



Global
Facilitation
Unit
for Underutilized
Species

**Steering Committee Meeting
Monday, 22 January 2007
Bioversity International, Rome
(13:30 – 17:00)**

Agenda

1. Opening and welcome of participants (E. Kueneman)
2. Welcome of participants by Bioversity International DDG (K. Atta-Krah)
3. Adoption of agenda, approval of minutes of last meeting (E. Kueneman)
4. Steering Committee Membership (E. Kueneman)
5. Report on GFU activities in 2006 (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
6. Workplan 2007 (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
7. Discussion
8. Report from GFU/ICUC meeting in Washington (E. Kueneman)
9. Discussion of next steps

Participants

	NAME	ORGANIZATION	e-mail ADRESS
1.	Eric Kueneman	FAO-AGPC	eric.kueneman@fao.org
2.	Caterina Batello	FAO-AGPC	caterina.batello@fao.org
3.	Mauricio Bellon	Bioversity	m.bellon@cgiar.org
4.	Alessandro Meschinelli	IFAD	a.meschinelli@ifad.org
5.	Marlene Diekmann	GTZ	marlene.diekmann@gtz.de
6.	Paul Bordoni	GFU	p.bordoni@cgiar.org
7.	Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon	GFU	i.zeledon@cgiar.org
8.	Kwesi Atta-Krah	Bioversity (observer)	katta-krah@cgiar.org
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Minutes

1. Opening and welcome of participants

Eric Kueneman opened the meeting and emphasized that in view of the topics on the agenda, this would be one of the most important meetings of the Steering Committee's (SC) history

2. Welcome of participants by Bioversity International DDG

On behalf of Emile Frison, Bioversity International's DG, Kwesi Atta-Krah welcomed presents stating that Bioversity was proud to host the GFU, keen to be part of this initiative, committed to support it and looking forward to see how it moves ahead with regards to a closer collaboration with ICUC.

Alessandro Meschinelli mentioned that IFAD had just approved a grant to Bioversity for a second phase of the IFAD NUS project that will provide fuel towards these two programs

3. Adoption of agenda, approval of minutes of last meeting

The agenda was unanimously adopted and minutes of last meeting approved

4. Steering Committee Membership

Eric Kueneman acknowledged the pulling together of Rome based organizations by the GFU was an achievement in itself. He mentioned that the UN was pushing for the further streamlining of its organizations at country level – in the case of Italy FAO, IFAD and WFP and recommended that SC members make further efforts to bring the topic “underutilized species” to the attention of their individual organizations.

Recently some changes have occurred with regards to the composition of the SC:

- Hannah Jaenicke, director of ICUC, as per her request is currently an observer.
- Ola Smith, former GFAR Executive Secretary, has not yet been replaced.
- Peter Griffie, alternate to the chair, has been replaced by Caterina Batello.

Alessandro Meschinelli informed the meeting that Dr. Abdelmajid Slama has recently been nominated as the GFAR interim Executive Secretary.

Eric Kueneman affirmed that FAO was happy to chair the group and to continue in that role. However a rotation of the chair would be well accepted if the SC felt a need for this.

As GFAR is currently preparing its workplan for the next three years, it was agreed that the minutes of this meeting would be sent to the GFAR chair with a cover letter signed by Eric Kueneman and that mentions our expectation regarding GFAR's involvement into the GFU vis-à-vis steering and implementation. [Action: Eric Kueneman and Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon](#)

Alessandro Meschinelli pointed out that IFAD was about to fund a person that will take care of GPPs (Global Partnership Programmes) at the GFAR Secretariat and stressed the importance to promptly address GFAR as they would be looking more closely to NUS in future.

5. Report on GFU activities in 2006

Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon reported on the progress made by GFU during 2006. The SC acknowledged the achievements and made the following observations:

Marlene Diekmann was happy to see an increased collaboration between GFU and ICUC. Alessandro Meschinelli recommended a link on GFU web site to phase II of the IFAD NUS project and added that synergies could be achieved by relating our work closely to Areas 6 and 7 of the IFAD NUS project (impact of policy and raising awareness). He also mentioned the importance to change the perception of NUS in the North. In order to better achieve this we should link to Area 4 of the NUS project that explores the role of rural tourism. The IFAD loan projects could be used to develop projects on underutilized species. [Action: Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon and Stefano Padulosi.](#)

Eric Kueneman suggested that Rocket in Italy would make a nice story for the market success analyses.

Mauricio Bellon mentioned the close collaboration between GFU and Bioversity's DfL (Diversity for Livelihood) Program regarding the case studies and the NFR (Novel Food Regulation) work.

6. Workplan 2007 (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)

Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon presented the workplan and related budget for 2007 which mainly aims at concluding and consolidating earlier initiated activities and to plan steps to ensure GFU's sustainability. The following comments were made:

With regards to the planned meetings with policy makers Alessandro Meschinelli was questioning what we knew about the most effective ways to influence policy. In this regard and because of a democratization process, IFAD is working with farmers' organizations. Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon responded that from the policy studies it could be concluded that Health and Education are the most appropriate channels.

