



GCARD

Second Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development

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Breakout sessions P2.2 Land, Water, Forests and Landscapes - Speaker Brief

Sarah Simons / Trevor Nichols (CABI)

Context – the problems being addressed

Background

AIRCA is a newly-formed, nine member alliance focused on increasing global food security by supporting smallholder agriculture within healthy, sustainable and climate-smart landscapes. With a combined annual turn-over in excess of US\$ 200 million and with more than 60 member countries comprising >70 percent of the world's population, AIRCA has an on-going research and development (R&D) activities in all major geographic regions and ecosystems.



Context - the problem being addressed

Increasing demand for food, fodder, fibre and fuel to satisfy the demands of a population expected to reach at least nine billion by 2050, can only be sustained through an innovative systemic approach to agricultural development (Campos, 2012; Scheer and McNeely, 2001). AIRCA will address the challenge of increasing global food security by identifying and disseminating science-based development solutions to problems in smallholder agriculture through the promotion of healthy, sustainable and climate-smart landscapes.

AIRCA will bring an integrated and holistic approach to solving development problems at a landscape scale through the mobilisation of nine agricultural R&D centres with a wealth of expertise across a range of ecosystem types and crops. AIRCA's members have a demonstrated ability to respond rapidly and efficiently to agricultural problems, and it is AIRCA's intention to work in close partnership with the CGIAR Consortium, bringing in expertise which is complementary to that of the FAO and the CGIAR. The founding members of AIRCA also have a long-established history of working in close collaboration with member-country governments and national partners.

AIRCA Members have:

- proven track records of successful **research and development (R&D)** activities
- expertise across a wide range of **ecosystems** and crops
- core competencies to improve the **health** of humans, plants, animals and landscapes

Current activities presented and discussed in the Session

AIRCA was launched in March 2012, and so it is still a relatively new alliance. Participation in GCARDII will constitute the first public presentation of AIRCA, while at the same time, providing its members with an opportunity to progress on the strategic plan, in close collaboration with the CGIAR, FAO and other regional and national partners. The nine founding members of AIRCA are:

- **AVRDC - Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center** (www.avrdc.org) -

Alleviation of poverty and malnutrition in the developing world through the increased production and consumption of safe vegetables.

- **CABI - CAB International** (www.cabi.org) - Improves people's lives by providing information and applying scientific expertise to solve problems in agriculture and the environment.
- **CATIE - Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center** (www.catie.ac.cr) - Contributes to rural poverty reduction by promoting competitive and sustainable agriculture and natural resource management, through higher education, research and technical cooperation.
- **CFF - Crops for the Future** (www.cropsforthefuture.org) - Helps partners to generate, synthesise and promote knowledge on neglected and underutilised crops for the benefit of the poor and agricultural sustainability.
- **ICBA - International Center for Biosaline Agriculture** (www.biosaline.org) - Enables water-short countries to improve their agricultural productivity, social equity and environmental sustainability through the effective use of marginal quality water.
- **ICIMOD - International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development** (www.icimod.org) - Enables and facilitates the equitable and sustainable well-being of the people of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas by supporting sustainable mountain development through active regional cooperation.
- **ICIPE - African Insect Science for Food and Health** (www.icipe.org) - Helps alleviate poverty, ensure food security and improve the overall health status of peoples of the tropics by developing and extending management tools and strategies for harmful and useful arthropods, while preserving the natural resource base through research and capacity building.
- **IFDC – International Fertilizer Development Center** (www.ifdc.org) - IFDC enables smallholder farmers in developing countries to increase agricultural productivity, generate economic growth and practice environmental stewardship by enhancing their ability to manage mineral and organic fertilizers responsibly and participate profitably in input and output markets.
- **INBA - International Network for Bamboo and Rattan** (www.inbar.int) - Improves the well-being of the producers and users of bamboo and rattan within the context of a sustainable bamboo and rattan resource base.

