

TERMS OF
REFERENCE

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Collective Action on
**PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH IN
FAMILY FARMING**
in the framework of GFAR





This Collective Action (CA) aims to place research and innovation systems at the service of inclusive and resilient development of family farmers towards the achievement of the SDGs and it is framed within the United Nations Decade for Family Farming 2019-2028 (UNDF). The UNDF strives to address global crises and to support family farmers in their efforts to provide sufficient, affordable and nutritious food to the growing population in healthy and sustainable ways.

The UNDF comprises a wide framework that urges to develop an enabling inclusive multi stakeholder policy environment to strengthen Family Farming (FF), improve policy and institutional frameworks, reinforce the dialogue and knowledge management, prioritize and strengthen gender and youth fields. Thus, research focused on FF should be a key component of such an enabling environment for family farming.

Participatory Research is a highly relevant approach to achieve the outcomes and vision of the UNDF; it firmly emphasizes on continuous collaboration to build mutual knowledge of the parties involved - especially the research community and family farming organisations - by scaling up farmers' skills/knowledge to the research field and ensuring complementarity for improving the quality of family farming and guaranteeing the future of sustainable agriculture and food systems.

Participatory Research recalls the benefit of family farming organizations participating in research governance, establishing long-term partnerships and co-constructing innovative solutions, always adapted to local contexts and needs. It recognizes that there must be concrete frameworks to define the involvement of farmers in all the research cycle. At present, family farming communities are facing multiple crises related to climate change- agrobiodiversity loss, natural resource degradation, climate shocks, etc. - and it is pressing for farmers and researchers to develop appropriate innovative solutions. In this sense, participatory Research is essential to define contextualized adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Farmer- or community-led (informal) processes of research is also a key element of participatory research with profound, self-reinforcing, and long-lasting impacts - especially on the capacity to innovate.



MEMBERS

The CA promotes dialogue among family farmer organizations (FFOs), research and extension agents through integrated processes and participatory approaches. Thereby, creating a space and sharing existing experiences and knowledge, encompassing all relevant scientific disciplines and types of innovations, including indigenous and local knowledge as well as community-based innovation.

The members of the Collective Action are:

- leaders of some of the main and most representative regional family farming organizations: **PROPAC**, Central Africa (Plateforme Régionale des Organisations Paysannes d'Afrique Centrale); **PIFON**, Pacific Islands (Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network); **ESAFF**, Eastern and Southern Africa (Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers' Forum); **PDRR**, Central America (Programa de Diálogo Regional Rural); **COPROFAM**, South America (Confederación de Organizaciones de Productores Familiares del MERCOSUR); **AFA**, Asia (Asian Farmers Association);
- the **PROLINNOVA** and **AGRINOVIA** research networks;
- the agricultural research network **GFAR**;
- the **World Rural Forum**.

The Collective Action stems from a dynamic, participatory and inclusive process designed in 2022-2023 within the framework of GFAR, which consolidated the CA design itself through an inclusive, dynamic and participatory process.

The various discussions and exchanges provided the ground to consider the mutual interest and benefits of expanding the capacities, knowledge and mutual understanding of both family farmers and agricultural research actors, and to foster continued knowledge sharing. In view of the progress achieved during these discussions, the participating organizations created a proposal for a Community of Practice on Participatory Research. The proposal was discussed and subsequently approved by all participating organizations.

DEFINITION

“ THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (COP) IS "A GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS OR ORGANIZATIONS WHO SHARE A COMMON CONCERN OR INTEREST IN PROMOTING PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND CO-INNOVATION WITHIN FAMILY FARMING AND WHO ASSEMBLE TO MEET BOTH INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP OBJECTIVES ”

The CoP on Participatory Research will play a key role in knowledge management and support for continuous learning on research processes specific to family farming, at all stages ensuring the active participation of all members. It is a flexible and open modality where responses to emerging needs are developed, offering the space to share good practices and create new knowledge through continuous interaction.

Within the framework of GFAR, this CoP is presented as a collective learning space for the exchange of knowledge, experiences and techniques on participatory research that contribute new perspectives and specific added value to participatory research itself.



VISION



To ensure that participatory research with/for/by family farmers and their organizations is widely extended and applied, generating political, technical, economic, social and ecological impact on the livelihoods of family farmers for the benefit of society as a whole



OBJECTIVES

The common objective of the CoP is **to work collaboratively to promote participatory research and co-innovation in which all actors**, especially but not limited to, **representatives of family farmers and research centers are involved in the whole research cycle** in order to ensure the future of sustainable family farming and food systems.

Furthermore, the following important points are also included in the objectives:

- to generate greater financial and political commitments for long-term public research (by research centers, governments, and donors);
- to strengthen and broaden dialogues, as well as influence governance towards co-research, co-innovation, and support for Family Farming-led research.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The main responsibility of the various actors that comprise the CoP is to offer their experience and knowledge of participatory research processes in family farming, as well as their expectations, and to place them at the service of the Community of Practice, participating in the different planned actions.

