global forum for rural advisory services
forum mondial pour le conseil rural
foro global para los servicios de asesoría rural

Agence Nationale de Conseil Agricole et Rural

15. GFRAS ANNUAL MEETING

Rural Advisory Services in Higher Education and in Agricultural Policies and Programs

11-14 November 2025
Dakar, Senegal

Meeting Organisers

Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS)
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Location

Centre International de Conférences Abdou Diouf (CICAD)

Pôle Urbain de Diamniadio
BP 4026, Rufisque, Senegal

Contact

Contact GFRAS Secretariat:
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Social Media Channels

Follow the meeting on social media using the hashtags #gfras25 and #gfras2025 or on the GFRAS Facebook Group.

Sub-Themes of the Meeting

There are multiple forms of administrative and academic institutionalisation of rural advisory services around the world. In some countries, rural advisory structures are attached to the Ministry of Agriculture in the form of general or national directorates, divisions, offices, or simple technical services. There are also structures exclusively dedicated to rural advisory services, as well as cases where rural advisory is provided as a complementary service within broader agricultural and rural development institutions (infrastructure, land use, financing, etc.).

With respect to teaching and research on rural advisory services, there are well-developed models integrated into universities, such as the land-grant system in the United States and other Anglophone contexts, where some universities are also directly involved in implementation. These universities therefore fulfil a triple mandate: training, research, and outreach or rural advisory services.

However, in other countries, particularly in Francophone Africa, there are few research programs and training curricula dedicated to rural advisory services. Researchers and/or lecturers specialising in approaches, methods, tools, and practices of rural advisory are rare.

As a result, rural advisors are often initially trained as agricultural production technicians (crop and/or livestock), who then transition into advisory work. The recent emergence of curricula specifically focused on rural advisory services, though still limited in human, material, and financial resources, nonetheless signals an encouraging trend.

This diversity in administrative and academic institutionalisation of rural advisory services fosters pluralism and represents a wealth of experiences and practices. The Dakar meeting will examine these through four (4) main themes:

Theme 1: Research and Education on Rural Advisory Services

- How does rural advisory services, as a discipline, construct its objects, methods, and approaches to endogenous and exogenous knowledge?
- What are the orientations, methods, and findings of research on rural advisory strategies and practices (mechanisms, approaches, activities, methods and techniques, tools and media) that can be mobilised?
- What types of training (initial and continuing), curricula, and study levels exist for rural advisory services?

- How are curricula developed and revised in light of new social, scientific, economic, and technological knowledge?
- How do teaching and research on rural advisory services integrate global challenges such as climate resilience, food sovereignty, digitalisation and artificial intelligence, sustainability, etc.?

Theme 2: The Role and Position of Rural Advisory Services in Agricultural Development Policies and Strategies

- Do specific public policies and/or strategies exist for rural advisory services? If so, what are their orientations? Do they account for both crop and livestock production sub-sectors?
- How do governments and partners integrate rural advisory services into agricultural development policies and programs?
- In what ways are rural advisory services perceived as levers for systemic transformation of agriculture?

Theme 3: The Role and Position of Rural Advisory Services in Agricultural Development Policies and Strategies

- What are the needs of rural advisory service users, and how are they being addressed (levels of adequacy, effectiveness, and limitations)?
- What mechanisms exist for structuring demand and for co-construction to ensure inclusive and adapted rural advisory services? What technical and behavioural skills are required?
- What modern tools and mechanisms are being used in rural advisory services to meet demand?
- What financing strategies exist for rural advisory services? How do different sources (public, private, mixed) and types (grants, investment funds, crowdfunding, self-financing, etc.) affect accessibility, quality, and accountability of services?
- Are there monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to effectively measure the impact of rural advisory services?

Theme 4: Institutional Anchoring and Governance of Rural Advisory Structures

- What models of organisation, coordination, and/or governance exist for rural advisory services, and what are their strengths and weaknesses?
- How do different forms of institutional anchoring either grant rural advisory structures autonomy of action, or reduce them to extensions of other agricultural sub-sectors?
- How does centralised and/or decentralised structuring of advisory services contribute to their performance, and what are the limitations?

- What are the experiences of Country Fora as tools for coordination and governance of rural advisory services? How do they function, and how might they be adopted and adapted in countries where they do not yet exist?
- What forms of official recognition are granted to these fora (legal texts, financing, integration into public systems, etc.)?
- How do they contribute to strengthening synergies among rural advisory actors and to meeting the specific needs of users?