During Session P2.2 Land, Water, Forests and Landscapes at GCARDII, AIRCA will present its vision for 'Healthy Landscapes', describe its approach, core competencies and strengths and explain how it is currently partnering with FAO and the CGIAR, together with plans for strengthening existing partnerships and expanding new partnerships with international and regional organisations, including FAO and the CGIAR, as well as with member country governments and national programmes.

Intended outcomes

At the highest level, the intended outcome of the AIRCA's proposed programme of work is 'Healthy Landscapes' i.e. healthy plants, people and animals, as the guiding goal for the sustainable intensification of agriculture and agricultural ecosystems to increase global food security. As such, AIRCA will be working and delivering impact at the nexus of the agriculture-environment interface.

AIRCA will pursue this outcome initially by strengthening the links between its founding members (while at the same time welcoming any other international or regional centres whose values and *modus operandi* are consistent with those of AIRCA's founding members). While some AIRCA centres have worked together effectively in the past, this has been done on more of an *ad hoc* basis rather than being a concerted effort under the auspices of a global alliance with a common vision. This newly-established partnership will adopt a more holistic approach to solving problems in smallholder agriculture and agricultural ecosystems, be a greater voice with which to influence key policy fora, and offer an innovative and consolidated approach for donors and development partners, resulting in reduced transaction costs and greater impact in increasing global food security.

Commitments to collective actions in 2012-2014 (national, regional or international)
i. With existing resources
<p>Each AIRCA Centre currently has its own budget, with no external donor funding to support the AIRCA alliance. During 2012, a small pot of funding was made available by each centre to initiate collaboration e.g. an inaugural DGs meeting, establishing the brand and developing a strategic plan, culminating in the first public launch of AIRCA at GCARDII (October 2012). It is envisaged that the centres will avail additional seeding funds in 2013 to develop a resource mobilisation strategy for AIRCA, and to pursue funding opportunities with donors and development partners.</p> <p>During this preliminary phase, existing R&D projects currently being implemented by individual AIRCA centres will begin seeking support, including technical inputs, from other centres to strengthen/broaden the scope of work. A common information portal will be developed, which will be an electronic gateway for the AIRCA centres through which library and other information tools and products e.g. toolkits and reports from each centre can be accessed to facilitate collaboration. Such collaboration will be between the centres themselves initially but assuming the pilot phase is successful, the initial exchange of scientists and knowledge-sharing in areas of mutual interest could ultimately be transformed into joint proposals for demand-driven research and/or capacity-building programs, and international conferences addressing specific aspects of healthy landscapes.</p> <p>ICBA has already offered to host the 2nd AIRCA DGs meeting at its HQ in Dubai during 2013, which will provide the AIRCA centres with a further opportunity to refine the AIRCA Strategic Plan and begin developing an operational plan and resource mobilisation strategy for 2014 onwards.</p>
ii. With additional support
<p>With additional support, AIRCA members will undertake a detailed analysis of their current programs and projects, and map these to those of the other AIRCA centres to identify where there are gaps and inconsistencies e.g. where additional skills or technical support might be needed within the alliance i.e. a needs assessment. This will include expanding the work undertaken by AIRCA centres, partnering other non-AIRCA centres, as appropriate and identifying where there is a clear demand for the development of collaborative, donor-funded programmes between the AIRCA centres.</p> <p>This information will subsequently be used to generate a prioritised list of demands for solutions to problems in smallholder agriculture and agricultural ecosystems, and form the basis of AIRCA's first collaborative funding proposal, addressing one or more of its prioritised thematic areas, with an emphasis on partnerships, dissemination and outreach, for submission to donors and development partners.</p> <p>At the same time, additional support would facilitate AIRCA partnering other existing/on-going initiatives within the Consortium such as the CRPs, thereby expanding the breadth of expertise, ecosystems and ultimately impact of the on-going initiatives.</p>
iii. With specific large scale programme investment

With specific large-scale programme investment, AIRCA will formulate multisectoral, multi-centre programmes and projects at the landscape scale, in partnership with the CGIAR, FAO and national partners that address problems faced by smallholder farmers at the landscape scale i.e. demand-driven, and catalyse large-scale, agricultural development outcomes to increase food security.