



GFAR

GLOBAL FORUM ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Newsletter

Issue 19/2007 – April 2007

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Editorial from the new Executive Secretary

2006 was a very active year for GFAR. A wide variety of programs and activities were conducted by its members and partner organizations. The highlights of the year were the Review of the Global Partnership Project, the 2nd External Review of GFAR and the GFAR 2006 triennial Conference at New Delhi. For 2007, GFAR has on its agenda the development of its 2007-2009 Business Plan. This is in addition to several continuing regional and interregional and partnership building activities of GFAR.

From March 30 till April 1 2007, representatives of GFAR stakeholders met and participated in a retreat at Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt to develop the GFAR 2007-2009 Business plan. After carefully considering the changing environment for global agricultural research for development, GFAR's strategy for the future was realigned to focus more on poor, small holder producers. The emphasis would be in promoting and fostering agricultural innovation systems for development. As its strategic objectives, GFAR would further strengthen its leadership role in strategic thinking and consensus building among ARD stakeholders on challenges faced by agricultural development and their possible solutions. It will continue to foster and promote partnerships on both North-South and South-South axis among its stakeholders for agricultural research for development (ARD). GFAR's role in information and knowledge sharing and exchange related to ARD would be further reinforced, especially through the use of information and communications technology through EGFAR. In the Business Plan for 2007-2009, GFAR will take up specific activities that contribute to adapting agriculture to climate change, linking small holder producers to markets, reorienting agricultural research, education and extension and enabling innovative approaches for knowledge access by smallholder producers.

In this newsletter, we include the communiqué released at the GFAR participatory retreat to develop its 2007-2009 Business Plan. The final Business Plan, after approval of the GFAR Steering Committee, is expected to be ready for implementation by end of May 2007.

Abdelmajid Slama

GFAR Secretariat

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News from the Secretariat

GFAR has a new Executive Secretary *a.i.*

The Global Forum on Agricultural Research has a new Executive Secretary *ad interim*.

Dr. **Abdelmajid Slama** was appointed Executive Secretary *a. i.* on February 6th 2007, replacing Dr. Ola Smith.



Born in 1943, Tunisian national, Dr. Abdelmajid Slama graduated in Agricultural Engineering and Agronomy from the National Agricultural Institute, University of Tunis (1967) and in Agricultural Economics from the University of Minnesota (1971). Dr. Slama has over 35 years of national

and international experience with a rich and balanced coverage of all the relevant aspects of agricultural development in developing countries. He was also actively involved in the IFAD initiated process that culminated in the creation of GFAR and chaired its Donor Support Group until 1999.

The GFAR staff, on behalf of all the stakeholders, warmly welcomes Dr. Slama and wishes him a successful and rewarding stay at GFAR.

**GFAR Retreat, 30/3 - 1/4 2007
Communiqué**

2 April 2007 Rome, Italy - Representatives of GFAR Stakeholders which include farmer organizations, non-government and civil society, regional research forums, research organizations of the North and South and international development agencies met for 3 days from 30th to 1st April 2007 at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt to formulate the central theme, direction and priorities through a business plan for GFAR for the next 3 years.

The Bibliotheca Alexandrina's Director Ismail Serageldin in his welcoming address stressed a focus on the world poor and the vital role of GFAR in mobilizing agricultural research globally for development.



Discussion group at the GFAR Retreat

The stakeholders reiterated GFAR's focus on the poor, small holder farmers and producers for mobilizing agricultural research and innovation for development. They emphasized an innovation systems approach that involved partnerships of multiple actors in the public, private and community sector for collaborative action for agricultural development.

The GFAR stakeholders revalidated the GFAR strategy with its four objectives of building consensus and advocacy, enabling research and innovation partnerships, mobilizing knowledge and communication and strengthening institutional capacity that underpin all GFAR actions. They identified four new thematic areas with projects to tackle challenges of the highest priority facing GFAR stakeholders. These included:

- Blending knowledge for innovation in smallholder agriculture – from an innovation systems perspective, inform and guide GFAR stakeholders towards appropriate and effective systems and mechanisms that blend and apply different sources and forms of knowledge useful for smallholder farmers and agricultural producers
- Adapting agriculture to climate change – Build consensus among GFAR stakeholders on a researchable agenda and action related to combating biotic and abiotic stresses on crops and sustainable management of resources, especially optimization of water use brought about by global climate change. This effort will be done in partnership with GFAR Stakeholders.
- Transforming agricultural research, extension and education – identify reforms, capacities and investments that are necessary to better connect researchers, extension agents, educators, innovators, non-government agencies and civil society organizations to development needs of smallholder farmers and producers;
- Linking smallholder producers to markets – bring about global cooperation among regional agricultural research forums and civil society organizations to improve and support programmes that aim to enhance the capacity



Dr. Ismail Serageldin's address

of smallholders producers to participate more equitably in markets;

Raghnath Ghodake, the Chairman of the Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) concluded that "we really looked at the crux of the problems ... repositioning ourselves in terms of where we want to go and how to really serve all the stakeholders of GFAR." Myra Wopereis-Pura representing the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) stated that "FARA was reassured that the exercise is leading to a more vitalized GFAR which continues to be a critical supporter for the work of FARA in Africa." Ibrahim Hamdan of the Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA) expressed that "the new approach of the business plan of GFAR will have significant impact on issues of critical importance for ARD in the West Asia and North Africa Region". Enrique Alarcón of the Forum for the Americas for Agricultural Research and Technology Development (FORAGRO) was pleased with GFAR explicitly incorporating an innovations systems approach in its new business plan. Iain MacGillivray,

representing Canada, stated "It was very useful and productive business planning meeting where participants looked at fundamental critical issues." Shantanu Mathur of the International Fund for Agricultural Development was of the opinion that the meeting, through introspection and with free, frank and open discussions, was very productive and "held a promise for developing a GFAR business plan to meet the needs of all GFAR constituents." There was an explicit recognition of the vital role of young professionals as stakeholders in GFAR.

