

Newsletter



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Fifth Meeting of the International Steering Committee (ISC) and GRPI-Wide Phase II meeting

Highlights

As the year 2006 comes to an end, the Genetic Resources Policy Initiative (GRPI) project is also preparing to wind up its activities in the six pathfinder countries and two sub-regions. Phase I of the project began with a comprehensive Demand Analysis (DA) process where data regarding demand for capacity strengthening and research was collected and synthesized. This was followed by a stage of identifying gaps between those demands and existing information as well as training possibilities. Subsequent national policy research priorities were identified in each country and sub-region leading to the current Phase II stage of the project scheduled to end in 2007.

One of the most significant events held within the last quarter of 2006 was the GRPI-Wide Phase II and International Steering Committee (ISC) meeting. The former brought together GRPI Task Force (TF) representatives from all GRPI pathfinder countries and sub-regions with an aim of sharing experiences and forging a way forward as the project approaches conclusion. The ISC meeting, an annual undertaking which provides strategic and operational guidance for the project, was held after the GRPI-Wide Phase II meeting. It was noted that overall implementation of Phase II activities has been on a steady course throughout this year. These activities, most of which began in the year 2005, also generated tremendous interest among stakeholders who attended the meetings with notable observations being made in regard to sustainability and other related aspects of the project.

In this edition of our newsletter, we will provide an overview of progress of these activities in an attempt to provide information on some of the substantial achievements in this last quarter. Our online information sharing initiatives and networking activities are also highlighted. Other significant developments that were not mentioned in the previous edition of our newsletter owing to the evolving nature of their tasks and which ultimately are intended to support longer term policy research objectives are also included. We hope that by addressing these developments, further opportunities for conducting policy research and providing leadership in the under-represented genetic resources policy arena will be realised. We also hope that relevant stakeholders will adopt appropriate action plans in respect to specific policy priorities, goals and objectives accordingly.

Finally, we acknowledge with thanks all contributions to this newsletter, especially from our stakeholders in various national programmes who shared the activities they carried out in the immediate past - and which gave us an in-depth insight into the current research course.

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform all our national partners and stakeholders of activities and events that are taking place in the Project. The unique design allows for quick and easy access to articles of interest to you. New articles will be added every time we produce the newsletter. Older newsletters are available online at: www.pibs.info/data.php under GRPI public awareness section. There will be three editions of this newsletter for the purpose of targeting information that is relevant to your needs. For more information, do not hesitate to contact us by e-mailing info-grpi@cgiar.org. As always, we would like to extend our gratitude to all national partners and stakeholders who have played an instrumental role in our efforts aimed at strengthening capacity to analyse national options.

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News and Events

From the GRPI countries:

Egypt

Implementation of phase 2 activities continued as planned in the last quarter of 2006 notwithstanding some challenges in the implementation of Component 1 (Assessing the Impact on GRFA in Environmental Impact Assessment). Under this component a study on the economic valuation of GFA was commissioned. The study is intended to identify tools and methods for conducting the case studies envisaged under this component. Progress was hampered however after it became clear that there was lack of specialist expertise in the area of resource economics. In response, the GGCO in August/September 2006 organized a technical assistance mission to Cairo. As a result of this mission, the key methodologies for the component have been revised and work is now underway, including some aspects of the case studies that have been commissioned to a research team consisting of members from the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Alexandria and from the local communities in the selected research site.

Other notable achievements were also made by GRPI-Egypt in this quarter. These include data compilation under component 1 and field work under component 2 (strengthening farmers' rights).

Nepal

Considerable progress has been made in the implementation of Phase II activities. Notable achievements in this quarter included the linkage that was made under component 1 (Inter-Institutional Coordination and Linkages) on linking the work that GRPI-Nepal is doing with formal institutional structures such as the national mechanism for information sharing under the Leipzig Global Plan of Action on PGRFA.

In relation to the development of a *sui generis* framework under component C (Development of a *sui generis* framework), a baseline research in the form of collecting existing material, papers and articles on GR management has been conducted. This will provide basis for action research in the form of case studies currently being conducted and which are intended to form the basis for revisions to the Nepal Plant Variety Protection (PVP) Bill.

GRPI Nepal also produced outputs in this quarter in the form of a draft report on valuation of rice varieties in the country under component E (Commercialization and the development of market linkages to promote the use of genetic resources). The report estimates the value (use and non-use value) of local rice landraces with the intention of demonstrating its importance to policy-makers.

Peru

GRPI-Peru has also been advancing Phase 2 activities proactively. The development of a process for the establishment of an agro-biodiversity protected area to a point that this can be codified in the form of implementing regulations under the existing legal framework has been particularly notable. GRPI-Peru's other 'flagship' activity, the development of a register of native crops, has also been progressing well, with efforts towards the development of relevant descriptors and increasingly detailed consideration of the policy objectives of the register being major features of activity. Research and baseline information and analysis were undertaken on the markets and *in situ* conservation and the Task Force (TF) will produce a paper assessing the market impacts on activities of *in situ* conservationist farmers.

