

European Initiative for Agricultural Research and Development

Dr Jonathan Wadsworth, the Senior Agriculture Research adviser at the UK Department for International Development and the Chair of **EIARD** speaks to International Innovation about agricultural research and development efforts that enhance the impact of investment, and why research alone is not enough

To begin with, can you spell out the objectives of the EIARD? What needs does the initiative meet?

EIARD is a coordination mechanism for Government policies in the field of Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) of EU members states, the European Commission, Norway and Switzerland.

Coordination between donor governments is intended to enhance the impact of ARD investments in developing countries by avoiding duplication, creating synergies and complementarities, enabling mutual learning, and by increased influence in the international arena through a common European voice.

EIARD coordination focuses on

- ARD policies in the pursuit of the MDGs
- Members' investments in the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)
- Investments in strengthening global and regional ARD organisations, such as the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR), the

Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and sub-regional organisations such as ASARECA (East Africa) and CORAF/WECARD (West Africa)

- Investments in the ARD related components of Rural Development programmes funded by bilateral donors and developing country governments

The EIARD exists as a permanent informal Agricultural Research and Development (ARD) policy coordination platform. What does this entail, and what are its principal operations?

Like any other coordination platform, the main tools at the disposition of EIARD are:

- meetings (formal or virtual, e-consultations and phone conferences) of delegates to discuss and reach agreement on given issues
- specific studies (on topics of interest to the members, especially for their potential to increase alignment)
- and publication/communications (known as the 'EIARD Positions')

Can you describe some of the major achievements of the Initiative, and how they have impacted upon agricultural processes across the EU (and beyond)?

Here are three examples of our major recent achievements:

- The CGIAR reform: Coordinating the largest grouping of donors to the CGIAR (around 50 per cent of CGIAR budget), EIARD has strongly promoted the need for change in the CGIAR and contributed actively to the reform process. This has been achieved through the publication of EIARD 'positions' (results of consultation with members) and through an active participation in all the key governance bodies of the CGIAR.

As a result, the 'European views' are well represented in the new CGIAR. The research should be pro-poor, delivering more impact, and implemented through a broad partnership between CGIAR Centres, NARS, ARIS and civil society.

Europe has been instrumental in developing and implementing the concept of 'challenge programmes,' a coordinated, competitive and opened mechanism. We are therefore pleased to see that the CGIAR has taken this concept one step further by proposing to implement its renewal activities through 'Megaprogrammes.'

There is also a better representation of European interests in the Fund council, since it now hosts four European representatives instead of three in the former governance body (the ExCo). It has however been emphasised that the reform of the CGIAR is an ongoing process, still requiring a lot of time and attention from the EIARD members.

- GFAR: The global forum for agricultural research has been promoted and supported for many years mainly by members of EIARD. We are satisfied to see that this institution is now recognised, by both other donors and the CGIAR, as the legitimate apex global organisation in ARD. This was a very clear outcome of the recent global conference, the GCARD, held in Montpellier at the end of March 2010.
- Renewed international interest in Agricultural Research for Development: EIARD has worked with other institutions like the Global Donor Platform on Rural Development, to raise awareness of decision-makers on the key contribution of ARD to food security and poverty elimination.

Since the World population is projected to grow to nearly 9.2 billion by 2050, and the demand for food is projected to increase by at least 50 per cent by then, the largest increases in demand will come from developing countries, many of which are already experiencing food production insecurity. The required increases in food production (in quantity, including reduction of field and post-harvest losses, and in quality) must be achieved from land and water resources that are themselves declining in quantity and quality, a challenge made more complicated by the impacts of climate change which are largely adverse in developing and emerging economy countries. Some of the Green Revolution technologies are also approaching their limits in terms of sustainable yield increases. This context has helped to renew public investments in ARD, after two decades of serious neglect.

This advocacy work has of course been responsive to global events, like the food riots in 2008, and through the publication of various reports from European (DFID, Royal Society, OXFAM) and global institutions (World Bank, IPCC, FAO). Among the various examples of renewed interest in Agricultural research for Development, a large number of European states (Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, UK, Italy, Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain), with the support of the European Commission, have decided in 2010 to launch a large joint research initiative on 'agriculture, food security and climate change.' The EIARD Executive Secretariat has been working closely with the European Commission and the member states to nurture this initiative and is now closely accompanying its development.

How would you describe Europe's overall role and influence in agricultural research and development in a global capacity?





Dr Jonathan Wadsworth, Chair of EIARD



Europe is a major 'player' in the global ARD field and is the largest contributor to global ARD funding, supplying, for example, 40 per cent of the total funding to the CGIAR in 2008. Europe is also home to World class ARD expertise, educational institutions and research capacity.

A recent study led by Sir Gordon Conway (Centre for Environmental Policy, Imperial College, London) has established some clear evidence of European leadership. It shows that the top OECD/Development Assistance Committee countries, for bilateral aid and contributions to multilateral agencies, are the USA, Japan, France, Germany, the EC and the UK. The total funding for agriculture and food-related aid (including rural development, developmental food aid and emergency food aid), rises to a total of \$11.9 billion. Within this total, the largest donor is France, which devoted 11.7 per cent of its aid to agriculture. The second largest donor is the European Commission (EC).

EIARD members want this European contribution to the global effort in ARD to be maintained and even increased in the coming years. For instance, in its recent communication to the Council and the European Parliament the European Commission proposed that all member states "increase substantially support to demand-led agricultural research for development, extension and innovation, aiming to reach 50 per cent by 2015."

Without investments in agricultural and overall economic and social development however, research alone would be a blunt instrument in efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger.

To what extent is climate change considered a driver of change where agriculture and food production is concerned? Can you illustrate its impact, and highlight ways in which EIARD is developing and delivering strategies in mitigating the effect of changing climate patterns?

A recent study commissioned by EIARD, entitled 'The impacts of climate change on food security in Africa: A synthesis of policy issues for Europe,' has established that although climate change is a threat to all countries, developing countries are the most vulnerable. The World Bank estimates that they will have to shoulder some 75 to 80 per cent of the costs of damages caused. A global 2°C warming above pre-industrial temperatures could result in permanent reductions in GDP of 4 to 5 per cent for Africa. The African continent warmed by about 0.5°C last century. This century average annual temperatures are projected to rise by 3 to 4°C. Climate models concur that many arid areas will become drier and humid areas wetter. The impacts of climate change across Africa will vary.

- At mid- to high latitudes, crop productivity may increase slightly for local mean temperature increases of up to 1 to 3°C, depending on the crop, while at lower latitudes crop productivity is projected to decrease for even relatively small local temperature increases (1 to 2°C).
- In the tropics and subtropics in general, crop yields may fall by 10 to 20 per cent by 2050 because of warming and drying, but there are places where yield losses may be much more severe.

Nearly two thirds of Sub-Saharan Africans depend on livestock for some part of their livelihood. Climate change will affect the productivity of rain-fed crops and foliage, reduce water availability and increase widespread water shortages. These changes will increase the severity and distribution of significant crops, livestock and human diseases.

Based on this first study and on further work, EIARD will now develop a policy brief for its members on how to address the MDGs, especially food security and poverty reduction, in the context of climate change. This brief will try to integrate the interactions between mitigation and adaptation to climate change.