



# THE GFAR CHARTER

January 2017

## Table of Contents

List of ACRONYMS.....	3
<b>Section I. Preamble .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Section II. Background and Context.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Section III. Vision, Mission and Principles .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Section IV. Theory of Change and Operational Modalities.....</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1. Theory of Change .....	6
4.2 GCARD Road Map and GFAR Planning framework .....	7
4.3. Putting Collective Actions into Practice .....	7
4.4 Lesson learning and Accountability .....	8
<b>Section V. GFAR Structure and Governance.....</b>	<b>9</b>
5.1 Partners in the Global Forum.....	9
5.2. GFAR Governance and Governing Bodies.....	10
5.2.1. Partners’ Assembly .....	10
5.2.2. Steering Committee .....	11
5.2.3 GFAR Secretariat .....	13
5.3 GFAR Chair, Vice-Chair and Executive Secretary .....	15
5.3.1.Chair and Vice-Chair.....	15
5.3.2 Executive Secretary.....	15
5.4. GFAR Facilitating Agencies.....	16
5.5 Donor Support Group .....	16
<b>Section VI. Resourcing.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Annex 1. GFAR History .....	18
Annex 2. Structure and Function of GFAR’s Governing Bodies .....	20
Annex 3. Glossary.....	21

## List of ACRONYMS

AARINENA	Association of Agricultural Research Institutes in the Near East and North Africa
APAARI	Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutes
CACAARI	Central Asia and Caucasus Association of Agricultural Research Institutions
CGIAR	(formerly) Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIARD	Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research for Development
EFARD	European Forum for Agricultural Research for Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
FORAGRO	Forum for the Americas on Agricultural Research and Technology Development
GCARD	Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development
GFAR	Global Forum on Agri-Food Research and Innovation
GFRAS	Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ISNAR	International Service for National Agricultural Research (A CGIAR Center, no longer existing).
ITPGRFA	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
NARS	National Agricultural Research System
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PROLINNOVA	Promoting Local Innovation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resource management
SC	Steering Committee

## Section I. Preamble

The world faces unprecedented and complex challenges, including rising food demand, lingering food insecurity, malnutrition, obesity and rural poverty, all in a context of climate change, diminishing land and water resources, dynamic trade flows and regional protracted crises.

Agricultural research and innovation has delivered great change in feeding and improving the livelihoods of a growing population but huge challenges remain. By strengthening research and innovation systems, facilitating Collective Actions among multiple stakeholders and fostering effective international collaboration, **GFAR, the unique global forum on agri-food research and innovation and their role in development**, aims to make agri-food research and innovation systems more effective, responsive to the needs of resource-poor farmers, and equitable, thereby making a substantial contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals.

The GFAR Charter describes the structure, functions, governing rules and regulations of GFAR. GFAR's first Charter was approved by the GFAR Steering Committee in 1998 and was subsequently revised in 2000 and 2006. The present document is a substantive update based on the review of the 2006 Charter, taking account of major reforms in the international agricultural research system over the last 10 years, the recommendations of a review of GFAR governance carried out in 2012-13 and GFAR's first Constituent Assembly in 2015.

This document gives a precise description of the vision, mission and principles of the Global Forum, its Theory of Change and operational modalities, its organizational structure and governance, and its resourcing. The respective responsibilities of GFAR's governance bodies are presented, along with their functions, operational modalities and accountability mechanisms.

This updated version of GFAR Charter was endorsed by the Partners' Assembly on (5 April 2016). The Charter is not legally binding, nor does it impose any legal liability on the Partners in GFAR.

Any future amendments to the GFAR Charter can be proposed by the GFAR Steering Committee for endorsement by the Partners' Assembly.

## Section II. Background and Context

Recognising the role of agricultural research in contributing to development challenges, GFAR was formally established in Washington in October 1996, as the Global Forum on Agricultural Research, with a mandate *"to mobilize all the stakeholders involved in agricultural research for development and support their efforts to alleviate poverty, increase food security and promote a more sustainable use of natural resources"*. The stakeholders of agricultural research for development, a group of donors supporting the initiative and four facilitating agencies (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations – FAO; the International Fund for Agricultural Development –IFAD; the International Service for National Agricultural Research – ISNAR; and the World Bank), sponsored the formation of GFAR. FAO hosts the Secretariat of GFAR as a 'special multi-donor trust fund project'. A Memorandum of Agreement between FAO and IFAD, dated 24 May 2003, describes the hosting agreement for the GFAR Secretariat and the cooperation entailed between IFAD and FAO in its support.

The Global Forum is a convening and catalytic mechanism for change, a virtual institution composed and driven by the Partners who make up the Forum: networks, fora and institutions from all stakeholder sectors involved in agricultural research, extension, education and enterprise, from farmers and consumers to researchers, to multilateral organizations and from NGOs to the private sector. In recent years, GFAR has broadened its initial focus to include all aspects of the agri-food

research and innovation system and the generation, access/sharing, transformation, application and use of knowledge, skills and technologies required within this frame.

Annex 1 describes the history of GFAR from its establishment up to 2015. A review of governance, carried out in 2012-13 and endorsed by the Steering Committee in 2013, advocated substantive changes in the form and mandates of GFAR's bodies, to better align GFAR's governance with the realities of complex systems, the multi-stakeholder initiatives required of agricultural/agri-food value chains and the role of agriculture and food in development. A key recommendation was for a Constituent Assembly to improve representation and ensure wider participation by GFAR stakeholders – as Partners in the Forum. The first Constituent Assembly took place in Bangkok in August 2015 and deliberated on GFAR's role and purpose, GFAR collective actions, governance and resourcing. The decisions taken at the Constituent Assembly are reflected in this revision of the GFAR Charter.

