

Name of the Initiative (*tentative*)

The Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) Initiative

Expected date of initiation: Priority needs and themes emerged at CSD-8 (3/2000), were elaborated at the SARD Forum held concurrently with the FAO Committee on Agriculture (4/2001), and are being further discussed and refined through the WFS: fyl and WSSD preparatory processes (2001-2002). Special recommendations are expected to emerge from the NGO/CSO Forum of the *World Food Summit: five years later* (WFS: fyl, June 10-13, 2002), after which appropriate changes to the Initiative will be made. The Initiative is expected to be launched in late August 2002, at the *World Summit on Sustainable Development* (WSSD) (26/8-4/9/2002).

Expected date of completion: variable depending on theme; expected completion or major review 2006.

Actors Involved:

Early Design/Development Phase:

Governments: Canada, Germany, Ghana, Japan, Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, USA. Tentative: Japan, France, Norway, and all others which express an interest in participating during the WSSD preparatory process, the *International Conference on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions*, and similar processes.

Intergovernmental organizations: FAO, IFAD, ILO (tentative: UNDP) and others.

Rural organizations and members of major groups: Farmers and Farmer Organizations, Indigenous Peoples, NGOs, Workers and Trade Unions, Women, Children and Youth. Tentative: Local Authorities.

Other members of major groups and participating organizations/networks: Business and Industry, Scientific and Technological Community; Interest Groups for Consumers; Interest Group for Media for Agriculture; the Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty; and the UN System Network on Rural Development and Food Security; Mountain Forums.

Commitment-Building/Implementation Phase:

Governments, Organizations of Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, Women, Youth, Workers and Trade Unions, Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organizations, Business and Industry, the Technological and Scientific Community, Local Authorities, Inter-Governmental Organizations may commit and recommend improvements to the Initiative Framework.

The Initiative will be iterative in design and allow for critical refinements throughout the Initiative's life.

Lead Agency: FAO

Main Objectives of the Partnership/Initiative:

1. To foster sustainable access to and use of resource and build capacity of the poor to develop policies and practices for SARD through the establishment of **a resource center and global facility**. This resource center and facility would assist in information sharing through learning and training exchanges between communities and stakeholder groups, rural radio and news bulletins, and where possible Internet or a help-desk system. On demand from rural

communities and defined stakeholder groups, the resource center and facility would use a network to help supply training, information or other resources targeted to overcome specific problems associated with developing more socially, economically and/or environmentally sustainable agricultural and rural development policies, practices and programmes. A system of peer learning and beneficiary monitoring and evaluation will be used to refine the resource center, facility and network over time.

2. To enable small farmers, agricultural workers, rural communities and other disadvantaged stakeholders to make the transition towards sustainable agriculture, rural development, and livelihoods through a **small grant funding mechanism**. On a demand basis, the grants would be used to support innovation, pilot testing, experimentation and, when appropriate, replication/up scaling of new technologies, good practices, stakeholder consultation, participatory approaches, and strategic alliances.
3. To improve legal, regulatory, policy, and market frameworks by strengthening the knowledge and choices of policy makers derived from lessons related to local experience and through improved global knowledge about the significance of SARD for the environmental, economic, and social well-being of human kind. (*This third dimension is to be developed in the later part of Implementation Phase I*)

Relationship to Agenda 21 Goals:

- Builds on the working relationship between UN, Government, and Civil Society that has emerged through the implementation of Chapter 14 (SARD) of Agenda 21, particularly since CSD-8 and ECOSOC Decision 8/4 on Agriculture (E/200/20, para. 46)
- Proposes a pilot set of activities to contribute to the Millennium Development Goal and World Food Summit Goal of halving the proportion of hungry by 2015, through improved food security, sustainable livelihoods, poverty alleviation, sustainable ecological management and prevention of land degradation.
- Contributes to WSSD outcomes on the implementation of Agenda 21, especially chapters on poverty eradication, protecting and managing the natural resource base, health and sustainable development, sustainable development initiatives for Africa and means of implementation (Chairman's Paper 5/2002, paras. 7, 35-37, 39, 40, 71, 72, 89, 91).
- Adds value to the WSSD preparatory process by providing a mechanism through which local and national partnerships/initiatives (not of a global or regional scale) related to SARD can be recognized, supported, and if appropriate replicated to contribute to the implementation of Agenda 21.
- Takes advantage of the potential synergies between Chapters 13 (Mountains) and 14 (SARD) through the initial focus on Mountain Regions, one of the most important and fragile ecosystems of the world.
- Serves as a vehicle for the mobilization of financial resources to benefit the rural poor, in line with the *Monterrey Consensus (International Conference on Financing for Development, March 2002)*.

