

Minutes of the first Steering Committee on EU-ACP project on In situ conservation and use of Crop Wild Relatives in three countries of the SADC region.

Held on 16th April 2014 at Protea Hotel Safari Lodge, Lusaka, Zambia

Agenda:

- Welcome
- Constitution and selection of chair
- Terms of reference
- Feedback on project work plan

Dr Ehsan Dulloo, in his capacity as Project Coordinator of the EU ACP project on *"In situ conservation and use of Crop Wild Relatives in three countries of the SADC region"*, welcomed members of the steering committee (SC) to its first meeting. He said that according to the project document a SC needs to be constituted at the inception of the project to guide implementation and dissemination of results of the project, as well as to serve as an internal and external evaluation of the project. The SC should be comprised of the representatives of partner institutions of the project, farmers' community, breeders' community, environmental scientist, policy maker/decision maker, FAO, Director of SPGRC and Regional Director of Bioversity for sub Saharan Africa. Members are listed in annex 1. They were selected to be on the SC based on recommendations of the partner institutions. He highlighted that Dr Chike Mba from FAO also represents the breeders' community, as Dr Chike Mba has been himself a breeder at CIAT and IAEA before joining FAO. He also said that Dr Ishmael Sungu of Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Union (SACAU) and Dr Anneline Morgan of the SADC secretariat have accepted to be SC members as representatives of farmer's community and policy-makers respectively. They both were unable to attend the inception workshop and SC meeting and have sent their apologies. They assured us of their full support for the project and participation as SC members.

Selection of the Chair of the SC

Dr Ehsan Dulloo asked for a nomination for the chair of the SC and suggested that the chair should be selected from the non-partner institutions. Dr Nigel Maxted (University of Birmingham) nominated Chike Mba from FAO. This was seconded by Dr Paul Muyenyembe (SPGRC). Dr Mba was thus nominated by consensus and Dr Ehsan Dulloo passed on the chairmanship over to him.

Dr Chike Mba thanked the SC members for their confidence in nominating him as the chair of the SC. He said that the theme of this project is an important area of work for FAO and he is happy to take on the task as chairman of this SC.

Discussion of constitutions of SC

Dr Nigel Maxted (University of Birmingham) noted that the SC is not well represented in expertise from environmental sciences. He suggested that this expertise be strengthened in the SC, given the importance in linking agricultural agencies interested in the conservation of CWR with conservation organisations which are often responsible for management of in situ conservation sites. Several suggestions were made by SC members, including WWF office in Zambia which is engaged in regional community based activities in management of wildlife, IUCN regional office in Southern Africa, and UNEP-GEF. It was argued that UNEP-GEF would be a good choice given the potential of leveraging project funding through GEF. It was agreed that Dr Jojo Baidu-Forson, Regional Director of

Bioversity based in Nairobi, Kenya is well placed to contact UNEP-GEF and make a recommendation of whom to invite from UNEP-GEF.

Godfrey Mwila (Zambia) suggested that it would be desirable to seek an additional member to represent the breeders' community so as to lessen the load on the Chair. The project coordinator remarked that there is limited budget for the steering committee in the project budget. Notwithstanding the budget availability, the SC considered it is important to strengthen the committee with a breeder representative, preferably from the region. Several options for a breeder representative were discussed including CCARDESA, CGIAR centres; the following three suggestions were made in order of priority:

- a. Chair of South Africa Plant Breeding Association- (Wilhem Boetes)
- b. Catherine Mungoma, a breeder and currently Head of SCCI (the seeds certification institution) of Zambia
- c. Chair of Plant breeding centre at the University of Kwazulu Natal

It was agreed that the project coordinator should in the first instance contact Wilhem Boetes. Other possibilities should also be explored by the project coordinator.

