops. The ten-part action plan is available in various languages on the GFU website. This action plan was first distributed during a G77 and China Group meeting that took place before the September 2005 UN Summit in New York. The GFU has since then published a brochure: "Meeting the Millennium Development Goals with Agricultural Biodiversity" to show case the contribution of a number of underutilized species to improved livelihoods of rural people. The proceedings of the Chennai consultation are scheduled to be published in January 2006. See the GFU website for further details:
www.underutilized-species.org.

O.S.



News

FARA: putting *inclusive* research partnership into action

Participants in the Multi-stakeholder Consultation meeting held on 3rd-7th Oct. 2005 in Accra, Ghana

FARA convened a week-long multi-stakeholder consultation workshop during 3-7 October 2005 at the FARA headquarters at Accra, Ghana. The meeting brought together representatives from NGOs, farmer organizations, private sector, the Sub-regional Research Organizations (SROs) represented by CORAF/WECARD, Centre for Innovation in Development (Novafrica), and the CGIAR Centers in the region represented by IITA. The objective of the meeting was threefold: i) to develop an inclusive regional ARD agenda; ii) to provide the stakeholders with an opportunity to share and exchange information and knowledge; and iii) to sensitise the participants on recent developments in the ARD in the region.

The first two days were dedicated to the development of a program of work by NGOs. On the third day the group were joined by Farmers Organizations and Private Sector representatives to collectively devise a CSO Program of Work by identifying areas of collaboration. Representatives from CGIAR Centers and SROs joined the group on 4th and 5th day to share experiences identify, and take stock on lessons learned and plan the next steps.

Discussions focused on how CSOs can effectively participate in the planning, development, execution and evaluation of ARD programs at all levels, particularly at the regional level.

Some of the issues raised and discussed in-depth include:

- Weak research-extension-farmer linkage due to lack of appropriate capacity of farmers and their institutions to effectively engage with researches
- Poor access to, and use of knowledge and information
- Need for genuine participation, transparency and accountability in partnerships
- Need for strong biosafety policy, and regulations, as well as capacity development
- Inadequate infrastructure for the delivery of goods and services
- Lack of capacity of NGOs to collaborate and participate more effectively in the ARD process and resource mobilization
- Lack of incentive mechanism to encourage Small and Medium Enterprises (S&ME)

Some of the recommendations of the meeting were:

- ***Inclusive SROs:*** Implementation of active participation and representation of the different categories of civil society groups (farmer, private sector, NGOs) in sub-regional agricultural research organizations.
- ***CSOs as equal partners:*** FARA should with immediate effect, ensure a level playing field for participation, buy-in and ownership of all civil society groups in African agricultural research for development.



- **Capacity building:** FARA and GFAR should negotiate with CG Centres to contribute to capacity strengthening of civil society groups by supporting fellowship placements for their personnel at their respective centres. Also there is an urgent need to strengthen CSO group's capacity in international trade negotiations so that African stakeholders can perform better at such negotiations.
- **Inducive environment:** National governments should implement

favourable policies that encourage and support agricultural productivity and raise incomes of farmers.

The meeting was co-sponsored by the GFAR and FARA secretariats.

N.A

The Proceedings of the meeting are available here:
www.egfar.org/tools/pdf/FARA_inclusiveness.pdf

News

IFAP launches International Farmers' Committee on ARD



After a six month long consultation process, the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) launched the International Farmers' Committee on Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) during a meeting held in Paris on 05-06 September 2005. The objective of the meeting was to discuss ARD priorities of farmers and identify collaborative activities with researchers that would respond to their needs.

At the meeting the Committee developed a five-point action plan:

- Lobby campaigns for more farmer involvement in ARD processes at all levels
- Document and disseminate best ARD management practices by examining good practices and positive processes

that already exist between researchers and farmers

- Set-up capacity building programs that enhance farmers' organizations contribution to ARD
- Draw up a farmers' documentation kit on agricultural research
- Facilitate and coordinate farmer representation at agricultural research debates and discussions at various fora

The overall mandate of the Committee is to properly articulate and present farmers' concerns and interests on various ARD debates and discussion at the global level. The meeting was organized by IFAP Secretariat and sponsored by GFAR Secretariat.

