



In-situ Conservation of Crop Wild Relatives Through Enhanced Information Management and Field Application



FAST FACTS

Achieved: Conservation of crop wild relatives in five countries with the goal of increasing their potential for crop improvement and the establishment of an international information system to support worldwide conservation of these at-risk, wild species.

Where: Armenia, Bolivia, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan

Cost: GEF funds: \$6,126,025; Co-financing: \$9,887,574

When: March 2004 to March 2011

Partners: Partner and donor organizations included Biodiversity International, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, the German Federal Agency for Agriculture and Food, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources and the United Nations Environment Programme’s World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

Achievements

The project substantially expanded the world’s knowledge of crop wild relatives (CWRs), especially in developing countries. It included an ambitious assessment of the distribution, use and threats to these wild species. It organized existing national-level information and made it available on the CWR Global Portal. Some CWRs were assessed for their use in crop improvement for sustainable livelihoods and food security.

Legacy

- Developed national strategies to ensure the conservation of sustainable use of CWRs in five countries.
- Acted as a driving force in the formation of the Species Survival Commission of the World Conservation Union’s CWR specialist group, a network of experts who promote conservation and sustainable use of the wild species.
- Carried out extensive eco-geographic surveys of CWRs and published the first IUCN red list dedicated to them in Bolivia.
- Raised awareness of the threat posed by climate change to CWR conservation through a study supported by the project.
- Received credit in the Second State of the World’s Report on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (SOW-2).
- Inspired the assessment of wild species used for food in Armenia.
- Developed mechanisms for sustainable harvesting and management of wild species for food security.
- Generated information and a manual on in-situ conservation practices that can be used for making decisions in other countries.

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Publications:

Information gathered and archived can be found on www.cropwildrelatives.org

Outputs and Deliverables:

The project met its goals of:

- Establishing working relationships between institutions to promote the development of national and international CWR inventories.
- Prioritizing CWRs, collecting information on their conservation status and use, and evaluating their potential for crop improvement. As a result of this effort, species from 36 genera were earmarked for action and more than 310 species were red-listed according to IUCN guidelines.
- Providing effective models for protected areas and species management that can be used in other parts of the world.
- Developing awareness programs for policy makers and other audiences that highlighted the biodiversity of CWRs and their importance for livelihoods and food security.
- Producing tools such as the global CWR portal and a manual on in-situ conservation.

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Photo Credits: Potato stall in Bolivia, wild pepper in Sri Lanka and wild plants in Armenia all by Annie Lane.

