

3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting

The Role of Rural Advisory Services in Agricultural Innovation Systems

26-28 September 2012, Manila, Philippines

Minutes

Objectives of the 3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting

1. Understand and agree on the role of rural advisory services (RAS) in agricultural innovation systems (AIS)
2. Strengthen RAS networks for results-oriented activities
3. Update participants on progress in GFRAS

Overall Agenda

Pre-meetings (not included in the minutes)

24 and 25 September: Side events

- [Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services \(APIRAS\) Network](#)
- Board meeting African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) (by invitation)
- [Farmers' experiences in advisory services activities](#)
- GFRAS steering committee meeting (by invitation)
- [Integrating Gender into Rural Advisory Services](#) (Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services – MEAS)
- [National Agricultural Extension Policies – Improving the Enabling Environment for Effective RAS](#) (Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services – MEAS)

3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting

26 September: Lessons learnt on the role of rural advisory services (RAS) in agricultural innovation systems (AIS)

- Opening
- The role of RAS in agricultural innovation systems
- GFRAS activities since the 2nd GFRAS Annual Meeting, Nairobi 2011

27 September: Field trip: Lessons learnt on the role of rural advisory services in agricultural innovation systems

28 September: RAS fora: Strengthening results-oriented networking

- The role of RAS in agricultural innovation systems: Presentation of field trip reflections
- RAS fora: Strengthening results-oriented networking
- Share fair on experience in RAS
- Wrap-up and closing

Abbreviations

AFAAS	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
AIS	Agricultural Innovation System
APIRAS	Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services Network
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme
CECRA	Certifying European Consultants in Rural Areas
CIM	Center for International Migration and Development
EIP	European Union Innovation Partnership
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FITS	Cavite Farmers Information and Technology Services (
GCARD	Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development
GFRAS	Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)
IALB	Internationale Akademie land- und hauswirtschaftlicher Beraterinnen und Berater (International Academy for Agricultural Advisory Services and Home Economics)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
NIFAAS	Nigerian Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
PMA	Partner Member Agencies
PROCISUR	Porgama Cooperativo para el Desarrollo Tecnológico Agroalimentario y Agroindustrial del Cono Sur (Cooperative Program for Agri-food and Agroindustrial Technological Development of the Southern Cone)
RAS	Rural Advisory Services
RELASER	Red Latinoamericana para Servicios de Extensión Rural (Latin-American Network for Rural Extension)
RESCAR-AOC	Réseau des Services de Conseil Agricole et Rural d’Afrique de l’Ouest et du Centre (West- and Central African Network on Rural Advisory Services)
SEARCA	Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture
STBF	Science and Technology Based Farm

Presentations

All presentations and other inputs can be found at <http://www.g-fras.org/en/events/gfras-events/annual-meeting-philippines-2012>.

Opening (26 September)

Welcome speech of the GFRAS chair and APIRAS chair

Riikka Rajalahti, GFRAS steering committee chair, welcomed affiliates and members of the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) to the 3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting, particularly those who form the Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services (APIRAS) network. GFRAS was established nearly three years ago. On its way to become a one-stop shop for RAS information, evidence, and advice it has made considerable steps in terms of joint advocacy and fostering quality RAS. Agriculture and RAS are back on the rural development agenda, but there is still a long way until RAS will fill the gap in the rural space. RAS must be strengthened to fulfil the more “traditional” role of organizing producers, providing knowledge and transferring technology. It also needs to transform to serve as a broker, linking producers to markets and credits and facilitating multi-stakeholder processes, which is particularly important in the AIS context. The GFRAS Annual Meeting gives the opportunity to discuss these issues. Riikka thanked the secretariats of GFRAS and APIRAS, especially Virginia Cardenas’ team, and all sponsors of the meeting. She wished participants a successful event.

Virginia R. Cardenas, chair of the Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services (APIRAS) network, welcomed participants to the Philippines and the 3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting. She highlighted the varied opportunities to discuss new activities in RAS, reflect network strengthening and appropriate structures of governance, and create linkages. Virginia thanked all partners in the Philippines who contributed to the 3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting. She especially thanked those who contributed to field trips enabling participants to discover experiences of Philippine RAS.



Presentation of participants

141 people from various regions and sectors participated in the 3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting:

- 46 women (33%)
- 49 participants from RAS (35%), specifically 35 from public RAS (25%), 7 from private RAS (5%) and 7 from civil society RAS (5%), 31 farmer representatives (22%), 19 from research (13%), 19 from universities (13%), and 1 from media (1%)
- 67 participants from Asia (48%; specifically 52 from South-East Asia, of which 41 from the Philippines, 8 from East Asia, 4 from South Asia, 2 from Central Asia, and 1 from Middle East), 32 from Africa (23%; specifically 12 from East Africa, 9 from Southern Africa, 7 from West Africa, 2 from Central Africa, and 2 from North Africa), 8 from the Pacific Islands (6%), 5 from Latin America (4%), 2 representations from European RAS (1%), and 18 participants working for international organisations and networks based around the world (13%)

The role of rural advisory services in agricultural innovation systems (26-28 September)

