

Rural Advisory Services Worldwide: A Synthesis of Actors and Issues



Revised, 2011

GFRAS is the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services. The GFRAS forum is made up of various stakeholders worldwide who have an interest and role in rural advisory services (RAS). The mission of this forum is to provide advocacy and leadership on pluralistic, demand-driven rural and agricultural advisory services within the global development agenda. GFRAS advocates for better recognition of the essential role of RAS and to see this recognition reflected in the policies of international development organisations, better investment in RAS, and more influence by RAS providers in international fora. The GFRAS vision is to see rural advisory services effectively contributing to the sustainable reduction of hunger and poverty worldwide.

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Executive summary

The purpose of this report on actors and issues in rural advisory services (RAS) is to provide the required background information and analysis that will – together with other ongoing validation activities – enable GFRAS, the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services, to develop its long-term strategies and work plans in order to fulfil its mission and functions. GFRAS was created to provide advocacy and leadership for pluralistic, demand-driven rural advisory services within the global development agenda, based on the vision that these RAS contribute to the sustainable reduction of hunger and poverty worldwide.

The report on actors and issues in rural advisory services (RAS) is based on a review of primary and secondary documentation about RAS and their stakeholders, undertaken in 2010. Key stakeholder groups identified were RAS 'clients', RAS 'providers', and those stakeholders responsible for or contributing to an overall enabling environment for RAS. The report differentiates between the following seven groups of RAS providers: (1) farmers and farmer organisations, (2) public-sector RAS, (3) private-sector RAS, (4) NGOs, (5) research organisations, (6) agricultural training and education organisations, and (7) networks and platforms representing all or some of these. Four regions were differentiated for the purpose of this report: (1) Africa, (2) Asia and Pacific, (3) Latin America and Caribbean, and (4) Europe; global stakeholders were considered in a separate section. For the analysis of gaps and opportunities, key themes and issues mentioned in the documents consulted were mapped and prioritised according to their relevance for the various regions.

Africa has the largest proportion of people living in rural areas and dependent upon agriculture for their livelihoods. There are great opportunities for agricultural production, but there are also challenges. Key challenges include low and highly variable rainfall, low agricultural productivity, low use of external inputs, low overall levels of agricultural knowledge, lack of connection between farmers and the market, food security, and equity (in particular gender eq-

uity). The CAADP (Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme) framework in Africa provides an opportunity to bring agricultural development back on the agenda, and to have coordinated approaches at the country level with a clear role for both generation of knowledge and technology and agricultural advisory services. In terms of RAS providers, farmer-to-farmer extension is an important mechanism for most of Africa's smallholder farmers, even though only a fraction of farmers are organised in producer organisations at the national level. Public-sector advisory services have suffered from cutbacks and attempts at reform, which in many cases resulted in rudimentary and poorly resourced services. Private-sector service providers generally offer advice together with agricultural inputs, but are used mostly by commercial producers. NGOs are actively involved in RAS and often pilot innovative and participatory approaches, but their coverage is limited. Research organisations undertake some advisory activities, in particular by disseminating research findings through targeted publications and other media to intermediate and end users. Agricultural education institutions are numerous, but overall, agricultural subjects receive less attention in higher education than they used to, and many institutions are struggling to attract the most promising students. Most of the above-mentioned stakeholder groups are organised through networks or associations at the regional and/or continental levels. AFAAS, the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services, has recently emerged as a continental network to facilitate exchange and learning among RAS stakeholders, and to strengthen the voice of RAS during the CAADP process. In francophone West and Central Africa, an informal network, the "Réseau des services de conseil agricole et rural d'Afrique de l'ouest et du centre (RESCAR-AOC)" emerged in 2011. Supporting AFAAS will be a key task for GFRAS.

The Asia and Pacific region is more heterogeneous than Africa. Industrialised countries or parts of countries are located side by side with agrarian economies dominated by smallholder farmers. The Green Revolution led to significant agricultural growth, but during the past decade food production has largely stagnated. Coupled with the effects of soaring

food and fuel prices and climate change, this has increased the vulnerability of a large proportion of the rural population. Key challenges include access to natural and financial resources, and the development of modern value chains. However, there are also many interesting and innovative models of RAS. RAS stakeholder groups include farmers, who rely heavily on their own innovations and knowledge exchange. There are ongoing initiatives in several countries to make public RAS more responsive to farmers' needs and more accountable. Private-sector RAS play a more prominent role in Asia than in Africa, in particular for producers supplying urban markets. NGOs are important RAS providers in some countries, but generally focus more on advocacy for issues such as green development or right to food. Agricultural research organisations supply knowledge and information to other RAS providers. The region's agricultural education institutions train many agricultural experts from other regions, in particular Africa. Networking activities in Asia and the Pacific include the Pacific Islands Extension Network (PIEN); the larger Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services (APIRAS) network and the Central Asian Countries and Caucasus (CACC) agricultural advisory services network were created in 2010. Support of these networks by GFRAS is important in order for them to have an impact in the region.

Latin America and Caribbean is a diverse region with a wide range of agro-ecological and socio-economic zones. Agricultural growth is largely fuelled by integration of some parts of the sector into global markets; smallholder farmers have not benefited much from this growth. The region faces one of the highest levels of economic and social inequality in the world, both between and within countries. Other key challenges include adaptation to climate change and natural disasters, and meeting market demands for high-quality and diverse agricultural products through value chain development. Farmer organisations in the region have been very active both in relation to agricultural technology and issues of sustainable natural resources management, and as part of a wider social and political movement for farmers' rights. Public-sector RAS have undergone significant reforms. In many countries services have been

decentralised or partially privatised. Some models emerging from this process have been of interest to African RAS as well. Private-sector RAS are mostly active in high-potential areas with commercial farming systems, but are also moving into less advantaged areas as part of government efforts to make RAS more competitive and client-oriented. NGOs are also major players, in particular to promote sustainable farming methods and farmers' rights, often working together with farmer organisations. Research organisations (both publicly and privately funded) are active in technology development and, to a lesser extent, dissemination by making findings available and accessible to users. Agricultural education organisations in the region are generally of a high calibre, but few courses focus on the needs of smallholder farmers. There is a number of regional centres on rural and agricultural development in general, and a Latin American RAS forum was created towards the end of 2010.

Europe is both a user and a global provider/supporter of RAS. There are large differences between agrarian economies in different parts of Europe as a result of climatic, economic, and social parameters. Rural economies in Eastern Europe have undergone tremendous changes since 1990 as a consequence of the transition from centrally planned economic systems to market economies, affecting RAS and other services. The 27 European Union member states have a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the focus of which has shifted from increasing agricultural production to inclusion of sustainability aspects in farm management. A large proportion of European farmers are organised in farmer organisations and receive some advice from these. Public advisory services focus increasingly on the provision of 'public goods' related to public health and environmental management, while most of the production-related advice is provided to farmers by private-sector firms. NGOs are mostly concerned with social and environmental aspects of agriculture. Research institutions generally do not provide RAS, but RAS providers and farmers make use of the Internet and other media to access research findings. Agricultural education increasingly fo-

cuses on training overseas students, as the dwindling agricultural work force in Europe does not generate sufficient demand for agricultural education. There is a large number of networks and forums on agricultural and rural development in Europe, and at least one sub-regional RAS network, but there is no specific forum for RAS that brings together the different stakeholder groups. This is a possible intervention area for GFRAS.

Globally, agriculture has received more attention since the food price crisis in 2007/8, with a large number of projects and programmes supporting the sector, backed up by high-level statements such as the 2009 L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security. International agencies supporting RAS both directly (through financial and technical assistance) and indirectly (by working towards and advocating for conducive and evidence-based policy and practice) include UN agencies such as FAO, WFP, and IFAD, as well as the World Bank and continental development banks. The worldwide producer organisation IFAP dissolved in 2010; its coordinating functions related to RAS can be taken up by GFRAS. RAS donors include most bilateral agencies and a number of multilateral ones, as well as foundations. The majority of RAS donors are members of GDPRD (Global Donor Platform for Rural Development). Other key global RAS stakeholders include the private sector (as a provider of agricultural inputs and advice) and agricultural research and education networks and forums, including the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR). Several agencies specifically work on agricultural information and communication, notably CTA (Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation) and CABI (formerly the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau), thus providing a link between producers and users of agricultural knowledge and information. The global RAS landscape is thus similarly diverse as the regional ones, leaving GFRAS in the challenging role to support effective communication, exchange of experiences and learning, and advocacy in collaboration with global partners.

To conclude, users and providers of RAS face a range of challenges related to RAS, which can be

summarised under the following themes: (1) Non-conducive policy environment for RAS; (2) Lack of clarity on roles and weak voice of RAS actors; (3) Insufficient or inadequate communication and coordination between main agricultural and rural development stakeholders at all levels; (4) Weak capacity of RAS; (5) Poor availability of evidence on RAS; and (6) Insufficient funds for RAS.

GFRAS can respond to these challenges by delivering through its three functions:

- Providing a voice for RAS and promoting improved investment in RAS. Main intervention areas: coordination of RAS actors, their approaches, and their policies to facilitate their engagement in policy dialogue and advocacy; engaging in policy dialogue by advocating for GFRAS's position among a wider audience; raising awareness of RAS. Main activities: initiate dialogue and convene meetings to discuss issues, policies, and approaches in RAS with the GFRAS constituency; debate the roles of the different RAS actors such as the private and public sectors and civil society; conduct or commission analysis or systematic reviews of existing rural and agricultural policies; participate in events and forums such as GDPRD; ensure that there is a wide debate of evidence of returns to RAS investment among stakeholder groups that extends academic discussions; participate in and convene meetings, events, and discussions; engage in policy dialogue and advocate the importance and results of RAS among funders.
- Supporting the development and synthesis of evidence-based approaches and policies. Main intervention area: facilitation of knowledge generation and management. Main activities: acquire information and evidence by participating in events, interacting with key stakeholders, and undertaking and commissioning analyses; commission the synthesis of existing evidence and present it in a form that is attractive and useful for intermediate and end users; feed evidence into policy.
- Strengthening RAS actors. Main intervention area: facilitation of networking between RAS actors, sectors, and different stakeholder groups. Main activities: link actors, stakeholders, and sectors by exchanging contacts, brokering re-

relationships, and creating new contacts through e-mail and virtual and face-to-face meetings and forums; provide a platform for exchange, coordination, and learning; identify needs for capacity strengthening in RAS; advocate for the involvement of farmers and other stakeholder groups in the design and monitoring of RAS provision and in the identification and validation of RAS-related researchable issues; strength-

en regional RAS networks through technical backstopping, collaboration, and the principle of subsidiarity.

In addition to this, GFRAS should address a number of cross-cutting issues, including capacity strengthening and education of RAS staff, social equity and contexts, and the weak role and capacity of RAS partners.

Acronyms

AAFO	Africa Alliance of sub-regional Farmer Organisations
AARINENA	Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa
AAU	Association of African Universities
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries
ACSA	Central and Eastern European Rural Advisory Services Forum
ACT	African Conservation Tillage
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFA	Asian Farmers' Association for sustainable development
AFAAS	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFGC	Asian Farmers' Group for Cooperation
AFSI	L'Aquila Food Security Initiative
AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
AGRINATURA	European Alliance on Agricultural Knowledge for Development
AGRIDEA	Swiss Association for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas
AGRIS	International Information System for the Agricultural Sciences and Technology
AIAEE	Association of International Agricultural and Extension Education
ALEAS	Asociación de Escuelas de Agronomía en América Latina
ANAFE	African Network of Agriculture and Forestry Education
ANGOC	Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
APAARI	Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions
APFO	African Platform of Farmers' Organisations
APEAEN	Asia Pacific Association of Educators in Agriculture and Environment
APEN	Australasia Pacific Extension Network
APIRAS	Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services
ARD	Agricultural Research for Development
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
ASFARNET	Asian Farmers' Regional Network
BASICS	Building African Scientific and Institutional Capacity
BMGF	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme
CABI	Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau International
CACAARI	Caucasus Association of Agricultural Research Institutions
CACC	Central Asian Countries and Caucasus
CaFAN	Caribbean Farmers Network

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CECRA	Certificate for European Consultants in Rural Areas
CFC	Common Fund for Commodities
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CLADES	Centro Latinoamericano de Desarrollo Sustentable
CLOC	Coordinadora Latinoamérica de Organizaciones del Campo
COGECA	General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives
COLEACP	Comité de Liaison Europe-Afrique-Caraïbes-Pacifique.
CONCORD	European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development
COPA	Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations
COPROFAM	Coordination of Family Farms of MERCOSUR
CORAF/WECARD	West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development
CSA	Collectif Stratégies Alimentaires
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation ACP-EU
DAAS	Danish Agricultural Advisory Service
DATIC	District Agricultural Training and Information Centres (in Uganda)
DIRSI	Diálogo Regional sobre la Sociedad de la Información
DG	Directorate-General of the European Commission
EAFF	Eastern Africa Farmers' Federation
EARD Infosys+	European Information System on Agricultural Research for Development
EFA	European Federation of Agricultural Workers' Unions
EFARD	European Forum for Agricultural Research for Development
EFMA	Fertilisers Europe
EFSG	European Food Security Group
EIARD	European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development
EPFS	European Platform for Food Sovereignty
ERA-ARD	European Research Area on Agricultural Research for Development
ESEE	European Seminar on Extension Education
EU	European Union
EUCORD	European cooperative for rural development
FAAP	Framework for African Agricultural Productivity
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
FAS	Farm Advisory System

FO	Farmer Organisation
FORAGRO	Forum for the Americas on Agricultural Research and Technology Development
FSTP	Food Security Thematic Programme
GCARD	Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDPRD	Global Donor Platform on Rural Development
GFAR	Global Forum for Agricultural Research
GFRAS	Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services
IAASTD	International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IADP	Integrated Agricultural Development Project
IALB	Internationale Akademie land- und hauswirtschaftlicher Beraterinnen und Berater / International Academy for Agricultural and Home Economics Advisory Services
IARC	International Agricultural Research Centres
IAREE	International Academy of Rural Extension in Europe
ICRA	International Centre for development oriented Research in Agriculture
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IFA	International Fertilizer Industry Association
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFAP	International Federation of Agricultural Producers
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
INOFO	Intercontinental Network of Organic Farmers Organisations
IPI	International Potash Institute
IRRI	International Rice Research Institute
ISF	International Seed Federation
LVC	La Vía Campesina
MCAC	Movimiento Campesino a Campesino
MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
MESA	Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities
MOAAS	Market-Oriented Agricultural Advisory Services
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services (of Uganda)
NAARAP	NGO Association for Agricultural Research in the Asia-Pacific
NARI	National Agricultural Research Institute
NARS	National Agricultural Research System

NASRO	North African Sub Regional Organisation
NI	Neuchâtel Initiative
NIFA	National Institute of Food and Agriculture
NR Group	Natural Resource Group
NRI	Natural Resource Institute
NRM	Natural Resources Management
PAEPARD	Platform for African-European Partnerships on Agricultural Research for Development
PanAAC	Pan-African Agribusiness and Agro-Industry Consortium
PEN	Philippine Extension Network
PIEN	Pacific Islands Extension Network
PIP	Pesticides Initiative Programme
PROPAC	Sub-Regional Platform of Peasant Organizations of Central Africa
RAS	Rural Advisory Services
RDA	Rural Development Administration of the Republic of Korea
REC	Regional Economic Community
RIMISP	Centro Latinoamericano para el Desarrollo Rural
ROPPA	Réseau des organisations paysannes et de producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
RUFORUM	Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture
SACAU	Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions
SADC FANR	Southern African Development Community – Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources
SAI	Sustainable Agriculture Initiative
SCARDA	Strengthening Agricultural Research for Development in Africa
SFIAR	Swiss Forum for International Agricultural Research
SG2000	Sasakawa Global 2000
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSANAAS	Sub-Saharan Africa Network on Agricultural Advisory Services
T&V system	Training and Visit system
UMAGRI	Union Maghrébine des Agriculteurs
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WTO	World Trade Organization

1. Introduction

1.1 GFRAS and its validation process

In January 2010, the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) was created to provide advocacy and leadership for pluralistic, demand-driven rural advisory services within the global development agenda. The ultimate goal of GFRAS is to contribute to the sustainable reduction of hunger and poverty worldwide. GFRAS's functions are to:

- Provide a voice for advisory services within global policy dialogues and promote improved investment in RAS (by convening, mobilising, energising, and harmonising within the broader agricultural development arena);
- Support the development and synthesis of evidence-based approaches and policies for improving the effectiveness of rural advisory services (RAS); and
- Strengthening actors and fora in rural advisory services (RAS) through facilitating interaction and networking.

In its inception phase from January 2010 to June 2011, GFRAS's short-term objective was to establish the GFRAS structure and governance, develop a five-year plan, and secure longer-term funding. One of the inception phase activities for the GFRAS secretariat was to undertake a validation process to present its mission and objectives to global and regional stakeholders and assess how it should act in the future.

During the validation process, GFRAS mapped stakeholders and matched interests in rural advisory services (RAS) and rural development. The aim was to obtain a clearer picture of who is involved in RAS and in agricultural development in general, and to map out strategies for working with these actors – based on their interests and positions – in the long term. Validation activities included dialogues between GFRAS secretariat staff and stakeholders during workshops, conferences, and face-to-face meetings with individuals. In addition, the GFRAS secretariat commissioned a review and synthesis of existing documents and consultations (methodological details are described in Section 1.3).

The present report is a result of the validation process. It is not a scientific paper and analysis is not based on representative data. Still, the information obtained is diverse and can indicate tendencies with regard to the types of stakeholders involved in RAS worldwide, the issues discussed, and existing potentials and gaps. In line with its overall aim, the present report can serve as a source of information and orientation in elaborating long-term strategies for GFRAS. Chapter 1 explains the context and the methodology of the synthesis report and defines key terms. In Chapter 2, findings from the synthesis report are presented by region (Africa, Asia and Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean, Europe). Stakeholders and issues at the global and international levels are presented in a separate section. In Chapter 3, findings from Chapter 2 are summarised, and key issues for current RAS are presented. Chapter 4 gives recommendations based on the conclusions drawn in Chapter 3.

1.2 Definitions

The terms defined in this section are regularly used by GFRAS and in this report. Definitions are based on GFRAS documents such as its briefs and strategy.

Rural advisory services (RAS), also called extension, are all the different activities that provide the information and services needed and demanded by farmers and other actors in rural settings to assist them in developing their own technical, organisational, and management skills and practices so as to improve their livelihoods and well-being¹. GFRAS holds the view that RAS need to be demand-driven and pluralistic (e.g. multisectoral).

Advocacy involves promoting, supporting, or defending something.

Leadership stands for direction, information, or guidance.

¹www.g-fras.org/fileadmin/UserFiles/GFRAS-documents/GFRAS-Brief_Key-areas-for_Mobilizing-potential-of-RAS_web.pdf

1.3 Methodology

This report is based on a review of a range of primary and secondary documents about RAS and their stakeholders carried out in 2010. The documentation came from two sources:

- Primary documents: Notes from meetings attended and discussions held by GFRAS staff in the context of the GFRAS validation process. Annex 8 lists all meetings and discussions that the secretariat held between January and September 2010 and that are considered in this report; meetings and events were chosen by opportunity in different regions and sectors.
- Secondary documents:
 - Reports and other documents from various stakeholder organisations, in particular WB, FAO, and NI;
 - Regional overview papers, including the GCARD regional reviews and synthesis reports and the regional IAASTD reports;
 - Academic papers and reports on RAS; and
 - Websites of key stakeholders (shown in □ Annex 3 to Annex 7).

The identification of key stakeholders was based on discussions with GFRAS secretariat staff, which resulted in the mapping shown in Figure 1. It shows RAS stakeholders in relation to three overlapping domains: RAS 'Clients', RAS 'Providers', and the 'Enabling (or disabling) Environment'. Many stakeholders fulfil functions in more than one domain; for example, farmers both receive and provide RAS, NGOs both provide RAS and influence the environment (e.g. through policy advocacy). Annex 1 shows the different functions that stakeholders fulfil to different degrees.

Based on this analysis, it was agreed to focus primarily on stakeholders who provide RAS at the regional and global levels and with whom GFRAS could collaborate, resulting in seven groups: (1) farmers and farmer organisations, (2) public-sector RAS, (3) private-sector RAS, (4) NGOs, (5) research organisations, (6) agricultural training and educa-

tion organisations, and (7) networks and platforms representing all or some of these.

The review of secondary documents focused on a description and analysis of the aims and objectives of key stakeholders and their organisations, as well as their role in RAS, at both the regional and the global levels. This was supplemented with regional analyses undertaken in 2008 by the IAASTD³, and in 2009/2010 for GCARD (Global Conference for Agricultural Research for Development)⁴. Four regions were differentiated for the purpose of this report: Africa, Asia and Pacific (including West and Central Asia), Latin America and Caribbean, and Europe.

