



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**OF**

**GFAR BUSINESS PLAN 2004-2006**

**GLOBAL FORUM ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (GFAR)**

**May 2004**

The Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) was established in 1996 as an initiative to promote cost-effective partnerships and strategic alliances amongst stakeholders involved in agricultural research. It was designed to provide a forum where these stakeholders could work together and find solutions to the persistent problems of food insecurity, poverty, degradation and loss of natural resources, and became operational in 1998.

The GFAR concept revolves around three key issues all linked to the sustainable development paradigm. Firstly, that in order to respond effectively and efficiently to the triple demand of adequate quality food, good environmental stewardship and poverty alleviation, placed on the agriculture-food sector, the sector would have to be integrated, knowledge driven and innovative. Secondly, that no single research group, institution or individuals working alone and in isolation can generate, utilize or promote the effective utilization of the required knowledge based and integrated approaches. Thirdly, and as a corollary, that the activities, enquiries, innovation and research outputs required to drive this knowledge based integrated agriculture can only be efficiently and effectively produced by stakeholders working together in strategic alliances and cost effective partnerships, in order to benefit from the economies of scale that come from the pooling of knowledge, expertise and resources both human and financial. Researchers would need to work in not only in pluri-disciplinary teams, but also across stakeholder groups inclusive of civil society organizations (CSOs) such as farmers' groups, community based organizations (CBOs), relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector groups such as processors, commodity and input traders etc.

Hence the mission of GFAR which is to mobilize and support the scientific community and all other stakeholders involved in Agricultural Research for Development (ARD), in their efforts to alleviate poverty, increase food security and promote sustainable utilization of natural resources. In order to address this mission, GFAR stakeholders will pursue the following objectives in the short to medium term period of the next 10 years:

- Facilitate the participation of all stakeholders in formulating a truly global framework for development-oriented agricultural research.
- Foster cost-effective collaborative partnerships amongst such stakeholders involved in agricultural researcher for development.
- Promote the emergence of National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) that are truly representative of the range of stakeholders, and enhance their capacity to respond to users' needs.
- Facilitate and promote information exchange and knowledge sharing amongst its stakeholders.
- Advocate for and sensitise decision-makers to the need for a long-term commitment to, and support for agricultural research.

The GFAR Business Plan (BP) provides a frame work and guidelines to its constituent stakeholders as they pursue these objectives. The current BP, the third in the series covers the period of 2004-2006 and was developed after a number of consultations with stakeholders' representatives in order to ensure a collective ownership of, and commitment to the implementation of the document. It comprises three parts: (i) a strategic document that briefly describes some of the issues that shaped the vision of GFAR and guided the choice of its priority areas of focus for the immediate and near future of about ten years; (ii) a comprehensive three-year rolling plan that describes not only concrete activities and expected outputs for each of the priority areas of focus identified in the strategic document, but also a phased implementation plan of the activities, key indicators and milestones for monitoring purposes, lead and other stakeholders that will drive the initiatives; and iii) a Programme of

Work (PoW) of the GFAR Secretariat, that provides details of what the Secretariat will do on an annual basis, to facilitate the implementation of the rolling plan by the stakeholders.

## **THE STRATEGIC DOCUMENT (2004-2013)**

The priority areas of focus identified in the strategic document comprise four components or pillars and two cross cutting issues. The pillars are: inter-regional collaboration; collaborative research partnerships; advocacy, public awareness and strategic thinking; and Management Information Systems (MIS). Two issues, full and active involvement of CSOs and private sector engagement in GFAR's activities were thought to be sufficiently important as to be reflected in all of our activities as cross cutting issues.

## **THREE-YEAR ROLLING PLAN (2004-2006)**

***Inter-regional collaboration:*** This Pillar represents the value adding contribution of GFAR to the global research system because it fosters strong linkages amongst the various Regional Fora (RF) and facilitates the sharing of knowledge, technology and information across regions. Under this pillar, efforts will be made to ensure that the RF are truly representative of the range of stakeholders. Regional priorities will be identified or updated and the output will be used to develop collaborative research programmes including networking. Strengths and opportunities of the RF will be analysed and used to form the basis of south-south and north-south collaboration. The RF will drive all of these efforts with support from the Secretariat and other stakeholders such as the International Agricultural Research Centres (IARCs) and Advanced Research Institutions (ARIs). Key indicators and milestones identified are that in another year or two, some two-to-three (2-3) inter-regional networking activities and north-south collaborative activities developed on the basis of regional strengths, opportunities and updated regional priorities would be on-going. Some evidence of a balanced stakeholder representation on RF governing bodies will also be presented.

***Collaborative Research Partnerships:*** Global Partnerships Programmes (GPPs) will continue to be the privileged tool for implementing the collaborative research partnership pillar in following thematic areas of inquiries: genetic resources management and biotechnology, natural resources management and agro-ecology, commodity chains and under utilized crops species, and policy management and institutional development. Efforts will also be made to examine interactions between these and the WEHAB (water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity) themes identified during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). While this initiative will be driven by the stakeholders who find common issues of concern to work on, the Secretariat will facilitate the building of such research partnerships including the mobilization of required funds. In addition, an information exchange system will be developed within the Electronic Global Forum on Agricultural Research (EGFAR) to stimulate and encourage the sharing of lessons learnt and outputs as well as networking amongst GPPs tackling similar issues. A comprehensive Cost-Benefit analysis of the development and implementation of GPPs will be carried out to document good practices for reducing the high transaction costs associated with multiple stakeholder partnerships. Development and/or linkages of websites of on-going GPPs to EGFAR as a means of disseminating information on the GPPs during the first year of the triennium is one of the key indicators identified. Others are the implementation of two-to-three (2-3) new GPPs and follow up phases of another two first generation GPPs now concluding their first phase.

