



**Charter of the
Young Professionals' Platform for Agricultural
Research for Development (YPARD)**

October 2008

The YPARD Charter defines the scope, rules and the roles of the Young Professionals' Platform for Agricultural Research for Development (YPARD). This first Charter is approved by the YPARD Steering Committee (SC) on behalf of the YPARD constituency at its time of creation. It hopes to incorporate the vision and spirit of young professionals from all over the globe who voiced their concerns and needs in various founding meetings that led to the shaping of YPARD.

1 Background

The Young Professionals' Platform for Agricultural Research for Development (YPARD) was founded in New Delhi, India, on 8th November 2006. The structure of its governance was established on the basis of an agreement between stakeholders of agricultural research for development (ARD) and a group of donors who supported the initiative.

Prior to its foundation in November 2006, YPARD traces its roots in to the EFARD (European Forum for Agricultural Research for Development) meeting held in Zurich in May 2005. Thereafter, a number of occasions allowed several young professionals to congregate and define YPARD's vision, mission, and first operational plans (Marrakech, December 2005; Wageningen, May 2006; Hannover, July 2007).

In summary, the rationale to create YPARD was motivated by the young generations' increasing lack of interest in agriculture, insufficient participation of young professionals in dialogues addressing critical development issues, and inadequate access to resources to address these problems. The founders of YPARD are convinced that a responsible agriculture, able to meet global needs without depleting its resources, can only become a reality if young professionals are actively engaged in shaping the sector's future.

Conceived as a platform, YPARD is a "movement" and does not intend to become a formalized institution. In order to ensure accountability and continuity, as well as enable financial contributions, a small structure is nevertheless established. Participation and contribution to YPARD is on a non-remunerated and voluntary basis with a few exceptions to run the Coordination Unit.

The Charter defines YPARD and the terms of reference of its governance bodies, which are:

- (i) Constituents (the Members)
- (ii) Steering Committee (SC)
- (iii) Local Representatives (LR)
- (iv) Coordination Unit (CU)
- (v) Senior Advisory Group (SAG).

2 YPARD's mission statement

To serve as a global platform through which young professionals can express their ideas and realise their full potential towards a dynamic agricultural research for development.

YPARD's objectives

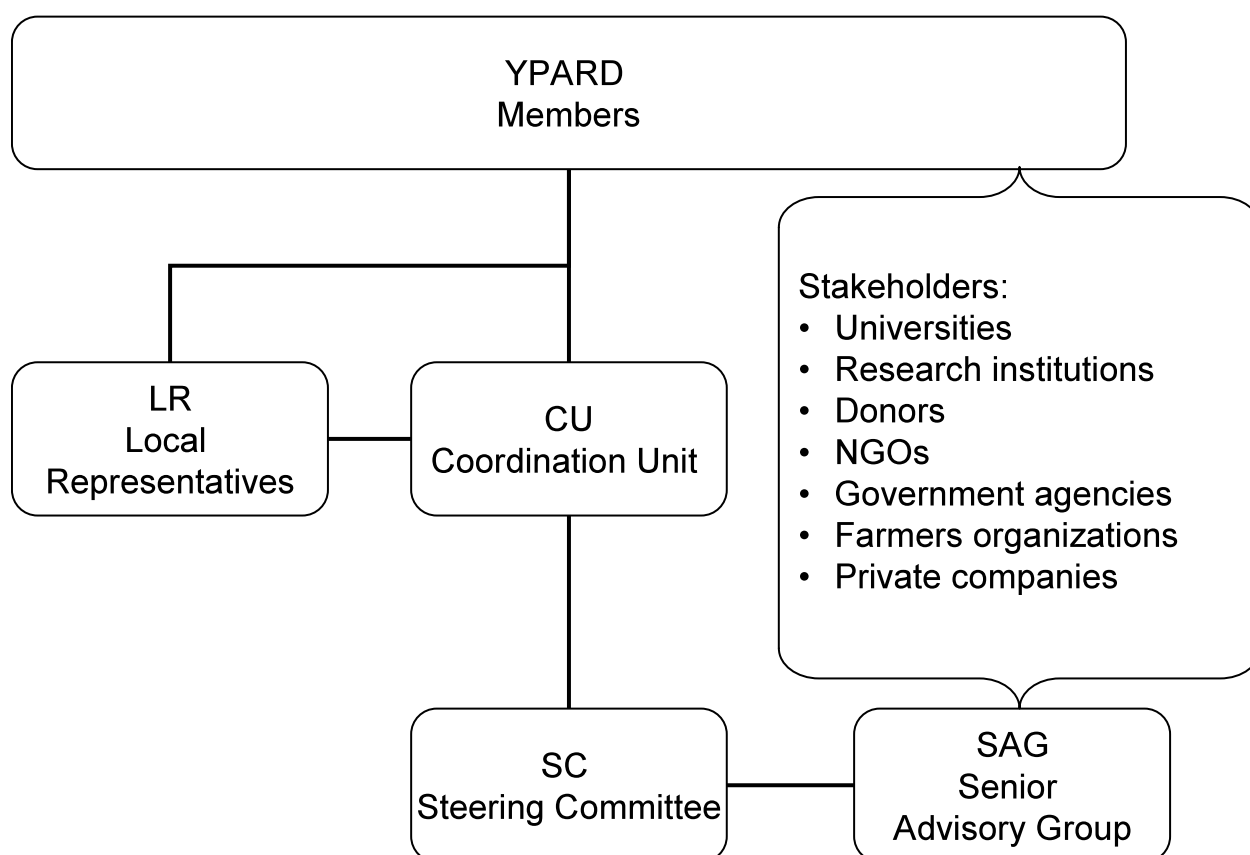
1. To facilitate exchange of information and knowledge among young professionals across disciplines, professions, age and regions.
2. To broaden opportunities for young professionals to contribute to strategic ARD policy debates.
3. To promote agriculture among young people.
4. To facilitate access to resource and capacity building opportunities.

