



Reforming and Strengthening the Regional Agricultural Research and Innovation Organizations

A Collective Action within Key Focus Area (KFA) 3: *Transforming Organizational and Individual Capacities*



With the change in the demands and expectations of the Regional Research Fora, the Fora themselves have ascertained the need to change. They must evolve from their public sector research focus to become multi-stakeholder Fora, addressing the different dimensions required in strengthening and transforming agricultural innovation. They have embarked—with the advice and facilitation of the GFAR network—on a comprehensive system-wide reform that will strengthen their organizations and will result in self-sustaining, truly multi-stakeholder platforms that more closely reflect the demands of their constituents together with the agreed upon goals of GFAR and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The move as stated by the partners of the Fora and of GFAR is towards more inclusion, equitability, democratization, legitimacy and sustainability and the focus is on the value added of the fora to their partners and constituents. Two of the regional FORA have taken serious steps in implementing this transformation with the technical advice and support of GFAR: AARINENA and FORAGRO. Other FORA are organizing themselves to join the reform.

The comprehensive reform system facilitated by GFAR Secretariat will look at the environment of each partner Regional Research Fora, the inputs to the current system, the processes and the

type and quality of outputs as compared to the targeted and expected outputs. As organizational leadership, governance and structures are vital factors in the success of any organization, the role of leadership and governance approaches will be thoroughly examined in this reform model. The structure will be reformed to support the function. The Fora have agreed to change their business model, to diversify their funding sources, address institutional barriers to support the new goals and their sustainability.

This comprehensive reform involves the diverse stakeholders of the Regional Research Fora and ensures equitable representation of the stakeholders in assessing the needs, planning the changes, implementing the reform and assessing the outcomes. Needs assessment, foresight exercises and innovation platform techniques are used along the reform process. By the end of this process, each Regional Research Forum or regional partner organization that undertakes it will be more relevant, committed and capable to contribute to a food-secure world.



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Each reform process of the Regional Research For a comprises these elements:

Diagnosis and needs assessment

- 1) Foresight exercises with diverse stakeholders, mind-mapping and time-effective multiple consultations coordinated by GFAR among its partners to bring out the needs/visions that will support the formulation of the strategy

Planning

- 2) Technical support in developing the Strategy, based on foresight and consultation exercises, the historical competitive edge of the regional forum/organization and the agendas of the stakeholders
- 3) Choosing the right way to change – Assessing readiness for change, working with stakeholders in designing appropriate approaches, plans and tools to implement the change, while handling resistance and overcoming barriers

Implementation

- 4) Leading the transition and mobilizing commitment among direct stakeholders and implementers
- 5) Organizational restructuring at different levels to meet the new strategy: policy, processes, structural divisions, people, funding and fund diversification, finances and organizational evaluation systems
- 6) Continued orientation and capacity development of regional and national/local level partners to implement the change

Quality Assurance and Sustainability

- 7) Forming local and regional-level innovation platforms that help the Forum/organization to remain constantly attuned to their stakeholders
- 8) Monitoring and evaluation systems used to sustain the change and fund continuity

You are invited to join AARINENA, FORAGRO and other Partners in GFAR in their Collective Action on Reforming and Strengthening the Regional Agricultural Research and Innovation Organizations.

For more information contact GFAR Secretariat at GFAR-Secretariat@fao.org