Expected results: *Speedier implementation of SARD/Chapter 14 of Agenda 21*

- Healthier people, environment and economy associated with improved awareness, adoption, testing, monitoring, evaluation and, if applicable, replication of good practices.
- Improved access of the poor to critical resources for SARD, with a focus in Phase I on access by the poor of *mountain regions*;
- More informed decisions that foster the evolution of farming systems towards more SARD through improved agro-ecological and ecosystem approaches.
- Fairer conditions of employment in agriculture and more diversified and sustainable

livelihoods associated with the creation of new, stable and fair working opportunities for landless and underemployed wageworkers, including migrant labor.

- Improved negotiating capacity of some Civil Society Organizations;
- New ventures and strategic voluntary alliances involving various governments, international organizations, civil society, business and industry and/or other stakeholders to promote sustainable rural livelihoods, sustainable farming systems, and poverty reduction in affected rural areas such as mountain regions.
- Improved legal, regulatory, policy and market frameworks by reinforcing the knowledge and choices of policy makers to reduce poverty and promote more sustainable development

Specific targets of the Partnership/Initiative and timeframe for their achievement:

(Phases and dates are indicative, subject to availability of funds. Overlapping phases are part of a flexible and iterative programming framework)

Design Phase (4/2001-11/2002): draft terms of reference of design participants; definition of thematic focus; stakeholder needs and priority assessments; resource mapping; critical gap identification; strategy for bridging resolvable gaps; development of Implementation Phase I, components, outputs, indicators; draft principles of engagement; definition of funding mechanism and facility structure, Secretariat and programme management structure, monitoring and evaluation system. **Milestones:** (Commencement) *SARD Forum, COAG (FAO) (Rome, April 2001)*; (Development) *informal meetings at WFS:fyl (Rome, 10-13 June, 2002)*; *informal meetings and Side Events of WSSD PrepComs*; *SARD Initiative Launch at the WSSD (Johannesburg 26 Aug.–4 Sept. 2002)*.

Inception Phase (6/2002-11/2003): commitment building, resource mobilization, development of eligibility criteria of cases, technologies, information, methods, materials and tools; development of resource center prototype (including stocking the center with easily retrievable databases good case experiences, training materials, off-the-shelf technologies); links with (services and needs of) existing relevant coalitions, rural networks, institutions, and funding sources; consultation on innovative mechanisms to promote rapid two way communications in rural areas without internet access; project management structure review; monitoring and evaluation responsibilities. **Milestones:** *International Conference on SARD in Mountain Regions (Adelboden, Switzerland, 16-20 June 2002)*; *World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 26 Aug.–4 Sept. 2002)*; *Bishkek Global Mountain Summit (Kyrgyzstan, 29 Oct.–1 Nov. 2002)*

Implementation Phase I (11/2002-10/2006): To optimize resources and synergies with other organizations, the resource center and grant facility will develop gradually, relating pilot efforts to themes receiving global attention associated with International Years (IY). The first phase would focus on SARD in Mountain Regions (*IY Mountains 2002*) and depending on community demand, the availability of funding and interests of participants support to SARD practices and policies in mountain regions may continue for several years or throughout the Phase I. Possibility of a 2006 focus on SARD for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Livelihoods (including an external, multi-stakeholder SARD Initiative Review) (2006 End of UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty). **Others to be defined** based on participant priorities, interests, and availability of funds, including possibly: SARD in semi-arid and degraded regions; indigenous knowledge and practices for SARD; building accountability of agricultural, financial, and social services for SARD; etc.

