



## Vision, Objectives and Expected Results

### Introduction

**AGRINATURA** is formed by NATURA, the Network of European Agricultural (Tropically and Sub-tropically oriented) Universities and Scientific Complexes Related with Agricultural Development, and ECART, the European Consortium for Agricultural Research in the Tropics in order to capitalize on their respective strengths and partner networks and to build increased synergies based on complementarities between their mandates, experiences and expertise.

**AGRINATURA** encompasses 36 universities and research organisations from 19 European countries working with agricultural research, education, training and capacity strengthening for development. As such, AGRINATURA is the major institutional voice in Europe and the main gateway between Europe and developing and emerging economy countries in the field of agricultural research and education for development.

### Vision

A vibrant European Research Area for agricultural research and education for development with sufficient critical mass to meet the common global challenges, in partnership with developing and emerging economy countries.

### Objectives

**AGRINATURA** will make substantial contributions to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Paris Declaration.

Specifically, **AGRINATURA** will play an active role in:

- Policy advocacy for agricultural research and education for development in Europe and worldwide
- Developing and strengthening strategic alliances and partnerships with and between different stakeholders in development, both in the North and in the South
- Encouraging networking and partnerships between institutions, organisations and individuals
- Organising, facilitating and implementing joint participation in European and international programmes and projects.

## **Expected Results**

AGRINATURA's activities working with agricultural research, education, training and capacity strengthening for development will lead to:

1. Facilitated access to European expertise, experience and infrastructures;
2. Improved linkages of European agricultural research and education within the global system;
3. Increased advocacy;
4. Increased synergies between research, education and development;
5. Enhanced role of small and new EU Member States
6. Increased availability of the European ARD community and expertise to the European Commission.

### **1. Facilitated access to European expertise, experience and infrastructures**

Partners from developing and emerging economy countries do not have a clear and easy entry point into European public sector ARD expertise, experience and infrastructures.

AGRINATURA represents a large pool of specialists with a wide range of skills and geographical experience that are more readily accessible. Through improved coordination and cooperation between European organisations and institutions, the potential for Europe to respond to requests for research collaboration, partnership in educational programmes or other forms of joint activities will be improved. Rather than setting up new platforms and databases, better use will be made of existing networks and initiatives.

In order to realize this potential, an effective mechanism will be established by AGRINATURA for rapidly identifying the specific needs that are sought by developing and emerging economy countries. The credibility of AGRINATURA will be enhanced by maximising the response to requests for partnerships.

### **2. Improved linkages of European agricultural research and education within the global system**

Agricultural research, education, training and capacity strengthening for development is conducted throughout the world by a diverse array of organisations and institutions at national, regional and international level. Each of these organisations and institutions have their own capabilities and comparative advantages. They increasingly work together through partnerships to capitalise on these comparative advantages, maximize synergies and reduce overlap and redundancy. Historically, advanced research organisations and universities in Europe had a significant role in fostering the emergence of the global research system, not only through their research efforts, but also through training agricultural researchers in science and technology.

AGRINATURA will support the European Forum on ARD (EFARD) in achieving its objectives and in its contribution to the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR). In bringing together the European research and higher education capabilities, AGRINATURA will seek to better serve the global ARD system and respond effectively to the evolving global research and education challenges in a demand-driven manner aimed at improving food security and alleviating poverty.

### **3. Increased advocacy**

Investment in agricultural research and education is a key factor in improving agricultural productivity and, thereby, helping to stimulate growth, generate income and reduce poverty. However, despite the proven value of achievements, international and national investment in agricultural research has been seriously declining for the past two decades. There are indications that this trend may have reversed in the last couple of years. It is, however, still far from meeting today's urgent need for food security, let alone the increased requirement for the next two decades when climate change is predicted to have adverse effects on agricultural production.

AGRINATURA will help reduce the present fragmented policy representation of the European ARD stakeholders and ensure that research, education, training and capacity strengthening for agriculture for development are kept on the European agenda. It will use its combined strength to advocate for increased and sustainable support to agricultural research, education, training and capacity strengthening for development.

AGRINATURA will actively advocate for an increase in involvement of young scientists in development work and an improvement of gender equality as well as strengthening awareness of ethics in development work. AGRINATURA will, in addition, strongly and actively advocate for an increase in investment in funding of agricultural research, education, training and capacity strengthening for development at National and European levels.

### **4. Increased synergies between research, education and development**

The separation between research and education and training is rather artificial. In all countries, closer collaboration between research, education and training is encouraged and more recently has resulted in a number of mergers of research organisations, universities and other learning institutions. Many –if not all- research projects have a training and/or education component, and graduate schools in agriculture and development have usually a strong research component. In addition, there is a growing awareness of the need for research capacity to be strengthened in developing countries, so that investments produce lasting impact. Employers are beginning to demand graduates with a wider sets of skills that better equip them for the work place. Similarly, government policies in some developing countries now encourage national agricultural research organisations to link more effectively with other organisations, including universities, in order to respond better to the needs of farmers and consumers.

Whilst considerable improvement has taken place in establishing inter-disciplinary partnerships between organisations and institutions involved in research and education, other stakeholders are not regularly involved in identifying research and education needs and implementing projects.

AGRINATURA will work closely with farmers' organisations, other civil society groups and commercial organisations in order to help bridge the gap between research and development. AGRINATURA will, furthermore, strengthen links between research, education and training and build new joint activities in agricultural research, education, training and capacity strengthening for development. Specifically, AGRINATURA will apply these efforts and activities within frameworks that address processes of institutional strengthening and change. Building on this, stronger linkages between different types of

ARD organisations will promote research that is more relevant to emerging needs and leads to greater impact. A high priority will be given to knowledge exchange between the different stakeholders, requiring coherent data and knowledge management.

## **5. Enhanced role of small and new EU Member States**

For many small as well as new EU Member States, as well as candidate countries, public efforts towards ARD are channelled through international organisations and/or the CGIAR. Significant numbers of research and education staff and students from these countries work on topics relevant to development work. However, lack of cohesion between organisation and institutions results in weak links and poor coordination. Greater recognition of these contributions is needed in order to give full recognition to the efforts of the small and new Member States and to gain political support to a proactive policy for ARD and to support them in fulfilling their political commitment to the MDGs.

AGRINATURA will contribute to a stronger and more integrated representation in terms of numbers of members and countries, large and small, including new Member States. This will in turn also support the smaller and new Member States in being more active in development work and in their efforts to contribute to the Millennium Development Goals.

## **6. Increased availability of the European ARD community and expertise to the European Commission**

There is a favourable environment at the European level which provides many opportunities for a greater mobilisation and involvement of the European ARD scientific community. However, the political representation of the ARD stakeholders in Europe is weakened by being fragmented in different organisations for research and education and training.

AGRINATURA will provide a broader representation of European agricultural research, education, training and capacity strengthening for development.

AGRINATURA will build on the closer collaboration between research and education and training that is being established in many European Member States. By representing a broad range of European ARD actors, AGRINATURA will be available for discussions with the EC regarding agricultural research, education, training and capacity strengthening for development and be in a stronger position to make available “Best Practices”, provide knowledge based advice to the EC and enhance rapid access for the EC to the best available resources in Europe.