### Section III. Vision, Mission and Principles

GFAR has a critical role to play in articulating the demand for research and innovation in the agri-food system to serve the present and future needs of the poor and ensure that these needs are recognised in the establishment of research and innovation priorities. This role is consistent with the aims of promoting basic human rights to food and nutrition security, enabling viable rural livelihoods and generating resilient and sustainable productive systems.

#### **GFAR vision statement**

*The Global Forum makes agri-food research and innovation systems more effective, responsive and equitable, towards achieving sustainable development outcomes.*

#### **GFAR mission statement**

*Partners in the Global Forum, at national, regional and international levels, advocate for and catalyse Collective Actions that strengthen and transform agri-food research and innovation systems.*

#### **Guiding principles of GFAR's mode of operation**

- **Collective Action** is the overarching principle guiding GFAR's work.
  - A GFAR Collective Action is a multi-stakeholder programme of work at national, regional and international level, initiated by three or more Partners and prioritized by the Global Forum, always including producers and with a particular focus on women and youth, contributing to the objectives of the Global Forum and the GCARD Road Map.
  - It also refers to the fact that GFAR's Partners agree to commit and generate resources together, in actions or advocacy that strengthen and transform agri-food research and innovation systems towards shared demand-driven development aims and which add value through their joint actions.
  - The Global Forum's Collective Actions and their outcomes must be publicly recognized as contributing to the objectives of the Global Forum and the GCARD Road Map. Progress must be reported and shared with other partners through the Forum.

- **Complementarity.** GFAR strives to develop and strengthen the global agri-food research and innovation system by drawing on the value of the diversity and complementary strengths of all stakeholders involved.
- **Volunteerism:** GFAR is an open and inclusive forum, in which partnership is voluntary, and which engages any Partners who wish to align with GFAR's vision and mission. GFAR operates by consensus and commitment of Partners themselves.
- **Accountability:** GFAR links research and innovation, from any source, with the users of their products. It provides a framework for holding researchers and service providers accountable to addressing needs, particularly of resource-poor smallholder farmers and poor rural communities.
- **Subsidiarity:** Planning and management of GFAR Collective Actions should take place at the most appropriate level at which they can be effectively and efficiently implemented. The GFAR implementing Partners may include local, national, regional or global organizations, depending on which level is most appropriate to implementing the action.

## Section IV. Theory of Change and Operational Modalities

### 4.1. Theory of Change

GFAR stakeholders recognize that, while agricultural research is essential, it is not in itself sufficient to achieve large-scale development impacts and must be embedded in wider partnerships, processes and systems of innovation to reach and impact on the desired beneficiaries. By bringing together all actors involved in agricultural research, extension, education and enterprise at the global level, GFAR provides a unique and truly multi-stakeholder mechanism that helps to stimulate and trigger regional and national actions, delivering on the ground towards commonly agreed aims. GFAR operates through voluntary commitment towards a shared vision, building complementarity between diverse actors in establishing effective policies, pathways and practices towards desired outcomes. GFAR's role in advocating for change and triggering new thinking and actions was rated by its stakeholders as the most useful function of the Forum, together with ensuring equitable stakeholder inputs to agricultural research and innovation reform processes, and sharing knowledge and information.

GFAR's Theory of Change is that collective actions, advocacy and sharing of knowledge, catalysed through the interaction of GFAR Partners in open and transparent multi-stakeholder processes, will in turn trigger transformational change in international, regional, national and local institutions. This will result in agri-food research and innovation processes that are more effective, relevant, equitable and accountable to those intended to benefit through the development outcomes concerned.

Achieving this change requires 1) addressing institutional barriers and individual habits and attitudes that determine the power relationships between science, the holders of new knowledge, and the communities they serve and 2) developing new institutional arrangements, including resources, capabilities and behaviours to effectively deliver these changes.

To achieve this, Partners in GFAR have recognized a number of key elements required in transforming agricultural research and innovation systems:

1. Inclusively defining research and innovation priorities and actions, driven by development needs
2. Developing and fostering equitable partnerships among all stakeholders

3. Advocacy to achieve the increased investments required to meet development needs
4. Developing essential human and institutional capacities to meet the needs of today and the future
5. Embedding innovation in development programmes and policies
6. Including and involving stakeholders, in particular smallholder farmers, in the accountability and value of systems used

## 4.2 GCARD Road Map and GFAR Planning framework

The GCARD Road Map, resulting from the First GCARD meeting in Montpellier in 2010 provides the strategic orientation for GFAR's Medium Term Operational Plans. The GCARD Road Map comprises the six elements that underpin GFAR's Theory of Change (Section 4.1).

The GCARD Road Map runs for a notional 10 years 2010-2020. It will be periodically reviewed by subsequent GCARDs as an evolving strategic document and the GFAR Secretariat will support the preparation of any updates required for approval by the GCARD.

GFAR prepares multi-year plans structured on the outcomes in the GCARD Road Map. Collective actions by GFAR Partners contribute to outputs that support the outcomes identified. The first GFAR Medium Term Plan covers 2013-17.

## 4.3. Putting Collective Actions into Practice

A particular role of the GFAR Secretariat is to coordinate, catalyse, facilitate and track GFAR Collective Actions (as defined in Section III). GFAR aims to ensure that the Collective Action is truly guiding the work of the partner organizations and meets the expectations of all partners involved.

Collective actions must involve at least three GFAR Partners and be sure to include the perspectives of farmers/producers. They can be at a wide range of scales, from global to local and can focus on the transformation of a particular sector or involve collective actions around a key development theme. Box 1 gives some examples at the global level. At the local level, the Innovation Platforms initiated by the CGIAR/FARA Sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Programme, which bring together farmers with researchers and private sector and/or NGO partners are good examples of Collective Actions. Regional fora, thematic networks, national or local partners may all initiate, facilitate or support GFAR Collective Actions in their mandate areas.