The implementation of the business plan will draw upon expertise and capacities of the entire GFAR stakeholder community. In the coming weeks, the new business plan will be finalized by the GFAR Steering committee and shared with potential investors and partners.

Abdelmajid Slama concluded that the meeting helped GFAR "plan actions to address the emerging challenges for the global agricultural community." The Chair of the GFAR Steering Committee Adel El-Beltagy while thanking participants for their excellent contributions stated that "GFAR was at a crossroad and this meeting helped finding a path for us to repositioning GFAR for the future."

DURAS 2nd Project Leaders' Workshop held



The 2nd DURAS Project Leaders' Workshop was held last 28 February - 02 March 2007 at Agropolis International in Montpellier (France).

The event was attended by all the project coordinators and their European/French counterparts as well as two members of the DURAS Scientific Partnership Committee – Prof. Bernard Guerin (ACTIA - Association Centres Techniques au service entreprises Alimentaires) and Sonia Ramonteau (ACTA – Association de Coordination de Technique Agricole).



DURAS 2nd Project Leaders' Workshop

During this event, Dr. Jean Francois Giovannetti (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Chair, DURAS Steering Committee) announced the extension of the duration (without additional funding) of the 12 projects until 31 March 2008 instead of 30 November 2007. Also present during this event

were Dr. Henri Carsalade (President, Agropolis International) and Dr. Abdelmajid Slama (Executive Secretary a.i., GFAR).

The workshop aimed at bringing together coordinators and participants in DURAS-supported projects to share information about the progress achieved one year after implementation; to collectively take stock of lessons learned; to discuss emerging project contribution to sustainable development and the indicators which can be used to measure it; and



to discuss plans and strategies for next steps.

Key issues raised include the need to enhance communication and exchange across projects (e.g., use of videos, co-publication, etc.), need to effectively involve small and medium agro-enterprises particularly in research projects that involves the whole "filierre"; mainstreaming innovative approaches being adopted in each of the 12 initiatives particularly in the regular activities of organizations involved in the project; how can local knowledge be best used as a take off point in doing research, including how can these traditional knowledge feed into research; enabling farmers to be better involved in research; ensuring project results accessible; research ownership and Intellectual Property (IP) management; promoting synergy with other projects/initiatives and promoting research-development-education linkage.

Participants were also briefed of the outcome of the DURAS mid-term External Review. They have also provided some inputs for DURAS 2 such as a special Call for Proposal under Phase 2 involving only the 12 projects in an effort to promote and encourage integration of initiatives and valorize (emerging) complementary results (This can be a way of supporting future activities of some of the 12 projects).

Participants also strongly suggested to organize the 3rd DURAS workshop in one of the project sites. To be held in April 2008, this event will be open to other stakeholders working in agricultural research for development (ARD) and will serve as an opportunity to promote exchange of experiences and lessons learned on the dynamics of partnership, local innovation and ARD.

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GPPs

Updates on PROLINNOVA

October 2006: DGIS Support to Prolinnova 2007-2010 confirmed

The Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has confirmed its commitment to co-fund Prolinnova for the next 4 years, 2007-2010.

Though Prolinnova receives funding support from various donors, the DGIS component is crucial as it provides the basis, the core, to which other sub-programmes with other donors can be added.

By the end of 2006, all country programmes and partners went through a strategic review and planning process, including both the activities and the partnership arrangements, in preparation to the next 4 years.

November 2006: Innovation in Africa Symposium

Prolinnova successfully co-hosted with CIAT the Innovation in Africa Symposium as part of its international awareness raising and policy work. About 140 professionals working on agriculture and NRM in Africa and representing different stakeholders discussed new insights in how agricultural innovation can be stimulated. It was strongly recommended to plan a similar event in 3 years time.

More information can be found in the [news section on the Prolinnova website](#).

March 2007: Annual International Prolinnova Partners Meeting

The annual international Prolinnova partners meeting was held in Senegal. 40 people from about 20 countries exchanged their experiences in Promoting Local Innovation, building partnerships, integrating PID into curricula of universities and also developing plans for future joint actions.

One remarkable aspect was the presence of a considerable number of new partners from new countries who proved very keen on trying to build up Prolinnova type programmes: Kenya, Mozambique, Solomon Islands (representative got stranded on the way), Bolivia, Mali, Senegal, and Burkina Faso. The latter Francophone countries in West Africa have already mobilised funding from donors and the other countries have undertaken major steps, mostly from their own resources with limited inception support from the Prolinnova DGIS grant.

Booklets on Facilitating Multi-stakeholder Partnerships and Recognising Local Innovation

Experiences among Prolinnova partners in the period 2004-2006 have been captured in two publications: *Facilitating Multistakeholder Partnerships* and *Recognising Local Innovation*. These are available from IIRR, the Philippines, and also through the Prolinnova website [here](#). An agreement has been reached with CTA, the Netherlands, to cooperate in the publishing and distribution of a series of publications by Prolinnova, of which these booklets will be the first 2 volumes.

Laurens van Veldhuizen, PROLINNOVA



GPPs

Updates on the Global Facilitation Unit for Underutilized Species



GFU-ICUC side event at the CGIAR Annual General Meeting

On 5 December, the International Center for Underutilized Crops (ICUC) and the Global Facilitation Unit for Underutilized Species (GFU) organised a lunchtime event to discuss the "Future of Underutilized plants research and development", proposing to formalise their increasingly close collaboration during 2006. This proposal was commented very positively by the 30 participants to the meeting who engaged in a lively discussion on future institutional models. ICUC and GFU will now work closely to develop a proposal for their future collaboration, in consultation with their respective stakeholders.

The Strategic Framework for Underutilized Plant Species Research and Development published

In October 2006 the GFU published the *Strategic Framework for Underutilized Plant Species Research and Development* with special reference to Asia and the Pacific, and to Sub-Saharan Africa. This framework is the product of a global electronic consultation and two regional workshops earlier in 2006 organised by ICUC, GFU and Bioversity International.

