Action Plan for a farmer-led, farmer-managed grassroots foresight

Prepared during the 3rd Foresight Exchange Workshop by representatives of Farmer organizations with the support of the Forward Thinking Platform

Montpellier June 6, 2014
During the 3rd Foresight Exchange Workshop, held in Montpellier, June 4-5, 2014, representatives of Farmers Organizations, NGOs, and members of the Forward Thinking Platform met and discussed the implementation of the Grassroots Foresight Initiative supported by GFAR through the Global Foresight Hub. The purpose of the session was to produce concrete advances in the process of implementing the grassroots foresight initiative as proposed by Farmer Organizations and NGOs at GCARD2 and supported by GFAR (See Attached support document).

This document integrates the outputs of the workshop into an Action plan under three key issues: Objectives and Principles, Scope/Method and Time Frame, and Governance.

I. Objectives and Principles

The objectives of the grassroots foresight initiative agreed upon by the representatives of the Farmers organizations and supported by all other participants are as follows:

1. Empowerment and capacity building in using forward thinking for the self-determination of their own future
2. Produce a Plan of Action at local level including research and development dimensions and practical implementation
3. Link layers of social actors at the local, national and international levels
4. Influence policy, research programs and institutions, governance and funding structures.

The participants agreed upon principles guiding the initiative and its implementation as indicated below. These principles will be used to determine who engages in the initiative (see Governance chapter III below). They pull together many comments and suggestions made during the brainstorming session.

1. Inclusiveness. Give a voice to the voiceless is a core principle of the initiative; think of youth, women, farm workers, landless, vulnerable groups, indigenous people (think even of landlords who sometimes do not speak)
2. Openness. Include also other stakeholders not just farmers (food supply chain and industries, consumers, food systems, cities,…). A specific methodological design is necessary in each situation, in order to ensure that those stakeholders who are very useful to inject different perspectives and information in the foresight process should not prevent the “voiceless” of the former category to come to the word.
3. Documentation. Document methodological choices in order to ensure relevant comparability across local cases (who was involved, who actually managed to come, what variables have been looked at, etc…)
4. A bottom up approach. Develop a bottom-up perspective in order to achieve the Objective 3 of linking layers and networks of social actors across scales.
5. Operationalisation of scenarios. Link scenarios with concrete actions. This will include for example dissemination of scenarios and a proper action plan based on a strategic analysis of the scenarios as indicated in Obective 2.
6. Mutual learning. Provide opportunities for global food security foresight specialists working with farmers’ organizations to reconsider their mindset, framings and methods after having participated to the project.

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1 See the list of the 33 participants in Annex 1.
7. **Context-specificity.** Consider the cultural specificities and belief systems when designing the foresight capacity development and ensure that farmers and farmer’s organisations are sensitized not only to foresight as methods for a one shot event, but also as a permanent attitude (think in terms of possible changes, of scenarios, and not only in terms of stability or continuation of trends). This might necessitate to show that a foresight attitude is complementary (and not conflictive) with people’s belief systems and the way they deal with the future.

II. **Scope, methods, time frame**

The **scope** of each local initiative will not be too specific as it has to be linked with other initiatives across regions. The focus is on the futures of family farmers with a long-term perspective (20 years) enabling mid-term strategic thinking (10 years) and short term implementation (5 years).

The **methods** used will be participatory, flexible and inclusive of women and youth as expressed in the objectives and principles. It is based on training at local level enabling to capture a diversity of perspectives and divergences through constructive dialogues. The selection of one common method for all cases or different methods in each case will be made by the ad hoc committee of governance (see chapter below) with the support of the members of the Platform. Selection of cases will be a progressive process starting with pilot/spotlight cases and expanding progressively to reach a target of 20 cases of which at least 10 will be finalized by the time of the GCARD3 event foreseen for December 2015.

