

Annual Report 2013



**GFRAS is the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (RAS).
Our vision is to see rural advisory services effectively contributing to
the sustainable reduction of hunger and poverty worldwide.
Our mission is to provide advocacy and leadership on rural advisory
services within the global development agenda.**



Impressum

Impressum

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GFRAS – Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services

2013 Annual Report Executive Summary

The GFRAS mission is to provide advocacy and leadership on pluralistic, demand-driven rural advisory services (RAS) within the global development agenda. It groups its activities under the following three functions:

1. Providing a voice for RAS within global policy dialogues and promoting improved investment in RAS

In March 2013 GFRAS established a Consortium for Extension Education and Training. The consortium is a platform for professionals in universities and other training institutions, which champions the “New Extensionist” principles. The consortium is prioritising research on extension and collecting and reviewing curricula with a view to reform extension training in line with the “New Extensionist” vision.

2. Supporting the development and synthesis of evidence-based approaches and policies for improving the effectiveness of RAS

GFRAS and the World Bank’s Secure Nutrition Knowledge Platform published a study in 2013 to examine the integration and linkages of nutrition within extension and advisory services. The study examined the different roles of these extension agents and how they could be used to promote the topic of nutrition. The report identifies a series of challenges for this endeavour, especially regarding the training of the extension agents. The GFRAS gender working group produced a brief on gender equality in RAS.

3. Strengthening actors and fora in RAS through facilitating interaction and networking

In 2013 GFRAS strengthened existing regional extension networks such as AFAAS (African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services), APIRAS (Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services Network), RELASER (Red Latinoamericana de Servicios de Extensión Rural) and RESCAR-AOC (Réseau des services de conseil agricole et rural d’Afrique de l’Ouest et du Centre). In 2013 new networks were formed the Caribbean (CAEPNet – Caribbean Agricultural Extension Providers Network) and Europe (EUFRAS – European Forum for Farm and Rural Advisory Services). All networks and other stakeholders gathered in September 2013 in Berlin, Germany, for the 4th GFRAS Annual Meeting and discussed the topic “The Role of Private Sector and Producer Organisations in Rural Advisory Services.”

Find out more at www.g-fras.org

Foreword



How is GFRAS doing? In 2013 GFRAS underwent a mid-term review. The GFRAS steering committee wished to be informed if the forum was doing the right things and doing things right. Different aspects of GFRAS, such as organisational structure and processes, objectives and strategic orientation, governance and management, and work performance – as well as the forum’s role and position in an evolving international context of agricultural development – were appraised, and the forum’s main accomplishments and challenges faced during the period of 2010 to early 2013 were assessed. The review serves as a policy and managerial tool for GFRAS steering committee decisions regarding the immediate future, and includes forward-looking insights and practical recommendations regarding future options for GFRAS, within the existing strategic framework and beyond.

Following the emphasis set by the terms of reference, the focus of the review addressed the effectiveness of GFRAS according to the existing strategy and the functions of the network. In particular, the changing landscape at regional level, the relations within the GFRAS network, and between the GFRAS secretariat and the regional networks were highlighted in the report. The recommendations indicated ways to enhance a balanced responsibility-sharing at operational level, and to tackle the challenge of diversifying the network’s stakeholder base.

Based on the report, the GFRAS steering committee has recommended that in future GFRAS should better position itself within international debates and initiatives in RAS, agriculture, and food security, and indicate the role of RAS in agricultural innovation systems.

And where is GFRAS headed in 2014? We recognise the diversity of our members and affiliates and the need to work with partners to achieve our goals. We thus are engaging with national and regional bodies as well as international organisations to encourage dialogue and produce evidence on good practices leading to better rural livelihoods. Our annual meeting will be held in Argentina on the topic of evidence and practice in RAS policies. We hope to see many of you there!

Francisco Aguirre

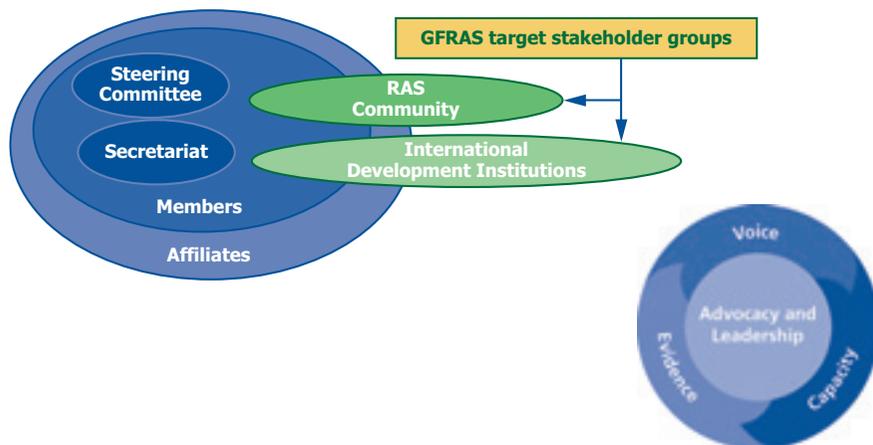
Chair

Kristin Davis

Executive Secretary

GFRAS – Making a Difference by Improving Rural Advisory Services

International development institutions and investors increasingly recognise the essential role played by rural advisory services (RAS) in reducing hunger and poverty. Yet, until recently, the services have not presented a coherent and credible voice, with limited representation in global or regional rural development forums. The highly diverse set of RAS providers have limited access to information and advice regarding funding options and means to influence policymaking.



RAS actors and fora would therefore benefit greatly from more interaction through knowledge sharing and peer-to-peer experience exchange. The Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) meets the need for a formal structure to proactively promote the strengthening of rural advisory services.

GFRAS' mission is to provide advocacy and leadership on pluralistic, demand-driven rural advisory services within the global development agenda. Our vision is to see rural advisory services effectively contributing to the sustainable reduction of hunger and poverty worldwide.

