



## **CALL FOR THEMATIC PAPERS TO SUPPORT THE PROMOTION OF THE PRODUCTIVITY AND COMPETITIVENESS OF SADC'S AGRICULTURE IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY**

**6 February 2007**

### **Introduction**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs and the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) of South Africa will co-host the fourth (4th) General Assembly of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) from 10 -16 June 2007 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The General Assembly will draw together representatives of FARA's constituents from all African and non-African institutions involved in African agricultural research and development. This includes the Sub-Regional Organizations (SROs) (ASARECA, CORAF/WECAO, SADC/FANR and Northern Africa - AARINENA), the agricultural research institutions, universities, NGOs and private enterprises that comprise the national agricultural research systems (NARS), advanced research institutions (ARIs), the International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCs), international NGOs, policy makers, the private sector, farmers' organizations and Africa's development partners.

The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) was established comprising major stakeholders in the South African NARS, research institutions and organizations with a regional mandate. It is responsible for all logistics and technical arrangements, in liaison with the FARA Secretariat, for the successful hosting of the 4<sup>th</sup> FARA General Assembly.

### **Call for papers from the SADC Region**

The FARA General Assembly presents a unique opportunity for the SADC community to communicate issues that are pertinent to the region. The Local Organizing Committee is calling on interested, knowledgeable people from the SADC region to contribute thematic papers addressing the FARA sub-themes noted below. The submitted papers will be reviewed by a panel of international experts. An honorarium of ZAR 6000 will be paid for the best paper in a specific sub-theme. The winning authors will be expected to be available to make presentations at the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) regional meeting (2-4 May). The papers will be distributed at the FARA General Assembly (10-16 June). Both meetings are to be held in Johannesburg.

### **Thematic Focus of the FARA General Assembly**

The theme for the General Assembly is ***Promoting the productivity and competitiveness of African agriculture in a global economy***. Ten sub-themes have been identified as follows:

- a. How can Africa identify and exploit its competitive advantages in agri-business and related industries; nationally, regionally and globally?**

- What are the conditions required for promoting pro-poor agri-business?
- How can the demands of producers (higher farm profits) and consumers (lower consumer prices) be better reconciled, e.g., through higher yields, lower post harvest losses, more efficient processing and marketing?
- What are the enabling conditions for promoting intra-regional trade within Africa, e.g., unification of health, phytosanitary and quality standards for trans-boundary trade?
- What are the enabling conditions for strengthening Africa's position in global trade, e.g., identifying and supporting products where Africa has natural advantages such as non-traditional horticultural products demanded by the African Diaspora, strengthening Africa's international negotiating capacity, collaborations with other consuming and producing developing states such as China, India and Brazil?

**b. What is needed to enable African producers to be better innovators and entrepreneurs?**

- Is best-use being made of modern information technologies and communications to enable producers to access the information they need?
- Is best-use being made of modern distance learning methods and participatory approaches to enable producers, especially smallholders in remote areas, get information when and in the form needed to develop their knowledge of the innovations they are encouraged to engage in?
- Is the technical information provided to producers matched by provision of the business skills required to cope with the risks and uncertainties that accompany innovation?

**c. How can researchers best influence and support agricultural policy development?**

- Is research playing its most appropriate role?
- Are the policy makers listening to the researchers?
- Are research data and findings being considered in policy making processes?
- Is enough attention paid on how research products are to be used and the impact they have?

**d. Are the five requirements identified by FARA, i.e.: i) a unifying framework; ii) a new approach to agricultural research for development; iii) strengthening Africa's capacity to build capacity; iv) getting research products on to the farms; and; v) making farmers and other stakeholders knowledgeable and able to access and contribute to knowledge on African agricultural development adequate?**

- What lessons have been learnt in developing and implementing the:
  - Framework for African Agricultural Productivity (FAAP)
  - The SSA Challenge Programme and other interventions (SSA CP)
  - Building Africa's Scientific and Institutional Capacity (BASIC)
  - Disseminating New Agricultural Technologies in Africa (DONATA)
  - Regional Agricultural Information and Learning Systems (RAILS)

**e. What are the optimal roles and positioning of agricultural research institutions?**

- What are the institutional arrangements for effective communication, exchange of information and action learning?
- How do we best position NARS institutions to perform their roles?
- How do we optimize the contributions of universities and NARIs?
- How do we improve the collaborative advantages of all players to maximize the returns to the total investment in agricultural research?
- Is research-working will other sectors of the economy to utilize the advances of science and technology in other industries?

