Call for hosts for the 12th and 13th GFRAS Annual Meetings, 2021 and 2022

Ever wanted to actively contribute to a global learning event and share your region’s and organisation’s experiences in Rural Advisory Services (RAS) with a global audience? Don’t miss to submit your application for hosting the 12th or the 13th GFRAS Annual Meeting by 29 February 2020 to ingrid.oliveira@g-fras.org.

What is the GFRAS Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting is GFRAS’ central instrument to foster exchange on rural advisory services (RAS) between stakeholders and across regions, and to discuss GFRAS strategic directions and functioning. It serves all three GFRAS strategic fields: advocacy and support for an enabling policy environment and appropriate investment in rural advisory services, professionalisation of rural advisory services, and facilitation and enhancement of effective and continuous knowledge generation and exchange.

The GFRAS secretariat organises the GFRAS Annual meeting with strategic guidance by an organising committee. Hosts of the meeting have been RELASER (2010, Chile), AFAAS (2011, Kenya), APIRAS (2012, the Philippines), GIZ (2013, Germany), RELASER (2014, Argentina), CACFRAS (2015, Kyrgyzstan), and RESCAR-AOC (2016, Cameroon), APEN (2017, Australia), RICKI and APIRAS (2018, Korea), and CAEPNet (2019, Jamaica). EUFRAS, IALB, and SEASN are co-hosting the 2020 meeting in Latvia.

Who can host the GFRAS Annual Meeting

Regional and sub-regional RAS fora, as well as networks and organisations involved in the agricultural innovation system are invited to apply to host the GFRAS Annual Meeting. The GFRAS Board selects the host based on the following criteria:

- Willingness and demonstrated demand of the potential host to hold the GFRAS Annual Meeting
- Ability to co-sponsor the GFRAS Annual Meeting at the magnitude of minimum USD 100,000 (in both funds and in-kind contribution)
- Personnel, logistical, administrative, and financial capacity of the potential host
- Strategic opportunities to promote RAS and GFRAS, e.g. by reaching to a new segment of affiliates, strengthening regional and sub-regional RAS networks, and strengthening partnerships with new organisations
- Opportunities to link regional issues for RAS to global level and degree to which participants can learn from particularities from the region
- Security for participants and political and economic stability of the host country
- Financial and logistical considerations, including simplicity in visa applications, accessibility of the place, availability of appropriate conference facilities, etc.
- Rotation of the GFRAS Annual Meeting between regions and sectors to allow global attendance from different types of participants
• Opportunity to gain synergies with other events related to rural advisory services (RAS)
• Ability to involve private sector representatives

The host does not need to fulfil all of the listed criteria, except for the co-financing capacities, which needs to be an up-front written commitment to be selected as a host.

What is involved in hosting a GFRAS Annual Meeting?

The host of the GFRAS Annual Meeting, in coordination with the GFRAS secretariat and the Annual Meeting organising committee, gives support and is responsible for organising key logistical and administrative aspects, including:

• Contribute a minimum of financial or in-kind support to the meeting and/or its organisation
• Managing the registration process (online registration facilitated by the GFRAS Secretariat)
• Organise logistics, including venue, accommodation, meals, coffee breaks, equipment, and interpretation (if relevant)
• Delegate one (or two) representative(s) from the host organisation to be part of the GAM Organising Committee
• Cover the cost of catering during the GAM for all participants (morning and afternoon refreshments, as well as lunch)
• Organising and covering the costs of the field trip – including lunch (if such a trip is deemed relevant)
• Liaise with national authorities for visa facilitation of participants, security issues, eventual participation of high-level representatives, and others
• Preparing and sponsoring information material, promotional material, and conference bags
• Help to record the meeting through minutes, photos, and video
• Provide support to organise the attendance of sponsored participants (i.e. facilitating Visa procedures)
• Help to manage finances at local level (budgeting, contracting and paying service providers, financial reporting)
• Promote the GAM at national level and encourage participation of new partners and organisations (including the private sector)

What support is offered by the GFRAS secretariat?