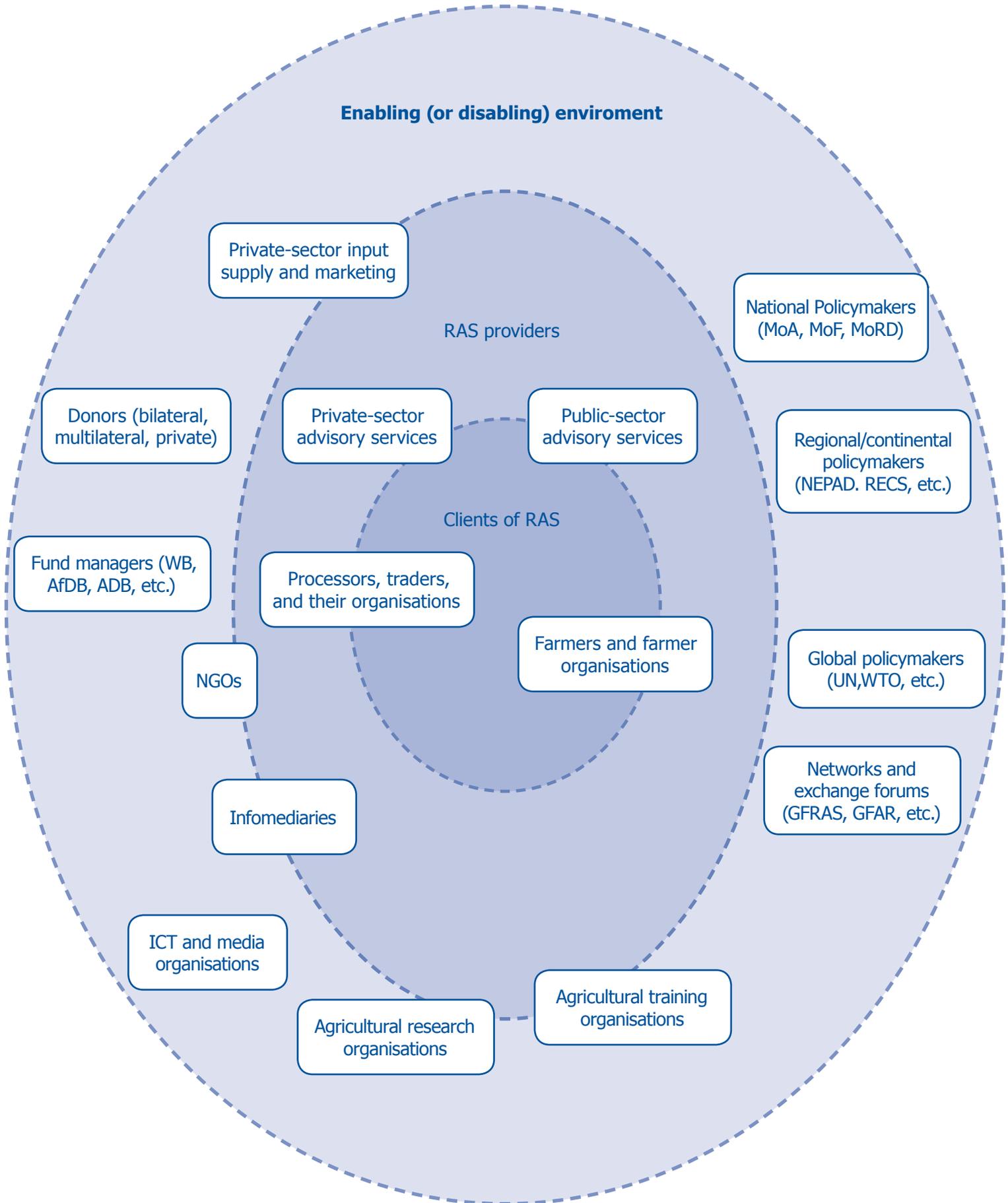
For the analysis, key themes and issues emerging from primary and secondary documents were mapped and prioritised according to their relevance for regions (see Annex 9 for primary documents and Annex 10 for secondary documents). For themes with high priority for all or most regions, existing initiatives and remaining gaps were listed, resulting in key intervention areas for GFRAS. The analysis of gaps and opportunities is still indicative, as it has not yet been subjected to a review by stakeholders. Additional validation of the longer-term strategy continued through the end of the GFRAS inception phase in June 2011.

²All hyperlinks to web pages in the reference list were operational in July 2011.

³The United Nation's (UN) International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) was funded by five UN agencies and the World Bank, and authored by over 400 scientists and development experts from more than 80 countries. It concluded that there is an urgent need to increase and strengthen further research and adoption of locally appropriate and democratically controlled agro-ecological methods of production, relying on local expertise, local germplasm, and farmer-managed local seed systems.

⁴The first Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD) was held in Montpellier, France, on 28–31 March 2010. The GCARD conference was informed by a comprehensive, systematic, and inclusive global consultation process which identified key themes and issues as perceived by all stakeholders who are actively engaged in the agricultural system. Priorities were identified by means of document reviews, an electronic survey, open electronic consultations, and face-to-face meetings in each of the regions of Near East, Asia Pacific, Central Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America and Caribbean.

Figure 1: Main RAS stakeholders



2. RAS: Stakeholders and networks

The review of primary and secondary documents described in Chapter 1 resulted in an analysis of RAS stakeholders and their networks at the regional and global levels⁵. The stakeholder categories are derived from Figure 1 and Annex 1, to include RAS clients and providers, as well as networks and umbrella organisations supporting them. Stakeholders in the wider enabling environment (in particular policy-makers at different levels) are considered, but wider agricultural trade and market access policies at the global level are not discussed in detail. The focus is on stakeholders who directly influence the ways in which advisory services are resourced and delivered.

2.1 RAS in regions and sub-regions

2.1.1 Africa

2.1.1.1 Regional characteristics

The African continent, comprised of North, West, Central, East, and Southern Africa, has a population of just over one billion people, most of whom live in rural areas, with agriculture being their main source of livelihood. North Africa often has closer linkages to Southern Europe, other Mediterranean countries, and the Middle East, and shares some characteristics of these sub-regions – such as low and highly variable rainfall, high levels of land degradation, high levels of illiteracy and income inequality, and land fragmentation in some areas going hand in hand with concentration of farmland in other areas (Gana et al. 2009).

There are great opportunities to increase Africa's agricultural production, due to strong demand prospects, favourable domestic policy environments, incentives for investment, and new technologies (The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank 2009). However,

agriculture also faces challenges: In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), crop yields are generally very low, resulting in a large number of chronically undernourished people (estimated at 250 million in 1999) and large food imports (USD 18.7 billion in 2000). Unlike in other regions, overall per capita agricultural yields declined from 1970 to 1980 and since then have stagnated. Livestock production plays a crucial role in providing assets and food to rural households, but productivity is generally low as a result of diseases and low water and feed availability for prolonged periods and over large areas. According to the IAASTD (Markwei et al. 2005), the main challenges facing the agricultural sector in SSA, jointly leading to low productivity, include low use of inputs (especially fertiliser); low levels of exploitation of surface and groundwater; rapid depletion of the natural resource base (including genetic erosion of indigenous germplasm); overall low levels of knowledge, understanding, and uptake of new agricultural technologies; high levels of risk and uncertainty – aggravated by climate change; lack of connection between farmers and the market; high dependency on external funding for agricultural knowledge, science and technology; and incompatibility of current education, training, and extension structures with innovative approaches to agricultural development. Priority issues for agricultural development in Africa as mentioned by participants of the African Agricultural Science Week in 2010 in Ouagadougou and other partners in the GFRAS validation process include trade and globalisation, access to markets and adding value to products, enhancement of agricultural innovation, elaboration and control of standards (social, environmental, and quality standards), access to and management of assets (especially land, finances, infrastructure, and information), food security, and social equity (especially gender equity).

The desire to eliminate hunger and malnutrition in Africa as well as the necessity to reduce the high outlays for food imports became the driving motive for the adoption of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) by Africa's Heads of State and Government. Overall, CAADP's goal is to eliminate hunger and reduce poverty through agriculture, aiming to achieve an average annual growth rate of six per cent in agri-

⁵Geographical regions are broadly defined by continents, acknowledging that these cut across other socio-economic or agro-ecological regions (for example, North Africa is included in Africa, even though it shares some agro-ecological and cultural features with the Middle East, which is included in Asia).

culture by 2015. African governments have agreed to increase public investment in agriculture by a minimum of 10 per cent of their national budgets. This is to be done through CAADP's strategic functions, regional and economic communities, national roundtables, and CAADP's four key pillars: (1) Extending the area under sustainable land management, (2) Improving rural infrastructure and trade-related capacities for market access, (3) Increasing food supply and reducing hunger, and (4) Agricultural research, technology dissemination, and adoption. Pillar 4 covers both agricultural research and advisory services, even though, arguably, Pillars 1 and 2 include elements of advisory services as well. The responsibility for coordination, monitoring, and implementation of CAADP has been assigned to Africa's Regional Economic Communities (RECs). By the end of January 2011, 24 countries in SSA had signed CAADP compact agreements (Tambi et al. 2011).

2.1.1.2 RAS stakeholders

In most African countries, RAS are provided by a combination of public-sector agricultural extension services (usually under the ministries of agriculture), NGOs, the private sector (specifically for commercial crops), and farmer organisations and their members (farmer-to-farmer extension). In North Africa, the private sector plays a more important role, particularly in the high-potential areas producing fruit and vegetables for export. In most SSA countries, linkages between RAS providers and other agricultural and rural development stakeholders are weak, but the CAADP process⁶ provides an opportunity for a more coordinated approach at the country and sub-regional levels. Besides RAS providers, main stakeholders in Africa related to RAS include the Regional Economic Communities (RECs); national,

sub-regional and continental agricultural research institutions and networks; agricultural education institutions; various infomediaries⁷; and donors supporting these processes.

At the institutional level, a withdrawal of state RAS interventions can be observed (Davis et al. 2009), which leads to models such as privatisation of service providers to improve the quality of service provision, or decentralisation to better take into account the demands of local communities. There are new arrangements between stakeholders to build new forms of RAS, such as services directly managed by farmer organisations or NGOs, or public-private partnerships including interprofessional bodies or contracts between a private firm and the state. The ongoing trend is moving from 'national advisory service systems' towards more pluralistic 'innovation systems' where all stakeholders have a role to play.

At the same time, based on the demands of farmers and other actors, contents are moving from technical to economic, from production to marketing and natural resources management, from farm level to collective level, etc. With regard to methods, there is a shift from top-down approaches to more participatory approaches and a focus on learning processes to strengthen farmers' capacities to make their own decisions in line with their objectives and resources. These ongoing trends pose a particular problem to the staff of existing RAS, who must find ways to deal effectively with such changes. In many countries there are few mechanisms to train advisors. The challenge lies in developing the necessary skills to work with new types of institutions, communicate with demanding farmers, and be professionally capable of providing market-oriented agricultural advisory services (MOAAS).

⁶Although CAADP is continental in scope, it is based on national efforts to promote agricultural growth and economic development. As such, CAADP is not a set of supranational programmes, but a framework embodying a set of key principles and targets. This means that each country will implement the CAADP agenda in its own way – although each will use a common set of tools, such as the pillar frameworks and the country roundtable process. Success will be measured by the extent to which policies and investment programmes change, guided by the common principles and goals of the CAADP agenda. The national roundtables, which are still under way, are designed to lead to national pacts between donors and individual governments that will help different countries to achieve the four pillars. See www.caadp.net/national-roundtables.php for details.

⁷Infomediaries provide the crucial link between generation and use of knowledge and technologies by 'repackaging' and disseminating research findings in formats and language appropriate for different audiences and target groups – such as agricultural policymakers, RAS providers, farmers, SMEs, etc. Sometimes this function is fulfilled by research programmes and projects using their own tools (e.g. via a communication strategy). However, there are also a number of specialised service providers (from both the private and the not-for-profit sectors) that act as 'brokers' between research and development agencies.

Farmer organisations and farmer-to-farmer extension

Farmers are probably the main source of informal agricultural advice in SSA⁸, where most subsistence farmers have not had much contact with formal RAS and thus rely on fellow farmers and local input traders (e.g. Orojobi 1980; Bagnall-Oakely et al. 2004; Okwu and Umoru 2009). This informal and often unrecognised mechanism has been an entry point for extension approaches that aim to build on farmers' social networks and exchange mechanisms, but add value to them through capacity development, institutionalisation and formalisation. Farmer-to-farmer extension has been recognised as an important mechanism to fill the gaps left by public and private RAS providers (see sections below). In many countries farmers have formed learning groups, often with support from NGOs or in response to government programmes providing incentives for farmers to form groups⁹. Some groups specifically aim to develop their members' capacity through experimentation and joint learning. There is no comprehensive study available of the extent of informal farmer-to-farmer extension in Africa. However, case studies (e.g. Ouedraogo and Sawadogo 2005 or Prolinnova working papers¹⁰) suggest that this contribution can be significant, in particular where farmers systematically share their own innovations with other farmers.

In some cases, farmer-to-farmer extension is linked to membership in farmer organisations at the local, national, or sub-regional levels. Africa has a long tradition of farmer organisations at the national and, since the 1990s, at the sub-regional level. These include:

- UMAGRI, formed in 1989, representing producers from five North African countries
- SACAU, formed in 1992, representing producers from 11 Southern and Eastern African countries;

- ROPPA, formed in 2000, representing 45 million producers from 10 West African countries;
- EAFF, formed in 2001, representing 570,000 producers from six East African countries;
- PROPAC, formed in 2005, representing 35,000 producers from 10 Central African countries.

At the continental level, the four Sub-Saharan organisations have since 2007 been associated in the FARA-initiated African Alliance of sub-regional Farmers' Organisations (AAFO), which has so far not been very active. Sub-regional farmer organisations fulfil an advocacy role for their members by lobbying for increased investments in RAS, better access to inputs and markets, and a stronger voice for farmers in national, regional, and global policy dialogues¹¹. They coordinate the interests of national farmer organisations, and represent these in regional forums (e.g. for agricultural research).

A number of national farmer organisations are strongly engaged in RAS and in developing RAS systems. Farmer organisations keep members informed of relevant policy, market, and technology developments through newsletters and events. Their activities are generally paid by membership fees and donor contributions (see Annex 1).

Cooperation and coordination between public RAS and farmer organisations still has potential for improvement. During the African Agricultural Science Week in July 2010 in Burkina Faso, participants stated that farmers should have a stronger leading role in RAS and innovation systems, and that they need to articulate their demands, for example by participating in the planning and designing of projects. Often, however, members of rural communities lack the necessary skills and capacities to contribute to such activities. The development of ICT has opened new opportunities that are being widely discussed in the RAS community.

⁸Evidence of this can be seen from Ghana (Arbab and Prager 1991; Gubbels 1991; Maseko et al. 1991). In Kenya, the major source of agroforestry germplasm was other farmers, according to a study in 1998 (Edouard 1998).

⁹In Uganda, for example, the NAADS programme (www.naads.or.ug) resulted in a proliferation of farmer groups, as being member of a group was a prerequisite for participating in the prioritisation of RAS themes and for accessing advisory services.

¹⁰Available at www.prolinnova.net/workingpaper.php

¹¹For example during the G8 Summit in April 2009, the five sub-regional farmer organisations issued a joint statement emphasising the needs of African farmers:

www.moreandbetter.org/en/news/

[the-farmers-organizations-of-africa-address-the-g8-agriculture](http://www.moreandbetter.org/en/news/the-farmers-organizations-of-africa-address-the-g8-agriculture).

Public-sector advisory services

African agricultural and rural advisory services have undergone a series of mostly donor-initiated interventions and reforms, including Integrated Agricultural Development Projects (IADPs) and the Training and Visit (T&V) system – both supported by the World Bank – as well as various forms of farmer participatory extension, including Farmer Field Schools (FFS). More recently, there has been a drive to support pluralistic, decentralised RAS with some elements of privatisation, for example in Uganda¹².

Generally, however, and with few exceptions, public-sector extension services in Africa are very weak after decades of restructuring and reforms, including the structural adjustment programmes, which resulted in very low extension staff to farmer ratios¹³. Public-sector RAS staff may be diverted from providing RAS by national programmes focusing on related fields such as input delivery or food aid, not to mention non-RAS activities such as collecting taxes or aiding political campaigns. In addition, staff are often used by NGOs and research institutes to mobilise the rural population for specific activities (e.g. on-farm trials or farmer training activities), and often receive additional pay or other facilitation (transport, training) from these actors, which might contribute to their focusing even less on their mainstream role. The main constraints are lack of funding and investment, dependency on donor organisations, poor equipment, insufficient pre-service training of staff (in particular in market-oriented production, learning, communication, and facilitation), inadequate performance management, low pay, and poor incentive systems. Monitoring and evaluation needs to be improved and farmers input in it increased.

Private-sector input and credit supply, marketing, and advisory services

The private sector plays an important role in RAS, because farmers must obtain capital, purchase external inputs (seed, fertiliser, agro-chemicals, veterinary drugs), and process and market their produce. This puts them in contact with small, medium, or large-scale entrepreneurs. Multinational agribusinesses with 'branch offices' in cities often have a distribution network that involves local SMEs. Depending on the commodity, private enterprises provide only specific inputs and associated advice (e.g. credit, seed, fertiliser) or a whole 'package' in the form of an outgrower scheme, where the agribusiness has considerable control over the smallholder production process, providing a large number of services, such as input credits, tillage, spraying, and harvesting. The smallholder provides land and labour in return for this comprehensive extension-and-input package. The high-value horticultural export sector is currently the focus of considerable outgrower scheme development¹⁴. In the context of contract farming and marketing associations, RAS is thus provided by the private sector and reaches a significant number of small-scale farmers.

While private-sector RAS is generally linked to input supply, there are examples where private entrepreneurs operate as 'freelance' RAS providers without necessarily selling inputs – often filling a niche left by public extension services. Again, this tends to be limited to commercial crops, where farmers can expect a relatively high return. The private sector is also involved in the dissemination of agricultural information via the media (e.g. FM radio stations) (Hambly Odame 2007).

¹²In Uganda, a multi-donor funded programme entitled National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) provided RAS through public and private-sector service providers, while using public-sector funding that was channelled through sub-county farmer forums. The forums prioritise RAS needs and develop terms of reference for service providers, thus offering an opportunity for more farmer control over the focus and quality of services. This system of publicly and privately delivered, publicly funded RAS provision has been widely studied, revealing some inefficiencies, which resulted in changes to the scheme in 2009, with public service provision being reinstated. See, for example, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201006240689.html>.

¹³For Southern Africa in the mid-1980s, these ratios were estimated at between 1:1300 (Swaziland) and 1:2900 (Zimbabwe) – see Aina 1991. According to the World Bank's Agricultural Investment Sourcebook (2005) they have not changed much since then, with the exception of Ethiopia, where the number of extension workers has increased from 15,000 to 66,000 in the last 5 years, resulting in the highest extension agent to farmer ratio in the world.

¹⁴Examples are Hortico in Zimbabwe and Homegrown in Kenya.

Private-sector RAS in Africa tend to be organised in professional chambers. While agribusinesses are active in the form of individual units, coordinated action at the sub-regional and regional levels is weak. In 2007 FARA initiated the formation of the Pan-African Agri-business Initiative (PanAAC)¹⁵. This consortium is in the process of developing sub-regional focal points and setting up national chapters. It is too early to say to what extent PanAAC will become a major player in representing private RAS providers in SSA. EMRC¹⁶ is an international not-for-profit organisation focusing on Africa that represents a potential entry point for improving private-sector involvement in RAS. Its mission is to promote sustainable economic development in Africa by growing business partnerships, with a specific focus on economic and trade relations with the private sector. EMRC includes a network of entrepreneurs, financiers, and officials from over one hundred countries around the world. It is a potential partner for making RAS an issue in the private sector. During the GFRAS validation process, stakeholders also mentioned that better coordination between the private and the public sectors are needed to increase the efficiency of RAS.

NGOs providing advisory services

A large number of NGOs are currently providing RAS to smallholder farmers in Africa, often as part of wider agricultural and rural development initiatives that may also include provision of inputs and credit, or even educational or health services. Some NGOs collaborate with agricultural research institutions and farmer organisations to develop innovations. There are three categories of NGOs: (1) Local NGOs/CBOs operating in part of a country, with a strong grassroots base, (2) National or sub-regional NGOs initiated by Africans in Africa, but often operating in several countries, and (3) International NGOs, often with a base in Europe or

North America, sometimes with more or less autonomous national offices in African countries.

NGO-provided RAS generally follows a project mode, with funding limited to a specific period of time, geographic coverage, and scope of work. They are thus unable to replace public-sector RAS, which are continuously funded by national governments (or, via sector or budget support, by donors). Due to the different ideological backgrounds and constituents of NGOs, their services are sometimes focused on specific themes or domains (e.g. organic farming). NGOs are therefore not always in a good position to take on the role of comprehensive RAS serving all sub-sectors and users. However, in some African countries NGOs employ more extension agents than the government does.¹⁷ NGOs such as the Capacity Building Foundation in Zimbabwe or the Global Development Network also act as infomediaries by repackaging research findings and other relevant information and disseminating them to users – for example via the TV soap opera *Makutano Junction*, and through numerous ICT initiatives, including various web archives providing access to agricultural information, such as *Infonet*¹⁸ and *SADC AIMS*¹⁹.

At the FARA General Assembly in Uganda in 2005, NGOs formed the Sub-Saharan Africa NGO Consortium (SSA NGOC)²⁰ with the aim of influencing ARD activities at the grassroots level, as well as its governance and decision-making processes at various levels (Jones and Sanyang 2007). However, the consortium has so far not succeeded in mobilising a wide range of NGOs working in ARD, possibly due to some extent to lack of funding, and to a strong national and sub-regional focus of most NGOs operating in SSA. Perhaps as a result of its origins in FARA, the consortium currently does not have a strong focus on RAS advocacy, and will probably require further investments to become an effective player.

¹⁵Later re-named PanAAC, the Pan-African Agribusiness and Agro-Industry Consortium.

¹⁶www.emrc.be

¹⁷In the 1990s NGOs established food and community development projects in many African countries that were primarily financed by bilateral donors. For example, in Mozambique in 2005, NGOs employed 840 extensionists, as compared with 770 public extension workers – see Eicher 2007.

¹⁸www.infonet-biovision.org

¹⁹<http://aims.sadc.int>

²⁰www.erails.net/CM/ssa-ngoc/ssa-ngoc/Home

Research institutions

Information and knowledge are crucial for the development of RAS, and both are claimed by those GFRAS stakeholders consulted to date to be insufficiently available, accessible, and coordinated. There is also a lack of evidence on what approaches and methods in RAS are effective to reach different client groups and to tackle different issues in RAS.

