



The International Centre for
Underutilised Crops

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ICUC-News #79

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Dear colleagues,
After two bumper issues of ICUC News, a somewhat leaner one this time round, as preparations are afoot for the official launch of Crops for the Future in 12 days time. We look forward to a valuable seminar and successful launch, and will report back in the next two issues.

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With best wishes,
Nick

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1. Funding & Job opportunities

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1.1. Scholarships from Government of Malaysia to international students

Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia invites applications from international students for the scholarships from Government of Malaysia for academic session 2009/2010. The scholarships are as follows:

- MTCP Scholarship
- MIS Scholarship for Undergraduate Studies
- MIS Scholarship for Postgraduate Studies
- Commonwealth Scholarship (Comprehensive information is provided in the brochure)

A panel established by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia will finalise the selection.

Deadline: 31 December 2008. For further information about the scholarship contact: Ms. Norkamilah Zaniale-mail: norkamilahz@mohe.gov.my

To download brochures and application forms: see <http://www.sciencedev.net/fe/Article.aspx?Aid=803>

1.2. Coordinator Mozambique SAKSS

Capacity Strengthening through Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support for Agricultural Development in Mozambique (Moz-SAKSS). The purpose of the role is to coordinate and implement the Moz-SAKSS programme based in Maputo, Mozambique. *Application deadline: 30 November 2008* – or until the position is filled.

IWMI and IFPRI seek to hire a Mozambican national to work jointly with the Programme Leader and MINAG/DE Head in the coordination and implementation of the Mozambique SAKSS programme in Maputo, Mozambique. The position will be based in Maputo, Mozambique and reports to the Program Leader of Moz-SAKSS and the Coordinator, Re-SAKSS-SA.

The Mozambique SAKSS programme aims to enhance Mozambican capacity for evidence-based policy making in the areas of agriculture and rural development and poverty reduction. It supports research and capacity strengthening for the implementation of Mozambique's national agricultural development strategies, at both national and sub-national level. It addresses policy effectiveness and coherence within the agricultural sector as well as between the agricultural sector and other sectors key to economic growth and poverty reduction in that country. Key research and capacity strengthening activities will be carried out within the Ministry of Agriculture and with a broad array of other agricultural sector stakeholders, Ministry of Planning, other government departments, key local research institutes, policy making bodies, and selected private sector and nongovernmental organizations.

The Coordinator will:

- Assist the Programme Leader in the day to day management and coordination of Moz-SAKSS in close collaboration with MINAG/DE, IIAM and Agricultural Services Director
- Serve as a liaison and link between Moz-SAKSS and MINAG and other Mozambican institutions, particularly government ministries, policy making bodies, research institutions, private sector, non-governmental organizations, civil society, and farmers' organizations
- Contribute to promoting greater knowledge and data sharing through various media (e.g. policy seminars, web-based platforms, news media) and the coordination of dialogue linking policy analysis and decision making
- Assist with the preparation of work plans and budgets in consultation with the steering committee, programme scientists and partners.
- Assist with managing programme budgets, raising resources and prepare progress reports relevant to diverse stakeholder groups
- To organize steering committee meeting, represent Mozambique SAKSS in national fora.
- Represent Mozambique SAKSS in regional fora organized by the ReSAKSS-SA programme, whenever required.

This is a regionally recruited position with a competitive salary and benefits package. This includes a transport allowance, retirement and health insurance package. The position will be governed by IWMI terms of employment. The position will be for two years with the possibility of extension for another year.