N.A.

The proceedings of the meeting are available here:
www.egfar.org/tools/pdf/IFAP_committee.pdf

News

Can the poor benefit from High Value Agricultural Products?

A group of about 40 experts in all aspects of high-value agricultural products (HVAP) - from different points in the research and development continuum and from different stakeholder groups - met at the

headquarters of the International Center for Tropical Agriculture ([CIAT](http://www.ciat.org)), Cali, Colombia, in early October to help those involved in agricultural research for development address the question of how the poor,



especially neglected groups such as rural women and ethnic minorities, can benefit from growing markets for these products.

Convened by the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR) and the CGIAR

Science Council, the workshop was organized by their secretariats in collaboration with CIAT, the World Vegetable Center (AVRDC), International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), and the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP).

Major outcomes of the meeting

After examining the major challenges to promoting HVAP, participants identified seven interrelated areas of research as pivotal for enabling effective linkages between poor farming communities and the more competitive and exacting standards of high value agricultural product markets. Research questions were clustered around:

- (i) The development of equitable partnerships for engaging in high value markets
- (ii) Organisation, with market competence, for the production and marketing of HVAP
- (iii) Good practice methods for engaging in higher value markets
- (iv) Market types that should be considered in an HVAP strategy for the poor
- (v) The management of information and innovation to maintain competitiveness
- (vi) The selection of the most appropriate technology for HVAP markets
- (vii) Fostering of pro-poor HVAP policies



Participants in the High Value Workshop held in October in Cali, Colombia

Overarching considerations

While appreciating the opportunities, the specialists acknowledged that enabling farmers to avail new market opportunities is not easy and entails significant risks. In particular they highlighted a number of considerations with respect to the promotion of high value agricultural products as a strategy for reducing poverty and enhancing food security. Among the most important of these were:

HVAP are not a substitute but a complementary strategy. HVAP strategies are essentially means of enabling producers to diversify into higher risk business areas. The approach should not be considered as a substitute to current development activities but as an additive or complementary process.

How to identify which "poor" to engage within a HVAP strategy. The HVAP approach should identify clients based on risk profiling. In this way communities can self-select among a basket of market options and products to invest in, based on their decisions of acceptable levels of risk exposure. This approach remains inclusive, flexible and offers a democratic and innovative process for working with different segments of the poor within a less advantaged community.

Political will. Participants considered that if left to market forces, poor farmers would be unlikely to be able to form long-term links to HVAP markets. HVAP strategies should be developed in areas where there is political will and community support for the process. Where this will is lacking,



advocacy to raise political awareness of the

The Synthesis Report of the workshop can be viewed here:
www.eqfar.org/tools/pdf/HVP_synthesis_report.pdf

HVAP options to alleviate poverty and improving food security will be required.

R.B.

News

Expert Consultation on International Agricultural Information Systems

FAO, CGIAR, CTA, INASP and GFAR as partners organized an Expert Consultation on International Information Systems for Agricultural Science and Technology – Review of Progress and Prospects during 19th and 21st October at FAO, Rome. The objectives of the consultation were:

- To define for the wider agricultural information community the future roles of and relationships between the various stakeholder networks and initiatives in agricultural science and technology.
- To raise awareness of the present “business models” for self-publishing by agricultural institutions and possible new approaches offered by the Open Access model.
- To define for the wider agricultural information community the future roles of and relationships between the various capacity building initiatives in agricultural information management.
- To initiate and/or consolidate a range of focused working groups for the

development and validation of standards and guidelines for information exchange.

