

Report on Dr Tim Chancellor's visit to FARA

By Aissetou Yaye, revised by Tim Chancellor

DAY 1: Monday 26, 2007

Dr Tim Chancellor from the Natural Resources Institute (NRI) of the Greenwich University (UK) has visited FARA. The objective was to discuss about NRI's support on the Inception phase activities of the SCARDA Programme. In the absence of Ralph, the person representing SCARDA was Aissetou Yaye.

The following subjects were discussed:

- Monitoring and evaluation
- Communication strategy
- RUFORUM Biennial Conference in Malawi: SCARDA presentation
- Gender issues
- Professional Facilitator for CORAF region stakeholder workshop
- Fund raising for further implementation
- Other issues

Monitoring and Evaluation

Tim Chancellor gave some background on the SCARDA Programme and described the role of NRI in supporting its development.

Concerning the SCARDA M&E, Tim informed that there are two or three persons at NRI who are ready to help in developing a proposal. The SROs may also have their own M&E specialists. Tim intends to work with Oruko (ASARECA) to put together a concept note on M&E. This concept note will be submitted this week to the SCARDA Coordination Unit.

Communication strategy

There is here also provision for NRI to help in this issue. An appointment is made for tomorrow to discuss with Anne Acosta ideas for inclusion in a communication strategy for SCARDA.

RUFORUM Biennial Conference in Malawi

Tim agreed to help me improve the SCARDA presentation, and started working on it. He himself will be presenting a document on climate change he wrote with one of his NRI colleague, Prof John Morton (an eminent Climate change specialist). Tim informed that Dr Barry Pound from NRI is invited by RUFORUM to present a paper on innovation systems. Making innovation systems visible in the SCARDA Programme would be a good idea. Barry could be the ideal person to help in doing that, particularly if he is nominated to be the NRI contact person for the ASARECA region as suggested by Oruko.

Gender issue in the SCARDA Proposal

We agreed that the gender issue and how it's going to be approached is not clearly defined and will need more attention to ensure that it is adequately addressed.

Professional Facilitator for CORAF region stakeholder workshop

NRI could provide a specialist either from its own staff or from the associated staff, but this needs to be approved by CORAF.

Fund raising for further implementation

It is clear that three year implementation will not be enough for the SCARDA programme. If FARA is willing to get other sources of funding for SCARDA, NRI could assist by identifying potential donors.

Other issues

- a) ANAFE: would like to develop another module for BASIC like the one developed by ILRI on Animal Genetics. One of ANAFE's priority topics for a new module is Risk and Uncertainty, and NRI can contribute to its development. However, the topic has to be approved by stakeholders during the consultation process.
- b) There were discussions with the FARA Head of Administration and Finance Victor. Tim wanted to get clarifications on the administrative procedures in FARA. Victor gave explanation on the procedure of contracting and invoicing and on the transfer of funds by FARA. He precised that the activities should be approved by the SCARDA Coordinator before any fund is allowed to be transferred.
- c) We called Marcel Nwalozie to make an appointment with him for discussion. Unfortunately, he will be free only in during the evening. He will meet at the hotel with Tim.
- d) Meeting with Anne Acosta tomorrow at 8:30.

Day 2: Tuesday, March 27: Discussion with Anne Acosta

Tim and I met for two hours with Anne Acosta to discuss about the SCARDA communication strategy.

Tim opened the discussions by giving a short report and highlighting the main outputs of the Inception phase inaugural workshop: the workshop was attended by a small group of champions from the three SROs, and representatives from regional organizations such as COMESA and IGAD; ANAFE and RUFORUM were also represented. This allowed getting a continental view on the SCARDA Programme. The output of the meeting was a work plan for the Inception phase. By the end of the inception phase, there should be a comprehensive institutional capacity strengthening document and strategy for implementing it. One problem encountered during the meeting was the country focus. The initial proposal put a priority in developing agricultural research capacities of countries emerging from conflicts. After discussion, it was proposed that there should be

different approaches to such countries. One of these approaches could be using the capacities of stronger countries or institutions to help build capacities in weaker ones. Tim also explained that the NRI is a technical partner of the Programme and will contribute in the scoping studies, the communication strategy and the M&E framework development.

Anne Acosta used a Power point slide to initiate the discussions about the SCARDA communication strategy (the details will be in the document she intends to send us later on today). We identified together all the stakeholders running from Donors, FARA and the SCARDA team, to end users and the private sector organizations (we should see how the private sector organizations should be involved more actively). The others matter discussed were:

- Need for undergraduate training or strengthening curricula: this could be done through developing a module like the one developed by ILRI and BASIC (the subject should however be defined during the scoping studies).
- Lobbying and advocacy would help improve the research and training policies in favor of better incentives for workers. This aspect is linked to one of the activities planed for SCARDA what is generating empirical information showing the link between increased investments in capacity strengthening and agricultural productivity and profitability.
- Communication strategy: it is not only information delivering, but it is also building trust, creating a culture of dialogue and making sharing of information rewarding.

The discussions with Anne were very productive and Anne promised to work out her table and the points discussed. Tim and I suggested her to send the document to us and to Ralph. We think that this is a good starting point for the M&E strategy framework. The table could be used by the consultants during the scoping studies to improve the communication strategy.

In the afternoon, Tim and I discussed about the SCARDA presentation and the information to include into the document. Tim gave me his presentation at the Inaugural workshop and that of Adipala to see what material could be incorporated. I shall improve the initial document and submit it to Ralph and Tim for correction.

Tim Chancellor left SCARDA at 4:30 to take the Novotel shuttle bus for the Airport.