Towards a network that learns

Mapping Long-term Options for GFRAS: Report

October 2010

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INTRODUCTION

In July 2010, the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) requested ETC Foundation to undertake the assignment "Mapping Long-term Options for GFRAS". The purpose of this assignment was to review a number of existing global networks, initiatives and forums in order to provide GFRAS with criteria and options for developing its long-term set-up, including structure, governance and funding mechanisms. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the assignment is found in Annex 1.

As required by the ToR, ETC compiled an initial list of 17 possible networks[1] that could be included in the review. This list was discussed with GFRAS considering aspects such as usefulness as a model for GFRAS, availability of relevant (internet-based) information and accessibility to key resource persons within the short period of the review. Eight networks which provided the diversity required for the review were selected. The list included networks of global and regional orientation, within and outside the agriculture sector, hosted and non-hosted, with a range of stakeholders and diverse funding arrangements.

This report presents the findings of this review. It begins with a brief outline of the study approach and continues to describe in detail the eight networks reviewed. Key considerations, criteria and options for GFRAS are extracted based on the information gathered through the review. The final chapter formulates a number of general conclusions.

STUDY APPROACH

Several factors were taken into consideration in developing an approach for this study. Firstly, this was largely a desk study (based mainly on web documents) which meant that the information available would perhaps not be fully consistent across all the eight networks. Secondly, this was not an evaluation and as such the individuals approached within the networks would not be obliged to provide information and would do so at their own discretion. Thirdly, the period in which the study was being done coincided with the summer vacation period (largely in Europe), which posed some difficulties in getting in touch with identified resource persons.

To start with, a (draft) case description of each network was prepared based on documents and other information on the respective websites. A simple framework was used to describe and analyse the cases that included all aspects mentioned in the ToR as well as those included in the offer by ETC for implementing the study (Annex 2). Each (draft) case description was sent by e-mail to the secretariat of the respective network and further discussed and revised through a telephone interview with a responsible staff member in the secretariat. In addition, and where possible, the case description was also sent to at least one individual who is familiar with and active within the network (e.g. network member, board member) and further discussed through a telephone interview. These interviews were used not only to supplement the information in the case descriptions but also to get the perceptions and opinions of the interviewees on the strengths and weaknesses of the organisational model of the network.

The finalised case descriptions together with additional information derived through the interviews were compared and contrasted to draw out key considerations, choices and options for GFRAS.

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[1] In this report, 'network" is used to refer also to forum, consortium, coalition and platform.

THE CASE STUDIES[2]

Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP)

Introduction

ALNAP was established in 1997 after the multi-agency evaluation of the Rwanda genocide which called for increased professionalisation of the humanitarian sector. Among several initiatives that emerged at that time, ALNAP was conceived as a mechanism for different organisations to keep each other and the wider humanitarian sector informed about their performance-related activities. Thirteen years later, ALNAP incorporates many key humanitarian organisations and experts from across the humanitarian sector. Members are drawn from donors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Red Cross/Crescent, the UN, independents and academics.

ALNAP is a learning network dedicated to improving the quality and accountability of humanitarian action by sharing lessons, identifying common problems and, where appropriate, building consensus on approaches. ALNAP uses the broad range of experience and expertise within its membership to produce tools and analysis relevant and accessible to the humanitarian sector as a whole.

With learning central to the network, ALNAP undertakes research and analysis of various aspects of humanitarian action and generates a substantial quantity of products in the form of study reports, guides and training material, issue papers, lessons papers, innovative case studies etc. The network also engages in advocacy by bringing key issues to the relevant decision makers. ALNAP exercises its convening power to bring diverse groups of stakeholders together to reflect and dialogue on issues related to humanitarian action that trigger action (e.g. meeting on media and humanitarian aid).

Structure

ALNAP is a membership network. Membership consists of Full Members and Observer Members.

The ALNAP Full Membership is designed to reflect the structure of the humanitarian sector through its five different membership groupings: donor organisations; Red Cross/Crescent movement; UN agencies; NGOs (inclusive of network/umbrella organisations) and independent academic organisations and individual experts.

To ensure a reasonable level of intimacy in discussions and meetings, the upper limit for the number of Full Members has been set at 75 currently. Most categories of Full Members pay an annual contribution (see details below). Most Full Members are organisations and nominate a representative to be the contact between the organisation and ALNAP. The Full Membership also includes a number of independent experts. Full members support, promote and play an active role in the implementation of ALNAP's vision. Full members as of December 2008: 14 donors; 7 UN agencies; 10 network/umbrella organisations; 18 International NGOs; 3 red cross agencies; 5 research institutions; 5 individual consultants/consultancy companies. All Full Members are regarded as equal players with an equal voice. All Full Members participate at biannual meetings and bring in issues of common concern to the table. They also act as "gatekeepers" and advocates within their own organisations/ and the humanitarian sector. Full Members take turns in hosting the biannual meetings.

Observer Members are individuals or organisations demonstrating an interest in issues of accountability, quality and learning in the humanitarian sector. Observer Members are not required to pay a financial contribution. They receive regular updates on ALNAP's work, and other relevant notices circulated by ALNAP members. A limited number of Observer Members are also entitled to attend the first day of ALNAP biannual meetings. By the end of 2008, the number of Observer Members was close to 1000. An individual or organisation that has been an Observer Member for more than one year can apply to become a Full Member through the secretariat.

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[2] Presented in alphabetical order

At present, the network is diverse in terms of the institutional affiliation of Full Members, but it is largely "Northern/Northern-based" organisations and individuals. According to the strategy document 2008-2013, ALNAP seeks to become a more diverse network with special emphasis to membership drawn from organisations based in crisis-affected countries. "Regional hubs" and "learning chapters" are mentioned as possible ways to extend the reach of the network globally.

The ALNAP Secretariat is hosted by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in London. ODI as a respected independent policy research institute provides ALNAP with a suitably "neutral" location to serve a diverse membership. ODI is also favourably placed in terms of access to debates, information flows and research within the humanitarian sector and gives ALNAP the institutional support of an established organisation. ODI has sole legal responsibility and liability for secretariat staff. ALNAP funds are managed through the ODI financial system and consultants are recruited on ODI contracts. The Secretariat is headed by a director who has dual reporting lines – both to ODI and to the ALNAP Steering Committee. As of 2010, the secretariat has 6 dedicated staff members (including the director, a 3-person research team, 2 communication staff and a part-time administrator).

The Secretariat is responsible for implementing all activities in the annual work plans and maintaining contacts with the full members required for specific activities. Consultants are hired-in for specific tasks. The Secretariat also organises and conducts the biannual meetings together with the full member responsible for hosting the event. The Secretariat maintains, develops and promotes the website and the evaluative reports database.

Governance

The network is governed by a Steering Committee. ALNAP's Steering Committee consists of eight full member representatives – two each from the groupings donor, UN and NGOs and one each from the Red Cross movement and the independent expert grouping. One of the members is elected as Chair. The Steering Committee determines the direction and the development of ALNAP in accordance with the views and priorities of the different constituent groups in the membership. Each steering committee member is mandated to represent the views of his/her constituent group. Decisions are taken on the basis of consensus. The term of office is two years with staggered rotation to ensure continuity. Full members within each constituent group nominate and elect their representatives to the steering committee. Elections are held during biannual meetings. Re-election is possible.

The Steering Committee meets every quarter and all members are required to attend in person or by phone. A 50% quorum is required for meetings. The Steering Committee plays a crucial role in running the network. This includes support to strategy development and monitoring its implementation; consulting with the different constituent groupings to provide constructive inputs into (draft) work plans; approving final work plans, budgets, expenditure etc.; monitoring implementation of the work plan together with the secretariat; actively identifying new members and ruling on new membership applications.

ALNAP'S guide to governance, management and membership of December 2008 spells out the roles, responsibilities and conditions for each of these categories:
http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/alnap_membership.pdf

Neither ALNAP nor the steering committee has an independent legal status. In legal terms, ALNAP is part of ODI.

Communication flows

The biannual meetings allows for regular face-to-face communication among the Full Members. These are two day events – the first day dedicated to a theme and the second to general network business. The financial crisis in 2009 and the resulting cuts in travel budgets of full member organisations resulted in a decision to reduce the number of meetings from two to one for the period 2009-2010.

The Steering Committee meets every quarter and has regular communication with the secretariat.

The website is a key communication channel and serves a much larger public beyond the network members. It is easy to navigate and contains a lot of useful information regarding the network itself. Since learning is a

priority, all the material generated through the network (i.e. case studies, papers, guides and training materials, meeting reports etc.) are clearly clustered and made available on the website. The website has a forum which provides an on-line space for Full and Observer members to dialogue on issues.

The evaluative reports database is a key tool to share and learn from experiences gathered by network members as well as other humanitarian organisations. Full members are expected to upload their reports on a regular basis, whilst others may use the facility to share their experiences. Most of the reports can be accessed by anyone. A few confidential reports are only accessible to Full Members.

ALNAP bulletins and media briefings are also used to communicate with a wider audience than the network alone.

Funding and finances

Full members contribute with an annual financial contribution and/or in-kind support (such as hosting a meeting, translation of ALNAP products etc.) A sliding scale has been calculated on the basis of annual revenues of types of organisation (in £):
- Donors – Annual contribution of 20, 30, 50 or 85,000 based on annual estimated turnover of above 25, 50, 250 and 500 million respectively.
- UN agencies – annual contribution 7,500 or 10,000 based on annual estimated turnover of 50-500 million or above 500 million respectively.
- Red Cross – annual contribution of 4,000 or 6000 based on annual estimated turnover of below 25 million or 25-50 million respectively.
- International NGOs – annual contribution 1,2,5 or 10,000 based on annual estimated turnover of below 5, 5-15, 15-150 and above 150 million respectively.

Certain categories of full members ("southern based" NGOs, research institutes, network/umbrella organisations and independent experts/consultant organisations etc.) are exempt from financial contribution but commit to providing in-kind support.

The Steering Committee encourages and, when necessary, facilitates prompt delivery of funding from members.

The network (including the secretariat) is financed entirely by the member's contributions. There is mention of instances where the pledges of members were not realised in time and ODI had to underwrite some of the expenses. This issue has been discussed by the steering committee and a decision to get member contributions for two years up front has helped solve this problem.

ALNAP's annual income in the year 2007-2008 was approximately £500,000 with around 65% spent on secretariat salaries and ODI overhead/charges and 35% on activities such as studies, meetings and communication/promotion (ALNAP Annual Report 2007-2008).

Some specific initiatives of the network are funded separately. Each of these initiatives are carried by a semi-autonomous working group within the network that has one or more donors involved who are responsible for raising the funds. These groups draw in the expertise of the Secretariat when required.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

ALNAP work plans are built around initiatives. Initial ideas for initiatives come from different sources within the network and go through a process of consultation and approval by the steering committee. In certain cases, the steering committee opts to seek wider consensus and tables the idea to the full members at a biannual meeting before approval.

ALNAP annual work plans are drafted by the secretariat based on the five-year strategy (currently 2008-2013). The Steering Committee consults with the relevant constituency groups and provides constructive feedback on the draft annual work plans. It also approves the final work plans, budgets and expenditures. The Steering Committee monitors the implementation of the work plans in collaboration with the secretariat and offers advice and guidance on substantive issues and new ideas in relation to the implementation of the work plan.

The ALNAP annual report is published around July every year. It provides an account of the previous year's achievements and financial performance. The period covered is that of the financial year running from 1 April to 31 March.

Frequent face-to-face meetings of the Steering Committee (once a quarter) and the Full Members (twice a year) allows for fairly close monitoring of the network's activities as well as of the secretariat.

A constituency feedback session is included in each biannual meeting. Members of the different constituency groups get together and provide feedback on questions related to the functioning of ALNAP.

A member's poll – through a phone survey – is conducted every 18 months to get feedback from the membership. The most recent poll was conducted in early 2010 with 50 members – 38 full and 14 observer members – to find out whether ALNAP's work is relevant, accessible and useful. The results – which show satisfaction across ALNAP's membership – are posted on the website.

The strategy for 2008-2013 has a chapter on M&E which places emphasis on the need for a structured approach to monitoring the effects of ALNAP's work. The secretariat has been tasked to develop a communications strategy and monitoring plan.

(Compiled from www.alnap.org)

The Food Agriculture and Natural Resource Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)

Introduction

Following a call in 1994 for an autonomous policy research institution to advise Governments and the Regional Economic Communities by Ministers of Agriculture from eastern and southern Africa, a group of eight agricultural policy research institutes responded in 1997 by forming an *independent source of policy analysis and advice* related to Food Agriculture and Natural Resource policies. This led to the emergence and marked the creation of FANRPAN. In 2002, FANRPAN formalised its structure and adopted its constitution and by-laws.

FANRPAN is now a regional network which operates in 13 countries in the southern African region. A fourteenth country, Democratic Republic of Congo, is likely to join this year. Its main objectives are to:
- Promote appropriate agricultural policy in order to reduce poverty, increase food security and enhance sustainable agricultural development in the SADC region.
- Improve policy analysis, research and formulation of priority SADC agricultural research themes.
- Develop human and institutional capacity for coordinated dialogue among stakeholders.
- Improve policy decision-making through the generation, exchange and use of policy related knowledge and information.

Policy research and studies form a major part of the work. Policy dialogue also receives considerable attention through participation in or organisation of policy oriented meetings and workshops. With support of various donors a number of capacity building projects have been implemented. The growing number of donor-funded projects has led to a further widening of the scope of activities, including the organisation of multi-stakeholder processes and audio and visual productions.