The consultations validated the outcomes of the GFAR supported regional and global ICM consultations and indicated action for advocacy to improve ICM in ARD systems starting from the NARS, capacity development, especially to generate digital content and collaborative efforts to improve content management related to agriculture globally. Technical resources such as standards, tools, applications etc will be developed through collaboration and consultation among all partners and stakeholders of ARD to facilitate digitization of content. Task forces for mapping action for advocacy, capacity development and content management are being set up. The draft report is available with GFAR Secretariat. The final report, now in preparation, will be circulated shortly.

A.M.

News

DURAS Project Leaders' Workshop held

Prior to full implementation of the 12 projects selected under the DURAS Competitive Grants, the DURAS Project Office organized a workshop that brought together all the Project coordinators and their European collaborators from 11-14 October 2005 in Montpellier (France).

During the workshop, project coordinators discussed the potential contribution of their respective projects to sustainable

development (SD) and what indicators could be used to measure it. As they were not able to draw a conclusion on this, it was agreed that the process of identifying indicators covering the economic, ecological and social dimensions of SD will be continued in consultation with their other partners.

Also discussed during the workshop was the framework for progress reporting.



The 12 projects will provide Quarterly and Annual Progress Reports. These progress reports will cover four critical success factors in project implementation: (1) meeting project objectives; (2) timeliness; (3) functional involvement of stakeholders; and (4) dissemination of scientific outputs.

Financial Reporting Framework as well as information and communication tools which can be used to facilitate interaction among project coordinators, including dissemination of project results, were agreed upon during the Workshop.



Participants in the DURAS Project Leaders' Workshop held on 11-14 October 2005, Montpellier (France)

Oliver Oliveros
DURAS project coordinator

News

The first meeting of the Young Professionals for ARD (YPARD)



Participants in the meeting of the YPARD, Marrakech, Dec. 4th 2005

About 70 Participants mainly youth, met on December 4, 2005 in the first ARD Youth Forum during GFAR 2005 Statutory meetings held at Marrakech, Morocco on 04-05 December. They discussed problems faced by young professionals, and how these issues could be addressed by a global, multi-stakeholder forum as proposed following the European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD) 2005 conference. The meeting was supported by the CGIAR System Office and the GFAR Secretariat. During discussions it was clear that young

professionals in ARD faced the same problems around the globe. The main concerns raised were:

- Poor access to resources and funding for youth
- Lack of career opportunities
- Poor institutional support
- Insufficient communication between youth and senior professionals and between different stakeholders

Some of the concrete recommendations to tackle the above problems were:



- Raise awareness and advocate for more youth involvement in ARD systems
- Advocate to donors for more funds particularly for young researchers
- Increase visibility and representation of young professionals views, needs and beliefs
- Develop communication mechanisms that would enable youth to exchange and share information and knowledge

The meeting agreed that there is a need for a platform for young professionals, Young Professionals Platform for Agricultural Research for Development (YPARD), composed by members who advocate and voice young professionals' needs and beliefs. YPARD should be present at international level meetings, organise information, and forge a strong learning-network. YPARD could then expand and incorporate other activities.

A strategy planning meeting of YPARD has been scheduled for spring 2006 in Wageningen, The Netherlands and the official launch of the YPARD during the GFAR Triennial congress between 9-11 November 2006 in New Delhi, India.

Further information:

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N.A.

To read the declaration, full proceedings of the meeting and the concept note of YPARD:
www.egfar.org/tools/pdf/YPARD_meeting.pdf

News

GFAR-DURAS Roundtable Discussion on Competitive Grants



Following a request by participants of the Pre-Plenary Session on "Lessons Learned in the ASARECA

Competitive Grants"

at the FARA General Assembly at Entebbe (Uganda), the GFAR Secretariat organized a Roundtable Discussion on Competitive Grants Schemes (CGS) on 03 December 2005 in Marrakech (Morocco) in conjunction with the GFAR Annual Statutory Meeting. This round table discussion was preceded by an electronic discussion on the same topic.