The GFRAS secretariat coordinates the overall organisation of the GFRAS Annual Meeting. It supports the host in the following areas

• The elaboration of the content of the meeting
• Guidance of the logistical preparation, including provision of guidelines, checklists, sample letters, and timelines to the hosts
• Global promotion of the meeting through various channels
• Registration of participants and coordination with sponsored participants
• Financial support for the event
• Ensuring reporting of the event

The collaboration between the host and GFRAS will be based on a written Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). In regards to promotion of the meeting, content, and registration, the
final division of responsibility needs to be clarified before signing the MoU, as GFRAS and the host can negotiate.

Suggested topics for the GFRAS Annual Meeting

After every Annual Meeting, GFRAS consults with its constituency to gather topics and suggestions for future meetings. The proposed topics are discussed amongst the Secretariat, and a selection is made based on a number of criteria (i.e. emergence and relevance of the topic, linkage to GFRAS strategic fields and operational plan). Future hosts are also invited to propose topics that are important in the region, as long as they can also be tackled from a global perspective.

GFRAS’ suggested topic for 2021 is:

“Models of National Extension Systems” – with the possibility – but not limited – to discuss how is extension organised in different countries, key players, actors, interactions, the role and involvement of government, certification systems (of RAS providers), policy environment, strengths and weaknesses of each system, and recommendations.

The purpose of this topic is to deepen the understanding of the fit between county context and national extension systems, and to assist countries in developing effective and functional RAS systems.

GFRAS’ suggested topics for 2022 are:

“Biodiversity: The Role of RAS in Redirecting Agriculture to Meet Global Challenges” – with the possibility – but not limited – to discuss total factor productivity (TFP), intensification vs. extensification, increase yield per hectare vs. extending land area in agricultural production, intercropping vs. mono-cropping, integrated pest management, increasing farmer resilience (food security and nutrition, financing/income, climate change impact...).

The aim here is to increase the global awareness of agriculture’s impact on biodiversity and share experiences on how nature and agriculture can coexist rather than conflict.

“Extension in Agricultural Education” – with the possibility – but not limited – to discuss 21st century skills, improving practical learning, tailoring learning and teaching to local conditions, continuous learning for extension officers (national policies and programmes), curriculum development, accreditation, skills vs. knowledge, increasing key competencies, and more.

The aim here is to discuss ways to ensure that education in agriculture extension provides the graduates with up to date knowledge and skills to meet the challenges of promoting sustainable agriculture that can provide a decent livelihood for the farming family, produce the agriculture products needed for mankind without negatively affecting biodiversity, sustainability and climate impact.

How to apply as host of the GFRAS Annual Meeting

Networks and organisations who would like to host the GFRAS Annual Meeting are invited to send a short (maximum 2 page) letter to Ingrid Oliveira, Communications Officer at the GFRAS secretariat (ingrid.oliveira@g-fras.org). It should contain information on the organisation’s/fora’s link to RAS, their motivation and ideas to host the GFRAS Annual Meeting, and their logistical capacity and experience in organising international participatory events, as well as a clear binding financial commitment. The letter should also include major advantages of the host and the location, potential additional local partners, (monetary, material, and in-kind) funding opportunities, and potential synergies that can be created. Finally, it should also outline what the added value of hosting the Annual Meeting would be for the GFRAS community as well as the region.
Please send your application letter, indicating whether you are flexible to hold either the 2021 or 2022 meeting as well as your preference of the year, by 29 February 2020. The GFRAS board will decide and communicate its choice by March 2020.

The collaboration will be based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the host and the GFRAS secretariat, which will be signed at least six months before the meeting. If the two parties cannot agree on the terms of the MoU at least five months before the meeting, the meeting can be cancelled.

In case GFRAS has to select between several good applications, capable of securing the required financial commitment, those fora and organisations who are not selected for the coming year can be considered as host of the GFRAS Annual Meeting in coming years or linked to regional RAS fora as host of their meetings.