Introduction: Rural advisory services and innovation systems

Rasheed Sulaiman Vadakkal, from the Agricultural Extension in South Asia (AESAs) network, introduced participants to the role of RAS in agricultural extension systems (AESAs). Innovation is the process by which new knowledge is generated, adapted and used. It happens through interaction among organisations, enterprises and individuals together with institutions and policies - AESAs. The traditional role of RAS has its focus on the dissemination of knowledge, including training, group formation, diagnosis, and problem solving advice. In addition, new roles are envisaged for facilitating innovation and addressing new challenges in rural development, including bridging, brokering, coordinating and facilitating interactions. In order to fulfil these roles, new generalist and specialist capacities are needed at:

- individual level in regards to technical aspects (technologies, practices, standards, and regulation) and functions (community mobilisation, organisational development, coaching, mediation, leadership, problem solving, reflective learning, and partnership building)
- organisational level for enabling interaction and learning, strategic management of structures, relationships, processes, systems, values, resources, and infrastructure
- enabling environment to ensure supportive macro-economic and policy frameworks, political commitment and capacity to share, engage, and learn, and institutions that facilitate collaboration



Capacity strengthening and relationship development as a long-term investment should build on existing capacities. Rasheed recommended that:

- National level strengthens (self-) diagnosis of agricultural innovation and RAS, creates mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and review of systems, supports the creation of platforms, initiates pilot projects, strengthens training centres, develops curricula for vocational and continuing education, initiates policy research, and enhances public funding for RAS.
- Regional level supports and engages regional RAS networks, synthesises evidence on RAS, elaborates documents to influence policy, frameworks, and methods, and organises regional consultations and exchanges.
- Global level develops and shares tools and documents to shape the evolution of RAS, liaises with donors, engages in policy advocacy, and provides long term support to RAS.

Presentation at: http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/RS-Vadakkal-The-role-of-RAS-in-AIS.pdf

Asterio P. Saliot, National Director of the Agricultural Training Institute, Department of Agriculture, Philippines, presented the RAS context of his country. He pointed to the diversity of culture and knowledge in the Philippines – a potential for innovation that can be activated by communication and interaction. Based on the Local Government Code, Philippine public exten-

sion has been decentralised since 1991 and its critical role has been recognised in 1997 in the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act.

The Philippine extension development framework aims for empowering individuals, groups, and rural communities, which will contribute to achieving the Philippine development goals. It is based on six core programmes: improving quality of knowledge products and services, enhancing extension capacities, strengthening partnerships, broadening innovations, strengthening capacity in climate change adaptation and mitigation, and improving quality of extension governance. Different actors groups interact and contribute to these programmes.

Asterio identified as key challenges for extension in the Philippines the diversity and archipelagic nature of the country, food security and rural poverty, the financial crisis, climate change, rural depopulation, and decentralisation of extension functions. Successes in the Philippine RAS system are based on the involvement of stakeholders, the public consciousness of good governance, and the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Since 2011, public funds are available for training and extension. Capacities are especially needed on value chains integration, climate change, and knowledge management. In future, extension should focus on good practices and best-fit solutions, coordinating pluralism in RAS, and climate change.

Presentation at: http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/AP-Saliot_The-role-of-RAS-in-the-Philippine-AIS.pdf



Strengthening RAS links and institutions in agricultural innovation systems (parallel session)

Emilio Ruz, executive secretary of the Cooperative Programme for Agri-food and Agroindustrial Technological Development of the Southern Cone (PROCISUR), presented PROCISUR's framework of innovation management, which responds to the variety of demands from heterogeneous production settings and contexts. He described innovation as a horizontal interactive process that includes appropriation and utilisation. Coordinated interaction of different stakeholders is needed to integrate systematic knowledge coming from science and technology and tacit knowledge acquired during the production process. The role of RAS is to facilitate interaction considering social and environmental sustainability and taking context as main reference, to promote collective action and inter-institutional coordination, and to strengthen capacities of all actors. RAS thereby creates conditions to transform innovation into development. Key challenges are to assemble multi-actors working groups, put the focus of evaluations on achieved changes, and incorporate socio-cultural and environmental dimensions into management.

Presentation at http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/E-Ruz_Integrative-vision-of-PROCISUR.pdf

Michael Kügler from the Brussels Office of the EU-Platform of Chambers of Agriculture referred to the need to pursue innovation in a cross-sectorial approach, interlinking existing initiatives, facilitating communication, providing value added through networking, and achieving synergies. The EU-Innovation Partnership (EIP) was designed to support knowledge transfer, cooperation, and collective investment. It will foster experience sharing on innovation and improve

communication between agricultural practice and science. Operational groups consisting of different actors from AIS will carry out projects. RAS are foreseen to take a mediator role in the operational groups. Activities of the EIP shall be funded through rural development plans of EU member states.

Presentation at http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/M-Kuegler_European-innovation-partnership.pdf

Magdalena Blum, extension system officer at the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), presented main issues and results from the FAO e-conference on AIS in family farming. The e-conference showed that: farmer innovations are important, should be better documented and closer linked to formal research; full integration of farmer organisations in AIS is largely emphasised; the availability of market opportunities is crucial for innovation adoption; research and extension have to become more demand-driven; innovation is associated with risk; women and young farmers should be stronger recognised; and ICT are important tools in AIS. Innovation brokers have a key role in improving interaction, collaboration, and negotiation among multiple stakeholders and in making AIS functional. The e-conference came to the conclusion that different kinds of AIS stakeholders could act as brokers. Networks of individuals with different roles might be better brokers than single individuals or organisations, depending on the complexity of the tasks and the institutions involved. In regards to funding brokering services, no answer has been found.