The activity aimed at sharing experiences and lessons learned on the use of CGS as a tool for leveraging partnerships as well as for building scientific and institutional capacities. The discussion focused on issues related to determining research focus of a CGS; types of accompanying measures to ensure that CGS funds reach

target groups; evidence of CGS impact on national research capacities; and sustainability of research partnerships developed through the use of CGS.

Speakers in this Roundtable debate included an interesting mix of stakeholders that are involved in CGS, namely the donor community (USAID); implementers of CGS at various levels- programme (Generation Challenge Programme), regional (FONTAGRO) and sub-regional (ASARECA); and a recipient of a CGS funding (local research organization in South Africa).

This consultation was supported through the DURAS project.

O.S. & O.O.

Follow this link to read the Discussion Highlights:
www.egfar.org/tools/pdf/GFAR-DURAS_CGS_RT.pdf



Articles

GFAR Communications Strategy

GFAR's function as a platform that facilitates and fosters global networks of agricultural research and development (ARD) stakeholders requires GFAR to have robust communication capabilities. GFAR's communication capacities must enable its stakeholders to discuss and act in partnership to resolve issues related to ARD across the world. GFAR should be capable of providing the necessary, relevant and useful information related to ARD issues to its stakeholders when and where they need it in a form that is easily accessible to them. GFAR has to go one step ahead of other ARD information providers in enabling its stakeholders to effectively use the information it provides. As GFAR evolves, in order to keep up with its vision and intent, the approach to how its stakeholders and partners communicate among themselves needs to be regularly revisited.

The GFAR Secretariat has initiated the drafting of a communications strategy for GFAR. The core parameters for designing its communications strategy are:

- The strategy must equitably include all its stakeholders and partners in serving information
- Its communications should aim to provide reliable, relevant and useful information in an open, transparent and coherent manner for all its stakeholders and partners
- There must be easy access to all information that GFAR provides
- GFAR should be an example that leads towards greater coherence and integration of global agricultural information systems and services

Setting up of these parameters for the GFAR Communication Strategy helps offset some of the gaps that current GFAR communications create. At the moment, a large percentage of all communications



The GFAR booth at Marrakech Meetings

within GFAR are processed by the Secretariat. The draft communications strategy emphasizes that stakeholders and partners, especially the Regional Forums, the NARS and GPP partners, independently use the EGFAR communications space to communicate with the GFAR community and the public.

Some of the elements the GFAR Secretariat is considering in developing the draft communications strategy include identifying Who the "clients" of GFAR communications are. For the purpose of drafting the strategy, it has considered the following as its main clients:

- Regional and Sub-Regional Fora and Organizations and their staff
- Farmer Organizations, Non-Government Organizations and Civil Society Organizations and their staff
- National Government and Public Sector ARD Institutions and their staff
- Private Sector Institutions and their staff
- GFAR Partners such as FAO and CGIAR including CGIAR IARCs and Non-CGIAR IARCs and their staff
- Donors who contribute to GFAR and potential donors and their staff
- General Public and the Press
- Members of GFAR's Governance structures and its secretariat staff



Table 1 - Clients and information needs

INFORMATION NEEDS	CLIENTS	Regional Fora	CSOs, NGOs, FOs	Nat. Gvrns, NARS	Private Sector	GFAR partners	Donors	General public and Press	GFAR governing structures
Current and Proposed GFAR and Partner activities with their status		●	●	●	●	●		●	
Partners and Stakeholders contact details and specialization, especially related to technology, information, skills availability						●			
Contact details of GFAR consultants and staff		●	●	●		●			
Platforms for advocacy where GFAR stakeholders and partners can voice their needs and contributions to improve ARD				●		●			
ARD institutions and agricultural technology ARD stakeholders offer		●	●		●	●		●	
Relevant linkages which Farmer Organizations, Non Government Organizations and Civil Society Organizations can form for better ARD					●	●			●
Institutional Development		●							●
Funding Sources		●				●			●
Institutions, Experts and ARD Projects including collaborative projects at sub-regional, regional and Global levels as also Public-Private and Public-Private-Community Partnerships classified Thematically, Geographically and Commodity wise		●							●

Tables 1 and 2 (on next page) describe the clients information needs and the media GFAR may use to communicate the specific information

An important strategic step envisaged is that GFAR will gradually, depending on responses from its stakeholders, partners and clients of its information and communications services, shift from print media to electronic media to communicate and share and exchange information. However, the draft communication strategy recognises that print media cannot wholly be replaced with digital and electronic media.