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Vietnam

Implementation of phase 2 activities progressed well in Vietnam this quarter. Of considerable importance is the considerable effort that was put in the field surveys for *Nep Cam* rice and traditional vegetables in the Sa Pa district of North West Vietnam. *Nep Cam* is identified as bearing significant interest among the local communities especially for traditional ceremonies and events. Literature reviews and desk studies have also been undertaken under component II (Informal Seed Systems Policy Research and Development). The TF expects to undertake work on the publication of a book of existing laws.

An awareness raising strategy was defined in cooperation with Laocai Provincial Department of Information and Culture with the aim of encouraging local farmers and policy makers to consider the conservation of local plant seeds in their activities.

GRPI-Vietnam also played host to a GRPI international workshop on Farmers' Rights that was held in Hanoi this quarter. The workshop brought together representatives from GRPI countries plus a representative from India. It also brought international experts in the field of genetic resources policy and farmers' rights in particular.

Zambia

GRPI-Zambia has advanced considerably, with the development or revision of several key studies that will provide a foundation for the completion of planned work in 2007. Notable achievements in this quarter include the revision of a draft study of the laws and policies affecting the use of local genetic resources and a draft market demand analysis report under component 3 (Promotion and incorporation of traditional varieties and local breeds in local production systems). The completion of a field study of patterns of genetic resource exchange is also expected to provide interesting insights for analysis in early 2007.

Preparations are also well underway for GRPI-Zambia to host a GRPI-wide workshop on economic analysis in late February or early March 2007.

From the GRPI sub-regions:

East Africa

A regional training course for lawyers and policy makers on the ITPGRFA was organised in Uganda. In addition, a regional conference on the implementation of the ITPGRFA and development of a strategy to address sub-regional issues was also organised. The sub-regional strategy includes specific activities and responsibilities for the implementation of the ITPGRFA, as well as proposals for the convening of policy working group to support sub-regional initiatives in the longer term.

Due to the immense interest generated by the previous conferences, GRPI-EA is exploring possibilities of holding a regional policy dialogue for members of parliament sitting in portfolio committees that deal in agriculture.

West Africa

A sub-regional conference to consider the establishment of a network of 'nodal centers of excellence' for PGR conservation and options for the implementation of the ITPGRFA across the 21 countries covered by CORAF was held in Burkina Faso in September 2006. GRPI is supporting the initiative and will continue to promote the implementation of the declaration until mid 2007. A publication describing the rationales behind

various aspects of the conference declaration and options for their implementation will be produced in collaboration with a broad group of authors in the region.

From the GGCO:

Meetings

- ❖ GRPI secretariat organised the following meetings:
 - GRPI-Wide Phase II meeting (Nairobi, Kenya; November 8-10, 2006).
 - International Steering Committee meeting (Nairobi, Kenya; November 11-12, 2006).
- ❖ GRPI secretariat in collaboration with GRPI-Vietnam organised an international workshop on exploring legal definitions of farmers' varieties in strategies to promote farmers' rights (Hanoi, Vietnam; 26-28 October 2006).
- ❖ The GRPI secretariat in collaboration with EAPGREN and ACODE organized a regional training workshop on laws and policies of relevance to GR for lawyers in Eastern Africa (Entebbe, Uganda; August 2006).
- ❖ The GRPI secretariat in collaboration with EAPGREN and ACODE organized a regional conference on implementing the ITPGRFA in Eastern Africa (Entebbe, Uganda; September 20-21, 2006).
- ❖ The GRPI secretariat in collaboration with CORAF and the GCDT organized a regional workshop on implementing the ITPGRFA in west and central Africa (Ouagadougou July 2006).

Visits

Michael Halewood, Isabel Lopez and Kwesi Atta-Krah visited the GGCO in November 2006. The purpose of this visit was to hold follow up discussions on both the outcomes of the GRPI-Wide Phase II and ISC meetings in collaboration with the GGCO-Nairobi staff.

Appointments

No appointments were made at the GGCO office during the last quarter of this year. It is expected that Dr. Edilegnaw Wale, GRPI supported ZEF post doctoral fellow in economics, will be seconded to the GRPI team in early 2007, as a means of providing increased support in economic analysis to GRPI projects and assisting in the final preparations for the economics workshop planned for Feb/March 2007.

Announcement

IPGRI has changed its name to "Bioversity International". The name echoes the organization's new strategy, which focuses on improving people's lives through biodiversity research. For more information please visit www.bioversityinternational.org.

