3RD PROGRAMME COMMITTEE MEETING

BEIJING, CHINA

28 -29 NOVEMBER 2007

Progress report: FARA
2007 GFAR Steering Committee Meeting
Beijing, China

FARA Secretariat
Progress report
January – November 2007
Introduction

The progress report provides a brief summary of the major activities accomplished by the FARA Secretariat in January – November 2007, not necessarily supported by GFAR. But the major activities with GFAR interventions include 1) strengthening the civil society organizations, 2) regional agricultural information and learning systems consultations and 3) participation of FARA in the global partnership program focused on linking farmer’s to markets.

The major FARA events during this reporting period were 1) the external program management review that made recommendation of revising FARA’s Strategic Plan; and 2) the 4th FARA General Assembly which endorsed the strategic plan for 2007-2016.

The Strategic Plan was endorsed for immediate implementation. Therefore the months of June – December is a transition period. The progress report is formatted to follow the new structure at the FARA Secretariat which is operating through its 5 networking support functions.

The Fourth FARA General Assembly

The Fourth FARA General Assembly was held in June 2007 in Johannesburg, South Africa within the Africa Science Week. It had a new record participation of around 670 people from political leaders to farmers, to scientists to extension workers, international research partners and development partners. The Theme of the week was promoting the productivity and competitiveness of African agriculture in a global economy, which was further subdivided into subthemes i.e.;

1. Identifying and exploiting Africa's competitive advantages in agricultural production, agri-business and related industries;
2. Developing Africa's capacity for agricultural commerce and innovation
3. Learning from past success of research in influencing agricultural policies
4. The status of the 5 requirements for turning Africa's agriculture around
5. Positioning agricultural research institutions to be fully effective
6. Learning lessons from responding to risks and disasters
7. Africa's capacity to build human and institutional capacity for the agricultural industry
8. Mobilizing civil society for agricultural development
9. Peri-urban agriculture
10. Capturing indigenous knowledge for development while respecting intellectual property rights, ethical and moral integrity and biosafety

The Africa Science Week was divided into three parts, the first 2 days was allotted as open side-events for any organizations to hold their own meeting that is related to the theme and subthemes of the week. There were a total of 23 side-events held by different organizations, some of which collaborated to discuss common issues within one side-event. An example of this is the joint meeting by FARA, CTA and RUFORUM to discuss ‘capacity strengthening, information exchange, learning, foresight, S&T policies for
agricultural innovation’. This turned out to be one of the most successful side-event during the week. Another successful side-event was the joint meeting organized by FARA, Research into Use program of DFID and Prolinnova on ‘overcoming challenges in African innovations’.

The side-events provided space for each of the civil society organizations active at FARA such as the Farmer’s organizations, private sector and the NGO consortium, as mentioned above. During the FARA General Assembly the Alliance for farmer’s organization was launched as well as the private sector consortium. The NGO SSA Consortium had also the time to reflect on the activities endorsed during the 3rd FARA General Assembly held in Uganda. Each of these CSO networks developed their workprograms and governance to ensure that each of the network become more responsible and accountable to their own network as well as to the partner institutions.

The South African research institutions convened to discuss the theme of the week, where around 60 papers were submitted for discussions. After careful and difficult screening selected papers were presented during the SADC Dialogue and a book was published containing all the selected papers.

The NEPAD partnership platform met during the week to look at the progress in achieving the CAADP objectives. FARA as the lead institution of CAAPD pillar 4 was recognized as having the most advanced progress i.e. the FAAP as the framework and tool is continuously mentioned as the model to move diverse stakeholders forward in achieving the African vision.

Several other side-events had also successful discussions, so much so that there was a demand from the FARA General Assembly to allot more time for side-events. Another feature of the Week was the exhibition of at least 45 organizations from African Universities, NGOs, national research institutes, International agricultural research centres, political bodies, development agency and all the Subregional research organizations.

Forty six poster exhibits were received from diverse stakeholders. Three winners were selected based on relevance to the theme and impact to the ARD end users.

