



## Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA)

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## EDITORIAL

### **New Era for AARINENA**

At the end of 2017 and the beginning of 2018 AARINENA going in a Transforming process in order to be more efficient and more transparent in serving and supporting its members. This process including which include transforming AARINENA itself and transforming the NENA Region Agriculture sector to be able to tackle the future challenges and achieve the Food Security for the increasing population of the region. This transforming process will concentrate on Innovation in Research and Higher Education in the Agriculture sector. The Research should be Stakeholders demand driven putting farmers, especially small – holders and Rural Areas farmers in the focus. Research in Agriculture should respond to the needs of farmers on rural areas and concentrate on increasing their income and livelihood. On the other hand, Higher Education should prepare the graduates for different future, it should developed new curriculum and post curriculum education materials that develop the personality of the graduate, improve his soft and professional scales, and improve his leadership and management skills.

According to the above, AARINENA with its partners, GFAR, FAO, the regional CGIAR and non-CGIAR research centers and the development organizations are taking responsibility to promote this transformation and build the national capacity of the member countries to enable them to transfer their research and education systems to respond to the farmers demand and improve their national food security and sustainable development.



## AARINENA IN ACTION

- **AARINENA Strategy Toward 2035**

Development of the AARINENA Concept Note “BRIDGING MINDS INTO THE FUTUR” A Participatory Prospective Analysis to transform NENA agriculture. Focusing on innovation through research and higher education. An initiative developed with support of the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR)

**The specific objectives of this initiative are:**

1. To develop foresight capacity and explore future scenarios for agriculture in the NENA region.
2. To establish a NENA foresight initiative for innovation through Research & Higher Education in the agricultural sector towards horizon 2035.
3. To build up the AARINENA long-term strategy for Innovation through Research and Higher Education in the agricultural sector and to develop actionable foresight by building up an operational action plan for the next decade.

**Actions Taken:**

***I. TCP Preparation***

Bridging Minds into Present and Future: Developing and Transforming MENA agriculture by Research and Innovation

**The Major goals:**

- ▶ To develop and implement good practices for transferring 2-3 mature technologies to small farmers and to capitalize on these practices in the NENA-REAS (Research, Extension and Advisory Service ) network that is managed by AARINENA.
- ▶ To develop a project document for a ten-year AARINENA operational action plan that uses research, innovation and higher education as vectors to adapt and transform agriculture in the NENA region based on participatory prospective analysis methodology.



## **II. Transforming Higher Education of NENA Region**

### **▶ Activities:**

1. Developing a partnership with: GCHERA, AARU, Universities and research centers in the region.
2. Develop a concept note for “Workshop/Conference on Transforming Higher Education of the NENA Region”

### **▶ Objective:**

1. transforming of higher education of NENEA region to be innovative and job creative

### **▶ Outputs**

1. The current situation analyzed and gaps identified,
2. New approach, success stories and good practices discussed,
3. Suitable transformation model/methodologies identified,
4. Pilot countries in which the model implemented identified

## **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

### **• 31<sup>st</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> GFAR Steering Committee Meeting, 2017 at FAO, Rome, Italy**

Dr. Mohamed Ajlouni the executive secretary of AARINENA, represented AARINENA in the GFAR Steering Committee meeting 31<sup>st</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> at FAO Headquarters in Rome during 8-9 February, 2017 and 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2017 at IFAD Headquarters in Rome respectively.

### **▶ The main Objectives of these meetings are:**

- 1) Set the agenda for global forum on agri-food research and innovation, towards helping to meet the UN’s 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- 2) Discuss GFAR Medium Term Plan 2018-21.

### **▶ Outputs**

- 1) List of Collective actions develop, AARINENA will participate on subjects including in our Strategy toward 2035 including: Foresight, Innovation platforms, Young professional, Gender, and linking Farmers to market and Extension and Advisory services activities.
- 2) New President and Vice-President elected .



- **NENA Regional Workshop on Information for PGR organized in cooperation with the ITPGRFA , 8-12 May 2017, Cairo, Egypt**

As a representative of AARINENA, the executive secretary of AARINENA participated the NENA regional workshop that was held at FAO office in Cairo, Egypt, during 8-12 May, 2017.

► **Objective are:**

- 1) Review on the Programme of work on the Global Information System of the ITPGRFA.
- 2) Discuss the status of regional cooperation and existing capacity in implementing ITPGRFA .
- 3) Review the efficiency of tools used in reporting the activities related to Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing.
- 4) Discuss the reporting System on the Implementation of the International Treaty and monitoring of the Global Plan of Action on PGRFA activities.

► **Outputs:**

- 1) Regional need assessment report developed
- 2) Capacity building work plan including a list of the needed capacity developed.