PIBS: News, resources and information on the Internet (www.pibs.info)

Information brokerage

The National Partner's Library continues to attract an impressive number of visits from users all over the world. New documents are added on an ongoing basis and we therefore encourage you to continue using the service and send us your feedback through: info-grpi@cgiar.org. At the moment the service is only available to our national partners. If you would like to utilize the service and do not have the login details, please get in touch with us using the contact e-mail provided above.

Networking

The country hubs for Egypt, Uganda, Zambia, Nepal and Peru are in operation. The PIBS correspondents in the respective sites are available for

information requests, comments or suggestions to improve the services. In collaboration with the GGCO, the PIBS correspondents are also working out a sustainability model as the project comes to an end.

Events in pictures



GRPI-Zambia Phase II: Component 1 dissemination seminar in Lusaka.



GRPI-Egypt Phase II: Bedouins at a meeting in Saint Catherine, Egypt



GRPI-Nepal Phase II: A workshop in San Marcos, Nepal (Sep. 2006).



GRPI-Wide Phase II meeting: Some participants during a tea break (Nov. 2006).

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Policy Trends

Killing two birds with one stone: Improving farmers' lives and promoting on-farm conservation of crop diversity through market chain analysis

Much of the literature on crop biodiversity economics has concluded that creating incentives for farmers to grow traditional landraces is crucial for their conservation and sustainable use. The incentives could be financial or non-financial as they could be market-based or non-market-based. In all cases, the idea is to make traditional landraces more rewarding and appealing for farmers on a sustainable manner. In practice, there is a huge resistance on the feasibility of financial incentives due to a concern about their sustainability and their implications for future genetic resources policy. If policy makers start to directly pay for farmers, what will happen when that fund stops? What can policy do for future genetic resources policy?

Let alone markets for traditional landraces, agricultural markets in SSA are segmented, fragmented, thin, incomplete, volatile, unreliable, risky, poorly functioning, and poorly connected to other businesses. Features of farmers' produce from traditional landraces (seasonality, poor quality and impurity, perishability, bulkiness, and inelastic demand, to list a few) have made it hard for farmers to benefit from production of these crops. Traditional varieties of crops are hardly connected to any local or global value chains. In most cases, there is no adequate market demand for unprocessed traditional varieties of crops. Consequently, the terms of trade will be against them. All these realities have resulted in sustainable poverty of traditional crop producers and loss of traditional landraces from farmers' fields.

The purpose of market chain analysis is to study the nature of the chain with all its ingredients from its conception to its end, starting with farmers and ending with the final consumers. To that effect, one needs to understand the nature of the product itself, the actors involved in the market chain (farmers, local traders, international traders, transporters, wholesalers, processors, retailers, and consumers), functions performed at each point of the value addition, prices in and out at each point, the opportunities related to the flow of a particular landrace, the market constraints in the chain, and the potential entry points. The results of the analysis can inform policy on the areas of intervention so that new opportunities can be created on alternative market outlets for products of traditional landraces.

If efficient value chains are placed for traditional crop varieties, every business involved in the whole chain (small-holder farmers, agro-processors, commercial farmers, exporters, transporters, wholesalers, supermarkets, retailers, consumers *etc.*) will benefit. This holistic approach will improve livelihoods and create sustainable demand for traditional landraces and their products. Through identifying critical constraints and opportunities in relation to the market chain, there will be a chance to see options / alternative policy interventions to better link farmers' traditional landraces with the market. Addressing the constraints might pave the way to address difficulty in market entry for products from traditional landraces. In some circumstances, there might be niche markets to address an existing demand gap for a limited number of consumers and products. In other cases, value addition on the products of traditional landraces which includes tasks like further processing, bulking, cleaning, grading, and bagging, could be the areas of intervention.

To be sustainable, biodiversity policy has to address not only conservation but also farmers' livelihoods. The overall objective of market chain analysis, as it relates to genetic resources, will, therefore, have to be to improve

farmers' income from traditional crops and ensure the sustainable use of traditional landraces by farmers. Market chain analysis and commercialization of threatened landraces based on the results of the analysis will ensure not only sustainable conservation of crop varieties but also improve the livelihoods of farmers whose lives are by and large connected to the marketability of traditional landraces. Above all, this strategy is in line with the newly emerging strategy of linking genetic resources conservation with farmers' livelihoods such as that of Bioversity International: *improving lives through biodiversity research*.

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This issue of the GRPI quarterly e-newsletter is widely distributed, as part of an awareness campaign for the project. As always, if you would like to provide feedback or recommend a friend for subscription to this newsletter, e-mail us at info-grpi@cgiar.org.

Upcoming events

- ❖ **GRPI workshop on economics** (an event to consider issues relating to economic valuation of GRFA and the linkage with production and marketing concerns; Lusaka, Zambia; tentative date-February/March 2007).

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