

Wageningen International

Plant genetic resources and seeds

Policies, conservation and use

Ethiopia, September 17 – October 12, 2007

Introduction

The Central and West Asia and North Africa (CWANA) region is the centre of genetic diversity for some of the world's major food crops. However, this valuable diversity is threatened by genetic erosion. Local landraces are being replaced by 'improved' varieties; population pressure, urbanisation and environmental degradation caused by frequent droughts, overgrazing and desertification contribute to this process. The informal system, an indigenous, knowledge-based, farmer-managed crop production system, remains the main source of genetic resources and seeds for small-scale farmers. International conventions such as CBD, IT-PGRFA, and TRIPS are calling for concerted effort in the conservation of the unique biodiversity of this region and for new policy and regulatory regimes in germplasm exchange and use.

Aims and objectives

The overall objective of the training programme is to enhance the participants' capabilities to deal with contemporary issues in the management of genetic resources and seeds. The programme pays special attention to relevant policies and participatory and market-oriented approaches. It aims for the participants and facilitators to exchange experiences and work together to explore practical applications for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources in agriculture.

Training methods

The training is experience-based and task-oriented. Due to their own knowledge and experience, the participants themselves are important resources for the courses. Speakers invited to the course introduce topics, after which participants generally work in small groups on case study assignments. Courses conclude with the development of proposals which integrate the topics dealt with and relate them to the reality of participants' working situations.

Who can participate?

The training programme is designed for project co-ordinators, senior staff, managers, trainers, programme leaders and other professionals who aim to promote the conservation and use of PGR for agriculture from a policy, research, education or development perspective. Participants are employed by research institutes, public/private seed companies, universities, NGO's or other agricultural

development oriented organisations and governmental institutes. Applicants should have at least a BSc or the equivalent in training and experience. They should also have at least three years of professional experience in a relevant field, they should work in an arid or semi-arid region and they should be proficient in English.

Programme

Four two-week courses are offered as part of two parallel programmes; see the programme schedule below. Each two-week course provides independent and comprehensive training. Based on their professional interests and institutional needs, participants can combine two courses into a programme.

Awassa, September 17 – 28	Debre Zeit, October 1 – 12
Market and chain development for GR and seeds <i>Code: 11/01 fee: € 1800</i>	Conservation strategies and PGR policies <i>Code: 11/03 fee: € 1800</i>
Participatory approaches in GR management and plant breeding <i>Code: 11/02 fee: € 1800</i>	Design of plant breeding programmes addressing drought <i>Code: 11/04 fee: € 1800</i>

Market and chain development for genetic resources and seeds

This course aims to create awareness of the economic value of agrobiodiversity, and to promote the use of agrobiodiversity through various strategic market-oriented approaches, while taking the analysis of the supply chain as a starting point. It gives special attention to the establishment of small-scale seed enterprises involving farmers and farmer communities by means of decentralised seed production and marketing. Topics addressed are:

- Economic perspectives of agrobiodiversity use.
- Market trends and sector analysis.
- Supply chain concepts and chain integration.
- Small-scale seed enterprise development.
- Marketing under-utilised crops and locally-produced seeds.

Participatory approaches in genetic resource management and plant breeding

This course aims to assist participants in designing efficient and effective genetic resource management and crop improvement programmes, while actively involving farmers

and farmer communities in conservation, variety selection and breeding activities. From a systems perspective, participants will explore options for linking formal genetic resource programmes with local genetic resource management activities. Topics addressed are:

- Methodologies and tools for participatory learning and action.
- Formal and informal genetic resource systems.
- Breeding objectives and user groups.
- On-farm conservation.
- Participatory variety selection and participatory plant breeding.

Conservation strategies and plant genetic resources policies

This course focuses on recently-developed perspectives on plant genetic resources conservation and aims to provide participants with the tools to manage germplasm collections more effectively. Special attention is given to plant genetic resources policies, enhancing participants' knowledge of intellectual property rights and mechanisms for access and benefit sharing. This will improve their capability to deal with these issues in research for development. Topics addressed are:

- Genebanks and national plant genetic resources programmes.
- Conservation and utilisation concepts and strategies.
- Genebank management procedures.
- Rationalisation of collections and documentation.
- International Genetic Resource Policies.
- Genetic Resource access mechanisms and MTAs.
- Intellectual Property Rights, PVP and Farmers' Rights.

Design of plant breeding programmes addressing drought

The participants in this course will learn how to design and redesign breeding programmes while taking into account strategic issues that determine the feasibility of the programmes. Moreover, they will learn the essential theoretical background of selection methods so they can increase the efficiency of selection programmes targeting drought-tolerant varieties. Topics addressed are:

- Bottlenecks of breeding programmes.
- Market analysis and setting breeding objectives.
- Access to and choice of germplasm.
- Design of selection programmes.
- Variety testing, variety release and dissemination.

For more information about the training programme, go to: www.courses.wur.nl (click on 'Courses Wageningen International', and then on the course of your interest).

The organising committee reserves the right to change the programme if necessary.

Partners

The training programme is organised by Wageningen International (www.wi.wur.nl) and the Centre for Genetic Resources, the Netherlands (CGN, www.cgn.wur.nl), in cooperation with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA, www.icarda.org), the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI, www.ipgri.cgiar.org), the Ethiopian Institute for Agricultural Research (EIAR), and other prominent national and international organisations.

Fees and accommodation

The fee for a two-week training programme is € 1850, and € 3500 for a four-week programme. The fee includes administration costs, lecture materials and excursions, but excludes board and lodging and travel expenses. Participants will be accommodated in Awassa (September 17 – 28) and Debre Zeit (October 1 – 12). A budget including all costs will be sent to you on request.

Fellowships

A limited number of fellowships is available from the Netherlands Fellowship Programme (NFP) for nationals of: Afghanistan, Autonomous Palestinian Territories, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, India (only arid and semi-arid areas), Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria (North semi dry only), Pakistan (only arid/ semi-arid areas), Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe. Only participants from institutions or crop programmes within semi arid and dry land agriculture ecosystems are eligible.

Candidates who wish to apply for such a fellowship should begin the application procedure as soon as possible. Candidates must FIRST apply to Wageningen International for admission to the course. Acceptable candidates will receive a letter from Wageningen International indicating that they have been PROVISIONALLY accepted. Candidates can then apply for an NFP fellowship through the Netherlands Embassy or Consulate in their own country. **Please note that NFP fellowships are available for a four-week training programme only.** Applications for NFP fellowships should be submitted to Wageningen International before **February 1, 2007**. For additional information on fellowships, go to: www.courses.wur.nl (under 'Fellowships').

Application

The admission deadline for application with funding other than a NFP fellowship, is August 20, 2007. For additional information and to download application forms, go to: www.courses.wur.nl (click on 'Courses Wageningen International', and then on the course of your interest).