

Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS)

Advocacy and leadership on rural advisory services

Charter



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Preamble

1. The **vision** of GFRAS is for RAS to effectively contribute to agricultural innovation systems for sustainable development.
2. The **mission** of GFRAS is to provide advocacy and leadership on pluralistic and demand-driven RAS for sustainable development.
3. GFRAS provides a space for leadership, professionalisation, knowledge sharing, and the mobilisation of the RAS community to advocate within the global sustainable development goals. This will result in rural advisory services and systems that more appropriately, effectively, and sustainably contribute to agricultural innovations systems for sustainable development.
4. This charter is accompanied by the GFRAS long-term strategic framework, GFRAS operational plan and GFRAS operational guidelines, available at www.g-fras.org.

Article I

Name

5. The name of the Forum shall be 'Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services' (GFRAS).

Article II

Strategic Fields of Action

6. To achieve the vision and mission, the Forum will:
 - a) Provide advocacy and support for an enabling policy environment and appropriate investment in RAS;
 - b) Promote professionalisation of RAS;
 - c) Facilitate and enhance effective and continuous knowledge generation and exchange.

Article III

Governance and Status

7. GFRAS is governed by a Steering Committee.
8. GFRAS is hosted by an organisation selected by the Steering Committee, which provides a legal personality and related services.



Article IV

Source of Funds

9. GFRAS is supported financially through contributions from donors or other parties. The support goes to an overall strategy. Support will be made through one or several funding mechanisms seen as appropriate by the Steering Committee. Additional, opportune funding for special projects may exceptionally be a part of the GFRAS financial resources as approved by the Steering Committee. GFRAS strives to have a broad funding base.

Article V

Affiliates

10. GFRAS affiliation is informal, open to individuals interested in RAS from all regions and sectors, and free of cost.
11. Affiliates receive information and regular communication from the GFRAS secretariat and can attend GFRAS activities.

Article VI

Members

12. Members are organisations or institutions invited by the GFRAS Steering Committee.
13. Regional and thematic networks representing RAS are encouraged to become members of GFRAS.
14. Members commit to actively promote GFRAS and its principles, to monitor and evaluate the Forum in their region, to participate in working groups, and to comment on GFRAS products and initiatives.
15. Members have access to a platform for discussion at the global level through the working groups and GFRAS Annual Meeting. Members also gain the opportunity for exchange with other members.

Article VII

Steering Committee Composition, Roles, and Rules

16. The Steering Committee consists of 12 institutional members and is composed of six seats for regional representatives, five seats for other relevant institutions or stakeholder groups, and one for the host (*ex officio*).
17. The Steering Committee is the highest decision-making body of GFRAS.
18. To be eligible to serve on the Steering Committee, individuals must have demonstrated commitment to GFRAS and its principles, vision, and mission; have credibility within their

sector and field; be available to attend Steering Committee meetings; and support the GFRAS secretariat with advice and resource mobilisation.

19. The roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee shall include:

- Providing direction for GFRAS and its secretariat;
- Approving the long-term strategy, annual work plans, and budgets;
- Representing and promoting GFRAS;
- Assisting in fund raising for the Forum;
- Mobilising the affiliates and members to take part in GFRAS activities within their respective regions and mandated fields; and
- Selecting and appointing the GFRAS Executive Secretary and senior staff.

20. Terms of office for Steering Committee members is two years except in the case of the host, with a staggered rotation to ensure continuity. Re-election is possible for no more than two additional terms. Re-election of individuals on the Steering Committee after more than three terms is subject to approval by the Steering Committee.

21. Steering Committee members should attend all meetings. Participation can be through physical presence or through well-structured tele-conferencing. The quorum at all meetings shall be more than 50% of members.

22. Steering Committee meetings are in principle self-financed, but assistance may be given on a case-by-case basis with the approval of the Chair.

23. There are no sitting fees for Steering Committee members.

24. Steering Committee meetings shall take place every six months, or upon special demand by the Steering Committee Chair or the GFRAS Executive Secretary.

25. Steering Committee members who do not attend two consecutive meetings without a valid reason, or those who do not fulfil the roles and responsibilities detailed above, will automatically be disqualified.

26. Decisions of the Steering Committee shall be based on consensus. If consensus is not procurable, decisions shall be taken by majority vote.

27. Resource people may attend GFRAS Steering Committee meetings upon invitation from Chair. Resource people shall be excluded from voting.

Article VIII

Steering Committee Chair and Co-Chair

28. The GFRAS Steering Committee has a Chair and Co-Chair selected from and amongst Steering Committee members.

29. The Chair and Co-Chair serve for two-year terms. Re-election is possible for one additional term.

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30. The roles and responsibilities of the Chair and Co-Chair include calling, convening, and chairing Steering Committee meetings, inviting resource people to the meetings, and supporting the secretariat where needed.

Article IX

Working Groups

31. On a demand-driven basis, the GFRAS Steering Committee will create from among the affiliates and members thematic Working Groups of stakeholders who show a keen interest to regularly participate in the implementation and development of the GFRAS strategy and organisational development.
32. In consultation with the Steering Committee, Working Groups will establish clear objectives, terms of reference, and outputs, sharing with the GFRAS Community through the Secretariat.
33. The Steering Committee will periodically review the performance of Working Groups, and, as appropriate, dissolve.

Article X

Secretariat and Executive Secretary

34. GFRAS will have a professional Secretariat headed by an Executive Secretary appointed by the Steering Committee.
35. The Executive Secretary serves for an initial period of four years, renewable once based on an assessment and decision of the GFRAS Steering Committee.

Article XI

Duties of the Secretariat

36. The Secretariat, guided by the Steering Committee, and working with regional networks and Working Groups, is responsible for implementing the activities of the GFRAS long-term strategy and annual work plan. The duties of the Secretariat include:
- Developing strategies, operational plans, and annual work plans for the Secretariat;
 - Developing joint work plans with regional networks, members, and working groups;
 - Coordinating monitoring and evaluation of the activities of the Forum;
 - Coordinating between the regional affiliates and members;
 - Backstopping regional and thematic networks, members, and working groups;
 - Communicating regularly with affiliates and members;
 - Coordinating implementation of activities as detailed in work plans;
 - Reporting regularly to the Steering Committee;
 - Developing the agenda, organising, and implementing the GFRAS Annual Meetings with support of affiliates and members; and
 - Responding to requests from the Steering Committee to formulate operational rules and mechanisms to regulate the functioning of GFRAS, as needed.



Article XII

Annual Meeting

37. The Annual Meeting is the central GFRAS event to exchange experiences on RAS across regions, strengthen regional and thematic networks, and consult on the strategic directions and functioning of GFRAS.
38. Efforts will be made to rotate the location between different regions and hosts.
39. Participation will be open to all affiliates and members and will be at own costs. A small budget will be allocated to support selected participants.

Article XIII

Amendment to the Charter

40. Amendment of the Charter shall be considered only at a meeting of the Steering Committee.
41. GFRAS may amend this Charter by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, provided that such majority is more than half the membership of the Steering Committee.

Article XIV

Dissolution

42. GFRAS can only be dissolved by a resolution approved at a Steering Committee meeting.

Article XV

Approval of the Charter

43. The Charter was revised and approved by the GFRAS Steering Committee on 8 October, 2016.