Indicative Programming Sequence (other specific targets/time frames to be determined based on thematic sub-initiatives): **2002-2004**

1. establishment of the Secretariat and Global Facility (possibly a multi-donor trust fund,

- including resource center, capacity/consultation building programme, small grant mechanism, monitoring/evaluation and programme support activities) for a 5 year initial phase;
2. develop clear links, joint work plans (if applicable), and defined responsibilities with existing networks, mechanisms, programmes, and institutions (e.g. UN System Network for Food Security and Rural Development; Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty, Mountain Fora, Farmer Field Schools and Farmer Life Schools, Regional capacity building networks, etc.); launch awareness raising about the facility, resource center, and grant programme;
 3. for the Resource Center, draw on, develop, and consolidate existing compilations of successful SARD experiences and programmes that have resulted in visible improvements at the local, national and regional levels (possibilities include Integrated Pest Management, Organic Agriculture, Conservation Agriculture, Sustainable Fisheries Management; Sustainable Forest Management, Participatory Animal/Plant Breeding or conservation through use; options for alternative paths of farming systems evolution towards SARD; innovative processing/marketing techniques and chains; worker conditions, knowledge, health; secure natural resource access for the landless; etc.) News bulletin/rural radio featuring select highlights to raise broad awareness of community/national successes and available approaches/techniques/methods.
 4. based on community and national requests (including a grant mechanism to respond to non-literate groups), small grants (range for each \$1,000-30,000) and monitoring and evaluation for community/national pilot field initiatives/projects that help to effect the transition to SARD by developing, experimenting with, testing, or replicating SARD good practices that have the potential to achieve rapid, verifiable impacts (focusing initially on mountain regions)
 5. on demand, supply of information, targeted training/capacity building, funding for learning exchanges between communities and/or stakeholder groups (including policy makers) to raise awareness of emerging lessons/good practice and build capacity to use approaches and technologies.
 6. on demand, strengthen the consultative capacity of civil society groups (e.g. indigenous peoples, women, youth and farmers groups) by funding regional, national and international workshops, conference calls, rural encounters, and experimentation with innovative information and communication technology to reinforce their participation in local, national, regional and international processes.
 7. development of a beneficiary and stakeholder monitoring and evaluation system, allowing for rapid feedback on progress, strengths and weaknesses of all activities and the establishment of thresholds indicators signaling the need for iterative adjustments to the SARD initiative framework, activities, methods, and management structure. As needed, support to strengthen national capacities to monitor local initiatives and exchange experience between governments, international organizations and NGOs/ CSOs, notably through the national thematic groups of the UN System Network on Rural Development and Food Security;

Milestones: Annual stocktaking at the Multi-stakeholder SARD Good Practice Workshops (tentative host: Canada), followed by SARD Initiative Planning Meeting to review implementation plans, participants, progress made, resource commitment levels, sources, and allocation (2003); ILO International Symposium on Decent Work in Agriculture 2003.

Recurrent Targets

- Annual Progress and Financial Reports to donor governments and committed stakeholders
- 2003 Brief progress report on SARD to the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) of FAO;
- 2004 Mid Term review of financial and other resources committed by Government, stakeholders, and community based organizations; Stocktaking on SARD in Mountains Regions (Adelboden II: tentative Switzerland)

- 2005 report to the SARD Committee on Agriculture (COAG) of FAO and CSD on progress of the Initiative;
- 2006 interim report of activities and peer review/evaluation report to be presented at the global meeting on SARD, reviewing progress and possible follow-up (phase II, III).

Coordination and implementation mechanism:

Possible overall coordination by FAO (implementing decision of an Inter-Agency Working Group) tentatively supported by a multi-stakeholder and government advisory group, a strategy and liaison group to accommodate nascent initiatives, and a multi-stakeholder monitoring and evaluation unit. Regional and National coordination responsibilities, variable depending upon capacity and stakeholder base of existing institutions (possibilities include UN System Network for Food Security and Rural Development; Mountain Fora; UNDAF, others to be identified. Precise management structure to be defined with inputs from Civil Society (including from the NGO/CSO Forum of the WFS: *fyf*), Governments, and others.

Arrangements for funding:

Financial support, contributions/commitments of time and human resources are being developed through relevant links to regular programme activities with FAO, IFAD, ILO (and other UN Agencies) and with the Governments of Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, U.S., and other Governments, Foundations, business and industry, and Civil Society.