There were 12 African governments represented by their Agriculture Ministers who were well received by the Week’s host, the Hon. Lulu Xingwana. A Ministerial Communiqué was issued emphasizing on;
- promoting the effectiveness of national agricultural research systems (NARS) and our sub-regional and regional agricultural research organisations;
- ensuring that our agricultural development, research and teaching and training institutions comply with the FAAP principles;
- fulfilling our governments’ commitment to invest 10% of our national budgets in agriculture;
underpinning this investment with the financial resources required to reinvigorate national agricultural research institutes, including, agricultural universities and colleges and technical institutes;
- ensuring the out-scaling and up-scaling of agricultural research products
- supporting the sub-regional and regional organisations that belong to our national agricultural research systems; and,
- reinvigorating tertiary agricultural education to produce technicians, graduates and postgraduates who are equipped with both international standards of disciplinary expertise and with the systems skills necessary for successful participation in advanced agricultural innovation systems capable of addressing the opportunities and problems outlined above.

The FARA General Assembly ended with the election of the new FARA Chairperson, Dr. Dennis Kyetere from NARO of Uganda, nominated by ASARECA and the FARA vice-Chairperson, Tiemoko Yo from CNRA of Cote d'Ivoire nominated by CORAF. The fifth FARA General Assembly will be held in 2010 in Burkina Faso.

The Networking support functions

The revised Strategic Plan (see FARA Strategic Plan 2007-2016) provides FARA with a super objective: to sustainably reduce African food insecurity and poverty and enhance environmental conditions. This is to be done by sustainably establishing high broad-based agricultural growth in Africa (General Objective). FARA will make this contribution by achieving its Specific Objective of sustainable improvements to broad-based agricultural productivity, competitiveness and markets.

Key to this is the delivery of five Results, which respond to the priorities expressed by FARA’s clients. These are:

1. Appropriate institutional and organisational arrangements for regional agricultural research and development established
2. Broad-based stakeholders have access to the knowledge and technology necessary for innovation
3. Strategic decision making options for policy, institutions and markets developed
4. Human and institutional capacity for innovation developed
5. Platforms for agricultural innovation supported

In order to achieve the five results, FARA as a forum will support networking amongst its stakeholders (FARA Secretariat MTOP 2008-2012) therefore it identified five networking support functions (NSF) that are directly related to the five expected results such as;

1. Advocacy and resource mobilisation
2. Access to knowledge and technologies
3. Regional policies and markets
4. Capacity strengthening
5. Partnerships and strategic alliances
The NSF are implemented by the FARA Secretariat through participatory processes aimed at maximizing impact by collaborative action involving all appropriate actors in the relevant agricultural value-chain. The existing regional initiatives are valued as appropriate projects that respond to specific networking support function (See Table 1). Other networking support functions do not yet have the required projects and will require further consultation with stakeholders to develop the most appropriate actions.

Table 1. Networking Support Functions and its regional initiative/projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network support function</th>
<th>Initiative / projects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Advocacy and resource mobilisation</td>
<td>FAAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Access to knowledge and technologies</td>
<td>RAILS, DONATA</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Regional policies and markets</td>
<td>ABBI</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Capacity strengthening</td>
<td>SCARDA, BASIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Partnerships and strategic alliances</td>
<td>SSA-CP, PAEPARD</td>
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**Networking Support Function: Advocacy and resource mobilization**

Translation of CAADP Pillar IV into practical action and investment requires a concerted effort to build a constituency and ownership (advocacy) and mobilize resources. This function complements the other four in addressing the priorities and targets linked to CAADP, including institutional reform that promotes excellence and growth. The aim is to enhance FARA’s capacity to provide the sub-regional organisations (SROs) and their NARS with the appropriate advocacy and resource mobilization support to contribute to the achievement of FARA’s Specific Objective, supporting the attainment of the CAADP Pillar IV Goal. (For more details on FARA’s Advocacy and Resource Mobilization Strategy, see the FARA 2007-2017 Strategy Companion Document.)

The interventions raise the profile of agriculture and agricultural research at the continental level; increase access to political, technical and methodological support, and increase investments for Africa’s agricultural productivity. They ensure enhanced continental perspectives, global linkages, and the broad scope and range of institutional reforms, agricultural expertise and resources required to achieve the CAADP Pillar IV Goals. This supports the reform of African agricultural institutions and services and a financing framework for African agriculture that promotes agricultural innovation systems that are efficient, effective, and have a high potential for rapid and widespread impact on agricultural productivity.
The Framework for African agricultural productivity

FARA as the lead institution of CAADP pillar 4, initiated the Framework for African agricultural Productivity Program (FAAP). In June 2006, FAAP was endorsed by the African Heads of States as the framework to coordinate and guide diverse agriculture stakeholders in achieving the African vision.