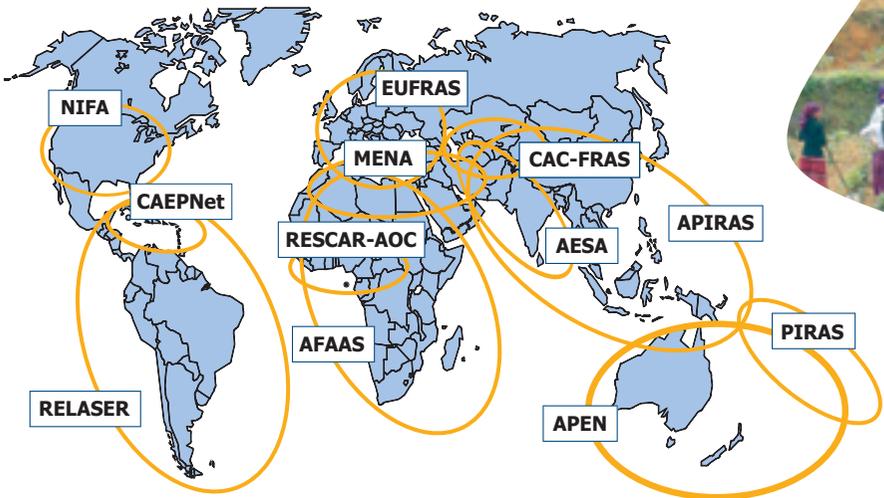
By working at different levels, GFRAS helps regional actors to present their perspectives in the global development arena, and provides a mechanism for global perspectives to engage at the regional and national level. This engagement mechanism strengthens the role of advisory services in agricultural development. GFRAS allows RAS providers and other organisations with an interest in RAS to have a voice, to engage in dialogue, and to promote a supportive environment for investment in RAS. GFRAS supports studies and evidence on effective RAS approaches and policies. It also strengthens the capacity of RAS practitioners through networking and interaction.

How to Get Involved

The GFRAS community is made up of affiliates and members. Affiliates are individuals from all regions and sectors that are interested in RAS. Affiliation with GFRAS is open, informal, free of cost, and on an individual basis. Affiliates receive information and regular communication from the GFRAS secretariat and can attend the annual meeting. Affiliates should register on the GFRAS website at www.g-fras.org. Those who do so receive special updates.

Members are organisations or institutions drawn from the affiliates at the invitation of the GFRAS steering committee. Members commit to actively promoting GFRAS and its principles. They support monitoring and evaluating the forum in their region or sector, or participate in working groups.

Another way to get involved with GFRAS is by joining a working group. Working groups are composed of GFRAS affiliates or members actively working around a thematic topic across regions and organisations. Working groups are formed on a demand-driven basis with the direction of the GFRAS steering committee. Working group members show a keen interest to regularly participate in the implementation and development of the GFRAS strategy and organisational development around their topic.



Regional and sub-regional networks of GFRAS:
Find all the contacts on pages 9 to 19 or 32.

The Integration of Nutrition within Extension and Advisory Services



Secure Nutrition
Linking agriculture, food security, and nutrition

GFRAS and the World Bank's Secure Nutrition Knowledge Platform published a study in 2013 to examine the integration and linkages of nutrition within extension and advisory services. The study identified potential for closer integration of nutrition and EAS, but many challenges must be met to achieve this.

There is a rising awareness globally, within development institutions and governments, for the potential of the agriculture sector to influence the production and consumption of nutritious foods necessary for healthy and active lives. Nutrition-sensitive agriculture aims to maximise the impact of nutrition outcomes for a population through sustainable farming systems that employ a “nutrition lens”, while minimising the potential for unintended negative consequences that may result from the sector's economic and production-driven goals. However, the linkages between agriculture and nutrition – and the mechanisms for effectively delivering nutrition-sensitive agriculture services to rural households – are not well documented.

Agricultural extension and advisory services (EAS) are often mentioned as a promising platform for the delivery of nutrition knowledge and practices, due to the close interaction that EAS agents have with farmers through their role as service providers in rural areas. Yet the context in which any nutrition knowledge is delivered by EAS agents, and the mechanisms for doing so, is unclear.



The purpose of this study was to examine the integration of nutrition and agricultural EAS in Africa, South Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Researchers used a systematic literature review, survey, and semi-structured key informant interviews. Data were collected between December 2012 and June 2013.

Findings

The rationale for the integration of nutrition within EAS lies in the opportunity to leverage key strengths of agriculture EAS systems and agents, including: an established infrastructure, reach, community trust, and cultural awareness, including an understanding of how to mitigate the constraints faced by farmers.

Consequently, although the report is premised on the notion that there is potential to increase alignment and collaboration of nutrition and agriculture through EAS, there are in fact differing opinions as to whether integration is viable or beneficial, and countries approach the integration of nutrition within EAS in different ways. This study indicates that countries vary in the scope of their integrated nutrition EAS programs and activities, the types of organisations that are involved in implementation, and the core functions of EAS agents, including how they incorporate nutrition messaging and the clientele they target. Rather than a comprehensive national nutrition EAS program, some countries target EAS towards specific regions based on their burden of malnutrition, food insecurity, or poverty. EAS agents may work in the public sector, the private sector, or may even be volunteers



who have been nominated by their community. The services provided by EAS agents working in nutrition are diverse, and their role often extends beyond that of the traditional frontline agricultural extension agent. The study looks at the different roles of these extension agents and how they could be used to promote the topic of nutrition, and identifies a series of challenges for this endeavour, especially regarding the training of the extension agents.

In an integrated EAS system, agents from different disciplines must work together towards common objectives. Multi-sectoral coordination, particularly between the agriculture and health sectors, lies at the heart of integrating nutrition within EAS. This level of coordination is a political challenge requiring institutional innovation to facilitate and generate political pressure.

