

Management response to the 2013 External Review

YPARD Steering Committee and Global Coordination Unit, January 2013

The 2013 external review of YPARD was undertaken by a team of twinned senior-junior external consultants, from August to December 2013, with the [Final Report](#) approved by the Steering Committee (SC) in January 2014. We appreciate the work of the reviewers and welcome their recommendations for a "renewed YPARD".

The SC agrees on the set of recommendations designed to bring YPARD the in-depth change required to fulfill its niche as the "Voice of Youth in Agricultural Development". This is a crucial role which YPARD is fully prepared to undertake.

The review clearly indicates the high performance of YPARD Team since the previous external review in 2009. YPARD's membership has grown by over 400%, and while the ratio of men to women is 70% to 30%, it is believed that this gender representation is a mirror of the agricultural development sector. YPARD strives for a better representation of women in its membership and activities. Currently, women represent over 60% of YPARD's management structure at the global, regional and national level.

In order to better reflect its drive towards a multi-stakeholder platform that represents the "Voice of Young Professionals in Agricultural Development", YPARD is currently going through a rebranding process that will help us position ourselves better among global stakeholders.

In the opinion of the Steering Committee, the overarching recommendation of the review for YPARD's future activity is: to develop and apply a content-driven approach. The Steering Committee, together with the Global Coordination Unit, agrees that the 2014-2018 period must focus on moving towards a content driven agenda and to fulfill its role as the "Voice of Young Professionals in Agricultural Development", by facilitating the development of topic specific activities and ensuring that regional and national content is represented. It is however of importance to maintain YPARD's objectiveness by becoming the facilitator of discussions and the aggregator of view points, while also keeping YPARD as a platform - thus using our networking dimension to ease young professionals' access to policy debates. These measures have to be taken while keeping in mind current capacity restrictions of YPARD, such as funding and regional level capacities.

The set of secondary recommendations made by the review includes:



Mentoring Program: The development and implementation of a Mentoring Program has been an area of interest of YPARD for the past two years. A baseline study was completed in 2011 in order to assess the needs of its members and design a tailored mentorship program. A pilot-peer to peer mentoring programme indicated that the preferred approach was that of a traditional mentor – mentee relation that YPARD could facilitate. Presently, YPARD is searching for funding in order to implement the mentoring program in the next planning phase (2014-2018).

Social Media: It has been recommended by the report that a collaborative social media team should be developed and supported by YPARD`s Management in order to increase our efficiency on different communication channels. At this time, YPARD has developed a strong collaborative team which, with the support of the CGIAR Consortium, has participated in several global and regional conferences and events, representing our network.

YPARD Funding: The main challenge that YPARD has at this time is to diversify its funding sources, from a wide range of donors who support youth in agricultural development.

YPARD`s Management structure and organization: Three important conclusions can be seen in the report:

- The Global Coordination Unit needs to be reinforced through at least one additional full time position in order to support the activity of a platform that grew with over 400% between 2009 and 2013.
- The hosting agreements for Regional Coordination Units need to be renegotiated, where possible, as the demands for coordination have grown at regional level.
- At national level, there is a need for a standardization of management and organizational structures.

All conclusions and recommendations made by the report - and recognized by the Steering Committee and the Global Coordination Unit - lead to the conclusion that YPARD needs to supplement its current budget in order to be able to support its continuous and powerful growth and shift towards a content driven agenda. Changes in the YPARD Charter have been made to reflect the new roles and responsibilities of its management structure, as well as how the increased demands and needs could be met.

We consider that, the 2013 external review process provided an insightful overview of YPARD `s progress and helped determine new strategic orientations towards enhancing support to young professionals for agricultural development.

We would like to thank our donors, partners and members for their continuous support in the past years and for a future in which our joint activities will strengthen youth`s role in global agricultural development.