On 15-17 May 2002 the second conference of the European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD) was held in Rome under the banner of “Strengthening the European Contribution to Agricultural Research for Development”. The conference was organised by the EFARD Steering Committee, composed of persons from public-sector institutions of agricultural research, education and administration. There does not appear to have been any systematic effort to encourage involvement of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and farmer organisations (FOs). The outstanding exception was Italy, the host country. The local preparatory group for the conference invited Italian NGOs to join and allocated four delegate seats to them. These four NGOs invested considerable time preparing for the conference: discussing issues and formulating various thematic statements based on own reflections as well as on reports and papers of civil society organisations (CSOs) from the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) conference in Dresden in 2000 and various regional meetings supported by the NGO Committee of the CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research).

Out of the more than 200 participants in the EFARD conference, 11 were from European NGOs (including the four from Italy) and one was from a European FO.

Preparatory meeting of CSOs
This small group met immediately before the conference in order to become better acquainted with each other, to discuss our expectations from and possible contributions to partnerships in agricultural research for development (ARD), to prepare for collaboration during the conference, and to plan how to influence ARD in the future. Participants came from: Agrecol (Germany), ALISEI (Italy), AVSI (Italy), BOAT (UK), Crocevia (Italy), ELKANA (Georgia), ETC (Netherlands), Swedish Farmers Federation (also member of EU Economic and Social Committee), FOCSIV-LVIA (Italy), FUE (Germany), GRET (France) and Solagral (France). The CSOs continued to meet briefly at breaks during the conference.

The participants supported the paper that had been prepared by the Italian NGOs and agreed that it should be distributed in the names of all CSOs present. The only change suggested was to put more emphasis on farmer-led research rather than just farmer participation in research led by formal scientists. We agreed on who would participate in each of the five parallel sessions, to ensure CSO presence in the discussion of each theme.

The main emphases of the final paper (see Annex 1) are on:
• developing family farming based on local values and aimed at ensuring food security
• the need for an ethical approach to research
• the role of NGOs not just as receivers of research results but also as actors in research implementation and in the development of research methods
• the primacy of participatory, farmer-led research.

The GFAR is promoting participation of all stakeholder groups (farmers, NGOs, private sector, national and international research institutes in South and North, and donors) in decision-making about ARD on a global level and in the regional and subregional fora. The CSOs felt that not enough attention is being given to stakeholder participation in the European contribution to ARD.

Research currently being conducted by farmers and NGOs on ecologically oriented agriculture follows and requires a site-specific approach. The CSOs felt that the mechanisms for research collaboration being proposed by the European Union for the 6th Framework Programme (Integrated Projects and Networks of Excellence), as these are too huge for the type of collaboration that is needed to address problems of resource-poor farmers in a participatory way. There is a need to set aside funds for other programmes developed by farmers and NGOs seeking partnership with scientists.
Research focused on ecologically and socially sound agriculture should be structured according to the principle of subsidiarity, meaning that questions for research that cannot be handled at local level should be mandated by that level to higher (national, international) levels of research. CSOs need to find ways to influence the criteria for selection of research proposals, so that this principle can be applied. The most effective way to influence research content and methods is via the funding mechanisms.

We agreed that the few CSOs that were in Rome need to broaden and strengthen our linkages with other CSOs in Europe and organise ourselves better if we want to have a real impact on policy and practices of ARD and to mainstream our vision of ARD into national and international institutions. We felt that, in Europe, it would be possible and desirable for the two stakeholder groups - NGOs and FOs – to combine forces. We regard ourselves as the seed of a CSO working group of ARD, which could eventually expand into a network. The first step is to establish closer communication between us and with other interested CSOs in Europe. Staffan Nilsson, the sole farmer in our midst and a member of the EU Economic and Social Committee (ESC), offered to investigate the possibilities that the ESC Secretariat on agricultural and environmental questions facilitate this communication at least initially.

Conference of confusion

The EFARD conference itself was focused on five thematic areas: 1) Genetic Resources and Biotechnology; 2) Natural Resources and Agroecology; 3) Commodity Chains and Food Safety; 4) Rural Transformation and Agricultural Innovation Processes; and 5) Structuring and Strengthening the Foundations of the ERA-ARD (European Research Area for Agricultural Research for Development). A member of the NGO Committee of the CGIAR was invited to chair discussions on the 4th thematic area.

On the basis of concept papers from European organisations and priorities expressed by regional and subregional research fora in the South, EFARD had worked out 19 research themes. In the last few weeks before the conference, scientists from several European countries had discussed each of these themes to a greater or lesser extent, primarily by email. In Rome, agreement was supposed to be reached on specific projects involving partnerships between European countries and with the South, especially with a view to preparing Expressions of Interest for the 6th Framework Programme of the EU. Most of the proposals seemed to fit under the EU priorities “Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems” and “Citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society”.

The conference was not designed in a way that allowed meaningful discussion of proposals. Too much time was given to prepared papers and “roundtables” (series of prepared papers) in the plenary. In most parallel sessions, it was possible to present the short thematic papers prepared by the Italian NGOs, but there was little or no opportunity for discussion.