Most activities have been implemented by or are managed by the Regional Secretariat. Research studies may be commissioned to others, including network members. Nodes are encouraged to raise funds for implementation of country-specific activities.

Structure

FANRPAN has a multi-tiered structure consisting of a Regional Secretariat based in South Africa, so-called national nodes in thirteen countries and a network of over 600 "member" organisations, universities, research institutes, the business sector, farmer groups and other civil society organisations that have a stake in FANR policies. The thirteen country nodes are the voting members in the Annual General Meeting of FANRPAN. Each node has or is supposed to have a national secretariat hosted by an existing credible national institution that has a mandate for agricultural policy research and advocacy and has the ability to mobilise relevant stakeholders. The 600 organisations mentioned above are registered as part of FANRPAN at the country node level.

In addition FANRPAN has signed more than 50 memoranda of understanding (MoU) to establish partnership with other organisations and networks. Apart from the 13 MOUs with the host of the country nodes these refer to generally open MOUs, expressions of willingness to collaborate with, for example, research organisations (including those from the CGIAR) or farmer unions.

The objectives of the country nodes are to facilitate policy dialogue in the country and promote the (objectives of) the network. The constitution formulates the process for a node to become member of FANRPAN ending by a formal decision of the Board of Governors. It is foreseen that members, the nodes, pay an annual subscription (presently set at USD 500 per year) but compliance with this rule is difficult to enforce given the fact that little or no resources are flowing to the nodes.

The functioning of the nodes as country partnerships differs from country-to-country. Some have only recently emerged, 2 to 3 are said to be close to really viable on their own. Generally nodes have (part-time) staff as secretariat who carry out other tasks for the host organisation whilst fitting in work "for" FANRPAN from their own resources. This seems to reduce their effectiveness for FANRPAN as a network. Sometimes relevant activities are undertaken without using the FANRPAN name. Limited capacities and credibility in doing relevant quality policy research among partners is also constraining FANRPAN to develop a strong profile at country level. Generally the 2007-2012 strategic plan aims to increase the role and strength of the nodes within the larger network.

The structure provides for a Technical Committee to appraise project proposals, set application guidelines etc. In practice this takes the form of project or research specific committees that help strengthen the quality of the work.

FANRPAN has a distinct legal status. It is an independent institution, registered as PVO in Zimbabwe with a detailed constitution initially signed by the ten initiating institutions (last amendment 2009). Since moving its base to South Africa, FANRPAN has a further formal agreement with the government of that country giving FANRAP full diplomatic status and privileges! Though SADC and COMESA are represented on its Board, FANRPAN operates completely independently from political structures.

The Secretariat is based in Pretoria, South Africa, and is hosted by the Government of South Africa and has offices at the campus of the Agriculture Research Council (ARC). The hosting agreement gives diplomatic status to FANRPAN staff but does not include in-kind provision of facilities. The Secretariat has a team of around ten: a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and 9 staff including for administration and finance; all staff are currently earmarked for specific projects. All staff members are given one-year contracts only because of the short nature of donor support. This fact plus the salary package is mentioned to be a serious constraint in filling staff positions. Some research work as well as some project management tasks are outsourced to network members. This has been noted as good for strengthening member involvement in the network.

Governance

The Annual General Meeting of members (AGM) has the highest authority in the network. Each country node elects one representative to join this event. Nodes are supposed to have annual (s)election processes to find their candidate; in practice the chair of the national steering committee or the national secretariat represents the nodes in the AGM.

Since 2006, annual Node Common Visioning Meetings are done for joint sharing, learning and capacity building of nodes and regional secretariat staff. Whilst the AGM is for network administration and decision making, these meetings offer representatives of the node hosting institutions the opportunity to engage in

open discussion to better understand what the network is about, its proposed way of working and the roles and responsibilities at various levels.

A Board of Governors gives strategic direction to the network and is accountable to the members meeting. It also has a number of distinct responsibilities as part of the legal framework of FANRPAN. According to the constitution the Board has 8 members with a 3-year term, one of which is a non-voting donor representative. Two members are direct representatives of named institutions whereas the other 5 are nominated from/by the different stakeholder groups. The CEO of the network is a ninth, non-voting, member. The Board is elected during AGM meetings. It oversees the functioning of the Secretariat and appoints the executive director and other senior network staff. It meets 4 times a year.

The Secretariat reports to the AGM, the Board of Governors and the donors.

Each node is supposed to have its own governance structure through a multi-stakeholder national steering committee. In most cases these do exist, at least in name, but their functioning seems limited. This may be partly due to the fact that resources – the stakes – for FANRPAN work at the node-level are limited.

Communication flows

The AGM and, since 2006, the annual Node Visioning Meetings are important communication channels. The latter are particularly designed in such a way as to promote sharing and learning. These communication platforms seem to focus mostly on the key people in each country (the node staff) and less on the wider network.

A considerable part of FANRPAN communication efforts is externally oriented: these include press releases and interviews in various media as part of its policy dialogue work. The FANRAP website is largely up to date. It does not have a dialogue or debate option to solicit views and contributions from members.

Generally, communication within the network is hampered by the relatively poor ICT infrastructure within many of FANRPAN member organisations.

Funding and finances

Most, if not all, funding for FANRPAN has been project based, each project supported by a different donor. USAID has been a major donor for various projects as well as the South Africa Trust and CTA.

According to 2007 data a typical annual budget at that time would amount to USD 400,000. In addition FANRPAN implemented studies commissioned by donors or other partners. Data from the 2010 Node Visioning Workshop suggest that the annual budget has increased rapidly over recent years and appears to be in the order of at least USD 2,000,000 per year. The donor group now also includes SDC, Gates Foundation, World Vision, Rockefeller Foundation and COMESA. The majority of funding is still project oriented. The secretariat is able to ensure that basic costs of secretariat are covered from the various project grants. Managing and reporting on this diverse set of donors is considered a "nightmare".

The strategic directions of the 2007-2012 strategic plan implies around 45% of resources to be used for research, 40% for capacity building and a remaining 15% for policy communication. The plan foresees that 76% of resources will be spent within the nodes and 24% at the level of the Regional Secretariat. This would be a major change from previous years.

Monitoring and evaluation

The main M&E instrument is the Partner Institutional Viability Assessment (PIVA) that monitors capacity building outcomes in relation to organisational development of the Regional Secretariat and the nodes. Its baseline was established in August 2005 while a first update was done in August 2007. Reports indicate that the results have been used to inform the development of the strategy and business plan.

FANRPAN does not have a comprehensive M&E framework based on an overall business plan. Generally the focus is on M&E of projects and their outputs as reported to donors.

A thorough external assessment of FANRPAN was done in 2009 on the request of SDC looking mostly at institutional capacity and strength of the network at all levels.

FANRPAN presented an annual report for 2005 - 2006. The consolidated annual reports for 2007- 2010 are to be published shortly.

(Compiled from www.fanrpan.org)

Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD)

Introduction

The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development, established in 2003, is a network of bilateral and multilateral donors, international financing institutions, intergovernmental organisations and development agencies. Members of the network share a common vision that agriculture and rural development is central to poverty reduction, and a conviction that sustainable and efficient development requires a coordinated global approach.

The Platform is committed to increasing and improving the quality of development assistance in agriculture and rural development. It promotes the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action in order to book sustainable results on the ground.

Knowledge brokerage and joint (evidence-based) advocacy are the main activities, supported through networking. The platform provides a space for individual organisations to share their knowledge and uses this knowledge base for joint advocacy. The Platform members also join in collaborative efforts to refine and apply aid effectiveness principles. In trying to gain experience and find workable ways of better aid harmonisation, the Platform has undertaken pilots in several countries such as Nicaragua, Vietnam, and Burkina Faso etc. These have been concluded now and lessons drawn for dissemination. The Platform has been working hard to get investment in rural agriculture back on to the international development assistance agenda.

Structure

Membership in the platform is open to donor countries and development agencies, multi-lateral organisations including international financial institutions, and foundations. Full members contribute a minimum of Euro 50,000 annually to the Platform Trust Fund and are entitled to one seat on the Board and can serve as task leaders for specific activities. The number of full members has grown to 13 in 2009. Associate members contribute less than Euro 50,000 annually or do not contribute at all. They are entitled to participate at annual Platform meetings. In 2009, there were 21 associate members. Every platform member is considered equal, irrespective of available resources, financial or human.

All full and associate members appoint a focal point (and an alternate) who serves as the official contact person between the Platform and the respective member organisation. The focal points represent their organisation at Platform meetings and are responsible for feeding back to their colleagues about Platform activities. This is mostly on a voluntary basis. The platform members meet once a year at the Platform General Assembly**.** The meeting is hosted by one of the member organisations on a rotational basis.

The Platform identifies institutes with whom it has common interests and partners with them in working towards achieving mutual rural development goals (eg. ODI, IDS, CTA, AGRA etc.).

The Secretariat is the service and management unit of the Platform. It is hosted by BMZ, located in Bonn and managed by GTZ. Being within the compound of the federal ministry has allowed the secretariat to make use of some of its infrastructure free of charge. Secretariat staff is on employment contracts of GTZ. Currently, the Secretariat has a coordinator and 6 other staff members, one working half-time. The Secretariat's work is directly supervised by the Steering Committee. Its functions include coordinating the implementation of Platform activities as set out in the work plan and budget (by the Board). It drafts annual work plans and budgets, manages the implementation of activities and finances and reports on these. The Secretariat also maintains a flow of communication within the network. In addition, the secretariat also supports Platform

activities through analysis and advice on policy in the focus areas of aid effectiveness, knowledge management and innovation, the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) and rural development and agriculture.

Governance

The Board (initiated in 2007) is the Platform's central decision-making body and comprises the focal points of all full members. The Board can decide by consensus to extend its membership to associate members. Unless otherwise specified, decisions are taken by two-thirds majority vote. Board meetings are convened twice a year, one preferably back-to-back with the General Assembly. The Platform Chair (also Board Chair) and the Platform Vice Chair (also Board) Vice Chair are elected during Board meetings. Both positions are for a period of two years.

The Steering Committee consists of the Board Vice Chair plus five Board members. They are designated *ad personum* by the Board for a period of three years. Two Steering Committee members are replaced every year with all Board members getting a turn in rotation. The Steering Committee is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of, guidance to and performance evaluation of the Secretariat. It also helps in additional fund raising and reports regularly to the Board Chair and annually to the Board. The Steering Committee communicates regularly through video/telephone conferences. It meets six times a year of which at least two face to face and the rest through video conferencing.

The Secretariat is responsible for organising the meetings of the Board/Steering Committees and writing the minutes.

The governance and organisational structure are detailed in the Platform Charter (March 2008).
The network has chosen to be informal but with clear and transparent structures.

Communication flows

Communication flows within the network are depicted in the diagram below:
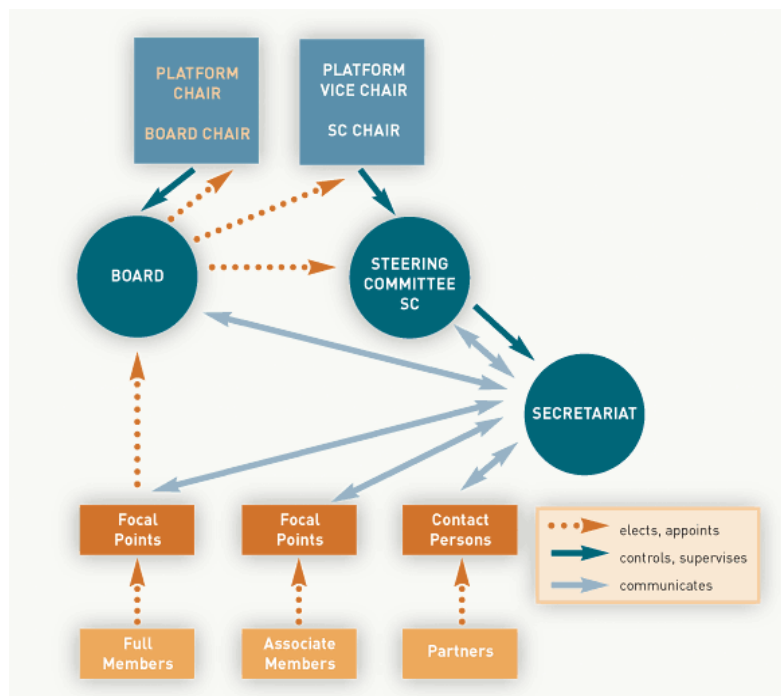
The Secretariat is responsible for maintaining a healthy flow of communication among all network components – full/associate members, partners, Board, Steering Committee etc. Making the secretariat the communication hub has been a deliberate choice by the focal points who do not wish to be overloaded by e-mails that are copied around the network. The Secretariat maintains around two dozen distribution lists through which specific information is provided to those members registered on the lists.

The members also communicate with each other at different meetings – General Assembly, Board, Steering Committee, and Technical Working Groups. Focal points are responsible for and ensure two-way communication between the Platform/Board and their respective organisations.

The website is important as a means of communicating with those beyond the network. The Board meeting minutes, steering committee minutes and annual reports are all posted on the website. The website also contains all the Platform's publications which include issue papers, policy briefs, studies, in-country lessons etc. Relevant publications of members are also posted on the website.