This text is a shortened version of the executive summary that was edited by Andrea Spry and based on the full report authored by Jessica Fanzo, Quinn Marshall, Joyce Wong, Rafael I. Merchan, Mona I. Jaber, Alejandro Souza, and Neelam Verjee. The publication is available for download at www.g-fras.org



GFRAS Regional Networks

■ AFAAS – African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services

Founding year	2004
Member	36 countries
Contact	Dr. Silim M. Nahdy AFAAS Secretariat Plot 22A, Nakasero Road P. O. Box 34624, Kampala, Uganda Phone +256-31-2-313400 secretariat@afaas-africa.org www.afaas-africa.org



“After over ten years of working in the field of advisory services and five years of coordinating efforts on the continent, my biggest desire is that efforts by all agricultural innovation system actors should be at the centre of agricultural development in our regions and globally. With this goal, AFAAS – as a constituent of GFRAS – continues to strengthen its collaboration and partnerships with international, continental, regional, and national research and development systems for the ultimate aim of enhancing access to knowledge, innovations, and technologies by innovation system actors. Working from this angle, partnerships for agricultural development are more likely to ensure well-targeted investments from both the public and private sectors, as well as from individual farmers. Economic growth should not be for the lucky few at the top, it ought to be broad-based, for everybody, and a good place to start is in the agricultural sector. These partnerships will help widen access to technology and link farmers to markets. Thus enhanced utilisation of improved knowledge, technologies, and innovations by agricultural value chain actors for improving productivity oriented towards their individual and national development objectives remains a core function of rural advisory services!” *Max Olupot, Technical Assistant at AFAAS Secretariat*

Events in 2013

- 4th AFAAS Extension week and General Assembly, 5th to 10th August, 2013 in Gaborone, Botswana, 320 participants.
- Communication, Information, and Knowledge Management Training Workshop, Kampala, Uganda, June 2013.

■ AESA – Agricultural Extension in South Asia

Founding year	2011
Member countries	8
Members	4500 members in the AESA Facebook group aesa_gfras2011@yahoo.com www.aesa-gfras.net



Contacts

- Dr. Rasheed Sulaiman V.
Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy (CRISP)
Plot No. 70, # 8-2-612/54/1, Gaffar Khan Colony, Road No. 10,
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Phone +91-40-23301976
rasheed.sulaiman@gmail.com
 - Dr. R. Saravanan
College of Horticulture and Forestry, Central Agricultural University (CAU)
Pasighat 791 102, Arunachal Pradesh, India
Mobile +91-9436054939
saravananraj@hotmail.com
-



“AESA Facebook group has currently more than 2000 members who are sharing and interacting on different aspects of extension and advisory services in this region. AESA received funding support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to strengthen its communication and knowledge management activities and to organise its first face-to-face meeting. AESA published several blogs, good practices and meeting notes during the year in its web portal. The credit for its achievements goes to the continued commitment and dedication of the AESA team and the support it has from GFRAS.”

Muhammad Ali, AESA country focal point, Pakistan

Publications in 2013

- 22 blogs on contemporary issues in extension, three good practices related to knowledge promotion and seven meeting notes were published on the AESA webportal.
- Links to new publications, training, and conferences were shared among the members through Facebook group and webportal.

Events in 2013

- Dr. Rasheed Sulaiman V. made a presentation on GFRAS/AESA in Bangladesh (Bangladesh Agricultural University; Department of Agricultural Extension DAE) and Sri Lanka (Department of Agricultural Extension, University of Peradeniya). Senior officers, faculty and students participated in these events.
- Dr. Rasheed Sulaiman V. and Dr. R Saravanan promoted AESA/GFRAS in the “International Conference on Extension Educational Strategies for Sustainable Agricultural Development”, Bangalore, India, December 2013.

■ APIRAS – Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services Network

Founding year	2011
Members/participant	27 institutions, 35 individual members
Contact	Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) College 4031 Laguna, Philippines apirasnetwork@hotmail.com www.apirasnetwork.org



“The most important moment for APIRAS was the 4th GFRAS meeting in Berlin, which made possible the attendance of several from the Asia-Pacific Region. This provided an opportunity to organise a side event for APIRAS. The dinner meeting was organised and sponsored jointly by SEARCA and GFRAS as side event during the 4th GFRAS Meeting. A good number of representatives from East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands were in the meeting. There was an outpouring of interest to organise national fora in countries such as Laos, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, East Timor, Fiji, Kiribati, and Samoa. The presence of the GFRAS secretariat and Dr. Tom Anyonge of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), plus the encouragement to work out a proposal for IFAD support for APIRAS were indeed exhilarating.”

Virginia Cardenas, Deputy Director-Administration SEARCA



Publications in 2013

- Assessment of Current Capacities and Needs for Institutional and Individual Capacity Development in Agricultural Innovation Systems in Asia, Los Banos, Laguna, 2013.

Events in 2013

- APIRAS Dinner Meeting in Berlin (side event of the 4th GFRAS Annual Meeting) September 2013.
- National Conference on Extension in Indonesia held at Bogor University and Gdja Mahda University, 150 participants.
- Leadership Excellence for Academe Program for Southeast Asia (Leadership Training in Chang Mai, Thailand, for Higher Education Institutions wherein the “New Extensionist” was discussed); participated in by 25 officials; sponsored by SEARCA and the Maejo University in Thailand.
- Flagship Course in the Management of Extension Services in state Colleges and Universities (SCUs) designed especially for Vice Presidents and Directors of Extension in the SCUs in the whole Philippines, 80 participants; sponsored by the Philippine Commission on Higher Education, and the Development Academy of the Philippines.
- Institutional Development Assistance for Yezin Agricultural University Consultation where the “New Extensionist” was discussed (this is a project of SEARCA for Myanmar government).
- Joint research on “Compendium of Extension and Technology Transfer Modalities in Agriculture, Fisheries, and Natural Resources in the Philippines”, jointly implemented by the Philippine Extension Network (PEN), Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic, and Natural Resources and Development (PCAARRD), Philippine Department of Agriculture, Agricultural, and Training Institute (DA-ATI), and the University of the Philippines Los Banos UPLB.

■ APEN Australasia – Pacific Extension Network Inc.