Both the generation and the dissemination of new knowledge and technology are included in CAADP Pillar 4. Most research organisations in Africa not only generate knowledge and technologies, but also act as infomediaries by making research outputs available to users via a range of channels, including publications, the Internet, and mass media. While the dissemination and uptake component has only recently started to be coordinated at the continental level (see section on RAS networks), agricultural research for development (ARD) has a longer history of coordination and joint advocacy. National agricultural research institutes (NARIs) generally do not provide RAS directly, but are a key source of information for RAS providers. In the late 1980s, NARIs started forming sub-regional research organisations (SROs), which have recently widened their constituency to include not only NARIs, but also other ARD stakeholders such as farmer organisations, public advisory services, NGOs, and the private sector. This wider understanding is reflected in the concept of NARS (National Agricultural Research Systems) as opposed to NARIs. Currently there are four SROs in Africa:

- **CORAF/WECARD, formed in 1987, with 22 West and Central African NARS members;**
- ASARECA, formed in 1993, with 10 East and Central African NARS members;

- SADC FANR, formed in 2001, with 14 Southern African NARS members;
- NASRO, formed in 2009, with 6 North African NARS members.

FARA, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa, was formed in 2001 as a forum for facilitation and information exchange among SROs, and as an umbrella organisation to represent SROs. FARA has since become the lead agency for CAADP Pillar 4 (agricultural research and dissemination), working together with AFAAS (the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services, see section below). FARA aims to achieve '*sustainable improvements to broad-based agricultural productivity, competitiveness and markets*' through five Networking Support Functions.²¹ Both FARA and the SROs are committed to using the Framework for African Agricultural Productivity (FAAP) and its nine principles to guide all their activities (FARA 2006). FAAP Principle 5 calls specifically for an '*integration of agricultural research with extension services, the private sector, training, capacity building, and education programmes*'. This is currently operationalised by involving RAS providers in research projects, and by making research findings available in suitable formats to RAS providers and other intermediate and end users. However, systems for making research findings available and accessible still need to be improved, as was stated during the African Agricultural Science Week in July 2010 in Burkina Faso.

Besides research organisations, a number of NGOs and farmer organisations as well as some private entrepreneurs are also involved in agricultural research, sometimes (but not always) working in partnership with public-sector research institutes.

²²See FARA's website for details: www.fara-africa.org/about-us

Agricultural education institutions

In Africa, a wide range of institutions at different levels are involved in training and capacity development of farmers, extensionists, and agro-processors. Farmer training colleges have emerged in many countries, but few have sufficiently secure sources of funding to enable a strategic and long-term approach to farmer capacity development.²² Agriculture is a compulsory or elective subject in the curricula of most African secondary schools (particularly in East Africa) (Lindley et al. 1996; Vandenbosch 2006). This reflects the large proportion of the population relying on farming for their livelihoods, and generates the human resource base for future RAS providers.

All African countries have at least one agricultural college or university, and many of these are members of the Association of African Universities (AAU) or the African Network of Agriculture and Forestry Education (ANAFE), which promote exchange between academics and students. Training in agricultural advisory services (including both technical training on agricultural technologies and training in communication and facilitation) is offered by most agricultural colleges, and some attempts have been made in the past²³ and more recently²⁴ to revitalise agricultural extension education curricula and teaching approaches and make them more suitable for the changing economic and institutional environment (e.g. pluralistic RAS provision, focus on value chains).

At the sub-regional level, RUFORUM (the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture) is a consortium of 25 universities in Eastern and Southern Africa established in 2004.

It has a mandate to oversee graduate agricultural training and networks of specialisation in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) countries. During the GFRAS validation process stakeholders called for more exchange on how to integrate RAS in education.

RAS networks

According to African partners participating in the GFRAS validation process, there is an urgent need for an opportunity to exchange knowledge and experience related to RAS – both between RAS and other stakeholders, and between different sectors providing RAS. Sharing of experiences within Africa and between Africa and other regions could contribute to a professional, evidence-based debate on RAS approaches and policies.

The African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services²⁵ (AFAAS) was initiated in 2004 as a permanent institution to support the exchange of experiences and networking between advisory services in different African countries²⁶. By June 2010, 14 countries had joined, representing all stakeholder groups, including policymakers, research and extension practitioners (public, private, and international), farmer representatives, community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), universities, development partners, and the private sector. The purpose of AFAAS is to ensure that *Advisory service stakeholders in participating countries will achieve enhanced knowledge and capabilities to support and increase agricultural productivity, food security, market orientation, and capacity to respond to climate change at local, national, regional, and continental levels*' (AFAAS 2010).

²²Again in Uganda, DATICs (District Agricultural Training and Information Centres) provided training to farmers and other rural people – see www.ardaf.org/NR/rdonlyres/70E4314C-9ECB-4D17-A1FB-915094B3335A/0/2003mugerwa.pdf – but proved not to be sustainable.

²³For example in 1993 at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana. A revised approach was adopted in early 1997 at Haramaya University of Agriculture in Ethiopia under the Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education (SAFE). SAFE is a partnership between the Ministry of Agriculture, the Sasakawa Africa Association (a non-governmental donor organisation based in Japan), Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development (a non-governmental development agency based in the United States), and participating universities and colleges in each country. The main focus of SAFE is the training of mid-career extension staff who currently work with ministries of agriculture and NGOs engaged in agricultural and rural development. Under the new programme, experienced mid-career extension staff can earn a B.Sc. degree in agricultural extension. See Zinnah et al. 1998 and www.safe-africa.org for further details about the SAFE programme.

²⁴In Uganda, Makerere University recently started a new Bachelor's course in Agricultural and Rural Innovations which is specifically aimed at potential private-sector RAS providers. See <http://agric.mak.ac.ug/index.php?mod=article&cat=programs&article=20> for details.

²⁵Initially the network was called SSANAAS (Sub-Saharan Africa Network on Agricultural Advisory Services)

²⁶Including Uganda, who initiated the network, partly to share experiences with its private RAS delivery system NAADS.

AFAAS provides an opportunity to develop RAS strategies across stakeholder groups and strengthen the voice of RAS during CAADP country compact development and implementation. AFAAS began its 18-month start-up phase in April 2010 with funding from the EU via a World Bank–managed multi-donor trust fund, and future donor commitment will depend on the outcome of this phase.

2.1.1.3 Conclusions

The African RAS landscape is diverse and active, with a wide range of stakeholders involved in the provision and facilitation of services. The CAADP process provides new opportunities to coordinate activities at the country and sub-regional levels. The Framework for African Agricultural Productivity²⁷ principles, elaborated by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa in the context of CAADP, indicate how to employ best practices to improve the performance of agricultural productivity in Africa, stressing the need for increased funding to be made available through less fragmented mechanisms. The FAAP principles could potentially become a universally accepted set of 'standards' for RAS interventions throughout.

As in many other regions, public-sector RAS are currently underfunded and underperforming, reaching only a fraction of agricultural producers. NGOs (at least in theory targeting mostly the poorer sections of society) and the private sector (working mostly with commercial producers) are partly filling the gap, but they too are reaching only small proportions of those in need of RAS. Farmers therefore rely on informal channels for

RAS, in particular on their peers. There are unexploited opportunities to strengthen community-based RAS (through policy advocacy and capacity development support), as is already done in certain thematic pockets, e.g. for community-based animal health care.²⁸

To summarise, some of the key challenges remaining for African RAS include:

- Low levels of investments in RAS, including public-sector services, resulting in low coverage and possibly insufficient attention to vulnerable groups in remote areas (who are likely to require higher investments per capita);
- Insufficient differentiation of services with regard to different types of clients (in socio-economic terms: age group, wealth category/resource endowment, level of education, farming system, gender, ethnicity, etc.);
- Strengthening the individual capacity of RAS providers in all sectors; and
- Strengthening the organisational, institutional, and networking capacity of African actors

Some African RAS stakeholders are already well connected to global counterparts through a range of networks and forums. These tend to have a thematic focus (e.g. agricultural research; ICTs, knowledge management and communications for agricultural development; farmer empowerment and rights-based approaches; value chain development and agribusinesses, etc.) and are not generally concerned with RAS in the narrower sense of 'providing face-to-face farming advice to producers'. There is nevertheless scope for improved coordination and exploitation of synergies between the wide range of ongoing initiatives.

²⁷www.fara-africa.org/media/uploads/File/FARA%20Publications/FAAP_English.pdf

²⁸See, for example, http://practicalaction.org/practicalanswers/product_info.php?cPath=&products_id=130

2.1.2 Asia and Pacific

2.1.2.1 Regional characteristics

The Asia and Pacific region is very heterogeneous, with wide variations in agro-climatic zones and biodiversity, levels of economic development, social infrastructure, human well-being, and the capacity to respond to disasters and crises. Industrialised countries of the region have achieved high levels of well-being and are recognised as new centres of manufacturing, with the result that East and South Asia now account for a major share of world economic output and economic growth. Agriculture's contribution to the national income and exports in most Asian countries is declining, but the Asia and Pacific region still underpins the global agrarian economy, with Asia being the largest supplier of the world's food and agricultural products. The size of landholdings is declining, and production resources are shrinking. The Asia and Pacific region is the home of about 58% of the world's population and 74% of the global agricultural population, but has only 38% of the world's agricultural land (Singh 2010). As a consequence, land availability per person involved in agriculture in this region (0.3 ha) is almost one fifth of that in the rest of the world (1.4 ha). Over 80% of the world's small and marginalised farmers live in this region, with large variations between countries with high population pressure on land and those with lower human-to-land ratios. Moreover, the agricultural work force is becoming increasingly feminised and older, with young men moving to non-agricultural employment.

The Green Revolution launched in the region in the 1960s resulted in an unprecedented growth of agricultural production and productivity, and led to the proportion of hungry people being more than halved by the year 1995. For the past decade or so, the region (with the exception of China) has experienced stagnation or a slowdown in agricultural production and productivity. Food insecurity and poverty, particularly rural poverty – account-

ing for two-thirds of the world's hungry and poor and exacerbated by the soaring food and fuel prices, the global economic downturn, volatile markets, and climate change-induced vulnerability – have resurfaced as the foremost development concerns in the region, resulting in an increasing divide between rural and urban, as well as between farmer and non-farmer incomes. Except in China and India, however, investment in agriculture in the region, particularly in agricultural research, education, and extension, has declined or stagnated during the past decade.

According to stakeholder discussions during the GFRAS validation process, key thematic areas in Asia in the context of agricultural and rural development include value adding, access to markets and development of modern value chains, focusing on niche and quality products, postharvest treatment, diversification of income, infrastructure, genetically modified crops, access to assets (in particular land, finance, and natural resources such as water), natural disasters (floods, cyclones, earthquakes, rising sea level), climate change, and organic farming.

2.1.2.2 RAS stakeholders²⁹

Farmer organisations and farmer-to-farmer extension

Similarly to Africa, there are many farmer innovators in Asia, and farmer-to-farmer extension is an important source of information.³⁰ The ProInnova network mentioned in the Africa section also operates in several Asian countries, promoting and supporting farmer innovation and farmer-to-farmer learning. Farmer field schools have been operating in many of the emerging countries, in particular to develop and share strategies for pest and disease control and for soil and water conservation.

Most Asian countries have active national farmer organisations, but the degree to which farmers

²⁹Because of the high diversity of the Asia and Pacific region, the role of different types of stakeholders varies significantly from country to country. The following sections generalise to a high degree in the interest of brevity.

³⁰Eicher (2007) reports on a 2003 national survey of 51,770 farm households in India who were asked to reveal their main source of information about new technology and farm practices over the past 365 days. Progressive farmers were the most important source (16.7%) of information for smallholders over a period of 12 months, followed by input dealers, radio, and television. Only 6% of the farmers in the national survey gained their information from extension workers.

are organised locally into formal or informal farmer groups varies from country to country. Groups can be state-initiated, farmer-initiated (usually with some state or NGO support), or part of the local government system. Farmer field schools established at farms of lead farmers have proved to be highly effective particularly in transferring complex messages and technologies. Farmer groups vary in their technical orientation, focusing, for example, on natural resource management, a particular crop or livestock enterprise, or on processing and marketing. According to a study on farmer empowerment commissioned by Danida (Danida 2004), farmers in Asia have a long tradition of organisation along water management and service delivery. Policy advocacy and farmer empowerment have in many ways been a success in Asia and there are strong indications that farmer organisations (FOs) with political linkages can be powerful mediators for farmer interests. However, farmers who have been 'empowered' often belong to the well-off part of the farming community, and despite agricultural development there is still widespread poverty and a lack of services for poor and marginalised farmers. During the GFRAS validation process, stakeholders pointed to the need for strong communities and strengthened farmer capacities, so that farmers can act as development partners and influence state policies.

There are a large number of networks and groupings of farmer organisations at the national and sub-regional levels, including the Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA) with nine member organisations in eight countries in East and South East Asia and the Asian Farmers' Group for Cooperation (AFGC) with nine member countries. A consultation of farmer organisations and forums conducted by IFAD in 2005 identified as common challenges of FOs in Asia the need for member capacity building, shortage of funds (because membership fees are insufficient to pay for the services expected), threats to smallholder farmers from trade liberalisation and globalisation, issues related to access to productive natural resources, declining government support to agriculture, ineffective pro-poor government policies, and the lack of consultation with FOs by governments during policy formulation.

Public-sector advisory services

Many national extension systems in Asia have over time evolved from commodity-focused colonial services to comprehensive advisory services for the whole agricultural sector. In terms of numbers of personnel, agricultural extension staff make up the bulk of Ministry of Agriculture employees in many Asian countries.³¹ Qamar (2002) highlights that agricultural extension in the region is a poorly paid profession with few career opportunities, and as a result does not attract the most gifted candidates. Pre-service education and on-the-job training of extension staff are generally poor.

Public-sector agricultural extension in the region has undergone a similar range of reforms as in Africa, including the T&V system. Overall, however, national systems have been less influenced by donor paradigms than in Africa, as extension systems are largely funded by national governments, in particular in India and China. Declining public funding for extension has led to a reduction in staff and inadequate operational budgets. Distant and remote areas are often poorly served by the public sector and are also weakly integrated into the market. During the recent GCARD³² e-consultations, Asian participants voiced their concern that extension/technology/knowledge transfer systems have weakened, and some said that public extension systems in the region are 'dead'. This is a result of under-investments in agriculture in almost all countries in the region, probably with the exception of India and China.

Most countries in the region do not have extension policies or strategies, and do not have systems in place to monitor progress and assess the impact of public RAS. In many countries reforms are taking place to make extension more client-oriented, and to move away from purely technical advice aimed at increasing production towards also considering economic factors at the farm and market levels as well as environmental concerns. The extent to which these

³¹For example in India there are an estimated 100,000 extension agents in the MoA (see Eicher 2007).

³²The Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (see Singh 2009).

reforms have resulted in pluralistic, accountable, and demand-driven systems is yet to be assessed.

There are currently no public-sector RAS networks in Asia, even though public-sector representatives attend certain forums and meetings on cross-country RAS.

Private sector

While there are large differences within the region, private-sector RAS play a more important role in Asia and the Pacific than in Africa, possibly owing to the larger proportion of produce that is sold outside the immediate production location. Private-sector RAS can be provided by input suppliers or by produce purchasers. Asian farmers increasingly sell their produce (particularly fresh vegetables) to multinational companies or supermarket chains through contract-farming types of arrangements. Many large trading companies have their own agricultural research and extension staff, who might be better informed about the export potential of specific products than a government extension agent. While access to alternative sources of information is certainly a plus, in particular where highly specialised knowledge is required, the terms and conditions of these contracts are not always advantageous for small-scale producers, in particular if farmers have to bear the production risk.

Multinational private-sector firms such as Syngenta and Monsanto play an important role in RAS in some Asian countries, particularly in densely-populated areas. Because provision of extension is subject to economies of scale, providing extension services may be profitable for private companies only if they can reach a sufficiently large number of farmers. In places where smallholder farmers are located far apart and have limited access to transport, the transaction costs of providing extension are typically high, hindering the for-profit private sector from providing these services.

The private sector is also a key provider of ICT services in Asia and the Pacific, which are widely used for rural and agricultural information dissemination. Village knowledge centres and visual and radio networks are used for sharing knowledge and informa-

tion and to link extension centres to markets, constituting a market-led form of extension. Several studies have revealed the effectiveness and efficiency of mobile phones in information sharing, particularly for market information.

Implications for GFRAS are the need to engage with private-sector firms and networks in all regions, but in particular in Asia and the Pacific (and in Latin America – see next sub-section), acknowledging their key role in RAS provision. This would involve including the private sector in networking and exchange events and activities.

NGOs providing advisory services

In many Asian and Pacific countries NGOs are major RAS providers, often going beyond the 'traditional' NGO mandate of social mobilisation and farmer empowerment to be serious partners in participatory innovation development and dissemination. Civil society organisations and NGOs are increasingly becoming involved in the policy arena to ensure green development and a sustainable growth pattern. CSOs also play an increasingly strategic role in the campaign for the right to food, in particular for marginalised and tribal people, for whom the pressures for survival are likely to increase under growing environmental and economic pressure.

Extension reforms provide new opportunities for NGOs, with different sectors complementing one another by meeting different needs or covering different population groups. Complementary roles are also seen in the technology development process, with NGOs often piloting environmentally appropriate technologies that are later promoted by extension services.

There are at least two NGO networks with an interest in RAS: The Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), which is primarily concerned with advocacy, and the newly (in 2008) formed NGO Association for Agricultural Research in the Asia-Pacific (NAARAP), an APAARI (Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions) initiated group of NGOs involved in RAS that have an interest in agricultural research and technology development.

Research institutions

Agricultural research in Asia and the Pacific is organised at the national level through national/public-sector agricultural research institutions (including universities), as well as private-sector laboratories and research centres. Some large NGOs also undertake adaptive research, in particular on pest and disease control in crops, natural resource management practices, and post-harvest management.

There are three main agricultural research networks covering the Asia and Pacific region:

- AARINENA, established in 1985, covering Western Asia (including Pakistan) and the Arabian peninsula (but also North Africa)
- APAARI, established in 1990, covering 42 countries in South, South East, and East Asia and the Pacific (including Australia and New Zealand)
- CACAARI, established in 2009, with eight members (all of them former Soviet republics)

These networks or forums participate in the international debate³³ on priority setting for ARD, and the CGIAR reform process. There is currently no overall agreed 'Asia and Pacific' agenda on ARD, comparable to the CAADP process in Africa, possibly due to diversity of needs and resources in the region, which make it difficult to agree on one agenda. Communication and exchange between research and RAS need to be strengthened in the region.

Agricultural education institutions

The Asia and Pacific region is a provider of agricultural education both for the region and for other parts of the developing world, notably Africa. There are a large range of education institutions at all levels, catering for different stakeholders. Agricultural universities in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, India, and China provide training to agricultural professionals, including future RAS providers, from all over the world.

Agricultural training and education are generally provided both pre-service and in-service. NGOs are an important source of in-service training to RAS, in particular where they require additional skills that are not necessarily taught in agricultural colleges (e.g. in organic farming, or in the use of participatory approaches). Criticism has been voiced regarding the top-down approach of some Asian public-sector RAS providers vis-à-vis their clients, and training courses as well as on-the-job training often focus on facilitation skills and participatory approaches.

The Asia Pacific Association of Educators on Agriculture and Environment (APEAEN) is the largest network of professionals working in agricultural education in the region, with 21 member countries and a large number of individual members. Their mandate is mainly scientific and technical capacity development and exchange between members. GFRAS might be able to draw on such advanced networks in Asia to link them with extension education organisations in other parts of the world, especially in Africa.

Networks

In 2010, the Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services (APIRAS) network was created. APIRAS brings together the diverse actors of the Asia and Pacific region, which is also organised in sub-regional and national professional networks, whose main objective is to support individual members (not necessarily organisations) in their professional development. The Central Asian Countries and Caucasus (CACC) agricultural advisory services network held its first meeting in 2009 and is still active. The Australasia-Pacific Extension Network (APEN) is a professional association with around 500 members, mostly based in Australia. The Pacific Islands Extension Network (PIEN) was formed in 2005, primarily with the aim of building the capacity of extension staff and associated institutions including government, non-government, and academic institutions in participatory research and extension. PIEN offers the 'excellence in extension and outreach' award. PIEN also actively pursues opportunities for extension services to engage in the use of ICTs and the media in order to improve outreach to their main

³³They were, for example, represented at the GCARD in 2010 and commissioned their own reviews of ARD constraints and opportunities in their regions.

clientele – the farmers. At the national level, the Philippine Extension Network (PEN) was established in 2001 to influence the direction taken by national extension services and to increase the level of professionalism in RAS. The expertise of these networks could be harnessed for activities outside the region.

2.1.2.3 Conclusions

Agricultural development in Asia and the Pacific faces many challenges. The GCARD consultations identified common weaknesses as follows: (1) Lack of connection between teaching, research, and extension institutions and agencies, (2) Lack of cooperation between the government, NGOs, the private sector, and farmers, and (3) Lack of integrated approaches along the whole value chain. The Central Asia and the Caucasus Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (CACAARI) GCARD report pointed to the need to strengthen extension in the region.

Amidst the generally unsatisfactory situation of RAS, there are some good models of extension and support services offered by the private sector, farmers' cooperatives, and NGOs. They have the potential to be further developed into innovative public-private and NGO-market partnerships. Such extension approaches are likely provide scope for an integration of research and advisory services along the value chain. GFRAS's role in the region could be to provide networking and learning opportunities, so that the different stakeholders active in RAS have the opportunity to learn from each other, and possibly develop joint approaches to RAS. With large parts of the region relying heavily on value addition to agricultural produce, RAS approaches need to increasingly focus on market access and quality issues to enable producers to obtain adequate returns to their efforts. While some RAS stakeholders are clearly aware of this, mechanisms to identify the comparative advantages of different actors and share experiences and approaches more widely are still insufficient.