Funding and finances

Funding of the Platform was unpredictable and precarious for a fairly long period. Setting an annual subscription fee of Euro 50,000 for full members in the Charter was a measure to increase funding certainty. Full members as well as some associate members contribute to the Platform Trust Fund. Full members contribute Euro 50,000 to 500,000 per year. Although basket funding is preferred, there are still donors who prefer to fund a specific activity. Following a network evaluation in 2008, the Platform embarked on a process that led to the formulation of a strategic plan for the period 2009-2011. The strategic plan indicates an allocation of resources according to the priority roles chosen by the members: knowledge management 35-45%; advocacy 24-35% and governance/secretariat management etc 7-17%.

Availability of a strategic plan allowed members to make longer-term commitments for the first time. As a result, member contributions to implement the work programme rose by 85% from Euro 856,154 in 2008 to Euro 1,587,537 in 2009, most of it as untied contributions. Total expenditure in 2009 amounted to 1,050,372, of which approx. 27% in knowledge management, 43% in advocacy and governance and 18% in platform governance and management. Approx. 11% is mentioned as indirect support costs to GTZ.

Financial reporting is done individually to all donors by the Secretariat. Where possible, the Secretariat tries to arrange that the donors receive the standard financial report plus annual audit report. But many donors have their own reporting procedures and standards that need to be met.

Monitoring and evaluation

In the early years of the network, the activities it undertook were rather ad-hoc, based on opportunities that arose and rather uncertain funding. The external evaluation in 2008 recommended that the Platform become more focused and strategic. This resulted in the preparation of a strategic plan for 2009-2011 and consequently an operational work plan and budget for 2009-2011 and a feedback mechanism. This has provided a set of clearly defined outputs that can be monitored. The extensive consultation process used for developing the strategy plan will be continued also for feedback of its implementation. This will include interviews with Board members and Platform members.

The formulation of a charter has moved the Platform to a less informal position with clearly defined roles for the different bodies within the network. The Steering Committee with its mandate for direct supervision of the Secretariat thus has a direct role in monitoring and evaluation of the activity plan and budgets. The Secretariat provides concise quarterly reports to the steering committee based on the work plan for this purpose.

Annual reports are presented at the General Assembly.

Results-based management principles form the core of M&E. This includes a clear system of monitoring and reporting on both inputs and outputs being developed to facilitate assessment of performance with the definition of clear lines of accountability for delivery of outputs. A time recording system for consultants and secretarial staff is being put in place. The principle of subsidiarity is applied in carrying out the programme of work – all substantial activities (studies, meetings etc.) shall, by default, be carried out by members' organisations. Where this is not possible, the Secretariat will take steps for implementation with external parties but with a member organisation overseeing the activity concerned.

(Compiled from www.donorplatform.org)

The Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR)

Introduction

The Global Forum's mission is to mobilise all stakeholders involved in agricultural research and innovation systems for development, and support their efforts to alleviate poverty, increase food security and promote the sustainable use of natural resources. It aims to revolutionalise agricultural research for development, to mobilise, reorient, strengthen and bring coherence to systems generating and sharing new knowledge around the world, to overcome systematic failings and efficiently lead to development outcomes for the poor.

GFAR was formally established in Washington in October 1996 by a group of donors and four facilitating agencies (Food and Agriculture Organization, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Service for National Agricultural Research and the World Bank). At that time a GFAR Steering Committee and a NARS Steering Committee were formed and hosted by the World Bank and FAO respectively. In October 1999, a decision was taken to merge the two secretariats into a single unified GFAR Secretariat to be based in FAO, Rome. This took effect in June 2000.

The main strategic objectives of GFAR are:
- To build consensus and strengthen advocacy for action in relation to agricultural research and innovation priorities;
- To promote global and regional partnerships for collaborative research and innovation;
- To boost knowledge and improve communication in relation to agricultural research and innovation;
- To strengthen the institutional capacities of GFAR and its stakeholders.

A major part of its work is in the organisation and/or facilitation of, or support to, international dialogues on issues related to agriculture for research and development (AR4D).

GFAR has gone through a period of dwindling donor support in the period 2006-2008 caused by a convergence of a number of developments. Recently it has managed to consolidate its work and attract wider funding support again. The joint collaboration with the CGIAR of the process leading to the CGARD conference in Montpellier earlier this year has been a boost to GFAR and its mandate.

Structure

The GFAR structure is quite complicated. GFAR has no formal membership; it is open to all and is inclusive. One becomes part of GFAR by participating in the events and programmes, not by becoming a member. GFAR basically presents a platform for stakeholders to debate and strategise on AR4D.

Its constituencies, those represented in the GFAR governance mechanism include:
- The six multi-stakeholder Regional Fora for AR4D, including one for Europe. These are autonomous multi-stakeholder platforms or networks with own governance bodies, secretariats and other structures.
- Specific Stakeholder groups. Of these the donors are the best organised and have an own Donor Support Group (DSG) that meets regularly. Other stakeholders (farmer organisations, NGOs, private sector) do not have fully clear permanent structures within GFAR and have various ways to be represented within GFAR governance
- CGIAR is singled out within GFAR's constituency and has a seat in the governance body;
- The two facilitating organisations FAO, host of the secretariat, and IFAD facilitating the DSG.

The main organizing structures of GFAR at the global level are the Steering Committee, the Management Team, the Program Committee and the Donor Support Group mentioned above. The Steering Committee (SC) has 14 members, including representatives of all stakeholder groups. It meets annually. The Management Team has only 6 members including the executive secretary, 2 representatives from the two host organisations and a donor representative. The Chair and Vice Chair of the GFAR are members too and provide the link to the SC. The Management Team meets twice a year and is important in supporting the small secretariat in its regular operations. The Program Committee (PM) has about 12 members, 2 from each of the five southern regional platforms and one each from the two northern platforms. It seems to be designed to act as technical committee to feed into the Steering Committee but there is considerable overlap between the mandates of the SC and PC where the first has a more representative multi-stakeholder profile.

GFAR shows high levels of decentralisation given the importance of the regional fora and their relative autonomy. Some of these existed in fact in the form of research networks even before GFAR emerged and have been adopted into the GFAR framework. As part of this process they have made efforts, with differing levels of success, to increase the role of other stakeholder organisations. Generally there is great variation among the regional fora in terms of the quality of stakeholder involvement beyond the formal research community, internal structures, volume of activities and mobilisation of own resources. The African Platform (FARA, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa), e.g., has 3 sub-regional platforms, is relatively well resourced and its activities include coordination of major research programmes.

Since its inception GFAR has facilitated the emergence of so-called Global (AR4D) Partnership Programmes (GPPs). Around 10 of these emerged but only four have developed successfully with only one growing into a longer term sustainable partnership (PROLINNOVA, another case studied in this review). A separate study on the success and failures of the GPP approach is available. Even though GFAR as a whole has a donor support group, each of the emerging GPPs was supposed to mobilise their own resources with the GFAR secretariat playing only a facilitation support role. GPPs continue to be an important tool for GFAR to help address new research topics, although they do not have a place in the formal GFAR structure.

GFAR has a Charter to formalise its functioning. This has been established by the Steering Committee and adapted for the last time in 2006. It has no legal status.

GFAR has a small Secretariat hosted by FAO in Rome. FAO provides for the legal and administrative structure for GFAR. Having to work through the FAO's administrative routines is a constraint as it slows down parts of the work considerably. The advantage is the high quality of the management checks and transparency. GFAR funding is structured under FAO in the form of a trust fund so that they are not directly part of the FAO annual budgets and reports.

The Secretariat has presently only an Executive Secretary with one programme officer and support staff. All are employees of FAO. At present, the Secretariat feels severely understaffed. As in the past, several secondments from other organisations are being negotiated to add to the staff strength of the Secretariat.

Governance

The Steering Committee is the main authority in GFAR. Its membership is clearly defined in the charter to cover the above constituencies. The process according to which members are being selected or elected by the various constituency groups, however, is much less clear. This is basically being left open to the constituencies themselves. As democratic as this appears to be, where the constituencies do not have clear structures and processes to select their representatives to the SC, the model is vulnerable in terms of quality and commitment of SC members and their representativeness can become an issue. Mechanisms for communication with and reporting back to their stakeholder group are also not always in place.

The Management Team is important for day to day decision making. It does not have a formal mandate and line of reporting to the SC but the SC Chair and Vice-Chair are members. It provides important support to the Secretariat which in turn reports to the SC. The role of the donor support group in catalyzing strategic decision making is not very clear.

The Secretariat reports to the SC and the donors.

The Regional Platforms have their own governance structures and mechanisms and have full autonomy in terms of governance. Their governance system often mirrors that of the global GFAR. They face similar challenges in terms of organisation and representation of stakeholder involvement.

Communication flows

Initially and traditionally, one of GFAR's central means of communication, one of its central activities in fact, has been the 3-yearly global forum, a multi-stakeholder meeting. This meeting went on for several days and was used mostly to present and share issues and experiences around AR4D and discuss future priorities. Around this event, stakeholder groups would have their own meetings to formulate positions for presentation in the final plenary sessions and for feeding into the SC meeting that would follow the open days. Recently

GFAR has started to work with the CGIAR in organizing a joint 2-yearly meeting as the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD). This also replaces the Annual meeting of the CGIAR. In a similar way the Regional Platforms organise their regional events with varying frequencies.

These forum events have two limitations. The way they are organised does not encourage high levels of interaction and sharing but provides space mostly for plenary presentations. The learning and interaction objective does not receive the same attention as other objectives. Secondly, the status, process and decision making around proposed priorities for future AR4D seems not clear. Is decision making an objective or not? What is the final purpose of discussing priorities? What does endorsement by GFAR mean; to the proponents, to GFAR, to donors?

Up to 2009 GFAR published a quarterly newsletter, which was sent around by e-mail but in a format that made it easy to print. This has been replaced by much more frequent E-news updates that also appear as news on the website. The GFAR website is well structured and developed (but some parts are not well maintained/updated). Apart from all relevant information and documents on GFAR itself, the website incorporates modern knowledge access features and good dialogue and debate facilities through the forum option. It is not yet being used a lot but is certainly higher in comparison to other networks.

In addition, several of the regional fora have their own communication mechanisms with stakeholders, including own websites, mailing lists and newsletters.

Communication seems to flow, by and large, from the secretariat, outwards and downwards, though the website has facilities for people to contribute ideas and news items. The only exception to this is probably (parts of the) 3-yearly meeting.

Funding and finances

Funding levels have varied over the years. In the period 2003-2005, e.g., the annual budget fluctuated around USD 1,700,000 (mostly from CIDA and the governments of Italy and France). In 2003 this was complemented with just more than USD 200,000 for the global meeting in Dakar from a diverse group of donors. In addition GFAR benefited a lot from in-kind contributions in the form of staff secondments and volunteers supported by other organisations.

The business plan 2007-2009 projects annual budgets of USD 2.4 to 3 million per year of which close to 40% would be for regular secretariat and governance with the remaining for specific projects and activities. According to the information available, only half of this amount had been secured by early 2007. Increased donor support from 2009 onwards has resulted in an increase of the annual budget to approximately USD 5 million in 2010.

Presently about 25% of the budget is used for costs of the secretariat, the remaining for implementation of specific projects or programmes linked to the central objectives of GFAR. In most cases, the GFAR secretariat or the regional secretariats are the main implementers.

GFAR receives its funding mostly through project grants and carries the administrative and reporting burden associated with this.

Monitoring and evaluation

GFAR does not have an overall, comprehensive M&E framework. It does have regular external evaluations, two of which have been implemented so far (2000 and 2006), basically requested by the donors. In addition GFAR undertakes or commissions assessments and studies on parts of its work (e.g. the external review of the Global Partnership Programs in 2006). There is no evidence of regular reflection on the functioning of the global network and ways to strengthen this.

Annual reports have been prepared to inform all constituencies of work done. For the period 2006-2009, a cumulus annual report is under preparation and is about to be published. Preparation of annual reports in this period was not given priority due to the reduced level of staff and activities.

(Compiled from: www.egfar.org)

The International Land Coalition (ILC)

Introduction

The predecessor of the International Land Coalition, the Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty, was formed in November 1995 at the conference on Hunger and Poverty in recognition of the importance of building global multi-stakeholder alliances to respond to the poverty challenge. In recognition of the importance of equity in access to land for rural development as a means of fighting hunger and poverty, and to better reflect its actual work, the organisation was transformed into the International Land Coalition (ILC) in 2003. As a result, its strategic focus became land access issues moving away from its wider mandate. The name reflects ILC's identity (an international organisation), its focus (land, which by definition includes natural resources) and its nature (a coalition of organisations).

The International Land Coalition is a global alliance of civil society and intergovernmental organisations working together to promote secure and equitable access to and control over land for poor women and men through advocacy, dialogue and capacity building. Generally ILC recognises three groups of activities:

- Policy Dialogue and Advocacy
- Knowledge Management and Capacity Building
- Governance and Management.

Although ILC has multiple objectives, its ultimate objective is national and international policy change towards secure land access for the rural poor.

Structure

ILC is *a* membership-based network and currently comprises 83 members of which 8 are intergovernmental organisations and 75 are civil society organisations. Members are based in 40 countries both in the North and in the South. All members have full voting rights in the Assembly of Members.

