

“Supporting consultation processes in preparation for the first GCARD conference”

Final technical report

Simone Staiger-Rivas, CIAT, June 2010

CIAT supported GFAR in designing and implementing the consultation processes related to the GCARD process and that culminated in the first Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD 2010) that was held in Montpellier in March 2010 as a first stage in what is envisaged as a progressive process of learning and feedback.

The consultations were both on line and face to face and led by the regional fora. CIAT assured an overall input into the design and facilitation of those activities, as well as active support to those implementing consultation processes in the regions.

Results

- Practical guidance provided on design of the e- and face-to-face consultations.
- Regional Fora supported in the facilitation of those consultations with the objective of assuring harmonization of focus and processes across the various consultations and introducing innovative ways of engaging stakeholders into the consultations.
- Outreach and virtual engagement action plans designed and coordinated for the consultation process as well as for GCARD.
- Social reporting activities coordinated at the GCARD2010 conference.

Detail of activities and achievements

Six regional e-consultations have been coordinated. The consultations have been joined by a total of 2000 participants. This included:

- Participation in a planning meeting in Rome, August 2009
- Contacts by phone, and via email with the regional fora teams
- Set up and sharing of a wiki with tips for facilitators and with draft emails for facilitators: <http://gfareconsultations.wikispaces.com/> which served as a baseline for all teams.
- Facilitation of the 3-week Asia-Pacific e-consultation with 120 participants, and 330 emails. Discussions moderated and summaries elaborated and shared.
- Reading and analysis of more than 1000 contributions to the 6 discussions. Key quotes shared via Twitter: <http://twitter.com/gcard2010>. 87 followers, 250 tweets and re-tweets sent.
- Publishing of blog posts on the GCARD blog: summaries, announcements, links to resources, stories. 56 posts, 30 comments, 9000 views.
- Regional analysis of type of participants, number of posts.
- Permanent contact with the regional teams as needed to support different aspects of the e-consultation process.
- Design, and set-up of an e-consultation evaluation survey. Analysis and sharing of the results.

In addition I participated actively in two face-to-face meetings:

- Facilitation of the LAC face-to-face meeting. Support in the design of the agenda and facilitation of the sessions. Interviews, photos and blog posts.
- Participation of the Asia Pacific face-to-face meeting in Bangkok. Chair of one session. Interviews.
- CIAT provided input and guidance on possible ways to conduct a second and global round of e-consultations in terms of technological stewardship and stakeholder engagement. This included suggestions of platforms, and timelines. We are currently waiting for the green light and framework of this second round of e-consultations.

- A proposal was formulated under the ICT-KM Program for the coordination and training of a social reporting team.

Social Reporting at the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development GCARD2010

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“Social reporting makes a conference space truly public”, says [David Wilcox](#), a journalist who came up with the term of “social reporter” as a useful label for a mix of social media tools and face-to-face activities. That’s exactly what a team of 10+ professionals aimed at during the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development GCARD2010 that took place in Montpellier, France between 28 and 31 May, 2010 and where it was all about communicating the need for a fresh start to agricultural research for development and including many stakeholders that weren’t able to join the face-to-face event.

After having coordinated and facilitated the [e-consultations of the GCARD process](#), I was in charge during the conference (May, 28 -31 2010) to coordinate the social media activities at <http://gcardblog.wordpress.com>. While I was used to a rather informal social media work where a group of volunteers gathers insights, captures video testimonials, takes pictures with amateur cameras, blogs and tweets along rather personal criteria of quality and substance, this time I found myself surrounded by a highly professional team of journalists ([Burness Communications](#)) and photographers. And I learnt what a difference this can make!

The perfect media mix, the right tone

Together we decided to summarize as many sessions as possible, and to use those summaries for the blog as well as for a [daily newsletter](#) that was printed out each morning for the conference participants. In addition we featured [videos](#) that had been taken in advance by GCARD in three countries around the globe (Uruguay, Bangladesh, and Kenya) and that represented excellent testimonials of stakeholders. We also included daily wrap-up posts where we highlighted the sessions through [pictures and quotes](#) and videos from the sessions. Finally we did some “[Voices from the corridor](#)” posts where we captured some feedback from behind the scene. The blog was directly fed with the [pictures](#) and [tweets](#). Twitter was used to promote the blog but also to report live from the session through quotes. [Vimeo](#) was used to store the videos.

We had some discussions about the adequate tone for our blog posts foreseeing possible tensions during the conference discussions. At the end those worries were unjustified: The openness of the debates and the friendly atmosphere that all stakeholders brought to the event made it easy for us to document it in a transparent manner. The [NGO statement](#) and the [statement of young researchers](#), as well as other critical testimonials were published. We also linked to and promoted the critical analysis that was done by the [international media](#). [Farming First](#) and [YPARD](#) partnered on twitter and through a guest blog post.

17,657 hits in 8 days

In the 4 days of the conference a team of 10 documented the event: Together we published more than 50 blog posts, and tweeted around [150 messages](#). 780 pictures have been uploaded to [Flickr](#) and 46 videos have been posted on [Vimeo](#). The GFAR Web team assured constant mirroring of the blog and the website.

In the week of the conference (including the two days that preceded and followed it) the blog received 5517 visits. From the 150 tweets that have been shared, 60 tweets have been re-

tweeted. Among the re-tweeters are @agrobiodiverse, @farmingfirst, @gcard2010, @ruralinnovation, @faonews, @unicef, several CGIAR centers, and many individuals. In the conference week the number of followers on Twitter has switched from 168 to 203. The 46 videos have been seen 1724 times. The 780 photos received a total of 10416 views, which demonstrates the need and success of visuals.