The primary interest of the European CSOs had been to use the EFARD conference as a forum of the different stakeholders to discuss research priorities and to agree on criteria (related to both content and methods) for selection of ARD collaborative projects. We felt this would have been a more constructive use of time than trying to work out proposals in a large conference that was not designed for this.

Much of the conference was therefore frustrating for the CSOs. The coffee and lunch breaks were the most exciting and communicative periods. Indeed, the suggestion was made that EFARD might considering experimenting with more innovative approaches to conferences, such as Open Space meetings (sometimes described as conferences of coffee breaks) and/or markets of opportunities (Dare-to-Share Fairs).

Focus on the North

Not only the CSOs but also many public-sector scientists from European institutions found the approach of trying to develop North-South partnership proposals with very little input from the
South was likely to dampen rather than enhance the motivation of Southern organisations to become partners. However, no funding is available through the EU to bring potential partners from North and South together to plan research collaboration within the 6th Framework Programme.

As became increasingly clear during the conference, the seven priorities in the Framework Programme are meant to strengthen European institutions. Only the 8th (as yet, not defined) “priority” will concern development cooperation. This had not been well understood by most participants when they started to discuss the proposals in the parallel sessions.

**Strengthening future contributions of European CSOs to ARD**

Earlier this year, the European NGO focal point for the GFAR (Global Forum on Agricultural Research) had asked the EFARD to review its structure and to include NGOs and FOs more explicitly (see agenda note and report in Annex 3). The EFARD Steering Committee (SC) had agreed to this in principle but, up to the Rome meeting, had still not agreed on how to go about it.

One of the Italian NGO representatives attended the EFARD SC meeting immediately after the conference. Here the SC decided that the criteria to appoint the NGO and farmer representatives in the SC would be fixed by these stakeholder groups themselves. The choice of members could be done, for example, by an NGO/FO working group on ARD.

From our perspective, the main benefits of the meeting in Rome were at two levels:

- within the NGO-farmer group, to get to know each other and to share ideas, and
- within EFARD, to meet some like-minded scientists and to be able to contribute to preparing the expressions of interests (and hopefully also the research proposals) after the conference.

As was agreed during the CSO meetings, we asked that support for building up our constituency be included in the proposal to the EU for strengthening the foundations of the ERA-ARD. This will hopefully provide an opportunity to bring European NGOs and FOs into closer collaboration in promoting agricultural research for low-external-input family-based farming, poverty alleviation and environmentally, economically and socially sustainable livelihoods. In the meantime, through electronic communication, we would like to formulate criteria for selection of ARD proposals, to be submitted to the EU, and to consider ways to bring our concerns into meetings, discussions and decision-making, as well as to monitor implementation of decisions taken. One small step will be filling the seats now available for NGOs and FOs in the EFARD Steering Committee.

The documents prepared for the conference and the list of proposals discussed will be published on the EFARD website (www.eufor.org). Several Expressions of Interest prepared by subgroups from the five parallel sessions were submitted to Brussels by the deadline of 7 June 2002 and the Rome Declaration from the EFARD conference will be presented to the European Commission.
Questions to European CSOs concerned with ARD

1. Criteria for project selection

In the paper that was initially prepared by the Italian NGOs and was discussed during the preparatory meeting of CSOs for presentation to EFARD, some criteria for selection of research proposals have been highlighted:

- derived from needs of the local people
- respect and integration of local knowledge
- focus on marginal environments and fragile eco-systems
- centrality of the rural communities
- evidence of capacity to reach the objectives sought
- aimed at immediate applicability of results
- transparency: free circulation of ideas and information on the procedures, resources and results.

For further details, see the section on “Agricultural Research for Development: the point of view of NGOs” in Annex 1.

*Do you agree or disagree with any of these criteria? What additional criteria should be included?*

2. CSO collaboration on ARD policy dialogue

*Is your organisation interested in joining a CSO (NGO and FO) working group/network on agricultural research for development?*

3. CSO representation in EFARD Steering Committee

*Which criteria do you propose for choice of the person(s) to represent NGOs and FOs in the EFARD Steering Committee?*

*Should both seats (for NGOs and for FOs) be occupied?*

*What suggestions do you have for procedure to appoint this person / these persons?*

Please respond by 15 July 2002 to:
Ann Waters-Bayer (waters-bayer@web.de)
Staffan Nilsson (staffan.nilsson@esc.eu.int)
Italo Rizzi (rizzi@hotmail.com)
“Peasant agriculture is the agriculture of the future, of this we have absolutely no doubt, as it re-invents, on the basis of tradition, in the positive sense of the term, and of techniques, a new way of producing that is respectful of the environment, a new relationship with the economy that aims at optimising added value to ensure income and the remuneration of the factors of production, a new bond with consumers who are offered products of quality. Through this evolution of agriculture, it is possible to rehabilitate the vocation of the farmer and reconstruct a network of widespread solidarity.” (Confédération Paysanne Française)

European Agricultural Research for Development and NGOs

Introduction
In the context of reformulating the priorities for agricultural research for development (ARD), the NGOs, together with research institutions and “donors”, are summoned to contribute ideas. One of the most important paths through which this goal can be reached is that promoted by EFARD (European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development).

