



# Final Report for the Project

*Transforming AARINENA's Capacity as a  
Multi-Stakeholder Futuristic Regional Forum on  
Research and Innovation for Development*





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## PART ONE: General Introduction and Justification



AARINENA has been seeking to keep up-to-date with international happenings and challenges and to reform continuously and adapt to the changing needs of its constituents. Changes to the Constitution, governance, processes and performances have taken place through the period 1984 and to the present. Still, AARINENA's partners believe there is room for structured diagnosis and reform of AARINENA in light of the opportunities and threats of the future, and the role and impact AARINENA as a regional forum should have on shaping the future of the region and realizing the SDGs.

In order to realize these reform goals, AARINENA in partnership with the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR) and a generous support from the European Union has launched a collective action aiming at Strengthening AARINENA's Capacity as Multi-Stakeholder Regional Forum on Research and Innovation for Development. This collective action resulted in the development and finalization of AARINENA's new strategy and action plan toward 2035 2030, and ultimately in contributing towards reforming and strengthening agricultural research and innovation systems, enhancing multi-lateral collaboration, and influencing development in the NENA region. The strategy development process started with conducting needs assessment including all AARINENA constituents and stakeholders in order to identify the future alternatives and the strategic directions of Agriculture in NENA region and ending with the development of the strategy and its action plan in addition to the constitution changes to achieve the implement the action plan.

This report including all the documents resulted from this process such as the monitoring and evaluation plan that ensure the proper implementation of the action plan and the communication plan that enable AARINENA to include all stakeholders during the whole process. The next step will be a practical exercise including formulation and development of two Innovation platforms which will start soon. Happening that this strategy will enable AARINENA to serve its member in more efficient and productive way.



## PART TWO: AARINENA STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2030



## I. AARINENA and the Global and Regional Context

### 1.1 Introduction and Context

Among the several challenges facing the NENA region, climate change, undernourishment, food imbalance, poverty and low incomes particularly in small farming sectors, low attractiveness of agriculture for youths, gender inequalities, low agricultural productivity under scarce natural resources and food import dependency will remain central and even gain importance up to and beyond 2030. Together with these challenges, the region is experiencing a huge knowledge waste as the knowledge produced locally is not turned out into innovations and wellbeing. Considering this context, the Strategy focuses on the role of AARINENA in facilitating and mobilizing dialogue and collective actions among partners over these priority challenges of the NENA region, as well as contributing to the global SDGs. AARINENA aims to strengthen agricultural research, higher education and innovation as a lever for ensuring a better inclusive futures and well-being, not only for the NENA rural communities, but also for the urban agricultural-related ones.

Similar to corresponding regional platforms of research and innovation for development around the world, AARINENA aims to contribute mainly to the SDGs 1, 2, 5, 8, 13, 15 and 17

### 1.2 AARINENA 's Background and the need for a new strategic plan

The Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA) was established in 1985 to strengthen cooperation among national, regional and international research institutions and centres through the dissemination and exchange of information, experiences and research results.

Upon its establishment, its mission was to contribute to the enhancement of agricultural and rural development in the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) Region through fostering agricultural research and technology development and through strengthening collaboration within and outside the region. AARINENA aim has always been to achieve greater degree of self-reliance in food and agriculture, and to improve the nutritional well-being and overall welfare of



the people of the WANA Region while sustaining and further improving the productive capacity of the natural resources base.

The WANA region includes sub-regions (the Maghreb, Nile Valley and Red Sea, Mashreq, Arabian Peninsula, and Western Asia). This area covers roughly 21.6 million sq. km with some 610 million people. Population grows at an estimated annual rate of 2.1%, with a life expectancy of about 67 years. Gross National Product (GNP) in the region is around US\$ 2200 per capita.

AARINENA has always been seeking to keep up-to-date with international happenings and challenges and to reform continuously and adapt to the changing needs of its constituents. Changes to the Constitution, governance, processes and performances have taken place through the period 1984 and to the present. Still, AARINENA's partners believe there is room for structured diagnosis and reform of AARINENA in light of the opportunities and threats of the future, and the role and impact AARINENA as a regional forum should have on shaping the future of the region and realizing the SDGs.

In order to realize these reform goals, AARINENA in partnership with the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR) with financial help from the European Union has launched a collective action aiming at Strengthening AARINENA's Capacity as Multi-Stakeholder Regional Forum on Research and Innovation for Development. This collective action has resulted in the development of AARINENA's new strategy and action plan toward 2030, and ultimately in contributing towards reforming and strengthening agricultural research and innovation systems, enhancing multi-lateral collaboration, and influencing development in the NENA region.

***In this occasion we like to thank GFAR and the European Union for their continuous support to AARINENA and its activities.***



## II. Process for Developing the Strategic Plan 2019-2030

AARINENA followed an integrative transparent multi-steps reiterative process in developing its strategic plan. The following points describe this process:

### 2.1 Multi- Stakeholders Participatory Needs Assessment and Foresight

The first activity of this initiative was conducting needs assessment workshop including all AARINENA constituents and stakeholders in order to identify the future alternatives and the strategic directions of Agriculture in the NENA region. Participants identified the targeted image of AARINENA, diagnosed the current internal and external circumstances, identified the gaps and recommended ways to cross the gaps between the present and what the future they aspired for AARINENA and for the region.

### 2.2 Multi-Stakeholders Strategic Plan Development

The second activity was to gather the diverse stakeholders of AARINENA to develop together the structure and content of the strategic plan, based on the needs assessment and foresight exercises. The meeting took place in Cairo in March 2018 and the multi-stakeholders representing research, farmer organizations, universities, civil society and the private sector developed together, the vision, mission, goals, objectives, outcomes and impact of AARINENA, agreed on how the new strategy will contribute to the SDGs and agreed on the pathway to impact of the strategy.