- Complete application form http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/About_IWMI/Vacancies/
- Attach your resume and list of publication,
- Attach a letter of application, which specifically addresses the selection criteria outlined in the table above and include the names and addresses of 3 referees who may be contacted if you are short-listed.
- Submit online. Our on-line HR recruitment system is quite new and you should receive an automated reply. If you have not received this acknowledgement e-mail within 24 hours of sending your application, then contact: The Human Resources Office, IWMI, P.O. Box 2075, Colombo, Sri Lanka; Email: work-at-iwmi@cgiar.org

For further information visit IWMI - <http://www.iwmi.org>, or IFPRI – <http://www.ifpri.org>

2. Workshops & Training Courses

2.1. Contemporary approaches to genetic resources conservation and use

Training course, The Netherlands, 6 April – 1 May 2009

Biodiversity in agricultural systems is under pressure worldwide. The loss of plant and animal genetic resources by its declining use in modern agriculture has generated much concern about the future vulnerability of agricultural production and related pest and disease risks, food security and environmental stability. Various international conventions have addressed this topic; this has moved the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources issue to the top of the international development agenda.

The overall objective of the training programme is to enhance participants' capabilities to deal with the management of genetic resources activities and programmes. In addition, relevant policies regarding genetic resources will receive special attention. The course programme aims for participants and facilitators to exchange experiences and to enhance understanding of effective approaches towards the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources in agriculture.

The courses provide the opportunity to learn from the broad range of international experience that is represented not only by our trainers, but also by other participants. Working in a job-orientated, interactive and experience-based setting, we facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience through a variety of formats: lectures, case studies, group discussions and assignments, and field study. The courses conclude with the development of proposals which integrate all course topics and relate them to the reality of the participants' working situations.

The training programme is designed for project co-ordinators, senior staff, managers, trainers, programme leaders and other professionals who aim to promote the conservation and use of genetic resources for agriculture from policy, research, education or development perspectives. Participants are employed by research institutes, public/private companies, universities, NGOs or other organisations with an agricultural development orientation. Applicants should have at least a BSc or the equivalent in training and experience. They should have at least three years of professional experience in a relevant field and be proficient in English.

The programme will address different topics in different modules; see a brief description of each individual module below. Each two-week course provides independent and comprehensive training. Based on professional interests and institutional needs, participants can combine two modules into a programme.

Genetic resource policies and conservation strategies, 6 – 17 April 2009

The first part of this module focuses on the history, contents and impacts of international agreements, in particular the CBD, IT-PGRFA and WTO-TRIPS, and their impact at the national and institutional level on genetic resources management. The second part focuses on current perspectives regarding the management of plant and animal genetic resources, and provides insights and tools for more effective management approaches. Topics addressed include:

- International agreements and their impact on national policy regimes
- Access and benefit-sharing issues
- Intellectual property rights issues
- Conservation strategies for plant genetic resources
- Rationalisation of PGR collections in genebanks
- Developments in livestock systems and AGR conservation
- Documentation systems
- Design of strategic GR management plans.

Adaptive genetic resources management, 6 – 17 April 2009

This module will help participants to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of genetic resource management programmes, while actively involving stakeholders at all levels. It focuses on methodologies and strategies to strengthen the in situ management and use of genetic resources at the genetic, species and ecosystems level. Topics addressed include:

- Methodologies and tools for participatory learning and action
- Community management of agrobiodiversity
- Managing diversity at genetic, species and eco-systems levels
- Linking policy, research and genetic resources management programmes
- Project design addressing adaptive management of genetic resources.

Integrated approaches in crop improvement and seed supply, 20 April – 1 May 2009

This module addresses seed sector development taking an integrated approach, i.e. considering a diversity of options and solutions for the diversity of problems in the different sectors; supporting both

the formal and informal crop improvement and seed sector; and establishing public and private partnerships, with interventions that are based on proper situational assessments. The training addresses key strategies in:

- ☐ Increasing the performance of the formal seed sector
- ☐ Commercial approaches in crop improvement and seed supply
- ☐ Participatory approaches in crop improvement
- ☐ Strengthening the farmers' seed supply system
- ☐ Establishing enabling policy frameworks.