Presentation at: http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/M-Blum_AIS-in-family-farming-and-the-role-of-Innovation-Brokerage.pdf



Capacities and policies for effective RAS in agricultural innovation systems (parallel session)

Roy Murray-Prior, Associate Professor Curtin University, presented three functions for enhancing RAS contribution to AIS:

- The information access function refers to the accessibility of information for a wider audience, the relevance of information, and the existence of effective communication strategies and skills. Adequate resources and targeted information are required
- Facilitation and empowerment aim at increased social capital, problem solving, planning and reflection skills, but need strengthened capacities of RAS providers
- Technology development will make innovations relevant to farmers. Participation in multi- and trans-disciplinary teams is relevant

Programmed learning focusing on specific skills for smallholder value chain actors, adult learning, and facilitation and action learning helps to achieve information access, facilitation and empowerment. Mentoring and consultancies contribute to facilitation, empowerment and technology development.

Presentation at: http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/R-Murray-Prior_Framework-for-enhancing-RAS-contribution-to-AIS.pdf

Christina Ketter, Programme Management Assistant at the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), showed the creation of interlinkages between the production context and the extension and education system in the case of rice intensification in Timor-Leste. Experience from interaction with farmers lead to the elaboration of field tested approaches. When a new public extension service was established in 2008, 400 extension staffs were recruited, trained and backstopped in these approaches. In 2009, the approaches were institutionalised in a national extension policy. Back in the field, extension staffs discussed and developed their knowledge with farmers. Evaluation showed the success of this cycle from the field to public RAS and back to the field. Christina identified the need to strengthen facilitation skills of RAS providers, motivate extension staff through performance-oriented incentives, and institutionalise constant training and content revision cycles. Curricula development should be oriented by field tested recommendations. Secondary schools' should reach professionals, facilitate between RAS and research, and link to universities for strengthening their teachers' capacities.

Presentation at: http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/Ch-Ketter_Strengthening-public-ES-and-agric-education-in-Timor-Leste.pdf

Olademeji Idowu Oladele, Professor at the North West University South Africa, discussed one of five core pillars of the Extension Recovery Plan in South Africa. The plan was introduced in 2007 as response to identified challenges and constraints in RAS. Under the pillar "re-skilling and re-orientation of extension" South Africa's educational system offers courses for acquisition of a higher degree and qualification on-the job. Extension staffs are considered as generalists but focus either on crop or livestock. Olademeji presented operational issues and an example curriculum of the training. On-the job extension students follow separate classes but acquire their degrees in the same examinations as regular students. Olademeji pointed to the need of good curriculum design, skill based training, and provision of equipment as conditions for an improved role of RAS:.

Presentation at: http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/OI-Oladele_Improving-ES-in-AIS_Extension-recovery-plan-in-South-Africa_.pdf

Business orientation in RAS and agricultural innovation systems (parallel session)

Sa-Gyiu Kim, researcher from the Korean Rural Development Administration, presented the model of participatory learning and action with small and medium enterprises in the Republic of Korea. The model is based on a strategic development process. It aims at exploring dynamics and impacts of the small and medium enterprises' empowerment programme of Koreans Rural Development Administration. The model is led by four guiding questions focusing on internalising praxis in an action learning process, transforming tacit knowledge into practical knowledge, strengthening entrepreneurship, and examining empowerment processes. Participatory action research was applied in multi-disciplinary teams. The process included self-analysis, coaching, communities of practice, and planning. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected. As a result, a practical empowerment programme and a holistic extension service were established. There was a shift in focus towards self-directed and action learning, process-orientation, holistic human development, entrepreneurship, and qualitative research.

Presentation at: http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/SG-Kim-MH-Lee_Case_Study-on-RDA-PLA-model-with-Agri-SMEs-in-the-Rep-of-Korea.pdf

Miriam Hird-Younger, African Program Staff at Engineers Without Borders Canada, presented an agribusiness and entrepreneurship project. The project tackles weak business knowledge and skills of extension staff, lacking training in soft skills, and scarce recruitment of agricultural college graduates. During their training, students are asked to design and execute an agribusiness. Thereby, experimental learning is integrated in courses, and students are practising busi-

ness planning, innovation, teamwork, communication, investment, marketing, and multidisciplinary. Students carry the responsibility and ownership over their agribusiness. They are empowered to own their future and create opportunities. As an effect, college graduates are skilled extension staff and potential actors in private sector, both impacting on farmers' context. Lecturers are the owners of the initiatives and thereby improve their training in agribusiness. The project was leveraged to all of Ghana's public and some private agricultural colleges. Incorporation in future curricula updates is anticipated.

Presentation at: http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/M-Hird-Younger_Building-business-entrepreneurship-and-innovation-skills.pdf

Yuan Zhou, Head of Research and Policy Analysis at the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture, highlighted the importance of pluralism in RAS for reaching small scale farmers. Delivery of embedded services and contract farming are rapidly growing. Input suppliers increasingly understand that farmers seek effects and knowledge is required along with products. However, commercial sector advice may be limited to the products sold or crops bought and to specific issues such as food quality and safety, contract enforcement, and dispute settlement. Stewardship and training on product application may not be guaranteed, and incentive to reach remote and marginal farms may be limited. Mobile applications play an increasing role in private sector RAS and represent a potential for reaching scale and overcoming the "last mile problem". They can impact farm incomes if information is timely and of quality, and farmers trust the relationship.

