**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. **Background**

GFAiR is a unique multi-stakeholder global forum where public, private and civil actors engage in all aspects of agri-food generation, access, transformation and use. Through their representative mechanisms, these actors come together to collectively shape the future of agriculture and realize desired SDG impacts. With close to 1,000 members spanning 13 Constituencies, GFAiR facilitates collaboration through [Collective Actions](https://gfair.network/collectiveactions) (CAs) based on [Partnership Principles](https://gfair.network/sites/default/files/GFAR%20Partnership%20Principles_0_1.pdf) (PPs), aiming to empower Small-Scale Producers (SSPs) as key actors in pro-poor agri-food Research & Innovation (R&I) systems. By fostering inclusivity, participation and accountability, GFAiR endeavours to cultivate more efficient, resilient and equitable agri-food R&I systems, addressing key challenges such as climate change, food and nutritional security, sustainable agriculture, and poverty reduction, whilst safeguarding environmental resources.

CAs are multi-stakeholder programmes of work at local, national, regional or international level, initiated by three or more partners, focusing on SSPs, women and youth. Partners commit to generating resources together and to catalyse actions or advocacy towards shared, demand-driven development aims. These actions are fostered and supported by the GFAiR Secretariat.

Through dialogue, knowledge exchange, and innovative partnerships, GFAiR aims to break down institutional barriers, support stakeholder learning, and mobilize diverse sources of knowledge for the co-creation of context-specific, sustainable solutions. GFAiR operates as a facilitator and platform for collaboration rather than a funding organization. CAs are part of a project funded by the European Commission (DG INTPA). In this framework, a limited amount of seed-funding is available to facilitate selected CAs. In collaboration with other organizations, GFAIR, may also provide business development support including capacity strengthening and assistance with fundraising efforts.

1. **Objective of the Collective Action**

As a global initiative and partnership mechanism, the CA on Forgotten Foods, which launched shortly before the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, is ever more relevant amidst ongoing global crises exacerbating food insecurity and hunger worldwide, thus exposing the inherent flaws in dominant agri-food systems. The UNFSS underscored the significant contributions of current food systems to various sustainability challenges, including biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, poverty, malnutrition, and climate change, calling for bold actions to transform these systems.

Forgotten foods and crops, cultivated and utilized for centuries by smallholder farmers, Indigenous Peoples, and their communities, lie at the heart of this CA. Consequently, the CA positions farmers and their organizations as central figures and key contributors to the creation of healthier food systems. It acknowledges the critical importance of investment and research in unlocking the potential of forgotten foods and associated farming practices to enhance the diversity and resilience of agri-food systems.

GFAiR seeks an organisation or a group of organisations to build upon the achievements of the [CA on Forgotten Foods](https://gfair.network/content/gfar-collective-action-forgotten-foods)1 and existing initiatives. In particular, one the main outcomes of this CA, the 2021 [Global Manifesto on Forgotten Foods](https://gfair.network/sites/default/files/Global%20Manifesto%20on%20Forgotten%20Foods%20web%20version.pdf), a landmark proposal aiming to guide present and future actions related to forgotten foods based on broad and intensive consultation process carried out in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe and the Middle East, should serve as the foundation of any future work.

In this new phase of the CA, GFAiR seeks to emphasise the role of forgotten foods in combating climate change and improving nutrition. Often referred to as Neglected and Underutilized Species (NUS), these foods offer a wide array of essential macronutrients, micronutrients and bioactive compounds that contribute to overall dietary health. Beyond their nutritional benefits, they tend to be resilient to changing weather patterns, climate change, pests, and diseases. They contribute to the rich diversity of agro-ecosystems and landscapes, safeguarding farmers' livelihoods and cultural traditions.

In the pursuit of resilient and healthy food systems, this CA will continue to emphasise the crucial role of farmers, researchers, and local resources, such as forgotten foods and local knowledge systems, moving away from agri-food systems that rely heavily on a limited number of crops and external inputs, such as chemical fertilizers. Addressing the challenges posed by unsustainable food production models and supply chains requires multidimensional actions and concerted efforts by various stakeholders. Through this CA, a diverse group of stakeholders, with farmers at its core, will unite to leverage research and investment in these forgotten foods.

1. **Overall scope of work**

GFAiR envisions the work of the CA to include the following stages:

* **Roadmap:** This stage involves designing the process, delineating roles and partnerships, and establishing a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) mechanism that will feed into GFAiR’s MEL system.
* **Implementation:** The planned activities will take place during this phase. Conflict resolution mechanisms and grievance procedures have been developed by UNEP, FAO and UNDP (2023)[[1]](#footnote-1) and should be used to address any potential disputes among partners involved, including with the GFAiR Secretariat.
* **Review and way forward:** As the activities of the CA are handed over, its participants will assess the work undertaken, evaluate the achievement of objectives and reflect on the partnership model adopted. A lesson-learning exercise will be conducted to gather insights from the CA process and formulate recommendations.

1. **Working arrangement**

A contract will be signed between GFAiR and the lead organization(s) applying. Internal arrangements will be made between the lead organization(s) and the other participants. Availability of applying organizations must be ensured for the timely delivery of milestones over the duration of the contract.

1. **Duration of the assignment**

A CA can be supported by GFAiR for a maximum timespan of two years, starting with a contract of up to 11 months. The work of the CA is expected to start as soon as the selection process is completed, and the contract is signed.

1. Examples of conflict resolution models are available in the following publication: UNEP, FAO and UNDP. 2023. [Rethinking Our Food Systems: A Guide for Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration](https://doi.org/10.4060/cc6325en). Nairobi, Rome and New York. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)