Enhancing agrobiodiversity use: Markets and chains, 20 April – 1 May 2009

This module aims to create awareness of the economic values of agrobiodiversity and to promote its use through strategic, market-oriented approaches. Participants learn to assess the problems in agricultural supply chains and to formulate solutions that contribute to the sustainable use of agrobiodiversity. Topics addressed include:

- ☐ Economic perspectives of enhanced agrobiodiversity use
- ☐ Market trends and sector analysis
- ☐ Supply chain concepts and chain integration
- ☐ Analysis of farm performance for under-utilized crops
- ☐ Marketing concepts for niche markets
- ☐ Business plan development on the facilitation of chain development in a selected chain.

The training programmes are organised by Wageningen International and the Centre for Genetic Resources, the Netherlands (CGN, www.cgn.wur.nl) in collaboration with other partners of Wageningen UR (www.wur.nl), Bioversity International (www.bioversityinternational.org), GFU for Underutilized Species (www.underutilized-species.org) and other national and international organisations that play a key role in genetic resource conservation and use.

The admission deadline for application directly to Wageningen International, with funding other than a NFP fellowship, is 6 March 2009. Early application is recommended. For online application and additional information on this course, please go to www.cdic.wur.nl/UK/newsagenda/ and click on the course of your interest.

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 Telephone: +31 317 486 800, Fax: +31 317 486 801
 E-mail: training.wi@wur.nl; Website: www.cdic.wur.nl
 Code: R/004/000, Duration: 4 weeks, Period: 6 April – 1 May 2009
 Application deadline for full programme: 6 March 2009

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3. Publications & Information

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3.1. Trading up: building cooperation between farmers and traders in Africa

By the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) and the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR). 2008, 280pp, ISBN 978 90 6832 699 4(Pb), €25 or free to download from: www.kit.nl

Finding a market and transporting produce are among the biggest headaches facing smallscale farmers in Africa. Often these farmers are portrayed as being at the mercy of middlemen or traders who exploit their ignorance, vulnerability or desperation. *Trading Up* seeks to redress the balance, arguing that with more support, Africa's traders could significantly boost the efficiency of food supply chains, increasing the demand for farm produce and improving the livelihoods of rural people. With contributions from 30 traders, farmers and professionals working through the IIRR's 'writeshop' process, this is a highly recommended sequel to the 2006 book *Chain Empowerment* (see <http://www.new-ag.info/06-6/inprint.html#ip08>). Case studies from seven countries examine how relationships between different players in commodity value chains - including farmers, traders, wholesalers and retailers - can be strengthened. Supportive institutions, such market information networks, and the development of rules, such as standard weights, are also covered. Commodities and countries include livestock and milk (Zimbabwe and Kenya), green bean (Ethiopia), mango (Burkina Faso), tomato (Ghana and Kenya) and coffee (Tanzania). Engaging and accessible, based on first hand information, *Trading Up* will be of interest to anyone working to improve market chains in the developing world.

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3.2. Molecular Markers for Tropical Trees, A Practical Guide to Principles and Procedures

Muchugi A, Kadu C, Kindt R, Kipruto H, Lemurt S, Olale K, Nyadoi P, Dawson I and Jamnadass R (2008) *Molecular Markers for Tropical Trees, A Practical Guide to Principles and Procedures*. ICRAF Technical Manual no. 9. Dawson I and Jamnadass R. eds. Nairobi: World Agroforestry Centre.

Molecular marker methods can provide significant insights into the biology of tree species. They are, however, relatively expensive and their careful application is therefore required. This guide seeks to promote the proper use of these techniques. This guide describes molecular marker techniques based on the polymerase chain reaction. It also describes the wider issues that must be considered if laboratory studies are to impact practically on the management of tropical trees. Part 1 of this guide describes the issues that should be considered before beginning molecular studies. Part 2 relates the characteristics and practical procedures of different molecular methods. Part 3 describes how to handle molecular data once it has been obtained.

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ISBN: 978-92-9059-225-9

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3.3. A winning combination for community conservation

The following is only a short extract from the full article which details examples from several countries.

Shea nuts, in particular, are helping over 700 women to earn a living by supplying the Savannah Fruits Company (SFC). The women receive premiums for harvesting nuts that are certified as organic and the SFC supplies buyers in Europe and North America for the cosmetics market. "The move is fast eliminating middlemen who have been previously exploiting these women while they rake in handsome returns from exports", continues Bandanaa. "SFC is now buying from the women's groups at high prices which have positive knock-on effects for the economy of the area."