Presentation at: http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/Y-Zhou_Strengthening-extension_the-role-of-the-private-sector-and-ICT.pdf



Field trip: Lessons learnt on the role of rural advisory services in agricultural innovation systems

Cyber-village Project, Apalit, Pampanga

The Cyber-Village Project in the municipality Apalit, Pampanga, uses two ICT tools for rice management that were recently developed. The Pinoy Rice Knowledge Bank is an internet-based web repository of scientifically validated rice management principles and technologies created by extensionists and farmers. The Nutrient Manager for Rice is a web and mobile based computer software that provides site specific fertilizer recommendations for farmers. The tools provide extension workers and farmers the convenience of accessing modern rice technologies when and where they need them. RAS acts as a broker of technical information between rice experts from research and rice producers.

Participants concluded:

- Achieved key roles of the cyber-village project in AIS: Increasing the knowledge flow to a wider community, promoting innovations to a limited number of actors, potentially helping to identify needs and potential problems and complementing other RAS functions
- Other positive aspects: Gender neutral approach, farmer organisations are part of the process, potential for linking to other communication strategies
- Scaling up: Not yet planned, unclear funding and capacity, complicated for a single cell company
- Areas for improvement: Strengthening bottom-up aspects and market-orientation, need for effective evaluation

Farmers' Call Center, Quezon City

The e-extension programme of the Farmers' Call Centre in Quezon City is an electronic delivery of extension services. It is implemented by the Agricultural Training Institute of the Department of Agriculture with other government agencies as well as with state universities and colleges. To date there are a total of 27 e-learning courses available for free at www.e-extension.gov.ph/elearning. Digital learning resources on various commodities and technologies and video tutorials are available. E-farming features the delivery of farm and business advisory services through the use of ICT, particularly mobile phones, carried out through the Farmers' Contact Centers that are contacted by stakeholders through call, text, or email. Thereby the Farmers Call Centre acts as a broker of technology advisory services using ICT.

- Achieved key roles of the Farmers' Call Center in AIS: To achieve equity of access to information
- Key skills needed by Farmers' Call Center staff: Ability to mobilise the required expertise from various sources
- Farmers' Call Center's impact for the rural population: Source of information for alternative problem solving, media for innovation dissemination, various extension staff reached
- Scalability: Technical scalability is not a problem, high initial human and financial resources are required, lower but continuous operating costs, limits in e-extension updating; challenge: it needs strong governmental support to make such e-based innovation programmes happen.
- Institutionalisation and institutional integration: Partnerships with private sector, capacity strengthening by national level to decentralised RAS systems

Cavite Farmers Information and Technology Services (FITS)

The Farmers' Information and Technology Services (FITS) Center is a one-stop service facility accessible to the majority of farmers, entrepreneurs, and other clients in a given province or municipality. It provides easy access to information and technologies on agriculture, forestry, and fisheries in forms appropriate to the clients' needs. The Cavite Center of Agriculture for Farmers Production has a demonstration farm to showcase the technologies of farmer-scientists. The farmer scientists were initiated as a farm extension modality.

Participants concluded:

- Achieved key roles of FITS in AIS: Promoting collaboration and cooperation among key actors (local governments, academe, farmers) and link to the political level; challenge: ensure proficiency in the performance of the role in regards to political dependence and scientific validation of farmer scientists, include more women, especially as farmer scientists
- Key skills needed by FITS staff: Farmer empowerment in regards to self-confidence and articulation, focus on commodities; challenge: teaching versus facilitating
- FITS impact for the rural population: Formation of well-trained farmer scientists; challenge: sustainability of the system, reaching small-scale farmers

- Scalability: Functioning model at local level, system that correspond to the autonomous nature of farmers, but difficult to sustain as self-sustained body with reduced government support
- Institutionalisation and institutional integration: Well linked to public institutions and academe, but does not seem to reach the majority of the farmers, including female farmer scientists

Cavite State University as Partner Member Agency in Indang Cavite

Partner Member Agencies (PMA) of the Regional Research and Development Consortia are mostly state universities and colleges in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries that are actively involved in technology management activities in the regions. They ensure continuous supply of research-based information and technologies to the Farmers Information and Technology Services Centers and provide the technical assistance to its clients. The PMA likewise coordinate the various activities of the Farmers Information and Technology Services Centers and assists them in the preparation of work and financial plans.

