

EGFAR Task Force

Introduction

The critical role of information sharing and exchange and communications among its various stakeholders is well recognised by GFAR. GFAR has various mechanisms to inform and communicate issues related to agricultural research for development (ARD). One of them is EGFAR which uses new ICTs, especially the Internet, for information and knowledge sharing and exchange and communications with all stakeholders to ARD and users of agricultural research information.

EGFAR has evolved significantly since its inception. The needs of its users have expanded and changed. New developments in ICTs influence its structure, function and capabilities. There has been an increase, both in numbers and groups of ARD stakeholders as also their gaining in strength to discuss and influence global ARD issues.

EGFAR also provides a model for further development of the Regional Forums electronic communications. EGFAR's webspace is designed to bring integration and further coherence in agricultural information and communication systems, especially at the regional agricultural information level and in the development of the GFAR ARD Web ring.

EGFAR now needs greater participatory involvement of GFAR stakeholders in its further development and in providing guidance to improve its functions and capacities in sharing and exchanging information and knowledge among GFAR stakeholders. During the GlobAL.RAIS consultations and the two Inter-regional consultations that followed them as also the ICM4ARD GPP proposal, the setting up of an EGFAR Task Force to guide further development of EGFAR has been strongly recommended.

This document details the TOR and process of setting up of proposed EGFAR Task Force.

Draft Terms of Reference

- To liaise with the New AGRIS initiative Task Forces and other similar initiatives that are involved in advocating improvement and rapid progress in agricultural information systems at the global, regional and national level
- To advocate and guide development of ICT enabled agricultural information systems at global, regional and national levels as also among the various commodity, thematic and disciplinary ARD networks, global partnership programs and stakeholder groups through GFAR activities
- Support and promote the development and adoption of common standards, rules, norms etc. for sharing and exchange of agricultural information;
- Oversee the development and functioning of EGFAR, GFAR Document Repository, the GLOBAL.RAIS Web Ring and the GFAR Knowledge Network
- Collate information and publish the Global biannual state of ICT enabled Agricultural Information Systems
- Publish the quarterly electronic bulletin on ICT use and ICM in ARD;
- Coordinate the publication of articles on ICT applications and success stories in ARD;

Composition

The EGFAR Task Force will consist of:

1. Representatives from the Regional Forums
2. 1 representative from FAO
3. 1 representative from the CGIAR
4. 1 representative nominated by the CSO (including NGO and Farmers Organization) and Private Sector grouping of GFAR Stakeholders
5. Representative from the GFAR ICT Cell or of the Executive Secretary, GFAR who will also be the member-secretary of the Task Force

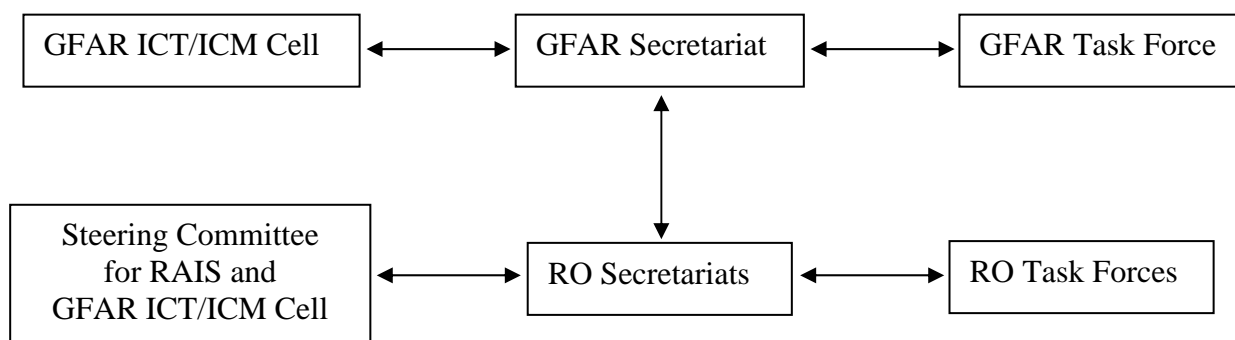
The Task Force will elect its Chairperson from its members. The term of the Chairperson term will normally be of three years. The representatives from the regional forum and the CSO and private sector groupings will also rotate every 3 years. The Task Force will provide its recommendations and suggestions related to its terms of reference to the Executive Secretary, GFAR who will execute and implement through appropriate mechanisms within the GFAR Secretariat such as the ICM4ARD GPP, after due consideration and concurrence of the Management Team, recommendations and suggestions of the EGFAR Task Force.

GFAR ICT Cell

The formation of the EGFAR Task Force requires the formation of the GFAR ICT/ICM Cell at the GFAR Secretariat. This cell will consist of a GFAR professional staff with experience in managing agricultural information and its communication through use of ICTs.

This cell will be a part of the GFAR Secretariat to manage the regular operational and management aspects of the Task Force.

Figure 1: Governance structure



Procedures

1. The EGFAR Task Force will meet in full at least once a year, in conjunction with GFAR Annual meetings. The quorum for such meetings will be 3 members out of the 6 in the Task Force.
2. All other EGFAR Task Force business may be transacted, as appropriate, through electronic communication, with the support of the GFAR Secretariat.
3. To ensure transparency, the EGFAR Task Force will utilize the eGFAR web site to seek and share views with GFAR shareholders and stakeholders.

4. The EGFAR Task Force will submit a synthesized report containing its findings, comments, suggestions and recommendations for consideration of the GFAR Executive Secretary who will include it in full with the Executive Secretary's remarks in his report to the Steering Committee. Each such report will be posted on the eGFAR web site.

5. The comments, suggestions and recommendations offered by the EGFAR Task Force will not be binding for execution by the GFAR Executive Secretary without the concurrence of the Management Team.

Expected Outputs (examples)

1. Guidelines for further development of EGFAR by the GFAR ICT/ICM Cell.
2. Recommendations and Suggestions for specific GFAR activities related to improving information and communications management for ARD to be incorporated in the GFAR Secretariat's Annual Work Plan and GFAR Triennial Business Plan
3. Publication of Global biannual state of ICT enabled Agricultural Information Systems
4. Publication of the quarterly electronic bulletin on ICT use and ICM in ARD
5. Comments on Information and Communications Management and Knowledge Management related issues in the GFAR Secretariat's Annual Work Plan and GFAR Triennial Business Plan