

Training of Trainers Workshop on Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research for Development (CIARD), Amman-Jordan, 4-6 October 2011



Participants of “Training of Trainers” Workshop on Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research for Development (CIARD), Amman-Jordan, 4-6 October 2011

AARINENA with support from FAO and GFAR organized the Training of Trainers Workshop on Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research for Development

(CIARD) which was held during the period 4-6 October 2011 in Amman-Jordan. More than 20 participants representing NARS members in 13 countries (Algeria,

Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Authority, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and Yemen), and representatives from FAO, GFAR and CGIAR attended the workshop. The training workshop aimed to improve partnerships among the National Information Nodal Points (NINPs) so as to strengthen capacities and skills to improve sharing of information and knowledge for out-scaling of innovations through AARINENA-Regional Agricultural Information System (RAIS) activities, and to train the trainers who in their turn train users in their countries to enable them to improve their skills to participate better in the CIARD activities.

At the Opening Session, Dr. Ibrahim Hamdan, AARINENA Executive Secretary emphasized the vital role that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can play in the development of agriculture in the countries of the WANA region. He highlighted the valuable role of GFAR, FAO, ICARDA, BI and IFPRI in supporting NARS in WANA region through capacity building activities and establishing regional information and communication system. Representatives of GFAR, FAO, and the German Jordanian University emphasized the importance of knowledge sharing mechanisms in agricultural innovation.

The First Session dealt with Regional Information and Communication Management (ICM) status and how to strengthen RAIS and National Agricultural Information System (NAIS). Mrs. Taraneh Ebrahimi, AARINENA-RAIS Secretary and Web Manager and Dr. Magdi Latif from FAO presented a summary of activities and outputs of AARINENA-RAIS. Mrs. Ebrahimi explained the questionnaires which is a framework for Assessing ICT/ICM of NAIS/NARS. Dr. Latif presented the objectives and outputs of the Near East and North Africa Rural and Agricultural Knowledge and Information Network (NERAKIN) in the WANA region. The working sessions addressed National and Regional ICM Status, the role and mission of NINPS/NARS in the RAIS progress, as well as how they can contribute to AARINENA-RAIS. The participants divided into four groups to discuss their national ICM status and clarify the most important opportunities and challenges they are facing at national and regional levels.

At the Second Session, the participants discussed accessibility of Information- CIARD Concepts Revisited. Dr. Ajit Maru from GFAR focused on CIARD initiative and its concept and framework. Mrs. Nadia Manning Thomas from CGIAR addressed the theme on advocacy and advocacy toolkit. She highlighted that CIARD is important to the access of materials, resources and tools for advocacy and provide links for guidance and ideas. The working groups that were identified at the first session deliberated on CIARD advocacy toolbox. Dr. Rudgard Stephen from FAO clarified that the CIARD partners have developed a 'Manifesto' of the changes and Checklist of actions build on existing initiatives. Social Media and its role

in sharing and exchanging information and knowledge was another important theme addressed by Mrs. Thomas who mentioned that social media is online content created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies.

At the final session of the workshop, Dr. Ajit Maru presented the CIARD Virtual Fair and CIARD RING. He highlighted that the CIARD Virtual Fair (<http://www.ciard.net/ciard-virtual-fair>) is a facility where people and organizations can share and learn about ways to make their information and knowledge open and accessible. The CIARD RING is a global registry of web-based services that will give access to any kind of information sources pertaining to ARD. The participants discussed and adopted the following recommendations:

- The most important challenges encountered at national and regional level are: lack of institutional information strategies and policies; lack of national networks and networking; marketing and online marketing. The most important opportunities at the national levels are: good IT infrastructure and strong human resources.
- Activate the use of the new ICM tools- NINPs at national and regional levels to exchange information and knowledge within the region.
- Fulfil the national ICM questionnaires and provide it with country reports to the AARINENA-RAIS secretariat to prepare the Regional ICM Status report.
- Accept and confirm CIARD initiative as a successful and valuable effort which can support ICM activities at national levels.
- Benefit from Social Media tools as well as CIARD RING to share effectively information related to agricultural research and innovation for development (ARD)
- Advocate for the development of ICM at national and regional levels, and work together to change the attitudes of key decision makers.
- Development of NERAKIN and its important role in the region and use it as a national information and knowledge system.

The meeting elected the new ICT Steering Committee Members for 2011-2013 as follows:

- Mrs. Basma Al Manaseer (Jordan), ICT SC Chairman, and Representative of the Mashreq Sub-Region
- Mr. Hamed Al-Dhuhli (Oman), Member Representative of the Arabian Peninsula sub-region
- Mr. Otman Sebbata (Morocco), Member Representative of the Maghreb Sub-region
- Dr. Mahmud Rafea (Egypt), Member Representative of Nile Valley Sub-region
- Mrs. Taraneh Ebrahimi, Member Representative of West Asia Sub-region
- Dr. Magdi Latif, Member, FAO Representative
- Dr. Ajit Maru, Member, GFAR Representative.