The publication reviews current activities, provides examples of success and emphasizes the need to improve resource mobilization in support of underutilized plant species research and development, including urgent work to collect baseline information and formulate

meaningful indicators to guide future action. You can download the document [here](#).

Workshop proceedings - Hunger and poverty: the role of biodiversity

In November 2006 the GFU released the Report of the *International Consultation on The Role of Biodiversity in Achieving the UN Millennium Development Goal of Freedom from Hunger and Poverty* that took place in Chennai, India, April 18-19, 2005 at the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation and organized by GFU, MSSRF and Bioversity International.

You can download the document [here](#) and find all documents related to this event [here](#)

Who is doing what - Institutional Mapping Database

The "Who is doing what" service on the website of the GFU has been in place for some time, but the survey is still open for contributions. In order to facilitate improved networking and to develop synergies amongst stakeholders it is important to know who are those stakeholders involved, what are they doing and what strategies are they using. GFU has conducted and is still conducting a survey the results of which are compiled in a database and made available from the GFU website.

"Who is doing what" provides an opportunity to make your work and your expertise known to a large community and will give you information about other ongoing or past activities on underutilized species at a global level. With this survey GFU targets organizations, institutions, networks and individuals in the public and private sector. This will give the widest possible overview and in the end enlarge the community.

News from the Regional Fora

AARINENA

AARINENA Executive Committee Meeting

AARINENA Executive Committee held its meeting in New Delhi, India on 8 November 2006.



The meeting was chaired by Dr. Ahmed Al Bakri President of AARINENA.

The Committee discussed and recommended the following:

1. Present the following amendments to the constitution to the next general conference:
 - 1.1. The reference of the pronoun "he" in the Constitution Articles will be amended to "he/she" and "chairman" to "chairperson".
 - 1.2. Rule XIV of the general rules of procedures will be changed to: "amendments or additions to these general rules may be adopted by "a simple majority of..." instead of "a two thirds majority" to be in line with Article XII of the Constitution.
 - 1.3. The term for Executive Committee members be for three years renewable



once instead of two years to save funds by holding the General Conference every three years.

- 1.4. To add one new member to the Executive Committee for the position of the "President" in addition to the five sub-regional representatives and the Executive Secretary.
- 1.5. Add three new members to the Executive Committee to include representatives of GFAR, CGIAR centers and civil society organizations.
2. Contact International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and ICARDA for their support of a new proposal on Livestock Genetic Resources Consortium/ Network.
3. Consult ICARDA on the interest of Agricultural Research and Education Organization (AREO)-Iran in establishing regional IPM Network.
4. Recommends Pakistan representative, Dr. Mohamed Afzal to represent West Asia sub-region on the Executive Committee as an observer up to the next General Conference.
5. Request Dr. Mohamed Roozitalab to serve as an advisor to the Executive Committee.

AARINENA

AARINENA ICT Steering Committee Meeting

In the framework of GFAR 2006 Conference, AARINENA - Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Steering Committee meeting was held on 10 November, 2006, and attended by representatives of AARINENA sub-regions and Network Coordinators.

The participants highlighted the establishment of focal units in AARINENA member countries, and possibilities of improving National and Regional Agricultural Information Systems (NAIS-RAIS).



Participants in the AARINENA ICT Steering Committee Meeting

Dr. Mohamad Sallam Chairman of the Steering Committee mentioned that official letters have

been sent to the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) to encourage them to establish their focal units. He said that weakness of national agricultural information systems can affect RAIS and without a strong NAIS, a proper RAIS can't build. Terms of reference for the focal units were discussed and drafted.

Mrs. Taraneh Ebrahimi, underlined kinds of support to be given to the regional networks, and indicated that some pages on the AARINENA website were especially designed for the regional networks. The participants agreed that AARINENA should act as a portal in the future, so all network's members can upload their data directly on the web from their countries.

A tentative draft of the ICT-RAIS work plan (2007- 2009) was discussed. The participants agreed that the budget needs revising with focus on the priority issues including National Agricultural Research Information Management Systems (NARIMS) for which budget was already secured.

Dr. Kheder Durah presented achievements of IPGRI related to development of information system in the region. He underlined that IPGRI developed an effective modeling tool to capture traditional knowledge, analyze and share among national programs; namely GRIS Portal.

The participants adopted the implementation of the following activities in collaboration with IPGRI:

- Support the focal units on implanting their information systems.
- Provide support for developing NARIMS in RAIS.
- Develop the Portal for AARINENA-RAIS and reengineering the AARINENA website and linking it with the GRIS portal.

AARINENA

Expert Consultation Meeting for Establishment of Water Use Efficiency (WUE) Network

AARINENA in collaboration with ICARDA and GFAR held an expert consultation meeting at ICARDA, Aleppo-Syria during 26-27 November, 2006.

Water use efficiency experts participated in the meeting from Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Yemen, ICARDA and FAO.

The participants presented their country profiles and reviewed the proposal for establishing a WUE Network in the WANA region. The participants adopted the proposal for the



establishment of the network with the following composition:

- The venue and the secretariat of the Network will be at INRA -Morocco.
- Elected Dr. Ayman Abu-Hadid from Egypt as the chairman of the board of the network.
- Identified the following countries to host the technical working groups:
 1. Management and conservation of rainwater in rain fed agriculture (Yemen).
 2. Sustainable management of water in irrigated agriculture (Iran).
 3. Decision making and water management tools{ modeling and GIS}(Egypt).
 4. Institutional, policy and socio-economy analysis and evaluation of water in irrigated agriculture (Syria).

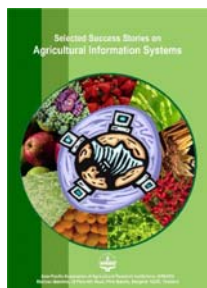
The participants recommended as a priority activity for the network to be implemented in 2007 the formulation of an ATLAS that will serve to compile data on water use efficiency.

