



Dear Participants,

I am pleased to inform you that APAARI in collaboration with Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) will be conducting a regional consultation to identify the priority agriculture and natural resource research (ANRR) agenda for the Asia-Pacific. Perhaps you are aware that in the change management process, the Executive Council of Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) has decided to have in place of Annual General Meeting (AGM) a biennial event named as Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD) under the overall leadership of GFAR, primarily involving various stakeholders as partners of different regional fora. Accordingly, the results will provide integral inputs to the GCARD process together with similar processes in other regions (Africa, Central Asia, West Asia, Latin America/Caribbean, Europe and North America). GCARD process will thus culminate in a global conference that is scheduled in Montpellier, France from 28 to 31 March, 2010 to contribute towards agriculture research for inclusive development.

We do recognize that guidance on the priority and direction of ANRR agenda in the Asia-Pacific region will be crucial in view of the fact that this region is a major global supplier and consumer of food and agri-based products. Also the region houses the largest number of world's extreme poor and vulnerable groups, and nutritionally most insecure people. The fresh examination of the role and necessary linkages for research to deliver better against development objectives will contribute to the reform and renewal of agricultural research and innovation systems around the world. The emphasis has to be mainly on improving the systems, policies and partnerships required, so that they are better oriented to the needs of both poor producers and consumers and resourced to deliver more efficiently and rapidly commensurate with the national development objectives.

Recognizing the important role of APAARI, as a neutral research forum, in engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, GFAR and ADB have provided support to build on existing priorities established through the forum's previous work by validating the research priorities through a participatory process and the use of rigorous and systematic approaches that clarify the criteria for prioritization for the region (and sub-regions); and focusing not just on the research priorities but on pragmatic and institutional partnership arrangements of developing and disseminating the knowledge products for development. These findings will be documented in the form of a regional report to be prepared through an e-consultation process, supported by analytic work at sub-regional levels, and culminating into a face to face meeting for Asia and the Pacific. The discussions in the regional forum will be consolidated and serve as inputs to revising the final agriculture research for development agenda for Asia and the Pacific. Following is the brief outline of the proposed schedule and the key issues and processes that are involved in this context:

- (i) It is planned to initiate an E-consultation beginning 4 September 2009 specifically for South Asia, South-East Asia and the Pacific sub regions involving multi-stakeholder groups. A set of key issues (main drivers of change), challenges currently being faced and possible options for large scale development impacts has been attempted by a team of consultants under the overall leadership of Prof. R.B.

Singh, Ex. ADG, FAO-RAP, Bangkok. These are attached as Annexure I and II for your review and needed input.

- (ii) The process of e-consultation will be led by Ms. Simone Staiger (s.staiger@cgiar.org) from GFAR, Rome and will be facilitated by Dr. Attaluri (attaluri@apaari.org) APARIS Coordinator, APAARI, Bangkok and Mr. Benjie Dayco (bdayco@yahoo.com), ADB, Manila.
- (iii) The e-consultation is scheduled to begin on 4th September 2009 and the first phase will continue until 15th September 2009. Thereafter, a team of Consultants (Lead and the Sub-regional) will collate and analyze the responses. This step is likely to be completed by 25 September 2009. The outcome of the 1st phase of e-consultation will be shared with all stakeholders and the second phase seeking additional information, as required, will be initiated possibly by 30 September 2009.

A number of relevant documents relating to research priorities in the Asia-Pacific are available in APAARI's website: www.apaari.org. APAARI has also posted an e-consultation announcement on its website with link <http://www.egfar.org/egfar/website/gcard/regional-consultations/ap/participate> for registration. Some important papers shared by the sub-regional and regional consultants have also been uploaded. By registering, participants automatically become members of the web forum.

On completion of e-consultation, all the sub-regional consultants (Dr. Mruthyunjaya for South Asia, Dr. David Raitzer for Southeast Asia and Dr. Alan Quartermain for the Pacific) will use the inputs to prepare their reports that assess the current ARD priorities in ANRR situation in Asia and the Pacific- its gaps, challenges, and new areas for future research; develops the conceptual framework for ANRR agenda-setting in an agro-ecologically heterogeneous and socio-economically-politically-culturally diverse region; and outlines the future ANRR needs (whether in the form of research, development and/or policy) to address the challenges, gaps, and new areas. Finally, it is planned to discuss the regional report being prepared by Prof. R.B. Singh in a face to face meeting of the stakeholders on 30-31 October, 2009 to be held in Bangkok.