During the preparatory work, the Scientific Committees of the National Forums have solicited and obtained from the various players in the national ARD system numerous abstracts of research proposals (17 fiches from NGOs) and have categorised these according to priority topics for the European Forum, namely:

- genetic resources management and biotechnology
- natural resources management and agro-ecology
- commodity chains and food safety
- rural transformation and agricultural innovation processes.

The proposals sent by the National Forums to the EFARD have been grouped together in 19 research proposals/topics (fiches for the proposals for ERA-ARD), which include only some of the NGO proposals, and were then submitted to the European Commission. However, the research priorities of the respective national research systems have still not clearly emerged.

Medium-term perspective
The aim was to bring out the research priorities of the respective national research systems, coordinate project efforts and create opportunities for partnerships that represent the objectives pursued by the NGO delegates at the European Forum 2002 in four thematic areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVSI</td>
<td>Lorenzo Orioli</td>
<td>Genetic resources and biotechnology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOCSIV-LVIA</td>
<td>Italo Rizzi</td>
<td>Natural resources management and agro-ecology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALISEI</td>
<td>Luciano Venturi</td>
<td>Commodity chains and food safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROCEVIA</td>
<td>Alessandro Cardarelli</td>
<td>Rural transformation and agric. innovation processes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proposals in which the Italian NGOs were involved were allocated to the four thematic areas as defined during preparation of the Forum (see Annex 2). Later, the Forum organisers decided – without consultation with the NGOs – to put some topics in different thematic areas and even to create a fifth one. This document deliberately does not take these later modifications into account.

Agricultural Research for Development: the point of view of NGOs
Agriculture over the past 50 years has, all over the world, been gradually assimilated into the mechanism of general development. It has lost many of its traditional characteristics, it has adjusted to the prevailing mode of production, it has become organically linked and it now has reciprocal relations to the markets for products and inputs, including the whole services sector. Traditions, institutional factors, environmental elements, social histories and a whole series of territorial determining factors have contributed to conditioning the placing of the primary sector within the complex configurations of contemporary economic and social sectors.

Over the five decades of cooperation for development, the research aimed at finding solutions for the recurrent crises in agricultural production that cyclically affect developing countries, and in particular sub-Saharan Africa, has been carried out outside the rural world. In other parts of the world, too, the local agricultural sector has often, if not almost always, been considered essentially devoid of capacities for self-renewal. Attention has been placed on the development of technological packages by research institutes far from the reality of farmers and peasants. These packages have then been diffused in one direction only, following pre-defined patterns from top to bottom. This has often upset the environmental equilibrium and created instability in the agricultural ecosystem, which has become increasingly in need of support.

Fortunately, the need to invert the path has been commonly recognised, also because some people involved in co-operation (NGOs, research institutes, foundations, supranational bodies), have taken up different positions. They have:

- worked with the partners in the South to foster a model of eco-compatible sustainable agriculture, capable of valorising the local resources of agricultural biodiversity and technological knowledge;
- perceived the movement that was taking shape in the farming and rural world from the 1970s onwards and have engaged in a progressive reinforcement, in rural areas, of associations and groups of peasants and farmers who try to improve their situation. At the same time, they have accompanied the institutional development of groups of associations that had formed at regional and national levels.

In line with this, NGOs have formulated some basic values (criteria) for the appropriateness and quality of agricultural research for sustainable development:

**Reliability -**
The motivations of research are derived from the needs of the local people and the interventions are limited to the areas in which adequate levels of competence can be ensured, maintained and developed. Integration and respect of local knowledge of the agricultural-ecological, technological and socio-economic systems are safeguarded, taking care that the innovations produced, at low capital cost, do not lead to an increase in the level of risk for the people involved.

**Centrality of rural communities –**
The attitudes, activities and professional practices develop relations of trust between the participants in the research programmes, thus not regarding the rural systems and communities solely as beneficiaries. To this end, their empowerment and the creation of usable mechanisms of accessibility to the research results must be fostered. Particular attention is paid to marginal environments and fragile eco-systems (poverty oriented). The farmers contribute to the development and testing of the innovations (action research, participatory technology development, farmer-to-farmer approaches etc.) and carry out farmer-led research.

**Efficacy -**
The identification of the ARD programmes responds to proof of evidence of capacity to reach the objectives pursued. The prioritisation of needs is based on defined participatory methodologies appropriate for the emerging proposals. Important synergies are derived from working in a network at local/regional level, linked with research carried out at regional and global level.

**Flexibility -**
The ARD programmes respond to mechanisms of scalable innovation (adaptable, subject to modification, improvement and responses) and are monitored in progress and ex-post. Innovation is understood as technological/technical but also in relation to the agro-ecological and social principles/processes of the system (holistic approach by means of integrating ecological, economic, social and political components into the study).