Membership to the ILC is open to civil society (including academic institutions) and inter-governmental organisations if they express, in writing, their interest to join the ILC and if the organisations comply with a list of criteria (see http://www.landcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/ilc-charter.pdf). In 2007, the decision not to include government organisations was confirmed again in order to maintain the focus on strengthening the CSO role in land policy work. In practice this membership combination helped to increase the profile of CSO work in this area. But it is increasingly difficult now to formulate strong joint specific policy positions (e.g. on land grabbing). This was easier initially when they were concerned with more neutral issues such as increase access to land for the poor.

Membership applications need to be endorsed by two current members before it is taken into further consideration. Additionally potential members need to subscribe to the basic principles of ILC (democratic decision making, consensus seeking regardless of the size, type, place of origin, and function of members, and mutual respect for difference among ILC members). Membership is final only after approval by the Assembly of Members (AoM). Aspiring Inter-governmental Members are approved by the existing Inter-governmental members and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) by existing CSO members. Membership can be withdrawn if the coalition council suspends a member and this is approved in the AoM.

Members are expected to make contributions in cash or in kind, with the size of the contribution set according to the type of the member organisation and its capacity (Membership Contribution Policy document) with annual contributions ranging from USD 150 to USD 8000. Within membership categories, a distinction is made between Northern and Southern organisations. Payment of cash contributions has been actually implemented only since 2010. Generally, member contributions are felt to be important to express member ownership and commitment to the Coalition rather than in creating an important source of funds. In practice payment in cash is complicated because CSO members do not have it included in their running agreements with donors, because of the high costs involved in international bank transfers and because of management complications of these relatively limited resources within the IFAD overall accounts. Decentralisation of payments, i.e. to the regional secretariats, could be the way forward.

Government agencies that are not eligible to become a member of the ILC or civil society or inter-governmental organisations which face legal or procedural constraints to formalise their ILC membership can be granted the status of Strategic Partner. Presently there are 3 Strategic Partners. They have to comply with a set of requirements closely linked to the requirements for potential members and share ILC's core values and support its objectives.

Figure 1 below summarises the structure of ILC. Planning, coordination and evaluation are carried out by the International Secretariat and the Nodes of the regional platforms. These also take care of facilitation of the network whereas the regional platforms focus on coordination and monitoring of activities on the ground. The Secretariat works on fundraising and overall facilitation of communication.

It is important to note that the Nodes of the regional platforms are relatively new and small, each having only 1-2 full time staff. The Nodes are hosted by an ILC member selected in the region: ANGOC (Manila, the Philippines) for the Asia node; KLA (Nakuru, Kenya) for the Africa Node; CEPES (Lima, Peru) for the Latin America Node. The Nodes serves as small secretariats for the regional platforms. The regional platforms bring together all ILC members in each region: Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The International Secretariat is composed of a Director, seven regular full-time staff, 5 consultants and several interns. It is hosted for a given period by a member of the ILC that is part of the UN system as it was felt that the Coalition needed to be hosted within an influential and internationally credible institution to be able to play its roles effectively. Currently IFAD in Rome is the host and has signed a 5-year MoU to this end with ILC. After this period, the secretariat is supposed to move to another member. For routine administration and human resource matters the International Secretariat is considered an IFAD Division. It relates to IFAD through one of the Departments. IFAD thus doubles as host organisation and full member of the AoM and CC.

Figure 1

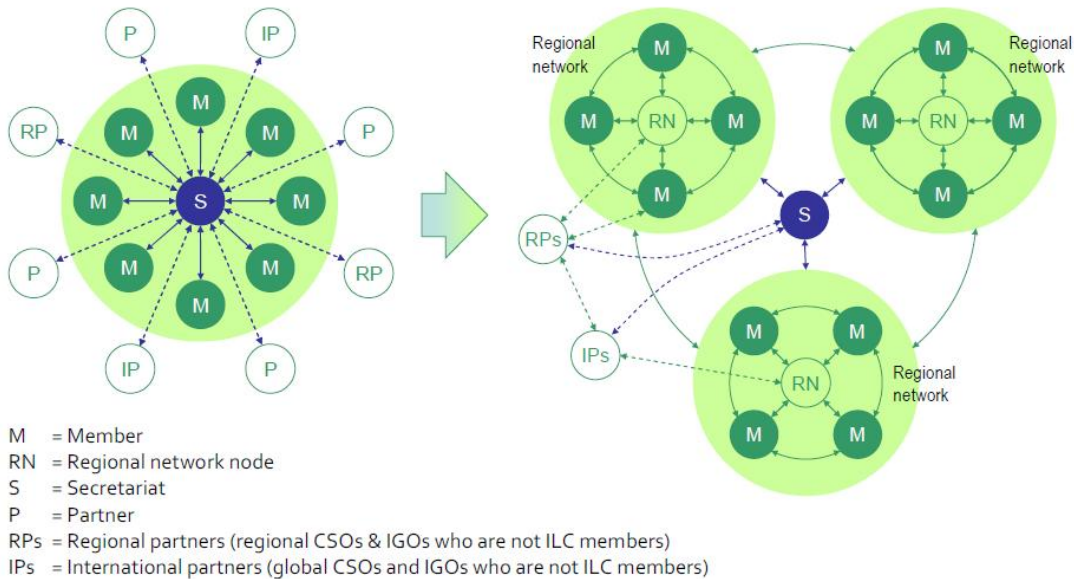International Land Coalition Organizational Chart

ILC is thus a network that – by explicit demand from members – is changing from a centralised structure largely driven by the Secretariat to a decentralised one (Figure 2). This is part of the move from addressing general land issues in the initial years to addressing complex land-poverty issues on the ground where regional differences can be considerable. Decentralisation also allows formulation of more radical positions at lower levels that are not necessarily endorsed by all members globally. Since 2008 regional platforms/networks were set up to monitor regional activities, facilitate communication in the region and represent the ILC, activities that were previously carried out by the International Secretariat in Rome. In practice the regional platforms are constrained by limited resources as well as an unclear legal status, a problem for independent fund raising. Given that the volume of staff at the International Secretariat remains high, competition for funds between the different levels in the network seems to be emerging.

Figure 2: From secretariat driven to regional networks

A previous focus on programming and funding through the Secretariat

An increased focus on regional networks and peer-to-peer processes; Secretariat as facilitator/coordinator

M = Member
RN = Regional network node
S = Secretariat
P = Partner
RPs = Regional partners (regional CSOs & IGOs who are not ILC members)
IPs = International partners (global CSOs and IGOs who are not ILC members)

ILC is not registered as an independent entity. The choice is for a coalition as a partnership of organisations.

Governance

The AoM is the supreme governing body of ILC responsible for establishing the overall strategies and policies of the ILC. It meets once every two years. Prior to the general meeting, the regional meetings discuss their issues and positions, elect Council members from the region etc. The AoM appoints the Coalition Council (CC) which is the executive board of the ILC. The overall structure also allows for committees, action groups and advisory bodies as deemed necessary, on an *ad-hoc* or semi-permanent basis.

All members are given equal voting rights in the AoM. The quorum for a meeting of the AoM is 50% of the civil society members and 50% of the inter-governmental members. Each member has one vote and decisions are taken by simple majority. Additionally members are consulted intensively during formulation of important documents (e.g. strategic framework). As discussed earlier, the AoM also decides on membership of new members and has the power to suspend members.

The Strategic Partners have advisory functions and are offered the possibility of taking part in the ILC Council meetings and in the AoM as observers. The status of Strategic Partner is granted by the Coalition Council for a period of two years, on a renewable basis.

The CC meets twice a year and consists of representatives from 14 members serving a two-year term (renewable once). Eight of the 14 members of the CC are from civil society organisations. Of these, not less than five are from the ILC regional platforms and not more than three are international or global civil society organisations. Six of the 14 members of the CC are inter-governmental organisations or international research organisations, an over-representation in fact given the growth of CSO members. CC members are generally elected. This works best for the representatives from the regions where the regional meetings prior to the AoM are used for elections. These representatives communicate feedback to their constituency after CC meetings through an e-mail update and through reporting to the next regional SC meeting.

The intergovernmental organisation hosting the Secretariat of the Coalition holds permanent membership for the duration of the hosting agreement. The Director of the Secretariat is an ex-officio member. The CC is co-chaired by one representative from a civil society organisation (as selected by the other civil society representatives) and one inter-governmental organisation (the organisation hosting the Secretariat of the ILC). (http://www.landcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/ilc-charter.pdf). The Secretariat of the ILC through its Director reports to the CC and the AoM. It also reports directly to donors on specific programmes/projects.

Regional platforms have their own governance structures and mechanisms feeding into the global ones. These include members' general meetings and regional Steering Committees. Their functioning differs from region to region, depending amongst others on resource mobilisation in the region. CC members from the regions are supposed to report back to their regional SC.

Communication flows

The biennial AoMs allows for regular face-to-face contact between members. The first part of the (multi-day) event is used as an awareness creation, learning and sharing meeting with content discussions open to a wider audience. The second part is dedicated to internal network business and decision making.

The website serves as an important means of communication – information on the network, its mode of operation, how to become a member etc. are all published and easily accessible. Additionally, the website serves as an important tool for information sharing among members, partners and a wider audience. This is done through putting publications of members and ILC on the website, by a database of documents related to access to land on the website, regional news, a list of opportunities (mostly calls for papers) and a blog on access to land related issues. ILC publishes a quarterly electronic newsletter as well as monthly updates for members and partners.

ILC also supports specific knowledge-related activities in which issues related to land access are studied and analyzed. The knowledge and lessons generated from innovative pilots are packaged and disseminated to a wide audience largely via members and partners, international meetings and the website.

The recent effort to decentralise was done to improve communication between members. One of the core tasks of the regional networks is to facilitate member-to-member relationships within their region, including joint action and communication among members and with other strategic stakeholders.

Funding and finances

Apart from membership contributions, the largest share of funding comes from other donors, currently including the European Commission, International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Netherlands Ministry of Development Cooperation, the Canadian International Development Agency, Swiss Development Cooperation, Belgian Survival Fund and the International Development Research Centre, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, Swedish International Development Agency and Omidyar Network. Managing this diversity of donors is a big challenge.

Only 2 of the donors now provide longer term untied support based on the ILC strategic plan. This is a major administrative constraint where even relatively smaller grants need to have their own separate reporting process. The trend of some donors to provide resources only through so-called competitive calls contributes to this problem.

ILC's annual budget rose from USD 2.3 million in 2006 to USD 6.5 million in 2010. About 60% of the budget is allocated for direct programme operations (mostly through members and partners), and 40% for administrative and governance costs.

For each AoM, ILC prepares a biennial report covering the two preceding years. In addition an annual report is prepared for the December meeting of the CC along with the annual work plan and budget for the coming year. Reporting for activity-based funding is done to the specific donors.

Monitoring and evaluation

The ILC has a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework that is published on their website. This M&E Framework (MEF) sets out processes, roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating progress and achievements in following three domains:
- Strategic Level. Assessing the efficiency and effectiveness with which the ILC is implementing the Strategic Framework.
- Activity Level. Assessing the efficiency and effectiveness with which the ILC is implementing the activities set out in its work plan and budget.

- Institutional Level. Assessing ILC's performance as a member-led coalition

For monitoring and evaluation in these 3 domains ILC has a fixed set of tools. Monitoring tools include physical and financial progress reports, official travel reports, and annual audits or financial statements.

Evaluation tools are:
- An annual survey of members and partners, which seeks member feedback on progress and delivery at the institutional level.
- Joint reviews of a small sample of ILC activities that provides a rapid assessment of the progress and achievements, and which support mutual learning and accountability within and across regional networks.
- Evaluation studies that provide a more in depth assessment of the performance including on the efficiency and effectiveness of ILC activities or its approach to particular themes or strategic objectives.
- Annual reports on delivery against the strategic framework.

Thus ILC has a well-designed M&E system in which monitoring is part of the regular planning and reporting cycle combined with clearly focused internal and external evaluations and studies.

(Compiled from www.landcoalition.org)

The International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP)[3]

Introduction

The emergence of IFAP soon after the Second World War was part of the growth of international bodies at the time, including those under the United Nations' system such as the FAO. Major national farmers' organisations felt the need for an international organisation to represent their interests. Founded in 1946 IFAP quickly grew to become a major player in international debates and negotiations in agriculture.

Though initially carried by well-established farmer organisations in the North the number of members from developing countries has increased steadily and rapidly after the IFAP 2000 Millennium Development Cooperation Initiative.

The overall aim of IFAP is to promote the well being of all who obtain their livelihood from the land and to assure them of the maintenance of an adequate and stable remuneration. Its central objectives are:
- to exchange information and ideas, to discuss problems of mutual interest, and learn;
- to take coordinated action to further common interests;
- to represent agricultural primary producers and their interests towards international organisations;
- to encourage the formation of independent organisations of agricultural producers globally.

IFAP is a multiple-purpose network with a strong emphasis on promotion of members' interest and their representation.

It is difficult to obtain a good overview of activities as information on the website is sketchy and not conclusive. An important area of activities is the organisation of and/or participation in meetings, conferences, or committees to further the IFAP agenda. Other such events are organised mainly for facilitating learning among members and/or between members and others. A total of around 50 events are listed for 2010. IFAP also has a series of publications on (IFAP's view on) a wide variety of agriculture and natural resource management related topics, a website and a newsletter.

IFAP has implemented externally-funded projects focusing on strengthening farmer organisations in developing countries.

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3 Despite all efforts it proved impossible to compliment the limited information available on the IFAP website through interviews with the secretariat or other resource people.