Founding year	1993, Incorporated 1994
Members	438 individuals, including 32 overseas affiliates
Contact	Dr. Rosemary Currie APEN Secretariat P.O. Box 1239 Wodonga Vic 3689 Australia Phone +61 (02) 6024 5349 info@apen.org.au

“For me the most important moment for APEN in 2013 was the APEN International Conference, which was held at Lincoln University in the South Island of New Zealand in August, which is winter in the Southern Hemisphere. This meant it was quite cold and at one stage snow came down to around 300 metres and was visible on the Alps. Christchurch and the University were still recovering from the horrific earthquake and still getting tremors. Around 150 people came from both the public and private sectors from New Zealand, all states of Australia, and from the Asia/Pacific region. A special edition of the Extension Farming Systems journal will soon be on-line at www.apen.org.au.”

Roy Murray-Prior, Agribusiness RD&E Consultant, Yungaburra, Australia

Publications in 2013

- Volume 9 of the Extension Farming Systems Journal containing papers from the APEN International Conference. 41 papers and 296 pages.
- Extension Net Vol 20 No 3 (16 pages) and Vol 21 No 1 (20 pages).

Events in 2013

- APEN International Conference 2013 (APEN ICNZ 13), Transformative Change: Chosen or Unchosen: Pathways to innovation, resilience and prosperity, 26 – 28 August 2013, Christchurch, New Zealand. 147 Participants.
- APEN supported Webinars with DAFF Qld and Citrix were viewed at 1124 computers live and 1870 accessed the recordings later. There were 8 webinars with separate topics and presenters. An average of 273 registered for each webinar.

Founding year	2013
Members	35
Contact	David Dolly Faculty of Science and Agriculture University of the West Indies, Saint Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago Phone 1 (868) 662 2002 external 3204 farmdavid42@gmail.com



“The most important moment for the organisation in 2013 was the manner in which CAEPNet focussed on the extension profession at its launch in Guyana and the overwhelming support which it received in return from the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED). COTED represents member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and has agricultural related responsibilities as part of its mandate. At the official launch in Georgetown, Guyana, CAEPNet had an important support team in the Honourable Ministers of Agriculture from Saint Lucia and Guyana and the Dean of the Faculty of Food and Agriculture of the University of the West Indies. In the audience was a mix of citizens interested in agriculture matters and several leaders of extension advisory activities from the Caribbean who were attending the Caribbean Week of Agriculture. This was a further motivation for CAEPNet to continue its initiatives which can improve the region’s advisory functions in the coming years. Lead members in the new network were very pleased with the launch. They held a strategy meeting at the event and have since continued their efforts to build a strong organisation.”

David Dolly, University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago

Publications in 2013

- Dolly D. (2013) Launching the Caribbean Agricultural Providers Network, CWA, Georgetown. Guyana, 2013 (6 pages).
- Business Focus, Nov/Dec 2013 Saint Lucia News, Regional Agricultural Network launched.

Events in 2013

- CAEPNet launch, 9 October, 2013, 35 participants.
- Regional Extension meeting “Networking for Change”, 28 February to 1 March 2013, St Augustine, Trinidad Tobago.

■ CAC-FRAS – Central Asia and Caucasus Forum for Rural Advisory Services

Contact Elisabeth Katz
Training Advisory and Innovation Centre (TAIS)
43/1, Grajdanskaya Street, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
Phone 996 (0)312 36 55 66
eka.rdconsulting@gmail.com

This is a emerging network.

■ EUFRAS – European Forum for Farm and Rural Advisory Services

Founding year 2013
Members 16 organisations
Contact Edgars Linde
European Forum for Farm and Rural Advisory Services
Rigas street 34, Ozolnieki, Ozolnieki Parish,
Ozolnieki County, 3018 Latvia
Phone 00371 63050220
edgars.linde@llkc.lv



“The idea about the creation of a united European Rural Consultants Organisation to exchange experiences and latest research discoveries originated already in 2002. 23 September 2013 was the lucky date when this idea was brought into life and the European Forum for Farm and Rural Advisory

Services was officially founded. With EUFRAS’ establishment, we are one step closer to blend together the latest information on agricultural technology and rural development experience from all over Europe, which allows to constantly improve advisory services for farmers and rural areas.”

Edgars Linde, Board member at Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre

Events in 2013

- Preparatory Workshop for the foundation of a European Forum for Rural Advisory Services in Wroclaw, Poland, 27 February, 2013, 12 participants.
- EUFRAS Foundation Event on 23 September at the 4th GFRAS Annual Meeting, Berlin (Germany), 24 – 26 September 2013, 33 participants.

■ MENA – Middle East and North Africa Extension Network

Contact Hala Yousry
Desert Research Center
23 Z, 25th January St., Megawra 16, Egypt
Phone 2 022 929 2905
halayousry@hotmail.com

This is an emerging network.

■ NIFA – National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Contact Greg Crosby
National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
1400 Independence Ave, SW,
20250 Washington, United States of America
Phone 1-202 401-6050
gcrosby@nifa.usda.gov

Events in 2013

- Mobilising Extension and Advisory Services to Improve Food Security and the Livelihoods of the Rural Poor, MEAS, NIFA (USDA) Washington DC, USA, April 2013, 30 participants.

■ PIRAS – Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services Network

Founding year 2005
Members/participants All 22 Pacific island member countries of Secretariat of the Pacific Community
Contact Siosuia Halavatau
Land Resources Division, Secretariat of the Pacific Community SPC
Private Mail Bag, Fiji
Phone +679 3370 733
siosiuah@spc.int
www.spc.int

“Our biggest achievement in 2013 was that extension and RAS was included in the objective 2014 – 2017 of the Pacific Community Land Resources Division (LRD). Under objective 2.2.2.1, Support Development of Strategic Plans for Countries, we have already developed two countries agricultural strategic plans for American Samoa and Kiribati. We are now finalising the strategy for Niue. During 2014 we will implement a quick survey to confirm whether issues from a 2006 participatory assessment of agricultural extension delivery in the Pacific are still valid and based on this the PIRAS strategy will be developed with national stakeholders.”