### 2.3 Multi-Stakeholder' Review of the Draft Plan

AARINENA Secretariat – working with an international expert on the matter, produced the first draft of the strategy. This first draft was then circulated to representatives of the multi-stakeholder partners for review and comments. Once received, the comments have been integrated into the strategy.



## 2.4 Steering Committee Review and Approval

In its meeting in November 2018, AARINENA representative multi-stakeholder Steering Committee reviewed and approved the Strategy with minor changes.

## 2.5 Finalization and Publishing of the Strategic Plan and the Action Plan

The Strategy was finalised, published on the website and disseminated to partners and stakeholders in November 2018.

## III. AARINENA's Value Proposition in Implementing the New Strategy

- 3.1 Equitable and direct representation of all actors on the value chain in Agricultural Research and Innovation
- 3.2 Access to relevant global and regional knowledge platforms, expert solutions and funding opportunities for AR&I4D + capacity strengthening opportunities for partners
- 3.3 Professional connections and networking far beyond organizations' own access
- 3.4 Collective identification of challenges and collective delivery of the right solutions

## IV. The vision, mission, goals, objectives and planned actions of AARINENA

### 4.1 Vision of AARINENA

AARINENA aspires to be the hub for NENA agricultural stakeholders who strive to jointly strengthen and transform agricultural research and innovation to effectively address challenges and realize together a sustainable, inclusive and prosperous future for the region.

### 4.2 Mission of AARINENA

As a unique network of representative multi-sector partners, AARINENA promotes and facilitates the development of state-of-the-art transformational solutions that enable NENA agricultural research and innovation systems to address more effectively critical and pressing agricultural and innovation challenges. In this respect, AARINENA focuses on mobilizing



dialogue, knowledge exchange and partnerships over collective actions; empowering rural women, youth and small holder farmers; impacting policies, and strengthening capacities of NENA agricultural and innovation systems.

#### **4.3 Goals of AARINENA**

- 4.3.1 Establish AARINENA as a global knowledge platform to facilitate, mobilize and coordinate multilateral exchange and dissemination of actionable specific and transversal knowledge among stakeholders at south-south and south-north levels.
- 4.3.2 Support and enhance multi-stakeholder partnerships over collective dialogues and actions, aiming at collectively building up open systems of agricultural research and innovation that are more effective in finding innovative and applicable solutions.
- 4.3.3 Facilitate and coordinate education and capacity strengthening of various partners to enable them to communicate and interact effectively within agricultural research and innovation open systems. This will include promoting the transformation of higher education and research, and reforming research and innovation organizations and their governances in alignment with the goal of developing efficient open systems and in accordance with agreed upon AARINENA mission and goals.
- 4.3.4 Contribute to advancing rural women, youth and small holder farmers along the agricultural value chains through promoting collective actions among open agricultural R&I systems that prepare these targeted populations for employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in order to improve their income, enable them to impact relevant policies, and make rural areas attractive to them.
- 4.3.5 Strengthen the architecture of AARINENA to enable the fora to perform and realize its reviewed mission, goals and expected outcomes and impact.



## V. Objectives related to the goals of AARINENA

### 5.1 For knowledge management and dissemination Goal:

- 5.1.1 Develop mechanisms to promote the production of quality agricultural research and publications
- 5.1.2 Establish a knowledge platform, mobilize partners' participation and input into the platform, create a data base of experts to map and integrate available regional knowledge, and share and disseminate scientific breakthroughs. (type of objectives: Offering opportunities)
- 5.1.3 Promote mechanisms that support the development of institutionalized open agricultural research and innovation systems (type of objectives: to engage stakeholders in institutional change)

### 5.2 For collective actions on research and innovation for development Goal:

- 5.2.1 Mobilize existing and new networks and subnetworks of partners towards working together on regional priorities (type of objectives: Offering opportunities)
- 5.2.2 Disseminate models of open systems for R & I and of effective research/ private sector partnerships, and mobilize their scaling out (type of objectives: Offering opportunities)
- 5.2.3 Encourage major partnerships at the regional and sub-regional levels that fundraise collectively for the purpose of producing required technologically mature research deliverables to the partners in the region (type of objectives: Promoting collective actions)
- 5.2.4 Support the development of partners' national and sub-regional strategies that promote and implement agreed upon AARINENA principles and approaches (type of objectives: Promoting joint actions)



### **5.3. For education and capacity development Goal:**

- 5.3.1 Promote jointly with higher education regional organizations and relevant stakeholders an agreed model of transforming higher education to produce the comprehensive graduate who is capable of meeting present and future challenges of agriculture in the NENA region (type of objectives: Offering opportunities)
- 5.3.2 Facilitate the offering of capacity development programs to diverse partners focusing on areas of relevance to the strategy especially on the development and management of open agricultural systems for R & I. (Type of objectives: Engaging stakeholders in institutional change)
- 5.3.3 Support organizational review and reform of partners' organizations to adapt to new challenges. (Type of objectives: Engaging stakeholders in institutional change)

### **5. 4 For integrating rural women, youth and small farmers and impacting policy Goal:**

- 5. 4.1 Promote mechanisms, schemes and best practices that support the progress of rural women and youth along the value chains and their inclusion in R&I open systems, move young agricultural professionals up the career ladder and ensure their engagement in their organizations and environments (type of objectives: Offering opportunities)
- 5. 4.2 Support and promote the sharing of and scaling out of best practices that target the empowerment of rural women and youth through multiple approaches across the region (type of objectives: Offering opportunities)
- 5. 4.3 Support national partners in developing formal channels with policy makers and ensure continued visibility and communication of AARINENA principles and news through these channels (type of objectives: Offering opportunities).