The **time frame** for implementation has been set as follows:

- **June-September 2014:** Setting the ad hoc committee, identifying first cases (5) and agreement on the methodology through support from the Forward thinking Platform; signing LoA for implementation.
- **September-December 2014:** At least five pilot cases started.
- **January-March 2015:** At least 5 more cases started. An intermediate result-sharing session by March.
- **March-September (2015):** 10 more cases started. At least five cases completed. In September a preparatory session for the GCARD 3 to put together cases in a coherent frame for feeding the GCARD.
- **December 2015:** GCARD 3 presentation and discussion of the results engaging a dialogue on the futures of family farming with at least 10 cases completed.
- There was also an understanding that an auto-evaluation process will take place and that the initiative will not stop with the GCARD3 event, but will be an ongoing process through more proactive and forward thinking farmer organizations.

III. **Governance**

Four main governance functions were identified and agreed upon as follows:
- Facilitate the application of the agreed principles in the selection and implementation of the cases
- Mobilize additional resources in order to secure proper implementation of the case studies and cross scale activities
- Decide on how to use the results at various levels
- Monitor and evaluate the process through reporting principles and a common framework allowing local freedom.
For this purpose an ad hoc governance system was established consisting in a group of enthusiastic, dedicated “champions” having expressed their interest in this initiative. This is a small group of people from the farmer organizations’ sector. Members of this group will not have to reflect a pre-determined geographic distribution by region, the group will have to build on existing energy and expand from it when necessary. It is meant to be an effective and leading group with the capacity to perform the above mentioned functions. Some of the participants of the workshop have been involved since GCARD2 in this process and have expressed their interests and shown their commitment. As a result Ester Penunia from AFA, Fernando Lopez from COPROFAM and Elizabeth Atangana from PROPAC have volunteered to integrate this group. This governance group will also make the connection with other regional farmer organizations in Africa, based on earlier expression of interests received by the GFAR Secretariat. Among them, Stephen Muchiri from EAFF, Ibrahim Coulibaly from CNOP, Mali, Annick Sezibera from Burundi have already expressed their interest and commitment. During the workshop Salima Marzouki from UNTAP Tunisia also expressed interest.

This group will be supported by a group of equally enthusiastic, dedicated “champions” having expressed their interest in this initiative from the NGO sector, from the Platform and from GFAR Secretariat. Similarly, early followers and supporters have expressed their willingness to integrate the support group: Sonali Bisht from INHERE, Sébastien Treyer from IDDRI, Robin Bourgeois from the GFAR Secretariat. In addition, Hans Herren from the Millennium Institute has offered to explore possible links with his current activities in order to seek additional funding for this initiative.

Governance of local initiatives will be decided locally with the support of the governance group.

Monitoring and evaluation will be ensured through close coordination between the governance group and GFRA Secretariat by means of LoAs.

IV. Next steps

Engaging a quick consultation with all platform members about their offer to develop capacity for local scenario building by farmers organizations along the objectives and principles indicated above. This offer would then be submitted to the ad hoc group and decisions made on the method(s). Deadline end of August 2014.

Follow up of the agenda and programme of work decided by the ad hoc governance committee and liaison with the support group.

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A recent inventory on the current state of foresight in agriculture shows that there is no comprehensive foresight work centred on the future of farmers worldwide, neither in terms of content nor in terms of process. More, Farmers Organizations and Civil Society Organizations engaged in agriculture and rural development, particularly in the South, are significantly absent as “doers” or even as commissioners of foresight studies. The results of this inventory, conducted by the GFAR Secretariat in association with the CGIAR ILAC and Consortium Office were discussed at the second Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD2). Representatives of farmers organizations worldwide and representatives of NGOs and CSOs declared there their willingness to collectively engage in a “grassroots foresight” on the futures of family farming.