**Transparency**
The ARD programmes guarantee the free circulation of ideas and information on the procedures adopted, resources and results. The management processes, both inside and outside the governing centre of research, are absolutely visible and comprehensible.

**Immediate applicability**
The research initiatives must be finalised for practical and immediate application in the productive and system processes of the people concerned, taking into account what is stated in the first point on reliability.

**Agricultural Research for Development: a role for NGOs**

The NGOs do not see themselves solely in the role of “receivers” (users, clients) of the products of ARD. The history of experience accumulated by this component in the non-profit sector, its consolidated function as facilitator of technical interventions in disadvantaged conditions (situations proper to the “development” context), its contribution to social stabilisation and overcoming micro-conflicts, and the strong bond between NGOs and other important components of civil society at local, national and supranational level – all these give legitimacy to the role of NGOs in ARD.

In particular, NGOs have operated in various agricultural-ecological contexts in developing methodologies of participatory research and experimentation in their role of co-actors. In this regard, NGOs deem that the organisations involved in ARD, whether governmental or private, must not assume an exclusively technical function. Civil society must also have a role and contribute to the choices and re-orientations of the research programmes and be involved in processes of monitoring and evaluation.

The values in the vision and mission of the NGOs often meet obstacles on the part of the market, which tends to privilege profit at the expense of the real needs of ARD for poverty alleviation.

The means currently used by ARD are of a highly varied nature: overlapping of research structures, duplication of interventions, competition that is not with a development aim, transfer of practices and resources that are obsolete or harmful for human health, use of methods and instruments that have not been evaluated for their environmental impact (before, during and after), failure to use and diffuse, in the disadvantaged areas, the innovations produced by the research programmes.

The NGOs will participate in ARD if it is planned and implemented with respect to research ethics that protect the basic values stated above and if it is designed to remove the constraints and weaknesses that are detrimental to its real and global efficacy. In the world of research, NGOs can participate with competence and professionalism, with the strength of their values which they hold as institutions. They seek to establish a synergetic relationship with other actors in ARD, based on the complementary nature of the institutional roles and the principles of subsidiarity.
Annex 2: Thematic area profiles – Preparatory work of Italian NGOs

Genetic Resources and Biotechnologies

This thematic area has two scientific leaders: Dr Tuberosa from the University of Bologna and Dr Lelli from the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sper. dell'Abruzzo e del Molise, respectively for plant and animal genetics and their applications, followed by 4 referents for the topics:

- Conservation, Management and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food Security and Poverty Alleviation
- Conservation, Management and Sustainable Utilization of Animal Genetic Resources for Food Security and Poverty Alleviation
- Plants Genomics for Health using rice as model plant
- Global Initiative on Vector-borne Trypanosomiasis control for animal and human health

In particular the NGOs refer to plant genetics, according to the following Integrated Projects (IPs):

| Improving Food Legume Resistance to Biotic Stress | AVSI Milano milano@avsi.org; prof. Daniele Bassi Dip.to di Produzione Vegetale - University of Milan daniele.bassi@unimi.it |
| Search for Fungal Disease Resistance in Rice Varieties in Haiti: Genetic Improvement for Food Security Purposes | AVSI Milano; milano@avsi.org prof. Daniele Bassi Dip.to di Produzione Vegetale - University of Milan daniele.bassi@unimi.it |
| Development and Field Release of Cassava Genotypes Resistant to ACMV (African Cassava Mosaic Virus, Strain Ugv) Obtained by Genetic Engineering. | Plant Pathology Institute University of Milan Piero A. BIANCO piero.bianco@unimi.it AVSI (Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale) Milano milano@avsi.org |

In particular, plant genetics has been further re-elaborated in the following topics, taking into account all the projects presented in the thematic area of Genetic Resources and Biotechnologies and selecting some in view of the Forum:

- Conservation and management ex-situ and in-situ of the plant genetic resources
- Genomics of crops
- Use of Plant Genetic Resources

The position of the NGOs with respect to the topic of Genetic Resources and Biotechnologies and in this specific case in relation to the IPs presented, and in harmony with the common point of view of the role of the NGOs in the context of Agricultural Research for Development (ARD), aims to underline the role of “connection” – a fundamental – between the rural world and local research bodies, within a more extensive international institutional network. The valorisation in loco of the universities, of the public research bodies – often decadent, no longer valorised and removed from the rural reality which they should be addressing – can be carried out through:

- appropriate technological research innovation;
- the exchange of students, researchers or technical staff;
- the application of research to development projects carried on by NGOs;
- thematic updating and in-field experimentation.

North-South co-operation between research institutes does not always succeed in addressing – through divulgation, training, participatory approaches etc. – the beneficiaries. Therefore an upstream “connection”, in order to valorise the local research bodies in a wider international network, fostering their technological innovation, thematic updating, scientific production and a downstream “connection”, in order to benefit the beneficiaries, address the areas of research according to the basic needs of the population. In this way, civil society, represented both by the rural communities and the institutions, are promoted from a stance of self-development.