AARINENA

APAARI

An update on recent activities of the Asia-Pacific Agricultural Research Information System (APARIS)

After a highly successful organization of the Inter-regional Workshop on Advocacy and Inter-regional Collaboration for ICT/ICM in ARD in July 2006, in which representatives of all RFs, GFAR, FAO and other global agricultural information systems participated, APARIS focused its attention on issues related to advocacy and integration of information resources.



Accordingly, APARIS published a **collection of success stories and best practices of ICT and ICM in ARD** (see the cover image). In addition to a descriptive list of several current initiatives on agricultural information systems, the publication provides two different case studies – one on linking farmers with the researchers (RDA, South Korea's Agricultural Information Service) and the other on linking farmers with the markets (India's e-Chopal initiative). The publication was formally released and presented during the APAARI Expert Consultation on Agricultural Innovations: Linking Farmers with Markets, held from 6-7 November 2006 at New Delhi, India, just prior to the GFAR 2006 Triennial Conference. More than 100 copies

of the publication were distributed to senior NARS leaders and managers. This APAARI success story publication was also presented and distributed to more than 150 participants at two other workshops – the Regional Meeting on Central Asia and Caucasus – Regional Agricultural Information System (CAC-RAIS), held from 15-16 January 2007 and National Workshop on ICT for Rural Finances, 5-6 February 2007, organized by College of Agricultural Banking, Reserve Bank of India. Lately, internationally renowned Indian School of Business (ISB) requested APAARI to grant permission to reprint the above collection of success stories in their upcoming book entitled "ICT in the Rural Development: Opportunities and Challenges."

In other major developments, APARIS team continued its efforts on integrating information resources for the benefit of ARD stakeholders and published the following CD-ROMs (see cover images) for wider distribution through APAARI:



- **APAARI on CD**, version 2006
- **NARS on CD** – Directory of Agricultural Research Institutions of the Asia-Pacific Region
- Proceedings of **APAARI-GFAR Workshop on Regional Synthesis of Research Needs**, 18-19 August, 2006, Bangkok, Thailand
- Proceedings of the **APAARI-GFAR Meeting of the Regional Ad hoc Working Group on Linking Farmers to the Markets**, 6-7 June 2006, Bangkok, Thailand.

In 2007, APARIS team plans to undertake a major revision of APAARI web site (www.apaari.org) using newly available web technologies for a better content management system and linkages to other ARD web sites. The revised web site will also make it easier to directly upload information from decentralized input sources such as National Information Nodal Points (NINPs), spread across the Asia-Pacific Region and also globally. So, please keep visiting the site for continuous updates.

APAARI



CACAARI

CAC-RAIS: Workshop for Regional Agricultural Information System

A two-day workshop for elaborating the strategy and workplans to develop a Regional Agricultural Information System in CAC (CAC-RAIS) was organized by the Central Asia and the Caucasus Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (CACAARI) in partnership with the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR) and ICARDA on 15-16 January, 2007 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan..



The CACAARI Workshop on a CAC Regional Agricultural Information System

In his welcoming speech, Dr. Raj Paroda, Regional Coordinator, ICARDA-CAC, and Head, PFU-CGIAR, expressed his satisfaction that NARS leaders and ICT experts from all the eight CAC countries are attending this event, which "demonstrates their commitment to support and strengthen an agricultural information system in the region". In addition, Dr. Raj Paroda emphasized that the participation of ARIS coordinators and ICT experts from other Regional Fora such as AARINENA and APAARI, as well as the Sub-regional Office of FAO for Central and Eastern Europe to share their experiences in this area was especially important. Dr. Khanazarov, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources of Uzbekistan and Executive Secretary, CAC Regional Forum thanked GFAR and ICARDA for their continued support and facilitation for this regional initiative and expressed his good wishes for its success.

Dr. Ajit Maru, Agricultural Research Officer, GFAR Secretariat, Dr. Sahdev Singh, ARIS coordinator for APAARI, Mrs. Taraneh Ebrahimi, ARIS coordinator for AARINENA, Mr. Michal Demes, Information Management Specialist, FAO SEUR/KCEF shared their experiences of developing agricultural information systems. The National Information Nodal Points (NINPs) from all the CAC countries made presentations on the

current status of agriculture and agricultural information systems in their countries, which was then synthesized into the regional report.

As a result of the workshop, a Steering Committee for the CAC RAIS was established and the blueprint workplan for 2007-2009 actively discussed by the participants. Following these discussion, it was decided that a Working Group, made up of NINPs and representatives of GFAR and ICARDA will draw up a detailed draft of the workplan and present it to the Steering Committee for approval. Subsequently, the NINPs will implement the workplan in their countries.

CACAARI

EFARD

In June 2007 George Rothschild will take over the EFARD presidency



At the last EFARD steering committee held in Dublin on 30 October 2006 it was announced by the EFARD Chair that from June 2007 George Rothschild (UK) will take over the EFARD presidency. Rothschild has a strong reputation and visibility in the international arena. The new leadership and management support will help in serving more efficiently and effectively the EU development policy. EFARD will develop its new strategy based on response to the recommendations of the external evaluation. It will build on its strength, i.e. the network among researchers, and will increasingly try to attract other stakeholder groups. It looks forward to a strengthened collaboration with its most prominent stakeholder group, EIARD, in which the EC has a fundamental role.

EFARD

ERA-ARD mid-term Conference "ARD in Europe: towards a shared vision"

The creation of **ERA-ARD** (the ARD dimension of the European Research Area), financed by the European Commission Framework Programme on Research (FP6), is considered as an outcome of the Rome EFARD Conference. ERA-ARD has been formed to establish coherence and collaboration in European ARD; it has been joined by fourteen European member states for a four-year duration.

The ERA-ARD mid-term Conference "ARD in Europe: towards a shared vision" is planned for the 28-29 June 2007 in Brussels, Belgium.



The ERA-ARD conference will bring together around 150 key ARD stakeholders from the European Member States and Associated States, the European Commission and the regional and global ARD fora.