### **5. 5. For strengthening the architecture of AARINENA Goal:**

5. 5.1 Ensure that the organizational structure and governance of AARINENA is fit for the implementation of its new mission and expected outcomes
5. 5.2. Institutionalize AARINENA's new direction through documenting it in pertinent strategies including AARINENA's Strategy 2019-2030, AARINENA's Communication Strategy and AARINENA's Partnership Strategy and Mechanisms together with guidelines and mechanisms for fund-raising and donor relations

## **VI. Activities to achieve the goals and objectives:**

### **6.1 Activities related to Goal 1**

- 6.1.1. Establish a focal point/organization in every sub-region that facilitates the review of draft publications by specialized experts and link partners to AARINENA specialized networks who may train and guide young researchers on publishing in referee journals
- 6.1.2. Link existing regional knowledge platforms together, or establish a new comprehensive knowledge platform
- 6.1.3. Establish regional experts' data base of different specializations
- 6.1.4. Transform AARINENA Website to attract partners and funding, meet partners' expectations in staying connected and updated, reflect a positive image of AARINENA, and increase its popularity
- 6.1.5 Initiate and strengthen the use by AARINENA of social media such as Facebook and Twitter to increase visibility and connectivity
- 6.1.6. Establish and make available virtual communication networks for partners to communicate together
- 6.1.7. Disseminate an impactful number of blogs and articles on partners' innovations through AARINENA's social media and the media of its major partners
- 6.1.8. Establish a process to reach out for success stories of partners to be published through AARINENA's media



## 6.2 Activities related to Goal 2

- 6.2.1. Reach out to at least 5 organizations a year in the region to join AARINENA in the process of increasing the number and diversity of partners
- 6.2.2. Upgrade existing sub-networks and create and operate new sub-networks such as the recommended ones on honey-bees and agribusiness. Develop clear guidelines to the establishment, operation and expected outcomes of sub-networks.
- 6.2.3. Publish blogs and post on the website collaboratively agreed models of open systems and multi-stakeholder partnerships in order to mobilize their scaling out
- 6.2.4 Identify collective actions that partners are committed to co-fund and work together to fund-raise for these collective actions, moving towards promoting the development of a special fund with partners for research and innovation projects that respond to regional or sub-regional research strategies
- 6.2.5 Provide technical advice to sub-regional and national partner organizations that request support in reviewing and developing their strategies in line with AARINENA mission. The number of supported organizations can range between 5 to 10 organizations a year. The support can be individual or through sponsored and coordinated workshops

## 6.3. Activities related to Goal 3

- 6.3.1. Organize and co-organize representative multi-stakeholder workshops to transform higher education to provide the targeted graduate
- 6.3.2. Conduct situational diagnosis of research and innovation in partner countries to target areas that need development and that are mostly related to objective 3.2
- 6.3.3. Conduct two training programs per year one on development and management of open systems and one on priority areas identified by partners during the formal needs assessment
- 6.3.4 Advise and facilitate consultancy on strategy development, management of change, governance restructuring and monitoring and evaluation.



## 6.4 Activities related to Goal 4

- 6.4.1. Initiate a program for empowerment and integration of rural women, youth and small farmers and disseminate knowledge on best practices in empowering youth and women and making agriculture attractive, through AARINENA social media
- 6.4.2. Make available, disseminate and promote the scaling out of the best practices that target the empowerment of youth and women through the region
- 6.4.3. Promote capacity development programs, available networks, certification programs, and possible effective incentives that result in inclusion of women, youth and small holder farmers
- 6.4.4 Establish and strengthen at least two communication channels at national levels with decision makers to impact the policy making.

## 6.5 Activities related to Goal 5

- 6.5.1. Transform AARINENA governance to ensure equitable representation of stakeholders involved in the value chain of Agricultural R&I, commitment and accountability, review the constitution and establish the necessary bylaws in this regards
- 6.5.2. Develop an agreed participatory approach for partners to engage and contribute to decision making in different matters of AARINENA
- 6.5.3. Develop a stable and tested fund-raising mechanism that also ensures the maximum use of available financial and other resources
- 6.5.4. Reach out and strengthen relationship with at least one major donor each year for the region and share these donor priorities within the AARINENA network.



## VII. Targeted Outcomes and Lasting Impact

### 7.1 Targeted Outcomes

- 7.1.1 AARINENA is a multi-stakeholder representative platform with equitable representation at all levels of all stakeholders involved in the value chain for R&I
- 7.1.2 Partners share a common vision of AARINENA and work together with commitment and accountability to maximize AARINENA's identified and agreed impact
- 7.1.3 Partners are producing and disseminating globally competitive knowledge and innovation through institutionalised open systems for agricultural research and innovation
- 7.1.4 Improved utilization of Information Technology in connecting partners and sub-networks through virtual knowledge platforms, making available international scientific breakthroughs and updated data bases, and increasing opportunities for collective research, innovation and development
- 7.1.5 Climate relevant research and innovation especially on resilient species and enhanced water and soil management conducted and solutions reached through collective actions within more efficient open systems for agricultural R&I
- 7.1.6 A special fund from partners in R & I in the region is promoted and initiated
- 7.1.7 Enhanced capacity of the agricultural and rural populations including researchers, students, farmers, government units and NGOs to communicate, work and deliver together
- 7.1.8 Models of Open R&I Systems promoted and adapted by R & I Systems, and R & I systems are supported in reforming their organizations to meet new challenges
- 7.1.9 Improved missions and practices of agricultural universities to support the realization of the SDGs within the context of the NENA Region
- 7.1.10 Equitable sustainable value chains formed with supportive policies involving youth, women and small farmers leading to improving their income and livelihoods and making rural areas more attractive to them with on-farm and off-farm integrated activities



- 7.1.11 AARINENA- donor relations successful through transparency and continued communication
- 7.1.12 AARINENA's visibility, membership and benefits to partners increased through its new strategy, governance reform, communication and partnership strategies and its new monitoring, learning and evaluation system.