Guiding principles

The following are YPARD guiding principles in its policies and activities¹:

- Multi-stakeholder
- Transparency
- Participatory
- Subsidiarity
- Equality
- Inclusiveness
- Representation
- Accountability
- Comparative advantage

3 Governance



3.1 Future development of governance structure

Every 5 years YPARD will review its charter, in a process facilitated by the SC. This will be done in the light of increasing the level of participation of the constituents in the decision-making.

¹ YPARD meeting, Wageningen, May 2006

3.2 The Constituents of YPARD – The Members

3.2.1 Definition of Members

The constituents of YPARD are its members. Members of YPARD should be:

- Young professionals (YPs) in ARD, i.e. working in relation to agriculture in its widest understanding. Stakeholder groups include universities, research institutions, donors, private sector, non-governmental and governmental agencies, farmers' organisations, and including livestock, fisheries, forestry, etc
- No more of 40 years of age.

Young professionals satisfying the above criteria and interested to join YPARD are invited to register through the various means outlined in item 3.2.2 below. The term “Member” encompasses the participatory and voluntary character of the YPARD structure. Participation is free of charge and bound to the YPARD structure.

3.2.2 Modus operandi

1. An YP may apply to become a YPARD member by filling in an online registration form at the YPARD website, by signing up for YPARD during an event where YPARD is present, or by expressing the interest to join YPARD through post, email, telephone.
2. The CU maintains a list of YPARD members. A Member can ask to be removed from the members list at any time by informing the Coordinator.
3. The existence and visibility of YPARD depends on the voluntary participation and involvement of its members.
4. Members are entitled to services or benefits provided through YPARD's operations and activities, which are supported by various donors and partners.
5. Members of YPARD do not have any legal rights to any services or benefits from YPARD.

3.2.3 Modes of participation

YPARD members are expected and encouraged to contribute to the development and attainment of YPARD objectives. In order to do so to, they

1. **Voice out YP's ideas and opinions**, e.g. in contacting local organizers of various kinds of meetings related to ARD issues and bringing in YP's perspective, or participating in YPARD's e-forum.
2. **Promote the YPARD movement**, e.g. download the documents available at the YPARD website and bring them to the attention of colleagues at work, university, etc.
3. **Support a YPARD Local Representative** and participate in and/or initiate activities at this level (see item 3.6 below)
4. **Participate in YPARD's formal coordination or governance structure**, e.g. serve as a Steering Committee member, a Local Representative, etc.
5. **Distribute information relevant to YP's in ARD**, e.g. by keeping YPARD structures informed about regional developments of YPs in ARD, circulate articles, ideas, news, job opportunities, information about meetings relevant for YPs globally to be included in the newsletter;
6. **Be active and innovative**, search for new ideas or opportunities to further involve YPs in ARD.
7. **Propose and implement projects** in coordination with relevant YPARD governance and/or coordination structure.

