



Global
Facilitation
Unit
for Underutilized
Species

**Steering Committee Meeting
Monday, 10 January 2005, FAO, Rome
(13:30 – 16:30, AGD meeting room B 640.)**

Agenda

- 13:30 Opening and welcome of participants by the Chairman (E. Kueneman)
- 13:35 Presentation and discussion of agenda (E. Kueneman)
- 13:40 Summary of recommendations given by the reviewer (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
- 13:50 Discussion and decision taking on recommendations (E. Kueneman)
- 1) New name for the GFU
- 2) Strategic partners
- 3) New composition of the Steering Committee
- (see also discussion paper prepared by I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
- 15:00 New project set-up under IPGRI (Toby Hodgkin)
- Draft workplan 2005, 2006 (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
- Campaign on “Diversification of Crop Production”
- 16:00 AOB (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon and others)
- (e.g. International Consultation on Biodiversity and the MDGs organized by GFU,
 MSSRF, IPGRI;)
- 16:30 End of meeting



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Minutes

1. Opening and welcome of participants by the Chairman (E. Kueneman)

The chairman welcomed the participants *and summarized the objectives of the meeting*. A quick round of self-introduction took place for the benefit of Jane Toll from IPGRI who was invited to this meeting as an observer. As of January 2005 she has been nominated acting director of IPGRI's programme 4 (temporary title: "Big Global partnerships") to which the GFU will belong during its second phase.

Hans Schoeneberger attended the meeting in representation of BMZ and conveyed the apologies of Jochen de Haas, SC member that was not able to attend.

2. Summary of recommendations given by the reviewer (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)

Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon presented to the participants the recommendations that were made by the external reviewer in May 2004.

3. Discussion and decision taking on recommendations (E. Kueneman)

3.1. New name for GFU

A reoccurring debate took place regarding whether the name "Underutilized Species" should be changed from the title of our project.

To some persons a term such as "Underutilized" has a negative connotation while to others it is positive as it underscores the potential these species have. FAO representatives suggested changing the name "Underutilized" to "Alternative" or "New Crops"; this would broaden the array of species the unit is dealing with further to make the project more attractive to policy makers. There are many examples of species, considered underutilized in certain areas while not in others, that led or lead to livelihood improvement – the people are at the center in the livelihood approach and the improvement of their livelihood is seen as the crucial point.

Examples are the cold tolerant oil palm, the black oats and the new sweet sorghum. For other participants the unit, due to its limited resources, should direct its efforts to underutilized species in the narrow sense. Further to this, GFU's stakeholders are beginning to recognize the acronym "GFU" and a change in the name would generate some confusion. The term "Alternative Crops", at least in Europe, generally refers to non food crops.

As per IFAD's representative it is important to keep in mind these two approaches that follow:

- Pro-poor research – targets underutilized areas, cultures, crops.
- By-poor research – enhancing local knowledge, a large number of people has the opportunity to develop their own PGR improvement program and marketing for the livelihood improvement is in the forefront.

BMZ supports underutilized species because of the potential of their contribution to food security and poverty alleviation; they are pro-poor, contribute to diversification and risk reduction

Consensus:

It was agreed that the GFU will maintain the name Underutilized Species. For a better common understanding a short paragraph should be developed that describes the scope of work and what is meant with the term Underutilized Species in the context of the unit. This definition will be used by all SC members for dialogue with their stakeholders and will avoid misunderstandings.

3.2. Strategic Partners (S.P.)

GFU's coordinator cleared the meaning of the term "strategic partners" amongst the participants so to make sure of a common understanding of the word.

S.P. are those that make a contribution (funding or in-kind) to the GFU already during the next phase and take over activities in future. It was also stressed that these S.P. should have experience in mainstreaming underutilized species into a value chain.

The S.P. become members of GFU's Steering Committee.

Follows a list of potential Strategic Partners that was suggested:

The ones already on board: BMZ (that will be represented by BEAF/GTZ), IPGRI, IFAD, FAO-AGPC, ICUC.

New ones that could be approached: FAO beyond AGPC, DFID, AVRDC (legally difficult but perhaps the African component dealing with horticultural crops), IFAP, CG Science Council, Wageningen UR, NGO's, Development agencies, Organizations belonging to the industry (private sector), Organizations representing the Consumer.

Consensus:

It was agreed that the GFU prepares a concept note (CN) (that will be approved by all SC members) for approaching identified S.P. together with an accompanying letter – GFU's SC chair will be the signatory and send them out.

The CN will contain background information, opportunities and the priority activities for phase 2 of the GFU, it is important to be specific on the role of the Strategic Partner.

We shall enclose as an annex to the CN a list of the existing Strategic Partners their duties/commitments. While the stakeholders are engaging in the creation of the Strategic Partnership a period of mutual observation is required so to realize about the benefit for all of the parties involved.

3.3. New composition of the Steering Committee (S.C.) (See also the discussion paper prepared by I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)

The S.C. task is to reflect on content issues and new TOR's (Terms of Reference) will have to be developed for this body. It was agreed that the S.C. members present to date will remain on board and it was suggested that two or three new members should become part of it. Representatives from the south would be costly but significant elements of the SC; we would have to budget for ensuring their presence although they would seek for the needed funds if they see an advantage of their participation.