There is a huge potential for learning and exchange within this diverse region, as well as between this region and others, and much is already happening. Australia and Japan are both training RAS providers and other agricultural professionals in the re-

gion, and provide technical and financial assistance. Indian RAS professionals are working in Afghanistan and in many South East Asian and Pacific countries, as well as in Sub-Saharan Africa. There is probably scope to build on existing networks in order to further foster exchange and learning in the region.

2.1.3 Latin America and Caribbean

2.1.3.1 Regional characteristics

According to the regional GCARD synthesis report for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) (Carrquiry 2010), this region is comprised of more than 30 countries with a population of close to 600 million people (less than 10% of the world's population). However, it has 23% of the world's arable lands, 31% of its water resources, 23% of its forests, and 46% of its tropical forests, making it an increasingly important actor in global food supply. LAC is very heterogeneous in many aspects, particularly in relation to natural resources and social and economic situations. The region has one of the highest levels of economic and social inequality in the world, both among and within countries. More than 17% of the region's population live under the poverty line of US\$ 2 per day (World Bank 2005).³⁴

Agriculture is an important activity for the LAC economies. In many countries, the primary sector provides around 10% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and agribusiness as a whole provides 30%. Some segments of the sector have shown a pattern of strong growth, with greater integration into global markets and an increasing ability to create jobs and income opportunities. However, the participation of small-scale farmers – who have not yet received enough attention in the political, social, and research context – remains a challenge. LAC has around 15 million family farms, 60% of which are located in Brazil and Mexico. Family farms represent 85% of the total farms in the region and generate 35–45% of the agricultural GDP and an even bigger portion of employment.

³⁴See also: <http://data.worldbank.org/topic/poverty>

2.1.3.2 RAS stakeholders

Farmer organisations are particularly active in Latin America. The role and relative strength of other stakeholders varies significantly between and within countries, with the Andean countries generally being less developed, and consequently having weaker RAS actors and higher levels of rural poverty.

Farmer organisations and farmer-to-farmer extension

Farmer organisations have a long history in Latin America, and have been very active in promoting access to land and in advocating for sustainable agriculture. Since the 1980s new national-level rural organisations have emerged throughout the region, representing sectors previously excluded from the main peasant organisations and rural unions of the past, such as the indigenous, landless, environmental, and rural women's movements. In addition, many new movements have arisen in opposition to large-scale infrastructural projects, such as dam construction or mining. In the 1990s many of these movements have contributed to building transnational associations and networks at the sub-regional, continental, and global levels. As a result, the rural social movements in Latin America have come to be among the best organised as well as the most fervent critics of the neoliberal development model in the region.

Latin American farmer organisations are sometimes grouped into (1) organisations involved mostly in promoting sustainable agricultural practices, with a strong field base and emphasis on farmer capacity development (building on indigenous practices), and/or (2) organisations involved in advocacy for an agenda involving structural changes and changes in power relations. An example of the first group is the *Movimiento Campesino a Campesino* (MCAC), now counting several hundred thousand farmer promoters, helping farming families in the rural villages of Latin America improve their livelihoods and conserve their natural resources.³⁴ The second group

³⁴According to Holt-Giménez (2006), MCAC has demonstrated that, given the chance to generate and share agro-ecological knowledge freely amongst themselves, smallholders are perfectly capable of developing sustainable agriculture, even under highly adverse conditions.

includes organisations such as *La Vía Campesina* (LVC), which have a strong advocacy role. Since its inception, LVC's main objective has been to halt neoliberalism and construct alternative food systems based on food sovereignty. Another main transnational organisation is the *Latin American Confederation of Peasant Organisations* (CLOC, *Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo*), with currently more than 88 peasant organisations from 25 countries.

In the Caribbean, FOs from 13 countries are represented by *CaFAN*, the *Caribbean Farmers Network*, founded in 2004 with the aim of developing the capacity of Caribbean FOs to deliver services to members; to increase intra- and extra-regional trade; to increase communication and exchange of ideas, resources, information, and technology; to raise awareness and improve advocacy and networking in order to collectively influence decisions on strategic issues affecting regional agriculture, and to mobilise resources for and on behalf of network members.

Public-sector advisory services

According to Roseboom et al. (2006), public RAS in the LAC region have undergone significant changes, developing from agents within a linear 'transfer of technology' model to more inclusive services in line with the concept of 'innovation systems'. After a period of strong support in the 1960s and 1970s, public funding for research and RAS activities in LAC began to wane in the 1980s and 1990s. The strained economic situation in many countries made it necessary to seek more cost-effective and efficient strategies for producing, disseminating, and applying new knowledge and information in agriculture. At the same time the demand for innovation became more pressing, as increased global competition required improvements in agricultural productivity. Consequently, many countries in the region sought to revitalise their agricultural research and extension systems through a series of institutional reforms, with particular attention given to the sustainability of funding for these services. Reflective of the drivers of reform, the focus was on the following principles: 1) diversification in execution and funding; 2) allocation of funding on a competitive basis; 3) demand-driven financ-

ing; 4) empowerment of local communities; and 5) increased private-sector participation in implementing the reform agenda.

In the course of this process, RAS have retained the public delivery and public funding characteristics of traditional centralised extension despite decentralisation, whereas the responsibility for delivery has been transferred to local governments (district, county, etc.) in diverse ways. Many Latin American governments undertook this approach in the 1980s and 1990s, with levels of decentralisation varying widely from country to country. In some cases (e.g. Chile), the result has been encouraging (see also below).

In order to better meet the needs of farmers, public RAS have adopted a more demand-driven approach by incorporating farmers as active partners in identifying the priorities for advisory services. By doing so, public RAS have extended beyond technical information on agricultural production to include guidance on a wider range of issues, such as financial and economic concerns. Most countries have geared public advisory services more towards market opportunities in response to greater trade liberalisation.³⁶

A characteristic of recent agricultural extension reforms in the LAC region has been the outsourcing of advisory services to NGOs, farmer organisations, private businesses, etc. Generally, public resources are used to fund competitive contracts with local service providers. This requires the transition from a highly centralised and integrated structure to a clear separation between the different entities responsible for policy, priority setting, and implementation, as well as considerable organisational and managerial capacity within the government. Experiences have so far been mixed, and it has remained unclear to what extent this

newly emerging system caters for the needs of the most vulnerable farmers.

Reforms of RAS in Latin America have had effects beyond the LAC region. For example, the Ugandan National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) were partly inspired by visits to Chile and interactions with Latin American RAS experts.

Private-sector input and credit supply, marketing, and advisory services

The private sector plays a crucial role in the region's agricultural development, but its role varies between the more commercialised high-potential farming areas and diverse smallholder farming systems such as in parts of the Andes. The reform processes discussed above have given a new role to private-sector RAS providers, who are now in several countries working in partnership with NGOs, FOs, and government agencies to provide advisory services. In Chile, for example, public technical assistance to farmers was replaced with private services in the 1980s,³⁷ and during the 1990s extension to medium and large-scale farmers in Chile was executed by a private farmer group. It is now funded entirely on a private basis, while the Agricultural Development Institute (INDAP) of the Ministry of Agriculture targets small-scale farmers through an extension programme which is publicly funded and privately executed through private technology transfer firms (Antholt and Zijp 1996). However, a large number of small-scale farmers in Chile still lack RAS that could assist them in reaping the benefits of market opportunities.³⁸ Besides private RAS provision as part of a national strategy, there are many examples of contract farming in the LAC region, with private-sector firms providing RAS to those farmers under contract with them – largely commercial producers of export commodities.

³⁶In Chile, for example, extension agencies offer each farmer assistance in developing a business plan to support the economic viability of their farm, and continuous and intensive assistance to facilitate the transition.

³⁷See http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTARD/825826-111129171182/20431839/Extension_Reform_V2_final.pdf, page 9

³⁸See, for example, Osorio 2007, who highlights shortcomings in advisory services especially for small-scale and women farmers.

NGOs providing advisory services

A wide range of NGOs are involved in RAS in the LAC region, serving mostly remote and marginalised communities. The boundaries between FOs and NGOs are not always clear, as some larger FOs provide similar services as NGOs.³⁹ Most NGOs have a focus on sustainable agriculture, including organic farming, the use of indigenous knowledge and technologies, and support of fair trade initiatives.

There are a number of NGO networks operating in the agricultural sector, mostly in a capacity development and advocacy role. Centro Latinoamericano de Desarrollo Sustentable (CLADES) is one of these. Formed in 1989 by eleven Latin American NGOs from eight countries, it has since developed into a wider network including academics and private-sector organisations as well (Yurjevic et al. 2002). The Latin American NGO movement has influenced the thinking about agricultural and rural development outside Latin America, and has actively engaged with NGOs and FOs in other continents to share ideas and increase advocacy.

Research institutions

Similarly to Africa and Asia, national agricultural research organisations operate in most LAC countries. LAC also hosts the headquarters of several international agricultural research centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Both NGOs and the private sector undertake agricultural research and dissemination of technologies, the latter primarily for the commercial farming sector. Attention to farmer innovation has a long history in Latin America, with many NGOs and some research institutes not only documenting local innovations, but actively encouraging their development. However, as outlined earlier, public investments in agricultural research and

development have dropped in most LAC countries, affecting public research institutions.

FORAGRO (the Forum for the Americas on Agricultural Research and Technology Development) emerged in 1997/98 as a network to facilitate dialogue, coordination, and strategic alliances among the different actors that comprise the national and regional agricultural research and technology development systems, and between these and the international system of agricultural research. One of FORAGRO's key roles is to influence policies to promote agricultural development from a technology perspective. FORAGRO is a member of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR). FORAGRO members include public and private national agricultural research institutions, universities, private-sector organisations, producer associations, NGOs, and private foundations that develop and/or promote innovative technology.

Agricultural education institutions

The LAC region has a large number of agricultural colleges and universities, as well as a wide range of education institutions engaged in farmer training. Many of them are affiliated with agricultural research institutions and universities (see above). However, there are concerns about the relevance of RAS curricula, as expressed by FAO (1997) and re-iterated during the IAASTD. Curriculum contents are often insufficiently geared towards the needs of the rural population, lacking coverage of themes like agricultural diversification and risk reduction. The conventional high-technology agricultural production models proposed by higher education – which often inadequately consider environmental issues – are not accessible for the majority of small farmers.

³⁹See interview with Alberto Gómez, National Coordinator for the National Union of Autonomous Regional Farmer Organizations (UNORCA) in Mexico, and North American regional Coordinator for Vía Campesina, in Holt-Giménez et al. 2010.

⁴⁰These include some with an international reputation, such as Zamorano in Honduras (www.zamorano.edu/english), and Earth in Costa Rica (www.earth.ac.cr/index.php), who train agricultural professionals from all parts of the world.

The IAASTD demands that access to agricultural education for students from rural areas be granted in consideration of their experience and knowledge of the rural environment, as opposed to only their academic qualifications. To facilitate access by rural populations to labour markets, educational reforms are needed that include intercultural and multilingual training, the development of physical and IT infrastructure, and scholarships and training programmes for skill development.

Networks

The main umbrella organisation for agricultural development in the LAC region is the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), with 32 member countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as Spain, the USA, and Canada. It thus straddles North, Central and South America with the purpose to encourage and support the efforts of its member states to achieve agricultural development and well-being for rural populations. While RAS is clearly a component of this, the mandate is much wider and includes agricultural research, policies, investments, input supply, markets, and infrastructural development. Arguably, all of these six strategic areas of IICA are related to RAS directly or indirectly (IICA 2006).

Another regional not-for-profit organisation is the Latin American Center for Rural Development (RIMISP), founded in 1986. Over the last few years RIMISP has signed a range of collaboration agreements with more than 130 organisations in Latin America and other regions. Its current focal areas are social learning for rural development, rural territorial dynamics, and market transformation. RIMISP initiated the Latin American Network for Rural Extension which met for the first time in 2010. RIMISP has also engaged with RAS networks outside the LAC region, in particular with AFAAS in Africa.

2.1.3.3 Conclusions

The RAS landscape in the LAC region is very diverse, with a lot of potential, but also facing many challenges, including high levels of inequality between and within the region's countries, and economic and environmental challenges such as adaptation to cli-

mate change, natural disasters, and the global economic downturn. The rise of free trade agreements in the region has stimulated greater demand for agricultural innovation. Both agricultural research and rural advisory services are increasingly shaped by market demands for improved quality and cleaner or more specialised (e.g. organic, eco-friendly) production. Producers are more market-oriented, and consequently, make more demands on national innovation systems, of which RAS are a component.

The region has much to offer in terms of experiences with RAS reforms and with pluralistic RAS provision, and could potentially be an important source of experience for other regions.

2.1.4 Europe

2.1.4.1 Regional characteristics

Europe covers 42 very heterogeneous countries – including the 15 'old' member states of the EU, 12 new member states, 7 candidate countries and potential candidate countries, and 7 other European countries.⁴¹ Half of these countries have undergone tremendous changes since 1990 as a consequence of the transition from a centrally planned economic system to market economies.

While Europe provides the majority of donor funding for global agricultural research and development, it also faces the challenge of addressing rural livelihoods and rural poverty in many European countries.⁴² Therefore, any analysis of Europe as a region has to consider two aspects: (1) RAS needs in Europe, and (2) Europe as a RAS provider or supporter at the global scale (through technical and financial assistance, including training of future RAS providers from the South in European colleges and universities). The second function is considered in Section 2.2, as it targets RAS globally.

⁴¹Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and four Eastern European countries.

⁴²The European GCARD review (Richards and Chartier 2010) points out that, compared with other regional reviews prepared for GCARD, 'absolute' poverty in Europe is low; 38 countries out of 42 have less than 2% of their population living on less than US\$ 2 a day. The countries with significant and persistent income poverty are in Eastern Europe: Romania, Moldova, Turkey, Albania (and Kosovo). However, the incidence and prevalence of 'relative' income poverty is on the increase throughout Europe, with inequalities increasing in many countries, including the most developed Western European countries.

The EU is the world's largest importer and exporter of agricultural products and the largest export market for developing countries. The number of farmers in Europe is gradually decreasing, but the agro-food sector is still a key employer and generator of wealth.⁴³ In Eastern and South Eastern Europe, agriculture is characterised by land fragmentation, low productivity and competitiveness of agricultural production and value chains, shortage of off-farm income-earning opportunities, and weak rural social services delivery; these key structural problems hamper modernisation of the sector and reduction in rural poverty. Generally, globalisation and the opening of agricultural markets have confronted farmers with the need to produce and commercialise their products in a more competitive way. Discussions amongst European GFRAS validation partners referred to priority themes related to market development, strengthening links between urban and rural areas, adding value by indication of origin and labelling, and diversification of agriculture and of rural income.

There is one agricultural policy for the 27 EU member states: agriculture and fisheries are subject to integrated EU community policies, with decisions taken at the European level and a 'communitarised' budget that is separate from the national budgets. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been in place since the 1960s and has evolved through many reforms – from a focus on an increase in agricultural production to an approach taking more account of the sustainability of agricultural production. The CAP provides support to the farming sector through two components: the first pillar provides sector-specific measures related to agricultural markets, while the second pillar addresses rural development programmes. Since 2003, the most important budgetary instrument of the CAP has been the so-called 'single farm payment'.⁴⁴ The CAP makes it compulsory for member states to set up

a farm advisory system (FAS), which can be supported under the EU's Rural Development Policy.⁴⁵ There is no structure explicitly in charge of RAS at the EU level because it is in the responsibility of member states or even their provinces. During the GFRAS validation process, GFRAS stakeholders criticised weak coordination between different directorates-general (for Environment, for Agriculture and Rural Development, for Regional Policy) with regard to RAS.

2.1.4.2 RAS stakeholders

In line with Europe's role as both an in-country RAS provider and user and a supporter of RAS in developing countries, RAS stakeholders generally belong to one of the following groups: Group 1) is concerned with agricultural and rural development in Europe, and includes European farmer organisations, private and public-sector RAS providers supporting European farmers, and agricultural research institutions focusing on European needs. Group 2) is comprised of organisations and networks concerned with the developing world, including NGOs and research organisations focusing on technical and financial assistance to RAS in the South. While there are some overlaps between these two groups, they largely operate separately, and only recently have European farmer organisations, for example, taken an increasing interest in agricultural developments worldwide and in the global South. The present section is primarily concerned with the former group.

European RAS are organised heterogeneously at the country and even sub-country levels. In Central and Northern European countries the lead is with public agencies, semi-public chambers, or farmer organisations that have a long tradition, with varying degrees of public (co-)funding, which, however, has been reduced over the past years. In other sub-regions, such as Eastern and Central Europe,

⁴³In 2009, an equivalent of 11.2 million full-time jobs existed in the agricultural sector in the EU27, which amounts to approximately 5% of all full-time jobs. http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/5-07052010-AP/EN/5-07052010-AP-EN.PDF

⁴⁴This payment is (1) based on reference periods of past agricultural production; (2) decoupled from (or not related to) production (in the case of livestock farming, arable crops, and dairy farming), and (3) conditional upon meeting criteria such as respect for the environment and animal welfare.

⁴⁵<http://soco.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/ENFactSheet-10.pdf> and http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/farm-advisory-system/index_en.htm

the private sector has filled the gap where no public system was in place or where the system had been disrupted. In these countries there has been a tendency to prepare or put in place publicly co-funded RAS in order to support the application of the EU's CAP through a system of good governance and increased consideration of public interests (e.g. environmental issues) at the farm level (see FAS in Section 2.1.4.1 above). Different RAS structures exist, based on historical developments, and there is no clear conceptual framework at the EU level to guide policymakers on designing and regulating RAS programmes. Participants in the 49th IALB conference in Besançon, France, mentioned the following key issues facing European RAS: the challenges of financing activities such as labelling; reducing costs; diversification into farm-related services (such as agro-tourism); and providing profitable and at the same time demand-oriented RAS. Other concerns are raising awareness of the importance of RAS for rural development; land policy; farm management (including inheritance of farms); ecological issues (organic farming, biodiversity, water management, climate change); and social equity (i.e. gender and youth).

Farmer organisations and farmer-to-farmer extension

Farmer unions have a long history in many European countries, and are a powerful lobby in some. National farmer unions in Western and Southern Europe have, often effectively, advocated for agricultural and rural subsidies, and have succeeded in influencing the CAP in their interests. Farmer unions are organised locally, regionally, and nationally as membership organisations, with some focusing on specific commodities or specific production systems (e.g. organic farming).

The main European farmer organisation is the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations (COPA), which merged in 1962 with the General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives (COGECA). COPA-COGECA is now Europe's strongest farming representative organisation with 76 member organisations from the EU Member States and from other European countries. Their role is to represent the interests of European

agricultural, forestry, fishery, and agro-food cooperatives and to influence decisions which affect agricultural cooperatives' activities by lobbying the EU's public institutions. Similar to COPA-COGECA, the European Federation of Agricultural Workers' Unions (EFA) is mostly concerned with members' interests (health and safety, income, job security, etc.). COPA-COGECA has links to farmer organisations worldwide.

For farmer cooperatives, RAS are part of overall support services available for farmers along the supply and marketing chains of cooperatives. Thus the role of farmer organisations is to provide information (often including interpretation and advice with respect to current and future legislation) to members and promote exchange between them as a means to empower farmers to demand good-quality RAS at fair prices, and to ensure that the regulatory framework for RAS is favourable to farmers' interests.

Public-sector advisory services

Public RAS has a tradition of more than 100 years in some European countries. After the Second World War, national systems of agricultural extension services were set up in all European countries, replacing more traditional ways of circulating knowledge in rural areas (demonstration farms, agricultural fairs). While RAS were organised differently in the various countries, technical support was financed to a large extent by public funds and/or by a system of additional taxes on the sales of farm produce or on land. More recently, there has been a partial or total retreat of member states from the implementation and programming of RAS at the national scale, while transforming public funding into 'project- or goal-oriented packages'. Traditional forms of semi-public RAS (chambers of agriculture) or off-state RAS associations are replaced by new forms of contractualisation of relations between the state, farmer unions, and RAS service providers (Rivera and Zijp 2002). This has been accompanied, over the past 15 years, by a continuous disappearance of small family farms. State funding for RAS now generally focuses on issues related to public health and safety (e.g. prevention and control of disease outbreaks), environmental

management (e.g. reinforcement of environmental laws and protected areas), facilitating the implementation of the increasing number of regulations that are more and more complicated for farmers to understand, and rural development. In Central and Eastern European countries, which are still experiencing a wide productivity gap, the high proportions of the rural population earning an income in the agricultural sector pose a challenge to RAS and to rural development policies in general.

As in other regions, RAS stakeholders are demanding more and better capacity development for RAS agents. Some exchange between public RAS is happening at the regional⁴⁶ and continental levels⁴⁷, but there is no continental umbrella organisation for RAS.

Private-sector input and credit supply, marketing, and advisory services

Private-sector RAS have largely taken over from public-sector extension to provide productivity-oriented advice to larger single farms in most of Western and Southern Europe. With farming being considered by many national governments to be a business like any other, the farmer as a business owner is responsible for investments in knowledge and technology as a private good. However, small farms are often unable to pay for private advisory services. Service providers include both small firms providing customised support to farmers in a specific location, sector, or topic, and large corporations providing package technologies or inputs to farmers, with embedded advice. Research from the Netherlands and elsewhere has revealed the new role of innovation 'brokers'. These are frequently RAS providers who connect people and facilitate effective communication for innovation (Klerkx and

Gildemacher, in press). Some of these service providers also advise overseas commercial farms. The Danish Agricultural Advisory Services (DAAS), for example, an enterprise owned and used by Danish farmers, and some of its member organisations provide RAS to developing countries, as well as to Danish investors in agricultural production overseas.

There is currently no Europe-wide umbrella organisation for private RAS providers, but there are a number of commodity-focused professional organisations or chambers (e.g. the European Milk Board), which include producers, advisory services, and input providers. Private-sector RAS providers also participate in regional forums, such as the Pesticides Initiative Programme (PIP), a European cooperation programme funded by the European Development Fund and managed by COLEACP (mentioned in footnote 63).