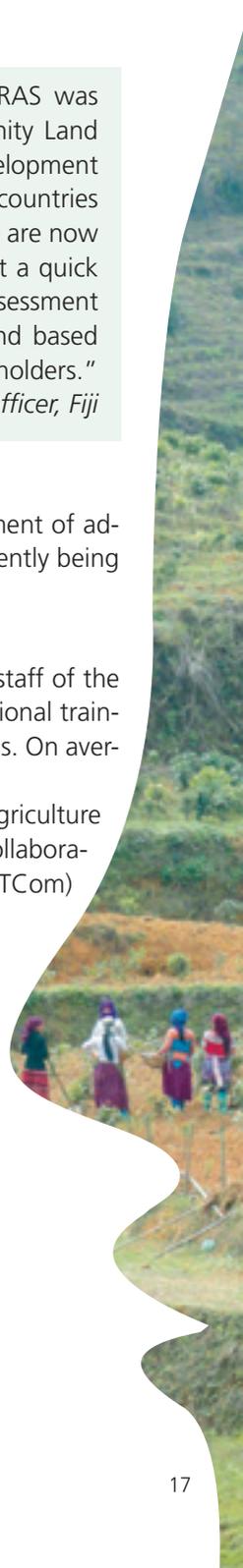
Stephen Hazelman, Organic Extension Systems Officer, Fiji

Publications in 2013

- Guide for community based vulnerability analysis and development of adaptation strategy that has been used in 6 countries and is currently being broadened into an Integrated Vulnerability Analysis approach.

Events in 2013

- Regional training in community based vulnerability analysis for staff of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), 30 participants. National trainings in Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Samoa, and Solomon Islands. On average about 15 to 20 participants per country.
- Training “Building capacity of youth” as part of the Organic Agriculture Training for Extension Providers, Under UNDP funding and in collaboration with the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) over 50 participants.



Founding year	2010
Members	17 countries
Registered Members	300
Contact	RELASER c/o Rimisp – Centro Latinoamericano para el Desarrollo Rural, Oficina Central, Huelén 10, Piso 6, Providencia, Santiago, Chile Phone +56-22-364557 rimisp@rimisp.org www.relaser.org



“During the year 2013, RELASER has taken important steps towards the consolidation of its mission to support technical and rural extension systems in Latin America. Shortly after beginning our journey, relevant steps wehre achieved.

The formation of several Country Fora have established spaces for discussion and dialogue with authorities to propose and agree on initiatives to strengthen extension systems as well as linkages to agricultural research towards accelerating innovation processes.

The study about extension reforms performed in 14 countries in Latin America with the support of FAO and Inter American Development Bank (IADB) highlights the importance of systematising and sharing knowledge about the context and policies applied in our countries.

No doubt that there is still a lot to “weave”. Fortunately Latin America has very rich experience, professionals, commitment, and results. The task of the RELASER team will be: to continue supporting the extension systems oriented to sustainable development, in the frame of innovation.”

Julio Catullo, INTA - Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria, Argentina

Publications in 2013

- Final Report of the “Study of Extension Reforms of Central America and the Caribbean” and “Study of Extension Reforms of South America” (FAO-IADB-RELASER).
- Policy briefs elaborated after the recommendations of the “Study of Extension Reforms of Central America and the Caribbean” (FAO-RELASER).

Events in 2013

- Meeting of Coordinators of Country Fora, Bogotá, Colombia, June 2013. 17 participants developed a joint document “Guidelines for the formation of Country Forums” based on the current experiences.
- Initial and Final Workshops for the “Study of Extension Reforms” in 14 Countries of the Region (FAO-IADB-RELASER). Bogotá, Colombia, and Lima, Peru, 20 participants.
- 4th Annual Meeting of RELASER, “Public Policies in Rural Extension and their contribution to Rural Development in Latin America”, Brasilia, Brasil, November 2013. 80 participants.
- Steering committee meetings, Asunción, Paraguay, March 2013 and Brasilia, Brasil, Novembre 2013, 12 participants.
- Meeting of the members of the Steering Committee with the members of the Paraguayan’ Country Forum of RELASER, Asunción, Paraguay, March 2013 (25 participants).

RESCAR-AOC – Réseau des Services de Conseil Agricole et Rural des Pays Francophones d’Afrique de l’Ouest et du Centre

Founding year	2011
Members	122
Contact	Patrice Djamen ACT African Conservation Tillage Network 01 BP 1607, Ouagadougou 01, Burkina Faso Phone 00226 50 31 05 10 djamenana@yahoo.fr patrice.djamen@act-africa.org



“The most important achievement during 2013 was the finalisation of discussions with CORAF/ WECARD about their support to the initialisation of RESCAR-AOC. These discussions led to the recruitment of a consultant to facilitate the process for the setting up of RESCAR-AOC. The charter, governance structure, and other statutory documents have been developed. The strategic plan and the operational programme are under preparation.”

Patrice Djamen, Coordinator RESCAR-AOC, Burkina Faso

Publications in 2013

- Charter and governance structure of RESCAR-AOC (draft version to be finalised during the General Constitutive Assembly).

GFRAS Consortium on Extension Education and Training

The Consortium on Extension Education and Training is a platform for professionals in universities and other training institutions, researchers in the field of extension, and/or service providers to various clientele along the agriculture value chain and in need of forms of support in rural livelihoods and wellbeing. One of its central function is to contributing actively to the “New Extensionist” theoretical and research base and actively factoring such information into teaching and research curriculums aimed at training.

The training of agricultural extension service providers is critical. The challenge is twofold: Firstly, enrolment in agriculture and extension programmes overall is low and even dwindling, at a time when we face enormous challenges in terms of improving food security and poverty eradication. Secondly, universities and other types of education and training institutions need to continuously review and strengthen their extension-related programmes to better address contemporary issues like climate change, new concepts of productivity and value chains, and gender equality. In this regard, the traditional picture of the extension agent as a production facilitator has to change. Extension should now be seen as playing a facilitating role in the innovation systems.

