



GFAR

GLOBAL FORUM ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
FORUM MONDIAL DE LA RECHERCHE AGRICOLE
FORO GLOBAL DE INVESTIGACION AGROPECUARIA

Establishment of a “Donor Support Group to the Global Forum for Agricultural Research”

A Discussion Paper

GFAR, October 1997

A. Background and Rationale for a Donor Support Group to the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (DSG-GFAR)

1. The first Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR) held in Washington D.C. under the Chairmanship of the President of IFAD adopted a **Declaration** and a **Plan of Action for Global Partnership in Agricultural Research**. As an historical event, the GFAR represented the culmination of a large consultative process consisting of various events/decisions of global or thematic nature. The main ones are the renewal of the CGIAR, the two-year NARS-driven consultative process commencing in December 1994 at the IFAD-convened Rome International Consultation on NARS' Vision of International Agricultural Research, and the European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development which urges ARIs to be part of that process. The “NARS” initiative was co-sponsored by a core Facilitating Group composed of EU, FAO, IFAD, ISNAR, The World Bank and Swiss DC, with initial financial contribution also from Denmark, Japan and the Netherlands. For a detailed report on the activities carried out in the year that has elapsed since the establishment of the Global Forum, see: **GFAR Report of Activities: 1996-1997**.

2. At the GFAR, a Global Forum Steering Committee (GFSC) was established and mandated to consult with all the stakeholders and monitor the translation of the Action Plan into a detailed programme of activities. At its first meeting during the Cairo CGIAR MTM held in May 1997, the GFSC recognized that the tasks and functions entailed by the Global Plan of Action were manifold and diverse, and that the NARS constituency was complex. It was therefore decided that the implementation of the Global Plan of Action would require two Secretariats - one for the NARS-Steering Committee (NARS-SC) and one for the GFSC, with distinct but complementary functions.

3. During its first meeting in Cairo, the GFSC recommended that its own Secretariat be hosted by the World Bank-ESDAR in Washington DC. This has been accepted by the World Bank-ESDAR and the proposed terms of reference for the GFSC Secretariat are presented in another document. During the same meeting, the GFSC also asked FAO, IFAD and ISNAR to draft a proposal and work out modalities by which they could co-sponsor and jointly support the NARS-SC Secretariat. At its meeting of 26 October 1997 in Washington, the NARS-SC approved the final version of a paper defining the guiding principles, the objectives and the terms of reference of this secretariat (see **Operationalization of the NARS-SC Secretariat**). These two Secretariats are conceived as small support units based in existing organizational facilities, that generate only a small additional cost related to the functioning of such units.

4. On the basis of the **Plan of Action for Global Partnership in Agricultural Research** that was approved in October of 1996, and on the basis of the Regional Consultations that were carried out, as well as discussions with the various partners involved in the Global Forum, a **GFAR Programme of Work: 1998-2000** has been prepared outlining the activities that will be carried out in the next three years. This Programme of Work 1998-2000 is divided in two components (sub-programmes). The first component comprises activities of a global nature to be implemented by the GFSC secretariat, while the second component consists of activities which are NARS-related to be implemented by the NARS-SC secretariat. In order to operationalize the Plan of Action, and to facilitate the implementation of the principal activities that constitute the Programme of Work for 1998-2000, it is proposed that a small Donor Support Group (DSG) be established, constituted by those donors who are interested in contributing to this process. The NARS-SC recognized the important and complementary role played by IFAD, FAO and ISNAR and recommended that all these agencies be involved in accordance with their respective comparative advantage.

5. On the basis of the above considerations, and after consultation between the facilitating agencies, IFAD accepted to initiate the process for the establishment of a Donor Support Group as recommended at the Cairo GFSC meeting to facilitate the mobilization of resources, while FAO accepted to host the NARS-GSC Secretariat and ISNAR to provide technical support to the secretariat. Since the Programme of Work for 1998-2000 identifies a range of activities to be carried out, donors may selectively support those activities that they feel are of greater importance as regard to their priorities. Some of these activities will be carried out with the support of the GFSC, while others will be coordinated by the NARS-SC. Following the principles of the Global Forum, special attention should be given to supporting the participation of NARS and of the Regional and Sub-regional Fora in the initiatives and activities of the Global Forum.

6. The GFSC includes one representative of the donors. Through the establishment of a DSG, the donor community clearly expresses its concern with the main problem that led to the establishment of the GFAR: food security, poverty alleviation, sustainable development and the need to look for cost-effective approaches to tackle these issues through collaborative efforts and research partnerships among the various stakeholders, and through the use of new technologies. The establishment of a DSG will also assist the donor community to organize its representation in the GFSC and indicate its willingness to be strongly involved in the consolidation and guidance of the emerging Global System for Agricultural Research.

B. Basic Guiding Principles for Establishing a DSG

7. Without attempting to define “the roles of the DSG” for its members, there are a number of basic principles underlying its creation. These are :

- **Voluntary basis:** The DSG should be established on a voluntary basis. It will be open to all donors actively supporting agricultural research activities of a global or regional nature.
- **Transparency:** The DSG should work in a transparent manner. It will make available to all donors and stakeholders information on its “policy (debates and positions reached)”, and on the activities it supports.
- **Specific pledging:** Pledging in the DSG should be limited to the GFSC and NARS-SC 3-year work programmes. It should remain clearly distinct from pledging of financial support to the CGIAR, while the work programmes will be complementary.

- **Limited scope:** Most research will continue to be funded in a decentralized manner. The DSG should focus primarily on facilitating linkage mechanisms, exchange of information and collaborative partnerships within the NARS, among the NARS at the sub-regional, regional and global levels, and between all the constituencies of the GFAR. It could also contribute to developing a coherent framework for all decentralized efforts, thereby increasing transparency and effectiveness. For that purpose, it should cooperate with already existing “donor clubs” which have either geographical focus (e.g. SPAAR) or thematic scope (e.g. the Banana support group).

C. Goal and Key Objectives

8. The overall goal of the DSG is to support the complementary work programmes of the NARS-SC and the GFSC, and to provide a vehicle for coordination of the donor community interested in supporting GFAR activities.

9. The specific objectives of the DSG are:

- To facilitate consultation among donors on issues related to the orientation of the GFAR, in order to forge and strengthen the consensus needed to increase synergies and complementarities among international, regional, sub-regional and national agricultural research. Special attention will be given to the relationships between the DSG and the CGIAR.
- To organize the donor representation and participation in the GFSC.
- To support both GFSC and NARS-SC activities as agreed in their respective work programmes, giving priority to the interaction mechanisms and the institutional arrangements for closer collaboration among NARS, and between the different actors of the GFAR.

D. Modus Operandi

10. A preliminary medium term plan or Programme of Work for three (3) years (1998-2000) has been prepared. This proposed programme of work is first being discussed by the NARS-SC and the GFSC, and will then be submitted to the DSG for their consideration. The next step in this process will be to attach budget figures to the activities or projects that will be included in the final version of the splitted GFSC and NARS-SC Programmes of Work. But before doing so, it is considered important to received feedback from the Donors' community (through the DSG if it is established), in order to adjust the whole Programme of Work to the appropriate level that will be identified by consensus.

11. The DSG, like the GFSC and the NARS-SC, will meet when necessary, but at least twice a year at the time of ICW and MTM of the CGIAR. Once a year, the DSG will review the programmes of work of the NARS-SC and GFSC Secretariats, as proposed by the respective Steering Committees in accordance with annual report of activities to be prepared by their respective secretariat. The DSG will provide its own financial support, and endeavor to mobilize support from additional donors to the agreed agenda.