Structure

IFAP is a membership organisation. Members are farmer organisations and the total current membership amounts to 112 covering 87 countries. It is thus a network of networks. The majority of members today are from developing countries. The constitution of IFAP formulates clear rules and conditions on membership application and acceptance into IFAP. Full members pay annual fees which are calculated per country taking into consideration the contribution of agriculture to the Gross Domestic Product. Membership is for farmer organisations only creating a single stakeholder network.

At the network level, the main structures are the General Conference of all members, the Executive Committee and the IFAP "secretariat". The Executive Committee is relatively large and consists of a president, 3 vice-presidents, a treasurer and 20 members.

In addition IFAP has four important so-called commodity groups that discuss and formulate positions on specific crops, groups of crops and animal husbandry sectors. These are needed given the high level of specialisation of negotiations on production, processing and marketing of specific crops/animals. A few other special issue committees also exist.

Historically, IFAP's focus in work and structure was at the global level. But with the growth of membership and, particularly the increase of members from developing countries, provisions have been made for the set-up of regional committees. Presently such committees exist for Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Mediterranean. A brief look at their (sub-) websites seems to suggest that the committees for Africa and the Mediterranean are most active. The structures and governance mechanisms at regional level are not well documented. By and large, though, the main focus of the network structure seems to be at the central network level.

IFAP has a detailed constitution to guide the network that is confirmed and accepted by the General Assembly. IFAP is an independent legal entity, the details of which are not known.

IFAP headquarters are located in Paris. The design of IFAP does not call for a Secretariat in the same way as a hosted network but gives provision for hiring of IFAP staff. The Executive Committee is given the authority to appoint the Secretary-General who in turn is mandated to add IFAP staff within the boundaries of work plans and budgets. Presently the number of IFAP staff is reported to be nine and includes the Secretary-General, several policy officers and support personnel who are all directly employed by IFAP.

Governance

The General Conference (GC) has the highest authority in IFAP and takes or confirms all important decisions. This is the basic avenue for members to influence decisions in IFAP. The conference is held every two years or more frequently if deemed necessary. While the conference is open to all members, the constitution makes provision for "weigh voting" in case several members are from one and the same country. This helps to ensure that the vote of each country has equal weight.

The General Conference elects the Executive Committee (EC) to handle affairs in between general assemblies. In the case of IFAP the Executive Committee has considerable power to act on behalf of IFAP without direct mandate from the GC as long as it remains within existing IFAP policy. The committee is said to meet regularly. The president can call for meetings of the smaller "Office Holders Committee" to address and decide on urgent issues when needed. This committee consists of the President, the Past President (!), 3 Vice-Presidents and the Treasurer. As mentioned, the Executive Committee selects and appoints the Secretary-General who in turn is mandated to follow up on all decisions from the EC.

The level of autonomy of the regional structures in terms of their position in (international) debates, planning and implementation of work, and fund raising and fund management is not very clear. The commodity groups do have considerable autonomy in order to be able to address the issues and concerns of the relevant specialised sub-sector.

Reporting lines and accountability of the Secretariat are directly to the Executive Committee and (through the EC) to the General Conference.

Communication flows

The General Conference plays a major role in facilitating communication through face-to-face interaction. Other workshops and conferences as well as meetings in some regions do play the same role. Beyond this, information flows mostly from the secretariat to members though the frequency and form is unclear.

IFAP has a series of publications on (IFAP's view on) a wide variety of agriculture and NRM related topics. These communicate messages both within IFAP and, mostly, to the various external audiences. IFAP has a newsletter that appears to come out periodically. The IFAP website has only a limited amount of basic information and lacks a search function. There is no discussion or debate facility and/or question and answer service.

Funding and finances

The major source of funding for IFAP is the membership contribution. This allows for adequate functioning of the organisation. In addition IFAP implements development, capacity building and other projects funded from other sources, by specific donors.

There is no information on the average annual budget of IFAP or the use of funds broadly (e.g. % of funds used for secretariat versus other activities).

Monitoring and evaluation

No information is available on the monitoring and evaluation of IFAP.

(Compiled from http://www.ifap.org)

PROmoting Local INNOVAtion in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resources management (PROLINNOVA)

Introduction

PROLINNOVA was conceived in late 1999, when Southern and Northern NGOs – supported by the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR), the NGO Committee (NGOC) of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs – met in France, to explore how participatory approaches to agricultural research and development (ARD) based on local initiatives could be scaled up. Participants asked ETC EcoCulture, a Netherlands-based NGO, to help launch a Global Partnership Programme (GPP) built up from country level. NGOs in Africa, Asia and Latin America facilitated multi-stakeholder design of country programmes (CPs), which then designed international activities to reinforce their own.

PROLINNOVA is a global learning and advocacy network that focuses on recognising the dynamics of indigenous knowledge and enhancing capacities of farmers (including pastoralists, forest dwellers and fisher folk) to adjust to change – to develop their own site-appropriate systems and institutions of resource management so as to gain food security, sustain their livelihoods and safeguard the environment.

Currently PROLINNOVA involves around 160 organisations in 18 countries and is moving towards a community of practice.

PROLINNOVA builds on and scales up farmer-led approaches to participatory development that start with finding out how farmers work out new and better ways of using and managing natural resources. The ultimate aim is mainstreaming and institutionalisation, that this approach becomes understood, accepted and integrated into the regular work of research, extension and education institutions.

PROLINNOVA therefore focuses on learning and exchange, joint programme implementation, awareness creation and policy lobbying. Its main objectives are:
- Methodology development and spread through studies, pilots, documentation
- Capacity building through training, peer reviews, international backstopping
- Mainstreaming, institutionalisation of farmer-led participatory approaches for ARD at local, national and international level.

Structure

PROLINNOVA is an NGO-facilitated network that is built from the bottom up. The main building blocks of the network are the semi-autonomous Country Programmes (CPs). In each country a NGO convenes the major ARD stakeholders and designs a programme that meets their specific needs. This NGO usually hosts the national PROLINNOVA secretariat and plays a facilitating role in the country partnership. A Country Programme Coordinator – usually from the lead NGO – has overall responsibility for the CP and heads up a small core team/working group of key organisations that is involved in day-to-day implementation of activities of the CP.

The International Secretariat (IS) is hosted by ETC EcoCulture in the Netherlands headed by a Programme Manager. It is responsible for overall network management and facilitation which includes: drawing up MoUs/contracts with programme partners at international, regional and national level; drawing up annual work plans and budgets for international activities, in consultation with the IST members; compiling and distributing six-monthly and annual reports on the programme; providing secretarial services to the POG and conducting programme monitoring and evaluation. The Secretariat has approximately 1.5 full-time equivalents (fte) filled in by 4 part-timers (including financial and administrative staff).

The International Support Team (IST) supports country-level activities through networking, capacity building and backstopping, coaching, web-based knowledge management, publishing and advocacy. The IST includes several staff of ETC EcoCulture (approximately budgeted at 2.5 fte). They are all regular staff of ETC Ecoculture working only part-time for PROLINNOVA while also being involved in other ETC programmes or assignments. Other organisations involved in the IST are the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) in the Philippines (1 fte) and the Centre for International Cooperation of the Vrije Universiteit (CIS-VUA, 0.25 fte) in the Netherlands. Yet others with responsibilities that exceed a single country programme are also included in the IST. The PROLINNOVA structure is very flexible and diverse allowing for thematic sub-programmes/ projects that are of interest to several countries within the network. The Farmer Access to Innovation Resources (FAIR) is a sub-programme that is piloting de-centralised funds to support farmer innovation and experimentation called Local Innovation Support Funds (LISFs). Promoting Farmer Experimentation and Innovation in the Sahel (PROFEIS) is a sister-programme of PROLINNOVA in several countries of West Africa. HIV-AIDS and PID (HAPID) is a thematic sub-programme that has been looking into how local innovation and farmer-led research could avoid/prevent mitigate HIV-AIDS and mitigate its effects.

The International Partners Workshop (IPW) is the annual face-to-face meeting of partners and is hosted by one of the CPs on a rotational basis. Generally, two members from each CP plus selected members of the IST participate at this meeting. Participation is rotated within the CPs and the IST to ensure that as many partners as possible get a chance to participate at this event.

PROLINNOVA does not have formal membership by individuals or organisations. Joining the PROLINNOVA network is open to any country or region that shares the vision and mission of PROLINNOVA and is willing to uphold its rules and principles. Criteria and procedures for new countries are elaborated as one of the PROLINNOVA guidelines. Accordingly, a NGO or Farmer Organisation that convenes a group of diverse ARD stakeholders within the country/region and formulates an initial proposal of how they wish to set up a country programme can submit such a proposal to the IS for consideration to join the network. Such proposals should also indicate how funds are going to be acquired for carrying out the programme. These proposals are then tabled at the next PROLINNOVA Oversight Group (POG) meeting. The POG consents immediately or requests for further information to make their decision. Some country programmes have membership arrangements at their level.

PROLINNOVA runs a yahoo-based discussion group that is open for anyone interested to be part of the PROLINNOVA information exchange and debate.

Governance

The PROLINNOVA Oversight Group (POG) serves as a governance mechanism to ensure accountability to the CPs, their constituencies and donors. The POG is made up of four people from the CPs – one each from Asia, Latin America, Francophone and Anglophone Africa, one from the International Support Team (IST) and three external people who serve on a voluntary basis. Since its inaugural meeting in 2005 in South Africa, it has met face-to-face at least once, normally twice, each year; otherwise, it communicates by email. The Terms of Reference for the POG were originally drawn up by PROLINNOVA partners at their first meeting in Ethiopia in March 2004 and have been revised periodically by the POG on the basis of experience. The IS handles the POG Secretariat function.

The main purpose of the POG is to ensure effectiveness of the PROLINNOVA International Programme and transparency and accountability to its country-level partners and donors. Thus the POG provides strategic direction; ensures that the CPs and the IS keep to the agreed strategy, policy, principles; oversees the functioning of the IS; arbitrates in conflicts between the IS and CPs or these with donors; ensures that monitoring and evaluation is adequate and that advocacy is conducted effectively. The POG has drawn up important operational guidelines for PROLINNOVA which are revised periodically as more experience is gained. Currently there are six such guidelines posted on the website at http://www.prolinnova.net/guidelines.php

The National Steering Committee (NSC) is the governance structure at country-level made up of people from government research, extension and education, other NGOs and farmer groups. The NSC defines the CP activities, ranging from farmer-led research to policy advocacy. It gives the CP strategic guidance, helps mobilise resources and is the apex structure for accountability. Each CP has its own arrangements and schedules for NSC meetings. Under the NSC most country programmes have a task force or working group supporting the country secretariat, collaborating in implementation and helping to prepare the NSC meetings.

Communication flows

The IPW is the main face-to-face meeting of the network. It has a very interactive design in which CP representatives take turns to handle sessions. In addition, partners also meet at other international events, mainly training workshops. The country backstoppers from the IST visit each CP (once a year at least) and have closer interactions with members of the CP and support them on special requests.

Cross visits – a group from one CP visiting another CP for sharing and learning – has allowed for face-to-face communication of partners from different countries.

The POG meets once (if possible twice) a year face-to-face but communicates frequently by skype and phone. The meetings are of 2-3 days duration. The POG has close communication with the IS and IST also using e-mail, skype and phone. The POG tries to schedule one of its meetings back-to-back with the annual IPW in order to have the opportunity to interact directly with network members.

The IS maintains frequent communication with the CPs mainly through e-mail and skype.

The PROLINNOVA yahoo group is open to any interested organisation or individual and is used mainly to share information. Occasionally, it is also used to dialogue on certain relevant issues.

The PROLINNOVA website is run by one of the IST partners – IIRR in the Philippines. It carries most of the important information on PROLINNOVA and also its products, including those of the CPs. The website has been kept technically simple so that all CPs (including those partners who have limited access to the internet) can also use it.

Funding and finances

After one year of inception funding from IFAD, DGIS has been the main funder of PROLINNOVA (which includes 9 of the 18 CPs) until 2010. Three CPs have mobilised longer term core funding for their PROLINNOVA country programme (through EED and Misereor). In addition, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DURAS) and Rockefeller Foundation have been funding the FAIR sub-programme. Several specific

activities within PROLINNOVA (conferences, workshops, publications etc.) have been supported by various donors over the years.

ETC EcoCulture as host of the International Secretariat has played a key role in many of these acquisition efforts. However, the responsibility for fund raising is gradually being taken on by CPs. Some CPs have been successful in getting co-funding to supplement the funds that comes from the main donor DGIS. Others have managed to get specific activities funded.

Narrative and financial **reporting** to the donors has been done annually in nearly all cases. With ETC being the contract holder, the International Secretariat has been responsible for a major share of such reporting to donors.

The PROLINNOVA overall **budget** has grown from less than Euro 100,000 per year in 2003 to an average of Euro 1,500,000 per year over the last few years. These resources have come from DGIS (800,000), Rockefeller Foundation (250,000), other donors (50,000) with the remaining covered by own contributions of CP and IST partners.

The above annual budget would be, along large lines, for activities directly by partners at the CP level (600,000), by the secretariat and IST (600,000) with the balance for various regional or international study and capacity building activities.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Monitoring and **evaluation** has been built around the main programme and sub-programmes of PROLINNOVA. Based on a 4-year strategic programme, CPs and the IST prepare annual plans and budgets. Mid-year summary reports and comprehensive annual narrative and financial reports are submitted by all CPs and IST members to the IS. The IS uses this material to compile reports to the donors.