Current extension training should change from a decades-old “top-down” “supply-driven” approach where the curriculum is pre-determined and is “one size fits all” to a more pluralistic and demand-driven system that can meet actual needs of the extension workers. There must be good interaction within and between all players concerned to build sufficient and efficient capacity. As a first step into this direction, in 2012 GFRAS produced



the publication “The ‘New Extensionist’: Roles, Strategies, and Capacities to Strengthen Extension and Advisory Services,” which indicates the different needs for capacities and skills on individual, organisational, and system level. The consortium took up this challenge in 2013 and is using it to evaluate various curricula from extension training courses to identify gaps and possible improvements. The aim is to develop a framework for extension training at the undergraduate level.

The consortium was established during a prioritisation exercise on capacities needed on the “New Extensionist”, during a meeting in Pretoria in March 2013.

Find more about the consortium on www.g-fras.org/consortium
On this page you can also join the consortium’s mailing list.

“As part of their activities the consortium set up a directory for extension education and training providers. This open data resource provides a space to collect basic information about institutions that provide education (academic or vocational) and continuing training for extension agents. In a special section institutions can list more details of their courses.

The directory is part of the more comprehensive directory of extension providers which includes all other aspects of extension apart from education and training. www.g-fras.org/training_directory”

Adolpus Johnson, Njala University, Sierra Leone



Overview of the GFRAS Work Plan 2014 – 2015

To reinforce and amplify its work, GFRAS will give emphasis in 2013 – 2014 to its objective 2: Supporting the development and synthesis of evidence-based approaches and policies for improving the effectiveness of RAS. The aim is to fill the gap that exists between knowing about potentially effective advisory services approaches and identifying the “best-fit” practices that should be deployed under specific circumstances.

The “New Extensionist”

The New Extensionist activity of GFRAS will help clarify the roles, strategies, and capacities to strengthen extension and advisory services. The New Extensionist document examines capacities at the individual, organisational, and system level, focusing on those needed to play an effective role in agricultural innovation systems. Activities in 2014 will concentrate on the use of the position paper in the regions as a basis for advocacy and discussion at this level.

www.g-fras.org/new-extensionist

Evaluation Initiative and International Reference Group

This initiative is assessing the effects of reform efforts in agricultural extension over the past 15 – 20 years to understand and explain whether and how these efforts have succeeded in promoting the intended improvements. We are currently evaluating Brazil’s extension system and supporting Laos to evaluate their system too. The findings will inform and advance extension practice worldwide and help to guide future investments. An international reference group advises regions and countries on evaluation. Outputs will include country-level reports and policy briefs.

Global Good Practices Initiative

This initiative is identifying and analysing good practices across five RAS dimensions (governance structures, policy, capacity and management, advisory methods, and cross-cutting issues). Using a typology based on RAS themes in different country contexts (socio-economic, political, organisational, and ecological), the initiative has developed a framework to systematically document cases of RAS provision to see what approaches worked where and why. It will provide decision support tools to RAS managers, RAS practitioners, educators and trainers, policy makers, and international development institutions. Activities in 2014 include the publication of several briefs intended for practical use that exemplify a specific good practice including farmer field schools and innovation platforms.

Working Group: Gender Equality in Rural Advisory Services

The purpose of the working group is to create an effective global voice for commitment to increased gender equality and women’s empowerment through improved access to and participation in RAS. Activities in 2014 include the promotion of the brief “Gender Equality in Rural Advisory Services.”

International Year of Family Farming IYFF

The UN declared 2014 the International Year of Family Farming to focus the world’s attention on family farming and smallholders and their important role in agriculture. The pre-2014 consultations showed that rural advisory services play a key role for the sustainable development of family farms. GFRAS will therefore engage with this topic in 2014 in several events.



The Role of Private Sector and Producer Organisations in Rural Advisory Services

4th GFRAS Annual Meeting, Berlin, Germany

*A report by Dr. Rasheed Sulaiman V, Director,
Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy (CRISP), India*

First of all, I am really amazed at the interest and enthusiasm of the large number of practitioners, managers, policy makers, researchers, and donors involved in extension and advisory services (EAS) who participated in this meeting and their strong conviction in the transformative power of EAS. I often fail to see this “energy” and passion for EAS elsewhere. What did I learn at this meeting?

Private Sector and Producer Organisations in EAS still Need Public Investments

EAS provision is pluralistic in most countries. Private sector and producer organisations do play an important role in advisory provision and organising other support and services that are critical for farming. The presentations during the conference revealed the importance of strengthening coordination of pluralistic extension systems and developing capacities for collaboration. Small-scale farmers are often not effectively served by the private sector and producer organisations, and public financing is often needed to ensure equity in service provision. Public investments are also required for enhancing the capacities of various providers. The field trip at Branderburg during the meeting clearly demonstrated that the lack of investments in EAS provision is an important concern even in developed countries. There’s an evident need to widen the reach of advisory services and capacity development of advisors.



The Need for Strengthening Capacities of Producer Organisations

Producer organisations are critical for promoting demand-led extension and their capacities need to be enhanced to help them play this role. A lot more needs to be done to make farmer organisations more inclusive (greater participation of small farms and catering to their interests). However lack of mobilisation and facilitation skills among EAS providers currently constrain farmer organisational development. Quite often small farmers and their organisations need long-term handholding support to evolve as viable producer organizations. They also need capacities related to mobilisation, facilitation, and business management skills.

The Importance of Networks and the Learning of from Practice

Eelke Wielinga's (LINK Consult, The Netherlands) presentation "What makes networks work?" helped me to reflect on the quality of networks which I am a part of. The presentation highlighted the importance of "free actors" and how "warm" networks evolve into "cold" organisations if we fail to recognize and maintain the "energy" within the networks.