## 7.2 Targeted Lasting Impact:

As the hub for NENA agricultural stakeholders, AARINENA effectively contributes to increased regional production of globally competitive knowledge, finding solutions to regional challenges of food scarcity and climate change through effective partnerships and use of generated knowledge, enhanced capacities of research, innovation and education systems leading to improved ability to address current and future challenges, and better income and equitable integration of rural women, youth and small holder farmers in the improved economies of their rural areas.

## VIII. AARINENA's Impact Pathway

Based on its goals and outcomes, AARINENA developed its Impact Pathway. The following graph explains and represents the Pathway.

### AARINENA's IMPACT PATHWAY

SDGs						
1 NO POVERTY	2 NO HUNGER	5 GENDER EQUALITY	8 DECENT WORK & ECON GROWTH	CLIMATE ACTION	LIFE ON LAND	PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

### IMPACT

As the hub for NENA agricultural stakeholders, AARINENA effectively contributes to increased regional production of globally competitive knowledge, finding solutions to regional challenges of food scarcity and climate change through effective partnerships and use of generated knowledge, enhanced capacities of research, innovation and education systems leading to improved ability to address current and future challenges, and better income and equitable integration of rural women, youth and small holder farmers in the improved economies of their rural areas.



## OUTCOMES

Globally competitive knowledge and innovation is produced and disseminated by AARINENA partners

Climate challenges researched and applicable solutions found through partnerships and collective actions

Enhanced capacities of AR&I systems and Educational institutions

Women, youth and small-holder farmers integrated into new value chains, and their capacities developed, leading to better econ opportunities

AARINENA is a multi-stakeholder platform with strong donor relations, increased membership, improved visibility and strong edge vis-à-vis its

Dialogues, Partnerships, Knowledge Production and Dissemination, Offering Opportunities, Collective Actions, Capacity Development, Institutional and Organizational Change, Communication, Resource Mobilization, and Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation

Goal 1: Knowledge Management, production and Dissemination

Goal 2: Partnerships and Collective Actions on Research and Innovation for Development

Goal 3: Education and Organizational Capacity Development

Goal 4: Integrating rural women, youth and small-holder farmers and impacting policy

Goal 5: Strengthening AARINENA

## MISSION

As a unique network of representative multi-sector partners, AARINENA promotes and facilitates the development of state of the art transformational solutions required to enable agricultural research and innovation systems in the NENA region to address more effectively critical and pressing challenges.

## VISION

AARINENA aspires to be the hub for NENA agricultural stakeholders who strive to jointly strengthen and transform agricultural research and innovation to effectively address challenges and realize together a sustainable, inclusive and prosperous future for the region.



## IX. STRATEGY SUCCESS ELEMENTS

For the Strategy to succeed, support components or elements needed to be developed and sustained. These support elements included the development of a Partnership strategy, a communication strategy and a monitoring, learning and evaluation system. These strategies and systems support the implementation of the strategy and the realization of its goals.

### 9.1. Partnerships for Development

Since its establishment as a Forum, AARINENA has been based on partnerships with research organizations in the NENA region over dialogues and actions to address problems and find solutions through research. AARINENA partnerships have been successful in providing unique opportunities for research organizations to learn from each other, to exchange experiences and to work together effectively and efficiently for the good of the region. With the new direction of AARINENA and the new strategy emphasizing the importance of a multi-stakeholder forum that goes beyond research along the value chain to support the provision of improved livelihood to rural populations, new types of partnerships need to be developed with new models and mechanisms to facilitate them. This is why a partnership strategy will be developed by AARINENA.

The Partnership Strategy aims to support AARINENA in engaging new partners especially those who are of comparative advantages to AARINENA and to its goals. The strategy provides mechanisms and tools to effectively work together to achieve the goals and targeted outcomes and impact of AARINENA Strategy 2019-30. The Partnership Strategy describes channels of partners' engagement with AARINENA, emphasizes the value of being partner in this regional hub for agricultural research and innovation stakeholders, and provides models of partnerships that maximize the benefit, effectiveness and value from partnerships.



The partnership strategy and its mechanisms ensure that AARINENA is multi-sectoral, representative, equitable and efficient in addressing the challenges of the region. The mechanisms also ensure that the mix of partners is the right one to achieve the goals of AARINENA and that it is applied throughout its functions and activities.