In particular, genetic and biotechnological research must be linked to the conservation of biodiversity, knowledge of which very often is a requisite of the cultural heritage of the local population and must be linked to the long-term policies of Food Security. Biotechnological research is seen therefore not as an expropriation of local biological resources but as a means of their conservation and improvement.
Natural Resources Management and Agroecology

With the members of the Italian working group on “Natural Resources Management and Agro-ecology”, following the meeting of 4th March, some points have been underlined which can be agreed with as NGOs.

"Group 2, in underlining the priorities for the national Forum, highlighted some points in terms of actions that must be implemented: a) the research must be non self-referential; b) there must be an effective demand from DCs; c) a liaison must be established with research structure in DCs, in order to implement concrete interventions."

To this we add that the system of agricultural research we wish to see is based on an integration of local and scientific knowledge.

Furthermore, as research does not play a neutral role, we state the importance of the participation of farmers in the development of the innovation for use by the various members of society and the valorisation of the local systems of knowledge which on a local scale are essential to ensure their capacity of adaptation to new challenges and which represents a foundation of sustainable development. Agricultural research for development must include the various stakeholders when it is planned, but it must also create the conditions for it to be demand-driven, that is, create research partnerships with FO, NGOs and local institutions, and improve the organizational and implementing capacity of these research platforms.

In this regard, research is carried out in complex systems with a holistic approach, for the simultaneous study of agro-ecological and management factors, in order to develop innovation that is complementary to the livelihood strategy (agricultural intensification/extension, diversification of the system of sustenance and migration) of the players of the rural system (Scoones, 1998). Therefore, maintaining the scientific method, we propose using a study methodology on a territorial scale in real situations and not only in experimental stations.

Research on the use of NRM strategies proposed by the NGOs, addressing the disadvantaged sectors of the population, in particular in marginal areas, aims at the study and diffusion of agro-ecological technology for the optimisation of biological processes. The research that is necessary to fuel local systems of innovation, has applicative purposes and concerns the sustainable management of resources (agro-biodiversity, soil fertility, water) with a reduced use of external inputs, integrated into an ecologically and socially sustainable system of cultivation.

For some time, NGOs have shown a specific skill in developing methodological instruments to analyse and carry out participatory experimentation. This is an important point to be worked on and in which to invest both by integrating the action of the NGOs in wide-reaching projects and wide partnerships and by developing instruments and projects to improve the scalability of innovation and processes of innovation.

Furthermore, the referents of the topics related to this area have been appointed, namely:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Integrated Land and Water Management for Sustainable Food Production in (Semi) Arid and Mediterranean Areas</th>
<th>Rossella PAPINI</th>
<th>Ist. Sperim. per lo Studio e la Difesa del Suolo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Agro-Ecosystems and Human Interactions for Sustainable Agriculture in Peri-Urban Areas</td>
<td>Grazia MASCIANDARO</td>
<td>Istituto per la Chimica del Terreno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Integrated Land and Water Management for Sustainable Food Production in (Semi) Humid Tropical Ecosystems</td>
<td>Andrea PISANELLI</td>
<td>CNR - Istituto per l’Agroselvicoltura</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the research topics shown above, there are others in which the proposals presented by the Italian NGOs converge.

In particular, the Integrated Projects on:

- Local Innovation of Farmers for Valuing Indigenous Knowledge on Sustainable NRM and Agro-ecological Practices
- Direct Sowing, Mulch based agriculture and Conservation Tillage (DMC) for Food Security, Poverty Alleviation and Conserving natural resources
- Sustainable Forestry, Agro-forestry Management in (Sub)Tropical Areas, including carbon sequestration

No proposal was received on the topic
- Integrated Pest Management for Sustainable Agro-ecosystem

The proposals received by the NGOs are shown below:

| The conservation tillage by human and animal power in semi-arid environments for sustainable land management | LVIA Cuneo – (Italy) Massimo Pallottino lvia@multiwire.net |
| Sustainable agro-ecosystems in humid tropical Africa: Mangrove rice production between traditional knowledge and market pressures | LVIA Cuneo – (Italy) Federico Lotto lvia@multiwire.net |
| Farm forestry and natural resources conservation around the Arabuko-Sokoke - Goshi, Coast Province of the Republic of Kenya | ALISEI – (Italy) Andrea Pisanelli a.pisanelli@ias.tr.cnr.it alisei.bo@alisei.org |
| Sustainable management of natural resources in the Norte Santafesino (Argentina) | AVSI (Associazione volontari per il servizio internazionale) Milano – (Italy) prof. Daniele Bassi daniele.bassi@unimi.it |
| Eco-compatible use of autochthonous woody plant species in Amazonian forest for fruit and wood production | AVSI (Associazione volontari per il servizio internazionale) Milano – (Italy) prof. Daniele Bassi daniele.bassi@unimi.it |

**Commodity chains and food safety**

The control of the section of food production represents a fundamental of the process of protection of their security in highly industrialised and widely developed contexts. One of the most important actions for its realisation is represented by an integrated system that presupposes a transparent chain of control of foods based on two mechanisms: the univocal identification of the food and reliable and verifiable conservation of its identity.