**Box 1: Some of the Global Collective Actions that GFAR actions have led, facilitated or directly influenced.**

- CGIAR reform and Research Programs (CRPs)
- Global Foresight Hub
- Gender in Agriculture Partnership (GAP)
- Farmers' rights in the context of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)
- Coherence in Information for Agricultural research for development (CIARD) and Global Open Data for Agriculture & Nutrition (GODAN)
- Promoting Local Innovation (PROLINNOVA)
- Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS)
- Young Professionals in Agricultural Development (YPARD)

Collective actions rely on the commitment of partners themselves, to drive and lead the initiatives concerned and to foster the involvement of others. Partner organizations involved in a particular

collective action are expected to themselves bring and engage their own resource commitments of time, staff & funds, to the process, together building a collective, sustained through its own actions.

The GFAR Secretariat acts in support of such processes, according to priorities determined by GFAR's governing bodies and within the financial and human resources available.

GFAR is not a donor agency and is not responsible for the core funding of any of the GFAR Partner organizations.

Priorities for collective actions are determined by the Partners Assembly, and in the interim by the Steering Committee that acts on its behalf, and are particularly informed by, and publicly reported to, the processes of GCARD (see 4.4 below). Partners in actions endorsed by the Steering Committee are entitled to associate them with the GFAR logo and name as GFAR Collective actions.

Wherever possible, the Partners will seek to consolidate or cross-link Collective Actions, to maximize their impact and reach.

#### 4.4 Lesson learning and Accountability

GFAR's Collective Action modality provides a unique opportunity for lesson learning, mutual accountability and knowledge sharing across global and regional constituencies. The GFAR Secretariat, global partners representing particular constituencies, and regional fora will collate lessons learned and share experience through workshops, reviews, or electronic media. The GFAR website provides a common repository and learning resource for all partners and champions and shares the work of all GFAR Partners who are working together towards the Forum's purpose.

GFAR provides a framework for transparently and publicly ensuring that actions are developed equitably and appropriately, and subsequently for:

- Holding researchers and service providers accountable to farmers and other users of research products;
- Holding implementers of Collective Actions accountable to other Partners in GFAR and their constituencies;
- Holding GFAR and its Partners accountable to those funding the actions

The GCARD process, co-led by GFAR and CGIAR, is the main linking research to demand. GCARD identifies demand from regions and constituency groups and opens research and innovation programmes, including but not limited to those of the CGIAR, to public scrutiny by a wide range of stakeholders. GCARD is important to gearing research and innovation processes to farmer needs, in particular those of resource-poor farmers and inspiring and building partnerships for Collective Actions.

The GFAR Medium Term Plan provides the agreed framework for action and for determining and showing the results of Collective Actions undertaken by GFAR Partners. The logical framework included in the plan contains **indicators, targets and milestones** to measure performance. Reporting mechanisms of GFAR Partners are expected to be consistent with this logical framework, so that Collective Actions are recognised as aligned with GFAR and as contributing to the outputs of the GFAR Medium Term Plan and the outcomes of the GCARD Road Map.

The Medium Term Plan is the mutually agreed basis for GFAR and its Partners to report progress to donor agencies.



## Section V. GFAR Structure and Governance

### 5.1 Partners in the Global Forum

The Global Forum is a convening and catalytic mechanism for change. It is a virtual organization with an open and inclusive nature, composed and driven by networks, fora and institutions from all stakeholder sectors involved in agricultural research, extension, education and enterprise, from farmers and consumers to researchers to multilateral organizations and from NGOs to the private sector.

Partnership in GFAR is open to any organization that shares and supports GFAR's vision, mission and values, as expressed in Section III. Partners may include global, regional, national or local organisations. Potential partners must be representative of, and accountable to, their members/constituents and be able to engage in GFAR processes and actions. The scope of partnership includes all actors in food and agriculture, including the diverse services, occupations and activities related to rural communities and their landscapes<sup>1</sup>, the value webs between producers and consumers, and the multiple relations between rural and urban areas. Participation is voluntary and open to all institutions, or recognized organizational units within an institution (e.g. a University Department), concerned with the generation, access and use of agricultural and agri-food knowledge, research and innovation. Partners self-select based on their interest and commitment to working together. To be recognized as Partners in the Global Forum, organizations should communicate their alignment with GFAR's Vision and Mission to the GFAR Secretariat and request to become GFAR Partners. This can be done by email, through the GFAR website or through recorded public statements. There is no mandatory financial commitment for Partners and this is a voluntary partnership, not a legally binding arrangement.

GFAR aims to achieve a balanced representation across regions and stakeholder groups, including regional agricultural research for development fora<sup>2</sup>, and thematic networks focused on agricultural research and innovation in development. All stakeholders involved in agri-food research and innovation are eligible to become Partners in GFAR, without prejudice to their own status or institutional positions. Currently active regions and thematic or sectorial networks are as follows:

#### **Regions:**

- Sub-Saharan Africa
- West Asia & North Africa
- Asia and Pacific
- East Asia
- Central Asia and Caucasus
- Europe
- Latin America including Central America and Caribbean
- North America
- Global

#### **Sectors**

- Regional Fora of national agricultural & food research and development institutions and Regional government agencies
- International research institutions
- Advanced/G20 research organizations

---

<sup>1</sup> Agricultural landscapes include biodiversity, forests, fisheries and aquatic ecosystems, soils and water, covering their multiple economic, social and cultural services.

