Type II partnership proposal submitted by the French Government

TITLE: **The DURAS Project:**

Promoting Sustainable Development in Southern Agricultural Research Systems

PARTNERS:

Sponsor(s) of this initiative (full contact details):

(1) AGROPOLIS, Avenue Agropolis, 34 394 Montpellier Cedex 5

Tel.: + 33 4 67 04 75 75, Fax: + 33 4 67 04 75 99, e-mail: agrolopis@agropolis.fr Website: http://www.agropolis.fr This body will act as a central point for the expression of opinions and coordination of meetings on behalf of those French organizations addressing the requests made by the Southern countries.

(2) GFAR (Global Forum on Agricultural Research): GFAR Secretariat , c/o FAO/SDR, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 ROME – Italy

Tel.: +39 06 5705 3413, Fax: +39 06 5705 3898, e-mail: GFAR-Secretariat@fao.org

Associated bodies (NGOs, local authorities, businesses, international organizations, governments, etc.):

The French Agronomic Research System works with Southern countries and includes French NGOs and companies working in collaboration with Southern countries on these issues.

(**CIRAD, IRD, INRA**, INA/PG, CNEARC, **GRET, IRAM**, and other **NGOs, PROLINOVA INTERDEV, Inter-Réseaux**, etc.).

International partners:

At international level, the project has been developed in close association with the Global Forum on Agricultural Research, which also represents the ***Southern and Northern Systèmes Nationaux de la Recherche Agricole (SNRAs) (National Agricultural Research Systems)***. It is this Forum, more commonly known as **GFAR**, which has put forward this topic of "Research and Stakeholder Development"

The Southern National Agricultural Research Systems (SNRAs) include training and research centres, producer organizations, private companies and NGOs from the South. Increased awareness has also been generated amongst European research systems and the idea has received some very favourable feedback.

DESCRIPTION:

The Southern National Agricultural Research Systems (SNRAs) have recently gained a forum in which to discuss and express their needs at world level. Within the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), they can meet their Northern partners as well as representatives of international centres. Together, they have determined that issues addressing biodiversity, ecosystem management and sustainable development (SD) must now be included in their mission.

GFAR is designed to encourage an upward structure of research systems: national, sub-regional, regional and global. These various levels also offer a place for stakeholders within societies affected by development research. This allows them to become involved in the various stages of formulating and monitoring research programmes referred to above.

The project aims to strengthen the abilities of GFAR's Southern members to implement and manage the SD research programmes they believe to be strategically important for their regions. **The activities now adopted have been selected with the involvement of GFAR's Southern members from those meeting the priorities previously set by GFAR and those now being presented at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (August 2002 in Johannesburg).** These cover:

(i) Support for coordination between GFAR and the regional fora and between the regional fora and the national systems responsible for implementing programmes. Specific initiatives will be aimed at increasing the part played by the societies as a whole in selecting directions for research.

(ii) A basis for the implementation of modern information systems for research teams and research administrators.

(iii) The implementation of a competitive fund for carrying out SD research programmes. <u>The 4 project areas were selected by Southern representatives at the Rome GFAR meeting in May 2002 and have been approved by European research system representatives.</u>

<u>Brief summary of the 4 project areas adopted for competitive funds (iii)</u>:

1. **Agricultural practices compatible with environmental conservation, such as direct sowing**: To contribute to food security and the conservation of resources through low-cost technologies focussing on labour practices that respect soil quality, increase the incorporation of organic matter and enable good carbon take-up.
   DMC = Direct Sowing, Mulch-based Agriculture and Conservation Tillage.
2. **Incorporating local knowledge in ecosystem management:** To understand, evaluate and stimulate the use of local knowledge in the sustainable exploitation of natural resources. To enable such knowledge to occupy a respected position

in the application of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

3. **Promoting agriculture in rural areas through the emergence of market-led opportunities and SME networks**: To contribute to extending the framework of agronomic research work to take account of the growing effects of liberalization and the important changes now occurring in agriculture and their consequences for rural areas, including the health of the small business communities upstream and downstream of agriculture and new areas of opportunity for producers.
4. **Selecting varieties suited to addressing the priorities of food security and poverty:** To contribute to food security and the conservation of resources through environmental conservation and the exploitation of agrobiodiversity, especially through the use of plant genetic resources: varietal selection, biotechnology, seed technology and increasing the use of conservation and management practices in-situ and ex-situ.

Expected results for project area 1:

- The construction of production systems based on DMC and adapted to different ecological zones.
- Dissemination of these agro-ecological innovations into areas where the potential for local adaptation exists.

Expected results for project area 2:

- An inventory of technical and social innovations spontaneously initiated by producers.
- The development of information processes that facilitate the exchange and retention of these experiences by local communities and research systems. Distribution of the most promising innovations to other sites and other communities.

Expected results for project area 3:

- Exchanges of experience and learning methods relating to agricultural multifunctionality.
- Enhancement of the relationships involved in the innate interdependence that exists between agriculture and agricultural supplies, harvesting and transformation.
- Facilitation of the emergence of SMEs and SMIs of different types in developing countries and the encouragement of those businesses to engage in research.

Expected results for project area 4:

- Genetic characterization of tropical plants offering financial potential for local communities suffering from nutritional deficiencies.
- Increasing the degree of coordination between gene banks, especially in terms of the relationship between Europe and the Southern countries.
- Making progress towards standardizing ex-situ collection management practices to improve equipment exchange, quarantine controls, etc.
- Support for small local seed production industries as part of distributing local varieties more effectively.

PROJECTED IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE:

The programme proper is planned to commence at the beginning of 2003. Duration = 4 years

PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES:

Funding:

- MAE, €4 million
- French organizations: €700,000 - €1 million
- Southern SNRAs: PM researchers and local facilities

Evaluation process: internal mid-term evaluation and expost evaluation at the end of the project.

Contact: Alain Leplaideur, Chargé de mission, Direction Générale de la Coopération Internationale et du Développement, Sous-Direction de la recherche, 244 Bd Saint Germain, 75303 PARIS 07 SP. Tel: +33 (0)1 43 17 82 83, alain.leplaideur@diplomatie.gouv.fr

---

Further information is available at: www.diplomatie.fr