



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



Report

3rd Steering Committee Meeting

Held at
Southern Sun Hotel, Pretoria, South Africa
Thursday 24th November 2016

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

Held on 24th November 2016 at Southern Sun Hotel, Pretoria, South Africa.

Present:

Chike Mba	Senior Officer (Team Leader), FAO, Rome, Italy, (Chair)
Willem Botes	Lecturer, University of Stellenbosch, member of Southern Africa Breeders Association, Stellenbosch, South Africa
Yasmina Jaufeerally-Fakim	Faculty of Agriculture, University of Mauritius, Reduit, Mauritius
Thabo Tjikana	Genebank Curator, Directorate of Genetic Resources, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Pretoria, South Africa
Godfrey Mwila,	Deputy Director, Zambia Agriculture Research Institute, Lusaka, Zambia
Shelagh Kell	Research Fellow, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK, (representing Nigel Maxted)
Thandie Lupupa	Representing the acting Director of SADC Plant Genetic Resources Centre, Lusaka, Zambia
Ehsan Dulloo	Component leader and Coordinator of SADC CWR project, Bioversity International, (Secretary)

In attendance as observer:

Imke Thormann	Scientist, Bioversity International, Rome, Italy (rapporteur)
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The chair welcomed members of the Steering Committee (SC) present. The agenda (Annex 1) was adopted as presented without modification.

1. Agenda item 1. Apologies:

The project coordinator reported that a number of Steering Committee members were unable to attend the final steering committee and sent their apologies as follows:

Anneline Morgan	Senior advisor, Science, Technology and Innovation, Social and Human Development and Special Programmes, SADC Secretariat, Gabarone, Botswana. She apologized as there was an important ministerial meeting at SADC secretariat level taking place at the same time of this meeting.
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Nigel Maxted	Senior Lecturer, University of Birmingham (represented by Shelagh Kell). He was unable to attend due to lecturing commitments at his university.
Barnabas Kapenge	Acting Director of SADC Plant Genetic Resources Centre, Lusaka, Zambia. Mr Kapenge replaces Paul Munyemyembe on the Steering Committee. He could not attend because he was instructed at the last minute not to travel as he had to represent SPGRC at the ministerial meeting within SADC. He was then represented by Thandie Lupupa from SPGRC.
Chandrani Jhowry	Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security, Port Louis, Mauritius. Mrs Jhowry was called upon to serve on the Steering Committee to represent policy makers. She could not attend as just prior to her travel, she was transferred to a different ministry and did not receive permission from Prime Minister's office to attend.
Jojo Baidu-Forson	Regional Coordinator, Bioversity International, Accra, Ghana;

Absent

Ishmael Sunga	Executive Director, Southern Africa Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU). There were no representatives from SACAU although they indicated that they would attend. It was noted that a representative of SACAU attended the second stakeholder workshop for validating the South African National Strategic Action Plan in September 2016.
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2. Agenda item 2. Minutes of the previous meeting

2.1 The chair went through summary action points listed in the notes of the second Steering Committee meeting and requested the project coordinator to comment. The project coordinator reported the following:

Action 1: Project coordinator to share notes of meeting and progress reports; DAFF to visit and invite SACAU for national stakeholder workshop; Project coordinator to explore with SACAU the possibility of making a presentation on the project at a SACAU meeting.

This action point related to the promoting the participation of SACAU in the project. The project coordinator shared the notes of meetings of the second Steering Committee meeting as well as the project progress report as was requested. A visit to SACAU headquarters in Centurion, Pretoria was organised by DAFF during the technical backstopping meeting to South Africa in April 2016. Members from Bioversity, University of Birmingham and DAFF attended the meeting. The Executive Director was travelling and the SADC CWR team was received by two senior members of SACAU, Mr Benito Eliasi, capacity development advisor, and Ms Fhumulani Mashau, projects officer. The project coordinator gave an overview of the project and explained that the purpose of the visit was to raise awareness of the project among farming communities in the project countries and discuss ways in which

SACAU through its network could help raise awareness of the importance of CWR among farming communities.

