



Executive Summary

Over the year ahead, the Global Forum on Agricultural Research, which brings together key agencies such as regional and national research organizations, the CGIAR, the FAO, IFAD, farmer organizations, civil society organizations and donor agencies, is leading a rolling process of global consultation to establish new agendas and new ways of working in agricultural research for development.

Electronic and face-to-face consultations will enable all those who care about the future of agriculture to have their say in determining research priorities that best deliver against development needs and in shaping the systems required to generate new knowledge and technologies and to make these accessible to those in most need. These regional and global processes of open and inclusive consultation provide a critical means to truly link agricultural research into wider processes supporting rural development and for those who generate and enable use new knowledge to become better connected with, more valued by, and more accountable to those they seek to benefit *especially the resource poor*.

These consultations will lead to a Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development in Montpellier, France in March 2010, which will address the key needs for change and investment in agricultural research and extension institutions of all kinds *especially in developing countries* and marks the first phase in a multi-year process to integrate agricultural research into development processes driven by the needs of societies.

These processes will enable the CGIAR to work together with its many and diverse partners in new ways, to truly realize the potential of agricultural research in overcoming the twin scourges of hunger and poverty. They provide also the public forum in which the emerging strategy and results framework and megaprogrammes of the CGIAR, *a major international agricultural research system*, can be shared and input provided by diverse partners to ensure their validity and relevance to development objectives and to build equitable relationships with the many partners involved in innovation systems and in linking research outcomes into achieving development impacts.

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Background

The world faces unprecedented development challenges, rocked by recent crises in both food supply and global recession, while addressing significant long term challenges such as climate change. Millennium Development Goals of eradicating extreme hunger and poverty, of environmental sustainability, the advancement of women and of meeting basic education, child nutrition and health needs are all strongly linked with rural development. Yet all are struggling to be met. Beyond the generic need for agricultural progress in developing countries, the needs of the resource-poor require specific attention in research and extension processes *and this is a key premise and focus of the GCARD,*

Effective agricultural research for development (AR4D) systems that link science and society through public, private and civil partners working in new and coherent ways are essential to meeting global development commitments, through both the generation of new and relevant knowledge and the empowerment of rural communities to make use of what is already known.

However, the world's AR4D systems face a number of major challenges in achieving desired impacts. These systems are often under-resourced, disconnected from processes supporting wider development, face numerous bottlenecks and barriers between, and sometimes inside, their constituent institutions and crucially often lack substantial connection with and accountability to their intended beneficiaries. Significant change in such systems is essential if agricultural science is to be better connected to society and to meet the enormous challenges we are all facing in sustainably feeding the world and enhancing incomes for the poor.

Purpose

The Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) is organizing a Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD), working through its constituent agencies and networks, which include *the National Systems represented through the Regional Research Fora (FARA, APAARI, AARINENA, FORAGRO, CACAARI and EFARD)*, the CGIAR, the FAO and IFAD, *representatives of farmer organizations* civil society, the private sector and donor agencies. The GCARD mechanism aims to increase the development value and impact of agricultural research for the resource poor, in particular poor farmers and agricultural producers. The process is being organized *by the GFAR Steering Committee* through a Task Force drawn from different sectors, chaired by Dr Monty Jones (FARA Executive Director) and tasked with ensuring a successful and dynamic process that is open and inclusive of all those who care about the future of agriculture and the role of agricultural research in development.

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The GCARD aims to ensure that:

- Agricultural research outputs are accessible and relevant to the poor in developing countries
- Research focuses on the right questions and is driven by the development needs of the resource-poor
- Knowledge generation through scientific research is embedded in development thinking and practice
- Funding systems are aligned between research and development
- Effective innovation pathways are developed between diverse stakeholders
- International agricultural research systems are effectively integrated with regional and national partners (public, private and civil) and respond to national and sub-regional demands to help ensure development impact.

The GCARD seeks to lay the ground for change in the basic architecture of, and investment in, agricultural research for development. Through an open process of consultation it will provide opportunity for all those concerned about the future of agriculture and its role in development to contribute towards building more coherent and effective research systems that can be valued for their development impact. Alongside this, it provides the opportunity for truly aligning investments in research with those in wider rural development and highlighting the need for enhanced investment in this crucial sector.

