

9th GFRAS Annual Meeting
***Addressing Challenges and Seizing Opportunities:
Developing Effective Partnerships in RAS***
22-26 October 2018, North Jeolla Province, Republic of Korea

Concept Note

Date, Venue and Topic

The [9th Annual Meeting](#) of the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services ([GFRAS](#)) will take place from **22-25 October 2018** at the headquarter of the Rural Development Administration ([RDA](#)) in North Jeolla Province, Republic of Korea, with side events on 22 October. The Annual Meeting will be preceded by a meeting of the Asia Pacific Island Rural Advisory Services Network (APIRAS) as well as a sub-regional meeting of the Rural Innovation Centre for Knowledge and Investment (RICKI).

The topic of the GFRAS Annual Meeting will be "Addressing Challenges and Seizing Opportunities: Developing Effective Partnerships in RAS". Co-organisers and hosts are RDA and APIRAS.

Background

Effective and efficient agricultural extension and rural advisory services (RAS¹) are fundamental to support rural people to face existing and emerging challenges, and to improve their incomes and livelihoods, thus contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. GFRAS was initiated in 2010 to provide advocacy and leadership on pluralistic and demand-driven RAS for sustainable development. The forum includes networks of RAS stakeholders at regional, sub-regional and national levels, and actors from all sectors and domains involved in or related to RAS. The GFRAS Annual Meeting is a key mechanism for GFRAS to foster learning and exchange and to discuss and strengthen the functioning of GFRAS, regional networks and national fora.

The Annual Meeting contributes to addressing the three strategic fields identified in the GFRAS Strategic Framework, namely:

1. Advocacy and support for an enabling policy environment and appropriate investment in RAS
2. Professionalisation of RAS

¹ Rural advisory services, also called extension services, are all the different activities that provide the information and services needed and demanded by farmers and other actors in rural settings to assist them in developing their own technical, organisational and management skills and practices so as to improve their livelihoods and well-being. ([GFRAS Strategic Framework](#))

3. Facilitation and enhancement of effective and continuous knowledge generation and exchange.

Since its inception the GFRAS Annual Meeting has involved a thematic component, field trips and a functional component (focused on network strengthening). Since 2017, the Annual Meeting also includes a policy dialogue session, to better position RAS and GFRAS in international policy debates, highlight the relevance of RAS to achieving international development goals and to increase the visibility of RAS.

Meeting Objectives

Building on the experience of previous GFRAS meetings, the capacity assessments of GFRAS regional networks, and on the expertise, knowledge, and experiences of participants, the three objectives of the 2018 Annual Meeting are to:

- identify and define good practices, best-fit approaches and strategies to develop, strengthen, and maintain effective partnerships in RAS, with a particular focus on smart technologies, financing, and collaboration across stakeholders;
- identify and define ways to build the capacities needed at different levels and by different stakeholders (policy, research, education, extension, farmers) to develop, strengthen, and maintain effective partnerships in RAS; and to
- identify and define the roles and capacities needed by GFRAS and its regional RAS networks to play an important and meaningful role in developing, strengthening and maintaining effective partnerships.

Meeting Structure and Thematic Focus

Thematic Part: Addressing Challenges and Seizing Opportunities: Developing Effective Partnerships in RAS

Public sector, private sector, non-governmental organisations, producer organisations are all involved in RAS and contribute through various arrangements to the provision and financing of RAS, though to varying degrees according to context.

Public extension services remain very important in many regions and often provide an overall policy and regulatory framework within which RAS function. They directly organise extension activities and are often driven by the national agricultural development goals.

Private sector RAS have the advantage of being fast, flexible, and often high quality. They benefit from the private sector's financial resources and competitiveness. However, companies' interests lead to a neglect of public goods and a marginalisation of producers' interests.

Non-governmental organisations are usually driven by donor priorities and/or local interest, and in general possess a very valuable in-depth knowledge on the community and play a crucial role in building social capital.

Producer organisations are mainly shaped by their member concerns, and, in addition of organising the demand side, are also increasingly involved in the supply of RAS to their members.

Aside from these actors directly involved in RAS, there has been an increasing overlap between activities of RAS, education and training, as well as research, and individual consultants have started playing a significant role in responding to the demand for specific services.

Roles and capacities of these different actors vary significantly across countries, value chains and other contexts and very often the individual actors are working isolation, focussing on their geographical and thematic scope and amongst specific types of clients.

However, for rural advisory services to be effective in facing current challenges need to go beyond providing information and services related to an increase of production and income, but take up a more holistic approach by looking at value-chains, livelihoods, and overall community development. But a single service provider cannot be fully inclusive and holistic, and a range of services and providers that meet a variety of needs are better suited to respond to these needs and challenges. This in turn, requires an increased coordination and collaboration between the different actors in order to use each actor's comparative advantage to provide inclusive and demand-based services to their clientele.