Mr Eliasi gave an overview of SACAU's roles and activities. It is active in capacity development and provides advice and support to farmers' organizations, looks into relevant policies and advocates for farmers' interests at national and regional level. They are active also in channeling information at national and regional level to farmers. SACAU could have a role in ensuring that farmers' rights and interests are reflected in the NSAP and in raising awareness among farmers on the importance of CWR. They were present at the second stakeholder meeting. However they did not send a representative to the final SC meeting.

Action 2: Project coordinator to ensure that minutes includes an action list

This was done. The notes of meetings of the second Steering Committee meeting contain a list of action points.

Action 3: Project coordinator to contact Marieta Sakalian to join the SC

The project coordinator informed the committee that he has invited Marieta Sakalian from UNEP GEF to serve on the committee to represent the environment sector, but she did not respond to earlier messages and got back to the coordinator much later questioning if it would be still useful for her to join the project at that late point in time. The project coordinator also said given the burden this would have put on the budget, he considered that this was not useful considering this was the final year of project and there was little advice that she could have provided.

Action 4: National project coordinators should include environment representatives on their national committees

The environmental sector was well represented at national level in all three countries. In South Africa the project partner DAFF (agriculture) worked very closely with SANBI (operates under Department of Environment). In Mauritius members of forestry service and national parks and conservation service served on the local steering committee while in Zambia ZARI consulted very closely with forestry department as well as the Zambian Wildlife Agency.

Action 5: Task force for organisation of the final conference to prepare a concept note for raising funds for the final Conference and undertake a feasibility study for organising final International Conference on CWR

A task force was set to discuss the organisation of a final conference. Members were Thabo Tjikana and Noluthando Netnou Nkoana (DAFF), Willem van Rensburg (ARC), Anneline Morgan (SADC secretariat), Willem Botes (University of Stellenbosch), Nigel Maxted (University of Birmingham), Hannes Dempewolf (Global Crop Diversity Trust). However the idea was subsequently not pursued because it became apparent that there was not enough time to get organised within the timeframe of the project. There were too many administrative burdens and lack of funds which would make the holding of conference not feasible through DAFF. However the task force pursued other options to do it through ARC. A concept note was prepared and sent to ARC management. Here again this would have involved a MOU to be developed between ARC and DAFF, which would have taken too much time. The Global Crop Diversity Trust was contacted to see whether they would be willing to support this conference. They were supportive and suggested to organize it in

conjunction with the third Harlan and de Wet symposium. But the time frame for this event would not have fitted our project life time. The project coordinator made a submission to the organisers of the First Agrobiodiversity Congress which took place in New Delhi in India 6-9 November 2016 to have a satellite session on CWR. This was approved and enabled us to get an opportunity to disseminate our project results at this international congress. Out of the 9 presentations made in this session three were from members of SADC CWR project (South Africa, Zambia and University of Birmingham). Further Nigel Maxted gave a keynote presentation at the concurrent session on *in situ* and on farm conservation of the congress, mentioning the importance of CWR and making reference to the SADC CWR project. The chair expressed his appreciation on the efforts made and the achievement reached to get exposure at IAC 2016.

Action 6: Paul Munyenembe to send minutes of Board (of SPGRC) meeting to project management.

This was done.

Action 7: Project coordinator and SPGRC to prepare a concept note about a regional network in the SADC region for sharing with SANBIO and SPGRC; SPGRC and SADC Secretariat to raise the issue of supporting a CWR network in SADC region, with SANBio

The concept note on a regional network was not pursued. Thandie specified that the call from SANBio did not fit with policy issues and therefore SPGRC did not consider it useful to pursue this. The Chair commented that it was not too late yet to continue to think along this line. A network could facilitate to scale out the project to other countries and regions. If we cannot have a formalized network, SPGRC could raise awareness about the successes achieved, as it has facilitating mechanisms operating. Shelagh Kell noted that there is also the IUCN CWRSG that serves as a global networking mechanism. Godfrey stressed that this work on CWR should really be integrated into a network approach. SPGRC could help in streamlining and sharing this. There is no need to think about a new separate project. The plan for the upcoming meeting of the SADC Technical Meeting to be held in December 2016 is indeed that countries present what they have done, in particular about the NSAPs, and also the concept of the integrated conservation strategy.