FAAP has guided the SROs in revising their strategy so that its priorities are responsive to the needs of the region as well as the specific needs of its stakeholders in their corresponding subregions. CORAF and ASARECA revised their strategy so that it’s priorities and activities are directly linked with the FAAP principles. In turn FARA identified 5 networking support functions adding value at the continental level (see Table 2).

Table 2. Interactions between SRO and FARA logframe results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SRO</th>
<th>Demand driven technologies/ innovations generated and promoted</th>
<th>Regional policy and national policy options for enhancing agricultural systems facilitated</th>
<th>Regional and national capacity for implementing agricultural research in the IAR4D paradigm strengthened</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASARECA</td>
<td>Availability of information on agricultural research and development enhanced</td>
<td>Strategic decision-making options for policy, institutions and markets developed</td>
<td>Sub-regional agricultural research system strengthened and coordinated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORAF</td>
<td>Appropriate technologies and innovations developed</td>
<td>Human, institutional and organizational capacity for innovation developed</td>
<td>Platforms for agricultural innovation supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demand for agricultural knowledge from targeted clients facilitated and met</td>
<td>Strategic decision-making options for policy, institutions and markets developed</td>
<td>Sub-regional agricultural research system strengthened and coordinated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FARA</td>
<td>Appropriate institutional and organizational arrangements for regional agricultural research &amp; dev’t established</td>
<td>Broad-based stakeholders have access to the knowledge and technology necessary for innovation</td>
<td>Human, institutional and organizational capacity for innovation developed</td>
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<td>NSF 1</td>
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<td>NSF 5</td>
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In Southern Africa several consultations were held on how to shape the future of the SRO in the subregion. It is recommended that a semi-autonomous SRO be established, placed outside the SADC Secretariat, but formally and closely linked to the SADC Secretariat though a Memorandum of Understanding that spells out the nature and scope of the autonomy, the division of roles and responsibilities, and areas of complementarities with the SADC-FANR Directorate. The Southern Africa SRO will focus on broad and long-term research program. It is to be viewed as a vehicle for regional cooperation working through strategic partners and regional and national thematic centers of leadership in agricultural research and development.
The Southern Africa ARD stakeholders proposed to meet in December 2007 to discuss this report and finalize the way forward in establishing the Southern Africa SRO.

The Northern African countries held several formal and informal consultations to develop the first draft constitution for the North Africa subregional organization (NASRO). Initial member countries are Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia. The proposed objectives are to:

1. foster the development of agricultural research in the North Africa Sub-Region;
2. promote the exchange of agricultural, scientific and technical experience and information;
3. encourage the establishment of appropriate cooperative research and training programs in accordance with identified regional, bilateral or national needs and priorities;
4. advise member institutions on issues pertinent to research organization and management;
5. strengthen cross-linkages between national, regional and international research centers and organizations, including universities, through involvement in jointly-planned research and training programs.
6. strengthen national agricultural research capacities for providing timely and necessary data and information to the policy makers;

The FARA Secretariat gave its comments on the constitution and will be included in the revision of the constitution. Further consultations will be organized for Northern Africa to move to formally endorse this constitution.

**AU/NEPAD CAADP partnership platform meeting**

FARA is involved in the CAADP country roundtable discussions to ensure that country programs recognize the importance of agricultural research’s contribution to economic development. Below provides more details on the different consultations related to FAAP achievements.


The meeting attended by 91 CAADP partners, reviewed progress on CAADP Pillars I, II, III, IV and Livestock i.e. (a) progress on Pillar frameworks (b) the identification of lead African institutions and get input/comments on the same from the RECs (c) to seek endorsement of the identified lead institutions and agreement and (d) modalities for integrating the Pillar work and input into the country level CAADP implementation processes.

H.E. Rosebud Kurwijjila, in her opening address, noted that the meeting should be seen as a strategic and coordinated approach to addressing problems of African agriculture. The sector has received unparalleled support from African governments. Appreciate that the Development Partners are rallying their support around CAADP but recommend that they establish a trust fund for CAADP and if agreed to discuss the modalities.
Reports were presented by the CAADP Pillar Lead Institutions including FARA for Pillar IV. Discussions centred on the modalities for alignment and harmonization on Pillars into the country-CAADP implementation processes i.e. 1) the roles and responsibilities of the Pillar Lead Institutions in the overall CAADP implementation, 2) participation in the country level implementation processes and, 3) participation in the CAADP peer review process at the REC level. A team was to be established to define, refine and harmonise the roles and responsibilities of the Pillar Lead Institutions, taking into account the diversity in process and approach among the pillars.

