



Global
Facilitation
Unit
for Underutilized
Species

**Steering Committee Meeting
Monday, 12 December 2005 IPGRI, Rome
(13:30 – 17:00)**

Agenda

1. Opening and welcome of participants, presentation of new members (E. Kueneman)
2. Welcome of participants by IPGRI DG (E. Frison)
3. Adoption of agenda, approval of minutes of last meeting (E. Kueneman)
4. Report on GFU activities in 2005 (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
5. Discussion
6. Outlook into 2006 (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
7. Review of GFAR's Global Partnership Programmes and recent discussions within GFAR related to the GFU (O. Smith)
8. AoB

Minutes

1. Opening and welcome of participants, presentation of new members

The chairman Peter Griffee, on behalf of Eric Kueneman, opened the meeting by welcoming participants and introducing the new members of the SC.

Newcomers are:

- Marlene Diekmann from GTZ, attending the meeting in representation of the donor (BMZ) and replacing Hans Schoeneberger
- Hannah Jaenicke from the ICUC replacing Nazmul Haq and
- Mauricio Bellon, representing IPGRI and replacing Toby Hodgkin.

2. Welcome of participants by IPGRI DG

IPGRI's DG Dr. Emile Frison welcomed participants and gave some background information about the GFU. He stated that "The first phase of this facilitation unit has been a successful one and IPGRI has been asked by the donor to implement the GFU on behalf of GTZ during its second phase (March 2005 – December 2007). IPGRI is very much looking forward to a close collaboration amongst GFU and ICUC; an opportunity we have not really capitalized upon in the past. Within IPGRI's recent restructuring process, the GFU belongs to Program 4, the Global Partnerships Program (GP)."

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

The chair summarized the objectives of the meeting.

The minutes of the previous SC meeting (10 January 2005) were approved

4. Report on GFU activities in 2005

Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon presented GFUs progress report.

During this second phase of project cycle (March 2005 – December 2007) GFU's products and services should address those stakeholders that can be best served with a facilitation approach, hence GFU's target group should in first place be the policy and decision makers, research managers, donors, the general public and to a smaller extent stakeholders working at the technical level.

She reported about progress made in the main activity areas.

- **Information, communication and documentation**

The web portal is expected to be the main gateway for providing access to information on underutilized species to the stakeholders. It is being restyled to enhance its functions, provide easier navigability and user friendliness. Hence a "users' needs" survey is currently being carried out to identify the way ahead in this reshaping process. In March 2006 the new structure should be in place.

In order to respond to requests for funding that GFU receives on a regular base, donor information has been gathered and will be placed on line.

GFAR secretariat and the FM of the GPA did not demonstrate interest in partnering with the GFU in developing a joint donor database dedicated to underutilized species that would be made publicly available. However ABFU, hosted at IPGRI, made a financial contribution towards this information on donors as they are having interest in accessing such kind of information.

Further to this a strategy paper “Strategic approaches for funding work on underutilized species” and thought especially for small stakeholders is being prepared. The objective is to provide guidance on:

1. how to develop successful donor tailored proposals related to underutilized species,
2. strategic approaches for finding resources and
3. managing donor relationships.

Two concept notes on underutilized species supply chains have been prepared in partnership with

1. GFAR and CIAT (more historical): “Strengthening Underutilized Crop Supply Chains for the Poor through Participatory Inquiry and Action”
Expected outcome is a better understanding of the supply chains, how did they evolve and how can they be improved.
2. IAC and IFPRI (more economic): “The Necessary Conditions and Capacities for Poor Market Chain Actors to Engage in and Benefit from Production, Processing and Marketing of Underutilized Species”
Expected outcomes are
 - a methodology and tools for the development and implementation of case studies, geared towards exploring and analysing the possible commercial use of underutilized species
 - guidelines and recommendations for the creation of an enabling policy environment for the commercialization of underutilized plant species
 - training materials and learning guidelines for different target groups and
 - training modules.

Both of them have been submitted to some donors for funding but no positive response has been received.

- **Public awareness**

The International Consultation held in Chennai in April 2005 on "The Role of Biodiversity in Achieving the UN Millennium Development Goal of Freedom from Hunger and Poverty" saw the participation of more than 100 specialists amongst policy makers, media, farmers and others. The output of the consultation was an action plan, the Chennai Platform for action, that has been translated in six languages contains policy recommendations that refer several times to underutilized species as an asset in achieving MDG 1 (eradication of extreme poverty and hunger).

IPGRI's DG carried the message of the Chennai Platform for action to policy and decision makers while attending the G77 + China meeting. The document was also distributed at the UN summit in September.

GFU is finalizing the proceedings of this meeting.

EU Novel Food Regulation – GFU and GTZ have published a fact sheet that informs about the regulation and its implications on trade with traditional foods between developing countries and the EU. Suggestions to amend this constraint for the extra-European farmers are pointed out

Another publication on the topic is a joint issue paper (GFU, UNCTAD, IPGRI, CBI and GTZ). IPGRI's 2005 "Geneflow" magazine with a special section dedicated to Diversity and Nutrition features an article on the novel food regulation. Several GFU partners made contributions to this issue of IPGRI's magazine.

