



GFAR

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

An innovation systems approach for ARD focused on poor, small holder producers central to future GFAR actions

2 April 2007 Rome, Italy - Representatives of GFAR Stakeholders which include farmer organizations, non-government and civil society, regional research forums, research organizations of the North and South and international development agencies met for 3 days from 30th to 1st April 2007 at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt to formulate the central theme, direction and priorities through a business plan for GFAR for the next 3 years.

The Bibliotheca Alexandrina's Director Ismail Serageldin in his welcoming address stressed a focus on the world poor and the vital role of GFAR in mobilizing agricultural research globally for development.

The stakeholders reiterated GFAR's focus on the poor, small holder farmers and producers for mobilizing agricultural research and innovation for development. They emphasized an innovation systems approach that involved partnerships of multiple actors in the public, private and community sector for collaborative action for agricultural development.

The GFAR stakeholders revalidated the GFAR strategy with its four objectives of building consensus and advocacy, enabling research and innovation partnerships, mobilizing knowledge and communication and strengthening institutional capacity that underpin all GFAR actions. They identified four new thematic areas with projects to tackle challenges of the highest priority facing GFAR stakeholders. These included:

- **Blending knowledge for innovation in smallholder agriculture** – from an innovation systems perspective, inform and guide GFAR stakeholders towards appropriate and effective systems and mechanisms that blend and apply different sources and forms of knowledge useful for smallholder farmers and agricultural producers
- **Adapting agriculture to climate change** – Build consensus among GFAR stakeholders on a researchable agenda and action related to combating biotic and abiotic stresses on crops and sustainable management of resources, especially optimization of water use brought about by global climate change. This effort will be done in partnership with GFAR Stakeholders.
- **Transforming agricultural research, extension and education** – identify reforms, capacities and investments that are necessary to better connect researchers, extension agents, educators, innovators, non-government agencies and civil society organizations to development needs of smallholder farmers and producers;

- **Linking smallholder producers to markets** – bring about global cooperation among regional agricultural research forums and civil society organizations to improve and support programmes that aim to enhance the capacity of smallholders producers to participate more equitably in markets;

Raghunath Ghodake, the Chairman of the Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) concluded that “we really looked at the crux of the problems ... repositioning ourselves in terms of where we want to go and how to really serve all the stakeholders of GFAR.” Myra Wopereis-Pura representing the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) stated that “FARA was reassured that the exercise is leading to a more vitalized GFAR which continues to be a critical supporter for the work of FARA in Africa.” Ibrahim Hamdan of the Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA) expressed that “the new approach of the business plan of GFAR will have significant impact on issues of critical importance for ARD in the West Asia and North Africa Region”. Enrique Alarcón of the Forum for the Americas for Agricultural Research and Technology Development (FORAGRO) was pleased with GFAR explicitly incorporating an innovations systems approach in its new business plan. Iain MacGillivray, representing Canada, stated “It was very useful and productive business planning meeting where participants looked at fundamental critical issues.” Shantanu Mathur of the International Fund for Agricultural Development was of the opinion that the meeting, through introspection and with free, frank and open discussions, was very productive and “held a promise for developing a GFAR business plan to meet the needs of all GFAR constituents.” There was an explicit recognition of the vital role of young professionals as stakeholders in GFAR.

The implementation of the business plan will draw upon expertise and capacities of the entire GFAR stakeholder community. In the coming weeks, the new business plan will be finalized by the GFAR Steering committee and shared with potential investors and partners.

Abdelmajid Slama concluded that the meeting helped GFAR “plan actions to address the emerging challenges for the global agricultural community.” The Chair of the GFAR Steering Committee Adel El-Beltagy while thanking participants for their excellent contributions stated that “GFAR was at a crossroad and this meeting helped finding a path for us to repositioning GFAR for the future.”

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GFAR mobilizes the scientific community and all other stakeholders involved in pro-poor agricultural research and innovation for development. It facilitates consensus building and advocacy on global research and innovation priorities; it promotes regional, inter-regional and global partnerships for agricultural research and innovation; it supports knowledge and communication for agricultural research and innovation; and it strengthens and supports the institutional capacities of all its stakeholders.