The partnership strategy sets mechanisms that realize the following:

- Efficient selection of and communication with potential partners
- Integration of new partners with the current body of partners
- Positive, interactive and productive partnership environment
- Effective dialogues and collective actions by Partners in AARINENA
- Sustainable partnerships through AARINENA ML&E system
- Clearly recognized value to Partners in being part of AARINENA
- Stronger Partner-Based Forum

## 9.2. Capacity Strengthening

One goal of AARINENA is to strengthen the capacity of research and innovation systems including higher education systems in the NENA region to produce the type of agricultural solutions, systems and individuals capable of effectively addressing the current and future challenges. In this respect, AARINENA's capacity strengthening efforts in the period 2019-2030 target the following areas:

- Preparation and skills development of young researchers in producing globally competitive research and publications that provide solutions to regional as well as global problems
- Supporting the research and innovation systems in reforming and developing their new directions and structures that will enable them to address emerging challenges in collaboration with AARINENA's partners
- Supporting universities in reforming their systems to provide transformational learning to students and develop their students in all aspects, providing not only the state of the art academic knowledge but also the employability, entrepreneurship, interpersonal and



leadership skills that allow them to integrate in the global world and contribute to the highest level in addressing regional and global issues.

- Facilitating the integration of rural women, youth and small holder farmers on the value chains through strengthening their entrepreneurial capacities and empowering them to have equitable voices with regard to the research and policies that impact them

### 9.3. Communication

Communication is essential to AARINENA as a forum made of members and partners physically located in all countries of the NENA region, and also as a forum with connectivity with international and global organizations in different parts of the world. AARINENA has always depended on its system of communication to link with its partners and to link its partners together to achieve the level of connectivity around subjects and actions it aspired to. However, with the new strategy of AARINENA and its ambitious action plan that is based mainly on partners' dialogues and collective action, also with the great advancement in the field of communication, a new communication strategy and mechanisms had proven essential for AARINENA. AARINENA's new communication strategy provides a plan and tools to:

- Develop a knowledge platform where partners input and access available knowledge and experiences
- Develop a sense of community among partners by expanding the use of virtual meeting platforms (skype, blue jeans, messaging systems, etc.) and making them available for partners to communicate and dialogue together on their priorities.
- Improving communication with partners through renovating and restructuring the current webpage to ensure better connectivity and coverage of partners activities and news, and through expanding in the use of social media in communication with the partners and among themselves
- Supporting the capacity development of partners in social media and virtual communication



#### **9.4. Promotion and communication of AARINENA Strategy**

AARINENA uses multiple communication means to promote and communicate its Strategy. These include face to face meetings, print material and virtual communication. The strategy is posted on AARINENA website; is printed in booklets together with the partnership, communication and monitoring and evaluation system and distributed to members and partners; is presented in meetings; and is summarized and put into action through blogs and webinars.

#### **9.5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning**

AARINENA's monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system aims to track strategy implementation and outputs systematically, and measure the level of progress in implementation. It also helps determine what changes may be needed in direction to ensure effective and efficient realization of the goals. AARINENA monitoring is technical, financial and impact-related, and the evaluation is periodic at the middle and the end of each of the two consecutive action plans. The monitoring uses the action plan, milestones and delivery dates as base, while the evaluation uses different data collection tools to get feedback of AARINENA stakeholders. Written documents and products provide for learning from the implementation process and sharing this learning with others.

#### **9.6. Resource Mobilization**

AARINENA has an ambitious plan to diversify its donors and increase its resources. Mapping of potential donors through the partners of AARINENA is a first step, followed by establishing channels of communication with identified key donors, using multiple channels. The action plan of AARINENA has more details in this regard. In addition to international donors, AARINENA aims at encouraging partners to provide resources to the collective actions to the forum. The goal is to one day reach a multi-donor-fund formed of contributions of the partners from the region. The communication strategy will surely be used in the effort of resource mobilization.



## 9.7. AARINENA Core Principles

In implementing its strategy, AARINENA observes the following long-standing AARINENA principles:

- Equitable access to knowledge and decision making especially to small-holder farmers
- Gender and youth empowerment
- Strengthening the capacity of education, research and innovation architecture
- Open research systems
- Knowledge sharing and open access to knowledge
- Partnerships and collective actions
- Professionalism and continued communication
- Subsidiarity, and
- Transparency

## 9.8. Governance and Management

The Constitution of AARINENA has been adapted multiple times throughout the year, proving flexibility of the major stakeholders to respond to environmental and societal changes and keenness to adapt the structure and governance of the Forum to perform its demanded role in the most effective and efficient ways. In this same spirit, AARINENA is currently considering the changing of its Constitution to allow for the participation of strategic stakeholders representing the multitude of societal sectors. This in turn will allow for the development of collective approaches and actions required for setting up efficient systems for agricultural research and innovation in the NENA region.



## X. CONCLUSIONS

AARINENA is embarking on a new era to confirm itself as the hub for agricultural stakeholders of the NENA region who strive to jointly strengthen and transform agricultural research and innovation to effectively address challenges and realize together a sustainable inclusive and prosperous future for the region. In this respect, AARINENA has developed this new Strategy 2019-2030 and asserted its role as a unique network of representative multi-stakeholder partners that promotes and facilitates state of the art transformational solutions that enable agricultural research and innovation systems to address more effectively critical and pressing issues.

AARINENA focuses on establishing a knowledge platform to facilitate knowledge exchange and production, promote partnerships among stakeholders and strengthen their individual and organizational capacities and AARINENA own capacities to address current and future challenges. In all its work, AARINENA is especially focused on improving income and livelihood of rural women, youth and small holder farmers, and making rural areas more attractive to the rural population.

AARINENA ensures the effective implementation of its strategy through a solid action plan and through a complimentary communication strategy, a partnership strategy and a monitoring, evaluation and learning system. The targeted impact is to find solutions to regional challenges of food scarcity and climate change through generating competitive regional research and publications, enhanced capacities of research and education systems, moving along the value chains to improve livelihood of marginalized communities and effective multi-stakeholder partnerships and collective actions.