Participants will exchange views and debate, inter alia, on the following questions:

- What will the ARD landscape look like in 2025?
- Would there still be a need for an ARD capacity in Europe in 2025?
- How should the European ARD capacity evolve to meet its partners' needs and enhance its contribution to MDGs?
- What could then be a shared vision for European ARD?

More information is available [here](#).

EFARD

"Dialogue on European initiatives and financial support to ARD" event at the GFAR Conference 2006

EFARD organised the event "Dialogue on European initiatives and financial support to agricultural research for development", which was held on the 8th of November as a side event during the GFAR Conference in Delhi.

The objective of the side-event has been to present the on-going and planned European initiatives in support of ARD and to open a dialogue with the participants with a view to maximizing the active involvement of the GFAR community in those initiatives and their impact on development. The different sessions of the side event have been chaired by the EFARD Chair, the Head of the EU Delegation in India, and the EIARD chair. Sessions included presentations from EFARD, EIARD, FARA, the European Commission (DG DEV and DG RTD), and DFID (UK).

EFARD

Launch of EFARD evaluation, March 2007

The European Commission has launched an evaluation of EFARD. The evaluation team is composed by Majda Bne-Saad and Alex Percy-Smith. The review will assist in the identification of strengths and weaknesses regarding EFARD response to the challenges posed to agricultural research for development in Europe in its transcontinental dimension. At the same time it will formulate recommendations regarding EFARD sustainability, both in terms of its policies and its finance. The kick-off meeting is foreseen in Brussels on 21 March 2007.

The draft report will be presented and discussed at the next EFARD steering committee, in April 2007.

EFARD

Platform for African-European Partnership on ARD (PAEPARD)

The First PAEPARD steering committee was held in Brussels on 11 January 2007. EFARD initiated and now implements with FARA the new project Platform for African-European Partnership on Agricultural Research for Development (PAEPARD). PAEPARD is a platform to mobilize African and European resources to the achievement of CAADP and European Strategy for Africa. It is a tool for FARA and EFARD to strengthen their constituent's capacity to deliver new innovations in agriculture. This will be achieved by lesson learning, brokering partnerships among African and European stakeholders, building bridges to open new partnerships among researchers and private sectors. It will open new avenues of partnerships with private sector of Europe and Africa and see how the private sector could be more involved and encouraged to invest in agricultural research for development.

PAEPARD will initially focus on geographic locations by identifying different groups of countries to be used in the case studies. It will look into areas where capacities require strengthening, facilitation will guide concerned partners to link with the most appropriate institutions to create synergies and resources are invested into the right places to achieve the objectives of CAADP and the EU Strategy for Africa.

First results of the PAEPARD project will be presented at the next FARA general assembly in Johannesburg in June 2007.

EFARD

FARA

Africa Agricultural Science Week and the 4th FARA General Assembly

The Africa Agricultural Science Week and the 4th FARA General Assembly will be held **from the 10th – 16th June, 2007** at the Sandton Convention Centre in Sandton city, Johannesburg, South Africa



The Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs of South Africa will co-host the fourth (4th) General Assembly of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) with the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and FARA. The General Assembly will draw together representatives of FARA's constituents from all African and non-African institutions involved in African agricultural research and development such as the Sub-Regional Organizations (SROs) (ASARECA, CORAF/WECARD, SADC/FANR and



Northern Africa - AARINENA), the agricultural research institutions, universities, NGOs and private enterprises that comprise the national agricultural research systems (NARS), non-African partner research institutions (PRIs), the international agricultural research centers (IARCs), international NGOs, policy makers, private sector, farmers' organizations and Africa's development partners.

Theme

Promoting the productivity and competitiveness of African agriculture in a global economy

Subthemes

1. Identifying and exploiting Africa's competitive advantages in agricultural production, agribusiness and related industries
2. Developing Africa's capacity for agricultural commerce and innovation
3. Learning from past success of research in influencing agricultural policies
4. The status of the 5 requirements for turning Africa's agriculture around
5. Positioning agricultural research institutions to be fully effective
6. Learning lessons from responding to risks and disasters
7. Africa's capacity to build human and institutional capacity for the agricultural industry
8. Mobilizing civil society for agricultural development
9. Peri-urban agriculture
10. Capturing indigenous knowledge for development while respecting intellectual property rights, ethical and moral integrity and biosafety

Invitations

Participants requiring invitations to acquire visa or official mission orders from their institutions can be issued by the FARA Secretariat and the South African Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs. Interested Parties should contact:

FARA Secretariat

PMB CT 173, Accra, Ghana

Tel: 233-21-772823; Fax: 233-21-773676

Email: mjones@fara-africa.org

Registration on the web is ongoing for:

- o individual participants
- o side-events
- o exhibits
- o field visits

For more detailed information go to the [faraweek website](#).

FORAGRO

Infotec: invitation to share success stories in the use of ICTs



Special invitation from INFOTEC for a joint IICA-FORAGRO-GFAR initiative

The documentation of successful experiences is a basic element for capacity building and for sensitization of decision makers on the importance of information and communication management. For capacity building, because of the possibility of sharing experiences on the way in which information and communication technologies were managed in cases in which they contributed to the success of a research or innovation process. And for advocacy, because specific cases of how a positive impact through these technologies was achieved, can help decision makers become aware of their potential.

With this in mind, FORAGRO is launching **an invitation to collect success stories in the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) within agricultural research and technological innovation projects or programs**. The invitation is for anyone who has inside information of such a case and wants to share it. The selected cases will be included in a publication, in which the respective proponents will be authors of their chapter.

For more information go [here](#) or contact infotec@infoagro.net

INFOTEC



News from the other Stakeholders

CGIAR

Knowledge Blenders: Toward more Dynamic Meetings on International Agricultural Research

When people interested in agricultural research get together – including farmers, NGO representatives and donors as well as scientists and research managers from around the world – they have a lot to talk about. And it isn't easy for them to cover all the ground they need to in just a few days.



The organizers of the Triennial Conference of the **Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR)**

understand that, because they recently held the third such event since the Forum's establishment in late '90's. This time, though, they got some help from their friends in the **CGIAR's ICT-KM Program**, which organized one of nine parallel working group sessions, in collaboration with colleagues at the International Water Management Institute (IWMI).