Action 8: Shelagh Kell will take the lead on the development of an integrated SADC CWR conservation strategy

A draft 'Concept for in situ conservation of CWR diversity in the SADC region' was prepared by Shelagh Kell of University of Birmingham and submitted to the SPGRC for review. Shelagh underlined that this concept document is based on a model developed for Europe. In Europe UoB (as the leader of the ECPGR Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves Working Group) received a mandate to develop this concept from the ECPGR Steering Committee. However no such mandate was provided to prepare the document for the SADC Region, although the overall concept had been presented at the second SC meeting in September 2015 and was well received by representatives of the SPGRC and SADC Secretariat who supported the preparation of a draft document. Therefore, the draft has been put forward as a discussion document and is a framework and example of how this work could be carried out in the SADC region.

Action 9: Minutes should be signed by the chair

This would be done once the notes of the second Steering Committee meeting would be approved. The minutes of the third SC meeting will be done by email.

Action 10: Project coordinator to include more details on the progress report

This was done.

Action 11: Project coordinator to provide more detailed information on the progress of achievement in the log frame

The project coordinator has included more details in the report and the log frame.

Action 12: Country project coordinators to take measures for implementing predictive characterisation activity as soon as possible

Predictive characterization was carried out in all three countries. It had been lagging behind as a final set of occurrence data were required which had become available very late in the project life time.

Action 13: Project coordinator should include the time lines in the log frame for monitoring progress

The project coordinator has included more details in the report and the log frame.

Action 14: SC recommended that a separate exit strategy be developed and shared with SC;

An exit strategy was prepared and presented to the SC. It was agreed that the exit strategy should be renamed as scaling out strategies to give it a forward looking perspective. (See Annex 2).

Action 15: Project coordinator to work with Nigel Maxted for submitted a proposal to IUCN World Conservation Congress

The project travel budget was limited and it was decided not to pursue the idea to be presented at the IUCN World Conservation Congress which was held in Hawaii and was very expensive to travel to. Rather the budget funds were better spent in having a good representation at the First Agrobiodiversity Congress which was more relevant to the project.

Action 16: Project partners to include link to their website and the project management will also share the login information.

A link to the SADC CWR project is available from the Mauritian web site of the Ministry. This was not achieved in South Africa. Zambia has had problems with the maintenance and connectivity of the web site, therefore it was not possible to implement this yet. It is suggested to Thandie that she works with Imke to put a link to CWR Portal also on the SPGRRC web site.

2.2 Willem Botes: requested to correct the name of the Southern African plant breeders association on page 2 and 4, where it reads erroneously “South African plant breeders association”.

2.3 The adoption of the minutes with the correction requested by Willem Botes was proposed by William Botes and seconded by Shelagh Kell (University of Birmingham) and Godfrey Mwila (ZARI). The minutes of the second Steering Committee meeting were approved and signed by the chair.

3. Agenda item 3 - Project Coordinators’ Status Report

3.1 The chair requested the project coordinator to present his status report to the Committee. The project coordination presented the document “Project coordinator status report” which was circulated to all Steering Committee members and can be found at Annex 3). As requested by the Steering Committee last time (Action Point 10), the project coordinator provided more details on work packages and activities. A summary of the achievements made in the project is provided. Many of these results have already been presented in day one of the final dissemination meeting. The coordinator briefly highlighted the main achievements of the project (see Annex 3).

