



Training and Experience Sharing on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) under the Framework of South-South Cooperation (SCC) – *Think Globally, Act Locally*

14 to 28 September 2014

Prospectus

1. Background / Rationale

One billion people around the world are supported by a myriad of family and community-managed agricultural systems that represent humanity's common heritage. Over centuries, generations of farmers and herders have developed complex, diverse and locally adapted agricultural systems that have been managed using time-tested, ingenious combinations of techniques and practices that bring about food and livelihood security, while conserving the natural resource base. Some of these systems are Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)¹.

Over the past decade, the GIAHS Initiative² has been piloting an innovative model that engages communities, local and national governments in the adaptive management of agricultural heritage and conservation of goods and services. The GIAHS approach focuses on holistic, innovative development, while seeking to safeguard the social, cultural, economic and environmental goods and services.

Since the inception of the GIAHS Initiative China, as a pioneer pilot GIAHS site, has led in the implementation of an innovative approach to the conservation of agricultural heritage, which has included the engagement of a variety of stakeholders including public-private-academic and research institutions and farming communities. China's

¹ Under GIAHS agriculture is defined broadly and includes: cropping systems, pastoral transhumant and nomadic systems, home gardens, forestry and agroforestry systems, fishing, hunting and gathering systems as well as combinations and variations of the above. Special emphasis is placed on the specific roles of women and youth, as custodians and beneficiaries of biodiversity and natural resources conservation, for they are the protagonists of household food security.

² The GIAHS Initiative is an international partnership, which was launched in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and aims to identify, recognize, support and safeguard Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems and their livelihoods, agricultural and associated biodiversity, landscapes, knowledge systems and cultures around the world. The GIAHS Partnership Initiative recognizes the crucial importance of maintaining an integrated approach to the well-being of family farming communities, while directing activities towards sustainable agriculture and rural development. For more information, www.giahs.org

leadership has resulted in enormous success and the establishment of further GIAHS sites in China. These GIAHS sites can provide a model for neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia and around the globe. During this pioneering process, the GIAHS Initiative has gained considerable recognition both at the international and national levels. At the global level, GIAHS has been very much appreciated at various intergovernmental fora. At the national level, GIAHS has become the basis used for the adoption of new policies that integrate agricultural heritage into their development programmes. Likewise, the GIAHS Initiative has served as a learning laboratory for the identification of new ways to sustain nature's bounty, the health of ecosystems and conservation. The GIAHS Initiative has also been influential in promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity and genetic resources for food and agriculture, the protection of traditional knowledge systems, culture and, more importantly, creating a bridge to a sustainable future.

The GIAHS innovative approach has resulted in positive experiences and lessons, such as:

- The designation of GIAHS – as an important social incentive that impacts farmers and consumers – recognizes the important and positive role of smallholder farmers, family farming communities and minorities, particularly women, and their knowledge and practices related to the conservation and sustainable use of traditional crops and biodiversity for present and future generations.
- The identification of and support to resilient rural livelihood systems, traditionally-based family-scale agrosystems and their associated high-value ecosystems services through reconstructing traditional knowledge and skills and the identification of elements suited to strengthening best practices, thereby rendering them transferable.
- The recognition that small-scale farmers, ethnic minorities and local communities and their agricultural heritage values have generated diversified sources of livelihoods and incomes through the transformation of conservation activities into marketable incomes both on and off farm. For example: marketing and branding heritage products and services, establishing links to eco- and agri-tourism including the promotion of 'rich cultural diversity'.
- Climate-smart, locally-based agricultural systems incorporate all the strong elements required for adaptation and mitigation of climate change that link to agro-ecosystems, cultural diversity, the conservation of biodiversity and the empowerment of indigenous communities and women. The agricultural, heritage-sensitive, economic diversification that often lies at the heart of sustainable Agricultural Heritage Systems offer immense potential for strengthening the economic productivity of small-scale and family farmers, indigenous peoples and communities, in particular women.

Agricultural heritage systems are examples of ingenious practices and technologies that have been developed by farmers, foresters, fisher folk, hunters and gatherers from around the world. These individuals have, over time, learned to manage their environments to produce sufficient quality food to sustain their lives while conserving the natural resource base and natural ecological processes. Agricultural heritage systems pertain to a wealth of diverse biological resources, knowledge systems and management techniques that have the

common goal of ensuring food security and quality of life for humanity. These agricultural heritage systems provide mechanisms with which to cope with the challenges of today and tomorrow such as climate variability and demographic changes.