3.3 The YPARD Steering Committee (SC)

The YPARD SC was formally established in November 2006 and since then has regularly met once a year.

The SC is accountable towards the members for any action or decision undertaken. This includes reception of criticism and feedback as well as timely informing Members about any relevant decisions.

3.3.1 Steering Committee Composition

1. The SC is composed of five to nine members and, to the extent possible, from various stakeholder groups, regions and gender.
2. The YPARD Coordinator participates in SC meeting as ex-officio member.
3. A Chair and a Vice-Chair will be elected within the SC members and from the SC. The Chairs will liaise with the SAG and will report on this to the other SC members and the CU.
4. The YPARD Coordinator will serve as Secretary. S/he will provide assistance and support to ensure that the SC functions efficiently.
5. The responsibilities, structure, membership and functioning of the SC will be reviewed at least every three years to ensure effectiveness and introduce necessary changes.

3.3.2 Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the YPARD SC are to:

1. Provide direction in the development and oversee the implementation of YPARD strategies, programmes and activities together with the YPARD Coordinator and in consultation with the SAG;
2. Approve the YPARD Annual workplan and budget;
3. Constitute task forces or working groups on special activities as deemed necessary;
4. Ensure that there is adequate and appropriate monitoring of YPARD activities;
5. Approve, recognise and review the persons nominated as YPARD Local Representatives;
6. Initiate consultation polls among YPARD members on issues which the SC deems important;
7. Review progress made and provide recommendations for improvement and follow-up;
8. Create and maintain a culture of ownership towards all members of YPARD and include them as much as possible into activities and decision making;

3.3.3 Selection process

1. The SC is a self-constituted committee. It replaces its members using the following procedure: a) suitable and willing candidates are proposed by SC members b) the SC elects the new SC member by majority vote. The Chair and Vice-Chair coordinate this process. As soon as practically possible, the SC will implement a democratic election process for SC members as suggested in paragraph 3.1. above.
2. Members will serve for a period of three years, which can be renewed once. If the SC member wishes to renew his/her mandate, s/he is to inform the Chair before the end of the original mandate.
3. Should an SC member wish to resign before the end of his/her term, he/she should write a resignation letter to the Chair
4. The Chair and the Vice-Chair are to be elected by the SC preferably by consensus, for a mandate of three years, or until the end of their own mandate, if the latter is shorter. In case of no consensus, they will be elected by majority vote.
5. If the Chair resigns before the normal term of his/her mandate, the Vice-Chair will take over as interim Chair until a new Chair is elected during the following SC meeting. If the Vice-Chair resigns from his/her mandate, the chairs remains vacant until the next SC meeting.

3.3.4 Modus operandi

1. The SC members will be acting on their personal capacity, but are expected to bring in the perspective of their stakeholder group and to be acting with the support/backing of their organisations.
2. SC members will interact electronically on a regular basis and will meet face-to-face at least once a year.
3. The SC members (including the Chairs) will serve with no remunerations, but costs of participating in face-to-face committee meetings will be borne by YPARD whenever possible.
4. The SC is obliged to make decisions in a transparent manner and give explanations on such decisions upon request to any member or the SAG.

3.3.5 Quorum

Two-thirds of the SC membership constitutes a quorum.

3.3.6 YPARD Steering Committee meetings

The SC shall meet at least once a year. When extraordinary meetings are required, they should be convened by the Chair in consultation with the other SC members.

The agenda of the meetings should be prepared by the CU. The draft agenda and documents to be discussed will be circulated at least three weeks in advance to allow the SC members sufficient time to consult their respective constituencies.

Minutes of the SC meetings are made available to all stakeholders upon request.

3.4 The YPARD Coordination Unit (CU)

The YPARD CU was established in August 2006. It implements YPARD activities and acts in consultation and under the guidance of the SC. It maintains donor relations, ensures regular contact with all stakeholders, and manages the YPARD website. Its role is defined in 4.3.2 below. It is accountable towards the members for any action or decision undertaken. This includes reception of criticism and feedback as well as timely informing them about any relevant decisions.