Extension Practitioners Keen to Learn about Good Practices but Desired Format not available

GIZ (German International Cooperation), the main host of this Annual Meeting together with GFRAS, organised a side event to exchange ideas for a practice-oriented knowledge platform on good practices in agricultural extension. This meeting highlighted the need for developing practice-oriented 4-page-documents in "how-to" format, for use by those working at the grassroots level. A Technical Advisory Committee was formed to take this initiative forward that will work on the creation of such a platform. Find more about the 4th GFRAS Annual Meeting at

www.g-fras.org



Combined Skills for Advisors and Extension Agents Are often in Short Supply

Ideally, individual advisors should have a combination of technical and functional skills as articulated in the GFRAS position paper, The “New Extensionist”. But often these are in short supply. Capacity development of several thousand EAS staff, already in service, especially in functional skills such as facilitation, mobilisation, brokering, negotiating, networking, partnership development, etc. is a major challenge everywhere. One of the farmers whom we met during field visit in Brandenburg told us that farmers look for the following qualities in an advisor: sound technical know how, project preparation skills, and good understanding of changing political, financial, policy-related, and regulatory environments.

Reforms in Extension Curricula Are Long Overdue

EAS staff often lack adequate skills and capacities and there is a need to review the quality of extension curricula followed in universities and staff training centres. A side event of the GFRAS Consortium on Extension Education and Training was organised during the conference to take forward the commitment and enthusiasm of academia in universities and other training institutions (and also researchers in the field of extension) who are keen to create a new generation of EAS staff with the required competencies. The meeting discussed the challenges in reforming the curricula, especially the huge inertia of the faculty; the importance of user consultations and participatory curriculum development; and linking with the private sector to introduce new courses.



“Me and my colleague from Concorcia Lechere Chile had big expectations regarding the GFRAS Annual Meeting - and they were all met and even succeeded. We had the opportunity to learn about extension models all over the continents, we could share our experience on the dairy sector in Chile, and also discovered a great occasion to do networking with extensionists and experts all around the world.

I want to highlight the opportunity to create new contacts with a considerable number of extension professionals and develop new capacities or identify gaps where we need to do some training. Finally, the very well organised field trip gave us an impressive and original view into urban agriculture practiced around Berlin.”

Catalina Montalv, Head of Extension Department, Dairy Consortium, Chile

Mobilising Extension and Advisory Services to Improve Food Security and the Livelihoods of the Rural Poor

GFRAS, Mobilising Extension and Advisory Services (MEAS), and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) co-hosted a seminar and e-discussion on how to mobilize the potential of extension and advisory services (EAS) in April 2013 in Washington, DC, USA.

The meeting was preceded by an e-discussion hosted by GFRAS and MEAS that asked the following questions:

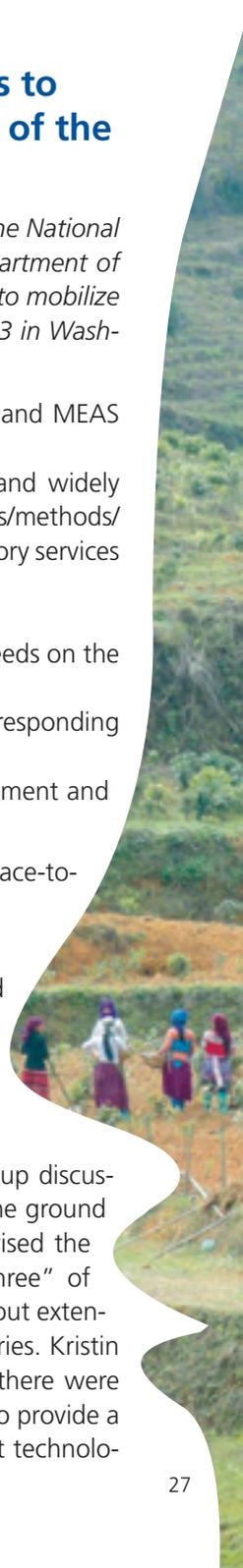
1. Advisory services and extension are “back on the agenda” and widely recognized as critical to rural development. What approaches/methods/tools – traditional and newer – are available for delivery of advisory services and scaling up?
2. What are the success stories?
3. What are the current extension and advisory services priority needs on the ground?
4. How are actors (governments, donors, private sector, NGOs) responding to those needs?
5. What is the way forward to effective and coordinated development and implementation of advisory services?

The results of this e-discussion were then used as a basis for the face-to-face meeting in Washington.

The objectives of the meeting were:

- To highlight the shared interest and expertise in extension and advisory services among the invited institutions.
- To take stock of remaining gaps/needs to strengthen/mobilize EAS.
- To agree on how to better coordinate and work collectively to achieve synergies in the various initiatives and opportunities.

The event consisted of two panel presentations and time for group discussion to answer the questions. Group A presented the needs on the ground from a regional and programmatic standpoint, and also summarised the e-discussion. Silim Nahdy from AFAAS talked about the “big three” of capacity, sustainable financing, and policy. Andrea Bohn talked about extension programs that work and MEAS assessments in various countries. Kristin Davis summarised the previous week’s e-discussion, saying that there were many (pluralistic) approaches but that basically EAS was evolving to provide a diverse set of functions that support livelihoods and offer relevant technologies and information integrated with appropriate services.



Group B presented some responses to these needs from the perspectives of the private sector and donors. Suzanne Poland from USAID mentioned the need for better coordination between research and EAS so that new technologies reach the farmer (and other value chain actors) sooner and the pipeline of technologies in development are responsive to farmer feedback. Clint Cuny from Export Trading USA LLC discussed the need for sustainability and monitoring & evaluation. T. J. Ryan from ACDI/VOCA talked about successful farmer field school implementation including effective communication, state of the art technical information, validating farmer knowledge, the on-farm agro-ecosystem analysis. Greg Crosby from USDA spoke about the lack of a general business case and justification for EAS that cross cuts sectors such as agriculture, health, and science and technology policy.