<sup>2</sup> Fora are currently active in the following regions: Africa (FARA); Asia and Pacific (APAARI); Central Asia and Caucasus (CACAARI), Europe (EFARD), Latin America (FORAGRO), Near East and North Africa (AARINENA).

- Consumers
- Farmer organizations, cooperatives and agricultural workers
- Higher Education
- CSOs/NGOs in agriculture, food & rural development
- Private sector (including input industries, SMEs and market & food industries)
- Rural advisory services
- Women in agriculture
- Youth organizations
- Facilitating agencies (FAO and IFAD)
- Donors & funding agencies

Partners in GFAR encompass a great diversity of groups with varying levels of formal or informal organization, legal status, membership, degree of incorporation, scope and diversity of specific constituencies. They include networks, and networks of networks, fora, alliances, member-based organizations, and groups of individual and institutional members or associates, at local, national, regional and international levels and including relevant units within an institution. The interests and priorities of particular, national, country-based or local institutions or associations are also represented through regional and international stakeholder mechanisms. Rules and regulations regarding the roles, rights, responsibilities and accountability mechanisms are the responsibility of individual Partner organizations.

## 5.2. GFAR Governance and Governing Bodies

There are three types of governance required in GFAR: strategic, programmatic and executive. These functions determine GFAR's governance structure. GFAR's governing bodies, as decided in the 2015 Constituent Assembly, are illustrated in Annex 2.

### 5.2.1. Partners' Assembly

The Partners' Assembly provides strategic oversight and overall governance to the Global Forum. It comprises approximately 150 organizations. The Partners' Assembly will be composed of representatives from Global Partners, Regional Fora Partners and Partners from all other sectors, as nominated by their constituencies. All Partner representatives are thus themselves accountable to their wider constituencies for their actions in GFAR and have mutual accountability with other sectors through GFAR Collective Actions and GFAR's governance.

The Partners' Assembly will meet every three years as part of the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD), convening a significant number of stakeholders representing and engaging with the wide geographic, thematic and institutional range of GFAR stakeholders.

The Assembly will be a broad representative body, the composition of which will enable GFAR to take full account of the range of stakeholder organizations for whose benefit it exists. This breadth of perspective will help the Partners' Assembly to fulfil its role of upholding and taking forward the mission and ethos of GFAR, holding it to account, and appointing any subsidiary bodies.

The role of the Partners' Assembly is strategic governance. Its main functions are as follows:

- Agree and prioritize a medium – long term strategy for collective implementation
- Review and adjust the strategy
- Catalyze partnerships for Collective Actions
- Oversee achievements and ensure transparent mutual accountability
- Ratifying rules for appointing Partners to the GFAR Steering Committee or other governance bodies

- Ensure the continued legitimacy and accountability of partners, and that they fulfil their rights and responsibilities for Collective Action in the strategic governance mechanism
- Elect the GFAR Chair and Vice-Chair
- Nominate and ratify representatives for the GFAR Steering Committee
- Bring collective advocacy and common commitment for GFAR actions.

The Partners' Assembly strives to reach decisions by consensus. Where this is not possible, partners will vote on decisions that are carried with a simple majority, or as otherwise determined by the Partners' Assembly.

### 5.2.2. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is composed of global partners, Regional Fora and Partners nominated from other constituencies, as agreed by the Partners' Assembly. The GFAR Chair and Vice Chair would hold these respective positions in the Steering Committee. The independence of the Committee is reinforced by inclusion of the GFAR Facilitating Agencies (FAO and IFAD) a representative of donor perspectives, and a representative of international agricultural research. Committee members are expected to represent the wider GFAR community if delegated by the Chair or Vice Chair. The GFAR Executive Secretary is an *ex-officio* member of the Committee.

The GFAR Steering Committee will be composed of representatives of GFAR constituencies, drawn from across all regions and from each sector, as defined in Section 5.1. The distribution of seats and their rotation will be determined by the Partners' Assembly, with appropriate measures for accountability to the Assembly. Partners in each constituency will identify their own representatives through an open election process where there is no one body already established to do so by the sector concerned.

GFAR Steering Committee members play a key role in developing GFAR's capacity to strengthen the interaction between the local/national, the regional/sub-regional and the global level. The interaction between these levels is essential for making GFAR a dynamic and agile Forum, engaging its Partners in dialogue on policy issues and facilitating their participation in Collective Actions.

Membership of the Steering Committee will be reviewed every three years by the Partners' Assembly. The Partners' Assembly has the right to replace members based on the current relevance, representativeness of member organisations and of the performance of their delegates to the Steering Committee, as assessed by their respective constituencies. Individuals representing organisations on the Steering Committee normally serve for a three-year term, which can be renewed once only.

The Steering Committee organizes itself as a body and through standing committees. It will decide what sub-committees it may, or may not, require to ensure effective operation and accountability in all respects. These may include (inter alia):

- An Executive Sub-Committee to streamline decision making and ensure effective supervision of the Secretariat
- A Resource Allocation Sub-Committee, to provide the Steering Committee with independent recommendations on allocation of available resources;
- A GCARD Sub-Committee to manage the organization of the GCARD process and GCARD meetings;
- A Collective Action Sub-Committee to monitor progress of Collective Actions, synthesize lessons learned etc.

The Steering Committee will meet annually. The GFAR Chair may convene extraordinary meetings of the Steering Committee when required. The agenda of the meetings are prepared by the GFAR Secretariat in consultation with Steering Committee Members and as decided by the Chair. The draft agenda and documents to be tabled are circulated at least two weeks in advance to allow Members sufficient time to consult their respective constituencies.

At the discretion of the Chair, some sessions of the Steering Committee may be in closed session for Members to discuss and, if required between Partners' Assembly sessions and on behalf of the Partners' Assembly, take decisions on GFAR Chair/Vice Chair and Executive Secretary appointments (following from open advertisement processes)..