PROLINNOVA has a **comprehensive** M&E framework, developed and improved at annual IPWs. This informs the reporting flow mentioned above.

An annual electronic evaluation of important aspects of the international networking and partnership is done by IIRR in the Philippines who plays an important role in M&E within the IST. The findings of this evaluation are discussed at the annual IPW for making changes and improvements to the functioning of the network.

Cross country visits also **include** an aspect of peer review where the visiting CP partners give feedback to the host country partners on their functioning.

The POG ensures that **adequate** M&E measures are applied across the network to safeguard the integrity of PROLINNOVA. The POG's oversight function of the IS includes financial management.

Regular external evaluations are undertaken by external evaluators, not only as donor requirements but also, and more importantly, as a means of learning within the network.

(Compiled from www.prolinnova.net)

ProVention Consortium

Introduction

The idea for ProVention[4] was conceived in 1998 by two individuals within the World Bank who – through their engagement in humanitarian assistance work – were convinced that disaster risk management was as important as disaster relief. Having secured funding through an award from the Development Marketplace, they undertook a pilot study in how the Government of Mexico dealt with disaster. The recommendations of the study resulted in the Mexican government applying for a World Bank loan for disaster risk reduction. This

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[4] ProVention stopped functioning in early 2010 but was included in this review for the lessons that could be drawn

then stimulated these two individuals to bring together a group of like-minded people (approx. 20) from diverse institutions to develop the first 3-year work plan of ProVention and raise funds to implement it. This marked the official launch of the ProVention Consortium in 2000 with a two-person Secretariat within the World Bank to address the social, economic and environmental impacts on developing countries caused by the increased frequency and severity of natural disasters.

The main objectives of the consortium in advancing disaster management were: forging partnerships and linkages; advocating for increased policy attention and commitment to reducing natural hazard risks; developing innovative approaches to the practical applications of disaster risk management; and sharing knowledge and resources for organisations, practitioners and communities active in disaster reduction. The consortium had five thematic priorities: mainstreaming risk reduction; risk analysis and application; reducing risks in recovery; risk transfer and private sector involvement; expanding risk research and learning.

Structure

The consortium functioned as an informal multi-stakeholder network across the different constituencies. The institutions that were represented in the initial meeting in 2000 to launch the consortium became its first partners and core group. By 2010, the consortium had over 80 partner organisations. It included international financial institutions, country donor agencies, universities and research centres, (international and national) NGOs, private sector partners and several global/regional network organisations. There were no transparent procedures or guidelines in place for joining the consortium and it appeared to be open to any organisation willing to work towards meeting its goals.

The Secretariat was hosted by the World Bank and located in Washington from 2000-2003. During this period the Secretariat was staffed by two employees of the World Bank who did this alongside their regular work. Thereafter ProVention was hosted by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) with the Secretariat moving to its premises in Geneva. Its main tasks were administration of funds and work programme management. The Secretariat was staffed by at least 2 people throughout, with periods in which there was more staff. The Secretariat was closely involved and took the lead in the content work of the consortium.

From its early days until around 2005, the consortium members met at least twice a year. All matters related to the consortium were discussed at this meeting and decisions were made by consensus. However, this became increasingly tedious and inefficient as the consortium grew larger. Thus a decision was made to continue these biannual meetings only with a core group of partners whilst a separate annual meeting would be held for all partners of the consortium. The smaller core group became the Advisory Committee whilst the annual gathering was called the ProVention Forum.

The Provention Forum was an annual gathering of Consortium partners held in a different region every year. The 2009 meeting was held in Turkey and attended by more than 110 participants. It was a platform for critical dialogue and agenda setting. It directly informed the work programme of the consortium which included multi-partner projects. More than 35 multi-partner projects have been implemented in the period 2000 – 2010 in the five themes mentioned above.

The consortium also relied on high-profile voluntary patrons, with no governance responsibilities, who promoted the goals of ProVention among international leaders and key decision makers.

Governance

The consortium had opted for a light decision making structure in order to be flexible to the changing needs of the partners and the sector. An Advisory Committee comprised of representatives of the founding organisation, host organisation, donors and nominated Consortium partners gave strategic advice and direction to the Secretariat, oversaw the implementation of the work programme and approved the annual budget. There were no clear procedures or a structure in place for governance of the network.

Communication flows

The ProVention Forum was the annual face-to-face meeting of all partners. The Advisory Committee which included the core partners of the consortium communicated with each other more regularly.

Consortium members involved in projects prepared short quarterly reports which were used by the Secretariat to prepare quarterly project reports.

A short newsletter prepared by the Secretariat was used as a means of communicating news about the consortium and its partners. The back issues are archived on the website.

The website is a repository for publications and other resources of ProVention and its partners.

Funding and finances

The consortium managed to raise funds for its activities although there was a regular turnover of donors. According to the Annual Report for 2008, the main funders were the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Norway's Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the Rockefeller Foundation. The total expenditure in 2008 was around CHF 4 million of which around 18% was on secretariat staff/project management and administration, 11% on the ProVention forum and pre-forum events and the rest on activities in the five themes. Most of the funds were tied to the multi-partner projects in the 3-year work plans. Reporting was done to all donors individually.

Monitoring and evaluation

Annual reports based on the annual work plans were prepared by the Secretariat. Quarterly and completion reports were prepared on each of the projects in line with donor requirements.

The Advisory Committee and Secretariat solicited expert technical advice from independent project reviewers to ensure high quality technical appraisal of ProVention project activities and accountability in project approval and decision making. Such evaluations were done regularly.

Although the need for monitoring and evaluation of the consortium's functioning had been discussed several times by the partners, no mechanisms were ever put in place.

(Compiled from www.proventionconsortium.org)

Table 1 summarises key data of the eight networks reviewed within the five main components included in the case descriptions.

Table 1: Matrix of networks

	ALNAP	FANRPAN	GDPRD	GFAR	ILC	IFAP	PROLINNOVA	ProVention
General								
Principle objective	Learning for accountability and performance in humanitarian action	Policy research and dialogue on NRM	Policy lobby to get development assistance for agriculture/rural development	Policy dialogue on ARD	Policy advocacy for secure access to land for the poor	Policy advocacy and defending of farmer interests	Mainstreaming participatory approaches in ARD	Policy recognition for disaster risk management
Size/reach	75 organisations/ individuals and 1000 associates	13 country nodes linking 600 organisations	13 organisations and 21 associates	6 Regional fora linking many organisations	83 organisations	112 organisations	18 country programmes (CPs) linking 160 organisations	80 organisations
Structure								
Membership	Organisations, few individuals	13 Country nodes	Organisations	No members	Organisations	Organisations	No members; partnership of 18 CPs	No members
Stakeholders	Multi	Multi	Single	Multi	Selected	Single	Multi	Multi
	Centralised	Semi-decentralised	Centralised	De-centralised	De-centralising	Semi-decentralised	De-centralised	Centralised
Legal Entity	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Hosting arrangements	Hosted by ODI	Headquarters at ARC campus in South Africa	Hosted by BMZ	Hosted by FAO	Hosted by IFAD	Headquarters in Paris	Hosted by ETC	Was hosted by World Bank and IFRC
Size of Secretariat (Current)	6 (one part-time)	10	7 (one part-time)	2 + support staff	8 + 5 consultants	9	1.5 fte + 4 fte in IST (all part-time)	At least 2 throughout
Governance								
Decision making	Steering Committee	Member Meeting with Board below it	Board with Steering Committee below it	Steering Committee	Member Assembly with Council below it	Member Conference with Executive Committee below it	Programme Oversight Group	Advisory Committee

	ALNAP	FANRPAN	GDPRD	GFAR	ILC	IFAP	PROLINNOVA	ProVention
Communication								
Communication flows	Good internal and external	Limited internal/ mostly external	Focus on internal communication	Focus on external communication	Good internal and external	Focus on external communication	Good internal and external	Focus on external communication
Funding/finances								
Indicative annual budget (Euro)	750,000	1,500,000	1,000,000	4,000,000	4,500,000	No information	1,500,000	3,000,000
Main source of funds	Donor/ members contributions	Donors	Donor member contributions	Donors	Donors	Membership fees	Donors	Donors
Form used	Annual payment	Project-based funding	Annual payment	Project-based funding	Programme funding	Annual payment	Programme funding	Project-based funding
Monitoring & Evaluation								
Systematic framework	Being developed	No	Being developed	No	Yes	No information	Yes	No
Internal M&E of network functioning	Regular	No	Informal	No	Yes	No information	Regular	No

CRITERIA AND OPTIONS

The above cases show that networks make very different choices in all of the five areas studied: structure, governance, funding and finances, communication and monitoring and evaluation. Context factors as well as network objectives influence the choices made. This chapter presents the main issues within each of these five areas where choices need to be made, summarises the main forms and models found as options for GFRAS and shows their implications, their advantages and disadvantages.

Structure

Defining *membership of the network* is the first important issue in setting up a structure. Membership arrangements may vary from being very informal, (almost) non-existent, to being very formalised with clear processes for becoming a member and descriptions of members' rights and responsibilities, including contributions in kind or in cash. A more formalised option adds strength to the network as it encourages commitment and ownership of those involved. There is a conscious choice made to join or not to join. Clarity on membership also helps to organise governance in a transparent way. When the network speaks, it is clear on behalf of whom it does so. In all the cases studied, membership is on an organisational basis, not individually, though clarity on who represents the organisation in the network is often a condition, particularly for the smaller, compact networks.

Yet, networks such as GFAR and PROLINNOVA purposely shy away from formal membership. This makes it easy for any party to get involved, participate in activities and contribute to the learning and sharing. It also prevents exclusion of organisations that for legal or other reasons have difficulty in becoming members of an international network (i.e. some intergovernmental or donor organisations as well as many government ministries). Payment of relatively small membership contributions through international banking is a costly exercise.

As a compromise PROLINNOVA and FANRPAN are structured as networks of networks, organised per country. They have clear procedures for country networks to join the international platform and governance arrangements describe how country networks participate in higher level decision making. The model allows for more open functioning without formal membership at the country level though experience from these two cases suggest that minimum arrangements for defining who "belongs" to the country network and who does not could add strength to the network.

Generally, it seems that clear membership arrangements make good sense if the agenda of the network focuses on (international, national) lobby and policy work, particularly when related to members' own interest (IFAP) or issues that members feel strongly about. The more homogenous the network constituency, the easier it is to organise membership.

The fundamental question to be addressed though is how one includes organisations and mobilises their commitment. Looking beyond the above membership arrangements, three crucial conditions should be in place for this to happen:

- The interest in and "feelings" about the network focus and agenda. Something that binds partners within PROLINNOVA and to a certain extent in ILC but is least prominent in e.g. GFAR or FANRPAN;
- The relevance of the activities and outputs produced by the network for the regular work of the organisations. This is very strong, for example, in the case of ALNAP and GDPRD;
- The feeling of being part of the network through effective two-way communication, involvement of activities, sharing of resources, influence in decision making etc.

A second question determining the structure of the network refers to *the level of decentralisation*. This depends very much on the agenda of the network. With the exception of GDPRD, all networks studied have struggled or are struggling with this issue. In many cases (ILC, ALNAP and IFAP), the networks initially had a centralised structure with a central secretariat and governance body as key structuring elements. In various ways they have started to look for ways to decentralise, create learning groups, sub-secretariats and/or governance bodies at lower levels. Only PROLINNOVA started with planning and work at country level as a basis for deciding the need for and roles of an International Support Team cum Secretariat.

Networks decentralise to increase members' involvement; physical and budget-wise decentralisation allows for larger numbers of members to join activities. They also do so in the realisation that in the end actual changes need to be realised mostly at the regional or, even more so, at the country level. Decentralisation also allows for addressing country/region relevant (sub) issues and even for taking up of specific positions related to these issues. Given the complications of decentralising a strong centralised structure it is advisable to explore best ways for decentralisation from the start. This needs to be accompanied, obviously, by a decentralisation of resources. Whilst the temptation may be to decentralise mostly to a regional level (emphasis in GFAR e.g., also in ILC and IFAP) this may not overcome the above-mentioned problems with the centralised model. In such cases, a greater emphasis of decentralisation to the country level should be considered.

The question regarding the *role and position of the secretariat* needs to be discussed given the various tasks that need to be fulfilled to keep a network alive, ensure its quality of work, its growth and visibility such as:
- Planning, monitoring and evaluation, reporting;
- Organising decision making and governance;
- Fund raising and fund management;
- Facilitation of communication and knowledge sharing, including annual meetings;
- Capacity building, strengthening of sub-networks and organisations;
- Research, analysis or documentation of lessons from the network;
- International policy work, advocacy.

The tasks at the top of the list are often considered core tasks referring to the basic coordination and facilitation of the network. These are almost always done through one team, based in one location. Tasks mentioned at the end of the list can be considered "implementation" tasks. These can usually be shared easily between different organisations, members or non-members in the network. If the secretariat takes on more tasks at this level it tends to grow into an "organisation" in its own right, rather than supporting network members to achieve their common goal. This may lead to higher visibility of the secretariat and a stronger capacity and profile in the content issues of the network, but enforces the centralising forces in the network, decreases the opportunities for members to share relevant tasks and related resources, and may alienate key partners through competition for activities and funds. PROLINNOVA is the only network that distinguished between the (small) network secretariat responsible for the first two tasks based at ETC Ecoculture and an international support team responsible for the other tasks involving staff from a larger group of international resource organisations and, increasingly, country "member" organisations.