I take this opportunity to invite you to participate in this very important e-consultation and register your name at: <http://www.egfar.org/egfar/website/gcard/regional-consultations/ap/participate>. Your valuable insight will converge in the formulation of a comprehensive document for the GCARD-2010 - a holistic development agriculture in general and food and livelihood security for the vast majority of small and marginal farmers and the rural poor in the region. Your indulgence will certainly help in adding value to take this collective endeavour towards a logical end.

We look forward to receiving your valuable response.

With kind regards,

Your's sincerely,



(Raj Paroda)

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Key Issues (Main Drivers and Major Challenges) of AR4D in Asia-Pacific

S.No.	Main Drivers	Major Challenges
1.	Extremely high and growing population pressure; nearly 75% of the world's agricultural population cultivating only 37% of the world's agricultural land under increasing water scarcity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To produce more and more from less and less land and water resources by developing and adopting technologies, rooted in the principles of economics, equity, ecology and environment to increase productivity in perpetuity – the Evergreen Revolution ▪ To overcome the stubbornly high and increasing (in number terms) food insecurity and poverty (the foremost MDG) ▪ To remove the unacceptably high concentration of undernourished children and women
2.	High dependence on agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To empower agriculture to anchor employment, income and food securities ▪ To reverse the trend of stagnating productivity, wide yield gaps, low and declining relative income of farmers, especially under vast rainfed settings ▪ To reduce prevention of post-harvest losses and to ensure value addition, quality, food safety and cost effectiveness ▪ To ensure quality, quantity and timely availability of seeds, fertilizers, irrigation and energy ▪ To enhance investment in agriculture
3.	Predominance of small and marginal farmers and increasing land fragmentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To address the non-viability of increasing number of small farm holdings and indebtedness/distress of farmers ▪ To generate and transfer technologies suited to smallholders (scale-neutral technologies are necessarily not resource-neutral) ▪ To analyse land and water rights and to complete the unfinished reforms to promote inclusiveness ▪ To ensure access to credit and insurance ▪ To increase labour productivity through skill enhancement and selective mechanization

4.	Ecological and environmental degradation and loss of non-renewable resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To halt the loss of land, soil, water and biodiversity resources and to restore their health and viability ▪ To ensure that land use for other uses competition does not reduce effective agricultural area ▪ To reduce reliance on non-renewable resources and promote renewable sources of energy
5.	Rice is life for South, Southeast and East Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To ensure long-term sustainability of rice based production systems ▪ To reverse the trend of stagnating rice yield and productivity and decelerating Total Factor Productivity growth rate ▪ To enhance the quality and nutritional content of rice
6.	Root crops, bananas and sago as main staple and critical crops for food and income security in the Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To make optimal use of the local knowledge, both traditional (TK) and from science, and opportunities with staple crops to combat rural and urban poverty and food insecurity, and meet aspirations for rural income generation
7.	Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To reduce climate change-induced vulnerability and risks, particularly in rainfed areas ▪ To minimize distortion of crop-animal-soil-water cycles ▪ To reduce green house gas emission
8.	Plant, animal and fish diseases, pandemics, zoonotics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To strengthen/establish Sanitary Phytosanitary (SPS), quarantine, biosecurity, regulatory, surveillance, monitoring and early warning mechanisms ▪ To pursue genetic amelioration of biotic stresses ▪ To establish/strengthen regional collaboration and to harmonize standards and regulations
9.	Technology, information, knowledge and innovations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To enhance investment in and strengthen agricultural research, innovation, extension and education systems, related institutions and participatory processes ▪ To revitalise, strengthen and reorient agricultural extension systems especially through involvement of different stakeholders. ▪ To improve quality of agricultural education and

		<p>capacity building.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To establish regional alliance for sharing technology, information, knowledge, innovation and success stories ▪ To ensure and promote congruence of traditional knowledge and innovation with modern technologies ▪ To strengthen the ICTs to reach the unreached ▪ To ensure safe, transparent and effective use of biotechnology
10.	Enabling institutions and policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To strengthen socio-economic and policy research to ensure accelerated and inclusive growth ▪ To create and strengthen institutions and policies to minimize input-risk-output imbalance ▪ To link research outcomes with development programmes, including those supported by external agencies especially those geared to serve the poor ▪ To improve terms of trade for agriculture ▪ To create credible databases for planning and decision making
11.	Migration, urbanization, dietary change, human health and diversification (livestock, horticulture, fishery and agroforestry)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To effect judicious agricultural diversification to intensify production of livestock, horticulture, fishery and agroforestry consistent with economics, ecology, environment and equity ▪ To ensure income and employment security through integrated on-farm – off-farm – non-farm employment ▪ To ensure availability of affordable, safe and nutritious food for improved health ▪ To mitigate effects of HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria and other deadly diseases, particularly on the farming community and farm labour ▪ To provide necessary primary health care and education, in rural areas
12.	Globalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To improve net trade and access to global markets through enhanced competitiveness, market intelligence and biosecurity