The general conclusion was that Pillar IV was showing the way and was the most advanced Pillar. However, the other two, with the possible exception of Pillar 1, had made good progress but more thought must be put into improving communications and interaction between the Pillars. Lead Institutions, such as FARA working through the SROs, will also have to become more active at the country level.

Enhancing participation of the civil society

FARA continues to support the strengthening of the civil society organizations in cooperation with GFAR, by facilitating the formation of the Sub-Saharan Africa NGO Consortium (SSA NGOC), the Alliance of Farmer’s Organizations (AFOs) and the Sub-Saharan Africa Private Sector Consortium. These civil societies’ regional bodies met during the FARA General Assembly in Johannesburg in June 2007. Although each one are in different stages of establishing different functionalities, the June meetings created an open space where views and ideas were deliberated and harmonized to create a regional approach which is cohesive and responsive to CAADP objectives and FAAP principles. Below are some major recommendations during the meetings:

1. **Africa Alliance of subregional Farmer’s Organizations (AAFO)**

The newly founded Africa Alliance of sub-regional farmer organizations (AAFO) brings together four sub-regional farmer organizations in East Africa (EAFF); ROOPA in West Africa; PROPAC in Central; and SACAU in Southern Africa. It is envisaged that a North African sub-regional farmer organization will become an AAFO member in due course. AAFO was created to enhance consensus building, engagement with conventional R&D institutions and organs, and common voice articulation on farmer issues in African agriculture.

The meeting recognized that farmers voice remain very weak in 1) setting research and development agenda, 2) organizational capacities, 3) coordination in representations and accountability to different bodies, and 4) resources to facilitate minimum group activities.

To move forward, they are requesting support from FARA to organize themselves into cohesive organizations that can be more responsible and accountable to each member and capable of participating in major discussions or consultations.

2. **Private Sector Consortium**
The proposed Pan-African Agri-business initiative aims to stimulate financing of agri-businesses enterprises; minimize risks in agriculture through expansion of the business portfolio; and develop and expand the domestic regional markets. The emerging consortium is as a result of investments by FARA to organize the private sector to actively engage with research. Its main focus is to respond to major challenges such as; stimulated investment in agri-business, reduce risks in the agricultural value-chain, market awareness and intelligence for African agricultural products, streamline the profit value chain in agribusiness.

The June meeting elected the Consortium’s interim Steering Committee (iSC) composed of representatives from each of the four subregions of Africa i.e. West and Central, East and Central, South and North Regions. They will work closely with FARA and the SROs to respond to 3 key deliverables namely, 1) partnership with the public sector in business financing and investment, 2) modalities for stimulating investment by minimizing risks and 3) restructuring markets to target the domestic market while eyeing export.

3. SSA NGOC
The consortium was established during the FARA General Assembly in 2005. It proposes to assist the NGOs in Sub-Saharan Africa through advocacy and creating awareness in African ARD issues, promoting end user access to knowledge and technologies, and improving the institutional arrangements and capacity of the consortium.

A workprogram was developed during the FARA facilitated regional consultation of the civil society group. Major achievements include; 1) governance structure, code of conduct, strategy; 2) profiling and typology exercise, 3) communications strategy, 4) case studies for advocacy and 5) active participation in major meetings.

The next years, it would like to concentrate on advocacy and public awareness and forming partnerships and strategic alliance with key regional initiatives, especially those that are coordinated by FARA. The NGO consortium will facilitate access to knowledge and technologies, and enhance its own institutional capacity.

**Networking Support Function: Access to Knowledge and Technology**

**Regional Agricultural Information and Learning System (RAILS)**

**Implementation workshop**
Following the support provided by GFAR and the African Development Bank, RAILS organized an implementation workshop in January 2007 (see RAILS report 2007). The purpose of the workshop was to review and validate the RAILS implementation framework for immediate application by Africa’s sub-regional organizations (SROs), national agricultural research systems (NARS) and related actors and stakeholders in agricultural information and technology exchange. The meeting was attended by
coordinators of major information and communication programs or projects at the SRO level; NARS representatives with a mandate to coordinate networks on information and communication technology (ICT) at the national level; and international service providers interested in Africa’s agricultural information and learning systems.