This declaration was not only an outcome of the GCARD2 Foresight Breakout Session on “Improving Foresight through Equitable Partnership”. It was also included in the plenary report of the final day of the GCARD2 as follows:
Following up on GCARD 2 outcomes, the GFAR Secretariat has endeavoured to include this initiative in the GFAR Medium Term Plan (MTP). The MTP is a reference document for engaging committed partner organizations in collective actions of mutual benefit in line with the GCARD Roadmap and the outputs of the GCARD2. It was approved at the 28th GFAR Steering Committee in April 2013 and this has opened the possibility to put into action this initiative led and managed by farmers organization and supported by NGOs and CSOs. GFAR offers also to support this initiative through the technical assistance from its senior foresight expert at the GFAR Secretariat and additional resources.

A first round of consultation with the members of the group who started this initiative at the GCARD2 confirmed a common interest and willingness to move forward. The purpose of this support document is to help the OPs to decide on the process and actions they would like to engage in, and lead, in order to implement this initiative.

Proposal

This draft proposal includes the following elements:

- Objectives and expected outputs
- Principles for collective action
- Method
- Governance and tasks
- Funding

1. Objectives and expected outputs

A first objective is to develop a farmer-led, farmer-managed grassroots foresight to call the attention of, and inform, the international community on how farmers see the possible futures of smallholder and family farming. This will bring an alternative dynamics in current conversations about the future of agriculture and rural development. The outputs will be a set of locally-produced foresight scenarios and their implications, led and managed by farmer organizations but with inputs and contribution of other local relevant stakeholders following the principles of participatory foresight scenario building.

A second objective is the empowerment of farmers organization through capacity building and advocacy of the results with the community of research, government and donors in particular including at local level. The outputs will be i) a position collectively taken by Farmers Organizations, substantiated by a deep and meaningful field work about the key issues and challenges, leading to an actionable advocacy process enabling the international communities, regional organizations and national authorities and stakeholders to make societal choices about the futures of farming and rural areas at various scales and ii) local processes lead by local farmer organizations engaging local stakeholders in the definition of desirable actions and driven by a better understanding of local challenges and implications of different policy options.

This grassroots foresight will significantly contribute to the next GCARD 3 process whose objectives is to help re-shaping research and innovation systems worldwide, including the next phase of the CGIAR Research programs (CRPs). The GCARD3 process is expected to conclude in October 2015 with a multi-stakeholder evaluation of the proposed transformations of agricultural research and innovation systems and related policies at global and local level. The consolidated outputs of the grassroots foresight initiative will play a key role in this process.
2. **Principles of collective action**

This initiative relies on a bottom-up process engaged by local farmer organizations or associations, and supported by NGOs and CSOs, leading to questioning broader and more global issues. It is based on principles of voluntary engagement of farmers organizations in their different geographic areas. It is therefore a decentralized local process which will require some ad hoc coordination (see point 4 hereafter).

3. **Methods**

In order to fulfil these objectives it is proposed to use a scenario-based forward thinking approach that will also contribute to building capacity of farmer organizations and opening worldwide thinking to the own perception of farmers about their own futures. It is proposed to use scenario building applied to the question of the futures of family farming using local family/smallholder farmers/pastoralists’ and other stakeholders’ perception of trends, ruptures and drivers that impact on the future of local farmers, and also rural inhabitants. These drivers will not be limited to family farming; they will include the transformation of the rural world. But what matters here is that it will be based on the knowledge and experience of and managed by local communities of farmers and pastoralists themselves including other local stakeholders in the process, a big difference.

A three-step process is suggested as follows:

1. **Own Capacity building.** Strengthening their own local capacities in scenario-based foresight will serve a double purpose for farmer organizations. First, it will ensure a better distribution of foresight capacities, compensating for unbalanced foresight competences in local Farmers Organizations, CSOs and NGOs compared to other global non Civil Society Organizations. Second, it will help farmer organizations to become more confident when interacting with foresight experts at various scales. Own capacity building would thus include i) awareness and understanding about what foresight is and how it can serve the interests of farmers organizations and ii) acquisition of the required skills within these organizations to conduct foresight studies now and in the future. This capacity building has to be conducted through a very applied mutual learning-by-doing approach between the facilitators supporting this initiative and the members of FO, NGO and CSO directly involved.