In underprivileged, less economically and socially advanced situations, dramatically and inexorably, the principles of traceability and “risk control” are gauged towards more appropriate connotations of “reduction of damage” as a consequence of the practice of extension of technologies and inappropriate or dangerous means.

The phenomenon has been significantly defined by the expression “international transfer of risk”, also in analogy with recently proposed concepts: “...it is no longer the case to speak of development but only of structural adjustment.” (S. Latouche, 2001).

The abuse of non-renewable resources, migrations, the frenetic drive towards production, the diffusion of inappropriate animal and farming technologies, the use of chemical molecules no longer allowed in developed countries represent some of the most important causes of inefficiency of the process aimed at guaranteeing food security.

In this wide space that links and separates the two types of approach – taking the second “reduction of damage” as an evolution, coherent with the levels of economic/social development of the areas concerned, of the principle of “control of risk” – Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) finds a pre-eminent role in the field of food production.

Components that are unquestionably involved in the organizational and structural path aimed at the achievement of the objective “Health” in which the improvement of food - qualitatively adequate for populations that are in increasingly difficulties regarding environmental, social, cultural and technological subversions – plays a role of primary importance and in which research is to be considered a resource (immaterial capital) and not a cost.

Food and health are therefore so inseparably connected and interdependent as to bring to maturity the need to foster greater international co-operation for the identification of priorities, needs and opportunities of ARD and for the joint evaluation of areas of collaboration and specific operative measures that aim – as well as:

CSO report on EFARD Conference, 15-17 May 2002
“to promote co-operation amongst European partners, encourage the participation of all stakeholders, establish priorities and common strategies, to foster partnerships with the institutions and organizations in the South of the world, to facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge, to increase investments in research in agriculture for development (*) – to place the rural communities at the centre of the “research system”.


On the basis of the general principles listed above and the proposals received by the Italian Scientific Committee of the EFARD, some fields of research have seen the convergence of projects in which the NGOs have an active role of partnership.

| Improving health function in Brassica vegetable produce by genotypes and agronomic techniques | Mille mondi. Italy AIAB – Sicily. Italy CERAI - Valencia. Spain |
| Traceability, Labelling, and Food Quality Management Systems for Tropical Vegetable Crops | LVIA. Italy UMADEP. France |
| Sustainable pest control of edible crops and forests in tropical and subtropical areas. | Consorzio Catania Ricerche, Catania. Italy |
| Increasing vegetable crop production to improve human nutrition and stimulate the economic development of rural areas of PIAUI’ (Brazil) | AES-CCC (Associazione amici dello stato brasileano Espirito Santo – Centro di Collaborazione Comunitaria). Brazil |
| Increasing vegetable crop production to improve human nutrition and stimulate the economic development of rural areas of PIAUI’ (Brazil) | AES-CCC (Associazione amici dello stato brasileano Espirito Santo – Centro di Collaborazione Comunitaria). Brazil |

The following have been appointed as referents for the topics relative to the thematic area:

| 14 | Improved food safety and quality of tropical food supply chains at the smallholder level in order to improve human health and enhance trade opportunities | Giuseppe MAIANI Nelson MARMIROLI Human Nutrition Unit Nat. Research Inst. For Food and Nutrition Univ. Parma Department of Environmental Science |
| 12 | Sustainable animal productions systems and biodiversity protection using conventional and non-conventional feed resources | Miro CRIMELLA Univ. Milan Institute of Zootechnics Faculty of Veterinary Medicine |

Innovation, transformation and rural development and poverty

This sector (which in actual fact is a multi-sector) is of fundamental importance for the processes of development and to activate the virtuous circle necessary. It is a transversal subject but also a sector for the post-harvest. For the thematic area Prof Roberto Pasca di Magliano of the Department of Economic Theory, Political Science, University of Roma La Sapienza has been appointed referent. The topic has no sub-topics. This is ideal ground for the activities of NGOs in which they certainly have a lot to say and do.

In the past few years, the context has undergone profound change. On the one hand, the structural adjustment policies, those of privatisation and “désengagement” by the state have created the expectation of a “prise en charge” by the farmers’ associations, summoned to run services that the government is no longer capable of ensuring. On the other hand, the economic, institutional and political context of West African countries is characterised by the strong will of the states to build up a common economic, social and political area, through sub-regional and regional integration.

The grassroots organisations are increasingly protagonists in the management of the processes of innovation, transformation and rural development. This convergence is particularly evident in the policies and programmes of innovation and development of the agricultural sector, which now recognises that the agricultural organisations can play a leading role in laying the bases for a sustainable growth of income of rural populations. Thus, the promotion of research and programmes capable of reinforcing the rural organisations and the importance of their role in the definition and implementation of the strategies and
programmes of development of the agricultural sector are now explicitly recognised by the public authorities and by the other economic and institutional actors, as fundamental for the future of agriculture in Africa.