It also provides the key mechanism for consultation and ground-truthing of the new strategy and results framework-setting process of the CGIAR (and its component “mega-programmes”) and ensuring these reflect the needs and aspirations of partners in developing countries. Development of mutual accountability in such processes is essential to realizing the value of the international system in support of national development needs.

Over the period 2009-2015, this will involve an ongoing process of analysis, e-consultations and face-to-face discussions to develop and refine a new global system for agricultural research for development. A series of Global Conferences every two years will discuss and seek to continuously improve agricultural research resourcing, impacts, delivery and accountability to its intended beneficiaries, the poor of this world. These Global Conferences on Agricultural Research for Development replace both the GFAR Triennial Conferences and the Annual General Meetings of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

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Description of GCARD 2009-2010 Effort

The GCARD effort for 2009-2010 consists of several key elements, connected by open and inclusive consultation:

- Regional review through synthesis of existing national and regional documents that will produce a high-level regional development context and refreshed, high-level set of regional agricultural research priorities. The review will serve as a principal reference for framing the questions that guide the electronic consultations.
- Electronic consultations and face-to-face dialogue to provide perspective on the priorities and on how research may be able to create more development impact. The face-to-face dialogue will also provide an opportunity for various and diverse actors to start viewing one another as partners in the AR4D system.
- A conference to be held in March, 2010 to align the disparate stakeholders (farmers, civil society, public, private and international research organizations etc.) in agricultural research around a common agenda.

Regional review

The process of consultation towards the March 2010 Conference will begin with a synthesis of existing documents, including development reports, regional and sub-regional research priorities, regional, sub-regional and national agricultural frameworks, etc. with the purpose of producing:

- An overview of regional development contexts and refreshed, set of regional agricultural research priorities
- Evaluation of current regional implementation mechanisms
- Identification of areas of specific need for the poorest in each region
- A set of key issues requiring wide public consultation to improve the value of agricultural research in achieving development goals

The reviews from all the regions will be synthesized to produce a global review of AR4D covering the four issues enumerated above. Consultants with expert knowledge of each region are presently being recruited for this study, which is set to be completed by 15 July 2009.

A parallel and related effort, being driven by the Alliance of CGIAR Centers, is focusing on conducting a higher-order synthesis and review of global development reports and global priorities. This team is conducting an initial analysis of global policy issues and analyses, such as the WDR and IAASTD to find areas where the CGIAR's efforts are likely to bring best rewards in development terms in the context of developing a draft Strategic Results Framework for the CGIAR. This framework will itself be laid open to public consultation and feedback through the GCARD process. The outcome of this work will be a key input toward the development of a draft overarching agricultural research framework.

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Electronic consultations and face-to-face dialogue

Upon completion of the initial consultancy study, GFAR and the Regional Fora will lead an initial round of facilitated, open e-consultations that will help us better understand the needs, perspectives, and expectations of different actors on the issues across different regions. The synthesis of these e-consultations will be brought together and validated via face-to-face meetings in each region, which will allow integrated debate of the specific issues arising from all consultations.

The GCARD e-consultation and face-to-face dialogues will include specific consideration of the issues being raised in the establishment of the SRF and 'mega-programmes' of the CGIAR.

An additional round of e-consultations would allow further elaboration of specific themes before the GCARD Conference in Montpellier in March, 2010.

GCARD Conference in March, 2010

This will be a platform for debate with a wide spectrum of actors and perspectives and provides a key stage point for validating the new strategy of the CGIAR and establishing/demonstrating new forms of partnership for the CGIAR Consortium (as it will be). The agenda will be driven by the bottom-up outcomes of the consultation process and is expected to cover the key needs for research in achieving development impacts, the tools, technologies and knowledge available to deliver impacts and the institutional investments, capacities and ways of working required towards mutually accountable systems and partnerships.

The GCARD Conference itself will also provide a key venue for high level consideration of the need for renewed and improved investment in agricultural research. This includes understanding the sorts of institutions and institutional linkages that are required in a new global agricultural research system so that research is effectively embedded in processes seeking to achieve development goals.