   It is proposed to strengthen the capacities of local resource persons selected by the Farmers Organizations. A resource-effective option is to organise a full six-day training session on a geographical basis, accommodating up to 20 participants, as a way to reduce transport and organization costs.

2. **Implementation of local scenario-based foresight.** The resource persons will facilitate the implementation of grassroots foresight by their farmers organizations over a sufficient period of time to complete a full, highly interactive scenario building process. The method selected will enable members of farmer organizations to collectively identify and reflect on the drivers of change shaping the evolution of family agriculture, how these drivers interact in a systemic way, the associated trends and potential ruptures, all leading to the building of alternative scenarios and their implications for the future of family farming. In the process, other local stakeholders will be included in order to ensure an adequate coverage of the issues. The time frame for such local work until the completion of the scenarios is expected to take no more than nine to twelve months.
As there is very little worldwide experience on decentralised foresight studies intended to contribute to a local-to-global work, it is suggested to use a common scenario building method which will facilitate turning locally initiated foresight into a more global picture. Using a common frame will be helpful to identify commonalities and differences at local level from which more global pictures can be built. Diversity of method will be less be the key for the success of this initiative than the quality of the work conducted at field level which will ensure a diversity of perceptions to be captured. The method suggested here is a participatory scenario building approach similar to that which has been successfully implemented and presented at GCARD2.

3. **Consolidating the implications of the different scenarios** in different contexts into key development issues (such as employment, well being, sustainability of people and resources, economic growth, resilience of rural areas, territorial development...), new and key challenges, potential discontinuities and options for policies and research. It is proposed to organize a bottom-up process from the local to international level through reflections, on common issues arising from field experience but also on the diversity which has to be taken into account by the international community in order to help shaping a more responsive agenda that can resonate through different scales up to local implementation.

In parallel, each local case is expected to directly benefit to the local farmer organizations by providing them with serious arguments to engage with local stakeholders in actions towards more desirable futures for smallholder and family farmers and avoiding undesired paths. The experience of local grassroots foresight or territorial foresight shows that this process leads to significant changes in the relationships between stakeholders with different views. It is expected that local foresight exercises will enable farmer organizations to convince and work with other stakeholders for the definition of local policies and actions targeting more sustainable territorial development.

4. **Governance and definition of tasks**

The fundamental principle agreed upon is that FOs or associations of FOs are leading this process and will ensure that their members or constituencies are well informed of progress and able to provide input into the various stages of the process. For this purpose it could be appropriate to set two task forces in order to distinguish between those who will be at the core of this work (the FOs) and those who will be supporting them (CSOs, NGOs, GFAR Secretariat, the Forward Thinking Platform).

**The FO task force** is made of the representatives from Farmers Organizations or Associations of farmers organization who were at the origin of the idea plus volunteer FOs joining this initiative at this stage. This task Force takes decision on the process and activities to be implemented. It is proposed such a task force to operate on a geographic basis with the Asian Farmers Association (AFA) being the managing body for Asia-Pacific, the Pan African Farmers Organisations (PAFO) for Africa and the “Confederación de Organizaciones de Productores Familiares del MERCOSUR” (COPROFAM) for Latin America and the Caribbean.

**The support task force** is made of staff of the NGO/CSO volunteering to providing support to the FO task force to facilitate implementation of process and activities. Backstopping to the FO and the support task

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force will be offered by the GFAR Secretariat and the volunteer members of the Forward Thinking Platform (FTP) of the Global Foresight Hub. The FTP is a neutral body in the sense that it brings together foresight practitioners from different disciplines, from different sectors and from different regions of the world.

Local implementation will take place in the locations selected by the volunteer FO.