During a 3-hour session entitled "Blending Knowledge Systems for an Inclusive Approach to Innovation," the Program experimented with knowledge-sharing methods, which show much promise for enhancing communication between participants in such events. Though still new in the somewhat conservative world of international agricultural research, these methods could soon bring about important changes in the dynamics and vocabulary of selected gatherings. If that happens, items like "chat show," "world café" and "open space" could come to occupy a central place on conference programs of the future, along with more conventional terms, such as "opening ceremony," "keynote address," "panel discussion" and so forth.

The knowledge-sharing approach was introduced at the GFAR Conference, not just for the sake of change, but because this new medium, emphasizing maximum participation in open discussions of important issues, closely matched the key issues of the session. These emerged through a chat show – a refreshing alternative to formal presentations by one or a few experts – in which a moderator posed provocative questions to four invited guests, while also

receiving questions from the audience.

One strong message conveyed in the process was that much agricultural research is still carried out in relative isolation. Moreover, sharing of the knowledge that results from research too often comes as an afterthought and is restricted to publishing in scientific journals. This pattern is reinforced by the "publish or perish" mentality prevailing in the management of many research organizations.

The guests and audience together painted a picture of a more collaborative approach, in which the diverse stakeholders in research have ample opportunities to share knowledge, beginning in the early stages of research and continuing throughout the entire process. Such an approach, they argued, leads to greater recognition that farmers have, not just problems, but valuable local knowledge, and it increases the likelihood that new knowledge resulting from research might be put to good use.

Farmers participating in the session vigorously endorsed the knowledge-sharing approach to research, and they expressed frustration about the lack of progress in making this the norm rather than the exception. "We've been hearing about 'bottom-up' approaches for years, but nothing changes!" said Egyptian olive producer Mohamed El Kholy. "The researchers keep going to conferences and talking about yields. My olive yields are high enough. What I need is more help with market access!"

In the afternoon, participants were first invited to prioritize the issues identified during the intense chat show discussion by voting with "sticky dots." Then, they got down to the business of hammering out recommendations to address the four issues the group considered most important. For this purpose, the session's facilitators introduced a world café format, in which groups of four or five participants sat at round tables and shared views in a relaxed café-type atmosphere on one of the four issues, recording their thoughts on paper tablecloths. At a signal from the facilitators, all but one participant moved to another table for a second and final round of discussion on another of the issues. The person staying behind conveyed the gist of the opening round to the new set of participants and invited them to build on the ideas already recorded by sharing their own



views.

By the end of the session, the facilitators had a detailed set of recommendations, reflecting input from all participants. On the issue of local knowledge, for example, the group recommended, among other things, renewed efforts to “institutionalize” farmer participatory research, strengthen farmer organizations and create “living documents” to record instructive uses of local knowledge. With respect to the design of research, they urged the introduction of new mechanisms, such as “outcome contracting”. Through this process, explained IWMI Director General Frank Rijsberman, researchers identify “impact pathways” in consultation with partners and end users, define the impacts for which they believe they can be held accountable and then enter into performance contracts, in which funding is tied to the delivery of those outcomes. To reinforce such mechanisms, it was also recommended that research managers modify performance incentive systems to include clear indicators of successful knowledge sharing, ones that include more than just scientific publications.

Participants in the session were thus clear about what they thought should be done to foster knowledge blending in agricultural research. But what did they think about the knowledge-sharing approach that offered them this opportunity to share ideas? According to the results of a quick survey, many felt the meeting was well organized and facilitated. Others stressed that it was “fun,” “enjoyable,” “dynamic” and “interactive.” Most important, though, they appreciated the opportunity to view the issues from multiple viewpoints and then move from talk to action through collective formulation of recommendations.

“It was one of the best workshops I ever attended,” said El Kholy. “We have to promote a forum in which all can express their views. Otherwise, we’re wasting our time.”

More information about the **CGIAR Knowledge Sharing initiatives** can be found [here](#).

*Nathan Russell,
Senior Communications Officer,
CGIAR Secretariat*

CGVlibrary Team Recognized

Two years ago, a number of people came together with a shared vision of a more unified, effective and borderless CGIAR. As a result of their cooperative efforts, they forged a new precedent for information sharing and effective communication across the CGIAR System. Then in December 2006, at the CGIAR’s Annual General Meeting in Washington, their collective contribution was recognized when they received a CGIAR Science Award.

The 2006 Outstanding Scientific Support Award went to the team responsible for the **CGIAR Virtual Library**, one of the ICT-KM Program’s most ambitious projects to date. The award was given to the team as a result of its cooperative effort, high standards of excellence in performance, and outstanding contribution to research efforts in the CGIAR system.

Luz Marina Alvaré, IFPRI’s Library and Knowledge Management Head, spearheaded the CGVlibrary project and was part of a dynamic and committed team of information managers, IT professionals, and researchers from across the CGIAR System. Team members worked together

on the project for 18 months while holding down fulltime jobs in the CGIAR. Strict deadlines saw many members sacrificing time with family and friends in order to meet the Library’s launch date last June.

Since its debut on the web, this internet gateway has enabled researchers to search the catalogs of all the CGIAR Centers, 160 external databases (including those of the World Bank, the Library of Congress, AGRIS, and Global Online Research in Agriculture) and over 4,000 e-journals.

During its first month online, the CGVlibrary was searched more than 500 times. User activity did not stop there, however, but rose dramatically, and the site averaged 29,000 searches a month for September, October and November. Moreover, usage figures indicate that more than 80% of CGVlibrary visits in November and December were made by users from the developing world.

Usage data, combined with the fact that the vast majority of CGVlibrary searches have targeted



The team responsible for the CGIAR Virtual Library



CGIAR materials, suggests that the Library has aided the CGIAR mission by providing research to professionals in the developing world.

Visit the CGVlibrary or contact CGVlibrary@cgiar.org for further information.