Our aim is that this event will bring together development policy leaders and shapers as well as the stakeholders directly concerned within agricultural research for development. By building connection to wider rural development mobilization and investment mechanisms such as the Global Partnership on Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (GPAFSN) and FAO Committee on World Food Security, that have also recognized the need for scientific and technical knowledge to guide their investments, the GCARD will seek to integrate agricultural research into addressing the international medium- to long-term goals of sustainably meeting world food needs and increasing incomes among poor farmers.

Global Conference for Agricultural Research and Development (GCARD) Revised Update as of May 22, 2009

The Conference dates are set for March 28th to April 1st 2010 (4 full days)

- The **first day** (28 March) will examine investment needs for systems of agricultural research, innovation and knowledge sharing. The sessions on this day will feature high level consultations and focus on policy change
- The **second day** (29 March) will focus on enhancing North-South collaboration with specific examples from the Mediterranean basin, as well as other issues such as attracting young people into agricultural research and extension
- The **third day** (30 March) will concentrate on current priority challenges and how we embed research into delivery of desired development impacts.
- The **fourth day** (31 March) will then focus on the possible solutions and ways forward to address the challenges identified on day 3. Participants will strive to identify better ways in which ARD actors can work together to achieve their development goals.

In addition to sub-regional dimensions, there may be separate focuses (or side events) on the big development countries of the South that are major global players in ARD, such as Brazil, China, India and South Africa. These countries would not be apart from the regional consultations as separate entities, but integral pieces to the larger process.

Progress to Date

We are about to launch the first phase of the GCARD effort—regional review. Our plan is to identify a consultant by early June to globally coordinate and oversee this effort, while other consultants selected by and working directly with the regional fora will each work to explore the relationship between development objectives, research priorities and implementing institutions on a region-by-region basis. These reviews will frame the questions that will guide the e-consultations. We expect this phase and the deliverables to be complete by *mid-July*.

We are also in parallel working on identifying a consultant agency that can help us lead and manage the electronic consultation effort on a global basis, working through regional partners and reaching out via networks of research and extension organizations, farmer organizations and NGOs to ensure as many institutions and individuals as possible are encouraged to participate. We plan to launch the first e-consultations in July, and plan to hold the face-to-face dialogues in the August-October timeframe.

We have had a number of additional conversations with the World Bank Institute and potential e-consultation agencies. The key takeaways from these conversations are:

- the need for openness and reaching out to all stakeholders through all networks and agencies involved in ARD
- the need for e-consultations to use a variety of approaches and media to reach as many as possible

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- the need for face-to-face discussions in each region is essential to ensure ownership of the consultations and their outcomes
- some regional fora anticipate real difficulty in getting meaningful dialogue and inputs through e-consultations as this presents a number of technological barriers in addition to being a new form of working for many.

Finance

The World Bank-managed CIF has earmarked \$2,500,000 of support for the GCARD process over the period 2009-2010, involving combined contributions from a number of individual agencies. While this support is welcomed and allows electronic dialogue and some direct interaction, it remains markedly below that required for effective face-to-face involvement of partners in each region

The budget proposed was even at the outset very modest compared with previous AGM events. In spite of this reduced budget, the GCARD team are determined to demonstrate that processes of prior consultation in ARD can be achieved through a variety of alternative means. These consultations and new forms of equitable and mutually accountable partnership are critical to the success of subsequent investments in research projects and programmes, providing a legitimacy for research among partners and delivery of real impact for intended beneficiaries of research programmes such as those of the CGIAR and at the national and regional/sub-regional levels.

Additional resources have been pursued directly and we are pleased to report that in addition:

- the Asian Development Bank has offered to help fund the regional consultations in Asia-Pacific
- EIARD (through GTZ/EC support) has offered to help fund the regional consultations in Europe.
- The EC and DFID are providing valuable core support to GFAR to enable these mechanisms to deliver real change
- The Government of France is providing staff contributions in kind and support costs for the GCARD Conference in Montpellier

It is recognized that direct engagement of stakeholders in each region is critical to success and additional resources are particularly requested to ensure civil society is able to engage in a rich dialogue with research partners and that the voices of the poor are strongly heard in research planning and implementation. Further support is requested and is being actively pursued with a number of agencies to help ensure the best possible process in each region.