Small groups then discussed how this group of participants, working in a more coordinated way, could respond to the obstacles mentioned in Panel A. Suggestions included the following:

- Use clearing houses and establish centers of excellence
- Make use of communities of practice
- Install mentoring programs
- Use rosters of experts (e.g., GFRAS; Agrilinks, WEN)
- Expand and enrich the GFRAS directory of EAS providers – the directory of who is who in the world of extension
- Produce thematic resources and good practice guides
- Produce and promote evidence of impact of EAS
- Provide guidance on how to influence policy
- Create and promote profiles and skills of the “New Extensionist”

You can watch the panels at www.meas-extension.org/workshops/gfras-meas-nifa-symposium

Financial Report

GFRAS was supported in 2013 by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), the European Union EU through the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Table 1 shows the income in 2013 by contributor.

Table 1. Financial contributions realised in 2013

Contributor	Amount in USD
SDC	441 123
BMGF	132 631
USAID	113 253
EU/FAO	104 583
IFAD	8 898
Rollover from 2012	30 744
Total	831 232

Because the contributions are not necessarily in sync with the calendar year, the financial contributions in Table 1 do not always reflect the total contracts with funders. Rather, the table shows the actual income in 2013. Also, some 2013 expenses will be accounted for in 2014 due to the funding cycle.

Table 2. Expenditures in 2013

Line Item	Amount in USD
Staff time	277 705
Meetings, conferences, and events	163 064
Support to regional networks	107 707
Consultants and special projects	118 911
Travel	15 091
Publications, web site, and communications	15 957
Management fees and overhead	111 092
Total	809 527
Net profit/loss	21 705

Unspent contributions were returned or rolled over into 2013.

Audit

The GFRAS accounting is integrated in the accounting of its host AGRIDEA and as such is submitted to a yearly audit. Further contributions are audited on request by some donors. The audit in 2013 was done by the Financial Administration of the Canton of Thurgau, Switzerland. The auditors found that the GFRAS bookkeeping was consistent with the AGRIDEA accounting and the expenditures were within the budgets established.

GFRAS Publications in 2013

Mohamed H. Abdel Aal. 2013. Arabic Translation of The “New Extensionist”: Roles, Strategies, and Capacities to Strengthen Extension and Advisory Services. Summary version. Lindau, Switzerland

Sanne Chipeta. 2013. Gender Equality in Rural Advisory Services. Lindau, Switzerland

Jessica Fanzo, Quinn Marshall, Joyce Wong, Rafael I. Merchan, Mona I. Jaber, Alejandro Souza, and Neelam Verjee. 2013. The Integration of Nutrition within Extension and Advisory Services (EAS): A Synthesis of Experiences, Lessons, and Recommendations. Lindau, Switzerland

Cristina Sette, 2013, Guia para Avaliação de Extensão Rural (Portuguese translation of chapter 1). Lindau, Switzerland

Online Products

GFRAS Directory of Education and Training Providers

The directory contains a list of organisations and institutions that provide education (academic and vocational) as well as continuing training for extension professionals. In some cases specific courses are listed.

www.g-fras.org/training_directory

Conferences and Meetings

3rd INSEE conference “Extension Educational Strategies for Sustainable Agricultural Development,” Bangalore, India, 5 to 8 December

4th RELASER Meeting, Brasilia, Brasil, 18 to 24 November

The Innovation System of Demand Driven Agricultural Research – Bridging the Implementation Gap, GIZ, Feldafing, Germany, 19 to 22 November

Research on Agricultural Extension Systems: What Have We Learned, and Where Do We Go From Here? Workshop organised by the CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions and Markets (PIM) 15 to 16 October

International AgriFood Network (IAFN) Side Event at Committee on World Food Security (CFS) CFS 40, Rome, Italy, 8 to 9 October Caribbean Week of Agriculture “Linking the Caribbean for Regional Food and Nutrition Security and Rural Development”, Georgetown, Guyana, 3 to 11 October

The Role of Private Sector and Producer Organisations in Rural Advisory Services 4th GFRAS Annual Meeting, Berlin, Germany, 24 to 26 September

Symposium on Rural Advisory Services: Modes of Sustainable Delivery, BMZ/GIZ, Bonn, Germany, 7 September

4th AFAAS Symposium “Agricultural Extension Week and General Assembly” Gaborone, Botswana, 5 to 10 August

2nd G20 Meeting of Agricultural Chief Scientists (MACS), “International co-operation in agricultural scientific research for sustainable, inclusive and balanced growth”, Moscow, Russia, 24 to 25 July

52nd Congress of the International Academy of Advisers in Agriculture and Family Entrepreneurship (IALB), Karlsruhe, Germany, 16 to 19 June

Knowledge Transfer Conference: Future of Farm Advisory Services, Dublin, Ireland, 12 June

Mobilising Extension and Advisory Services to Improve Food Security and the Livelihoods of the Rural Poor, MEAS, NIFA (USDA), Washington DC, USA, April 2013

1st Regional Meeting of Caribbean Extension Leaders, Saint Augustin, Trinidad and Tobago, 28 February to March

EUFRAS workshop, Wroclaw/Breslau, Poland, 26 to 27 February

Linkages and Representation

African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services, AFAAS

www.afaas-africa.org

Association for International Agriculture and Extension Education, AIAEE

www.aiaee.org

Global Forum on Agricultural Research, GFAR

www.egfar.org

Global Donor Platform for Rural Development, GDRPD

www.donorplatform.org

Regional Universities’ Forum (Africa), RUFORUM

www.ruforum.org

Joint Learning in Innovation Systems in African Agriculture, JOLISSA

www.jolisaa.net

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People

Steering Committee

Riikka Rajalahti, Chair (until June 2013)	World Bank, United States
Francisco Aguirre, Co-chair	RELASER, Chile
Magdalena Blum	FAO, Italy
Ernst Bolliger	Agridea, Switzerland
Virginia Cardenas	APIRAS, Philippines
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Patrice Djamen	RESCAR-AOC, Burkina Faso
Maurizio Guadagni (since July 2013)	World Bank, United States
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