The main roles of the Steering Committee are programmatic governance and executive governance although it also has a strategic role. It oversees the work of the GFAR Secretariat, and is assisted by the GFAR Secretariat in carrying out its tasks. The main functions of the Steering Committee are as follows:

#### ***Strategic governance***

- Promote GFAR's vision, mission and principles within GFAR's constituent Partners and in the broader agri-food research and innovation system community.
- Facilitate the flow of information and the exchange of experience among stakeholders of agricultural research.

#### ***Programmatic governance***

- Oversee GFAR Collective Actions, including legitimacy, commitment among all concerned and accountability for delivery
- Select the Collective Actions to be implemented in a given year, based on the medium- to long-term strategy
- Approve multi-annual Programs of Work related to the Medium Term Plan
- Report on and review program achievements, monitoring and evaluation of Collective Actions
- Mobilize resources for Collective Actions
- Report progress to the Partners' Assembly

#### ***Executive governance***

- Establish Sub-committees or working groups that may be deemed necessary to accomplish GFAR's mandate in an effective and efficient manner.
- Identify and evaluate candidates for the Chair and Vice-Chair of GFAR, and prepare recommendation for Partners' Assembly.
- Oversee performance of the GFAR Secretariat
- Following an open advertisement process, select and proposed a ranked shortlist of at least three candidates for the post of Executive Secretary of GFAR to FAO's Director General for appointment. The appointment will be made from this shortlist, unless a legal impediment intervenes, or the proposed appointment is not consistent with the provisions of FAO's Administrative Manual.
- Ensure that the Secretariat is staffed with competent persons that can contribute to the objectives of GFAR, including the approval of the staffing profile of the Secretariat, the persons that are posted to the Secretariat, and the Agreement with the Host Institution for the functioning of the Secretariat.

- Where possible, the Steering Committee and Partners' Assembly institutions should seek to provide staff to the Secretariat to help enable its functions and/or support to relevant Collective Actions.
- Approve annual Programmes of Work and budget, prepared by GFAR Secretariat and ensure that donor funding is used judiciously.
- Make decisions on the allocation of resources to GFAR programmes and Partners based on transparency and impartiality, recognizing and avoiding any conflicts of interest among Steering Committee members.
- Approve the GFAR Annual Report, prepared by the Secretariat.
- Assess the performance of the GFAR Executive Secretary at least every three years, in synchrony with his/her contract renewal.
- Undertake a self-assessment of the performance of Steering Committee members and report to Partners' Assembly.
- Commission an external evaluation of GFAR programmes every five years, to assess the progress being made towards the goals and objectives of GFAR as captured in the GCARD Road Map and Medium Term Plan.
- Oversee the planning and management of meetings of GCARD and the Partners' Assembly.

In addition to participating in Steering Committee meetings and carrying out the functions outlined above, each Steering Committee member is accountable to his or her constituents and has an important liaison function with the constituency that he/she represents. This includes:

- Seeking to organize and further develop or strengthen the constituency.
- Ensuring that adequate information is fed back to the constituency.
- Bring forward strategic issues in agri-food research and innovation, which are of interest to their constituencies, to the attention of the Steering Committee.
- Promote the involvement of his/her constituency in discussion of the strategic issues that are addressed by GFAR, actively reach out to other constituencies to build cross linkages, share knowledge and help enable the development of Collective Actions.

### 5.2.3 GFAR Secretariat

The GFAR Secretariat provides technical support to the Steering Committee and to all stakeholders in their active involvement in the Global Forum. It assists in the convening of the Partners' Assembly, GCARD, Steering Committee and other meetings and in the formulation of GFAR strategy and Programme of Work.

The GFAR Secretariat is hosted by FAO in Rome and is headed by an Executive Secretary, who has the support of a small team of professional and administrative staff. Since the activities carried out by the Global Forum are basically in the hands of the Partners as stakeholders, the Secretariat tasks refer to a role of facilitation or of assisting the respective stakeholders to carry out the agreed collaborative activities.

A particular role of the Secretariat is to coordinate, catalyse, facilitate and track GFAR Collective Actions. The coordination process will ensure that the Collective Action, as it is defined here, is truly guiding the work delivered by Partner organizations. It will also prevent problems of differing degrees of commitment that are often encountered in collective actions elsewhere.

The specific goals of the Secretariat are:

- To develop a far-reaching, multi-channel system for the exchange of information among all GFAR constituencies
- To facilitate discussion on critical strategic issues and to contribute to the emergence of a global agri-food research in development agenda
- To build a healthy environment for improved research and innovation partnership and the implementation of multi-stakeholder Collective Actions. South-South, South-North and inter-regional cooperation has to be actively promoted
- As a consequence of the above three, to foster the development of agri-food research and innovation systems around the world and to enhance, through sub-regional and regional fora, the capacities of agri-food research and innovation institutions to generate and make accessible, in a participatory manner, appropriate technologies that are suitable to end-users

The GFAR Secretariat functions include the following:

- Review and propose updates of the GCARD Road Map for approval of the Steering Committee and Partners' Assembly
- Prepare a Medium Term Plan and annual Programme of Work and Budget for approval of the Steering Committee
- Manage the finances of the Secretariat, ensure compliance with audit, and prepare financial reports for approval of the Steering Committee.
- Assist the various stakeholders to become active Partners in the implementation of Collective Actions that are included in the GFAR Medium Term Plan and in achieving their goals and objectives as a stakeholder group
- Organize the GFAR Partners' Assembly, Steering Committee meetings and other Global Forum meetings, including co-organization of the GCARD. Help the various constituencies to prepare, participate and make their contributions to these meetings
- Utilize GFAR Secretariat technical and financial resources, as available, to catalyze and facilitate multi-stakeholder Collective Actions among Partners from across agri-food innovation systems, through meetings, advocacy, capacity development and information exchange.
- Facilitate communication, interaction and knowledge sharing among GFAR Partners, in particular through the GFAR website and social media.
- Promote inter-regional and sub-regional linkages through improved information exchange and the formulation and implementation of inter-regional or sub-regional Collective Actions.
- Promote change in national agri-food research and innovation systems through advocacy for new forms of investment, collective action and lesson learning.
- Commission studies and organize surveys, workshops and meetings when necessary, to facilitate discussion on strategic issues or to develop global, regional and national research and innovation agendas
- Maintain an active contact with all donors and assist in mobilizing implementing partnerships and catalytic financial resources
- Assist all stakeholders in achieving their goals and objectives and to become active partners of GFAR

## 5.3 GFAR Chair, Vice-Chair and Executive Secretary

### 5.3.1. Chair and Vice-Chair

The Chair and Vice-Chair of GFAR are elected by the Partners' Assembly, (or if timing is considered inappropriate by the Partners' Assembly, proposed by the Steering Committee, and then electronically endorsed by vote of the Partners' Assembly), following open advertisement of posts in the media and interviews by the Steering Committee or an ad hoc sub-committee established for this purpose. Potential candidates should be widely recognized as leaders and advocates, actively advancing agricultural or rural development within public, private or civil sectors at national/regional/global level, with demonstrated engagement with multiple stakeholders and a high profile in generating, supporting, transforming, adapting or using agricultural knowledge, research or innovation in support of development.

The Chair and Vice-Chair each serve for a three-year term that is non-renewable unless determined otherwise by vote of the Partners' Assembly. The posts are unpaid. The appointments of the Chair and Vice Chair maybe staggered if required to enable continuity of GFAR Business. The Chair and Vice Chair presiding over GFAR during the same period should come from different regions and different stakeholder groups and full recognition should be made of the need for gender balance in their selection.

The Chair of the Global Forum will perform the following functions:

- a) Preside at all meetings of the Global Forum Partners' Assembly, Steering Committee and at other relevant meetings of the Global Forum
- b) Ensure that the Steering Committee is adequately addressing its various functions, as described in this Charter
- c) Serve as an ex-officio member of all standing committees or sub-committees of the Steering Committee
- d) Provide leadership to the Steering Committee in determining the policies under which the Executive Secretary operates the Secretariat and the annual Program of Work
- e) Oversee and advise the Executive Secretary and Secretariat on their work on behalf of the Steering Committee
- f) Be concerned with both internal and external GFAR matters. In internal matters, the Chairperson will interact closely with the Executive Secretary to monitor the development of GFAR programs
- g) In the external dimension, the Chair may represent GFAR as appropriate, including in the governing bodies of the CGIAR. The Chair is also expected to assist the Executive Secretary in developing and maintaining relations with donors and all GFAR constituencies

The Vice-Chair will perform the following functions:

- a) Assist the Chair in his/her tasks and represent GFAR at the Chair's request
- b) Preside over the Steering Committee when the Chair cannot be present
- c) Undertake the special responsibilities assigned by the Steering Committee, or in the follow up of its decision, as appropriate

### 5.3.2 Executive Secretary

The Executive Secretary of GFAR is recruited through an open competitive process in accordance with the relevant terms and conditions of service applicable to FAO personnel, is employed by FAO and is directly responsible to FAO for administrative purposes relating to the conduct of their duties.

The Executive Secretary serves for an initial period of three years, renewable in line with the host institution's rules and regulations, and based on an assessment and decision of the GFAR Steering Committee, for up to a maximum of 9 years, or as determined by the Steering Committee on behalf of the Partners' Assembly. The Executive Secretary is responsible for the efficient functioning of the GFAR Secretariat and for coordinating the implementation of administrative, institutional and operational activities approved by the GFAR Steering Committee.

The Executive Secretary:

- Reports to the Chairperson on GFAR matters and in the implementation of the Programme of Work and budget of the GFAR Secretariat
- Reports at an appropriate level within FAO on matters regarding the host institution, the management of the Secretariat's work within the frame of FAO procedures and explores ways of improving this relationship to the mutual benefit of FAO and GFAR.
- Acts as Secretary to all GFAR Committees

The Executive Secretary should establish and/or maintain close contact with the Heads of organizations represented on the Steering Committee, including the CGIAR System Units.

#### 5.4. GFAR Facilitating Agencies

GFAR recognizes the critical role played by some of the international organizations in its launch and hence considers a specific category of stakeholders called the 'GFAR Facilitating Agencies'. The following organizations are considered under this category:

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which hosts the GFAR Secretariat;
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Both FAO and IFAD have seats on the GFAR Steering Committee and are members of GFAR's Donor Support Group.

GFAR Facilitating Agencies play the following roles:

- Facilitate the link between GFAR Collective Actions and development programmes, in support of a shared mission of poverty reduction, food security and environmental sustainability and contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Sensitize and mobilize all GFAR stakeholders and the donor community to GFAR's vision and mission and its goals and objectives.
- Support, directly or indirectly, the GFAR Partners and GFAR Secretariat in the implementation of the GCARD Road Map and Medium Term Plan.
- Provide independent neutral perspectives, balancing the views of Steering Committee Members representing particular constituencies.
- Together with other members of the GFAR Donor Support Group, explore new instruments for financing of GFAR core costs and implementation of Collective Actions by GFAR Partners.