- **Regional workshop on: Models and successful stories of Research, Development Knowledge and Innovation Exchange in NENA Region, 24-25 July 2017 at İZMİR, Turkey:**

AARINENA in Cooperation with International Agricultural Research and Training Center (IARTIC)/Turkey organized a **Regional workshop on: Models and successful stories of Research development Knowledge and Innovation exchange in NENA Region**, during 24-25 July 2017 at İZMİR, Turkey. Twenty participants from FAO, ICARDA, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, Sudan, Palestine, Tunisia, Qatar and Turkey attended this workshop.

► **The workshop focused on the following objectives**

- 1) To identify “good practices” within different agricultural extension and advisory service institutions.
- 2) To reviews the objectives of extension systems in the agricultural development process.
- 3) To analyses the factors affecting the development of more pluralistic extension systems.
- 4) To discussing the different approaches within the agricultural development process in providing particular extension services to different categories of farmers, taking in consideration the growing recognition of market-driven extension System.



- 5) To discuss the role of public, private and civil society organizations to work together in providing extension services to rural farm households within a broader agricultural innovation network.

► **Outputs**

- 1) Good practices and successful cases identified.
- 2) Objective of extension and advisory services at NENA region identified.
- 3) List of the approaches in providing particular extension services suitable for the region approved.
- 4) Thematic areas for the Next AARINENA General Conference approved.

• **AARINENA Executive Committee Meetings, Jan, July, and Dec 2017**

► **Outputs**

- 1) AARINENA Work plan for 2017-2018 endorsed ,
- 2) The concept note for the strategic directions of AARINENA toward 2035 approved,
- 3) The General Conference theme will be; “Extension and technology transfer to foster adaptation and transformation of NENA Agriculture in the context of CC”.
- 4) AARINENA Work plan approved and agreed to give the priority to the following activities :
  - a. Activities aiming to develop competences: a) Red palm weevil and b) Protected agriculture.
  - b. Activities related to the multiactor systems in R&I toward a sustainable agriculture: a) Successful models of R&D and AKIS, but with merging the activity on innovation platform initially included under development of competences; b) Linking women’s to market; and c) Regional network of young professionals.
  - c. Follow up activities on the strategic and action plan for the next stage
- 5) The concept note for the strategic directions of AARINENA toward 2035 approved.
- 6) The committee recommended to give the implementation role of the strategy activities to NARS and to get benefit from other fora experience in developing the strategy
- 7) Participants discuss ICARDA’s strategy and they emphasized on the alliance between both AARINENA and ICARDA strategies to ensure the complementary among them
- 8) The committee approved to include the higher education, NGO’s, consumer’s organization. The secretary asked to find the method and/or the representative organization and to inform the committee members by e-mail.



- **AARINENA Transformation Process as Multi-Stakeholder Regional For a on Research and Innovation, started in Cooperation with GFAR.**

Letter of Agreement (LOA) between GFAR and AARINENA was signed on Sep. 2017, to *Strengthen AARINENA Capacity on Research and Innovation for Development*. This initiative was developed to build AARINENA capacity to face the future challenges and serve its members in more effective and transparent way, and to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. AARINENA Strategic directions Identify and strategy document developed.
2. Action plan developed.
3. Transformation steps and processes identified.
4. Communication plan developed.
5. Monitoring and evaluation plan developed

The first step in this initiative was the organization of the “**Foresight and Prospective Analysis workshop Towards a Leading Futuristic Agriculture Research and Innovation Sector in the NENA Region**”, which was held in 10-11 December, 2017 at Tunisia.

**The workshop aims were:**

- 1) To analyze and diagnose the current situation of the Research and innovation in the region;
- 2) To assess the different stakeholders’ needs and societal and global expectations;
- 3) To identify the futuristic image of AARINENA to integrate with global and regional expectations and stakeholders’ needs
- 4) To identify and agree on the strategic direction of AARINENA towards a vibrant futuristic and progressive Forum;
- 5) To identify AARINENA structural and content changes needed to implement the targeted reform.
- 6) To identify the needed enabling environment and how to get there.

**The main outputs for the workshop:**

1. The gaps analyzed and the path to the future developed.
2. List of strategic Priorities identify.
3. Future scenarios developed.
4. The players and responsibilities identified.

The workshop was attended many NENA Agriculture sector stakeholders including farmers, Higher Education, Regional Organizations, NGO’s, NARS, Consumers, and Young Professionals

NENA YPARD member blog-post regarding the workshop found at: <https://ypard.net/2017-12-21/ypard-egypt-participates-aarinena-and-gfar-workshop>.