## PART Three: AARINENA Results Framework/Action Plan 2019-2024



**Vision:** AARINENA aspires to be the hub for NENA agricultural stakeholders who strive to jointly strengthen and transform agricultural research and innovation to effectively address challenges and realize together a sustainable, inclusive and prosperous future for the region

**Mission:** As a unique network of representative multi-sector partners, AARINENA promotes and facilitates the development of state-of-the-art transformational solutions that enable NENA agricultural research and innovation systems to address more effectively critical and pressing agricultural and innovation challenges. In this respect, AARINENA focuses on mobilizing dialogue, knowledge exchange and partnerships over collective actions; empowering rural women, youth and small holder farmers; impacting policies, and strengthening capacities of NENA agricultural and innovation systems.

**Goal 1:** Establish AARINENA as a global knowledge platform to facilitate, mobilize and coordinate multilateral exchange and dissemination of actionable specific and transversal knowledge among stakeholders at south-south and south-north levels

Objective	Implementation Strategies/Activities	Targeted Outcomes	Milestones	Targeted dates
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2019-2024				
1.1 Develop mechanisms to promote the production of quality agricultural research and publications	1. Establish a focal point/organization in every sub-region that facilitates the review of draft publications by specialized experts, as needed, and support partners to publish in referee journals. Also, use the specialized networks to perform that role and provide training and guidance to young researchers.	1. Partners are together creating and disseminating globally competitive knowledge and innovation	1. AARINENA has supported the publication of 200 new researches on addressing priority challenges of the region  2. AARINENA organizes yearly training on scientific research and innovation publishing for young researchers	October 2024  Every year
1.2 Establish a knowledge platform, mobilize partners' participation	2. Initiate the knowledge repository through participation of partners,	2. Partners are better informed regarding the most appropriate	3. Knowledge platform established and functioning	October 2023



				October 2022
1.3	and input into the platform, create a data base of experts to map and integrate available regional knowledge, and share and disseminate scientific breakthroughs.	and link the current knowledge platform together or establish a new comprehensive one	approaches to improve research and innovation systems and to create and maintain open systems, as a result of the establishment of the repository and the dissemination and exchange of knowledge among all partners including researchers, farmers, private sector, and other sectors	4. Data base system for experts of the region established and functioning
	Promote mechanisms that support the development of institutionalized open agricultural research and innovation systems	3. Transform AARINENA Website to attract partners and funding, meet partners' expectations in staying connected and updated, reflect a positive image of	3. Partners share a common vision of AARINENA and the collaborative open-system mechanisms it promotes and work together with	1. 5. Website restructured and a specialized communication person is appointed to be responsible for
				October 2019



	<p>AARINENA and increase its popularity</p> <p>4. Initiate and strengthen the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter to increase the visibility of AARINENA, the promotion of its shared principles and mechanisms as well as the dissemination of available knowledge</p> <p>5. Establish virtual communication networks for partners to inter-communicate</p>	<p>commitment and accountability to realize AARINENA's mission and targeted impact</p> <p>4. A common understanding of the challenges to the region is developed through the knowledge shared by AARINENA, and agreement to collaborate on the most effective approaches to address the challenges is effected</p> <p>5. Improved utilization of IT to connect partners and sub-networks, and enhance data bases and</p>	<p>the updates and maintenance of the website and for the social media of AARINENA. Website used to disseminate 5 success stories per year including the analysis of the good practices used and the key elements of success they have followed</p>	
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	<p>6. Publish an impactful number of blogs and articles on partners' innovations on AARINENA social media and that of its major partners</p> <p>7. Establish a process to reach out for success stories of partners to be published through AARINENA's media &amp; explore and promote other measures and mechanisms to develop and maintain open systems of research and innovation</p>	access to knowledge for research, innovation and development		
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**Goal 2:** Support and enhance multi-stakeholder partnerships over collective dialogues and actions, aiming at collectively building up open systems of agricultural research and innovation that are more effective in finding innovative and applicable solutions

Objective	Implementation Strategies/Activities	Targeted Outcomes	Milestones	Targeted dates
2.1 Mobilize existing and new networks and subnetworks of partners in the form of innovation platforms towards working together on regional priorities	8. Reach out to at least 5 organizations a year in the region to join AARINENA in the process of increasing the number and diversity of partners  9. Upgrade existing sub-networks and create and operate new subnetworks such as the recommended ones on honey-bees and agribusiness. Develop clear	6. Collaborative research and innovation conducted by AARINENA partners provide solutions to priority challenges of climate change, and address needs for resilient species, enhanced water management among others	6. December 2019, 5 new organization that are diverse in nature have joined  7. December 2022, 20 new organizations have joined since 2019 that are representatives of multi-stakeholders	December 2019 December 2020 December 2021 December 2022 December 2023 December 2024



	guidelines to the establishment, operation and expected outcomes of sub-networks.		8. Guidelines for the establishment, operation and expected outcomes of sub-networks are collectively developed and published  9. 70% of subnetworks established are realizing their expected outcomes  10. More than 80% of subnetworks established are realizing their expected outcomes	October 2019  October 2022  October 2024
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2.2 Disseminate models of open systems for R & I and of effective research/ private sector partnerships, and mobilize their scaling out	10. Publish blogs and post on the website collaboratively agreed models of open systems and multi-stakeholder partnerships in order to mobilize their scaling out	7. Partners effectively collaborating together in open systems and the number of partners increase to realize impact on the ground	11. Blogs and AARINENA virtual publications promote and disseminate models of open systems and multi-stakeholder partnerships especially between research and the private sector	October 2019
2.3 Encourage major partnerships at the regional and sub-regional levels that fundraise collectively for the purpose of producing required technologically mature research deliverables	11. Identify collective actions that partners are committed to co-fund and work together to fund-raise for these collective actions	8. AARINENA's institutionalized approach to partners and donors is successful in providing funds for the realization of	12. Funding is provided through AARINENA donors to at least two of regional initiatives  13. A special fund is developed through	October 2022  October 2024