On day 1, the 2018 GFRAS Annual Meeting will provide a unique opportunity to explore, learn, discuss and make recommendations on the thematic focus of the meeting. In plenary sessions, participants will develop a common understanding of the topic, learn from evidence and gain insights from some innovative examples.

Parallel sessions will then be held for participants to discuss experiences and identify recommendations concerning the three sub-topics of effective partnerships identified here: smart technology; financing; and effective coordination and collaboration. The following questions will guide the parallel sessions.

Parallel session 1: Smart technologies for effective partnerships in RAS

- How can smart technologies be used to support the development, strengthening and maintenance of effective partnerships in RAS?
- What are the opportunities and challenges identified in their application?
- How can those opportunities be seized and scaled, and how can challenges be overcome?
- What capacities are needed on different levels to do so, and how can those capacities be built?

Parallel session 2: Innovative financing towards effective partnerships in RAS

- How can innovative finance models contribute to development, strengthening and maintaining of effective partnerships in RAS?
- What are the opportunities and challenges identified in innovative financing models for RAS involving private finance?
- How can those opportunities be seized and scaled, and how can challenges be overcome?
- What capacities are needed on different levels to do so, and how can those capacities be built?

Parallel session 3: Convergence through collaboration and coordination in RAS

- Who are the different actors in RAS, what are their interest, and where are synergies and overlaps?
- What are practical examples of the key opportunities and challenges identified in the collaboration and coordination between different actors in RAS?
- How can those opportunities be seized and scaled, and how can challenges be overcome?

- What capacities are needed on different levels to do so, and how can those capacities be built?

Korean Session

The Korean session will be held on 23 October from 13:30 to 17:30 at RDA in collaboration with Korean Society for Agricultural Education and Human Resource Development, Korean Association of Agricultural Extension, Korea Extension Specialist Association and RDA. Approximately 200 participants will attend this session. It will be an opportunity to be introduced to and explore the current state of Global Rural Advisory Services and New Extensionist Learning Kit (NELK). Moreover, the session will include thesis presentations in RAS and case studies presentations by Korean Extension Specialist Association.

Field Trips

Participants will be exposed to Korea's public agricultural extension services through field visits which showcase various case studies and agricultural extension system on 24 October, 2018. Field trip courses are focused on five main topics as follow, 'Korea's Extension System', 'Value Chain', 'Smart-Farming', 'Rural Youth', and 'Farmer's Group' which are all currently the main issues and being focused on by the agricultural and rural development in Korea. Not only the on-site technology and performance in each course will be introduced but Korea's agricultural and cultural experience as well.

- **Field visit 1: Korea's Extension System**

The Rural Development Administration (RDA) at the national level, Agricultural Research and Extension Services at the provincial level and agricultural extension center at the city/county level will be visited to learn about how the government leads the research-extension system for dissemination of advanced technology. The organizational role and performance in extension and research in RDA and local agricultural extension services will be introduced.

- **Field visit 2: Value Chain**

This course is to have learning experience about the successful case of improvement for agricultural value added using the value chain approach. Place to be visited include an agricultural product processing center, a local food store, a small scaled start-up farm and an educational farm.

- **Field visit 3: Smart-Farming**

This course includes a visit to smart-farming research and test-bed using ICT in RDA and outstanding smart-farm. Also, the fourth industrial revolution such as ICT application case in farming and development plan of smart-farming will be showcased.

- **Field visit 4: Rural Youth**

The training program for fostering rural youth and encouraging them to engage in agriculture will be introduced through field visit to Korea National College of Agriculture and Fisheries and visit to successful rural youth's farm producing traditional snacks and breeding livestock.

- **Field visit 5: Farmer's Group**

Visit to the farmer's study group and Korea Extension Specialist's group that are operating self-learning activity for farmer and extension agent. The various studies on income generating model of farmer's group and organizational characteristics will be discussed. Also, the activity of Korean Rural Leaders Central Association, Rural Women Leader's Federation and 4-H and organizational character, project, and role of National Agricultural Cooperative Federation will be introduced.]

Functional Part: Strengthening Capacities of RAS Networks

Regional and sub-regional networks and Country Fora are the main partners of GFRAS in implementing its work and in strengthening and advocating for RAS within their regions. They ensure that the work and focus of GFRAS remains grounded, relevant and demand-driven. The GFRAS 2016–2025 Strategic Framework and corresponding five-year operational plan place a strong emphasis on strengthening the capacities of the regional and sub-regional networks and Country Fora to fulfil these roles.

RAS networks play a crucial role in ensuring the link, collaboration, and exchange between different actors in the broader agricultural innovation system, and hence their role for strengthening partnerships deserve a particular focus.

Evaluations of past meetings have shown that peer exchange between networks is perceived as critical for networks to strengthen their own capacities. Hence, on day 3, the 2018 Annual Meeting will provide space for extensive peer exchange and learning between networks. This will be guided by experts on networks and network functioning, and will lead to the development by the networks of realistic roadmaps for action toward the 2019 Annual Meeting.