3.2 The coordinator informed the committee that Bioversity will need to provide a final detailed report of the project to the donor. This will rely on the national reports provided by the national project coordinators. He remarked that some of the national reports that have been received by Bioversity in the first and second year and the first half of the final year do not provide sufficient details. Bioversity had to rely on its own knowledge of what is going on in the countries through its technical backstopping missions to the countries to prepare the donor report. The project coordinator made a plea to the national coordinators to provide considerably more detail in the national reports and to properly document their results and also contacts and meetings with policy makers that they have in their countries and what they are doing to mainstream the NSAP in their respective country’s policies.

3.3 Yasmina Jaufeerally-Fakim reminded that the work in Mauritius was expanded to work on Rodrigues thanks to the funding received from Indian Ocean Commission which allowed the organization of two stakeholder workshops in Rodrigues. This should be added to the progress report. This was noted. The project coordinator commented that Rodrigues Island is part of the Republic of Mauritius, but has an autonomous government now and to give more visibility to Rodrigues, it was decided to develop a separate NSAP for Rodrigues, which was funded by IOC. The project contributed by supporting participation from Mauritian project members to the stakeholder workshop.

4. Agenda item 4- Review of key elements of the project plan, deliverables, milestones and risks assumptions

4.1 The project coordinator provided more details in the logframe as was requested in the previous SC meeting (Action Point 11) and summarized what actually has been achieved. The coordinator took the members briefly through the project document Logframe (Annex 4). The partially achieved activities were discussed.

- Regarding the partial achievement of predictive characterization, Ms Thormann provided a brief update on the status of predictive characterization in Zambia. The last step of identifying the final set of rice accessions is missing. This requires to get advice from experts and breeders on variables that could be used to identify environments. It is now too late to include any results in the NSAP, but it is suggested to finalize the work. The project team in Zambia will be requested to engage in the necessary discussions in the country and provide the information to Bioversity, so that Bioversity can finalize the analysis. A major impediment in Zambia to advance on predictive characterization has been the difficulties faced with the installation of CAPFITOGEN. Despite support from the developer of CAPFITOGEN, it was not possible to carry out the analyses as installation does not seem to have worked properly.
- Testing of the toolkit was not possible to carry out in the way planned as the actual development of the toolkit took longer than anticipated. However, from the beginning of the project, the partners in the SADC region had been requested to make use of the FAO Resource Book (http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/agphome/documents/PGR/PubPGR/ResourceBook/TEXT_ALL_2511.pdf) to inform their work, as well as to provide feedback on its content to UoB, since the Toolkit is an interactive version of the Resource Book.
- Three occurrence datasets have been uploaded to Dataverse now. Prof Jaufeerally-Fakim clarified that no ministerial approval is required to upload the Mauritian occurrence data and that it had already been discussed and agreed by the committee to provide the data. She will provide the final dataset for upload. Links to published NSAPs will be provided from the CWR Portal.
- With regard to work package 5 on project management the project coordinator noted that there was a very long delay in receiving approval of the financial report from the donor, which has considerably delayed the issuing of the third year LOAs to the countries. Up to now, no formal letter of approval has been received from the donor, and Bioversity has agreed to pre-finance the project to keep the project on-going. However the part payment for the final year has recently been received from the donor. The project coordinator thanked the partners that despite these delays they have continued to carry out project activities.

4.2 The project coordinator also commented on the project timeline of the work plan and to date the majority of the activities are on track. (Annex 5)

4.3 The chair stated that the project has been very successful. The coordination deserves the SC commendation. Partners have been very effective in their work as well. Very useful tools have been developed. He urged SPGRC to disseminate information about this project and the tools. Other countries could engage on similar activities. SPGRC could add an additional day to its annuals meeting to provide training and support to other countries to extending this work in the region. He also commends SPGRC for continued support and leadership.

5. Agenda item 5. Recommendations from Steering Committee members

5.1 The chair asked each member of the Steering Committee to express their thoughts and views on the project's achievement. This is reported hereunder.