CGIAR

CGIAR-CSI Joins UN Group

The [CGIAR-CSI](#) (Consortium for Spatial Information) recently scored a first when it received an invitation to become a full member of the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group ([UNGIWG](#)). The invitation, the first to be extended to a non-UN organization, was officially accepted when Glenn Hyman (CIAT) made a formal application for membership on behalf of the CSI at the Seventh UNGIWG Plenary Meeting in Santiago, Chile, in November 2006.

The membership, which will soon be made official, recognizes the CSI's success in carrying out its work and was brought about in part by the close cooperation between CSI Coordinator Robert Zomer (IWMI) and UNGIWG over the last two years.

As a member of UNGIWG, CSI members now have the opportunity to collaborate with other experts in the fields of cartography and geographic information science – UNGIWG is currently working on several projects of interest to the CSI. Moreover, it is hoped that the alliance will help construct a critical mass of organizations sharing spatial data. Looking further ahead, the CSI feels it will be able to take advantage of its membership to acquire spatial data, develop deals with software providers and nurture joint projects.

While in Santiago, Glenn also attended the 9th Meeting of the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure (GSDI) Association (UNGIWG and GSDI co-hosted both events), where he presented a [conference paper](#) on the lessons learned from the CSI's poverty mapping case studies, and gave a short talk on remote sensing and food security/poverty mapping in a special session of the Global Earth Observing System of Systems (GOESS) seminar.

CSI representation in Santiago was financed by the ICT-KM Program.

More information on the CGIAR Consortium for Spatial Information can be found [here](#).

CGIAR

IFAP: Towards a breakthrough for farmer-centred agricultural research



For years, IFAP has been insisting that agriculture research has to be farmer-focused. It must solve the problems farmers face both in production and in marketing.

The 3rd Triennial Conference of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) that took place in New Delhi, India, 9-11 November 2006 was an opportunity for farmers to lobby for this agenda – with significant success.

It has been the case in many developed countries for years that agricultural research is focused on farmers needs, because farmers have been contributing to agricultural research through check-offs (commodity levies) and so have influence in directing it. In some Latin American countries, farmers' organisations have representatives on the governing bodies of their national research institutes, and because government resources and producer check-offs flow through farmers' organizations, they have created research institutes admired the world over. This is not the case everywhere, and particularly for small-scale producers who do not yet have strong farm organisations representing them – not yet.

This is where IFAP stepped in a number of years ago and insisted that GFAR must change the way it does business; regional and national institutes were asked to do the same. Success has been significant over the last few years with research institute after research institute opening up their structures to let farmers in. But does this in itself lead to change? Of course not. Change is measured by improvements in types of projects that are given priority, the inclusion of producer groups in determining their design, how the project is administered and the role out of the plan to make the technology available to producers.

Now back to the GFAR Congress. The new chair insisted on change; a large delegation of producers from around the world from large to small scale insisted on change. The research community and donor groups insisted on change. Many of the guest speakers are talking like farm leaders, asking "how do we really engage farmers in the market in a profitable way to respond to the industry concentration that has taken place?" How do we organize producers to meet the food safety/traceability requirements to sell to the today's retail sector and, for small scale producers, "how do we give special attention to their needs?" This broad recognition in New Delhi of the need for a



farmer-centred approach to agricultural research now needs to be translated into meaningful action on the ground.

The large question of bio-energy was talked about and how do we make sure some of the benefit goes to producers, and for small-scale producers in remote areas how does research play a role to deliver technologies that will work on a small-scale. Here is an opportunity to give rural communities not only sustainable food production, but, for the first time in their lives, sustainable energy. Energy that allows the opportunity to move forward in the area of personal and rural development to create the jobs so desperately needed.

There is no turning back. The genie is out of the bottle now. It is up to the farm community to get better organised and take advantage of this opportunity.

Jack Wilkinson, IFAP President

News about YPARD

Following the launch of YPARD during the GFAR 2006, YPARD was invited to participate in the 5th Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Science and Technology for ACP Agricultural & Rural Development organized by CTA in Wageningen, The Netherlands in December 2006. At the end of the meeting young professionals (YP) lead by YPARD released a statement on the follow up activities including networks and communication tools to reach the YPs in ARD. In February 2007, YPARD signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with VIT University in India to host YPARD office and support activities locally. This will help YPARD



Signing of MoU between YPARD and VIT University, Tamil Nadu, India

get its message across the YPs in India and VIT University will help offering its infrastructure and logistics in hosting meetings and workshops organized by YPARD. At the same time of the year, YPARD entered into partnership with JECRC Foundation in the developing of the YPARD website.

YPARD

ICM Corner

Managing information on organizations, experts, projects and project outputs

Management Information Systems (MIS) in ARD provide information related to the management of projects and activities in ARD such as on organizations, experts, projects/activities and project/activity outputs. This information is needed to share and exchange agricultural technologies and to build research partnerships

across ARD Institutes and Natural Agricultural Research Systems. Because of this, a strong need for comprehensive and structured information services in this area has emerged in recent years.

Information on organizations, experts and projects in ARD is now managed by many different information services such as CARIS, WISARD, Infosys+, DFID R4D, AROW, the Regional Agricultural Information Systems and many others. Only a few of these systems share



data among themselves. They have difficulty in coherently integrating their data with other systems. Consequently, the users encounter problems in finding the desired information as similar data are available from several sources, none of which is comprehensive and all of which differ in subject coverage, type coverage, up-to-date status, quantity and quality of information. Selecting only one source is limiting and cross-searches across systems are not possible. For the information services and the data owners, lack of coherence and ability to integrate MIS data makes maintenance of their services costly as many similar datasets have to be maintained and updated. With dwindling resources, especially for global public information of this nature, it has become important that there is greater coherence and global integration in management information for ARD.

GFAR, in collaboration with partner organizations, particularly FAO and Wageningen International, is focusing its attention on activities and projects aiming at building coherent and more globally integrated Management Information Systems (MIS). In this context, the Content Management Taskforce set in place by the Expert Consultation on International Information Systems for Agricultural Science and Technology (Rome, 2005) has initiated steps where MIS information from distributed databases such as those managed by NARS and RAIS can be coherently accessed and integrated in MISs across the globe.