Agenda

The Dakar meeting will provide an opportunity to highlight the diversity of participants' knowledge, expertise, and experiences in order to foster collective learning and inform decision-making for potential reforms. Planned activities include presentations, round-tables and discussion panels, interactive workshops, as well as exhibitions and field visits. Facilitation will be led by skilled moderators and facilitators with strong expertise in interactive and participatory methods. A proposed agenda, which still might face adjustments until the meeting date, is as follows:

TUESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER		
Official opening	**Welcoming words** **GFRAS speech** **Official opening speeches**	Mayor of Diamniadio GFRAS Chair Prime Minister of Senegal
Ministerial conferences	**Administrative and academic institutionalisation of rural advisory services**	Co-chaired by the Ministers of Agriculture and Higher Education
AFTERNOON		
Communications (Presentations and Panels)	**Research and education on rural advisory services**	Moderators, rapporteurs, and panelists to be confirmed
	Rural advisory services in agricultural development policies and programs	Moderators, rapporteurs, and panelists to be confirmed
WEDNESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER		
Communications (Presentations and Panels)	**Demand and supply of rural advisory services**	Moderators, rapporteurs, and panelists to be confirmed
	Institutional anchoring and governance of rural advisory services	Moderators, rapporteurs, and panelists to be confirmed
Networking Sessions	**B2B meetings, poster sessions, video corners, sharing fair, creative corner, visits to exhibitors**	Facilitators

AFTERNOON		
Parallel Sessions	**Working groups on the four themes:** • **Priority actions in the short, medium, and long term** • **Implementation modalities (stakeholders and resources)** • **Success and failure factors to be considered**	Moderators, rapporteurs, and panelists to be confirmed
Cocktail Dinner		
THURSDAY, 13 NOVEMBER		
Workshop Reports	**Presentation of group reports**	Discussion led by rapporteurs of the working groups
Closing Ceremony	**General conclusion** **Closing words**	GFRAS Prime Minister of Senegal
AFTERNOON		
Networking Sessions	**B2B meetings, poster sessions, video corners, sharing fair, creative corner, visits to exhibitors**	Facilitators
FRIDAY, 14 NOVEMBER		
Field Visits (Optional)	**Two options will be proposed:** • **Technical: visits to farms and processing units in Dakar and the Niayes area** • **Touristic: visits to emblematic sites in Dakar**	

Participants

Participants from all countries working in the field of extension, rural advisory services, or related areas are welcome to attend the 15th GFRAS Annual Meeting in Dakar, Senegal. This includes actors from different sectors (public, private, and civil society), government authorities, and representatives of farmers' organisations, research, education, development agencies, the media, and others.

To ensure quality interactions, networking, exchanges, and sharing, the number of participants will be limited to approximately 250. If a large number of registrations is received, participants will be selected to ensure the best possible balance in terms of geographic diversity, gender, sector, and age. Priority will be given to those whose communications and posters are accepted.

Registration

Information on the meeting and funding arrangements will be announced on the websites and social media of GFRAS, MASAE, and ANCAR. The GFRAS regional networks will also share the information with their members.

An online registration platform will be set up by GFRAS and will be open in September 2025. All participants—whether seeking sponsorship, self-financed, or financed by GFRAS—must register. A registration confirmation will be sent after submission.

The registration fee is set at USD 167 per participant (equivalent to 100,000 FCFA or 153 Euros, regardless of exchange rates at the time of payment). A preferential fee of 25,000 FCFA will apply to students and young people under the age of 35.

Payment of registration fees should preferably be made before the event by bank transfer, check, or cash deposit. Payment details will be provided on the registration platform. Participants wishing to pay on-site may do so in cash only at the meeting venue.

Registrations will be confirmed by 15 October 2025.

Funding, Logistics, and Budget

Funding for the meeting will come from GFRAS, the Government of Senegal, and potential sponsors from other organisations. A limited number of participants, selected according to clear criteria, will be financially supported by GFRAS and its partners to attend the 15th GFRAS Annual Meeting.

Logistical information for the meeting will be continuously updated on the Annual Meeting website hosted by GFRAS.

The provisional budget for the meeting will be established based on the planned activities and the expected number of participants.

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