5.2 Shelagh Kell (UoB, UK): the role of UoB was technical backstopping. At the mid-term review meeting there had been some concerns about progress but the results presented at the final dissemination meeting are impressive. The suggestion of the coordinator for Mauritius about having more communication and meetings between the partner countries in the SADC region was interesting and probably could have been a useful addition to the project. Training had been provided in the first year of the project to all countries in the SADC region and this was followed up by technical backstopping in each country. Training sessions involving all three countries together might have been useful, also for the countries to discuss and share the approaches they were taking in the different steps of the development of the NSAPs. The peer-reviewed publications should really be taken forward. In terms of taking it forward in the region there seem to be many opportunities.

5.3 Godfrey Mwila (ZARI, Zambia): the key outputs are the NSAPs. What he would like to see how partners can work effectively to implement them. In Zambia the Ministry of Environment is key and it should be evaluated in Zambia how the NSAP could be endorsed also by this ministry, not only by the Ministry of Agriculture. Partners should be encouraged to keep the momentum going. They need to be proactive to align and anchor the NSAPs in the wider context.

5.4 Thandie Lupupa (SPGRC): SPGRC needs to mainstream CWR in their ongoing programs. Collection forms need to be revised to have a section on CWR. Currently they are regenerating wild rice for the first time. It would be appropriate for SPGRC to characterize these accessions and they are partnering with researchers from Malawi to do that. In the upcoming SPGRC technical meeting they will discuss the draft integrated regional strategy and will provide feedback.

5.5 Willem Botes (University of Stellenbosch, South Africa): we need action plans to be finalized in the countries before the breeders can be involved. A more targeted approach to pre-breeding is needed. DAFF could e.g. nominate specific individuals that could be trained to engage in pre-breeding. There are three layers to take it forward: policy makers, pre-breeders (need to be made aware, basically on a one by one situation), and then the breeders. It should be considered in curriculum level for plant breeders to include pre-breeding and CWR in these three countries. He will try to address all three levels through the South African breeders association, but he would need some support.

5.6 Thabo Tjikana (DAFF, South Africa): He supports the suggestion from SPGRC to update the collecting form. SPGRC should further develop SDIS to include CWR as well. The country should as soon as possible develop the web site to link to the portal.

5.7 Yasmina Jaufeerally-Fakim (UoM, Mauritius): one major positive output has been to getting people from different institutions together. It would be productive to the other

islands together as well. They have shown interest to work on CWR also. They have expressed interest to get some help. Targets have been achieved and awareness has increased, to the point that the Minister of agriculture opened the second stakeholder workshop.

5.8 The Chair concluded that the message he is getting that all members have a very positive impression of the project implementation, which should be commended. SPGRC should not feel bad if we continue to refer to them as they play a pivotal role in this region. They have the resources and mechanisms to bring people together and keep the momentum going. FAO and Bioversity will continue to do their bit. The Chair was emphatic the project had been successful in fostering a community of practice on CWR which was quite opportune as the international community was grappling with ways and means for developing a global network on the same theme. He also reiterated the success of the project in developing and validating critically important tools, strengthening human and institutional capacities, creating awareness and, in general, generating impetus for meaningful work that could contribute to enhanced resilience of cropping systems to climate change. He urged members to do all that they could to scale up and scale out the project activities (and corresponding outputs) and not let their achievements be an end unto themselves.

6. Agenda item 6 - Communication and awareness activities

6.1 The project coordinator circulated an update on the progress on the deliverables of the communication plan (see Annex 6). He said that the donor is putting a lot of emphasis on visibility and had requested at the outset of the project to prepare a communication plan. Most of the activities have been carried out.

7. Agenda Item 7. Any other business

7.1 Willem Botes expressed his thanks for the opportunity to be part of this project. He was slightly pessimistic at the start of the project but this pessimism has been dissipated after hearing about the achievements of the project. He hopes this will evolve in successfully implemented NSAPs.

7.2 Ehsan Dulloo, project coordinator, also thanked the chair and the committee members for their guidance, support and encouragement during the course of the project.

7.3 Chike Mba, the chair, thanked everybody too. He appreciated the opportunity to have been involved in in the project and to be able to visit the countries on site.