Greater coherence and integration of MIS information includes:

1) Distributed management for easier maintenance and greater reliability of this information

Data are most easily managed (stored, updated and made accessible) where they were originally generated and where they will be presumably kept updated for answering strong local needs, usually at the "lowest" level possible, be it geographically or subject-wise. In the present situation, in which many databases already exist that were created with a broad coverage, taking steps towards a distributed architecture could mean implementing data exchange procedures between these broad databases and the sources of their data (national / organizational databases that manage the same data and can guarantee their maintenance), possibly transforming these broad-coverage databases into information services leveraging on distributed and reliable sources.

2) Agreement on standards and technologies for easier interoperability

Powerful information services that provide access to distributed information are easily built if all the available data sources manage their data in the same way. This is why the Task Force is enabling the ARD community to agree on standards and common procedures in ARD data management and exchange. Some standards exist for facilitating information exchange and service interoperability in the agricultural field. The reference website for these standards is the Agricultural Information Management Standards website managed by FAO.

The Global Forum on Agricultural Research, as an organisation that facilitates communication and information sharing and collaborative, cost effective partnerships between the various actors of the ARD community, is promoting and coordinating activities and projects that contributes to building coherent and integrated MIS. EGFAR, which is designed as a tool to fulfil the need for a communication platform to exchange experiences, information and knowledge among all stakeholders involved in ARD now features the relevant proposals related to MIS (standards, tools, guidelines, tutorials).

Regularly updated information related to bringing about greater coherence and integration of management information is now available on the EGFAR ICM web page and in the "Coherence in AIS" section in the EGFAR Open Site.

What's new on EGFAR?

The GFAR Secretariat is pleased to inform you that new features are available on the EGFAR website at www.egfar.org.



Each one of these features goes a little further in implementing EGFAR's original objectives: 1) to



provide an interactive communication system among the stakeholders of ARD; 2) to provide information resources relevant to ARD and enhance access to them, thus providing "gateway (portal) functions"; 3) to build and allow access to "knowledge pools" built through collaborative efforts among stakeholders in a few high priority areas identified by them.

Some of the new features, particularly the Open Site and the forums, are part of a communication platform that we are now launching and in which we strongly invite everyone to participate. These tools allow everyone to add new contents to a collaborative website and to discuss issues of their choice in either a public or a private forum, and we feel they are essential to a platform like EGFAR: we created them for you and their objective will be fulfilled only with your participation.

Here is a list of what you can now do on the EGFAR website.

1) Publish your own pages on the EGFAR Open Site

Login to My EGFAR (either directly on the Open Site page or under My EGFAR). Once logged in, when navigating the Open Site buttons and links will allow you to edit existing contents or add new contents in the category of your choice. To start with, we have launched a section called "*Building and enhancing ARD websites*" in order to build a collaborative "knowledge pool" on how to best design and enhance websites and web information systems in the field of agriculture.

2) Have your news / events published on the EGFAR "What's new" section

There are two ways to do this:

a) Send us the url of your RSS feed: external feeds are read in real time on EGFAR and shown on the "News from other ARD websites" page in the "What's new" section.

b) Add your news item / event on the Open Site in the News and Events section. All contents published under this section and its sub-sections (News, Events, Job opportunities) are automatically shown on the EGFAR "What's new" page.

3) Participate in an existing forum or ask for a new public or private forum

Login to My EGFAR and then go to the Community page: a link gives you access to all EGFAR existing forums.

We want to host forums that are needed and used by the ARD community, so please use the link on the Community page to ask for new forums, either public or restricted to selected participants.

4) Search for GFAR documents

Main menu: Knowledge --> Document Repository.

Advanced Search: this engine allows you to search by title, year, type of document and subject (based on a specially developed classification, also mapped to Agrovoc for compliance with existing and widely accepted standards).

Shortcuts to documents: this page lists ready-made searches for relevant types of documents (Annual Reports, Conferences proceedings etc.) Our repository is managed through an EIMS module provided by Waicent (FAO) and supports export to Agris AP (we are an Agris Center). Soon, our repository will join the Open Archive Initiative and the new Agris Open Access project.

5) Search for Organizations

Main menu: Web Ring --> Web Ring Databases. This engine allows you to search by name, region, country and "domain" (based mostly on the stakeholder group according to a terminology widely accepted among the GFAR community).

At the moment this engine searches for organizations in the GFAR database and in the EARD/Infosys+ database of european organizations. As soon as interoperability protocols are implemented with our partner information systems, a "Web Ring" of relevant databases will be searched and other domains (projects, project outputs and experts) will be covered.

Important collaborations with partner organizations (FAO, Wageningen International, Infosys, CTA and the main Regional Agricultural Information Systems) are going on in order to set up a coherent platform for sharing reliable and updated information.

6) Search the "Web Ring" websites

Main menu: Web Ring --> ARD Advanced Searches.

ARD Web Search Engine: This engine searches for web pages containing your search terms.

ARD Doc Search Engine: This engine searches for documents (Word, PowerPoint, Excel). Type the word(s) to search for (use the same syntax as for Google searches).

Both engines search only selected websites (our "web ring") and when the results appear you can still narrow your search by clicking on the corresponding tab (each tab narrows the search to a certain category of websites).

This engine is based on a new service powered by Google (Google Custom Search Engine).

7) Exploit our RSS feeds

Main menu: What's new --> Keep informed.

On this page you will find the urls of our News and Events RSS feeds: you can read them



through your favourite news aggregator (see [here](#) for a comprehensive list) or you can publish them on your website.

Technical support for this and other technology issues will be soon available on the website.

EGFAR is and will always be a work in progress, ready to adapt itself to changes in technology and changes in the needs of the ARD community: many services are already under development and we are open to suggestions for new ones. Please send your feedback to egfar-webmaster@fao.org.

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