NGOs providing advisory services

European NGOs focus mostly on environmental issues (supporting organic farming or encouraging farmers to develop a wildlife-friendly habitat on their farm, e.g. the Foundation Ecology and Agriculture⁴⁸ with headquarters in Germany) or have a social focus (working with rural communities to address issues related to health, community life, marginalisation, disability, etc.).

In parallel to regional or rural development programmes or programmes for protecting natural resources, special local or regional bodies comprised of representatives of municipalities, regionally active development organisations, NGOs, farmers associations, and state representatives are created. To achieve their goals, these bodies often depend on RAS to reach

⁴⁶The publicly funded or co-funded RAS of the German-speaking countries have engaged in an exchange of experience over the past 50 years within IALB (the International Academy of Rural Advisors, www.ialb.org) with a yearly congress, project-oriented activities, and working groups. Cooperation with French RAS (chambers of agriculture) and with RAS in other neighbouring countries has been developed over the past years (during the INTERREG III project on a Rural Extension Network in Europe, RENE).

⁴⁷For example in June 2010 a Central and Eastern European Rural Advisory Services Forum took place with representatives from Poland, Ukraine, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova. www.acsa.md/libview.php?l=en&idc=114&id=683&parent=0

⁴⁸www.soel.de

farmers and the rural population and motivate them to participate in the joint process. Examples include initiatives such as LEADER (a European Union Community Initiative for assisting rural development), and other programmes on water resource management, biodiversity-oriented landscapes, and village development.

Research institutions

Europe has traditionally had a large number of research institutions linked to specialised agricultural colleges, universities, and to the state administration. The research landscape has become more diverse during the past decades, with some of the traditional agricultural research institutes adapting to new demands and challenges (such as climate change mitigation) and diversifying to include a wide range of socio-economic and biophysical sciences, with the aim of contributing to agricultural development in Europe and overseas, while also meeting academic objectives and standards.

As in the other parts of the world, RAS stakeholders consulted by GFRAS criticised the weak link between research and RAS in Europe and called for increased collaboration. They also demanded a stronger focus on extension in European research, and pointed out a special need for evidence on what approaches are effective in different contexts. Many research institutes are torn between the challenge to academically competitive at the international level (and acquire funds for international research programmes, in collaboration with the international research community) and the need to undertake research that supports farmers in their endeavour to comply with increasing levels of restriction in farming due to policy interventions by consumers and NGOs, which often result in new legal standards.

The private sector in Europe has also evolved in its role as a provider of relevant science and technology for both Europe and developing countries, including the development of new varieties (with the disadvantage of property rights forbidding on-farm multiplication of varieties), pesticides and herbicides, fertilisers, and other agri-inputs. The private sector is also a research funder in its own right, for example via its foundations supporting both agricultural research and agricultural education.

Agricultural education institutions

Education institutions include both vocational/technical training colleges (mostly concerned with training European farmers, agricultural technicians, and other farming professionals) and institutions of higher education, such as agricultural departments in universities. As agricultural employment in Europe has been and still is on the decline,⁴⁹ agricultural colleges and universities have begun to focus increasingly on educating overseas students.

RAS or agricultural extension education are taught by a few dozen universities and colleges in Europe, including leading institutions such as the University of Wageningen in the Netherlands, the University of Hohenheim in Germany, and the University of Reading in the UK. In other countries, such as Denmark, education on RAS is only provided by (farmer-owned) agricultural knowledge centres. There are also a number of mid-career courses for RAS providers and those working in agricultural research for development, in particular the International Centre for development-oriented Research in Agriculture (ICRA) course. These three organisations are members of AGRINATURA, a network of 35 universities and research organisations working in 18 European countries on agricultural research, education, training and capacity strengthening for development.

European RAS stakeholders involved in the International Academy for Agricultural and Home Economics Advisory Services (IALB) initiated an initiative to standardise continuing education for European advisors and elaborated the Certificate for European Consultants in Rural Areas (CECRA)⁵⁰. It aims to improve the capacities of RAS staff, especially in the methodological and social domains. The initiative was presented to the representatives of the European Commission preparing the legal framework for RAS within the EU as part of the CAP 2013–2020 negotiations.

⁴⁹Between 2000 and 2009, employment in the agricultural sector in the EU27 decreased by 25%, the equivalent of 3.7 million full-time jobs. www.europe.xorite.com/0,3,Employment-in-the-Agriculture-Sector-Down-by-25-Between-2000-and-2009,11785.html

⁵⁰www.landwirtschaft-mlr.baden-wuerttemberg.de/servlet/PB//menu/1298823_11/index.html, www.cecra.net

Networks

There is no formal network on RAS covering the whole of Europe. The International Academy for Agricultural and Home Economics Advisory Services (IALB)⁵¹ is a platform for German-speaking RAS that fosters the exchange of information and experiences. Participants of the 49th IALB conference in Besançon mentioned the need to intensify and enlarge European exchange on RAS to benefit from Europe's diverse experiences.

With support from INTERREG III, a regional development support programme of the European Union, the Rural Extension Network in Europe (RENE) was initiated in 2004 with the aim to promote the exchange of information and experiences in rural development, vocational, and extension work and the strengthening of specialised methodological knowledge about RAS. However, this project has ended and no follow-up has so far been initiated. Nevertheless, the formal and informal contacts which have been forged between the participating RAS in Europe, also integrating many partners outside the formal network, have had and continue to have an effect, with stakeholders knowing each other better and encouraging common activities in different fields.

At the European level, the EARD InfoSys+ system⁵² provides information about ARD organisations and programmes in Europe, mapping the European ARD landscape, supported by a network of European Partners and based on the contributions of its users.

2.1.4.3 Conclusions

Europe's role as both a user and provider of RAS offers interesting lessons, which are currently not exploited systematically. Poor rural areas of Europe could potentially benefit from an exchange of expe-

periences with less developed countries in transition and in the 'South', while commercial farmers in Asia and Latin America could find that they share many challenges with the more prosperous family farms in Western Europe.

With RAS being provided by a range of stakeholders, including NGOs, the private-sector, and farmer organisations, the role of public-sector extension services has diminished, and there are no overall European networks focusing specifically on public RAS. There does not appear to be a shortage of networks and forums in Europe concerned with agricultural and rural development, but because RAS is part of the mandate of several stakeholder groups, specific RAS concerns (such as, for example, access of small European farms to RAS, and transferring lessons learnt from RAS in Europe to Europe's global RAS support) might not be adequately addressed.

2.2 RAS at the global and interregional levels

2.2.1 Introduction

At the global level, the food price crisis in 2008 led to an increased interest in agricultural development issues, and an increased commitment from national governments, international development agencies, and donors to support agricultural development, including advisory services. When the global financial crisis threatened to undermine this commitment, governments and international agencies at the G8 Summit in L'Aquila (Italy) in 2009 signed the L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security (AFSI)⁵³, reconfirming a high-level commitment to achieving global food security. Such a high-level

⁵¹www.ialb.org

⁵²<http://eard.infosysplus.org>

⁵³The L'Aquila statement reiterates the urgent need for decisive action to free humankind from hunger and poverty. The statement connects food security with economic growth, social progress, political stability, and peace, and advocates increased and targeted investments to enhance agricultural productivity. It links the need for effective action towards global food security to the need for action related to climate change and sustainable management of water, land, soil, and other natural resources, including the biodiversity conservation. It also emphasises the need for cross-cutting, inclusive approaches involving all relevant stakeholders at global, regional, and national levels, and highlights the need for particular attention to smallholders, women, and families, as well as to expanding knowledge and training, among many other things.

political commitment is a pre-requisite for conducive RAS policies and increased investments in RAS. Along with national governments (G8 and 19 heads of state), several UN organisations (FAO, ILO, WFP, IFAD), the World Bank and the IMF, the WTO, AGRA, the CGIAR, the GDFRD, and GFAR also signed the statement. The role of these agencies in relation to RAS is discussed in the following sections.

While international agencies play a key role in creating an enabling environment for RAS, there are also many linkages between regional organisations. Europe, North America, and Australia have traditionally played a strong role in supporting RAS in developing countries both financially and technically, and are now being joined by India and China. Countries of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) group all support RAS in their regions, and increasingly outside their regions. These inter-regional linkages provide opportunities for learning and exchange, but are currently not systematically exploited.

Global actors place emphasis on RAS issues such as trade and access to markets, income generation, agricultural innovation, value chain development, elaboration and protection of standards and regulations, fostering investment in the rural context, access to assets (i.e. land, finance, information, and infrastructure), risk management, food security, social equity (especially gender), using linkages and synergies in RAS, coordination and coherence of policies and projects in RAS, the role of farmers in innovation systems (demand orientation and accountability to clients in RAS, strengthening farmers' capacity to be equal partners), private RAS development, measurement of progress and impact and creation of evidence, professionalising RAS by capacity development (education, training), sustainability of RAS activities, ecological issues such as water, soil and especially climate change, and, finally the use of ICTs in RAS.

2.2.2 Important RAS stakeholders at the global policy level

2.2.2.1 Civil society: farmers, their organisations, and NGOs

While farmers are not necessarily the most influential RAS stakeholders, they are certainly the most important ones, with most farmers relying largely on advice from their peers. Until 2010, farmers were globally represented through the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP). IFAP sought to develop the capacity of farmers, mostly from developing countries, and to influence decisions affecting them – at both the domestic and the international levels. To facilitate this development, IFAP acted as an international forum where issues of common interest to farmers were highlighted, and coordinated plans to address these issues were formulated. It is not clear whether IFAP will be succeeded by a similar global representation of farmer organisations.

In contrast to IFAP, La Vía Campesina is made up almost entirely of marginalised groups: landless workers, small farmers, sharecroppers, pastoralists, fisher folk, and the peri-urban poor. LVC's main objective has been to halt neoliberalism and construct alternative food systems based on food sovereignty. It was founded by organisations mostly from the Americas and Europe, but has since expanded to include more than 150 rural social movements from over 79 countries, including 12 countries in Africa and a great number of organisations in South and East Asia.⁵⁴

Besides these two main forums, there are a number of smaller farmer bodies with specific interests, such as the Intercontinental Network of Organic Farmers Organisations (INOFO)⁵⁵ or the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)⁵⁶, an umbrella organisation representing more than 750 member organisations

⁵⁴LVC has been remarkably successful in creating the necessary political space for advancing its campaigns for food sovereignty, for pushing the World Trade Organisation (WTO) out of agriculture, for women's rights, sustainable agriculture, a ban on genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and redistributive agrarian reform. LVC played the lead role in the FAO International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in 2006, and mounted successful resistance campaigns to the World Bank's market-led land reform programmes. LVC has also been among the most vocal critics of institutional responses to the global food crisis.

⁵⁵www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/professional/farmers_network.html

⁵⁶www.ifoam.org

in 116 countries that aims to develop organic agriculture and its markets worldwide.

Most European countries have national developmental NGO forums or networks, which do not usually focus on a particular sector.⁵⁷ The European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD) represents 1600 European development NGOs, and has formed the European Food Security Group (EFSG), which aims in particular to feed policy advocacy with good practices. The EFSG offers a representative forum of European NGOs involved in issues related to food security, and acts as a reference group in promoting a structured and regular dialogue between NGOs and the European Commission.

There are also many interregional exchanges between farmer organisations. In Europe, the European Platform for Food Sovereignty (EPFS), a loose alliance of European national platforms with 150 farmer organisations and environmental and development organisations, promotes the concept of food sovereignty (see Lines 2009). They see their role as advocating not only for European farmers, but for farmers worldwide. AgriCord is an umbrella organisation of nine national farmer organisations in Europe and Canada (Quebec) established in 2003, which specifically works towards building stronger farmer organisations together with farmers in rural areas of developing countries.⁵⁸

2.2.2.2 Global stakeholders funding RAS

While most RAS are probably paid either by farmers themselves (directly, i.e. to service providers, or indirectly, i.e. via taxes on agricultural produce or income) or by national governments, donors play an important role not only in providing grants or loans to fund RAS, but also in providing associated technical expertise. Monitoring and evaluation of RAS, often funded by donors, is meant to feed into

a process of reflection and learning, ultimately leading to changes in donor and national government policies and programmes. Global GFRAS stakeholders participating in the GFRAS validation process mentioned the limited availability of national funding for RAS that creates a high dependency on external funding and donors.

Most bilateral donors support RAS in one way or another – either by providing sector or budget support to national government or regional communities, or by directly supporting RAS stakeholders and actors. In the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, donors committed themselves to increasing coordination and harmonisation of aid. For agricultural and rural development, the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD) was established in 2002 as a network of 34 bilateral and multilateral donors, international financing institutions, intergovernmental organisations, and development agencies. Members share a common vision that agriculture and rural development are 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 after years of relative decline in public investment in this sector at the beginning of this century. GDPRD publishes studies, policy briefs, issue papers, and joint statements on a range of issues. While some major private-sector foundations (notably the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation – BMGF) are not part of GDPRD, many key global RAS stakeholders are represented, including FAO, the World Bank, and IFAD. It is a significant achievement that all of them agreed on a joint approach to agriculture and rural development. This provides a basis for discussing the role of RAS within the wider agricultural and rural development agenda.

The World Bank (WB) is a member of GDPRD and one of the main funding agencies for national RAS provision. The WB group provides low-interest loans, interest-free credits, and grants to developing countries for a wide array of purposes, including agriculture and rural development. During the 1980s and 1990s the WB invested heavily, providing loans and grants to a number of Asian and African

⁵⁷One example is BOND, the UK membership body for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in international development. Established in 1993, BOND now has 370 members. <http://www.bond.org.uk>

⁵⁸Since 2007, AgriCord has been operating a grant programme entitled "Farmers Fighting Poverty", which provides support to farmer organisations in the developing world.

countries to finance the Training and Visit (T&V) system of agricultural extension. World Bank investments in extension services often consist mainly of small investments accompanying investments in improved agricultural productivity and market linkages. Notable exceptions have included some large investments in extension system linkages as well as sweeping reforms of extension systems. With World Bank and other support, governments have invested heavily in designing and implementing new extension models, such as, for example, Uganda's National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) approach and Ethiopia's farmer training centre approach.⁵⁹ The World Bank has also been actively engaged in the Neuchâtel Initiative, and has commissioned or carried out in-house a wide range of studies and workshops on RAS.

There are a number of other grant-giving agencies supporting RAS in the wider sense, in particular IFAD and CFC. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is a UN agency established as an international financial institution, providing low interest loans and grants. IFAD also sees its role as an advocate for rural poor people (especially farmers). Its multilateral base provides a global platform for discussing important policy issues. The Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) is an intergovernmental financial institution with currently 106 member countries. CFC operates with a commodity focus, with the aim of enhancing the socio-economic development of commodity producers and to contribute to the development of society as a whole. While both IFAD and CFC do not directly fund RAS providers, they support key RAS stakeholders through capacity development, advocacy, and specific (in the case of CFC commodity-focused) support.

2.2.2.3 Other international agencies and initiatives

Key international agencies with an interest in RAS include, among others, UN agencies (FAO, WFP, WTO) and the UN Secretary General's High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, as well as the Neuchâtel Initiative.

⁵⁹For more information, see Davis and Heemskerk (in press).

FAO is the UN agency mandated with agricultural development and food security, and, accordingly, has a strong interest in RAS. FAO's Research and Extension Branch of the Office of Knowledge Exchange, Research and Extension provides advisory and technical services to FAO members to support an integrated approach to agricultural research, extension, education of rural people, and communication for development, with the aim of responding to the needs of national development policies and strategies in terms of technology, knowledge, human and institutional capacity building, and public awareness. Work in this area concentrates primarily on supporting and enhancing the capacities of public and private-sector agricultural research and extension systems, as well as education for rural people and communication for development institutions, with a special emphasis on rural radio. FAO is a member of the UN High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (initiated in April 2008), whose aim is to ensure comprehensive and coordinated understanding and action in responding to both immediate and longer-term food challenges.

The Neuchâtel Initiative (NI), of which FAO was also a member, was launched in 1995 and ended in 2010 with the establishment of GFRAS. Originally made up mostly of donor agencies sharing learning about RAS and developing common positions – a function now fulfilled by GDPRD – the NI subsequently became a forum of mostly northern academics and professionals with an interest in RAS. The NI was instrumental in the initiation of GFRAS, the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services.

2.2.2.4 Private sector

The global private sector plays an important role as a provider of RAS to mostly commercial farmers (Syngenta and Monsanto, for example, sponsor agricultural programmes in developing countries). The private sector is likely to play an even more important role in RAS in the future, with many countries unable or unwilling to maintain public-sector RAS for technical advice, which is considered a 'private good'. Currently, the private sector is more commonly structured in national chambers (according to sectors) than in international networks. An ex-

ception is, for example, the International Potash Institute (IPI)⁶⁰, a non-governmental and non-profit organisation that was founded in 1952 and is today supported by producers in Europe and the Near East. IPI's mission is to *"develop and promote balanced fertilisation for the production of higher yields and more nutritious food, together with ensuring sustainability of production through conservation of soil fertility for future generations."* The International Fertilizer Industry Association (IFA)⁶¹ represents over 500 members from the fertilizer sector in about 85 countries. The Sustainable Agriculture Initiative⁶² is a platform created by the food industry to communicate and to actively support the development of sustainable agriculture, involving stakeholders of the food chain.

Another type of private-sector stakeholder with an (almost) global mandate is the Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee (COLEACP), an inter-professional association representing and defending the collective interests of ACP (African, Caribbean, and Pacific) producers and exporters and EU importers of fruits, vegetables, flowers, and plants. It fulfils several roles, including that of an advisory services provider to members, an advocacy organisation, and an infomediary (e.g. by making research findings available to members via its PIP⁶³ component).⁶⁴

An important section of private-sector service providers are national and international consulting firms and freelance consultants providing RAS overseas, generally as service providers to bilateral or multilateral aid donors. The boundary between small consulting firms with development-oriented visions or missions, operating with fairly low profit

margins, and NGOs or academic institutions providing similar services 'not for profit', but at times with higher overhead rates, is fairly fluid. Many of these firms and consultants are members of formal or informal professional networks (e.g. The Natural Resources Group)⁶⁵, but as they are de facto competitors, the level of cooperation is generally linked to specific business opportunities. Similarly, the exchange between the private and the public sectors is very weak.

2.2.2.5 Agricultural research and education

The main umbrella organisation for agricultural research worldwide is GFAR, the Global Forum for Agricultural Research. GFAR's mission is *"to mobilise all stakeholders involved in agricultural research and innovation systems for development, and to support their efforts to alleviate poverty, increase food security and promote the sustainable use of natural resources"*. In 2010 GFAR organised the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD) in Montpellier.⁶⁶ The GCARD process aimed to promote effective and targeted investment at all levels of the agricultural system and ensure that agricultural research meets the needs of resource-poor end users. The GCARD process helped to refine regional and global agricultural research priorities as identified by different stakeholder groups and representatives in each region, thus also helping to ensure that RAS providers have access to relevant knowledge and technologies.

In addition, GCARD also contributed to the CGIAR reform process. The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), established in 1971, is a strategic partnership of donors

⁶⁰www.ipipotash.org

⁶¹www.fertilizer.org

⁶²www.saiplatform.org

⁶³PIP is a European cooperation programme managed by COLEACP. It is financed by the European Development Fund and implemented at the request of the ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) Group of States. The first phase of PIP ran from 2001 to 2009 with the objectives of (1) enabling ACP companies to comply with European food safety and traceability requirements and (2) consolidating the position of small-scale producers in the ACP horticultural export sector. A second phase of PIP was launched in October 2009 for a period of five years. In accordance with the Millennium Development Goals, the global objective is to: "Maintain and, if possible, increase the contribution made by export horticulture to the reduction of poverty in ACP countries".

⁶⁴COLEACP is also an active member of the EU's PAEPARD project, the Platform for African-European Partnerships on Agricultural Research for Development.

⁶⁵www.thengroup.net/index.shtml

⁶⁶See www.egfar.org/egfar/website/gcard/aboutGCARD for objectives and outcomes.

supporting 15 international research centres who work in collaboration with many hundreds of government and civil society organisations as well as private businesses around the world. CGIAR donors include both developing and industrialised countries, as well as international and regional organisations and private foundations. The 15 CGIAR centres work on a range of commodities and farming systems, often providing knowledge and technologies that are then further adapted to local needs by national research systems, including RAS providers and NGOs. The centres also work on a range of socio-economic and policy topics related to agricultural and rural development, including RAS approaches and policies, and the economic viability of different RAS models.

There is also a wide range of agricultural research collaborations and partnerships between different regions, for example between European research and developing country research organisations, often funded by the EU, for example via Framework Programmes.⁶⁷ In 2005 the ERA-ARD (European Research Area project on Agricultural Research for Development)⁶⁸ was launched as a project under Framework Programme 6 (the European Union's research programme). ERA-ARD works closely with the European Forum for Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD), an initiative that aims to strengthen the contribution of European ARD in addressing the global challenges of eradicating poverty and hunger, fostering food security and food safety, and promoting sustainable management of natural resources in Europe. While initially EFARD members were mostly from research organisations, the forum has recently become more inclusive and now also involves representatives of civil society and private-sector organisations. EFARD has no core funding and activities have been supported on a voluntary basis and with in-kind contributions from EU Member States. To coordinate European ARD policies and investments, the European Initiative for Agricultural Research for

Development (EIARD) was initiated in 1995. EIARD members are the Member States of the European Union, plus Norway, Switzerland, and the EC. EIARD also coordinates European support to the CGIAR.

Science and technology exchange is becoming a global phenomenon, with new actors entering the arena. For example, China is providing agricultural training and advice to African countries⁶⁹, while Indian universities and colleges have been educating agricultural professionals from around the world for some time. However, the exchange between research, RAS, and farmers was still characterised as insufficient by stakeholders during the GFRAS validation process.