3.4.1 Coordination Unit Composition

The YPARD CU consists of one Coordinator and supporting staff as required and depending on available financial resources. Additional human resources, also based in other institutions, may be associated through specific collaborative agreements.

3.4.2 Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the CU are to

1. To develop a far-reaching, multi-channel system for the exchange of information among all YPARD members;
2. To build a healthy environment for improved partnerships, essential for the achievement of the objectives of YPARD;
3. Coordinate the development and implementation of YPARD activities with its partners and members in consultation with the SC;
4. Prepare YPARD annual workplan, budget and financial reports for submission to and approval by the SC and in consultation with the SC;
5. In consultation with SC, prepare and submit financial reports as required by YPARD donors;
6. Organise YPARD activities at strategic ARD events worldwide;
7. Establish and maintain contacts with key ARD stakeholders at global and local level;

8. Mobilize resources for YPARD in coordination with the SC;
9. Propose suitable persons as YPARD Local Representatives (LR) for approval by the SC in absence of a peer nominated representative from the region;
10. Maintain the contact with LR and coordinate their regional activities in cooperation with them;
11. Provide the SC with monthly consolidated updates and semi-annual progress reports (financial and activities) to the SC;
12. Keep members and the LR regularly informed about new developments within the CU and within YPARD;
13. Create and maintain a culture of ownership towards all YPARD members and include them as much as possible into actual processes;
14. As an ex-officio member of the SC, the Coordinator serves as its Secretary and organizes regular SC meetings. S/he will coordinate and prepare documents for SC meetings, as well as provide assistance and support to ensure that the committee functions efficiently.

3.4.3 Modus operandi

1. The Coordinator is appointed by the SC and holds a remunerated position.
2. Further CU human resources may be proposed either by the Coordinator or by the SC, under approval by the SC and are subject to fund availability;
3. Duration of appointment of Coordinator and other human resources depends on the time period for which funding is secured.
4. The CU together with the SC are responsible for keeping the YPARD members regularly informed about new developments within YPARD.

3.4.4 Selection process for YPARD coordinator

1. Applicants for the Coordinator position must be YPARD members.
2. The SC updates the Terms of References, publishes an open vacancy description on www.ypard.org and elsewhere if required. It organises the screening and selection of the received applications.
3. The SC appoints a new Coordinator and organises his/her appointment at the YPARD host.

3.5 The YPARD host

The CU is hosted by an institution, where YPARD movement can operate and grow. The host plays a vital role in the functioning of the CU and SC.

3.5.1 Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the host should be jointly formulated during the development of the partnership between YPARD and the host. A document describing these will be formally approved by the SC and the host's governing body.

3.5.2 Selection process

All YPARD organs participate in the search and selection of the host, under the coordination of the CU and the SC. The following criteria for selecting the host should guide the selection process:

- Active and known in international ARD
- Experienced in international administrative/financial procedures
- Able to engage in contracts on behalf of YPARD, experienced in reporting to donors
- Working language English
- Office space with basic infrastructure available, hosting/contribution to YPARD.org

- Space for independent programmes (YPARD should be working under its own charter and not according to interests of the host)
- Possibility to provide financial and in-kind contribution to YPARD

3.6 The YPARD Local Representatives (LR)

In an effort to reach out to as much young professionals as possible, YPARD endeavours to facilitate and support the establishment of YPARD Local Representatives (LR) at the community, provincial, country, sub-regional or regional level. In the spirit of subsidiarity, these structures or mechanisms are referred to as “local Representatives (LR)”. Activities are carried out at the most geographically appropriate level.

The CU maintains a list and contacts of LR.

LR act on behalf of and represent YPARD in local or regional affairs. This differentiates them from global initiatives or activities in which they may participate but which are coordinated by the CU.

3.6.1 Area of representations

As a principle, an area of representation is defined by the LR who is willing to act in this specific geographic unit. It may be defined as an entire country, parts of a country, or several countries, and should be linked to the network and activities of YPARD in that area.

The SC in consultation with the CU can suggest the redefinition of an area of representation based on the focus needed and availability of suitable candidates to successfully work in their capacity as regional focal points. The CU maintains a list of LR and their area of representation.