***Advocacy, public awareness and strategic thinking:*** There was consensus amongst stakeholders that GFAR should step up its advocacy and strategic thinking role in order to add its voice and perspective to global debates and initiatives on policy, institutional and other

critical emerging issues that shape and affect Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development (ARSD). One of the planned activities that will be carried out early in the second year of the triennium is to review some regional and global initiatives and commitments (e.g. Hunger Initiatives, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)) to determine areas of common interest with GFAR. Partnerships and synergies with such initiatives will then be promoted through active participation of GFAR stakeholders in such initiatives in order to articulate and promote the views, perspective and the cause of GFAR. Another prioritised set of activities designed to address the strategic thinking component is to use a variety of tools such as organized discussion forum, workshops and commissioned research papers to provide information, and shed light on some critical issues of global concern, and appropriately disseminate the outputs. Not more than two (2) of such activities will be carried out by specialized stakeholders groups with support from the secretariat.

**Management Information Systems:** The development of an information exchange and knowledge sharing system has been one of the enduring elements of GFAR's modus operandum, as it provided an effective means of communication amongst the various stakeholders. The hub of the system has been the EGFAR, and it will continue to be the central element of the system during the next triennium. Activities planned to strengthen both this hub and radial components of the GFAR information communication wheel include: improved EGFAR in terms of tools and content; improved EGFAR Back Office (EBO) system to enable stakeholders upload and manage their own information; utilization of EGFAR for e-discussions and debates to address advocacy and strategic thinking components of the BP; establishment and/or improvement of Regional Agricultural Information Systems (RAIS) and their linkages to each other and to EGFAR; and the utilization of a variety of print and other media to complement EGFAR, in other to enhance our reach . The Secretariat will play a proactive role carrying out many of these activities, with the long term goal of developing a MIS capability for effective decision making processes.

**Cross Cutting Activities:** In addition to a variety of activities that will be carried under each of the pillars, and under the leadership of farmers organizations (FOs) such as the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) and regional NGOs consortia, efforts will be made to develop strategies and approaches to better organize and empower farmer groups and NGOs so that they can contribute more effectively to the development of agricultural research agenda at various levels. Projects based on such strategies will be developed, implemented and evaluated as to their effectiveness.

## **THE SECRETARIAT PROGRAMME OF WORK**

The primary role of the Secretariat is to facilitate the implementation of the BP by Stakeholders. To this end, the Secretariat will facilitate the development and implementation of a number of GPPs in the pipeline using a combination of appropriate tools and approaches including e-discussion, face to face brainstorming sessions and focused workshops for participating stakeholders. It will also support efforts to fund these GPPs as well as for second generation GPPs that require funding for a second phase.

In addition to these catalytic functions, the Secretariat also has the mandate to play a proactive or lead role to ensure implementation of a number of other activities. Firstly, the Secretariat will lead efforts to develop, update and establish EGFAR as a medium of information exchange and knowledge sharing amongst GFAR stakeholders. Secondly, it will also drive initiatives designed to identify critical and emerging issues that shape and affect agricultural research for development, and organize activities that will shed some light on such critical issues leading to better informed and updated stakeholders. Thirdly, it will drive efforts

designed to encourage a balanced representation of stakeholders within RF, and to support capacity building efforts directed at organized civil society groups.

Finally, the Secretariat will continue to serve as the glue that binds all of the different stakeholders together, ensuring they function as one whole, planning and implementing statutory meetings to ensure the governance structure functions, and facilitating the implementation of planned evaluations for lessons learned and system improvement.

## **MAJOR OUTPUTS**

The full implementation of this BP will, over the next several years, lead to the achievement of many of the following outputs:

- a well known, and recognized GFAR whose concept is more universally acknowledged, accepted and practised, and whose voice and perspectives are reflected in global events;
- emergence of functional NARS, inclusive of relevant stakeholders, with the necessary competence to provide effective solutions and services to their stakeholders;
- a GFAR whose stakeholders actively promote and practice the concept of working together, and giving a voice, space and opportunity to hitherto marginalized groups to actively participate in all activities, including decision making processes;
- GFAR driven activities, projects and programmes founded on cost-effective partnerships which are repeatedly replicated, scaled out and up by others; and
- concrete, visible, and demonstrable impact of GFAR stakeholder activities on food security, poverty reduction, efficient and competitive production systems and responsible natural resources utilization and conservation.

## **THE BUDGET (2004-2006)**

A total of 6.4 million USD during the triennium to cover the following:

- Catalytic funds to enable stakeholders carryout partnership building, capacity development, as well as preliminary activities leading to the implementation of collaborative research-development programmes;
- Funds for stakeholder connectivity for information sharing and knowledge exchange; and
- Contribution to the global knowledge pool on ARD and to ensure functional and efficient system governance.