Aside from some inputs in the plenary session, networks will have the chance to share experiences in a peer-to-peer learning session, assess their progress since the 2017 Annual Meeting, and develop a realistic roadmap to the 2019 Annual Meeting.

Policy Dialogue

Building on the results of the exchanges on the first two days, in the afternoon of the third day participants will participate in a policy dialogue which will summarise key elements from the discussions, explore the roles that the enabling environment plays and identifies structural and policy changes needed in order to foster change and implement the recommendations identified in the first days of the meeting. The policy dialogue will take the form of a moderated roundtable discussion among selected key resource persons and a Q&A session with Annual Meeting participants.

Exhibitions & Displays at Venue

Participants will have a chance to stop by 3 exhibitions at the venue, RDA. Participants are able to explore them anytime during the meeting. Details on them are listed below:

- **Exhibition 1: Outcomes of Agricultural R&D and Extension**

The outcomes of agricultural R&D and Extension will be on a display, from 22 October, to 26 October. Participants will have a great chance to see the outcomes of research and extension such as Smart-Farm models.

- **Exhibition 2: GoodPractices of Korea Extension Specialist Association**

Participants will have the opportunity to see the good practices of the Korea Extension Specialist Association by dropping by this exhibition. It will take place at RDA from 22 October through 26 October, alongside the exhibition on Agricultural R&D and Extension mentioned above.

- **Exhibition 3: Agriculture Science Hall**

The Agriculture Science hall is a reflective place, presenting the past, present and future of agriculture as well as the importance of agriculture using the latest technologies. This hall has several display halls: Modern Agriculture Exhibition; Future Agricultural Exhibition; 4D Theater; The Hall of Fame in Agriculture; and so on. During lunch break, interpretation services will be available.

Expected Outputs of the Meeting

The GFRAS Annual Meeting will look at different concepts and definitions of effective partnerships in RAS, and their importance and roles - and related challenges and opportunities - in strengthening RAS for the benefit rural actors worldwide. Going beyond defining concepts, identifying challenges and opportunities, however, the Annual Meeting aims to share and learn from good practices and identify innovative yet realistic and practical strategies to develop, strengthen and maintain effective partnerships in RAS. Participants will also discuss and identify capacities needed at different levels to implement these strategies. The outputs of the meeting will include tangible action plans and recommendations for the short, mid- and long term and at three different levels:

- Actions that each participant will be able to implement on return to their country;
- Action plans for regional and sub-regional networks to strengthen their capacities and roles; and
- Recommendations for structural changes required in national and regional policies and strategies.

The latter two outputs will feed into the preparation of a short Declaration, which will be a key output of the Annual Meeting for wide dissemination.

Draft Agenda and Preparation of Inputs by Participants

The 9th GFRAS Annual Meeting will, as in the past, be a participatory learning event with a range of different types of sessions, including keynotes, panels, presentations in plenary, group work, parallel workshops, short presentations, a share fair and field trips. Participants will be given a wide range of opportunities to provide inputs that will include lessons from practical experience and reviews of evidence. Inputs from participants may be presented in one of the following forms:

- presentation in one of the parallel sessions;
- short presentations during the meeting on experience, case studies, stories or evidence on youth and RAS;
- a stand at the share fair; and/or
- side events or trainings on 22 October.

A draft agenda as well as requirements, application process and deadlines, and selection criteria for all inputs and preparatory activities can be found on the website.

Participation and Registration

Online registration and the call for inputs will open in ~~May~~ June and close in July. Participants from all regions of the world working or interested in RAS or in related fields are welcome to attend the meeting. Stakeholders from different sectors – public, private and civil society – are encouraged to register for the meeting, including representatives of farmers' organisations, private companies, research and education institutions, development agencies, media and others.

In order to guarantee a participatory meeting with a focus on networking and exchange, the number of participants will be limited to approximately 150. If more people register, participants will be selected in a way that secures the best possible balance of regions, sub-regions, gender, sectors and age. Limited funding will be available to sponsor some representatives from different regions to take part in the meeting.

There will be a registration fee of USD 200 for all participants, which can be paid online before the meeting, or in cash (USD) directly at the meeting once registration is confirmed. For more information on participation, registration and sponsorship please check the [GFRAS website](#).

Budget and Funding

While the main funding for the event is provided through GFRAS, other organisations and institutions can co-fund the event or side events. For more information, please contact the GFRAS Secretariat (natalie.ernst@g-fras.org).

Logistics

Logistical information will be continuously updated on the [Logistics](#) section of the Annual Meeting website.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Annual Meeting

The meeting will be evaluated on the final day. The results of the meeting will be also monitored and assessed by the participants, working groups, regional networks and country fora via regular progress reports and annual reports.

Annual Meeting Organising Committee

The organisation of the 2018 Annual Meeting is strategically guided by an organising committee that comprises representatives of the host as well as all larger GFRAS regional networks: RDA, APIRAS, Red Latinoamericana de Servicios de Extensión Rural (RELASER), African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS). The organising committee is coordinated by the GFRAS Secretariat and AGRIDEA.