The central node of research at present regards the development of rural family-based agriculture in a context of policies of deregulation of national economies and globalisation of commercial exchanges. Rural family-based agriculture is in fact essential for sustainable development. It includes different activities and is based on a variety of values (including solidarity), and its essential aim is to guarantee food security and the integrity of the family nucleus in time. For this it offers the greatest possibilities in terms of job creation and generation of durable income in a rural context.

From this point of view, it becomes indispensable, for the farmers’ organizations, to simultaneously develop the technical capacities, negotiating and action skills at the main decision-making levels that exist at local, national and sub-regional levels, in order to get in-depth knowledge of the policies that influence small farmers’ agriculture.

These are the main actions for rural development and the removal of the causes of poverty:

- the search for mechanisms to make rural producers responsible and the promotion of their active participation in drawing up policies and programmes of agricultural/rural development; in natural resources management; and in the management of services necessary for producers.
- the promotion of dialogue between the various players and the creation of contexts of national and local planning and the institutional reinforcement and the consolidation of the capacities of the organizations representing civil society.
- the search for more effective mechanisms and strategies for the promotion of productive and sustainable development of family-based agriculture, seen in the context of the deregulation policies of the national economies and of globalisation of commercial exchanges.
- studies focused not only on specific projects, but also and above all on the policies, capable of contributing to the improvement and expansion of the exchange of information and reinforcement of the relations with movements of civil society in the North, in particular with the professional agricultural organisations.

The proposals received by the NGOs in topic 3 are shown below:

| Topic 3 | Long-term adaptation strategies of pastoral and semi-pastoral populations in the Horn of Africa | Massimo Pallottino  
C.so IV novembre 28 – 12100 Cuneo  
LVIA lvia@multiwire.net |
|---|---|---|
| | Process of organisation and management transformations of Community Based Organisations (CBO) of East Africa | Massimo Pallottino  
C.so IV novembre 28 – 12100 Cuneo  
LVIA lvia@multiwire.net |
| | Contribution of local institutions and community organisations engaged in the fight against poverty in Sahelian countries | Claudio Trovato  
FOCSIV Via San Francesco di Sales,18-00165  
ROMA focsiv@www.glauco.it |
| | Capacity-building programme for “Réseau des Organisations paysannes et des Producteurs du Sahel” (ROPPA) | COSPE -Cooperazione Sviluppo Paesi Emergenti -  
Via Slataper, 10 FIRENZE et Consortium of Italian NGOs for ROPPA support Via Slataper, 10 –50134  
FIRENZE ITALY  
mc8008@mclink.it; brunelli@cospe-fi.it |

ALISEI Luciano Venturi lventuri@alisei.org  
AVSI Lorenzo Orioli milano@avsi.org  
CROCEVIA Alessandro Cardarelli aalecarda@gol.grosseto.it  
FOCSIV-LVIA Italo Rizzi italo_rizzi@hotmail.com

with the contribution of COSPE (Alessandra Brunelli).
Annex 3: Representation of stakeholders in EFARD

Note for Agenda Item 8, EFARD Steering Committee meeting, Rome, 22 February 2002

Several NGOs and farmer organisations (FOs) took part in the first European Forum in Wageningen in 1999. We appreciated the opportunity to come into dialogue with each other as well as with people from formal research organisations in our own and other countries in Europe, to share and debate our views on agricultural research and development (ARD) and to come into contact with potential partners. However, at that meeting, the NGOs and FOs felt very much in the minority. Subsequent to that meeting, we have had the strong impression that decision-making in EFARD is dominated by the formal national research institutes and universities.

This is due, in part, to the composition of the Steering Committee – the decision-making body of the EFARD. It is made up of one representative per country elected at national level. As far as I am informed, these persons come from research institutes and universities. However, systems for development-oriented agricultural research are much wider than this, even in Europe. The current governance structure of EFARD does not integrate all stakeholder groups. In EFARD, each country has been asked to establish a National Forum of the 5 stakeholder groups in ARD:

- research institutes
- universities
- farmer organisations
- NGOs
- private sector.

This has already taken place in some countries and, at least in the cases I know, NGOs are represented in the national Steering Committees.

If EFARD as a regional platform wants to encourage the participation of all stakeholders in ARD and to maintain the interest of the NGOs, in particular, it will have to make greater efforts to involve all stakeholder groups not only in the Forum once every three years but also in the Steering Committee.

We propose that, in addition to the national representatives, the EFARD Steering Committee include at least one representative from each of the missing stakeholder groups – above all, the FOs and NGOs – and that these be key persons in mobilising interest in their constituencies to participate in the national platforms and the European platform. They could do this in collaboration with the national representatives in the EFARD Steering Committee. We propose that the persons to become stakeholder representatives be elected during meetings of the respective stakeholder groups at the second European Forum in Rome in May 2002.

Moreover, we propose that mechanisms be put in place to ensure that a balanced proportion of the participants in the Forum, both this May in Rome and at subsequent meetings, comes from FOs and NGOs. It was suggested already by NGOs at the first European Forum that, in future, representation at regional and global fora for ARD should be based more strongly on stakeholder groups. This would mean a matrix approach to representation at the Forum meetings: by stakeholder group and by nation.