**Next steps (tentative agenda)**

- Confirmation of the expression of interest by the prospective members of the FO task force group (AFA, PAFO, CFOROFAM); Jan-Feb 2014
- Preliminary identification of volunteer FO and related supporting NGOs and CSOs; Feb-March 2014
- Agreement on the method by FO with the support of GFAR Secretariat and FTP; Feb-March 2014
- Approval of GFAR support to the initiative by the GFAR Steering Committee; Feb-March 2014
- Identification of resource persons by supporting FOs and CSOs/NGOs; April 2014
- Identification of resources and funding partners with FOs, NGOs and CSOs and the GFAR Secretariat; Jan-April 2014
- Organization of training of resource persons; May-June 2014
- Implementation of the grassroots foresight; May 2014-Jan 2015
- Consolidation with stakeholders; from September 2014

Contact: GFAR Secretariat, robin.bourgeois@fao.org
The grassroots foresight initiative included in the GFAR MTP under Outcome 1 responds to the request by FOs and CSOs representatives at GCARD2 for increasing their capacity to shape the future agenda of agricultural research and innovation for development systems (ARIDS). The purpose is to enable local dialogues and actions about the future of family farming and local agriculture with local stakeholders, led and managed by FOs and enable multi-scale dialogues within ARIDS between Farmer organizations and other stakeholders. The purpose of these dialogues is to contribute to the orientation of ARIDS towards more responsiveness, focus and accountability vis-à-vis farmers organizations.

The local scenarios that will be developed in particular will provide a unique source of substantiation of global scenarios at local level, in particular in relation with climate change and climate smart agriculture, with the use of ICT, with technology and science orientations, with transformation of consumption patterns.

Financial management, accountability and M&E

Under the hypothesis of 20 local initiatives the total budget is estimated at US$ 650 000 over two years (2014-2015) with a budget allocation of 385 000 dollars for 2014 and 265 000 for 2015 (See investment tables below). GFAR provides a total amount of minimum 200 000 dollars (30%) split over two years from its core budget as follows:

- Step 1. 49 000 dollars for the training of local facilitators (65%)
- Step 2. 100 000 dollars for 20 foresight case studies (21%)
- Step 3. 45 000 dollars for consolidation dialogue (100%)
- Miscellaneous: 6 000 dollars (75%)

Complementary funding is needed as follows:
- Step 1. 27 000 dollars for the training of local facilitators (for which part of an IFAD grant has been secured in 2014)
- Step 2. 380 000 dollars for 20 foresight case studies
- Miscellaneous: 2 000 dollars (75%)
- M&E by GFAR Secretariat for accountability: 40 000 dollars

Note: A post-foresight additional support of 100 000 dollars (not included here) should be considered under the form of an allocation of US 5000 to each farmer organization completing the full process to
enable them to engage in follow-up actions at the local level based on the outputs of their foresight work.

**Resource mobilization strategy**

To complement the funds mobilized through GFAR, additional resources will be requested from various donors. The GFAR Secretariat will work actively with participating FOs to ensure the necessary resources for the implementation of the local foresight initiatives in each place, approaching local donors with ongoing programs related to agriculture and rural development, from which small amounts (U.S. $ 25 000) could be assigned to each initiative.

The GFAR Secretariat will provide the management and M&E mechanisms as follows:

- Preparation and follow-up of LoA with partners farmer organizations or association of farmers organization.
- Each LoA will include detailed activities and outputs as well as origin of funding and reporting mechanism.
- Farmer organizations will be fully responsible for the implementation of their grassroots foresight activities with technical support from the GFAR Secretariat on content and process.

**Investment details**

*Total Investment in US $ (2014-2015)*

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### Detailed Investment 2014

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#### Step 2. Implementation of foresight at community level (20 initiatives)

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#### Total operational investment 2014

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### Detailed Investment 2015

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#### Step 3. Consolidation dialogue 3-day working session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Unit cost</th>
<th>Qnty</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel of participants</td>
<td>1 500</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants daily cost</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting facilities</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Total operational investment 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Unit cost</th>
<th>Qnty</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>4 000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;E by GFAR Secretariat</td>
<td>16 000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>265 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Expected sources of funding US$

- GFAR: 200 000
- IFAD: 60 000
- Local donors: up to 500 000 (20 donors x 25 000)