An exhibition of underutilized species material has been compiled and displayed in various occasions. Some visual material accompanies the products with the intention to sensitize stakeholders about the diversity of products, the attractiveness they gain along the value chain and the objective to revert the sometimes negative connotation these underutilized species carry.

- **Policy analysis**

Through the analysis of national and international policy and legal frameworks that effect underutilized species recommendations enabling their deployment will be drawn and addressed to the policy and decision makers. The purpose is to contribute to a more conducive environment for the deployment of underutilized species.

Letters of Agreement have been signed between GFU and research teams of the following countries: Peru, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Vietnam, Uzbekistan, Jordan, Nepal.

GFU contributed to a discussion paper commissioned by UNCTAD and CBI and agreed on a joint strategy to increase leverage on EU commission

GFU supported the organization of a CBI and UNCTAD BioTrade Facilitation Programme (BTFP) workshop that took place in Bruxelles on 1 December 2005 and sponsored the attendance of a participant from Paraguayan Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock representing the exporting countries

Title of the meeting was: "Workshop on the revision of the Novel Food Regulation (NFR) - Views and experiences regarding traditional foods".

The objective of the workshop was to present technical suggestions for the revision of the Novel Foods Regulation and hear perspectives from developing countries, exporters and European importers. Several directorates attended: DG Sanco, DG Trade, DG development and DG Enterprise.

For more information you may follow the link: - <http://www.biotrade.org/BTFP/btftp-novelfoods-wshop.htm>

- **Capacity building**

Not part of the core of GFU's mandate, however, as a follow-up to the workshop organized in Macerata (January 2004) on marketing opportunities, GFU has negotiated with IAC in Wageningen to insert a two weeks module (19 - 30 June 2006) on "[Promoting agrobiodiversity use: market and chains](#)" into the "Training program on the Conservation, Management and Use of Plant Genetic Resources in Agriculture". It is tailored for the attendance of about 25 participants. GFU is working with IAC and IPGRI on the concept and content of this training module.

- **Strategic partners**

Letters of invitation have been sent by the chair to 30 selected potential partners. Up to now the response to become a strategic partner has been low.

Special attention should be given to this point as these new partners should give sustainability to the project, add additional expertise and funds to the GFU.

5. DISCUSSION

- **Information, communication and documentation**

Web portal

Peter Griffee underscored the importance of PROTAs portal to GFU's work. He offered to assist in establishing an agreement between the two organizations so to stamp each others work and make sure that GFU is up on PROTA's website.

A lack of flexibility in the search for experts in the Who is Who db was highlighted – Paul Bordoni will look at the possibility to carry out free text searches within the list of experts belonging to the db.

Donor information

Hannah Jaenicke indicated a directory in FAO Forestry as a model and a useful link for the GFU. Peter Griffee will look for the product and provide GFU with the link.

Studies on underutilized species supply chains

The hypothesis to seek funding for the GFAR/CIAT/GFU case studies within BMZ was advanced by Ola Smith, unfortunately Marlene Diekmann stated that the funds BMZ provided to the GFU can not be topped up.

- **Public awareness**

EU Novel Food Regulation

Tony Simons (from ICRAF) was indicated as a useful contact for GFUs effort in awareness creation on the EU NFR.

- **Policy analysis and advice to policy and decision maker**

Alessandro Meschinelli stated that IFAD together with other organizations are analyzing PRSPs assessing the importance these financial instruments attach to agriculture. He then suggested GFU pays a visit to Cheikh Sourang (IFAD program manager and coordinating this evaluation to find out about IFAD's interest in considering underutilized species in the analysis.

It was noted that in PRSPs rural development is not high on the agenda; a concern for underutilized species should follow the broader one for agriculture; nevertheless underutilized species could be the argument to give more importance to rural development in these documents. In its limited resources and capacities it was noted also that GFUs opportunity to influence policy agendas is to team up with strategic partners, however resources are needed.

Studies on impact of national and international policies on underutilized species

Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon said it is important to broaden the list of countries included in this policy analysis to gain a global perspective and include some African ones that are not present to date.

Hannah Jaenicke will provide contacts and facilitate the involvement of other stakeholders in the policy activity; a starting point will be the SEANUC network (South East Asian Network on Underutilized Crops).

Marlene Diekmann recommended including OECD countries in this policy analysis.

Alessandro Meschinelli recommended including the countries that are part of the IFAD IPGRI NUS project.

EU Novel Food Regulation

The chances of success in the amendment of this EU regulation are quite good; strong allies such as UNCTAD and CBI are now on board and will lobby for the amendment of this non tariff trade barrier. GFU will monitor progress and take action if needed.

The chances to have an impact on the policy making process exist only if GFU teams up with other organizations, otherwise the opportunity is to create awareness and raise consciousness.