GFAR needs a governance structure to coordinate and regularly approve its major communications such as books, finalized reports and briefing papers. To guide continuous evolution of EGFAR, which is expected to be GFAR's main communications space in the future (see the note on how EGFAR is being

reengineered in this Newsletter), a separate EGFAR Sub-Committee, which will comprise of members with a technical background in digital and electronic communications and information management, is being suggested. Once these governance mechanisms are in place, the GFAR Secretariat will establish the appropriate work processes that will enable efficient and effective communications within GFAR.

(The GFAR Secretariat solicits your comments and suggestions on the draft GFAR Communications Strategy. Please send your comments by e-mail to GFAR-Secretariat@fao.org or to GFAR Secretariat by postal mail)

A.M.



Table 2 - Information and Media

INFORMATION	Print media						Digital media										
	Books	Reports	Briefing papers	Brochures	Pamphlets, Leaflets and Flyers	Posters	Letters	EGFAR Website	CD-ROMs	Electronic discussion lists	PDF and Word documents	Power Point presentations	Emails	Databases	Directories	Multimedia Photos, audio, video	Newsletter
Current and proposed GFAR and partner activities with their status		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•
Partners and Stakeholders contact details and specialization, especially related to technology, information, skills availability					•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•	•		
Contact details of GFAR consultants and staff			•	•	•		•	•			•		•	•			
Platforms for advocacy where GFAR stakeholders and partners can voice their needs and contributions to improve ARD		•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•				•
ARD institutions and agricultural technology ARD stakeholders offer	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Relevant linkages which Farmer Organizations, Non Government Organizations and Civil Society Organizations can form for better ARD			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•				•
Institutional Development	•	•	•		•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•				•
Funding Sources					•		•	•	•			•	•	•	•		•
Institutions, Experts and ARD Projects	•						•	•				•	•	•	•		•

Articles

The re-design of EGFAR



EGFAR, GFAR's website and keystone to its communications, is being redesigned to keep pace with GFAR's continued evolution in facilitating and fostering effective networks for agriculture research and development. With the redesign of EGFAR, GFAR's stakeholders and partners will gain

improved access and usability to ICT mediated communications. EGFAR, over several years of its development, has been viewed as a system of web pages, a digital information repository, a discussion list etc. After consolidating various perspectives of EGFAR, it can now be considered as a **virtual space** that provides, through use of ICTs, an information and knowledge sharing



platform for all GFAR stakeholders. EGFAR has to mimic the physical space GFAR creates for discussion and action on ARD.

and experts and finding out details of ARD projects, their outputs and impact.

A new customizable section available to registered users, called **My EGFAR**, is

being included.