#### 5.5 Donor Support Group

GFAR donors will network among themselves to establish common positions, to support GFAR's governing bodies and GFAR programme implementation and to coordinate provision of donor



resources to GFAR. The number of participants depends on donor interest and commitment. The GFAR Facilitating agencies, FAO and IFAD, will be included in the Donor Support Group. Donors will agree, in collaboration with the GFAR Steering Committee, on a lead donor who will coordinate the Group and serve as donor representative on the GFAR Steering Committee. Meetings of the Donor Support Group are normally virtual, but the group may also convene in the margins of GFAR meetings.

## Section VI. Resourcing

Three types of resources relevant to GFAR's role:

1. The operational core resources enabling GFAR's governance and catalytic actions
2. Financial, human and other resources to catalyze and support international/regional or national Collective Actions among GFAR partners,
3. Mobilization and multi-stakeholder governance through GFAR of integrated financing and capacity development for national innovation platforms and actions

The GFAR Secretariat operates as a multi-donor Trust Fund within FAO. The operational resourcing of the Global Forum's core processes (advocacy & representation, governance, capacity development, administration, technical support, communication, programme development and monitoring) is currently supported through grants from donor agencies and through staff secondments. Funding agencies contribute to GFAR through the FAO Trust Fund or may do so through other mechanisms, in support of the GFAR Medium Term Plan or its component outputs or activities. In addition to providing office space, FAO makes a regular contribution to GFAR to help support secretarial assistance, communication costs and other miscellaneous expenses<sup>3</sup>.

The GFAR Secretariat is responsible for managing all income and expenditure and for the preparation of annual financial reports and budgets for scrutiny by the Steering Committee. The FAO Trust Fund falls under the overall internal and external audit procedures of FAO. GFAR may agree separate financial and audit procedures for donors who provide resources outside the FAO Trust Fund, including through CGIAR institutions, or other Trust Funds where accepted by the Steering Committee.

The core operational costs of the Global Forum are minimized by tight budgeting and a clear principle that any additional funds that can be obtained are used to help catalyse programme development. GFAR is exploring ways of generating greater volumes and more stable financing to support an expansion of Collective Actions. It is envisaged that seed funding may be required to initiate Collective Actions in some cases, noting that this modality requires Partners to commit and generate resources together to support their joint actions.

GFAR and its Partners have a responsibility to advocate for increased resourcing of agricultural research and innovation to meet the needs of the poor. Steering Committee members, the Donor Support Group and the GFAR Secretariat, have specific roles in raising awareness among their contacts in the donor community and in presenting the case for funding of GFAR and of GFAR Collective Actions. This may include exploring opportunities through FAO Committees or comparable international fora.

---

<sup>3</sup> The current annual FAO contribution is \$50,000. The contribution is subject to review each biennium.

## Annex 1. GFAR History<sup>4</sup>

The GFAR idea arose from discussions at the 1994 CGIAR mid-term meeting (MTM) in New Delhi. This initiated dialogue on ways of more fully integrating the concerns of developing countries into the formulation of global priorities for CG research. The then CG Chair oversaw the approval of a CG reform plan at this 1994 midterm meeting which had the following features:

- A new vision statement and refocused research agenda;
- Governance and management reforms to ensure predictability, transparency and accountability;
- NARS perspectives fully integrated into the CGIAR's policy framework;
- More effective linkages with farmers' groups (especially women's groups) and nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and the private sector; and
- A comprehensive plan of action based on the features above to be ratified by senior officials at an international conference.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was asked at this MTM to help organize a dialogue to strengthen the voices of NARS (National Agricultural Research System) in setting and implementing the international agricultural research agenda. IFAD organized an international consultation, titled Towards a NARS' Vision on International Agricultural Research, in Rome.

GFAR's initial governance structure comprised a GFAR Steering Committee (GFAR SC) and a NARS Steering Committee, each supported by a Secretariat. The GFAR Secretariat was hosted by the World Bank in Washington and the NARS Secretariat was hosted by FAO in Rome. In 1998 IFAD took the initiative to establish the GFAR Donor Support Group (DSG), and in 2000 the two secretariats were merged into a unified GFAR Secretariat. FAO hosts the GFAR Secretariat at its headquarters in Rome and provides a legal identity for GFAR, as an FAO Trust Fund, through a joint Memorandum of Agreement with IFAD, dated 24 May 2003.

Up to 2006 GFAR engaged its broader partners through a triennial meeting. Meetings took place in Dresden (2000), Dakar (2003) and New Delhi (2006). In 2008 major reforms in the international research system and in the CGIAR in particular, led to a redefinition of GFAR's role and the replacement of the triennial meeting with the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD), jointly convened by GFAR and CGIAR and held at two yearly intervals. The first GCARD took place in Montpellier in 2010 and the second was in Punta del Este, Uruguay, in 2012. The third GCARD has been postponed and is now scheduled for 2016.

The GCARD was initially planned to be held every two years, organized by GFAR in collaboration with the CGIAR Consortium, to showcase the Consortium and partners' research and to serve as a marketplace of advances in science for uptake by stakeholders or for further development by the contributors to the CGIAR Fund. This event has later been requested to be at 3-year intervals. The Conference will provide a platform for interactions among the contributors to the Fund, other donors of restricted funds, the Consortium, partners and other stakeholders, but it has no decision making function'. Indeed some CGIAR observers see the GCARD as an important part of the accountability mechanism to donors and partners.

---

<sup>4</sup> The early history is taken from the Review of GCARD 2, a 2013 report to GFAR by Rodney Cooke.

GFAR has had two external reviews – in 2000<sup>5</sup> and in 2006<sup>6</sup>.