As a suggestion we could think of involving representatives of the:

- SARD Initiative (Agenda 21 – chapter 14)
- NGO's (s.a. [AS-PTA](#) - Assessoria e Serviços a Projetos em Agricultura Alternativa - and in the person of Jean Marc von der Weid (leader of the Agroecology Working Group of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty)
- IFAP
- Someone from GFAR's RF
- Someone from the local private sector

It was unanimously agreed that FAO in the name of Eric Kueneman would remain chair of GFU for the next phase of the project

4. New project set-up under IPGRI (Toby Hodgkin)

The new structure of IPGRI was presented – 4 programs are considered:

1. Diversity for livelihoods
2. Understanding and managing biodiversity
3. Improving livelihoods in commodity-based systems
4. Big Global Partnerships

Based on a BMZ decision the GFU's 2nd phase will be implemented by IPGRI as opposed to GTZ. GFU staff will be recruited by IPGRI. GFU will belong to program 4 but is very closely linked to program 1 (Diversity for Livelihoods) and 2 (Understanding & Managing Diversity).

5. Presentation and discussion of Work plan

The draft of GFU's work plan for 2005 and 2006 was presented by Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon

5.1. Campaign on “Diversification of Crop Production”

“Diversification of Crop Production” is too broad as a campaign to carry out and should focus on Underutilized Species as intended in the definition of the GFU. An iteration so to share thoughts and receive inputs for such a Campaign between members of the S.C. has been suggested (i.e. what should be addressed, How should it be done etc.)

5.2. Policy analysis activity for the second phase of GFU

Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon

- As the focus during GFU's second phase is policy analysis and advise to policy makers this will represent one of the core activities of GFU' second phase. The GFU has recently met with IPGRI's GRPI (Genetic Resource Policy Initiative) coordinators. GRPI has task forces in 6 countries (Nepal, Zambia, Vietnam, Peru, Egypt, and Uganda) and our request was to consider the component Underutilized Species while carrying out their analysis. A connection has also been made with FAO LEG (Legal department) and they are looking at conservation policies in 5 different developing countries – they could include underutilized species into their work.
- Participants were also briefed on the activity CIAT, GFAR, IPGRI and GFU are jointly engaged in. A proposal for funding a series of case studies has been developed and will be submitted to donors. The project output will provide a tool to sensitize policy makers, donors, development agencies and entrepreneurs for and draw their attention to the relevance of underutilized species in rural development. It is expected that the dissemination of the information obtained through this project will increase the awareness and preparedness amongst the target groups to direct more investments into research on underutilized species and the development of enabling policies, thus increasing their contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal to combat hunger and poverty.

The following discussion highlighted the difficulties foreseen in performing policy analysis – a broad range of policies might affect underutilized species and a focus is required.

Alessandro Meschinelli:

- The key issue with regards to policy level changes is not designing “sound policies” *per se* but policies that are actually translated into field actions or are the reflection of them. Therefore the real challenge for IFAD is to ensure that project instrumentalities making use of NUS for poverty alleviation are being developed and applied in the design of new investment projects, which then could provide concrete guidelines for developing new policy frameworks. This requires the close involvement of IFAD country portfolio managers in the policy analysis activity. IFAD financed current Project on NUS¹ that is carried out in 6 different countries (Latin America: Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador; South Asia: India, Nepal; West Asia and North Africa: Egypt, Yemen) could be the appropriate context to perform the policy analysis

Toby Hodgkin:

- Recommended to look out for the organizations that would be interested to perform Policy work – ODI, IFPRI, Wageningen UR where suggested.

Nazmul Haq

- ICUC's program “Fruits for the Future” could be used for the purpose of Policy analysis

¹ Programme for enhancing the contribution of neglected and underutilized crops (NUCS) to food security and to incomes of the rural poor - <http://www.ifad.org/grants/tags/533.htm>

Eric Kueneman

- Suggested to search for projects within FAO, WHO, IFAD that take into account underutilized species, get involved in them and inject some ideas that consider the policy aspect.
- As for focusing on particular policies it was suggested to address initially those involved with GR.

Peter Griffee

Policy activity could be carried out with Biocenter in Bangalore, Karnataka

6. AOB

Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon

- The state of the “International Consultation on the Role of Biodiversity in Achieving the UN Millennium Development Goal of Freedom from Hunger and Poverty” was shared with the participants of the meeting. This is a PA activity directed in particular to high ranking policy makers that is being organized by the GFU in partnership with MSSRF, and IPGRI.
- GTZ is no longer implementing the project – IPGRI will perform the task.

Eric Kueneman

Suggested to pay a visit to Stefano Diulgheroff (information specialist and database manager of the Survey on the State of the world - <http://www.pgrfa.org/gpa>) in order to explore possible linkages between the db GFU is implementing and the set of information handled by the GPA. Activity 12 and 14 of the GPA are very relevant to the GFU.

Nazmul Haq

Described the work ICUC is carrying out with marketing of 4 different fruits in S.E. Asia Briefed participants that ICUC will move from Southampton to IWMI (Colombo – Sri Lanka).

Offered to facilitate the connection with ICUC’s Focal Point at IWMI’s – this would enhance the sharing of information

Annexes:

- I. Agenda
- II. List of participants
- III. Issues to be discussed
- IV. GFU’s work plan for 2005 and 2006



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List of participants

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