Participants concluded:

- Key roles of PMA in AIS: Linking research, private sector, education, extension, and farmers in a multi-stakeholder approach and along value chains, backstopping Farmers Information and Technology Services Centers; farmers could be more integrated in the elaboration of research proposals, along with ministerial staff and private sector
- Key skills needed by PMA staff: The PMA is required to focus on methodology of extension provision and cost-orientation of techniques; techniques need to be research-based
- PMA impact for the rural population: There is a direct interaction with the Farmers Information and Technology Services Centers, e.g. through the production and free delivery of seedlings
- Sustainability: The value chain orientation in PMA fosters farmers' participation and consideration of new technologies; 90% of PMA's expenditures are covered by government funds, which relate the PMA to political interests.
- Institutionalisation and institutional integration: Through its tight links to the local government, PMA is politically well integrated; the institutionalisation of the education process could be strengthened, i.e. by fostering contributions from the farmers' side in a holistic extension system

Science and Technology Based Farm in Amadeo, Cavite

Science and Technology Based Farms (STBF) showcase the use of newly developed and tested science-based technologies for improving the productivity of a particular commodity. Since coffee is a primary commodity in the province of Cavite, the STBF in Amadeo, through farmer scientists, showcases the following interventions: 1) the combination of organic and inorganic fertilizer, 2) coffee berry drier 3) use of de-pulper for wet processing.

Participants concluded:

- Key roles of STBF in AIS: Backstopping AIS actors, i.e. farmer scientist and agricultural extension service from different geographic levels; there is a need for empowering farmers, developing their organisation, and facilitating the integration of different value chain actors in the activities
- STBF's impact for the rural population: The impact is limited; especially a stronger focus on social and economic aspects and the consideration of value chains could increase the impact of STBF's activities
- Scalability: A stronger vision and cooperation with farmers' groups could increase scalability. Therefore, organisational strengthening of farmers organisations is required
- Institutionalisation and institutional integration: STBF integrates government, farmers, and universities at national and provincial level.



Recommendations and shared position on RAS role in rural development and AIS

RAS is about facilitation, fostering joint learning, alliance building, empowering and strengthening capacities of farmers, not neglecting technical tasks. In order to play this role, RAS need the ability to deal with change, entrepreneurship and business skills, and the capacity to listen and respond to demands. Other AIS actors should create an enabling environment: Farmer leaders need to collate and express demands, education should revise curricula and develop module based courses and distance learning, policy is required to coordinate and integrate actors in AIS on different geographic levels and introduce incentives, and investors should use mechanisms that reflect sustainability

Shared position on the role of RAS in rural development and AIS at: http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/Shared-position-on-RAS-role-in-AIS.pdf

GFRAS activities since Nairobi 2011 (26 September)

Introduction

Kristin Davis introduced participants to the GFRAS vision, mission, and structure, and presented the different GFRAS working groups. She looked back to the 2nd GFRAS Annual Meeting, the International Conference on Extension and Advisory Services – both held in November 2012 in Nairobi, Kenya – the GFRAS resolutions and the Nairobi declaration. Kristin gave an overview on realised and planned activities:

- Policies and strategies for extension: Under its function 1, providing a voice for advisory services within global policy dialogues and promoting improved investment in RAS, GFRAS produced materials for the Rio+20 conference, initiated a side event on policy development at the 3d GFRAS Annual Meeting, elaborated a document on “the new extensionist” that will be presented at the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD), and plans an advocacy training on regional level
- Gender equality in RAS: Under function 2, supporting the development and synthesis of evidence-based approaches and policies for improving the effectiveness of RAS, GFRAS created the working group “Gender Equality in RAS”
- Evaluating rural advisory services: GFRAS completed its evaluation guide and launched the evaluation initiative under GFRAS function 2. In Latin America, an evaluation meeting was held.

- Promising extension approaches and global good practices in RAS: Under function 2, the Global Good Practices initiative was launched
- The World Wide Extension Study database is online at <http://www.worldwide-extension.org/>. A directory of extension providers was established in 2012 at <http://www.g-fras.org/en/knowledge/extension-directory-2> and a GFRAS roster of extension experts is functional at <http://www.g-fras.org/en/component/comprofiler/userslist/GFRAS%20Roster%20of%20Experts?Itemid=1079>

Presentation at: http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/K-Davis_GFRAS_Activities_Since_Nairobi.pdf

Gender Equality in RAS

Sanne Chipeta reported on the establishment of the GFRAS gender working group. Currently, the male biased extension services are strong constraints for increasing food security and food production globally. The gender working group has been established in order to engage GFRAS in advocacy for gender equality in RAS. At its start-up meeting it has been confirmed that gender targeting is an important success factor for improving gender equality in RAS and that the mostly low number of women extension staff is a key issue. Despite the existence of several successful cases, scale up is rarely happening due to missing commitment and ownership. There are moreover only few well documented experiences of addressing issues of power and women rights in agriculture. The same is the case for the impact of climate variability on rural women. The focus of the working group will therefore be on awareness raising, knowledge sharing and creating ownership for improving gender equality in RAS.

Participants in the GFRAS Annual Meeting confirmed that the low number of female extension staff is a key issue. They therefore advised to explore the possibilities for incentives to women extensionists. Participants emphasised that gender equality in RAS requires targeted policies in every decision making body and good policy decision tools. In some cases it might be helpful to introduce quota for women representatives in committees.

Evaluating rural advisory services

Evaluation is an integral part of RAS and AIS and a continuous process of critical, evidence based learning about its processes and results. It is essential for both the search for ways to improve programming and to account for the value of investments made, but is often neglected by extension stakeholders. Evaluation methodologies should be tailored to reflect the objectives of any given extension initiative and anchored in an understanding of extension as process, rather than just focusing on the project being assessed. A quantitative and qualitative approach can be used. Both need careful analysis and interpretation. The collection of quality data depends on rigour and sufficient resources. The community should be informed on how data will be used and whether the community may benefit from the evaluation. Evaluations can in some cases lead to participatory formulation or adaptation of extension policies and programming modalities.