2.2.2.6 Providing information to RAS

The research findings developed by research centres, farmer innovators, universities, and the private sector are only useful to farmers if they are available, accessible, and usable. Several organisations work specifically on access to information and technologies, using both 'conventional' media (in particular various types of publications targeting different user groups), mass media (in particular newspapers and radio), and digital technologies (e.g. web-based databases, mobile phones, social networking, Web 2.0 applications). The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) is an ACP-EU institution set up in 1984 with the task of improving the flow of information among stakeholders in agricultural and rural development in African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries. CTA works in three key areas: (1) providing information products and services; (2) promoting integrated use of communication channels – old and new – to improve the flow of information; and (3) building ACP capacity in information and communication management (ICM), mainly through training and partnerships with ACP bodies. While CTA does not itself provide RAS, it develops capacities of RAS providers and offers information products that they can use.

⁶⁷http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html

⁶⁸www.era-ard.org/

⁶⁹According to Eicher (2007), President Hu Jintao of China identified agricultural cooperation as one of eight types of technical assistance to Africa at the China–Africa summit in November 2006. This includes sending Chinese working groups to 14 African countries to investigate into setting up agricultural technology demonstration centres in Africa and supplying 100 senior agro-tech experts to assist with Africa's agricultural development. A training course for 35 African officials from 21 African countries on the extension of agricultural technology was held by the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture in Beijing in July 2007. The course included lectures on genetically modified cotton, seed production technologies, and the use of water-saving and biological technologies in agriculture.

Similarly, CABI (formerly the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau) is a not-for-profit international organisation that aims to improve people's lives by providing information and applying scientific expertise to solve problems in agriculture and the environment. Activities include scientific publishing, development projects and research, and microbial services. CABI often works in partnership with agricultural research organisations to 'repackage' research findings in an attractive, user-friendly, and easy-to-understand format (e.g. as handbooks, posters, or radio programmes). They also develop communication strategies for research programmes, to ensure that key messages are communicated to relevant stakeholders in a targeted manner.

2.2.2.7 Conclusions

Food security and agricultural development are now clearly receiving more attention globally than they did five years ago, as indicated by a range of agencies and donors supporting programmes and agencies with a food security mandate. The degree to which developing country farmers' interests and priorities are taken into account when developing the global agenda has generally increased, due at least partly to strong advocacy by farmer organisations and NGOs. However, owing to the 'intermediary' function of RAS between producers, markets, technology generation, and policy, there does not appear to be a global consensus on the role of RAS and their relationships with other key actors. Since RAS are provided by different stakeholder groups, with each of these groups having its own networks and relationships, RAS interests are highly fragmented. Several global stakeholders already have close relationships with GFRAS (e.g. by being represented on the GFRAS board, or by financially supporting GFRAS), but there are others (particularly farmer organisations and the private sector) that have very few linkages with GFRAS to date. It will be important for GFRAS to reflect within its network the diversity of global RAS stakeholders, and to take a lead in supporting the identification (and eventually the addressing) of common issues of concern, as begun during the IAASTD exercise.

3. Challenges and potentials in the regions: Conclusions from Chapter 2

Chapter 2 highlighted a number of issues in relation to RAS, some of which are common to all regions, while others are specific to particular regions or sub-regions, and some apply to several regions. Chapter 3 summarises these issues and explains potentials and challenges for RAS actors in fulfilling their role in the current global context. Although any analysis is bound to be a generalisation of what are complex and diverse patterns, it nonetheless appears useful to map out some of the most prominent themes.

Rural people and agricultural producers face a range of challenges. Based on the findings from the literature review and the dialogues that GFRAS carried out during its validation process, the following issues are currently at stake worldwide, although the degree and characteristics vary depending on the different contexts:

- Economic globalisation and trade
- Access to markets through innovation, product diversification, and quality standards
- Access to information and technologies
- Access to resources such as land, finance, infrastructure
- Modernisation and technological development in agricultural production
- Agricultural productivity
- Environmental aspects such as climate change, water management, soil conservation, and sustainable production
- Risk management and sustainability of livelihoods
- Post-harvest management
- Use of ICTs and video
- GMOs

According to GFRAS's definition, RAS are "all the different activities that provide the information and services needed and demanded by farmers and

other actors in rural settings". They should thus support rural people in dealing with the issues mentioned above. Key RAS actors in each region are described in Chapter 2.

Non-conducive policy environment for RAS

Together, RAS actors have the potential to address the majority of RAS issues identified above, but only if the wider policy environment is conducive. While there is clear agreement internationally on the importance of achieving food security through sustainable agricultural practices adapted to climate change and other global challenges, there is no agreement on the role that RAS in general, and publicly funded agricultural advisory services in particular, are meant to play in meeting these challenges. Globally there is no voice for RAS as such – it appears that, at times, RAS 'get lost' in the wider debates on food security, farmer empowerment, access to markets, or NRM. Advocacy and awareness raising are needed to strengthen the position of RAS in the wider context of rural development. Likewise, the voice of producers and service providers in determining agricultural research, science, and technology agendas is insufficient. The GCARD process mentioned in Chapter 2 was used by farmer organisations to make a strong statement on this. PROLINNOVA and other initiatives promote farmer innovation and collaboration between farmers and researchers. RAS should make use of existing potential such as farmer organisations advocating for RAS policies and the CAADP process and AFAAS providing platforms for African RAS. There is also a need to identify which policies have a specific impact on RAS and which stakeholders are involved in developing these policies or advocating for their change.

Lacking clarity on roles and weak voice of RAS actors

The number of rural and agricultural service providers is constantly increasing, but their activities are not necessarily coordinated and they do not neces-

sarily work towards a common agenda. There is a lack of common understanding and focused analysis of the roles of different RAS stakeholders and actors, of how they should relate, and of who can reach different target groups. In particular, there is a conceptual lack regarding the definition of the relations between the public and private sectors and civil society in RAS. This issue is likely to impact negatively on advocacy for RAS. There is a need to communicate to a range of stakeholders what RAS entail.

Insufficient or inadequate communication and coordination between main agricultural and rural development stakeholders at all levels

RAS need to collaborate and interact with other fields involved in rural development in order to play a strong role. Even though a lot of exchange and networking is taking place at all levels – possibly not under the 'RAS' label, but addressing aspects of RAS – there is little exchange of experiences between public, private, and NGO RAS providers between countries and continents. There is a need to use existing forums (e.g. GDPRD) to advocate for the inclusion of RAS as an agenda item at international and regional events concerned with ARD, food security, and rural development.

Effective RAS also require stronger links between research and RAS. The involvement of farmers in each step of service provision – from design to evaluation – is another crucial aspect for success. Farmers' involvement requires a certain level of organisation and capacity of producer organisations. In many cases, these stakeholder groups are weak and need individual, institutional, and organisational capacity development to become strong RAS clients who participate in service provision and are capable of articulating demands and needs. Besides farmer organisations, the private sector is becoming increasingly important as an input supplier to RAS. There is a need for a policy environment that enables private-sector development.

Weak capacity of (public) RAS

In many countries, public RAS are perceived as inefficient. One reason for this is the weak capacities of RAS staff to meet new challenges and implement new approaches – such as the concept of value chains, the use of participatory and facilitative approaches, and concerns related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. This is especially true where decentralised RAS take over new responsibilities. There are many initiatives for capacity development, but they tend to be uncoordinated: at the country level, for example, many donors, NGOs, and research organisation train advisors, often in an ad hoc manner, and focusing largely on the training of individual staff members rather than organisational capacity development (including development of conducive organisational systems and processes). There is a need to advocate with donors for a more holistic and integrated approach to RAS capacity development.

Generally, both RAS providers and researchers still insufficiently adapt advice and approaches to their diverse target audiences and contexts, despite the fact that some pre-service training providers (e.g. BARI course of Makerere University, see section 2.1.1.2) include socio-economic differentiation in RAS training. It is also critical to consider gender aspects in RAS, which, to date, is insufficiently done. There is a need to advocate for the inclusion of socio-economic differentiation and consideration of context as a key aspect in RAS training globally, and to show that systematic differentiation increases the impact of RAS.

Poor availability of evidence on RAS

Besides capacity development and education, information and evidence is needed to support RAS providers in their work and to strengthen the position of RAS in the development context. However, little research is done on RAS, and a coordinated 'voice' on this is needed to enhance the role of RAS in ARD. There is a special need for RAS evaluation.

There is also a lack of documentation that synthesises experiences with innovative practices of RAS performance control by users, such as farmer involvement in service design and assessment. There is currently also very little information available on returns to investment and on value for money for different RAS approaches.

Limited studies on RAS exist, including some useful work from the 1980s and 1990s, but access to this work is difficult. Analyses of what approaches work in what context, and how investments in RAS have contributed to poverty reduction, are scattered and have never been systematically synthesised. Most available analysis is written for academics, and not for policymakers or farmers. There is a need to ensure that relevant evidence is synthesised, as well as debated with and presented to key decision-makers (farmer organisations, policymakers, donors) in formats accessible to them.

Insufficient funds for RAS

Funding is needed to strengthen RAS. There is some commitment to invest in agricultural and rural development (G8 etc.), but it remains unclear which amount of funding (public and/or private) is required for RAS to be an effective contributor to increased food security, increased rural incomes, reduced poverty, and other development outcomes.

The issue of the private sector's role in RAS provision and in leveraging approaches is also related to funding. A large segment of farmers seems to be willing to pay for advisory services, and these services may be more efficient and demand-oriented if taken over by private RAS enterprises.⁷⁰

Summary

The following table gives an overview of challenges that were identified during the review of primary and secondary documents (Section 1.3) in the context of the GFRAS validation process:

⁷⁰See, for example, a study done in India by the National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research (NCAP) at www.ncap.res.in/upload_files/policy_paper/pp10.pdf

Table 1: Challenges and opportunities emerging from document review

Challenge	Potentials
<p>Non-conducive policy environment for RAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No agreement on role in RAS, especially in public RAS • No global voice for RAS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global interest in agriculture/food security
<p>Lacking clarity on roles in RAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coordination in RAS • Lack of common understanding of the roles in RAS (public, private, civil society) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of RAS actors
<p>Insufficient or inadequate communication and coordination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • between main agricultural and rural development stakeholders • between sectors (public, private, civil society) • between geographical levels (countries, continents, global) • between stakeholder groups (research, RAS, farmer organisations) • Weak capacities of clients (farmer organisations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widely known good practices on making research findings available, accessible and usable by involving research users (farmers, RAS providers) in research design • Ongoing advocacy for farmer involvement in service design and assessment • Examples of innovative practices of RAS performance control by users
<p>Weak capacity of (public) RAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate capacity of RAS providers – especially in relation to new approaches and market-oriented agricultural services • Weak coordination of capacity development initiatives • Inadequate differentiation of needs, approaches and messages by target group and context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing capacity development initiatives • Socio-economic differentiation included in RAS training in some cases
<p>Poor availability of evidence on RAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient research on RAS • Scattered analyses on which approaches work in which context • Presentation of evidence not readable for decision-makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large number of relevant studies on RAS
<p>Insufficient funds for RAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of information on returns to investment • Weak conceptualisation of synergies between private and public sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to invest in agricultural and rural development • Existence of private-sector RAS

4. Options for GFRAS long-term strategies

4.1 Introduction

The Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) was created in 2010 to provide advocacy and leadership for RAS. Chapter 4 contains recommendations for GFRAS on how to fulfil its mission. These recommendations are based upon reflections on the potentials and challenges described in Chapter 3. Throughout, the role of GFRAS needs to remain a facilitating one, which supports RAS globally, without duplicating the activities of other actors. Recommendations are structured along the GFRAS functions described in Section 1.1. This will help the GFRAS management to operationalise the functions and to integrate the recommendations into the long-term strategies of GFRAS.

4.2 GFRAS function 1: Providing a voice for RAS and promoting improved investment in RAS

In Chapter 3, some **issues** were listed that apply to GFRAS function 1:

- Non-conducive policy environment for RAS
- No coordination and lack of voice for RAS actors
- No agreement on roles in RAS, especially in public RAS
- Insufficient investment in funding for RAS, partly due to difficult access to evidence of the importance of RAS and lack of information on returns to investment
- Weak use of synergies between private and public sectors to increase leverage of RAS

Looking at these challenges, a main **intervention area** of GFRAS could be:

- To coordinate RAS actors, their approaches, and their policies with the intention to facilitate their engagement in policy dialogue and advocacy.
- To engage in policy dialogue by advocating for GFRAS's position among a wider audience, and to raise funders' awareness of the importance and the results of RAS (based on evidence elaborated under function 2).

- To ensure a broad debate of evidence of returns to RAS investment among stakeholder groups (extending beyond academic discussions). The GFRAS secretariat and the GFRAS constituency can do this by participating in and convening meetings, events, and discussions, and by providing and disseminating evidence of returns to RAS investments.
- To engage in policy dialogue.
- To commission studies of returns to investment in RAS.

The following **activities** can contribute to the described intervention areas and GFRAS function 1:

- Initiate dialogue and convene meetings to discuss issues, policies, and approaches in RAS with the GFRAS constituency; at the beginning of the next phase, the GFRAS network should debate in particular the roles of the different RAS protagonists (private and public sectors and civil society) in order to facilitate coordination and joint advocacy.
- Conduct or commission analysis or systematic reviews of the effects of existing rural and agricultural policies on RAS; key themes for this activity could be identified jointly with the GFRAS constituency.
- Participate in events and forums (e.g. GDPRD); to prepare this activity, some criteria for the selection of partners and forums should be established.

4.3 GFRAS function 2: Supporting the development and synthesis of evidence-based approaches and policies for improving the effectiveness of RAS

The creation of, and access to, evidence on RAS is strongly linked to the existence of networks between stakeholders, especially between researchers, producers, and RAS. Many challenges in this field are dealt with under GFRAS function 3. Additionally, the following **issues** were identified in Chapter 3 of this report:

- Insufficient research on RAS
- Scattered analyses on which approaches work in which context

- Existing evidence is not presented in a way that is easily readable for decision-makers

To tackle these **issues**, the intervention area for GFRAS under function 2 could be to facilitate knowledge creation and management.

The following **activities** can contribute to this intervention area:

- Acquire information and evidence by participating in events, interacting with key stakeholders, and undertaking and commissioning analyses of issues such as the contribution of RAS to MDG achievement, and issues linked to RAS funding that are described under function 1; when elaborating evidence, the GFRAS secretariat as well as its members should collaborate closely with research institutions and advocate for consideration of RAS issues in research interventions.
- Commission a synthesis of the broad range of existing evidence and evidence to be elaborated by different actors in the future, and present this evidence in a form that is attractive and useful to intermediate and end users.
- Feed evidence into policy – a crucial activity for GFRAS – by liaising with forums that are experienced in this activity, which will also further contribute to function 1; GFRAS should consider the RAPID framework developed by ODI (Overseas Development Institute)⁷¹ and the work done by RURU (the Research Unit on Research Communication)⁷² on the use of research and evidence in policy and practice.

4.4 GFRAS function 3: Strengthening actors and fora in RAS through facilitating interaction and networking

Interaction and networking are key for learning and advocacy and represent a crucial element of any forum. As explained in Chapter 3, communication and coordination between RAS stakeholders are insufficient, especially:

- between main agricultural and rural development stakeholders
- between sectors (public, private, civil society)
- between geographical levels (countries, continents, global)
- between stakeholder groups (research, RAS, farmer organisations)
- An important intervention area for the GFRAS secretariat can therefore be to facilitate networking between RAS actors, sectors, and different stakeholder groups.

The following activities can contribute to GFRAS function 3:

- Link actors, stakeholders, and sectors by exchanging contacts, brokering relationships, and creating new contacts through e-mail and virtual and face-to-face meetings and forums.
- Provide a platform for exchange, coordination, and learning; this could be done by facilitating virtual networking, convening meetings and events, and running an electronic knowledge platform.
- Advocate for the involvement of farmers and other stakeholder groups in the design and monitoring of RAS provision and in the identification and validation of researchable issues related to RAS.
- Identify needs for capacity strengthening in RAS.
- Strengthen regional RAS networks through technical backstopping, collaboration, and the principle of subsidiarity.

⁷¹www.odi.org.uk/work/programmes/rapid

⁷²www.ruru.ac.uk

4.5 Crosscutting issues

Chapter 3 describes issues in RAS that are important for GFRAS but do not lead to a specific intervention area under its three functions. The following issues should be considered when working under all described intervention areas above:

Capacity development and education of RAS staff:

In Chapter 3 it was stated that capacity of RAS providers – in particular in relation to market-oriented agricultural services – is inadequate.

GFRAS can consider this issue in its work under all 3 functions:

- Under function 1, GFRAS can facilitate the harmonisation of capacity development interventions in RAS and raise awareness of the importance of funding capacity development in RAS.
- Under function 2, GFRAS can commission analyses of approaches, concepts, and themes for capacity development and education.
- Under function 3, GFRAS can work towards a more coordinated and holistic approach to supporting RAS capacity development and education, inform stakeholders on capacity developing opportunities, and serve as a knowledge broker.
- Consideration of social equity and context
- Mechanisms are needed for reaching specific socio-economic groups, such as poor smallholders and young farmers; likewise, gender needs to be considered in RAS. Related issues mentioned in Chapter 3 are:
 - Poor farmers depending on ineffective public sector
 - Inadequate differentiation of needs, approaches, and messages by target group and context

GFRAS activities targeting these issues can be:

- Under function 1: Advocacy for socio-economic differentiation, inclusion of disadvantaged social groups into RAS, and consideration of context as a key aspect in RAS training globally and in policies.
- Under function 2: Commissioning of analyses to show impact of effective differentiation of approaches by target groups.
- Under function 3: Fostering of exchange of experiences regarding socio-economic equity in RAS.

Weak role and capacity of RAS partners

- Farmer organisations and the private sector are important partners for RAS. However, as stated in Chapter 3, their role needs to be strengthened in order to achieve strong partnership. Key issues are:
 - Weak participation of farmers in RAS provision
 - Weak farmer organisations
 - Weak private-sector environment

Activities of GFRAS can thus be:

- Under function 1: Coordination and conceptualisation of experiences with different approaches to collaborating with or strengthening farmer organisations and the private sector; advocacy for an enabling environment for capacity development in RAS.
- Under function 2: Elaboration of evidence regarding advantages and disadvantages of each sector's RAS as well as good practices for collaboration.
- Under function 3: Creation of links and facilitation of collaboration between farmer organisations, input suppliers, RAS, and research.

Other issues:

Several additional issues can be dealt with in the intervention areas under GFRAS functions 1–3:

- Management of natural resources including climate, biodiversity, water, and soil; this issue is key when discussing the synergies between public and private RAS and their roles. Natural resources are a public good and therefore crucial for public RAS. Exchange of experiences and the creation of evidence regarding natural resource management will help RAS actors to provide quality services.
- Monitoring and evaluation contributes to evidence. Its results can be used for raising awareness of investments in RAS; stakeholders have an interest in sharing experiences on how to implement monitoring and evaluation.
- Use of ICTs: ICTs are becoming more and more important in daily life and in RAS. This represents an opportunity for GFRAS to foster learning in networks and synthesise new evidence.
- Other issues such as globalisation and trade or access to land are of global importance and should be considered by RAS. GFRAS can engage in such issues by partnering with existing policy networks.

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Annexes



1. Functions of main RAS stakeholders

XXX = major role, XX = secondary role, X = minor role

Note: These are the roles that stakeholders could have or aspire to; however, they cannot always fulfil them in practice due to a range of obstacles.

Stakeholder	Functions					
	Agric. production & consumption	Agric. & rural innovation	Use of RAS	Provision of RAS	Agric. processing and marketing	Financing of RAS
Farmer and farmer organisations	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX	X	X
Processors, traders, and their organisations	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	XXX	X
Public-sector advisory services	X	XX	X	XXX	X	
Private-sector advisory services	X	XX	X	XXX	XX	
Private-sector input supply and marketing		XX	X		XXX	X
NGOs	X	XXX	X	XXX	X	XX
Infomediaries		XX		XX		X
Agricultural research organisations		XXXX		X		X
Agricultural training organisations		X		XX	X	
National policymakers						XXX
Regional/continental policymakers						X
Global policymakers		X		XX		XX
Networks and exchange forums				X		
ICTs, media		X				
Fund managers						XXX
Donors						XXX

							Comment
Advocacy for RAS	Design of RAS	Legal framework for RAS	Knowledge management and lesson learning	(Re-) packaging of advice	Capacity dev. for RAS		
XX			X				Provide RAS through farmer-to-farmer and processor-to-processor extension, sometimes pay for RAS; their organisations advocate RAS but are generally not involved in RAS design
XX			X				
	XX	XX	X	X	X		Extension staff tend also to be agricultural producers (or processors/traders) and users of RAS; some innovate and experiment
	XX		X	X	X		
XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	Some provide RAS and some innovate and experiment; different levels (local, national, regional, global)
XX	XX		XX	XX	XX	XX	Fulfil a range of functions, depending on intervention level (local, national, international) and mandate (training, advocacy, etc.)
XX			XXX	XXX	XXX		Repackage research findings and innovations into formats useful for intermediary (extension staff) and end users (farmers, decision-makers); different target groups and channels.
X	X	X	XX	XX	XX	XX	Generate new knowledge and technologies; also do some research on RAS and provide some RAS directly
X	X	X	XX	X	XXX		Includes ministries of agric., rural development, and finance, national planning commissions, etc.
X	XXX	XXX			XX		Includes, e.g. in Africa, NEPAD, RECs, regional trade organisations
XX	XX	XX	X				Includes agricultural colleges training extension staff, but also rural training centres training farmers
X	XX	XX	X		X		UN organisations, WTO, etc.
XXX			XXX		XX		At different levels (national, regional, global); for different stakeholder groups (e.g. GFRAS for RAS, GFAR for ARD, RUFORUM or APEN for training)
XX			XXX	XX	XX		Includes Internet services providers, radio and TV stations and programmes, newspapers, etc.
	XX	XX	X		X		Those who manage funds on behalf of governments: WB/IMF, AfDB, ADB, IADB, IFAD
	X	X					Bilateral and multilateral donor agencies (incl. EU), private-sector foundations.