Terms of reference

A draft Terms of Reference for the SC was circulated for discussion. The Chair questioned whether it is the responsibility of the SC to ensure that activities are carried out. Rather the SC should be responsible to provide guidance to the project implementation towards achieving its objectives through providing oversight guidance and advice. Paul Munyenembe suggested that the last sentence of the background section, i.e. *in providing guidance to the project implementation and help in the proper orientation of its activities*, defines well the functions of the SC. The SC requested the project coordinator to redraft the mandate and scope to reflect this suggestion.

It was also suggested to merge the second and third bullets, as monitoring and review of progress means essentially the same thing. The third bullet should focus on advising any adjustment needed to the project work plan.

Prof. Yasmina Jaufeeraully Fakim suggested that the SC should review the progress of work based on the periodic progress report. Godfrey Mwila said that there may not be enough time to effectively do this given there are only two meetings of the SC remaining on the project cycle. The chair suggested that the project coordinator should provide members of the SC with copies of the progress reports to provide comments electronically. He also suggested to include a sentence in the working procedures section that SC members shall review the periodic progress report and provide recommendations electronically between SC meetings.

Dr Nigel Maxted remarked that there is nothing in the draft TOR about identification of opportunities for expanding or scaling up the project. He said that there are many developments in the sector of agricultural biodiversity and it would be good to have links with other projects or funding opportunity. The chair suggested that the last bullet could be expanded to include identifying opportunity for scaling up the project. Dr Maxted also suggested that the organisation of a conference at the end of the project could have a positive spin off for the project and help raising funding for expansion of the project to other regions of Africa and beyond.

Dr Jojo Baidu-Forso (Bioversity International) suggested that a bullet on creating awareness is very important and could help to look out for opportunities. He also suggested that the Director of SPGRC should bring the project to the attention of the SPGRC Board members and to include it on the agenda of the next Board meeting. They should also report the inception of this project to the SADC

secretariat stressing its link to food security. The project can be used as template for scaling up the conservation and use of CWR across Africa.

Dr Maxted recommended that a short catchy title of the project be found. This will help with better communication of the project with the external world, creating greater awareness of the project.

The Terms of Reference as revised by the SC are provided in Annex 2.

Feedback from steering committee members on project work plan

Members of the SC provided feedback on the inception workshop. Members were unanimous in saying that the workshop was an excellent opportunity for the partners to get together and discuss the work packages in detail. It provided the opportunity for partners to ask for clarification about activities and tasks they did not understand. The technical presentations made during the workshop were very informative and participants were able to get a clear understanding of objectives of the project and of what is expected of them.

It was noted that it was very good that national partners in the project were very much involved in the design and preparation of the proposal itself and there was a sense of ownership of the entire group within the project. All participants participated actively in the discussion, which augurs well to the implementation of the project.

SC members were pleased to see that high-level policy makers were invited to participate in the inception workshop and not only scientist and technical people. The presence of Deputy Permanent Secretary from Mauritius as a participant was highly appreciated and will help in getting the buy-in of the project at high political level in Mauritius and in the region. The other countries made great efforts to invite a high level policy person for the inception workshop, but it was difficult to assure their participation. Country partners were requested to ensure that awareness of the project is raised among their policy leaders in both agriculture and environment ministries. Dr Michel Cloete indicated that South Africa will strive to get a representative from the environment sector, back on board on this project in South Africa.

It was felt that the project provides an added opportunity for building a network of like-minded scientists in the region, which can work together to further develop proposals on related scientific themes, e.g. on characterisation, genetic diversity, landrace conservation, niche markets etc.

The next step is now for countries to develop work plans and set milestones to get clarity of what should be achieved by end of the year. This will also help in monitoring progress of the project. This exercise was carried out during the last day of the inception workshop.

Nigel Maxted also suggested that the project provides a good opportunity for Masters and third year undergraduate students to participate in the project in gathering and analysing data that will benefit the project and at the same time help build national capacity. The project coordinator clarified that some studies could be undertaken where it is budgeted on specific themes, but the project cannot provide funds for university fees, a fact which was acknowledged.