RAILS adds value to existing SRO initiative at the continental level. It recognizes that each of the SROs use different approaches and are at different stages with respect to ICT / ICM. RAILS wishes to develop an African platform for agriculture ICT to add value to these initiatives based on three central activities: (i) building learning teams, (ii) creating synergies and (iii) advocating for increased investments in agricultural information and learning systems. RAILS implementation will be through learning teams paying due attention to stakeholders’ needs, and selection of appropriate support mechanisms and services at national, regional and continental levels. RAILS needs to consider differences in institutional capacities and the social, economic and cultural environment in which it is operating. In terms of services RAILS will need to focus on communication management, content management, and facilitation and coordination, considering issues of sustainability, inclusiveness and mutual partnerships. In terms of support mechanisms RAILS will facilitate capacity building, team management, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

**FARA Webportal**

Being responsible in creating an information and communication system for FARA, RAILS together with its key partners developed the FARA portal that was launched during the FARA General Assembly. It uses the most up-to-date web2.0 tools that are interactive and dynamic allowing regular flow of information from the FARA Secretariat as well as key knowledge resources. The portal in divided into three parts i) information about FARA as a forum and its Secretariat activities, 2) international news related to agricultural research for development and highlights from the region and 3) aggregated information search from selected knowledge resource centres such as the CGIAR, FAO, CABI and CTA.

Development of the portal is carried out into two phases. Phase 1 dealt with creating a framework for information system composed of a content management system that follows a modular approach. It is designed so that it can be easily replicated by key FARA partners which in turn can feed and gather information from FARA. The Second Phase is the full development of the portal so that each of the FARA projects has it’s own information system and the FARA Secretariat has a very powerful communication tool that can serve it diverse stakeholders and key partners.

**Facilitation of FARA publication**

Annually, the RAILS Unit write the FARA annual report based on several information gathered from FARA partners as well as each of the FARA projects. The FARA annual report for 2006 was released during the FARA General Assembly in June 2007.

Several other FARA publications were released in 2007 facilitated by the RAILS unit, are; the SSA CP annual report 2006, Civil Society Organization proceedings report,

As FARA is representing the African ARD in several meetings, the back-to-office compilations was made and are available in CD format.

The FARA monthly bulletin was reformatted to reflect the new focus of FARA Strategic Plan on five networking support functions. It provides a quick update on related news and events based on the 5 networking support functions. Contents are not necessarily from FARA Secretariat alone, but from diverse institutions and organizations working on African agriculture.

**Dissemination of New Agricultural Technologies in Africa (DONATA)**

Dissemination of New Agricultural Technologies in Africa (DONATA) aims to rapidly and in a sustainable manner, scale-up and out agricultural technologies that will contribute to food and nutrition security and economic growth in Africa. The DONATA stakeholder implementation workshop held in March 2007 at the FARA Secretariat in Accra, Ghana, brought together SROs and their constituent NARS, and international agricultural research centers and Foundations involved in African agriculture to make strategic choices. Maize, sweet potato, cassava, and sorghum based technologies were selected for scaling-up and out in selected target countries (TCs) across the three Sub-Saharan Africa SROs and maize in particular, cut across all the three SROs. Innovation platforms for technology adoption (IPTAs) will be used at the level of the target country sites (TCSs) to demonstrate and document evidence based technology dissemination processes, approaches, and learning tools. DONATA will also strengthen the innovation capacity of NARS stakeholders in scaling-up and out agricultural technologies.

Innovation Platforms for Technology Adoption (IPTAs) will be established by the SROs and NARIs to promote the dissemination of high impact agricultural technologies. The IPTAs will include researchers, extension or advisory services, civil society organizations in agriculture (farmer organizations, private sector or agri-businesses, and NGOs), policy makers, etc. Technology dissemination pathways (farmer collective action, farmer-to-farmer learning, market-led technology adoption, participatory market chain approach) as well as participatory approaches and learning tools (participatory development approach, participatory gender user analysis-Participatory varietal selection, participatory learning and action research), farmer field schools and demonstration plots will be used to promote dissemination and adoption of the selected technologies. A special effort will be made to promote the active involvement of agri-business and women farmers.