Promising extension approaches and global good practices in RAS

Steven Franzel presented the GFRAS Global Good Practice initiative with its focus on five dimensions: RAS providers (public, private, civil society, mixed), governance (pluralism, decentralisation, financial sustainability, linkages, accountability), management (human resources, incentives, mission orientation), approaches (techniques, methods), and cross-cutting issues (gender, health). The group emphasised the importance of participation of AIS and value chain actors in RAS, public-private partnerships, corporate social responsibility, social media, as well as facilitation and brokering in the AIS. It identified gaps in the defined dimensions, such as financing mechanisms for RAS, youth in extension, and links between the dimensions. The discussion showed that selection criteria for case studies should include evidence of positive impact or - where there is no positive impact – important lessons, scalability, ecological, financial,

and institutional sustainability, benefits for marginal groups, and explicit involvement of regional RAS actors during the selection process. Participants advised GFRAS to focus on few themes in regards to the governance dimension. A country analysis may be more suitable than examining individual case studies. It is important to identify a methodology for analysing best-fit RAS and collect feedback on the framework and planned activities through the GFRAS website.

Policies and strategies for extension

Paul McNamara presented and discussed the policy side event to the GFRAS Annual Meeting. Quality extension policies are adapted to the country's context, based on the principle of subsidiarity, and considering gender equity. Two main challenges were identified:

- Lack of a national extension policy: Most countries lack a national extension policy. Some policies are adopted from other countries without adaptation to the specific national context and needs.
- Insufficient quality of implementation: There is a need for harmonisation of different – at times contradictory – programmes delivered by pluralistic RAS. Participants recommended the establishment of a quality control function and standard.

Tools for information sharing

Lorenz Schwarz presented different regularly used GFRAS information and dissemination tools, i.e. various types of publication, electronic tools and important face to face meetings. The tools were grouped along two perspectives:

- Internal or external use: Some of the information tools are used to keep GFRAS members and affiliates informed (internal use), others are targeted to people that do not yet know about GFRAS (external use).
- Push or pull use: Some information tools such as brochures and e-updates are designed to push a target group to GFRAS whereas others are thought to pull information out of interested stakeholders according to their needs, e.g. the GFRAS Roster of Experts and the GFRAS Directory of Extension Providers.

In order to meet different needs and preferences of interested people and to maximise the GFRAS outreach, a good mix of different information tools is important.

RAS fora: Strengthening results-oriented networking (28 September)

Introduction

Kristin Davis introduced participants to activities under GFRAS function 3, strengthening actors and fora in RAS through facilitating interaction and networking, and referred to the GFRAS resolution from the last Annual Meeting. She pointed to meetings held in different regions, especially West and Central Africa, South Asia, and Near East, which all are young RAS networks.

Presentation at: http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/K-Davis_Progress-reporting-on-GFRAS-function-3-since-Nairobi-2012.pdf

Experiences from regional networks:

Francisco Aguirre, executive secretary of the Latin America Network for Rural Extension Services (RELASER) gave an overview on RELASER's history in the context of dismantled extension systems. After the elaboration of an overview on the RAS system in Latin America and the elaboration of policy briefs, RELASER understood that, in order to achieve results, activities on national level are required. Focal points were identified to gather diverse actors, coordinate activities in countries, collate a country-based position, and strengthen thereby advocacy. Activities on national level were and will be supported by coordination and communication on regional level. RELASER plans to generate evidence on the effects and impacts of extension programmes, propose methodologies and evaluation indicators, influence the design or improvement of national extension programmes, propose institutional arrangements that respond to pluralistic RAS, and engage in capacity strengthening. Key challenges for RELASER are at this

stage to achieve a good representation of different actors groups, strengthen internal advocacy capacities, and consolidate internal roles.

Presentation at: http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/F-Aguirre_Results-oriented-policy-dialogue-to-strengthen-RAS_The-RELASER-case.pdf

Erich Waldmeier, representative from the International Academy for Agricultural Advisory Services and Home Economics (IALB), a RAS network in sixteen European countries, presented IALB's role in the implementation of the system for Certifying European Consultants in Rural Areas (CECRA). CECRA was introduced in response to decreasing or lacking university level education and initial in-service trainings for RAS providers, the need for new skills "just in time", including social and entrepreneurial capacities, and the need for synergies between different RAS institutions. CECRA started with the establishment of a working group and a partnership agreement for a pilot period of three years. Different actor groups were attracted by expected benefits: RAS providers will acquire skills and experiences, develop their transnational network and gain legitimisation through the certificate. Project partners on county-level can refer to a common standard of their trainings, develop their courses and offer a range of modules in collaboration with their partners. Policy makers can be sure of the quality of delivered services.