Tentative arrangements for funding during Phase I of the SARD Initiative:

- a Multi-Donor Trust Fund for a five year initial phase, including a small grants programme/entity (all welcome: tentative Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA);
- possible arrangement to accommodate separate funding modalities depending upon conditionalities associated with resources;
- mechanisms for in-kind or direct support to specific activities (i.e. to finance and host a series of annual workshops without participating in the Trust Fund; support for sustainable micro financial services or revolving funds by International Finance Institutions).

Arrangements for capacity building and technology transfer:

Depending on the thematic area, training/capacity building would focus on women, youth, farmers, rural communities, indigenous peoples, local and customary authorities, front line extension officers, and decision makers (at all levels). Capacity building needs and support would be delivered through:

- targeted information support, training/capacity building workshops/encounters, funding for learning exchanges between communities and/or stakeholder groups (including policy makers) to raise awareness of emerging lessons/good practice and building capacity to use approaches and technologies);
- some brokering services (identifying appropriate capacity building service providers, materials and facilitators for indigenous language and specialized technical requests).
- funding for regional, national and international workshops, conference calls, rural encounters, and experimentation with innovative information and communication technology to reinforce their participation in local, national, regional and international processes.
- rural radio and electronic fora (with semi-autonomous and linked capacity for participating stakeholders) and the establishment of an information network which would provide an array of information and technology support to peasant farmers, indigenous peoples, workers,

women, youth, and local authorities through community based approaches and learning exchanges.

- Training and support to strengthen local monitoring and evaluation capacities, for example, to improve accountability in service delivery and sustainable long term monitoring of local SARD initiatives (with a special focus on the capacity of women and youth). (See memo on specific forms of near term capacity building for SARD initiatives.)

Links of Initiative with on-going sustainable development activities at the international and/or regional level (if any): *(parallel and linked processes identified so far include, but are not limited to the following):*

- Land and natural resource tenure initiatives; agro-ecological and ecosystem approaches; guidelines on good agriculture practice and sustainable use of agro-biodiversity; global work on integrated farming systems and farming system evolution; cooperative projects on distribution channels, soil fertility, and other agricultural development issues; integrated farming systems work being undertaken by multiple actors.
- The Initiative contributes to the objectives of the WFS Plan of Action, Conventions on Biological Diversity, Climate Change and Combating Desertification, as well as to the action promoted by the UN Forum on Forests, among others.

Monitoring Arrangements (tentative):

The Monitoring and Evaluation System is critical to the Initiative and will be developed and refined in the design and inception phases. The initial monitoring criteria for the SARD Initiative will be defined by those participants who chose to commit by 11/2002. Additional refinements to the monitoring criteria may be possible at the Mid-Term Review in 2004.

- During Implementation Phase I, regular input from the Monitor and Evaluation Unit to the Initiative's Management Unit to support iterative planning. Progress reports will be available for each meeting of the Programme Management Unit and Advisory Group (annual).
- More formal annual assessments of progress with stakeholder inputs on an annual basis at the SARD Workshop.
- Annual progress and financial reports.
- Major external peer review and evaluation at Mid-Term and end of Phase I;
- Major progress reports to Governments and the UN System at COAG 2005 and at CSD sessions relating to SARD.
- For the network of pilot projects, short and long term beneficiary monitoring and a feed back system to support iterative planning. Monitoring/reporting on select pilot projects by a multi-stakeholder group to support overall programme development and drawing more in depth lessons to be disseminated through an information bulletin.
- Public monitoring through relevant Internet sites, including that of the Initiative, to provide on-line information on all the activities, promote regular interchange and milestone events through electronic forum conferencing, messaging and news.
- Efforts to support the development of national capacity to monitor sustainability years after the termination of SARD projects.

Other relevant information:

- Website shortly forthcoming at FAO on SARD/Ch. 14, FAO's preparations for WSSD and the SARD Initiative.
- A SARD Electronic Forum will be held from June 24 to August 17, 2002 on SARD issues and the SARD Initiative. All are invited to participate. Contact: SARD-Eforum@fao.org

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