Eric Kueneman reminded that the ministers of Finance and Planning were driving the policies; a good entry point would be parliamentarians and municipal leaders. The private sector could play a crucial role in getting the message out to these stakeholders. He added that it was fundamental to be strategic in the choice of regions and stakeholders to be addressed if we wanted to see some change.

Marlene Diekmann advised that to reach this audience it was possible to take advantage of fora like the "World Mayors' Association".

Caterina Batello noted that if we wanted policy recommendations to be taken into account, we must involve the policy makers at the stage while these are being developed.

Mauricio Bellon cautioned about choosing the appropriate fora to address policy makers.

It was recommended that GFU and ICUC continue working closely together during 2007. Both entities should allocate some funds towards the preparation of a framework for after 2007. Once a decision on the process for this has been taken, the GFU workplan and

budget should be revised and re-submitted to the SC. Marlene Diekmann agreed to a delayed submission and request for 2007 funds to GTZ, but reminded that there was only little flexibility in the use of the GFU funds.

7. Report from GFU/ICUC meeting in Washington

Eric Kueneman mentioned that the Washington meeting on 6 December 2006 was unique as GFU and ICUC suggested voluntarily to merge and not to compete. He summarized the main conclusions:

- The merger of ICUC and GFU is a first step in the right direction
- This new entity should have characteristics of facilitation, advocacy and implementation
- A SWOT analysis of the two organizations could be useful before deciding on a new future entity

8. Discussion

Eric Kueneman informed the meeting about the International Centre for Non Food Crops that is currently being established in the UK. It intends to have a high level advocacy role and strong links to private sector. He therefore felt that a close link with this new center would be beneficial for a potential new entity on underutilized species and it should be considered whether this Center could be an additional hub for the new entity.

Marlene Diekmann was wondering whether a merge of ICUC and GFU would be sufficient to streamline work on underutilized species. Indicating that currently too much was running in parallel and all initiatives were competing for the same funds, she suggested bringing together all projects, including those of other CG centers, under one umbrella. She added that according to the Science Council 15mio US\$ have been dedicated by the CG centers to system priority 1B; an indicator for extensive work on underutilized species in the near future. She felt that a CG System Wide program would be appropriate.

Kwesi Atta-Krah reminded that not all actors and required activities could be brought together under System Priority 1B. The merger between GFU and ICUC would be the starting point and a System Wide Program could be a long term goal. He agreed that a simple merger would not be sufficient.

Eric Kueneman made the point that it would not be possible to have one single institution as other independent institutions working on underutilized species would always exist.

Several Steering Committee members raised the question of potential donors for a new entity.

Marlene Diekmann reminded that deadline for submission of research proposals to BEAF/GTZ would be March 2007 for funding in 2008; the magnitude is up to 1.2mio Euro. She pointed out that the GFU was a particular case not really fitting into their funding strategy. In addition, justifying a third phase would be difficult.

Against this background and in view of DFID's deadline for submission of proposals Eric Kueneman suggested to explore alternative funding options to avoid a funding gap in 2008.

Alessandro Meschinelli said that IFAD would be happy to see a multi-donor dimension. Funding could derive from ongoing and planned big projects to which in return the new entity should add value. He thought that strong collaboration between these projects and the new entity would ensure its sustainability. To evaluate these opportunities an inventory of these projects e.g. of FAO, IFAD, GTZ, DFID, GHI should be done.

Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon informed the Steering Committee about the outcome of the recent ICUC SAB meeting and the proposed next steps towards the merge of GFU and ICUC and the establishment of a new body.

The SC felt that it was very difficult to implement the proposed actions before end of March 2007, the timeframe proposed by the SAB.

9. Conclusions

- There was a general endorsement for the need to have some consolidation/merger of GFU and ICUC. There was however, a strong urge for more clarity in defining what the merger is to achieve and how it will link up with and add value to projects already on the ground through various organizations and donors. The need to define a clear niche for such an entity and work out what it precisely will do and how it can add a stronger voice to the importance and appeal of underutilized species was highlighted.
- GFU and ICUC should further analyze the new intended nucleus and how it would add value to the existing initiatives such as the IFAD NUS Project, the GTZ funded project on fonio, FAO's current programmes and other ongoing or planned bigger projects.
- GTZ/BMZ could not make a commitment towards funding of a new entity. They prefer options that would open the program to alternative funding possibilities, such as through Systemwide or Challenge Programs.
- There was concern on what would be feasible to do between now and March (deadline for submission to DFID should be confirmed, for this type of proposal there might be other deadline applicable). Going through the suggested process (analysis of value addition to other initiatives, outcome mapping, SWOT, stakeholder consultation) was considered not possible in such a short time.
- It was understood that the outcome mapping suggested by the ICUC SAB would be with a view towards the future rather than an evaluation of the past achievements of ICUC and GFU. A SWOT analysis of GFU and ICUC could also be considered as part of this exercise. The results of the analysis above would feed into the development of a proposal for submission to donors.
- The issue of funding the process was also raised as there is not much flexibility in GFU's budget.
- It was suggested to engage an experienced consultant to help writing the proposal and accompanying the process of donor negotiations.