Presentation at: http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/E-Waldmeier_Certifying-European-consultants-in-rural-areas_an-IALB-lead-initiative.pdf

Max Olupot showed the approach of the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) in supporting agricultural extension reforms in Africa. AFAAS country fora are drivers of change on national level, supported by the AFAAS secretariat with guiding documents and a virtual social network platform. As a case, Arokoyo Tunji presented the involvement of the Nigerian Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (NIFAAS) in the elaboration of a national agricultural extension agenda. NIFAAS mobilises RAS actors, provides a pool of expertise, acts as a learning platform and does advocacy for an effective agenda. Support from the AFAAS secretariat was crucial during the establishment of NIFAAS and for experience sharing on policy reforms between African countries. In future, the AFAAS secretariat will review, synthesise and share policy documents with country fora.

Presentation at: http://www.g-fras.org/images/events/annual_meetings/2012/presentations/SM-Nahdy-et-al_strengthening-agric-extension-in-Africa_AFAAS-role-in-supporting-AAS-reforms.pdf

Group work on strengthening results-oriented networking: Presentation of recommendations

Participants from the same region or sub-region reflected the presentations and discussed recommendations for GFRAS and their regional network.

GFRAS steering committee and secretariat

Recommendations	Responses by the GFRAS steering committee and secretariat
Institutionalisation of (sub-) regional networks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support regional RAS network consolidation focused on farmer participation in RAS policy ▪ Technical support 	A resource document and a poster on what support can be expected from GFRAS by regional and sub-regional networks can be downloaded at: http://www.g-fras.org/en/community/members GFRAS supports regional and sub-regional RAS networks with capacity strengthening and human resources, e.g. by linking them to the Center for International Migration and Development (CIM)

<p>Interaction and networking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare the GFRAS Annual Meeting 2013 ▪ Provide pace and (financial) support for a one day continental meeting at the GFRAS Annual Meeting ▪ Initiate and support inter-regional exchange visits ▪ Participation of the GFRAS secretariat in the sub-regional meeting 	<p>The GFRAS Annual Meeting with its opportunities for regional side events and share fair contributions is a space for interaction and networking.</p> <p>GFRAS attends and supports regional and sub-regional meetings, such as the AFAAS Extension Week in August 2013 in Botswana</p>
<p>Capacity strengthening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the integration of agriculture in elementary and secondary schools 	<p>The GFRAS capacity working group will finalise and follow-up activities on “the new extensionist” that were presented at the 3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting</p> <p>Different activities related to “the new extensionist” are planned on regional level in Africa and Latin America, together with MEAS and team Africa</p>
<p>Thematic support</p>	<p>GFRAS has on-going thematic activities on topics such as gender and evaluation. Affiliates and members can link their activities in these fields to GFRAS and seek support where synergies are expected.</p> <p>The GFRAS guide to extension evaluation and a planned help desk give support in regards to evaluation.</p> <p>In other areas, GFRAS links its members and affiliates to partners on global and regional levels</p>
<p>Advocacy, global lobbying, creating awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Global lobbying at policy decision maker level to create awareness and funding options for RAS 	<p>Providing a voice for RAS within global policy dialogues and promoting improved investment in RAS is a GFRAS function. In 2012, GFRAS created awareness for RAS at GCARD and the G20 conference on agriculture.</p>
<p>Financial support</p>	<p>GFRAS can facilitate fundraising but is not a funding agency. Several regional and sub-regional networks already received seed money to strengthen their institutions and support priorities. GFRAS backs up regional proposals to funding agencies, and reviews strategies and business plans. Whenever possible, it matches donors to regions.</p>

African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services: Recommendations

1. Facilitate the establishment and strengthening of the country for a and sub-regional networks, while ensuring that the entry points are strong enough to influence government and other agricultural sector actors.
2. Play a critical role in advocacy and lobbying in extension and advisory services

3. Conduct resource mobilisation to support programmatic activities of the country fora and regional networks.
4. Capacity strengthening of the extension and advisory services systems
5. Establish and strengthen partnerships and collaborations among African advisory services networks and with sub-regional RAS networks, sub-regional research organisations and other research and development actors/ institutions
6. Initiate and commission studies for evidence based approaches and policies and share results with the RAS community

Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services Network: Recommendations and responses

Recommendations	Responses by the APIRAS board
<p>Networking and advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create links to potential local and international funding agencies ▪ Strengthen the APIRAS secretariat and joint activities with its members ▪ Mobilise partner institutions to assist in securing seed money to implement priority projects ▪ Comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of RAS and AIS 	<p>Creating awareness and attracting the interest for RAS, APIRAS, and GFRAS in the region is a key objective for APIRAS. As a first step, APIRAS will get familiar with on-going RAS initiatives in the region and create links for further collaboration, advocacy and networking. The APIRAS website and an e-newsletter will be main tools.</p>
<p>Capacity strengthening</p>	<p>APIRAS will identify needs for training and technical assistance on RAS and link RAS providers to trainers.</p> <p>It is planned to document innovative practices in Asian-Pacific RAS, conduct an institutional analysis and elaborate an inventory of RAS providers in the region.</p>