The chair concluded the meeting and said that the project is an important one and characterised it as 'watershed project'. The project will contribute to work of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources in establishing a global initiative for managing plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in situ.

ED/28/04/2014

Annex 1 :

List of Steering Committee members

Category	Name	Contact details
Partner Institution	Prof Yasmina Jaufeerally Fakim (University of Mauritius)	yasmina@uom.ac.mu
Partner Institution	Nathalie Feltmann (Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries)	NatalieF@daff.gov.za
Partner Institution	Dr Godfrey Mwila (Zambian Agricultural Research Institute)	godfrey.mwila@gmail.com
Partner Institution	Dr. Nigel Maxted (University of Birmingham)	nigel.maxted@dial.pipex.com
Farmers representative	Dr Ishmael Sunga, Southern Africa Confederation of Agricultural Union (SACAU)	Info@sacau.org
Environmental Science	??	
Breeders rep + FAO	Dr Chikelu Mba (FAO)	Chikelu.Mba@fao.org
Policy/decision maker	Dr Anneline Morgan, SADC Secretariat	Anneline.Morgan@dst.gov.za
SADC Plant Genetic Resources Centre (SPGRC)	Dr Paul Munyenembe (SPGRC)	pmunyenembe@spgrc.org.zm
Regional Director , Bioversity	Dr Jojo Baidu-Forson (Bioversity)	J.BAIDU-FORSON@cgiar.org
Project Coordinator	Dr Ehsan Dulloo (Bioversity) (Secretary)	e.dulloo@cgiar.org

Annex 2

Terms of reference of the Steering Committee of the EU-ACP Project on In situ Conservation and use of Crop Wild Relatives in three ACP countries of SADC region

1. Background

According to the project document, a Steering Committee will be convened at the inception of the project to guide implementation and dissemination of results of the project, as well as to serve as an internal and external evaluation of the project.

2. Mandate and scope

The SC will be advisory in nature and will provide guidance to the project implementation and help in the proper orientation of its activities.

The SC cannot alter the project objectives, as these have been approved by the donor and is part of the contractual agreement between EU-ACP group and beneficiary of the project namely Bioversity International.

3. Composition

Members of the Steering Committee are:

- Representatives of Partner institutions (Mauritius, South Africa, Zambia, University of Birmingham);
- A representative of farmers' community;
- A representative of breeder community;
- A representative of environmental sector;
- A representative of policy-maker/decision-maker;
- A representative of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO);
- The Director of SADC Plant Genetic Resources Centre (SPGRC)
- The Regional Director of Bioversity Sub Saharan Africa
- Project Coordinator (serve as the secretary)

4. The specific tasks of the SC comprise:

- Provide overall guidance on the implementation of the project;
- Review and monitor overall progress of the project with a special focus on delays, problems and bottlenecks faced by the project;

- Advise on any adjustments needed to the project work plan or timeline to meet its objectives;
- Discuss and make recommendations on other issues that its members consider to be of importance to the project;
- Help in creating awareness of the project externally and identify and suggest opportunities for linking with other projects and scaling up of the project in Africa and beyond;
- Monitor the continued coherence between the project and sector development.

5. Working procedures

- At the inception workshop, a chair will be elected by consensus among its members.
- Suggestions made by SC must be endorsed in the form of minutes from a SC meeting. The minutes will include all suggestions that the SC agrees to, and present arguments for the non-inclusion of recommendations, which cannot be endorsed.
- The Project coordinator will serve as the secretary and is responsible for drafting the minutes of the SC meetings and distributing these to all SC participants within a week after the meeting. The SC approves the minutes electronically.
- SC members shall review the periodic progress report and provide recommendations electronically between SC meetings
- The SC will meet physically three times during the project cycle:
 - At the inception meeting of the project.
 - During the first semester of the second year.
 - At the final evaluation workshop of the project at the end of the project cycle.

In addition the members of SC will communicate and provide inputs and recommendations electronically as is necessary (as for e.g. on periodic progress reports), between the above scheduled SC meetings.