This will allow

GFAR's

stakeholders,

partners and

individuals to

customize EGFAR to

fulfil their needs. My

EGFAR will include a

customizable

appearance, alerts,

the ability to share

documents and link

them to other

documents available

on EGFAR, setting

up electronic

discussion lists,

creating and editing

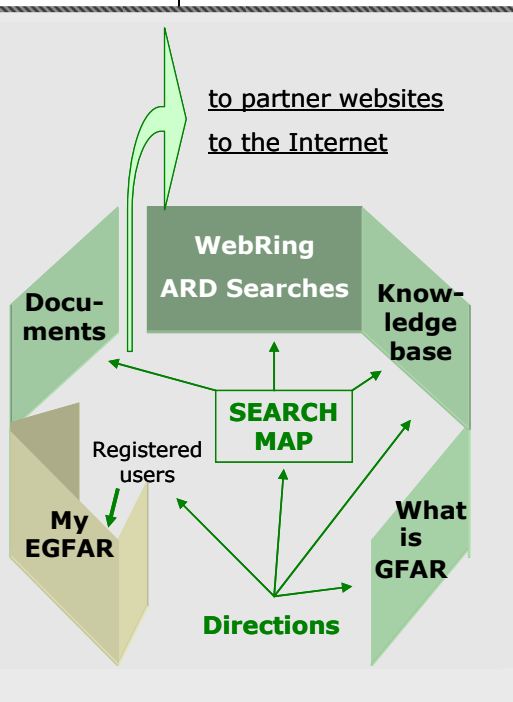
wikis and even

creating "rooms" to

discuss ARD issues.

In future, My EGFAR

EGFAR as a "Virtual Space" mimics the physical GFAR as a neutral platform to facilitate and foster discussion and action on ARD issues. As in a physical space, through EGFAR, stakeholders and partners of GFAR can meet other stakeholders and partners to access, share and exchange ARD information and knowledge. Within the virtual space, partners with specific and mutual interests can invite each other to joint activities and share their common information space.



EGFAR, while continuing to provide the most current information about GFAR, its stakeholders and programs, by its redesign will extend its information and knowledge services. The new EGFAR information services from will include:

- The pilot EGFAR Web Ring, to provide easy access to stakeholder websites and globally integrated ARD related databases
- ARD events information through an RSS feed
- Access to ARD documents and media such as photographs and video clips.

plans to offer blogging space to its stakeholders. My EGFAR, as a new section, imbibes key concepts identified when EGFAR was initiated. These were that the EGFAR website should, as a communication tool "be managed, as much as possible, in a decentralised mode by the different RAIS and GFAR stakeholders" and the role of the website should be in "converting information into knowledge that is useful for different end-users and stakeholders".

The redesign of EGFAR also aims to further realize, according to GFAR's principles of subsidiarity and decentralisation, improved access to relevant information resources of its stakeholders and partners available at their websites and in distributed databases that they maintain. Its knowledge services, after the redesign, will include access to **the GFAR Knowledge Base**. This knowledge base will provide support to GFAR stakeholders in contacting institutions

In order to streamline maintenance, EGFAR is being totally re-engineered. EGFAR will now use the Struts Framework to manage its architecture and have a Content Management System to manage its content. It will use middleware to isolate content both from its web server applications and from its presentation interface using modern tenets of web space management.

EGFAR will fully exploit the power of XML to render all its information on web pages. This will enable partner websites to automate access to EGFAR content. The



choice of XML complies with the principle of **standardization**, adopted by EGFAR since its project phase: "EGFAR will have to promote standards (use those already available) to be shared by the various stakeholders". Information has to be stored and shared in a standardized way so that it can be integrated with information coming from other sources. This means making use of standards at all levels: format (XML), cataloguing, taxonomies and indexes. The same concepts of using global standards apply to the choice of the database engine (standard SQL compliant) and the

programming language (platform-independent Java and Javascript).

The use of the new ICTs and compliance to and active promotion of widely adopted standards will help improve EGFAR's response to its main objectives by providing an interactive communication system and space among the stakeholders of ARD and enhance access, sharing and exchange of information resources by GFAR stakeholders and partners.

A.M. & V.P.

Announcement

GFAR 2006 Announcement



GFAR is pleased to announce that the Indian Government has kindly agreed to host the third GFAR General Conference. It will be held at **New Delhi, from 9-11th November, 2006** at the National Agricultural Science Center of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research.

The theme of the Triennial Conference will be "Reorienting Agricultural Research to meet the Millennium Development Goals".

The GFAR conference will follow immediately the 2006 APAARI General Assembly meeting held at the same venue from 6-8th November, 2006.

Preparation for GFAR Triennial Conference 2006 have started. GFAR Secretariat will soon provide information on participating in the Conference.

Please take note and reserve your dates for the Conference.

For further information, see:
www.egfar.org

O.S.

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