to the partners in the region; this is towards promoting the development of a special fund with partners for research and innovation projects that respond to regional or sub-regional research strategies		AARINENA mission and goals	contribution of partners in the region to support regional research, publications and innovation in priority areas	
2.4 Support the development of partners' national and sub-regional strategies that promote and implement agreed upon AARINENA principles and approaches	12. Provide technical advice to sub-regional and national partner organizations that request support in reviewing and developing their strategies in line with AARINENA mission. The number of supported organizations can range between 10 to 20	9. Tangible transformation in the direction of research and innovation in the region due to support given by AARINENA in the development of organizational strategies at the national and sub-regional levels	14. Strategy development of 50 partner organizations has been supported through training workshops, technical advice and linking to experts on the matter	October 2022



	organizations a year. The support can be individual or through sponsored and coordinated workshops			
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**Goal 3:** Facilitate and coordinate education and capacity strengthening of various partners to enable them to communicate and interact effectively within agricultural research and innovation open systems. This will include promoting the transformation of higher education and research, and reforming research and innovation organizations and their governances in alignment with the goal of developing efficient open systems and in accordance with agreed upon AARINENA mission and goals.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Implementation Strategies/Activities</b>	<b>Targeted Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Targeted dates</b>
3.1 Promote jointly with higher education regional organizations and relevant stakeholders an agreed model of transforming higher education to	13. Organize representative multi-stakeholder workshops to transform higher education to provide the targeted graduate	10. Improved mission and practices of agricultural universities to support the realization of the SDGs	15. Meetings held with higher education and stakeholders representatives to promote, discuss and agree on a	October 2019



produce the comprehensive graduate who is capable of meeting present and future challenges of agriculture in the NENA region			comprehensive model of transforming higher education  16. Pilots of the comprehensive model started and produced measurable outputs	October 2023
3.2 Facilitate the offering of capacity development programs to diverse partners focusing on areas of relevance to the strategy especially on the development and management of open agricultural systems for R & I.	14. Conduct situational diagnosis of research and innovation in partner countries to target areas that need development and that are mostly related to objective 3.2  15. Conduct two training programs per year one on	11. Enhanced capacity of the agricultural and rural organizations and sectors: researchers, students, government units, NGOs, farmers, etc.	17. Situational diagnosis conducted  18. Two training programs sponsored	October 2019  October of each year



	development and management of open systems and one on priority areas identified by partners during the formal needs assessment		and coordinated every year	
3.3 Support organizational review and reform of partners' organizations to adapt to new challenges	16. Advise and facilitate consultancy on strategy development, management of change, governance restructuring and monitoring and evaluation.	12. Enhanced capacity of the agricultural and rural organizations and sectors: researchers, students, government units, NGOs, farmers, etc.	19. Same as 2.4, Strategy development of 50 partner organizations has been supported through training workshops, technical advice and linking to experts on the matter	October 2022
<b>Goal 4:</b> Contribute to advancing rural women, youth and small holder farmers along the agricultural value chains through promoting collective actions among open agricultural R&I systems that prepare these targeted populations for employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in order to improve their income, enable them to impact relevant policies, and make rural areas attractive to them.				



Objective	Implementation Strategies/Activities	Targeted Outcomes	Milestones	Targeted Dates
4.1 Promote mechanisms, schemes and best practices that support the progress of rural women and youth along the value chains and their inclusion in R&I open systems, move young agricultural professionals up the career ladder and ensure their engagement in their organizations and environments	17. Initiate a program for empowerment and integration of rural women, youth and small farmers.  18. Publish blogs and web-articles on best practices in empowering youth and women in agriculture and	13. Complex value chains developed through the professional involvement of youth, women and smallholder farmers	20. A collective action is initiated to develop and implement a program of empowerment of rural women, youth and small farmers including mechanisms and schemes to progress women and youth along the value chains  21. AARINENA website and various social media disseminate	October 2022  October 2019



	making agriculture attractive		information on best practices of empowerment of agricultural women and youth	
4.2 Support and promote the sharing of and scaling out of best practices that target the empowerment of rural women and youth through multiple approaches across the region	19. Same as above with regard to publishing blogs and articles on best practices and successful mechanisms	14. Farmers involved in providing feedback and success stories through continued communication	22. Same as above. AARINENA website and various social media disseminate information on best practices of empowerment of agricultural women and youth	October 2019
4.3 Support national partners in developing formal channels with policy makers and ensure continued visibility	20. Establish and strengthen at least two communication channels at national levels with decision	15. AARINENA's link to governments strengthened and its visibility and influence	23. Develop collaboratively mechanisms to approach national	January 2019



and communication of AARINENA principles and news through these channels	makers to impact the policy making	on decision making is recognized	governments and make AARINENA and its mission and collective actions known to the governments  24. Two new communication channels are established and effective in influencing policy making by the government	December of each year starting 2019
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**Goal 5:** Strengthen the architecture of AARINENA to enable the fora to perform and realize its reviewed mission, goals and expected outcomes & impact.