For the full article, see <http://www.new-ag.info/08/06/focuson/focuson7.php>

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3.4. Sustaining biodiversity in ancient tropical countryside

Ranganathan J, Ranjit Daniels RJ, Subash Chandran MD, Ehrlich PR, Daily GC. 2008. Sustaining biodiversity in ancient tropical countryside. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*.

Researchers have shown that some types of tropical agriculture can sustain biodiversity, contrary to popular belief. A study by Indian and US scientists reveals that "traditional" plantations of areca nut palm in a 20-kilometre area of the Western Ghats ecosystem in the district of Uttara Kannada, Karnataka, India, has helped conserve bird species. The areca nut palm produces betel nut, a stimulant used by ten per cent of world's population. Recent research has suggested that certain types of tropical agriculture can support biodiversity, but that the sustainability of this over time was in doubt. The researchers looked at the biodiversity of bird species in the 20-kilometre area and found that it was home to 90 per cent of species associated with native forests in the region. Ecological historians believe the region has been under cultivation for more than 2,000 years, suggesting that its ability to harbour diversity is sustainable. Some of the groves have been farmed by the same family for over 250 years, says Ranjit Daniels, director of Chennai-based conservation group Care Earth and an author of the study. Areca nut plantations such as those in the Western Ghats involve intercropping areca nut with other types of plant, including pepper, cardamom, vanilla, coconut and banana crops. This provides both a complexity that is associated with bird species richness and good revenue for farmers — spices like pepper, vanilla and cardamom are high value crops. The areca nut palms also intermingle with natural forests, which supply protective leaf litter for the plantations. K. Venkataraman, member secretary at India's National Biodiversity Authority, told SciDev.Net that similar studies in Latin American

countries have shown that relatively high biodiversity occurs in coffee plantations in the shade of big trees. He adds that further studies of agriculture's effects on biodiversity need to be carried out in India. "Certain [bird] species adapt very well to modified ecosystems but, too often, local extinctions do occur," he says. "The general assumption is that bird biodiversity falls with human activity. This study shows that, even in ecological hotspots like the Western Ghats, people can co-exist with wildlife," Daniels says. "We must see how best traditional plantation systems can be integrated into long-term conservation plans," he adds.

See full article, <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2008/10/31/0808874105.full.pdf+html>

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4. ICUC-related information

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4.1. Crops for the Future Strategic Plan available

The strategy plan for 2009-2013 for the new entity Crops for the Future is now available on the ICUC website, at <http://www.icuc-iwmi.org/files/Publications/CroFu%20Strategy%202009-2013.pdf>.

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4.2. The CoDI project launches its own new website

Information from the Coalition to Diversify Income from Underused Crops project, led by ICUC with partners from India and Vietnam, can now be viewed at www.codj-asia.net. The website was launched on 17 November, and will have additional information added to it as it is received.

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5. ICUC network

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In this section we introduce new and old subscribers to ICUC-News to encourage greater interaction and benefit from the great diversity of readers. If you haven't done so, please send a brief introduction of yourself and your interest in underutilised crops to h.jaenicke@cgiar.org. We will not publish your email or phone contacts and if anyone is interested to establish direct contact, please write an email to me.

- Dr. A. Muthusamy, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Biotechnology, Manipal Life Sciences Centre, Manipal University, Planetarium Complex, Manipal 576 104, Karnataka, India. Research interests include underutilized plants for food and medicine, abiotic stress responses, developing salt tolerant hybrids/varieties, *Phyllanthus* spp., and extraction and screening of proteins for antimicrobial properties.
- Dr. Charles Mugoya, Program Manager, ASARECA Agro-biodiversity & Biotechnology Program, P.O.Box 765, Entebbe, Uganda.

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Championing underutilised plant species for food, nutrition and sustainable development