Each SRO identified two technologies (excluding rice\(^1\)) for dissemination among a group of Target Country Sites (TCSs) based on agreed criteria. In general, the group of TCSs has common geography and ecology.

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\(^1\) AfDB indicated that because they are already investing in NERICA rice dissemination and adoption, this project should promote other (non-rice) technologies.
Because capacity strengthening for NARS MSc training in South Africa and Morocco respectively will cover many countries in Africa, additional TCSs were identified so that candidates can be selected from countries that would form first and second phase TCSs. SROs were encouraged to rally around common technologies so that cross-site analysis within and across sub-regions can be applied to generate evidence based best-bet technology dissemination approaches and processes. Two years will be used to learn from the initial first phase TCSs. Second phase TCSs will be launched in year 3, based on the experience gained. Periodic monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment will be carried out by ECART beginning with *ex-ante* assessment to determine the level of technology impact before project intervention.

Each target country will select a national focal institution (e.g., the NARI) that will lead the IPTAs at the TCS level. The NARIs will in turn assign national focal points who will lead and manage the IPTAs in the TCSs.

DONATA recognizes that the potential impact of the adoption of new approaches to technology dissemination and rural development is attracting substantial interest from private Foundations and development agencies. It will therefore collaborate with initiatives such as the “Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)” led by Rockefeller Foundation and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; the UK Department for International Development (DFD) supported “Research Into Use” Programme; and the multi-donor supported Millennium Villages Project of the UN.

**Networking support function 3: Regional policies and markets**

The African Union advocates increased intra-African trade and call on member states to promote and protect strategic commodities such as rice, maize, legumes, cotton, oil palm, beef, dairy, poultry and fisheries products at the continental level. While at subregional level, specific commodities were identified such as cassava, sorghum and millet which can vary depending on national focus and importance. FARA will facilitate and coordinate policy research, market development, and institutional strengthening of actors along the value chain through appropriate African and non-African institutions.

Africa’s negotiating position in international trade and environmental treaties need strengthening. This must be built on strong and viable sub-regional and regional market development and institutional strengthening. FARA will therefore use its comparative advantage to promote and facilitate policy analyses and market research. FARA will also give advice and guidance for the development of sustainable strategic development options and governance instruments.
Networking Support Function: Capacity Strengthening

Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research and Development (SCARDA)

The purpose of the SCARDA programme is “to strengthen the institutional and human capacity of African agricultural research and development systems to identify, generate and deliver research outputs that meet the needs of poor people”.

The goal of the SCARDA is to contribute to sustained poverty reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa by empowering institutions and stakeholders involved in agricultural research and development to leverage the full potential of agriculture in sustainable wealth creation.

The SCARDA programme, led by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) in partnership with the three Sub Regional Organizations (ASARECA, CORAF/WECARD, and SADC/FANR) and other key stakeholders is supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) which funded a six-month Inception Phase with provision for a three-year initial Implementation Phase, subject to the acceptance of a detailed Implementation Plan.

The Inception Phase

The SCARDA Inception phase was launched on Monday 12 February 2007 followed shortly by an Inaugural workshop held in Accra. During the Inception phase, each of the SROs conducted participatory scoping studies with its national stakeholders to reconfirm and refine the priority capacity strengthening needs that can be supported by SCARDA, and recommended a programme of action.

The scoping studies conducted by the SROs were followed by sub-regional stakeholder workshops to validate the findings. They confirmed that there are serious weaknesses in agricultural research management in many national agricultural research institutes (NARIs), agricultural training colleges and university faculties of agriculture. These deficiencies relate to shortcomings in management systems and in specific management competencies. Taken together, they severely constrain the ability of the institutions to meet the needs of their clients. There are serious limitations with partnership arrangements, particularly with public and private agricultural extension agencies and farmers’ organizations. The ability of research and development institutions to meet emerging challenges and to capitalize on new opportunities is constrained by deficiencies in key skills areas such as biotechnology, biodiversity, biometry and seed systems. The capacity of researchers to meet the requirements of new ways of working with a wide range of stakeholders is limited by their lack of the ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ systems skills that are required for functioning effectively in multi-institutional innovation systems.

Similarly, there is a clear need among established professionals to develop their expertise in crucial areas such as gender analysis, intellectual property rights and packaging research outputs for end users.