5.1 Ensure that the organizational structure and governance of AARINENA is fit for the implementation of its new mission and expected outcomes	21. Transform AARINENA governance to ensure equitable representation of stakeholders, commitment and accountability, review the constitution and establish the necessary bylaws in this regards	16. AARINENA is a multi-stakeholder representative platform with equitable representation of all stakeholders in its governance and membership	25. AARINENA Strategy and Action Plan published 26. Governance reviewed including processes of election, selection and decision making to ensure equitable representation of stakeholders	December 2018 December 2019
5.2. Institutionalize AARINENA's new direction through documenting it in pertinent strategies including AARINENA's Strategy 2019-	22. Develop an agreed participatory approach for partners to engage and contribute to decision making	17. AARINENA- partner and donor relations successful through transparency and continued	27. Partnership Strategy and mechanisms developed	August 2019 October 2018



2030, AARINENA's Communication Strategy and AARINENA's Partnership Strategy and Mechanisms together with guidelines and mechanisms for fund-raising and donor relations	23. Develop a stable and tested fund-raising mechanism that also ensures the maximum use of available financial and other resources  24. Reach out and strengthen relationship with at least two major donors each year for the region and share these donor priorities within the AARINENA network	communication, and fund support is provided for the realization of AARINENA mission and goals	28. Communication Strategy Developed  29. Fund-raising Strategy and mechanisms developed  30. Two new donors approached for potential funding	August 2019  Each October, yearly
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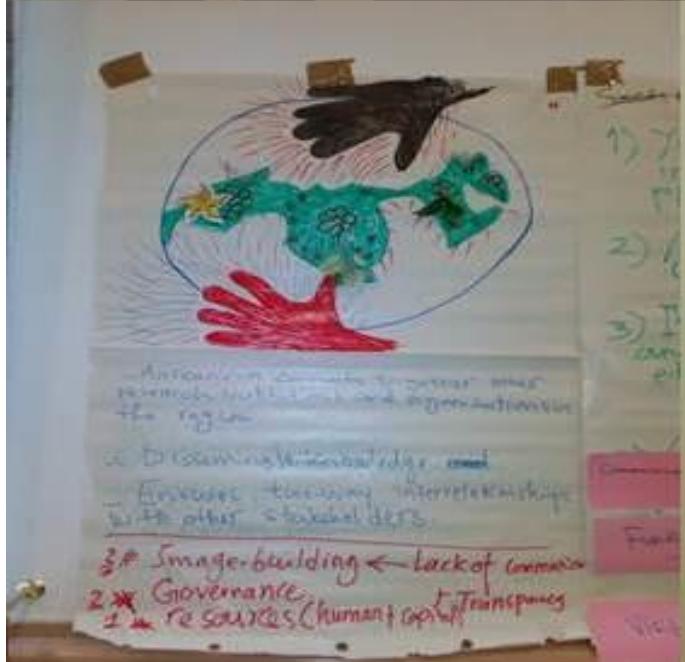
## PART FOUR: The Report Attachments

- ***Attachment1: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan***
- ***Attachment2: AARINENA Communication Plan***
- ***Attachment3: Change Management Plan***
- ***Attachment4: Innovation Platforms.***



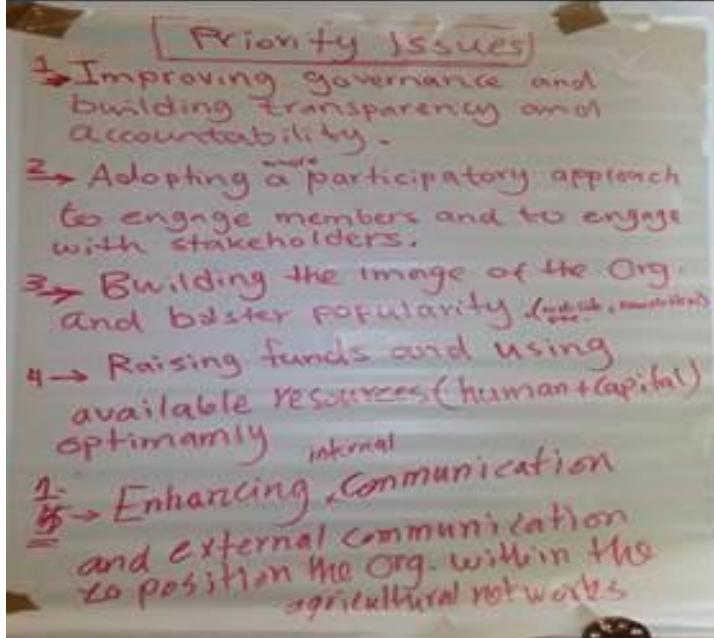
## PART FIVE: Photos







- Transform AARINENA Website to attract partners and funding, meet partners' expectations, reflect a positive image of AARINENA and increase its popularity
- Initiate and strengthen the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter to increase the visibility of AARINENA and disseminate the available knowledge
- Establish virtual communication networks for partners to inter-communicate
- Publish an impactful number of blogs and articles on partners' innovations on AARINENA social media and that of its major partners
- Establish a process to reach out for success stories of partners to be published through AARINENA's media
- Initiate the knowledge repository through participation of partners





**Our Mission**

*Unique value proposition (WWWWH) – 3 or 4 lines*

- Through its unique network of representative multi-sector partners, AARINENA provides state of the art transformational solutions on critical and pressing agricultural research and innovation issues in the NENA Region to enhance food security and nutrition, ensure effective management of natural resources & realize self-sustainable agricultural sectors in the region through mobilizing knowledge exchange & collective actions, empowering rural women, youth and small holder farmers, and strengthening agricultural and innovation systems.

