Breakout sessions: Briefing Paper Template

Sub-session C.3.2: Making Use of Knowledge and Advisory Systems

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<th>Context – the problems being addressed</th>
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*Capacities for knowledge and advisory systems are a critical investment area to reduce hunger and poverty.*

Agriculture is critical to the livelihoods of more than one billion small-scale farmers and other rural actors. Many challenges exist in agriculture and rural development today, including food price crises, natural resource depletion, changing and uncertain markets, environmental degradation and climate change. In spite of national and international development efforts, there is still persistent rural poverty and global hunger.

Addressing these global challenges requires an agricultural innovation systems approach with substantially enhanced use of knowledge and advisory systems by limited-resource smallholder farmers and other rural actors. This implies new roles for extension and advisory services, which are fundamental to supporting people to deal with existing and new challenges and to improve the livelihoods of rural people worldwide. New capacities are needed to fulfil these new roles. Strengthening knowledge and advisory systems requires enhancing capacities at individual, organisational, and system levels. This is a major underestimated challenge that must be met in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and future sustainable development goals.

GCARD II is focusing on ways to implement the tasks outlined in the GCARD Roadmap. The 4th priority area of the Roadmap is to “Develop the required human and institutional capacities for generation, access and effective use of agricultural knowledge in development.” The Capacity Development session of GCARD II will allow discussions on the capacities required for effective knowledge sharing and use within the complex agricultural innovation system. It will examine how these capacities can be developed through collaboration and partnership among agriculture and rural development actors at community, national, regional and global levels.

Knowledge sharing is critical to achieve sustainable agricultural development since agriculture has become more knowledge intensive. Knowledge is a critical resource for agriculture, yet is in short supply to smallholder producers and other actors in the innovation system. A large part of agricultural information remains behind barriers raised by institutions, literacy, cost, and limited capacity to appropriately generate and share it.

Sub-sessions 1 and 2 of Session C3 will address these constraints. The two sessions are complementary and run in parallel due to time constraints. Sub-session C.3.1 (*Accessing, Sharing and Transformation of Agricultural Information*) will highlight what needs to be done to address these barriers to opening access to data and information and to their effective transformation and use. Sub-session C.3.2 (*Making Use of Knowledge and Advisory Systems*) will formulate actions and partnerships necessary to address the capacity strengthening challenges, especially among advisory systems that play a key connecting role within the agricultural knowledge system.
Current activities presented and discussed in the session

The Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) was initiated in January 2010 to provide advocacy and leadership on pluralistic, demand-driven rural advisory services, with a vision of seeing advisory services effectively contributing to the sustainable reduction of hunger and poverty worldwide.

This GFRAS-led session will formulate actions and partnerships to address this capacity strengthening challenge based on the concept of “The New Extensionist.” This vision for the New Extensionist will be presented in a background report, with a briefing paper for discussion during the session.

The paper will discuss the role of advisory services within agricultural innovation systems; the importance of enhanced capacities for better performance at individual, organisational, and enabling environment level; the constraints and roles of actors at national, regional, and global level; and recommendations for action and partnerships to strengthen capacities of advisory systems at all levels.

Prior to the GCARD, the new extensionist concept has undergone a peer review, global electronic consultation, and validation exercise at the GFRAS annual meeting.

The purpose of this session is to validate the recommendations and define the next steps with regard to the GCARD Roadmap. The session will be interactive and will include an introduction to the new extensionist concept accompanied by real-life examples at national, regional, and global level. These examples will illustrate the new roles of advisory systems and innovative initiatives to address the capacity strengthening needs. The presentations will include a wide range of cases, including information on use of collective action, level of scale, and gender issues, and will be linked to the Roadmap priority area on capacity. Examples will be included from the individual, organisational, and enabling environment level. The African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS), the Latin American Network for Extension Services (RELASER), and Foro de las Américas para la Investigación y Desarrollo Tecnológico Agropecuario (FORAGRO) are among the presenters.

Following the presentations, small groups will discuss priority actions and partnerships for the next two years. The groups will then come together to report and frame the recommendations to the GCARD II plenary assembly.

Expected outcomes

1. Endorsement of the “New Extensionist” recommendations for roles and capacities needed to strengthen knowledge and advisory systems;

2. Determination of most critical gaps in advisory system capacities at all levels;

3. Agreement on WHAT actions are needed and WHO will take action at different levels for strengthening capacities for new roles in knowledge and advisory systems and thus achieving priority area #4 of GCARD Roadmap.

Commitments to collective actions in 2012-2014 (national, regional or international)

i. With existing resources

1. GFRAS will convene a global group of partners committed to take forward the declarations, interests, and intentions from various international events on extension and advisory services
by determining actions, partners, and outcomes for enhanced performance and use of knowledge and advisory systems in the context of the GCARD Roadmap and the GFRAS Strategic Framework;

2. GFRAS will produce several policy briefs from the New Extensionist in priority capacity areas.

ii. With additional support

1. GFRAS partners will implement actions for capacity strengthening in knowledge and advisory systems as a follow up to the agreed-upon recommendations in the New Extensionist document;

2. GFRAS regional networks and other partners will use the New Extensionist concept to advocate for strengthening knowledge and advisory systems at their level.

iii. With specific large scale programme investment

1. GFRAS partners will develop curricula frameworks to strengthen capacities at individual, organisational, and enabling environment level.

**Session Summary and Actions Agreed upon in Punta del Este**

**Session Summary**

Sue Canney Davison facilitated the session. Silim Nahdy, the chair, gave the context of the session specifically on extension at GCARD. Kristin Davis then gave an overview of the briefing paper, The ‘New Extensionist,’ and summarised the recommendations that the participants would be reviewing in the second half of the session. Jeff Mutimba then put the questions of what the challenge is for extension, highlighted the enduring need for technical capacity building and how this is increasing with speed of introduction of new technologies, and highlighted the role of employers. Laura Ramirez shared the structure of RELASER and FORAGRO as regional extension and research networks, respectively, and outlined the cultural, social, and economic capacities needed by extension workers. Trevor Nichols shared the activities that CABI is engaged in worldwide to strengthen existing extension services and engage in activities that bridge the high impact-low reach and low impact-high reach spectrum. K.D. Kokate then shared the extensive reach of extension both nationally and regionally of India’s KVK (Krishi Vigyan Kendra) programme that reaches down to the grassroots and panchayats through regional and local council mechanisms.

After these presentations (available [here](#)) the participants broke into groups to look at the recommendations at national, regional, and global level. A fourth group looked at how to integrated gender and ICT into the recommendations. Focussing more on monitoring and evaluation and on farmer institutional development with national farmers associations were recommended by several groups. The session decided that:

1. The recommendations for essential capacities to strengthen advisory services were in general endorsed
2. GFRAS regional networks will use the ‘New Extensionist’ to advocate for strengthening knowledge and advisory services at their level
3. GFRAS will catalyse dialogue to prioritise and implement the recommendations at all levels
4. Reaching grassroots, women and youth, and adapting ICTs are key elements
Next Steps

There are many recommendations from the ‘New Extensionist’. These need to be prioritised and owned by regional actors, and implementation steps, partners, and milestones agreed on for the next GCARD.

Facilitated electronic or face-to-face discussions will take place in early 2013 in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to prioritise action in these regions. Following this a global face-to-face meeting will take place during the first quarter of 2013 to allow further planning and implementation steps.