Depending on the choices made, secretariats can grow from 1 to 2 full timers to 10 or more. More interesting maybe to look at the percentage of available resources used to cover costs of the secretariat, its staff, the activities directly implemented by the secretariat, the working costs and overhead. Information from the case studies is not always conclusive and/or comparable but this percentage seems to vary from as low as 25% to 75% or more. The natural tendency seems to start small, expand rapidly until the need to decentralise is felt or claimed by the network.

Whatever the size and specific roles chosen for the secretariat, the dilemma will always be that a good secretariat, a good communicator to the outside world and an effective mobiliser of members' involvement, will be close to being overworked and constantly tend to grow, funds allowing. The secretariat needs to be aware of this and manage this challenge, saying "No" when too many new demands are being made or decentralise and share new tasks or activities with others maintaining a clear focus on the chosen core-business.

To provide a home for the secretariat, a network can choose to obtain an own independent *legal identity*. Only 2 out of the 8 networks studied made that choice. They wanted to create a clear framework facilitating the signing of agreements with donors and related administration as well as formalisation of employment contracts with staff and their management. In practice, establishing and dismantling the legal entity proves to be a time consuming and possibly expensive process. It reduces flexibility of structure and governance arrangements as each major change needs to follow the proper, legal, process. It also reduces the job security of secretariat staff as it only depends on the strength and funding base of the network itself. This in turn forms a constraint in attracting (and keeping) qualified staff. Finally (members often fear that) a network with an own legal independent status becomes an organisation in itself and a possible competitor for funds and international attention.

In the absence of a new independent legal entity for the network all evidence suggests that networks can be hosted adequately by existing organisations. *Hosting arrangements,* including financial management (see below) may vary but in all cases they provided the necessary legal and administrative framework for the network to enter into contracts and MoUs with donors and other partners and mobilise and maintain quality secretariat staff. The arrangements need of course to be clear and formalised in some form of hosting agreement which in turn needs to be made known to staff involved and the wider network in order to create adequate transparency. The host can choose to employ staff for the sole task of working for the network and for as long as donors agree to fund the network or its activities, a risk reducing strategy. Hosts like ODI and ETC integrate network staff in their regular organisation, creating possibilities for key specialists to work part time for the network and part time for other programmes of the host. This increases flexibility in staffing of the network and increases job security of staff involved as their future does not depend on the stability of the work only but also by continuation of programmes of the larger host.

Selection of the host organisation needs serious attention. Important considerations include:
- Credibility of the host: its name and status internationally as well as expertise in the core business, the content of the network.
- Capacity and flexibility in hosting and supporting administrative arrangements to the network. This determines how effectively the secretariat can handle recruiting of new staff, sign agreements with a wide range of partners, share resources, and send money to all corners of the network and process partner reports.
- In dealing with sensitive issues a relatively neutral name and position is an advantage.
- Experience and capacity of the host in facilitating international learning networks. This is a field of expertise in its own right that should not be taken for granted as a given within the host.

The is no doubt that in spite of increased use of ICT for communication in international networks (see below) *regular face-to-face meetings* need to be part of network design. They are essential for organising effective learning among "members", allowing emergence of new ideas or initiatives, creating platforms for governance and decision making, encouraging a feeling of ownership and increasing visibility of the network. But all these benefits can only be realised if the meetings are well planned and facilitated with a good balance between larger formal presentations and smaller working groups, between theory and practice, with open space sessions leading to clear concluding sessions. Networking is a verb and the face-to-face meetings are the place to make this work. They can boost or kill a network. Depending on the level of decentralisation, face-to-face meetings can happen at national, regional or global level.

And whatever the choices made regarding structure (and governance) the network needs to write them out, formulate them in some form of *"constitution" to create transparency* internally and externally. Where a legal entity is created the relevant legal framework will determine to a large extent the shaping of this document. In other cases the network can make its own choices. Some choose to formulate a full charter and adapt it only once in a couple of years. Others choose to formulate separate statements (guidelines) on important parts of structure and governance (e.g membership procedures, roles and responsibilities of various units, decision making, sharing of funds), change these if and when needed, and develop new ones when the needs arises.

Governance

There is no doubt about the importance of governance in making or breaking a network. Arrangements are needed that determine how decisions are made in a network and how individual organisations, members, can influence or take part in such decision making. The issue therefore needs thorough attention whilst choices made and the underlying rationale will need to be communicated very clearly to all those concerned.

From the case studies, three general models for network governance emerge – the democratic, the management and the guidance model. As always, combinations of models are possible.

In the most *democratic form of governance* a meeting of all members is given the highest authority. This meeting is given names such as Assembly of Members, Members Conference or Annual General *Meeting*. Frequency may vary from twice a year to once in 2-3 three years. Under this form, a governance committee functions for operational management, formally appointed by the AGM. This committee can be relatively small as interests of all members and stakeholders are well taken care of through the AGM. The governance committee provides direct supervision to the secretariat:
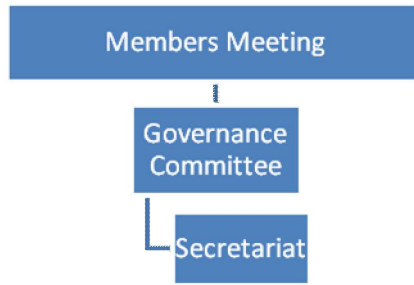
If well implemented, this mobilises ownership and commitment from the side of members. It is more easily implemented if the network is relatively small (ALNAP, GDPRD) and mostly needed when the network agenda has important political implications (IFAP, ILC)

In the *management form of governance* the status of the governance committee is upgraded to become the highest authority in the network, often known as a board. In this case the governance committee is usually larger to be able to meaningfully involve all relevant parts of the network. The larger size of the governance committee encourages the formation of a smaller team, a management team or executive board, for regular guidance and support to the secretariat. This may meet as often as four times a year. In this case governance is kept simple and transparent as the management team is directly chosen from and/or by the overall board. GFAR governance, for example, follows this model, by and large.
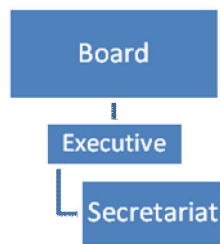
This model reduces the involvement and ownership of members. It is not necessarily more efficient in management as the decision making in the board may be as complicated as through members' meetings. It gives adequate governance in relatively open networks that lack clear membership arrangements and also in the case of large networks. In this case, board members are often representatives of sub-networks.

Finally, the *guidance model of governance* is the lightest form of the three. The status of the governance committee is reduced considerably as compared to the other two models to become an oversight group or general steering committee. It discusses and sets general network directions and policies but leaves it to the secretariat to operationalise these and plan, budget and manage activities accordingly. The committee only reviews annually – afterwards – whether the secretariat has done its job well.

This model obviously allows quite some room for manoeuvre to the secretariat increasing flexibility of the network to respond to new opportunities or adapt to unforeseen developments. It assumes patterns of trust between network members, committee members and the secretariat. PROLINNOVA governance resembles this model.

It is important to realise that the above analysis zooms in at governance of the global network as a whole. Parallel to the earlier discussion on decentralisation of network structures, a fundamental question is the *decentralisation of governance* to the location of decision making authority/power at the various levels in the network. Which decisions need to be made at the global level and which ones can be the responsibility of

sub-networks at country or regional level? While most networks give increasing attention to the importance of lower level sub-groups or sub-networks, it is clear only in a few cases (ILC, PROLINNOVA) how the network is working towards higher levels of autonomy for activities at these levels with related budgets.

In all cases the *composition of and (s)election process of the governance committee* needs to consider the following:
- Relevant actors, members, stakeholders need to feel that they are represented.
- Including committee members not representing any of the constituencies; "external" members who are able to look beyond the interests of the various constituencies makes governance often more effective. In some cases the Chair is by design such an "external" member.
- The secretariat should not be a member to maintain a clear distinction between governance and supervision on the one hand and implementation on the other hand. Some networks find this too artificial a construction and include the secretariat in the governance committee as a non-voting member.
- The process of deciding who is to be member needs to be clearly formulated and be transparent to all. This includes who nominates whom, criteria for who can be nominated, and procedures for decision making.
- Election (rather than selection) of members adds strength to the link between member constituencies and governance.
- Open election processes may lead to committee members who do not perform adequately and are not committed to the cause of the network. Thus, procedures for terminating committee membership should not be forgotten.

The issue of *representation* of network members or stakeholders within the governance committee merits further analysis. First of all, the word itself needs be used with care. If used, does it refer to true representation implying that the committee member speaks on behalf of her/his constituency or is it used more loosely suggesting that the committee member comes from a particular stakeholder category and is able to contribute from that perspective. A choice for real representation immediately poses the question of who represents whom. It is in this approach that the election procedure mentioned above becomes critically important. But representation should not conclude with the election process. If this approach is taken seriously the *communication between committee members and their constituency* needs to be well organised, both prior to meetings and decision making, and afterwards.

For an effective functioning of the governance committee, it is important to consider the issue of *incentive or compensation for committee members*. Effective committees often show a combination of strong individual interest of committee members in the topic and cause of the network and support by his/her organisation to create time for him/her to spend on the network. Such support may even allow committee members to use their own travel and expense budgets for work in the network thus reducing the pressure on overall network resources. Payment for time spent (fee) should be prevented for the same reason. Where CSO-led networks are very cautious with paying per diems or other allowances, other networks use this as compensation for the hard work of their committee members. If committee members are expected to link up systematically with their constituencies, mobilise inputs for and share and discuss results of meetings, they may need resources specifically set aside for this purpose.

A final word of advice from the networks studied: keep the governance structure simple with clear transparent lines and with low transaction costs. And remember that there are many other ways to involve members meaningfully in setting directions for the network and in (preparing for) decision making. Present ICT allow for regular consultations and debates with dispersed members including regular e-mail, yahoo-type discussion groups, debate options on the website, etc. If well facilitated, member workshops and meetings provide excellent opportunities for wider members' involvement. A governance structure that is not fed and inspired by such discussion is bound to end up becoming isolated from its base and thereby ineffective.

Funding and finances

Networks cannot function without finances, thus fund raising and management is an aspect that receives continuous attention in all the cases reviewed. In general, most of the networks have started by attracting one or two donors to the core idea of the network and gradually increased the volume of funding with the expansion of the activities of the network.

When it comes to funding of networks, donors are often more willing to fund content-related aspects than the network-related aspects. What this simply means is that it is easier to attract donors to fund a given activity/activities of a network rather than the structures within a network that ensure its functioning. This is also a reason that donors favour tied funding as opposed to basket funding favoured by networks.

The study revealed at least four, fairly distinguishable *forms of funding* of the networks. The first, and perhaps most attractive in terms of sustainability, is that donors are members of the network and provide an annual contribution to the network. This is the case for example in ALNAP where a range of donors agree to annual contributions worked out according to the annual revenues of the respective organisations. Such a financial construction allows for stability in terms of secretariat staffing and provides flexibility in terms of carrying out the activities of the network. It also allows the donors to be closely involved and contribute to the development of the network.

The second is that donors support a strategic plan of activities of a network for a period of 3-4 years in the form of programme funding. Several networks (GFAR, FANRPAN, and ILC) have been attempting to use a strategic plan for fund raising, though success has still been limited. Getting donors to buy into a strategic plan, in their opinion, requires continued lobbying and building a long-term relationship with selected donors. PROLINNOVA, for example, has managed to attract core programme funding for the activities of the network that are oriented towards a strategic plan. Although this form is less attractive in terms of sustainability, funding for reasonable periods of time allow the network to have dedicated secretariat staff to carry out the work and build up a larger donor base gradually. The donor is not as closely involved in the development and functioning of the network and is quite satisfied if the regular planning and reporting protocols are followed. This certainly puts more responsibility on the network to keep contacts with the donor(s) and find ways of engaging them in the affairs of the network.

A third form is project-based funding where donors provide a grant to a given project within the framework of a network. The majority of FANRPAN's funding comes for instance in the form of project-based funding, each project supported by a different donor. Basic costs of the secretariat are covered from the various project grants. This is far from sustainable and does not allow for stability in staffing. This also means that activities related to building and strengthening of the network gets very limited attention.

The fourth form is to fund the network and its activities through general membership contributions such as annual subscriptions, registration fees etc. The major part of IFAP's funding comes through membership fees of farmer organisations in 87 countries (more "northern-based"), where the fees are calculated per country. As a network expands and opens itself to a varied membership, especially "southern-based" organisations, this may pose more challenges. ILC, a much larger network with a majority of its membership being civil society organisations, has the intention of using membership contributions to finance the network in the long-term. However, the network is hesitant to actually impose this as a condition for membership realising that it could exclude some of the members who lack the means. The administrative costs related to collecting and managing membership contributions also need to be weighed out, particularly if the contributions are small and many. Yet, membership funds are considered an expression of commitment and ownership to the network.

On the question of *fund raising*, the networks mentioned several points that had positively influenced donors:
- Quality and usefulness of the network's outputs to members and donors:
- Availability of a comprehensive strategic plan for the network;
- Closer engagement with donors who are already supporting the network;
- Ability to demonstrate accountability and a transparent system of governance;
- High-profile voluntary patrons who promote the goals of the network.

