



Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research for Development (CIARD): A new initiative

Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research for Development (CIARD) is a global initiative working to make agricultural research information publicly available and more accessible.

Our vision: truly accessible information

"To make public domain agricultural research information and knowledge truly accessible to all".

The aim is to enable organisations that create or possess public agricultural knowledge to disseminate it more effectively. The CIARD partners coordinate their efforts, promote common formats for information sharing and exchange, and adopt open information systems approaches. Creating a global network of truly accessible outputs of research and innovation greatly increases the chance that they can be put to use, locally, nationally and globally.

Our Objective

"To collaboratively develop common standards, share knowledge, and contribute to effective and coherent institutional approaches in agricultural science and technology information."

CIARD has three priority areas:

Make Content Accessible

- open content; open systems
- common international standards

Develop Capacities

- empowered individuals with awareness and skills
- self-sufficient institutions with ownership

Advocate Better Investments

- sound policies that enable easier access to information
- coordinated approaches
- evidence of benefits

The need for CIARD

The impact that public knowledge and research can have on agricultural and rural development and natural resources management is limited because most of these outputs are not easily or widely accessible. But this doesn't have to be the case – partly because new information and communication technologies provide many opportunities for information to be handled and presented differently and more cheaply.

However, CIARD is not just about technology. It actually addresses the way that technologies are used. This includes building and improving information systems, empowering the institutions and people using them with a framework and a set of tools that open access to their content resources.

So, while we recognise that every institution has its own particular niche and set of clients, we're encouraging them to interconnect and work together in ways that complement each other. In this way, we're tackling the fundamental issues involved in making local, national, regional and global information systems available and accessible.

The way forward

The CIARD partners have developed a 'Manifesto' of the changes and Checklist of actions we want to achieve that build on existing initiatives.

Subscribing to international standards, adopting policies on intellectual property, setting up archives, and raising awareness of accessibility options are examples of actions that CIARD is encouraging.

Benefits that agricultural research institutions can derive from CIARD are:

- increased visibility and use of the outputs of their research and innovation
- increased exchange of information content with other systems
- increased awareness of other outputs of research and innovation
- access to expertise on information sharing and solutions used by others

But organisations also need to help their people to learn how to manage and use research information to best effect. This involves, for example, training for individuals, and redeveloping information systems to meet their needs better. Here we also need concerted efforts sustained over several years.

Institutions and individuals can contribute to CIARD as follows:

- promote the CIARD vision and objectives
- invest in implementing the policies and actions promoted by CIARD
- share their information services through the CIARD RING global registry
- adopt and promoting international standards
- share their experiences with others

Think global, act local

Acting locally while thinking globally, CIARD partners seek to support and complement the roles and initiatives of national, regional and international institutions.

The partners form a strong institutional base for CIARD and are working to align their efforts and develop information collections and services that are interconnected and more accessible, avoiding competition between systems and initiatives. Although they have their own priorities and constraints, all subscribe to common approaches.

What you can do

CIARD will have most impact when organisations and individuals all over the globe work together to dismantle the barriers that prevents information being truly accessible to all.

We encourage anybody wishing to learn more about the initiative to contact information@ciard.net. The CIARD website is available at www.ciard.net.

CIARD Partners

Association for Agricultural Research Institutes in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA)
Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI)
CAB International (CABI)
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)
Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD)
Centre Technique de Coopération Agricole et Rurale (CTA)
Department for International Development, UK (DFID)
Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
Forum on Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)
Global Forum on International Agricultural Research (GFAR)
International Association of Agricultural Information Specialists (IAALD)
Interamerican Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
Ministère des affaires étrangères, France (MAE)