Ann Waters-Bayer
AGRECOL e.V. Germany / ETC Ecoculture Netherlands
Göttingen, 19 February 2002

Seeking stakeholder involvement in EFARD – report from Steering Committee meeting

EFARD was formed in 1997 with the intention to:

- strengthen the response of European agricultural research to development needs related to food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable use of natural resources
- promote European coordination of this agricultural research for development (ARD)
- encourage participation of all stakeholders in ARD
- assist exchange of information and knowledge related to ARD, and
- enhance awareness of decision-makers and the public about the importance of ARD.

It organised the first European Forum (colloquium) in Wageningen/Netherlands in April 1999, as one of several regional fora leading up to the Dresden meeting of the Global Forum of Agricultural Research (GFAR) in May 2000. In both the Wageningen and Dresden meetings, the European delegations included members of all major stakeholder groups, with those from public-sector institutions predominating.

At global level, all of the stakeholder groups are represented in the GFAR Steering Committee (SC). The GFAR Secretariat is encouraging the various regional and subregional fora to include all stakeholders in...
their general meetings and in their decision-making bodies. However, the SC of EFARD is made up of one representative per country, and all of these persons are associated with public-sector organisations.

I had written to the EFARD Secretariat and suggested that they reconsider the structure of EFARD, particularly of its SC, its top decision-making body. The issue was placed on the agenda of the EFARD SC meeting on 22 February 2002 in Rome, and I was invited to join the discussion and argue the case.

The EFARD SC members discussed their efforts at national level to include all stakeholder groups in their meetings and SCs. A large number of them have been successful in at least including individuals from all groups, even though the linkages with the constituencies may still be weak. It was interesting to note that one of the national fora in Europe – the Norwegian forum for Agricultural Development Co-operation - had been established in 1998 independently of EFARD's call for national fora. It was a response to widespread dissatisfaction within the Norwegian development community because of a drop in Norwegian support for agricultural development. It now acts as an open, informal national forum on ARD in Norway.

At the end of the discussion within the EFARD SC, the majority of the members agreed (there was not a consensus) that one seat should be opened up on the SC for each stakeholder group that is not already represented by the national representatives. This would mean that, with the current composition of the EFARD SC, one seat each would be opened up for farmer organisations, NGOs and the private sector. It was left up to the Working Group within the EFARD SC to work out the modalities in such a way that the SC member of a given stakeholder group could be regarded as truly representative of his/her constituency.

One suggestion was that, at the next European Forum in Rome in May 2002, these three stakeholder groups each have an opportunity to meet separately and to elect a person from their midst who will represent them in the SC. With respect to NGOs, another suggestion was that the European Liaison Committee of NGOs (CLONG) appoints a person to the EFARD SC.

My own opinion is that the NGOs that have shown the interest and taken the initiative to become involved in the ARD discussions at national and European level will be best informed about the issues and needs and best able to judge who could best represent them. Their interactions leading up to and during the European-level meetings, such as in Wageningen and Rome, give them a chance to become better acquainted with each other's work and ideas. In any case, however, it should be ensured that linkages are set up, if they do not exist already, between the NGO representative on the EFARD SC and the CLONG. This will help in consulting with and informing a larger number of NGOs than only those directly involved in the national and European meetings and other activities related to ARD.

The discussion in Rome did not go into the details of how the participation of an NGO (or farmer organisation or private sector) member in the SC meetings would be financed. If the members of EFARD feel that it is important to include stakeholder groups that do not have government funding or commercial profits to cover travel expenses, then a mechanism will have to be worked out by the EFARD Working Group to make the participation of NGOs and farmer organisations possible in financial terms. (For the SC meeting last week, for example, EFARD could not make any funds available for my travel. I am grateful to the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ) for agreeing to cover my costs so that I could argue for wider stakeholder involvement in decision-making on ARD.)

It was clear from the discussions that some national representatives will be more active than others in trying to ensure that members from all stakeholder groups will be in the national delegations that come to the second general meeting of EFARD this May. It will probably be necessary that NGOs in each country be directly informed of the event and encouraged to approach their national forum if they are interested in attending, and explain the nature of their work and its relationship to ARD. Information about EFARD and the national forum representatives can be obtained from the EFARD Secretariat (natura@agropolis.fr) or from the website (www.eufor.org). Also the programme of the upcoming European Forum on 15-17 May 2002 in Rome can be found on this website.

A major aim of the meeting is to set up a coordinated European ARD system around the themes of 1) Genetic Resources and Biotechnology, 2) Natural Resources and Agroecology, 3) Commodity Chains and Food Safety, and 4) Innovation, Rural Transformation and Poverty Alleviation. Agreement will be sought on research partnership proposals that will be made to the European Commission and other potential funding agencies.

Please forward this message to as many NGOs and farmer organisations as possible that have an interest in ARD, in case they have not already been informed.

Ann Waters-Bayer
Göttingen, 24 February 2002