The principle of inclusiveness will be upheld and family farmers' organizations will be strengthened to exercise their role as important actors and collaborate with research institutions, including participation in research institutions' governance. Efforts will also be made to ensure that public policies and funding promote and strengthen research focused on the challenges and solutions offered for and with family farming.

Responsibilities will be developed around the following key points:

- **TO PROMOTE** participatory research with/for/by family farmers in their regions/countries;
- **TO FOSTER** dialogue between the different research actors, including donors, NGOs, research centers, donors, etc.;
- **TO SHARE** information on existing good practices and successful experiences in their regions/countries, as well as to convey conclusions from exchanges and dialogues to their respective areas of action;
- **TO INFLUENCE** the governance mechanisms of research institutions in order to include farmers' participation.
- **TO CONTRIBUTE** to technical and financial resource mobilization in order to support consultation and dialogue frameworks and processes dedicated to participatory research.

The Community of Practice will operate a Secretariat to facilitate dialogue and coordinate the different activities.

Guiding principles for Participatory Research in family farming

This Community of Practice includes the agreement on the guiding principles for participatory research in family farming, which are also based on the 9 principles of participatory research agreed upon by GFAR:

1

Contributing to the SDGs via **participatory processes**. The entire research cycle, including the definition of objectives, research priorities, approaches and methods are determined in a participatory manner by all key stakeholders, including specifically family farmers and the organizations that represent them, by considering different knowledge systems, worldviews and interests in the initial phases of identification, assessment and planning in order to ensure equity and inclusiveness, especially of the most vulnerable actors.

2

Transparency and easy access to information in communication networks and platforms. Encourage and enable knowledge sharing to guarantee the free flow of information.

3

Democratic distribution of rights and obligations. Responsibilities are negotiated and shared considering the advantages and competencies, preferences and obligations of each member, but also the need for inclusivity. Establishing guidelines for shared decision-making, mutual accountability, conflict resolution and the definition of internal mandates.

4

Promoting **mutual learning** through joint activities and reflection on results - both successful and unsuccessful. The challenge lies in combining mutual learning processes with short-term accountability, creating adequate space and using appropriate tools for knowledge sharing and joint analysis, with a view to building a common learning culture.

5

Improving collective research **capabilities**. Transforming the acquired individual knowledge into more lasting capabilities within the institutions and actors involved, in order to clearly define and concretize the development and training objectives through on-the-job training, among others.

6

Proper and equitable management of benefits and potential conflicts of interest. Equitable recognition for all stakeholders and fair benefit allocation to all partners, especially with regard to authorship, publications, memoranda of understanding, etc.

7

Wide **dissemination** of results to encourage their implementation. Identifying potential users and involving them from the outset, engaging them in ongoing dialogue and feedback at all stages of the research cycle by using culturally and linguistically appropriate means of communication.

8

Relevant and **scientifically credible** results. Ensuring sustainable processes, both in financial and human resources, in order to advance the strategy of a collective research designed by all partners.

9

Flexible applicability of the criteria to the **local context** of innovation and to cultural, social, practical and political circumstances.





ACTION LINES

- **KNOWLEDGE GENERATION AND COMMUNICATION:** documenting and systematizing good practices and concrete experiences, successful cases of participatory/collaborative research to disseminate them through digital and audiovisual material.
- **VALORIZING FARMER-LED RESEARCH:** collecting success stories and showcasing them nationally, regionally and globally.
- **AGREEMENT AND PROMOTION OF THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH IN FAMILY FARMING.**
- **PROMOTING DIALOGUE AND EXCHANGE:** holding meetings, informal and formal dialogues, as well as various online and face-to-face events where the added value of this type of process is demonstrated.
- **POLITICAL ADVOCACY:** scaling up actions and promoting regulatory and political frameworks conducive to the development of this type of actions. Dialogue with governments to participate in national and regional public research agendas and spaces.
- **GENERATING ADVOCACY TOOLS TO HELP INFLUENCE POLITICAL ACTORS.**
- **IDENTIFYING NEW ACTORS AND PARTNERS FOR PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH, PREFERENTIAL PARTNERS, INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.**
- **FUNDRAISING:** creating a fundraising strategy, including a donor mapping that allows scaling up the Collective Action.



SCOPE

The CoP is established as an open and global body, with representation across all 5 continents. Its scope is defined by the area of action of its members.

- **Advocacy scope:** Dialogues with national governments, regional and international authorities (EU, ASEAN, Mercosur...), international agencies such as FAO, IFAD, etc.
- **Geographical scope:** Global, with special emphasis on Central, South and East Africa, Europe, Pacific Islands, Central America, South America and Asia.



TIMELINE

The CoP will become operational as of June 2023 and its actions will be framed within the new GFAR Strategic Plan.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Collective Action on
PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH IN FAMILY FARMING
in the framework of GFAR



United Nations
Decade of
**FAMILY
FARMING**
2019-2028



WWW.RURALFORUM.ORG

WWW.GFAR.NET