A synthesis of the findings from the different sub-regional scoping studies was developed at a meeting of a core Working Group which prepared an Outline Programme-wide
Implementation Plan. This plan was reviewed and validated at a Regional Inception Phase Review Workshop which was held in Accra on 27-29 August.

The main outcome of the Inception Phase was the achievement of Output 1 of the Programme: “A detailed capacity strengthening programme and structures for its implementation in place”. Additional outputs from the Inception Phase were:

(a) Electronic databases incorporating data on a wide range of research and development institutions, including key capacity needs.

(b) A set of resource documents including synthesis reports of scoping studies conducted in the sub-regions; proceedings of stakeholder workshops; and five briefing papers on priority issues for the Programme.

During the final Inception Phase Review Workshop held in August in Accra, the SCARDA stakeholders developed a comprehensive approach for SCARDA that will be applied by working with Focal Institutions and their partners in innovation to develop and implement specific packages of capacity strengthening activities. The capacity strengthening needs of each Focal Institution will be identified through a rigorous institutional analysis conducted by a team of specialists working with senior management and staff representatives. The output of the institutional analysis will be an action plan addressing key capacity needs which will be matched to the most suitable service providers to meet the specific requirements of the institution. The institutional analysis itself will be an important capacity strengthening activity and will equip the institution with the tools to review its future performance. One member of the analysis team will continue to provide support to the institution by monitoring the progress of the activities and assisting with the change management process.

**Networking Support Function: Partnerships and strategic alliances**

**Sub Saharan Africa Challenge Programme (SSA CP)**

The period February to September 2007 was devoted to planning and mobilising resources for implementing the SSA CP’s research phase. The first half of this period was focussed on:

(i) developing a new research plan in accordance with recommendations of the CGIAR science council’s 2006 evaluation of the Programme;

(ii) dialogue with the Programme’s existing and potential donors over funding for the research phase;

(iii) entering contractual agreements with lead institutions.

The research plan was packaged as a medium term plan and submitted to the CGIAR science council (SC) and the programme’s stakeholders in May 2007. It laid out the theory of change for the integrated agricultural research for development (IAR4D) approach and the hypotheses the Programme aimed to test in order to: (a) “prove” whether IAR4D works in the sub-Saharan Africa context, (b) compare the benefits
attributable to IAR4D with those from conventional agricultural research and development (ARD) approaches, and (c) establish the generalizability of IAR4D across scales. The plan grouped the Programme’s research into three mutually reinforcing levels: (a) research to generate technological innovations; (ii) action research on institutional arrangements aimed at enhancing innovation (innovation platforms); and (iii) cross-cutting/site research to generate principles for facilitating IAR4D. The plan presented a set of indicators for assessing the Programme’s progress towards proving whether IAR4D works. It was developed with the understanding that it was a rolling plan that would be refined as its implementation elicited increased understanding of the task and the available resources to accomplish it.

During the second half of the reporting period, the Programme moved ahead with its pre-implementation activities as it awaited the approval of its research plan by the responsible organs of the CGIAR (the science and executive councils). The main activities carried and events held during this period were:

a. The side event at the FARA general assembly and African agricultural science week (10-16 June 2007) in Johannesburg, South Africa.

b. Sixth Steering Committee meeting held at the Sandton Convention Center, Johannesburg on 10th June 2007.

c. Review of the governance and management of the SSA CP to reduce transaction costs. It is proposing to remove the steering committee and management committee. The functions of these two committees are proposed to be taken over by the FARA Executive Board committee on programs and the SROs Executive Committee.

d. Development of the SSA CP’s communication strategy.

e. Development of a methods guide so that implementation uses reasonable homogenous methods to enable cross-site comparisons and consistency over the entire Programme.

f. Clarifying the cross-site research support team’s functions and operational framework.

g. Exploring opportunities for collaborating with regional projects:

h. Responding to the SC’s commentary on the Programme.

Platform African – European Partnership in Agricultural Research for Development (PAEPARD)

In May 2007, the FARA Secretariat received the funding from the European commission for the PAEPARD implementation. The funding is to support the building of a platform for African – European Partnership for ARD (PAEPARD). PAEPARD is an example of an inter-regional collaboration following the principles of GFAR. As of November 2007, three major activities were achieved:
1. **Transcontinental consultation** held during the FARA General Assembly as one of the side-events. A total of 47 representatives from major partners from Europe and Africa participated. Details of the workshop is given in the separate progress report of PAEPARD. Major recommendations of the workshop are:

- PAEPARD should assist the regional and subregional organizations as well as national partners in achieving their objectives. They should be assisted in implementing their priorities as stated in their strategies.