2. Channels for different types of rural advice

Advice channel	Prerequisite / enabling environment
Information services via SMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile phone network coverage • Funding for SMS information provider (from users, government, or donors) • Provider has access to relevant and up-to-date information • Availability and affordability of mobile phones for rural people
Information services via Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet coverage • Funding for web-based information provider • Provider is able to produce relevant and up-to-date information, targeting different types of rural people • Availability and affordability of internet access for rural people
Phone-based advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile phone network coverage or landline • Remuneration for advisor • Capacity of advisor (both technical and social – communication and facilitation skills, etc.) • Provider has access to up-to-date information • Availability and affordability of mobile phones / landline calls for rural people
Face-to-face advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remuneration for provider (monetary or in kind – e.g. farmer-to-farmer extension, based on reciprocity) • Capacity of provider (both technical and social – communication and facilitation skills etc.) and continuous professional development • Mobility of provider (access to means of transport) • Option for service users to monitor performance of service provider and provide feedback

Source: Own

Type of advice and examples				
	Technical advice	Economic advice	Social advice	Advocacy
	Notification on specific technical services (e.g. date of vaccinations)	Market prices in different locations, names of buyers or sellers of commodities, interest rates for loans.	Notification on events and services relevant to farmers / rural people (e.g. field days, meetings, social services)	Could be used to inform rural people about key events or decisions
	Information on specific technical themes – e.g. in toolkit format, providing different levels for different user groups	Information on economic parameters, and online support, e.g. on how to do GMA (gross margin analysis)	Information about farmer groups and farmer organisations and their activities, social networking for rural people	Information about key events relevant to farmers, collecting opinions / signatures etc.
Any topic that does not require the advisor's physical presence – similar to web-based service, but more interactive, allowing instant two-way communication. Could be used individually or with groups (if phone was connected to speakers, or with one group member acting as intermediary). Not suitable where detailed diagnosis requires direct observation.				
	Advice on specific technical themes, including facilitation of farmer experimentation. Interactive, responding to farmers' needs.	Joint monitoring of economic parameters (e.g. GM), facilitation of farmers' decision-making on economics of production, processing and marketing; information about and support for obtaining loans.	Facilitation of group formation and group management, encouragement of learning and exchange between farmers/ rural people, etc.	Support to joint advocacy, e.g. mobilising farmers for advocacy events, assisting with writing of petitions, etc.

3. Overview of African RAS actors and stakeholders

Category	Organisations	Visions and objectives
Farmers and farmer organisations	C: Africa Alliance of sub-regional Farmer Organisations (AAFO); S: ROPPA, EAFF, PROPAC, SACAU, UMAGRI N: Farmer unions L: Farmer groups	EAFF: <i>'A prosperous and cohesive farming community in Eastern Africa'</i>
Public-sector advisory services	N: Agricultural extension services under Ministries of Agriculture	Example for N: <i>'To increase farmer access to information, knowledge and technology for profitable agricultural production'</i> (NAADS Uganda)
Private-sector advisory services	C: PanAAC, various agri-industry networks and associations N: SMEs, agribusinesses C: EMRC (Belgium-based network promoting African business partnerships)	PanAAC: <i>'To develop a strategic network involved in African agribusiness and agro-industry value chain to increase growth, foster productivity, promote intra-regional trade and attract direct investment in the food system.'</i>
NGOs with agricultural focus/ RAS provision	C: SSA NGO consortium N: various groupings/forums	SSA NGO C: <i>'An inclusive ARD system, generating appropriate innovations that result in sustainable livelihoods.'</i>
Research and development	C: FARA S: CORAF, ASARECA, SADC FANR, NASRO N: NARIs, NARS N/L: Farmer innovators and their networks	FARA: <i>'Reduced poverty in Africa as a result of sustainable broad-based agricultural growth and improved livelihoods, particularly of smallholder and pastoral enterprises.'</i>
Agricultural training and education	C: AAU; ANAFE; SCARDA and BASICS programme of FARA S: RUFORUM N: Agricultural universities and colleges L: Farmer training centres, farmer field schools and learning groups	ANAFE: <i>'A vibrant network leading in agricultural education for development.'</i> RUFORUM: <i>'RUFORUM sees a vibrant agricultural sector linked to African universities which can produce high-performing graduates and high-quality research responsive to the demands of Africa's farmers for innovations and able to generate sustainable livelihoods and national economic development.'</i>
Infomediaries/ media	C: AFSJ ⁷³ , ACBF ⁷⁴ etc. N: Local radio and TV stations, NGOs	Depends on type of organisation
RAS Networks and platforms	C: AFAAS	<i>'AFAAS envisions the emergence of a pluralistic and demand-driven range of agricultural advisory services that effectively and efficiently contribute to sustained growth and transformation of African agriculture.'</i>

Notes: C = continental/regional level, S = sub-regional level, N = national level, L = local level

⁷³AFSJ: African Federation of Science Journalists (<http://africansciencejournalists.com>)

⁷⁴ACBF: African Capacity Building Foundation (www.acbfpact.org)

	Current and envisaged services and outputs	Members and target groups	Funding
	Advocacy for farmers' access to inputs and markets, fair prices and agricultural policies, government investments in ARD; provision of agricultural information for and fostering exchange between members	Open to all agricultural producers and processors, but members of formal farmer organisations tend to be those involved in commercial farming, with above-average education and resources	NGOs, bilateral, multilateral, and private-sector donors (larger proportion); membership fees and contributions from national governments (small proportion)
	Advice on all matters related to agricultural production, processing and marketing, including technical, economic and environmental aspects; in some cases sale of inputs	Open to all agricultural producers and processors, but frequently focusing on farmers organised in groups, which tend not to include the poorest of the poor	National government budgets, often supported by bilateral or multilateral aid donors via direct budget support or sector support
	Advocacy and networking for agribusinesses; provision of inputs and (some) advisory services to agri-input users	Focused on (a) agribusinesses (input producers and dealers), and (b) other value chain actors of commercial crops – usually medium to larger producers	Networks: Membership fees; RAS: user fees; own profits from sale of inputs and marketing of produce
	Support of agricultural producers, often specifically focusing on the rural poor, through social mobilisation, advisory services, and capacity development	All categories of farmers, but often focused on marginalised groups (women, disabled people, people living with HIV/Aids)	Donations, programmes funded by bilateral, multilateral and private-sector donors (and in some cases by national govts)
	Generation of agricultural knowledge and technology for development; some pilot uptake activities; some 'packaging' of research outcomes for intermediate and end users; some advocacy for ARD investments	Members are researchers and agricultural research organisations and networks; target groups include RAS providers, the private sector, and farmers (but technologies are often not suitable for resource-poor farmers, and these are generally not effectively represented in ARD decision-making bodies)	N: National government budgets, often supported by bilateral or multilateral aid donors via direct budget support or sector support; S and C: some membership fees, rest from donors, some through MDTFs
	Provision of high-quality agricultural education to agricultural producers and to those aiming for a career in agricultural research or development; exchange of students and academics	Agricultural producers (often targeting youth and women); students studying agricultural sciences and related topics; colleges and universities teaching agricultural subjects	Student fees, national government contributions, donor contributions
	Provision of information to the general public about recent developments in agricultural research, provision of customised information to different target groups	Different service providers / media target different groups – farmers, RAS providers, policymakers, etc.	Advertisement (mass media), aid donors (NGOs, ICT initiatives)
	Provision of a platform for exchange of knowledge and lessons, and for coordination and joint advocacy	Open to all institutions providing RAS to farmers in Africa	First phase funded by EU (under FSTP); as of 2000 by World Bank MDTF administered by FARA

4. Overview of Asian and Pacific RAS actors and stakeholders

Category	Organisations	Visions and objectives
Farmers and farmer organisations	C/S: Asian Farmers' Association for sustainable development (AFA); SEA: ASFARNET, AFGC N: National farmer organisations and unions	AFA: <i>'We envision Asian rural farming communities where we, small men and women farmers and producers, and our families:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• are free from hunger and poverty, are happy and in good health, and live in peace and prosperity;</i> <i>• own or have access and control over the lands we till and other basic productive resources; nurture our farmlands through appropriate, integrated and environment-friendly agricultural practices and technologies, get fair market for our products, have control over our goods and services; and,</i> <i>• are self-reliant, educated and able to participate in development processes through politically strong, socially responsive, culturally sensitive and economically viable farmers' organisations.'</i>
Public-sector advisory services	C: No forum/network N: National extension systems	Not available
Private-sector advisory services	C/S: No formal forums/networks, range of multinational firms providing RAS and inputs, and contract farming / marketing	Not available
NGOs with agricultural focus / RAS provision	C: ANGOC N: Various NGOs and NGO groupings at the national level	ANGOC: <i>'Vibrant, diverse, peaceful Asian rural communities, living in harmony with nature as stewards of the earth, whose members are able to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• realise their full human potential</i> <i>• collectively chart their path to development</i> <i>• provide for their present and future needs, and</i> <i>• share equitably the fruits of their labors in community celebrations of Life.'</i>
Research and development	C: APAARI, CACAARI, AARINENA N: national agricultural research systems and institutions	APAARI: <i>'Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) in the Asia-Pacific region is effectively promoted and facilitated through novel partnerships among NARS and other related organisations so that it contributes to sustainable improvements in the productivity of agricultural systems and to the quality of the natural resource base that underpins agriculture, thereby enhancing food and nutrition security, economic and social well being of communities and the integrity of the environment and services it provides.'</i>
Agricultural training and education	C: APEAEN N: Agricultural colleges and universities L: NGOs providing RAS and farmer training	APLEAN principles and goals: <i>'The Association provides a professional focal point for all those in the Asia Pacific Region and beyond who strive for excellence in education for rural sector. It shall be guided by the Principles of Universal Collaboration, Assistance, Responsiveness and Excellence (CARE) in the development and practice of the profession it will:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Serve as an international alliance for the identification and dissemination of new developments and best practices in the fields of agriculture and environmental education;</i> <i>• Exchange technical and professional knowledge and information among its members, government leaders and society in general in improving educational research, development and practice in the fields of Agriculture and Environment.</i> <i>• Cooperate, coordinate and/ or collaborate with local, national, regional, and international organisations, institutions, and governments in searching for new directions and solutions to problems related to education in agriculture and environment.'</i>
Infomediaries/media	Various at all levels	Make agricultural information and knowledge available to agricultural decision-makers (including policymakers), RAS providers and farmers
RAS Networks and platforms	S: PIEN, APEN N: Various agricultural networks	APEN: <i>'APEN is the peak body for professionals working with people to manage change in agricultural and natural resource management communities.'</i> PIEN: <i>'To offer an efficient and effective extension service to transform the agriculture and forestry sectors to be the main driving forces for Pacific economies.'</i>

Notes: C = continental/regional level, S = sub-regional level, N = national level, L = local level

Current and envisaged services and outputs		Members and target groups	Funding
	Policy advocacy; provision of technical and managerial support to members' initiatives on sustainable agriculture, farmer empowerment, agrarian reform, marketing and trade; capacity building; and governance (maintaining and upgrading organisational systems)	Member organisations are national farmer organisations from 8 South East and East Asian countries.	Partly membership fees and partly donor support. Membership fees generally insufficient to pay for services expected and provided by forums.
	Provide advice to farmers on agricultural technologies to enhance productivity	All farmers (but not reaching the poor and marginalised)	National governments, some donor funding, some loans from WB/ADB
	Provide RAS as part of input supply or as part of contract farming agreements	Mostly commercial farmers in densely populated areas of South, South East, and East Asia	Own profits
	ANGOC: Advocacy (especially on land rights, right to food); member capacity development; exchange between members; policy analysis	ANGOC: member organisations from 10 Asian countries	Large range of aid donors, membership fees (minor source of income)
	Development of knowledge and technologies to sustainably increase agricultural production and productivity; creation of socio-economic research findings to improve service provision	Similarly to Africa, members are researchers and agricultural research organisations and networks; target groups are RAS providers, the private sector, farmers (but technologies are often not suitable for resource-poor farmers, and these are generally not effectively represented in decision-making bodies for ARD)	C: Membership fees, donors N: National governments, donors; generally lower proportion of donor funding than in Africa
		APLEAN members: agricultural education institutions N/L: RAS service providers, farmers (generally the younger, better-off and more educated ones)	C: membership fees, donors N/L: student fees, national government contributions, donors
		Various, depending on type of intermediary	Generally by donors
	APEN: Main purpose is professional networking PIEN: Mostly capacity development for RAS providers	C: Members are agricultural professionals (not only RAS providers)	APEN: Membership fees PIEN: Hosted by SPC, donor funded (CTA, EU, GTZ, etc.)

5. Overview of Latin American and Caribbean RAS actors and stakeholders

Category	Organisations	Visions and objectives
Farmers and farmer organisations	C: CLOC, LVC, COPROFAM N: Membership fees, some national government contributions, donors L: Membership fees, NGOs, donors	LVC: <i>'The principal objective of LVC is to develop solidarity and unity among small farmer organisations in order to promote gender parity and social justice in fair economic relations; the preservation of land, water, seeds and other natural resources; food sovereignty; sustainable agricultural production based on small and medium-sized producers.'</i>
Public-sector advisory services	N: National public-sector RAS	Not available
Private-sector advisory services	C: Large input providers and traders – not associated over whole region N: Range of RAS providers, some part of professional networks	Not available
NGOs with agricultural focus/ RAS provision	C: CLADES N: various groupings	CLADES mission: <i>'CLADES is a collaborative effort of Latin American NGOs to prevent the collapse of peasant agriculture by transforming it into a more sustainable and productive enterprise.'</i>
Research and development	C: FORAGRO S/N: Wide range of agricultural research centres	FORAGRO: <i>'To be recognised as an active protagonist of the regional technological innovation process in the agricultural sector, facilitating integration among its members and promoting a greater integration of agriculture into the regional and world economy, in a competitive, sustainable and socially equitable way.'</i>
Agricultural training and education	C: ALEAS N: Agricultural colleges, universities and training centres	Not found
RAS Networks and platforms	C: IICA, RIMISP	IICA: <i>'To be the leading agricultural institution in the Americas and the partner of choice by virtue of the quality of the technical cooperation it provides in response to the needs of Member States, and its contributions to sustainable agricultural development, food security and rural prosperity.'</i> RIMISP purpose: <i>'RIMISP contributes knowledge to support processes of institutional change, production innovation and the strengthening of social actors, so revitalising and transforming Latin American rural societies, as well as making them more just and equitable.'</i>

Notes: C = continental/regional level, S = sub-regional level, N = national level, L = local level

	Current and envisaged services and outputs	Members and target groups	Funding
	Advocacy for smallholder farmers; RAS on agricultural and rural issues, in particular sustainable farming methods	C: National FOs N/L: Farmers and other rural people; some FOs specifically target marginalised groups	C: Membership fees and donors N: National farmer organisations L: Farmer groups
	Facilitation of farmers' access to agricultural information and technologies	N: all agricultural producers	N: National governments
	Provision to farmers of relevant information and knowledge about technologies and markets	In principle all producers, but generally focused on commercial farmers in the more developed LAC countries (e.g. Chile, Brazil)	User fees for RAS; in some cases contracted and paid by national governments
	Assistance for member NGOs in institutional development, including topics such as management systems, personnel policies, and evaluation techniques; preparation and advocacy of improved macro-policies related to national agricultural planning.	Agricultural NGOs in LAC	Membership fees, donors
	Support of national agricultural research systems, policy advocacy, identification and update of agricultural research priorities in the region	National and regional agricultural research systems (including research institutes, NGOs, FOs, private sector etc.)	C: Members, national governments, donors
	Training of RAS providers, agricultural researchers, private-sector agribusiness entrepreneurs	Students studying agriculture to become producers, RAS providers, agricultural researchers, private-sector agribusiness entrepreneurs	Student fees, government grants, some donor funding
	IICA: Encourage and support the efforts of its Member States to achieve agricultural development and well-being for rural populations. RIMISP: networking, advocacy, research	IICA: Lead ARD agencies in the region RIMISP: NGOs, FO, research organisations, private sector	IICA: Member countries, donors RIMISP: Donors (mostly IDRC Canada)

6. Overview of European RAS actors and stakeholders

Category	Organisations	Visions and objectives
Farmers and farmer organisations	C: COPA-COGECA, EPFS, EFA, AGRICORD (international development focused) N: National-level farmer unions L: Cooperatives	COPA objectives: <i>'to examine any matters related to the development of the CAP; to represent the interests of the agricultural sector as a whole; to seek solutions which are of common interest; and to maintain and develop relations with the Community authorities and with any other representative organisations or social partners established at the European level.'</i>
Public-sector advisory services	C: none (?) N: Umbrella organisations, e.g. DAAS	N: to provide farmers with relevant advice on all aspects of agriculture (e.g. DAAS: <i>'Our role is to process and convey the latest knowledge from research institution, companies and educational institutions and others – to our clients'</i>)
Private-sector advisory services	C: Range of large input suppliers operating across Europe; COLE ACP N: Dealers and contract trader; private firms and consultants	COLE ACP mission: <i>'Our main goal is to promote the horticulture trade in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, especially with the European Union and to enhance its competitiveness. With our concern for sustainable development and poverty alleviation, we are dedicated to increasing the integration of small farmers into the supply chain. We advocate the adoption of best practices by all operators in respect of food safety, human health and environmental protection.'</i>
NGOs with agricultural focus/RAS provision	C: CONCORD EFSG N: various groupings at the national level	CONCORD EFSG: <i>'The CONCORD European Food Security Group (EFSG) aims in particular at feeding policy advocacy with good practice. The EFSG offers a representative forum of European NGOs involved in food security-related issues, and acts as a reference group in promoting a structured and regular dialogue between NGOs and the European Commission.'</i>
Research and development	C: ERA ARD, EFARD N: various research institutes and universities	EFARD objective: <i>'Strengthen the contribution of European Agricultural Research for Development to poverty alleviation, food security, and sustainable development in developing countries by providing a platform for strategic dialogue among European stakeholder groups in order to promote research partnerships between European and Southern research communities.'</i>
Agricultural training and education	C: AGRINATURA, ESEE, ICRA N: Various agricultural universities and colleges	Agrinatura vision: <i>'A vibrant European Research Area for agricultural research and education for development with sufficient critical mass to meet the common global challenges, in partnership with developing and emerging countries.'</i>
Infomediaries/media	C: various projects – e.g. InfoSys+ N: private consulting firms	InfoSys+: Collection of metadata on organisations, projects, funding opportunities, experts, news and events in ARD
RAS Networks and platforms	C: IAREE N: IALB	IAREE: Promotion of exchange of information and experiences in rural development, vocational and extension work, and the strengthening of specialised methodological knowledge on RAS

Notes: C = continental/regional level, S = sub-regional level, N = national level, L = local level

	Current and envisaged services and outputs	Members and target groups	Funding
	Advocacy on behalf of farmer organisations for farming issues in Europe and globally (EPFS only)	COPA-COGECA: national farmer organisations; EPFS: individual farmers	Membership fees, some national government and donor funding
	DAAS: Provide highly specialised advisory services which match the needs of each farmer; full-range of services at all local advisory centres – at a high quality; access to the most recent products and methods; advisory services at competitive prices owing to rational procedures; and products developed to match the actual, local requirements	Individual farmers, cooperatives; DAAS: advisory service providers	Farmers (payment for service), some 'public goods' services (e.g. disease control) paid by tax payer
	Provide inputs and RAS to farmers, provide dividends to shareholders, provide advice to members	Individual farmers, farmer organisations and cooperatives, agribusinesses	From payment for services by users
	EFSG topics related to food security: 1. Food Security as core-issue for poverty reduction and sustainable development (overall concepts and strategies); 2. The place of Food Security as a priority area of the European Development Policy; 3. The role of NGOs, quality and impact of their field programmes, their partnership with Southern Organisations; 4. Programming and execution of the EC Food Aid & Food Security Programme; 5. Coherence between European policies, Monitoring of European and international commitments	European NGOs working on agriculture, rural development, and food security	Private and corporate donations, donor contributions
		European ARD stakeholders (researchers, civil society, private sector, etc.)	Member states and EU
	Agrinatura services: Education projects for post-graduate students and young post-doctoral researchers through North-South exchanges and degree programmes; training programmes run by agricultural researchers and professors for farmers, community leaders, decision-makers, and experts; new agricultural research programmes and projects focusing on the needs of farmers and farming communities, urban areas, and emerging markets; development of innovative strategies for government policy for agriculture and food	European and overseas students; researchers, donors	Student fees, national governments, EU
		Researchers and research organisations, RAS providers, NGOs	EU
		RAS providers, farmer groups, rural development professionals	IAREE: INTERREGIO III (EU)