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To establish/strengthen regional and inter-country alliances for trade ▪ To be adequately equipped to protect interest of the poor at global negotiations
13.	Market and marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To effectively link small and marginal farmers with markets, including with the fast emerging large (multi-national) retailers and super markets to increase their income ▪ To undertake market reforms, including institutional changes ▪ To benefit small farmers and to protect consumers from food price rises and fluctuations
14.	Feminization of agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To assure gender consideration in AR4D agenda ▪ To generate and disseminate appropriate technologies for women, particular for reducing drudgery
15.	Predominance of youth and their high unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To harness the vast youth power through education, training and skill development leading to their gainful employment in agrarian settings ▪ To train the youth to be an entrepreneur– job providers rather than job seekers, and to provide catalytic assistance for self-employment
16.	Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To develop bioenergy as a complement to and not as a competitor of food security ▪ To strengthen research in bioenergy to enhance energy security compatible with economics and ecology

Questions for Facilitating the Consultation

1. In your opinion, to what extent have the research agenda been addressing the development issues, especially the needs of the resource-poor? Have the technologies, humanware, policies, institutions and cost-effectiveness of the resource allocation for ARD been optimal? If not, what most important measures could enhance the impact of innovation?
2. In your opinion, what researchable and policy issues require urgent attention to tackle the stubbornly high hunger malnutrition, poverty, declining and degrading resources? What institutional arrangements and shifts in the NARS would help address the specific needs of the majority small and marginal farmers including women and other rural poor and how can they and other CSOs and private sector be more involved in research and technology development programmes to render the process pro-poor, pro-nature and pro-women?
3. As generally perceived, poor economic, social and ecological accesses to food and income (employment) are now the main causes (not production *per se*) of hunger. In your opinion, what policies/practices/technologies/knowledge are needed to enhance farmers' income and to promote innovative approaches to integrate on-farm, off-farm and non-farm employment?
4. Several excellent proven technologies, such as hybrid rice, conservation agriculture, single cross quality protein maize hybrids etc, are known, but their uptake in most Asia-Pacific countries, barring PRC and a few other countries, is rather low. In your opinion, what is the reason for this apathy– the technology *per se*, knowledge gap, investment gap, input gap, income gap, market gap or policy gap? What is your suggestion to bridge the adoption gaps?
5. In your experience, how can the extension/technology/knowledge transfer and innovation sharing systems be revitalised and further strengthened to make them more relevant, dynamic and development oriented, such as the institutionalization of market-led extension with broader participation including Private Sector/NGOs etc. and congruence of traditional knowledge and technologies with modern knowledge and innovations?

6. How can small farmers and others along the entire value chain be incentivised to innovate and to become extension and knowledge agents (change agents) so as to be an integral part of the change they aspire for? More specifically, how can backward-forward and research-extension-farmer-market-development linkages, technology packaging and professional marketing of research products be strengthened to adapt to market, climate change and bio-insecurity volatilities.
7. In your experience, what are the main difficulties faced by agricultural education and national, regional and international agricultural research systems and institutions and what can be done to make these systems and institutions not only promote excellence in science more meaningful and attractive to students and scientists to render them more entrepreneurial and development-friendly?
8. Under the globalization, in your opinion, what policy options and knowledge domains (knowledge replacing monetary inputs) are needed to increase farmers' competitiveness in and access to domestic and international markets. Are non-tariff barriers are major hurdles for most developing countries to benefit from globalization? In this context, how best can we create/strengthen awareness and literacy on gene safety, biosafety, food safety, health safety, environmental safety, quality and overall biosecurity at all levels, especially at the grassroot.
9. In your opinion, how good are our policy advocacy systems to provide guidance to enable farmers to adopt or not to adopt biotechnology products, production of biofuel crops and to decide whether to intensify their farming enterprises, to diversify their income, to adopt contract farming/group farming or to exit farming?
10. In your opinion, how can we meet the major challenges being faced by Pacific countries with extremely small population and land areas, isolation, high costs of transport, sea level rise, and absence of AR4D policies and capacities in some?