Reporting to donors was in most cases seen as a time-consuming exercise. Each donor has its own, fairly rigid, reporting requirements and protocols which need to be fulfilled by the networks. Thus, individual and specific reporting to donors is being done by all the networks reviewed. As such, they are all grappling with the most efficient way to handle the task of reporting. Even though networks seek to broaden their donor base, reporting is experienced as an increasingly tedious task as the number of donors increase. A similar situation is experienced when a network (eg, FANRPAN, ProVention) relies mostly on project-based funding with each project being funded by a different donor with its specific reporting requirement. Reporting is also challenging in more de-centralised networks such as PROLINNOVA where funds are disbursed to partners with responsibility for fund management although final reporting to the donor lies with the secretariat. Making

firm agreements on reporting targets and developing clear guidelines and formats for reporting within the network helps to facilitate this task.

Fund management can become complex for those networks that are hosted by large, bureaucratic organisations. GFAR hosted by FAO and ILC hosted by IFAD are examples. In these cases, trust funds for the networks have been set up within the host organisation. This has allowed for separating the fund management of the network from that of the host organisation, thereby giving more flexibility as required by a network.

Communication flows

Good communication is a hallmark of a healthy and vibrant network. Attention to communication flows – both within and beyond the network – was seen in all the networks that were reviewed. A diversity of tools and methods were being used for communication depending on the size and structure of the network.

Face-to-face gathering is the most common form of *direct communication* among members within all of the networks. The frequency and duration of such gatherings differ among the networks and depend on factors such as size, level of funding, decentralisation etc. ALNAP being a small network of 75 members has been able to organise two face-to-face meetings of its members each year. The much larger global meeting of the GFAR on the other hand is held once in three years. ILC, also a large de-centralised network, organises a global gathering once every two years, combined with annual gatherings of regional members. Considering the logistical and financial resources required for organising such events, an annual meeting face-to-face meeting is the most desired option of most networks.

All networks make use of *electronic communication* for more frequent and regular contact both internally as well as externally. Electronic bulletins/newsletters are used to send brief information updates to the network and other interested parties. Electronic lists (yahoo groups) are another frequently used form of communication, with different lists set up for different purposes and target groups. These lists are used not just for circulation of information but also, occasionally, for interactive purposes such as dialoguing on a given issue. The website is a key communication channel for most of the networks with considerable investment in keeping it updated, attractive and user-friendly. By and large, most of the websites functioned as repositories of information where both network members as well as outsiders could find relevant information. Apart from IFAP and FANRPAN, the rest scored high on this count. Website features that allows for interaction among network members through dialogue functions were being developed by networks such as ALNAP, PROLINNOVA and GFAR but were not fully functional yet. As networks with a global or regional orientation, language is an issue that is being dealt with in terms of communication. This is reflected in the websites that attempt to provide access – even if limited – in languages other than English.

A clear communication strategy could not be distinguished in any of the networks studied. Instead, each network had started with a basic set of communication tools which gradually expanded based on the needs of the network – both internally and externally. A one-way flow of communication is observed in networks that place greater emphasis on information provision to its members. Other networks consider interaction among members an important aspect of communication and use tools to stimulate two-way communication.

Monitoring and evaluation

The review focused on two important aspects of M&E. The first was the way in which *M&E is organised*. Some of the networks such as ILC, ALNAP and PROLINNOVA has (or are in the process of developing) fairly well-structured and transparent M&E frameworks. Such a framework included monitoring of the network's activities but also the functioning of the network itself. The frameworks clearly stated what needed to be monitored, for what purpose, how this was going to be done, which tools were to be used, who was responsible for the task, what the output should be and how frequently it would be done. Annual planning and reporting cycles of the network including the individual reporting to donors, external evaluations as well all other monitoring mechanisms are embedded in this framework.

In contrast, networks such as GFAR, FANRPAN, ProVention do not have a clearly worked out M&E framework with M&E being done in a rather ad-hoc manner. As a basic minimum, these networks try to prepare annual reports to inform the network on what has been achieved during the year. Yet, there have

been times that even this has been missed out for two or three years. External evaluations, often requested by donors, have been undertaken sporadically.

The second aspect was the *use of M&E for continuous learning within the network*. It appeared that the networks with M&E frameworks were also those that had in place tools and mechanisms for internal learning. Despite the fact that ALNAP full members meet twice a year and have plenty of opportunity for interaction, feedback from the larger body (including associate members) on network functioning is solicited through a telephone poll conducted every 18 months and a constituency feedback session at each bi-annual meeting. The annual survey of members and partners undertaken by ILC has a similar purpose. PROLINNOVA conducts an annual electronic evaluation through which all layers of the network are able to provide feedback on aspects related to its functioning. In all of these cases, the feedback received is used to bring about necessary changes to improve the structure and functioning of the network.

It is obvious that M&E requires investment of resources, but it is an investment that pays off in terms of building a network that is accountable, relevant and democratic with vibrant engagement and ownership of all who are part of it. M&E systems can be as simple or complex as a network wants. What eventually matters is that there is a system in place that is accepted and used by the network for continuous learning and improvement.

CONCLUSION

None of the eight cases studied presents an organisational model that can be copied by GFRAS. But the above analysis clearly suggests that an effective set-up of the international GFRAS network can be developed by making conscious choices on each of the items reviewed under the five headings above. In making these choices, a continuous link is needed with what GFRAS really wants to do and achieve. This includes the question of priorities among all that has been listed so far.

If, for example, the main priority is on creating a global voice for advisory services (current objectives 1 and 4), the network would need a rather centralised structure, need a strong secretariat, staffed by experts, hosted by an organisation with a strong international name in this area with communication channels mostly oriented outwards. If, on the other hand, a central priority is to improve the actual functioning of advisory services on the ground (part of objective 2), the network would need to be decentralised to a large extent, the international secretariat relatively small, mostly tasked with ensuring that resources reach (groups of) members working to change current practices on the ground, with communication in the network leaning to a two-way orientation.

In making choices for the set-up of the network, a number of questions need to be considered at all levels: What are the implications of the choices for:
• Internal and external accountability and transparency
• Creation of opportunities and dynamics for innovation and learning
• Sustainability of the network in terms of widely shared ownership and funding resources

Making wrong choices at this stage would not mean that seeds for disaster are planted, if GFRAS takes one of the central lessons on monitoring and evaluation of this study seriously; i.e. to create and use from the very beginning a set of simple mechanisms to monitor how the chosen set-up is functioning, to generate and process feedback from members or partner organisations, and to consciously plan for decision making moments to adapt and improve the set-up based on this feedback and new insights. With this in place, GFRAS will become a network that learns continually to become more effective and to interact with and serve its constituencies optimally.

Annex 1: The Terms of Reference

**Terms of Reference for Consultancy
Mapping Long-term Options for GFRAS**

Background

The Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) is seeking a consultant to review relevant existing networks, initiatives, and forums to develop criteria and options for consideration for its long-term set up and strategy. These networks, initiatives, and forums (referred to from here on as 'organisations') should include existing organisations that are similar to GFRAS (working at regional or global level; working on rural development issues; similar mission and objectives). In addition, a couple of organisations that are outside the rural development arena should be included.

The GFRAS mission is to provide a space for advocacy and leadership on pluralistic, demand-driven rural advisory services. GFRAS does this in the context of the global development agenda, with a goal of promoting sustainable growth and reducing poverty.

Purpose of the Consultancy

The outlined consultancy should feed into developing the long-term governance and the 5-year strategy of GFRAS.

Objectives

The objective of this assignment is to provide GFRAS with (a) an overview of existing governance structures, financing procedures, and pros & cons of relevant existing organisations; and (b) provide GFRAS with criteria and options for its long-term set-up, including structure, governance structure, and funding mechanisms.

Scope of Services

The main responsibilities and key activities of the consultant are as follows:

1. Scanning for at least a dozen similar organisations, interviewing people, and reviewing relevant documents and websites to answer the information detailed below, and detailing this in a **report**.
2. Setting up a **matrix** and **typology** of existing organisational set-ups to be included in the report.
3. Critical **assessment** of the reviewed organisations.
4. Based on the matrix and report, key **criteria and options** for GFRAS set-up and strategy in the long term.

The information sought includes, among others:

- Structure and governance
  - What is the structure, legal status, and decision-making process of the organisation?
  - Do they have a charter, constitution, binding agreement, or similar document?
  - How are member and affiliates involved? Is the subsidiarity principle applied?
  - What is the number of staff and what positions do the staff hold?
- Financing
  - What are the organisation's human and financial resources?
  - How does their financing flow and mechanisms work with the major multi-lateral, bi-lateral, and private foundation donors? How is reporting to multiple donors handled?
  - What are the financing possibilities and barriers?

The organisations may include but are not limited to: AFAAS, GFAR, GDPRD, DCED, NI, FANRPAN, and IFAP. Additionally, one or two innovative networks/initiatives/ forums outside of agriculture and rural development should be included. The consultant will complement the list as appropriate for the purpose and objective of this study.

The information sought will include not only the information above, but also perceptions and opinions from interviewees on what they think of their organisational structure, governance, and financing, and what they advise for GFRAS based on their experience. The consultant should also look for examples of organisations who have decided on different set-ups (e.g. hosted versus non-hosted; membership based vs. non-membership based; basket funding vs. activity funding) to give a better idea of options and reasons for choosing that option.

Performance Criteria and Outputs

The three main outputs are as follows:

1. Report providing an overview and analysis of governance, strategy and programs and financing of existing relevant networks, initiatives, and forums
2. Matrix and typology of institutional/organisational set-ups for comparison, with assessment of the networks, initiatives, and forums
3. Criteria and options for GFRAS long-term set-up, strategy and program components based on the report and matrix

Expected Activities, Processes, and Outputs

The process will entail desk work of reviewing documents and websites, and talking to people by email and by phone. First the consultant will submit a list of networks, forums, initiatives and individuals to be included in the study (**within a week of signing the contract**). In some cases, depending on the location of the consultant, it may also entail travel to key areas where several interviewees are located. This information will be detailed in a report (due **6 August**) and reported to the GFRAS steering committee between August-September 2010.

Qualifications

The consultant should have an appropriate degree and at least 10 years' experience in international relations, extension, rural development, or related field. The consultant will be familiar with international networks, forums and initiatives related to agricultural and rural development as well as with the respective donor community.

Expected Timeframe for Reporting

The list of networks, forums, initiatives, and individuals should be submitted within a week of signing the contract to the GFRAS secretariat**.** Report (that includes the matrix, typology, and criteria and options) should be ready by 6 August, 2010. It will be presented to the GFRAS steering committee in August or September (date to be decided).

Estimated Budget

GFRAS estimates this work at 15 days (including travel to present the report), plus any actual incurred expenses.

Additional Details

During its inception phase, GFRAS has an open structure with no formal membership. It is governed by a steering committee and managed by the GFRAS secretariat, currently located in Switzerland. Several partners support GFRAS financially including: the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), and the European Commission (EC). The Swiss Association for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas (Agridea) hosts GFRAS. More information is in the GFRAS brochure at http://www.g-fras.org/about-us/.

Please send a cover letter detailing

(a) Your background and qualifications and how they are relevant to this work, including knowledge of and contact with existing networks, initiatives, and forums; and knowledge of legal issues
(b) A proposal of how you will undertake the work

(c) Your ability to meet the deadline of 6 August 2010
(d) Your view of the time necessary to complete the work
(e) Your rates

Send this information with a copy of your CV, to kristin.davis@g-fras.org by **15 June 2010.** We hope to finalise the consultancy agreement by 30 June.

Annex 2: Network case description and analysis framework

Network objectives

What are the network objectives? Are these mostly referring to 1) Learning and sharing, 2) International awareness creation, policy dialogue, visibility, 3) Joint program implementation to effectuate change; or does the network have 4) multiple objectives

Structure

Membership issues: Organized membership? How many members, forms of membership, conditions for membership, membership contribution or fee
Is the network inclusive-exclusive, single stakeholder or multi-stakeholder?

Level of centralization: structures limited at the network/global level as compared to structures elaborated at lower levels with own tasks and budgets; their autonomy

Formalization: availability of constitutions or related documents; legal status

Facilitation and secretariat: Centrally organized or tasks shared/circulating; hosting arrangements and their implications; the size of secretariat and its roles; position of secretariat staff (network only; full or part-time); availability of network facilitation skills and expertise.

Governance

Decision making mechanisms and structures: (s)election of representatives in these structures; their role and functioning; how information is fed from and to the "members"

Other ways of soliciting influence of members in decision making of the network

Reporting lines and accountability of secretariat

Communication flows

Communication planning, evidence of, targets groups

Description of main communication/information channels and their use

Communication flows analysis: one or two-sided; focused on members at centre or among members at large.

Funding

Annual budget indication; the use of funds broadly (% for secretariat versus % for network activities; spending directly through the secretariat versus through members)

Source of funding and management of and reporting on multiple sources of funding

Monitoring and Evaluation

Planning of M&E; the M&E framework, main M&E activities and outputs

Monitoring and evaluation of network functioning: generation of members' feedback and adaptation of network design.

Network analysis

What are experiences in the actual functioning of the organizational model in terms of the 5 areas of concern? What worked and what did not? What are strengths and what weaknesses? How would one improve the model?

How did the organizational model influence, positively or negatively, the:
- Effectiveness of the network, level of achieving outputs and objectives;
- Accountability and transparency at various levels;
- Vibrancy of the network in terms of new ideas and innovation, diversity of activities emerging, growth of membership;
- Sustainability, including shared ownership by members and mobilizing and managing funds.