**f. Are we capturing the lessons from experiences and responses to risks and disasters?**

- How do we cope with increasing frequency and amplitude of climatic shocks and other stresses such as droughts, floods, fires, pest such as locusts and diseases and conflicts?
- Is agricultural research addressing adequately the effects of HIV/AIDS?
- How do we address the causes rather than the symptoms?
- Are we communicating enough among ourselves?

- g. What are the requirements and opportunities for building adequate human and institutional capacity**
- Is there sufficient coordination and value adding between different programmes and activities, including amongst African and non-African peers and donors?
  - Are the physical resources provided, adequately used and maintained?
  - Is the demand for strengthened institutional capacity of all NARS institutions being adequately addressed, including for example, non-publicly funded civil society organizations?
  - Are we addressing the future farmers i.e. the youth in strengthening capacity?
- h. How can civil society be better mobilized for agricultural development?**
- NGOs are sometimes replacing public institutions, especially in extension and service delivery. When is this appropriate or not appropriate and what are the right balances and incentives?
  - Is there adequate accountability to stakeholders by the civil society organizations such as NGOs?
  - How can African governments benefit from these new resources?
- i. How can agricultural research contribute to pro-poor enabling land policies?**
- Where and how can current social and legal institutions assist in accessing land-based resources constraining agricultural development?
  - What are the implications for customary and formal land use policies of emigration out of agriculture, ageing farming populations, female-headed households and increasing non-food producing urban communities?
- j. How can indigenous knowledge systems, intellectual property rights, ethical, morality standards, biosafety and environmental issues be accommodated to maximize sustainable social and economic development?**

## Submission of Expressions of Interest

Authors interested in submitting papers should notify the secretariat by 26 February 2007 and provide the following details: Title of paper, sub-theme category, name(s) of author(s), full contact address: e-mail, telephone, fax number, physical address and an abstract.

Expressions of interest should be submitted to the Secretariat by e-mail to: Mr R.J. Sebola, [DRTD@nda.agric.za](mailto:DRTD@nda.agric.za) and Mara de Villiers [mara@arc.agric.za](mailto:mara@arc.agric.za). If there is a problem with e-mails kindly submit by fax to +27 12 319 6389 for the attention of Mr R. J. Sebola.

## Guidelines for full papers

The above sub-themes are purposely posed as questions so that the discussions will produce concrete suggestions for actions by FARA and its constituents. These questions are in themselves colossal topics and authors are expected to provide comprehensive responses pertaining to the SADC region so as to enable constructive dialogue at the regional meeting and the General Assembly. Issues should be pertinent to the SADC region.

The paper should not be more than 4000 words long and should be accompanied by a covering letter that provides the following information.

- a. Name(s) of the author(s).
- b. Position, affiliation and contact details to where all correspondence should be addressed.
- c. A declaration that the paper is original.

Manuscripts must be submitted in electronic format using Microsoft Word, Times New Roman, single space and 12-point font.

The paper should be presented in the following sequence: Title page with sub-theme, title, name(s) of author(s), abstract (maximum 300 words), and key words; information that should be placed in the footnote on title page, such as address(es) of author(s); introduction and aims; material and methods, results and interpretation (discussion); conclusions; acknowledgements; references; and captions to figures and tables. All pages must be numbered consecutively.

Tables and diagrams should not be incorporated in the main text and each should appear on a separate page at the end. Tables and figures should be numbered consecutively.

Where there are several authors, the covering letter should indicate clearly who is responsible for correspondence. If possible, authors should be telephonically available while the article is being processed. The contact address and telephone numbers must be mentioned if these differ from those given on the letterhead.

Full papers for consideration should be submitted on or before 10 April, by e-mail to: Mr R.J. Sebola, [DRTD@nda.agric.za](mailto:DRTD@nda.agric.za) and Mara de Villiers [mara@arc.agric.za](mailto:mara@arc.agric.za).

## Timeframe and Deadlines

- 26 February: Deadline for submissions of Expressions of Interest
- 28 February: Acknowledgement of Receipt of Expressions of Interest
- 10 April: Deadline for submission of full papers
- 20 April: Authors of best papers notified
- 2-4 May: Best paper for each sub-theme presented at the FANRPAN Regional Dialogue meeting
- 12-16 June: Presentations at FARA General Assembly.