7. Overview of Global RAS actors and stakeholders

Category	Organisations	Visions and objectives	
Civil society – farmers, their organisations, and NGOs	IFAP, LVC	<p>IFAP objectives: to promote the well-being and stable remuneration of those living off the land; to exchange information and ideas; to take co-ordinated action to further common interests; to encourage efficiency of production, processing, and marketing of agricultural commodities; to confer with, advise, or assist international organisations, such as the FAO, on any matters affecting the interests or welfare of agricultural primary producers; to take active steps to encourage the formation and support of independent organisations of agricultural producers throughout the world; to do anything, either alone or in concert with any other persons or organisations, conducive or incidental to any of the objects above-mentioned in any part of the world.</p> <p>LVC: 'to develop solidarity and unity among small farmer organisations in order to promote gender parity and social justice in fair economic relations; the preservation of land, water, seeds and other natural resources; food sovereignty; sustainable agricultural production based on small and medium-sized producers'</p>	
Global stakeholders funding RAS	GDPRD, WB, regional development banks, IFAD	<p>GDPRD vision: 'To be a collective, recognised and influential voice, adding value to and reinforcing the goals of aid effectiveness in the agriculture and rural development strategies and actions of member agencies in support of partner countries'; mission: 'To achieve increased development assistance impact and more effective investment in rural development and agriculture.'</p> <p>WB: 'Our mission is to fight poverty with passion and professionalism for lasting results and to help people help themselves and their environment by providing resources, sharing knowledge, building capacity and forging partnerships in the public and private sectors'.</p> <p>IFAD: 'IFAD's mission is to enable poor rural people to overcome poverty'</p>	<p>GDPRD promotes the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action for sustainable results on the ground; provides a forum in which members and partners come together to build consensus on critical or emerging issues and formulate joint approaches; and adds value to the individual efforts of its members by facilitating the exchange of their development know-how.</p>
International agencies and initiatives	FAO	<p>FAO mandate and mission: 'Achieving food security for all is at the heart of FAO's efforts – to make sure people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. (...) FAO's mandate is to raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, better the lives of rural populations and contribute to the growth of the world economy.'</p>	
The private sector	Multinational agribusinesses	<p>Syngenta strategic goals: 'Drive land productivity through innovation (maximising land productivity while conserving scarce resources such as water); build leadership in plant performance (offering full crop programs and solutions to increase crop vigor and yield as well as control pests); capitalise on Seeds investment (expanding our sales of both genetically modified and conventional seeds to achieve a significant increase in Seeds profitability over the medium term); expand in emerging markets (through significant investments in people, portfolio and supply chain);</p>	
Agricultural research and education organisations	CGIAR, GFAR	<p>CGIAR vision: 'To reduce poverty and hunger, improve human health and nutrition, and enhance ecosystem resilience through high-quality international agricultural research, partnership and leadership.'</p> <p>GFAR mission: 'The Global Forum's mission is to mobilise all stakeholders involved in agricultural research and innovation systems for development, and to support their efforts to alleviate poverty, increase food security and promote the sustainable use of natural resources.'</p>	<p>CGIAR: (1) Food for People: Create and accelerate sustainable increases in the productivity and production of healthy food by and for the poor;</p>
Providing information to RAS	CTA, CABI		

Notes: C = continental/regional level, S = sub-regional level, N = national level, L = local level

Current & envisaged services and outputs	Members and target group	Funding
<p>Advocacy, information exchange and networking</p>	<p>National farmer organisations</p>	<p>Membership fees, donors</p>
<p>The sharing processes consolidate into a robust knowledge base which the Platform uses e.g. in their joint advocacy work. IFAD: 'IFAD will ensure that poor rural people have better access to, and the skills and organisation they need to take advantage of: (1) Natural resources, especially secure access to land and water, and improved natural resource management and conservation practices, (2) Improved agricultural technologies and effective production services A broad range of financial services Transparent and competitive markets for agricultural inputs and produce, (3) Opportunities for rural off-farm employment and enterprise development , (4) Local and national policy and programming processes.</p>	<p>GDPRD: IFAD, CIDA, DFID, EC, BMZ, UNCCD, SDC, Sida, WB, USAID, AfDB, ADB, ADA, AusAID, BDC, FAO, AFD, GTZ, Irish Aid, IDB, KFW, Spain, France, Italy, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, UNODC, OECD AFP, OECD SWAC, WFP, WTO</p>	<p>GDPRD: Contributions from members (in particular EC) WB, IFAD: Contributions from national governments</p>
<p>Put information within reach, share policy expertise, provide a meeting place for nations, bring knowledge to the field</p>	<p>National governments, farmer organisations, agricultural professionals</p>	<p>Contributions from member countries/ donors</p>
<p>create new businesses (bringing together Syngenta Flowers and Professional Products to serve the specific needs of Lawn & Garden customers); maintain cost efficiency (targeting annualised operational efficiency savings of \$290 million by 2011 to enable continued investment in growth initiatives); outperform the industry (building on the breadth of our business, spanning Crop Protection, Seeds, Traits and Seed Care, to provide a unique offer of integrated crop technology).'</p>	<p>Target group: Agro-enterprises/ farmers, RAS providers</p>	<p>Profits from sales</p>
<p>(2) Environment for People: Conserve, enhance and sustainably use natural resources and biodiversity to improve the livelihoods of the poor in response to climate change and other factors; (3) Policies for People: Promote policy and institutional change that will stimulate agricultural growth and equity to benefit the poor, especially rural women and other disadvantaged groups</p>	<p>GFAR: Worldwide NARS (via their regional forums), IARCs, NGOs, private-sector organisations, donor and development organisations, FAO, IFAD</p>	<p>CGIAR: donors (wide range) GFAR: member contributions and donor funding (EU)</p>

8. Meetings and events GFRAS attended in relation to its validation process

Africa

Organisation	Event	Date and place	Sector
EMRC	AgriBusiness Forum 2010	030-6/09/2010, Kampala, Uganda	Civil Society focusing on Private Sector
AFAAS, FARA	Joint AFAAS-GFRAS Side Event to the African Agriculture Science Week, Ouagadougou		Research and Public RAS
Biovision	Face-to-face meeting with 4 representatives of Biovision	11/06/2010, Zurich, Switzerland	Civil Society
EAFF	Face-to-face meeting with executive director	23/07/2010, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	Civil Society
FARA	5th African Agricultural Science Week	19-23/07/2010, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	Research
ACT	Face-to-face meeting with regional representative	24/07/2010, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	Civil Society
AGRA	Face-to-face discussion with AGRA representatives	15/04/2010, Bern, Switzerland	Civil Society

Latin America and Caribbean

Organisation	Event	Date and place	Sector
Fundaciones Produce Mexico	Telephone discussion	21 and 27/04/2010	Civil Society

Asia Pacific

Organisation	Event	Date and place	Sector
Rural Development Administration (RDA)	Face-to-face meeting with 15 RDA representatives	15/09/2010, Lindau, Switzerland	Public RAS
CACAARI	CACAARI meeting including NGOs and education	10-11/06/2010, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan	Research and Education, Civil Society
Philippines Extension Network	Face-to-face meeting with founder	06/07/2010, Manila, Philippines	Public RAS
Pacific Islands Extension Network	Meeting with representatives and email discussions with coordinator	06/07/2010, Manila, Philippines	Public RAS

Europe

Organisation	Event	Date and place	Sector
SFIAR	Face-to-face meeting with AGRIDEA	24/08/2010, Lindau, Switzerland	Research
Chambers of Agriculture Brussels Office	Face-to-face meeting	10/05/2010	Public RAS
Chambers of Agriculture Brussels Office	Telephone discussion	19/04/2010 and 19/05/2010	Public RAS
AGRIDEA	Face-to-face discussion on networking	25/05/2010, Lindau, Switzerland	Civil Society
AGRIDEA Lindau and Lausanne, German Chambers of Agriculture Brussels Office	Orientation meeting on GFRAS's role in Europe	17/08/2010, Lindau, Zurich	Public RAS/Civil Society
IALB	49 th IALB conference	12-15/09/2010, Besançon, France	Public RAS

Global and international levels

Organisation	Event	Date and place	Sector
SAI Platform	Face-to-face meeting with 2 representatives	23/09/2010, Lausanne, Switzerland	Private Sector
SDC	Dialogue on Agriculture and Food Security	15/04/2010, Bern, Switzerland	Public Sector / Donor
NRI	Face-to-face meeting with 4 representatives	13/05/2010, Chatham, UK	Research / RAS Resource Organisation
Wageningen University	Face-to-face meeting with 2 representatives, Wageningen	19/05/2010, Wageningen, The Netherlands	Research / Education
ADB, IFAD; FAO	Food Security Investment Forum	7-9/07/2010, Manila, Philippines	Public RAS
CABI Switzerland	Face-to-face meeting	14/09/2010, Delmont, Switzerland	Research/ Education
IFAP	Face-to-face meeting with Secretary General	1/07/2010, Paris, France	Civil Society
DFID	Face-to-face meeting with 2 representatives	13/05/2010, London, UK	
EUCORD	E-Mail exchange	26/05/2010	Civil Society focusing on Private Sector
GDPRD	Face-to-face meeting with 2 representatives	08/07/2010, Manila, Philippines	Donor
IFC	Telephone discussion	15/07/2010	Private Sector
IRRI	Face-to-face meeting with deputy director	13/09/2010	Research
Prolinnova (GFAR)	Face-to-face meeting with 1 representative	19/05/2010, Wageningen, The Netherlands	Research, Civil Society RAS
SAI	3rd Conference on Sustainable Agriculture: The Art of Farming	11-12/05/2010, Brussels, Belgium	Private Sector
USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, representing the UN Community for Sustainable Development (CSD) Learning Center	Telephone Conference with Director and National Programme Leader	19/04/2010	Public RAS

9. RAS issues/themes in the regions according to review of primary document

Issue in RAS	Africa	APC	LAC	Europe	global
Insufficient funding / Financing RAS	x	x		x	x
Insufficient support for networking (at all geographic levels)	x	x		x	x
Weak links between RAS and other development partners (research, donors)	x			x	x
Weak links within RAS sectors (also public and private, between geographic levels)	x	x	x	x	x
Private-sector RAS' need for support	x	x			x
Need for farmer empowerment to be strong partners, demanders	x	x			x
Weak farmer capacity to work with participatory approaches	x	x			x
Weak farmer participation in elaboration of policies	x				x
Lack of coordination of RAS approaches, tools, and experiences	x	x	x	x	x
Weak awareness of importance of RAS / Insufficient public interest in RAS	x			x	x
Policies inappropriate to RAS needs	x	x		x	x
Insufficient information and data on RAS and for RAS	x			x	x
Difficult access to knowledge about RAS	x	x		x	x
Insufficient elaboration of evidence in RAS	x			x	x
Lack of standardised methods to produce evidence					x
Insufficient/inappropriate approaches to monitoring and evaluation	x	x			x
Insufficient RAS policies / Up-scaling of RAS approaches	x				x
Insufficient implementation of RAS and approaches	x				x
Weak capacities of RAS providers / Weak RAS education and training	x	x		x	x
Unclear role of RAS	x	x			x
Lack of career opportunities and motivation for public RAS providers	x				x
Use of ICTs in RAS	x				x

Issues in rural development	Afirca	APC	LAC	Europe	global
Lack of income					X
Insufficient access to markets and marketing	X	X		X	X
Globalisation and trade as challenge and potential		X		X	X
Value chain development	X				X
Insufficient product development	X	X			X
Adding value through quality standardisation as potential				X	X
Diversification as potential				X	
Post-harvest management	X				
Insufficient private-sector development	X				X
Access to land and land property rights		X		X	X
Access to financial services	X	X			X
Access to information for rural population					X
Insufficient modernisation / use of technologies	X				
Insufficient technology		X			
Risk management / Livelihoods		X			X
Food security	X	X			X
Equity / Gender	X			X	X
Farm economics				X	
Organic farming				X	
Natural resource management / Sustainability					X
Climate change	X	X		X	
Water management				X	X
Biodiversity				X	
Soil management				X	X
Rural infrastructure	X	X			X
GMOs	X	X			

10. RAS issues/themes in the regions (by GFRAS functions) according to review of secondary document

Theme	Regional relevance				
	Africa	Asia and Pacific	Latin America and Caribbean	Europe	Global
Lack of clarity on what RAS entails, what is and what is not part of it, and how RAS relates to agricultural research and rural development (see also Section 1.2)					X
Non-conducive policy environment for RAS	X	X	X	x	X
Insufficient voice of producers and service providers in determining agricultural research, science, and technology agendas	X	X	X	x	X
Insufficient in-country investments in public funding for RAS targeting vulnerable groups / the poor	X	X	X	x	X
High dependency on external funding for RAS	X	x	x		
Inadequate rural services and infrastructure in most countries and regions	X	X	X	x	X
Lack of systematically compiled evidence that (and how) investment in RAS contributes to achieving MDGs	X	X	X	X	X
Access to RAS services by specific groups: women farmers	X	x	x	x	x
Access to RAS services by specific groups: small farmers		x	X	x	
Inadequate differentiation of needs, approaches, and messages by target group and context	X	X	X	x	X
Insufficient farmer involvement in RAS design and monitoring	X	X	X	x	X
Insufficient or inadequate access to finance and agricultural inputs	X	X	X		
RAS not adequately addressing new risks posed by climate change	X	x	x	x	x
Smallholder farmers not linked to markets	X	x	x		
Insufficient understanding of extent and effectiveness of farmer-to-farmer extension, and how this could be harnessed for RAS	x	x	x		
Insufficient or inadequate communication and coordination between main agricultural and rural development actors at all levels	x	X	X	X	X
Inadequate capacity of RAS providers – particularly in relation to market-oriented agricultural services	X	X	x	x	X

x = minor/average relevance, X = major relevance

Comment	Link to GFRAS function
Global issue hindering a clearer profiling of RAS. If defined too narrowly, RAS get lost in the 'big issue' debates on food security, climate change, etc. If defined too widely, RAS become synonymous with general agricultural and rural development and lose the focus on knowledge services.	1.
This includes not only policies directly related to agricultural production, but also wider trade, fiscal, and social policies, as well as policies related to ICTs, science, and technology.	1.
Considerable variation between types of farmers and level of farmer organisation. GCARD provided space for voices of farmer organisations, but has not yet triggered change in institutional mechanisms. Agricultural research remains largely accountable to funders and peers, rather than service providers and farmers.	1.
Poor rural people and farmers depend on public funding for RAS, as they are unable to afford privately supplied services. This is referred to in literature as 'market failure' of private-sector RAS. However, there is no clear understanding of the level of investment required in a specific context and location to provide adequate services to the poor.	1
Affects in particular SSA, where national governments have been unable or unwilling to fund RAS.	1
Agricultural advisory services are only part of rural services. They can only function if other basic needs of rural people are met, including health care, education, social services, and social safety nets such as pensions and unemployment insurance, but also services and infrastructure supporting other economic sectors in rural areas (mining, construction, manufacturing industries).	1. (also 3)
While there are evaluations of individual RAS initiatives, evidence that RAS contributes to achieving the MDGs is scattered, not systematically analysed and compiled, and not always rigorously assessed.	2.
Most RAS providers are men. Many studies show that women have less access to RAS, for cultural and (formal) educational reasons. This differs between countries depending on the overall socio-economic role of women.	2.
Particularly relevant where large and small farms coexist, and where RAS are privately delivered and funded.	2.
Despite a wealth of literature on socio-economic differentiation of rural populations and institutions, RAS often have a 'one fits all' approach to advice, instead of customising approaches to specific target groups. The concept of 'recommendation domains' exists in theory, but is hardly ever applied in practice.	2.
Depends on presence of strong farmer organisations or NGOs who advocate for a voice for farmers. This varies from country to country. Generally, resource-poor farmers have little influence.	2.
Depends on agricultural sub-sector, but is generally true for smallholder farmers, in particular in Africa	2.
This includes, e.g., decision-making systems that take into account risks, as well as crop and livestock insurances, etc.	2.
Large variations between and within countries, depending on commodities, infrastructure, location, etc.	2.
This is important because farmer-to-farmer extension is the main source of advice for the majority of smallholder farmers. Experiences with farmer-to-farmer extension are likely to offer useful lessons for institutionalised RAS in terms of relevance, approaches, and reach.	2.
Both a regional and a global issue. There are many forums at the national and regional levels, but communication and coordination (let alone harmonisation) between different actors is still very poor. In Africa, CAADP provides at least a common framework and national-level forums (but it is unclear to what extent RAS budgets are included e.g. in CAADP country compact investment plans)	3.
Capacity of service providers is generally low, with many having few of the relevant skills – in particular related to facilitation (use of participatory approaches), communication, and linking farmers to markets. Some service providers also lack basic technical skills and knowledge, or have knowledge that is outdated or irrelevant.	3.

11. RAS issues, gaps and opportunities

GFRAS function	Issues	How they are currently met
1. Providing a voice within global policy dialogues and promoting improved investment in RAS	1.1 Lack of clarity on what RAS entails, what is and what is not part of it, and how RAS relates to agricultural research and rural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many definitions for agricultural extension and agricultural advisory services...
	1.2 Non-conducive policy environment for RAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmer organisations advocate for RAS policies (as part of wider advocacy for rural and agricultural services) • L'Aquila and others endorse food security priority • CAADP process in Africa provides platform for African RAS (plus AFAAS)
	1.3 Insufficient voice of producers and service providers in determining agricultural research, science, and technology agendas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GCARD process was used by farmer organisations to make a strong statement on this • PROLINNOVA and others promote farmer innovation and collaboration between farmers and researchers
	1.4 Inadequate rural services and infrastructure in most countries and regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not currently met in a systematic way, but there are large differences between and within countries and regions
	1.5 Insufficient investments in public funding for RAS targeting vulnerable groups / the poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is some commitment to invest in agricultural and rural development (G8 etc.)

Gaps	Possible solutions and opportunities for GFRAS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ...but not for RAS. The RAS concept is still ill-defined and possibly confusing; it implies coverage of non-agricultural advisory services, but this is not the case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconsider the term 'RAS': can it be replaced with AAS? Would also lead to consistency with regional initiatives (e.g. AFAAS) • Debate with stakeholders the definition of RAS and clarify which services are included and which ones are part of the wider enabling environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globally there is no voice for RAS as such – it appears that at times RAS 'get lost' in the wider debate on food security, farmer empowerment, access to markets, NRM, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify which policies have a specific impact on RAS and which stakeholders are involved in developing these policies or advocating for their change • Support stakeholders who are already engaged in policy advocacy • Undertake or synthesise policy analyses, and feed results into high-level decision-making forums • Screen literature on evidence-based policy-making, and on how to support such a process⁷⁵
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little research is done on RAS • Farmers still largely have token representation on boards of research organisations or steering committees • No coordinated 'voice' on this from farmer organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a strong advocate for farmer and RAS provider involvement in research (particularly in prioritisation) • Identify key researchable issues related to RAS, validate with stakeholders, and advocate (e.g. among academic institutions, national research councils, and funding bodies) for these gaps to be filled • Develop capacity of and support farmer organisations and RAS providers already engaged with research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most areas suffering from poor RAS also have other gaps in service provision • Rural people do not necessarily put agricultural services on top of list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt and advocate an integrated approach to RAS, focusing on agricultural advice, but clearly showing what other services and systems need to be in place for it to operate effectively
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not clear what amount of funding (public and/or private) is required for RAS to become an effective contributor to increased food security, increased rural incomes, etc. • There is very little information available on returns to investment and value for money of different RAS approaches • There is a need for a more focused analysis of 'the role of the state' and the 'the role of the private and voluntary sectors' in RAS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate existing information about RAS evaluations • Advocate for a more systematic evaluation of RAS initiatives with RAS programmes and donors • Compile available evidence on differentiated funding mechanisms for different user groups and use evidence for advocacy

⁷⁵ See, for example, the RAPID framework developed by ODI (www.odi.org.uk/work/programmes/rapid/) and the work done by RURU (www.ruru.ac.uk/) on the use of research and evidence in policy and practice.

GFRAS function	Issues	How they are currently met
2. Supporting the development and synthesis of evidence-based approaches and policies for improving the effectiveness of RAS	2.1 Lack of systematically compiled evidence that (and how) investment in RAS contributes to achieving MDGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a large number of relevant studies on RAS, including some useful work from the 1980s and 1990s
	2.2 Inadequate differentiation of needs, approaches, and messages by target group and context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some pre-service training providers (e.g. BARI at Makerere University – see Section 2.1.1.2) include socio-economic differentiation in training
	2.3 Insufficient farmer involvement in RAS design and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmer organisations and some NGOs advocate for farmer involvement in service assessment • Some examples of innovative practices – e.g. Uganda NAADS farmer forums
3. Strengthening actors and fora in RAS through facilitating interaction and networking	3.1 Insufficient or inadequate communication and coordination between main agricultural and rural development actors at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much exchange and networking is taking place at all levels – possibly not under the ‘RAS’ label, but addressing aspects of RAS
	3.2 Inadequate capacity of RAS providers –particularly in relation to market-oriented agricultural services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many capacity development initiatives exist

Gaps	Possible solutions and opportunities for GFRAS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is little analysis available on what works and what does not work in what context, and most syntheses are written for academics rather than for policymakers or farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesise findings • Ensure a broad debate of findings in existing forums (farmer organisations, policymakers, donors) and not just among academics • Ensure relevant syntheses are available to intermediate and end users in a format accessible to them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both RAS providers and researchers still insufficiently adapt messages and approaches to their diverse target audiences and contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for inclusion of socio-economic differentiation and consideration of context as a key aspect in RAS training globally • Undertake or compile case studies showing what difference this has made in terms of impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still few examples of farmer/user involvement in RAS design and in effective performance assessment of service providers • Existing cases are not always well documented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile evidence on user involvement in design, monitoring, and evaluation of RAS • Use this evidence for advocacy with funding agencies and national and regional policymakers (including, e.g., CAADP)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is little exchange between public, private, and NGO RAS providers between countries and continents • Aim to include RAS as an agenda item at international and regional events concerned with ARD, food security, and rural development • Organise international RAS events (perhaps second-best option – GFRAS has already determined that it is generally more efficient and effective to contribute to existing events than to organise specific RAS events)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These initiatives tend to be uncoordinated; e.g. at the country level, many donors, NGOs, and research organisations train advisors, often in an ad hoc manner • Many initiatives focus only on training of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support (on a pilot basis) the development of national RAS capacity development strategies that are inclusive (addressing capacity needs at all levels – human resources, organisational systems and processes, and physical resources) • Advocate with donors for the funding of such strategies

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The purpose of this report on actors and issues in rural advisory services (RAS) is to provide the required background information and analysis that will – together with other ongoing validation activities – enable GFRAS, the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services, to develop its long-term strategies and work plans in order to fulfil its mission and functions. GFRAS was created to provide advocacy and leadership for pluralistic, demand-driven rural advisory services within the global development agenda, based on the vision that these RAS contribute to the sustainable reduction of hunger and poverty worldwide.