○ **Capacity building**

In order to make sure advantage is really taken from this training course on Marketing agrobiodiversity some key participants should be invited:

- the policy analysts that are working on the “Analysis of Existing National Policies that Enable or Inhibit the Wider Use of Underutilized Plant Species for Food and Agriculture”
- the project partners from the IFAD NUS project

○ **New strategic partners**

A strategy for research and development on underutilised plant species for Africa and Asia will be initiated in a GFU/ICUC joint effort, it will be crucial to inviting strategic partners in that occasion.

When approaching strategic partners, mention the IFAD grant to the NUS project that could give the opportunity to be impact oriented and have good leverage of funds.

A key organization is the Swiss commission for partnerships (KFPE) that is concerned about the partnerships.

6. OUTLOOK INTO 2006

Policy analysis and advice to policy and decision makers

Studies on impact of national and international policies on underutilized species

The analysis on a national scale shall continue and extend to other countries in order to get a more complete picture; India, more countries in Latin America and some African one's should be included.

Towards the end of the year an international workshop with policy makers from selected countries will be organized together with IPGRI's Policy Research and Support Unit and other partners to present the study results and to discuss the recommendations.

Monitoring of the suggested amendment of the EU Novel Food Regulation will continue and GFU will take action depending on the developments within the Commission.

Mauricio Bellon commented that the structure of incentives in a country determines why one species or another one is favored.

Alessandro Meschinelli recommended that GFU should team up with World Bank through IFAD to have a stronger capacity in lobbying for policy changes.

Ola Smith stated that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible for the GFU to influence the agenda of the World Bank.

Hannah Jaenicke will facilitate the involvement of other stakeholders in the policy analyses through the SEANUC network.

Information, communication and documentation

Web portal

Once the users' needs survey is closed and analyzed the web site will be redesigned. The objective is to make it become a more user friendly portal by enhancing the search functions improving its navigability (e.g. making it easier to browse). A news service via e-mail will inform stakeholders on updates.

Donor database

The database on funding opportunities will be placed on line and the information provided will be filtered or selected in order to avoid e-mail inundation of the donors.

Studies on underutilized species supply chains

The donors have not responded positively to the request for funding these studies. However, as the expected output of these studies is information relevant for the elaboration of guidelines on supply chain development for underutilized species and would provide inputs to the policy recommendations we shall look for other funding opportunities also in the donor database.

Public awareness

Focus of GFU for this year will be the organization of a public awareness campaign.

As a follow up of the international consultation in Chennai country based meetings are planned to take place in at least 10 different countries to raise awareness on the Chennai platform for action.

Ola Smith suggested including GFAR in the selection of the countries.

Capacity building

GFU and IPGRI will play key roles in the development and implementation of this course on Marketing biodiversity with emphasis on underutilized species.

Alessandro Meschinelli suggested that the IFAD NUS partners should be invited to the training course. Mauricio Bellon will communicate this to the project coordinator.

As an overall recommendation, Alessandro Meschinelli suggested involvement of GFU in the phase II of the IFAD NUS project (TAG 533¹) that is coordinated by IPGRI.

Strategic Partners

A request for advice was addressed to the steering committee on how to tackle this fundamental point.

Unfortunately no recommendation was made by the steering committee.

7. Review of GFARs' Global Partnership Programmes and recent discussions within GFAR related to the GFU

GFAR in 2001 organized an IFAD funded workshop to define what is a GPP. The results were never packaged and shared with partners.

A review of the GPPs is ongoing and a workshop will take place in January 2006. The purpose is to find out if

- the GPP concept (a partnership of stakeholders around a topic) is still a valid one;
- the GPPs had any impact

and come up with guidelines for new GPPs.

Ola Smith reported about complaints from the Regional Fora (RF) with regards to the GFU; the donor has funded only a unit and the RF do not feel involved in GFU's activities.

¹ <http://www.ifad.org/grants/tags/533.htm>

Acronyms and links:

- ABFU – Agro Biodiversity Facilitation Unit
- [BTFP](#) - BioTrade Facilitation Programme
- [CBI](#) – Centre for promotion of imports from developing countries
- [CoP8](#) - CBD Eighth Conference of the Parties
- [EFARD](#) - European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development
- [EU DG Sanco](#) – EU Health & Consumer Protection
- [EU DG Trade](#)
- [EU DG Development](#)
- [EU DG Enterprise](#)
- [EU NFR](#) (Novel Food Regulation)
- [FM of the GPA](#) - Facilitation Mechanism of the GPA
- [GFAR](#) - Global Forum on Agricultural Research
- [GPA](#) - Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
- [GPP](#)- Global Partnership Program
- [IAC](#) - (International Agricultural Centre)
- [ICRAF](#) - World Agroforestry Centre
- [KFPE](#) - Swiss commission for partnerships
- [PROTA](#) – (Plant Resources Of Tropical Africa)
- [PRSP](#) - Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
- [SEANUC](#)²- Southern and East Africa Network on Underutilised Crops
- [UNCTAD](#) - United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Annexes:

- I. List of participants

² member countries: Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe



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List of participants

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