Latin-American Network for Rural Extension: Challenges and recommendations

1. Institutionalise RELASER on country level: Participants recommend to catalyse the creation of national fora in order to expand RELASER's presence in countries and intensify advocacy activities
2. Increase the involvement of under-represented actors groups: create thematic RELASER groups for university representatives and producer organisations
3. Advocacy for public RAS policies: In order to do evidence based advocacy, RELASER need to elaborate reliable and quality information that support the diagnosis of national extension systems, considering proposed changes, capacity strengthening of RAS providers and the integration of RAS in AIS. In order to strengthen advocacy capacities, a training for RELASER members is jointly planned with AFAAS
4. Generate evidence on the effects and impacts of RAS and show the value of public extension for agricultural development: emphasise on impact and process assessments in collaboration with the evaluation initiative at global level
5. Capacity strengthening: RELASER should support governments and programmes in their training processes so as to increase extension staff's ability to respond to the new paradigm in RAS
6. Respect the diversity of extension systems, national policies, public and private experiences, levels of decentralisation, and capacities: facilitate process learning, identify demands and act in a demand-oriented way
7. Seek collaboration and integration to prevent duplication: RELASER intends to work closely with other active networks in the region

Share fair on experience in RAS (28 September)

A range of RAS actors presented and discussed their initiatives, programmes, and projects with their peers:

Name	e-mail	Title
Miriam Hird-Younger	miriamhird-younger@ewb.ca	Building business, entrepreneurship and innovation skills in extension education
Max Olupot	secretariat@afaas-africa.org	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS)
Elisabeth Katz/ Joo-martbek Jumabekov	eka.rdconsulting@gmail.com ; jkjw@mail.ru	Successes and limitations in promoting innovation in the AIS of Kyrgyzstan
Steve Franzel	s.franzel@cgjar.org	Disseminating Improved Practices: Are Volunteer Farmers Effective?
Erich Waldmeier	erwaldmeier@bluewin.ch	Three levels of European networks' contribution to capacity development in RAS
Siti Amanah	sitihanama@gmail.com	Issues and challenges of Rural Advisory Services in Indonesia
Wahyuni Sofiyanti Baso	abaso@ifc.org ; wahyuni.baso@gmail.com	Integrating gender in coffee value chains to improve adoption of sustainable practices
Christina Ketter	christina.ketter@giz.de	Strengthening public extension service in Timor-Leste. Governmental extension management system and standardization of good practices

Wrap-up and closing

Conclusions by partners from AIS

Simplice Vodouhé, Professor Université D'Abomey-Calavi, Benin, Ruperto Alerosa, farmer representative from the National Union of Rural Based Organizations, Philippines, and Hala Yousry, Head of Rural Sociology Department, Desert Research Center, Egypt, reviewed the 3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting from an AIS perspective. They highlighted the relevance of collaboration and linkages of education, production, and research with RAS and thanked for the opportunity to reflect approaches to strengthen the integration of RAS in AIS for achieving poverty reduction and well-being in rural areas.

Shared position on RAS role in rural development and AIS

Kristin Davis shared the GFRAS contribution to GCARD 2012, taking place in October 2012 in Uruguay. The GFRAS message to the AIS community will show that RAS is fundamental to support rural people. As it is increasingly knowledge intensive, knowledge sharing is key to achieve sustainable development. Facing global challenges, RAS require new roles and capacities.

With its sub-session C.3.2 *Making Use of Knowledge and Advisory Systems*, GFRAS will contribute to the fourth priority area of the GCARD 2012 roadmap, "Develop the required human and institutional capacities for generation, access and effective use of agricultural knowledge in development". GFRAS planned to formulate actions and partnerships to address capacity

strengthening challenges in RAS based on the concept of “The New Extensionist”. The three objectives of session C.3.2 are to:

1. Endorse recommendations for roles and capacities to strengthen knowledge and advisory systems
2. Determine most critical gaps in advisory system capacities at all levels
3. Agree on WHAT actions are needed and WHO will take action at different levels for strengthening capacities for new roles in knowledge and advisory systems and thus achieve priority area #4 of the GCARD Roadmap

The full paper “the new extensionist”, a summary, recommendations, and the results of an e-consultation can be downloaded at <http://www.g-fras.org/en/>

Shared position on the role of RAS in AIS

RAS is about facilitation, fostering joint learning, alliance building, empowerment and strengthening capacities of farmers, not neglecting technical tasks

To play this role, RAS needs actions from AIS actors:

RAS	Farmer leaders	Education	Policy makers	Investors
Reskill to match new roles and demands	Collate and express demands to AIS actors	Revise curricula	Coordinate and integrate actors in AIS on different geographic levels	Provide sustainable funding of AIS
Foster entrepreneurial and demand-oriented mindset		Develop or revise module based curricula and distance learning	Implement incentives according to new RAS role	

Closing remarks

Virginia Cardenas closed the 3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting with the words of the Brazilian singer Astrud Gilberto "The trouble with hello is goodbye", emphasizing that the closing of the meeting is a celebration of effective networking and a confirmation that GFRAS shall meet again.

Kristin Davis thanked participants for their contributions and promised that GFRAS commitment to engage RAS stakeholders for reducing global hunger and poverty will go on. She promised that GFRAS will seriously consider the recommendations made at the Annual Meeting.

Participants who were new in GFRAS added that the 3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting was an eye opener on GFRAS, network development, and RAS provision. Participants highlighted the meeting's continuous importance for networking, especially for women who are often neglected in this activity. Participants requested to give producers a prominent position at the meeting.

Gil Saguiguit, Director of the The Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) emphasized in its final closing remarks RAS key role in addressing emerging and continuing challenges to ensure global food security.