GFAR commissioned a review of governance in 2012-13. A Strategic Governance Working Group (SGWG) was formed in 2013 to take forward the recommendations of the governance review. A key recommendation was to convene a Constituent Assembly to improve representation and ensure wider participation by GFAR stakeholders. The first Constituent Assembly took place in Bangkok in August 2015 and deliberated and agreed on GFAR's role and purpose, GFAR Collective Actions, governance and resourcing.

An outline chronology of GFAR is presented below:

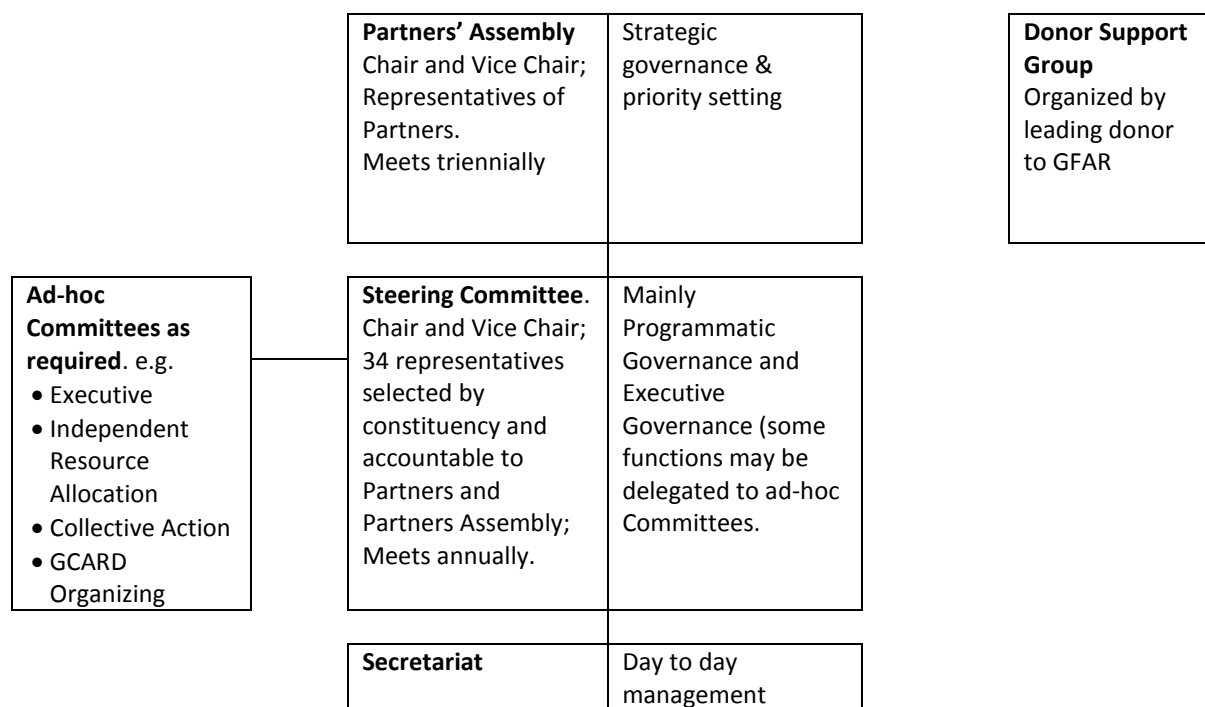
- 1996 GFAR founded
- 1997 GFAR Committees (GFAR Steering Committee, NARS Steering Committee) established with supporting secretariats.
- 1998 GFAR Charter drafted and approved by GFAR Steering Committee  
Donor Support Group set up.
- 2000 First GFAR triennial meeting  
First external review of GFAR  
Revisions to GFAR Charter  
Single unified GFAR Secretariat established, based in FAO, Rome.
- 2003 Second GFAR triennial meeting – Dakar
- 2006 Third GFAR triennial meeting – New Delhi  
Second external review of GFAR  
Second revisions to Charter
- 2008 CGIAR AGM defines GFAR's role in reform of the international agricultural research system and lays basis for GCARD Process, abolishing the GFAR triennial meeting.
- 2010 1<sup>st</sup> GCARD – Montpellier, France
- 2012 2<sup>nd</sup> GCARD – Punta del Este, Uruguay  
GFAR Governance Review
- 2013 Medium Term Strategic Plan (2013-17)
- 2015 1<sup>st</sup> GFAR Constituent Assembly
- 2016 1<sup>st</sup> GFAR Partners' Assembly  
3<sup>rd</sup> GCARD – Johannesburg, South Africa

---

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload/205507/External\\_Review.pdf](http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload/205507/External_Review.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload/222708/Second%20GFAR%20Review%20Report.pdf>

## Annex 2. Structure and Function of GFAR’s Governing Bodies



## Annex 3. Glossary

**Agricultural innovation.** The process whereby individuals or organizations generate new, or bring existing agricultural and agri-food knowledge, products, tools, technologies, processes and forms of organization into new social and economic use, towards eliminating hunger and malnutrition, eradicating poverty and enhancing wellbeing and fostering environmental sustainability and resilience to shocks.

**Agri-food Research and Innovation System.** A network of actors or organizations, and individuals, together with supporting institutions and policies in the agricultural, food and related sectors working to achieve agricultural innovation.

**Charter.** A written constitution or description of an organization's functions. (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition 2011)

**Collective Action.** A GFAR Collective Action is a multi-stakeholder programme of work at national, regional or international level, initiated by three or more partners and prioritized by the Global Forum, always including producers and with a particular focus on women and youth.

**GFAR Partner.** Any organization that formally aligns with GFAR's vision, mission and principles and requests involvement in the Global Forum.

A **theory of change** is a set of assumptions about how change can be triggered/produced in order to address problems or issues that affect individuals, groups, and/or systems.