- PAEPARD should add value to existing initiatives within the region that are led by FARA, SROs, RUFORUM in partnership with EFARD members such as ECART and NATURA. It will be an interface, a facilitator and catalyst for Europe-Africa cross actions that promote equal partnership between EU and African ARD Stakeholders on African and global issues. It will facilitate increased awareness of opportunities for collaboration in ARD as well as better understanding of funding mechanisms and procedures.

- As a platform, it should operate following the national, subregional and regional priorities. Projects are demand driven extending interactive knowledge exchange.

2. **Assessment of European-African partnership for ARD** was conducted through an analysis of European Commission database of its grants and projects with Africa which was complemented by an online survey of experiences of European and African institutions in developing partnerships.

The main findings indicate that partnerships are valued by the European and African partners as relevant and contribute to achieving their global institutional objectives. However, the findings also point to a number of major constraints to ensure continued success and inclusiveness of ARD partnerships i.e. there are limited EC-funded research projects focused on Africa and the ones that do exist involve a concentration of African institutions from 2-3 countries. Most of these partnerships are driven by the European partners with limited contribution by African partners in priority setting and management. Under FP7 – where the former INCO-DEV component has disappeared – scope for such collaborations has decreased rather than increased.

The analysis shows that the major restrictions identified by European and African partners in ARD partnerships are:

- A lack of information and knowledge on funding opportunities, difficulties in finding adequate partners, as well as full understanding of the complex and elaborate mechanisms of fund raising.

- A concentration of partnerships on only two institutional categories of actors (universities and national research institutes), with very limited CSOs participation i.e. the private sector.

- Existing coordination mechanisms are not maximizing their role in facilitating interaction between different stakeholders.

- European institutes more familiar with the EC mechanisms are the initiators of the partnerships and tend to be the coordinators of EC-funded projects.
Dissemination of innovations is valued least amongst the outcomes of research partnerships as compared to publications, training and access to funding. The EC instruments that support ARD are difficult to access by African partners. The administrative and financial rules are difficult to follow.

3. **Writeshop** for the PAEPARD phase 2 was held on 18-19 September, where representatives of FARA and EFARD had intensive discussions on how to move PAEPARD forward and ensure it’s sustainability. Four major components for PAEPARD were identified;

- Component 1. Facilitation of innovation and entrepreneurship in ARD partnerships
- Component 2. Facilitation of impact-oriented agricultural research, training and innovation partnerships
- Component 3. Information and knowledge exchange
- Component 4. Advocacy on alignment of priorities to resource allocation for African and European ARD

A concept note was written and submitted to the European Commission for a 3-year funding. If the concept note is approved, a full proposal should be written before the end of PAEPARD phase 1 in April 2007.

Two consultations are scheduled in November 2007 to discuss the above results, face-to-face with stakeholders and future actors/partners of PAEPARD.

**Conclusion**

The year 2007, started with a very hectic program and expectations, but the end results was positive. The General Assembly success showed that FARA General Assembly and Africa Agriculture Science Week is getting recognized by the ARD stakeholders as a major African event to get an update of current events and major initiatives related to ARD in Africa. The Week also provided an open space to form new partnerships with diverse partners within and outside Africa.

The new strategic plan of FARA throws a new dimension on how FARA as a continental body can effectively support the SROs in achieving their objectives in strengthening the capacity of their member NARS and coordination of ARD activities in the region.

The recognition by the African Union of FARA as the lead institution for pillar 4 ensures the clear linkage of FARA to the political leaders and its role in the harmonization and coordination of ARD activities to ensure pillar 4 contributions to the other sectors of African agricultural development such as the other pillars of CAADP.

The regional projects of FARA are all in the implementation phase. Initial results shows commitment and ownership from each of the different actors involved. Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities at different levels ensures that the principles of subsidiarity are practiced.

The FARA Secretariat has worked hard to respond and deliver actions based on the diverse needs of its stakeholders using the limited resources available. The year 2007
marked the transition towards the implementation of the new FARA Strategic Plan which requires restructuring and re-organization of the Secretariat.

The Secretariat is grateful to the FARA’s Executive Board, the SROs, NARS, international research institutions and development partners, without their support these achievements would not have been made.