3.6.2 Local Representatives Profile

1. A LR consists of one person, who is responsible for the coordination of YPARD activities in the represented region.
2. LR must be YPARD members.
3. LR should have proven to be contributing, productive and constructive as members.
4. LR should be working in the ARD sector and should have relevant experience in this field. S/he is therefore expected to be familiar with ARD issues.
5. LR are also expected to be proficient in English. Knowledge of languages relevant to the region of representation is expected.
6. LR should have proven capacity to successfully build up contacts within their regions as well as maintain the contact to the CU or SC.
7. LR coordinates the regional volunteers and their activities.
8. LR is a voluntary and non-remunerable position.

3.6.3 Selection Process

LR are ideally nominated by their peers from the region. They are recognised by the YPARD Coordinator and SC after consultation with YPARD members from the concerned region and following a CU-coordinated review of proposed activities.

3.6.4 Modus operandi

LR plan and contribute to YPARD’s mission from their own initiative and with support from its members and the CU.

Funds may be allocated to support their activities following a clearly formulated proposal based on transparent procedures. Local fund-raising must be informed and coordinated with the CU.

The LR have an important and delicate role in maintaining a good visibility of the YPARD movement in various regions. The LR are requested to report about their activities to the CU.

The following actions characterise a local or regional representation of YPARD:

1. Contribute to at least one objective of YPARD.
2. Elaborate and operate following a plan of local or regional activities including a budget. Share action plan and budget with the CU and other interested stakeholders. This will also serve as an input in the preparation of YPARD annual workplan and budget;
3. Work consistently in line with the YPARD's principles outlined in section 4 of this Charter.

3.6.5 Freedom of Action

Local representations have numerous options to get involved in YPARD activities, based on their own need assessments, interests and capabilities. The Representative is free and welcome to participate to the development of YPARD in a creative manner and to:

1. Initiate appropriate linkages with regional and/or sub-regional fora in ARD as well as other regional players in ARD and advocate for YPARD involvement in regional and sub-regional activities. This should be done in close consultation with the CU;
2. Promote dialogue with other ARD stakeholders in the region to increase their awareness and interest on YPARD;
3. Develop, promote and implement YPARD activities in the region, in consultation with the CU;
4. Maintain an inventory of youth-based organizations in the region working on ARD issues;
5. Participate in relevant meetings and other activities upon request of the YPARD coordinator;
6. Motivate peers from the region to actively get involved in YPARD activities;
7. Keep the CU and the SC permanently aware of the specific challenges of the represented region.
8. The use of the YPARD logo on official documents and in the public domain must be approved by the CU.

3.7 The YPARD Senior Advisory Group (SAG)

The SAG was formally established in November 2006, at YPARD's official launch in November 2006, in New Delhi, India.

3.7.1 Mandate

The YPARD SAG is a group of senior professionals in ARD who have shown and expressed support to YPARD and its objectives.

In an advisory capacity, this group provides suggestions and comments on YPARD strategies and activities. The group also provides guidance on the YPARD's organizational development and provides recommendations for improvement.

3.7.2 Composition and modus operandi

The SAG is composed of a maximum of nine members. Its composition is decided by the SC, who invites potential members to participate. To the extent possible, stakeholder categories, regions and gender balance will be ensured in the constitution of the group. By definition of the age brackets adopted by YPARD, Senior Advisors should be over 40 years old.

1. YPARD Senior Advisors do not represent their respective organizations. Their involvement is thus in a personal capacity and voluntarily in nature.
2. YPARD Senior Advisors are requested to remain part of the SAG for a period of three years.
3. YPARD Senior Advisors are not required to meet formally and regularly as a group. Consultation with the SAG and YPARD members will be carried out electronically and

through phone calls. Whenever possible, face-to-face meetings will be held, taking advantage of other ARD-related meetings or conferences.

4 The Charter

This Charter was elaborated in October 2008. All SC members have approved it through electronic consultation.

The Charter is available on the website www.ypard.org and accessible to every YPARD member and website visitor.

The Charter can be amended by the SC by a two-third-majority vote during the SC annual meeting.

It is the SC's hope that the Charter will eventually be democratically modified and approved by its Constituents, the Members.