To initiate, implement and benefit from the dynamic conservation of GIAHS, however, will require:

- An in-depth knowledge and understanding of the fundamental values of GIAHS.
- An assessment of the potential of GIAHS and the methodological processes to be followed in their designation.
- The creation of avenues and pathways to conserve and sustain GIAHS.
- An innovative approach to engage stakeholders in networking, partnership and twinning.
- The development of ways and means to create GIAHS awareness, GIAHS sustainability and sustainable development.
- The preparation and implementation of GIAHS Dynamic Conservation or the GIAHS Master Development Plan.
- The identification of resource mobilization or funding opportunities from international funding institutions, including in-country financing schemes.
- The recognition of lessons learned in pioneering countries and the up-scaling of best practices through South-South Cooperation.

China is one of the first pioneering countries to actively respond to the GIAHS initiative, a global initiative spearheaded by FAO and through the funding support by the Global Environment Facility. The implementation of the FAO-GEF funded GIAHS Initiative was made possible through the important support and leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), in collaboration with the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research (IGSNRR) at the Chinese Academy of Sciences as well as other competent research organizations who have conducted systematic studies on GIAHS sites. Since 2004, the above-mentioned organizations and institutions have formulated the national action framework; conservation and development plan; provided guidance for project implementation and developed substitute industries.

The MOA has established a dynamic, science-based and multi-participant mechanism for the conservation of GIAHS, and adopted a guideline featuring, “government authorities taking the lead, local communities playing a key part, science and technology (S&T) providing pillar support, enterprises driving the work ahead, and mass media promoting public awareness”. Local authorities at GIAHS sites in China are encouraged to set up specific agencies and develop plans and management measures to improve the conservation and utilization of agricultural heritage systems.

Over the years, China’s efforts have produced significant social, ecological and economic benefits. The work on GIAHS has substantially promoted sustainable agricultural development and rural ecological conservation, and identified effective approaches for the improvement of agricultural efficiency. This work has resulted in increased farmers’ income, maintained rural stability, and addressed the problems related to agriculture, rural areas and

farmers. China has also made remarkable contributions to agricultural heritage conservation and cooperation at the global level.

Currently, there are eleven GIAHS pilot sites in China, more than any other country in the world. These are Qingtian Rice-Fish Culture in Zhejiang, Hani Rice Terraces in Honghe of Yunnan, Wannian Traditional Rice Culture in Jiangxi, Dong's Rice Fish Duck System in Guizhou, Pu'er Traditional Tea Agrosystem in Yunnan, Aohan Dryland Farming System in Inner Mongolia, the Urban Agricultural Heritage of Xuanhua Grape Gardens in Hebei, Shaoxing *Torreya Grandis cv. Merrillii* Community in Zhejiang, Jiaxin Traditional Chinese Date Gardens, Xinghua Duotian Agrosystems, and the the Fuzhou Jasmine and Tea Culture System.

FAO, as the specialized agency for agriculture and food security, is strongly positioned to share its unique practical experience in the promotion of global South-South Cooperation; to deal with relevant issues concerned with capacity development; the exchange of knowledge and experience among countries of the south and to provide support for the implementation of strategies and the Special Programme on Food Security (SPFS).

The FAO South-South Cooperation involves the mutual sharing and exchange of key development solutions between and among countries in the global south. China, as one of the first countries to participate, has been actively involved in FAO's SSC framework. China has established a trust fund at FAO to support the SSC and to facilitate knowledge and experience sharing with other developing countries. On the basis of its successful establishment and promotion of the GIAHS approach, China is willing to share its experiences with other relevant developing countries through the FAO-China SSC programme, so as to promote sustainable agro-ecological development and agricultural heritage conservation and utilization around the world.

In this context, FAO and the Government of China have agreed to the creation of a project to organize a training course on GIAHS as a capacity-development activity under the FAO-China SSC programme work plan for 2014.

2. Objectives

The objective of the FAO-China SSC project is to train High-Level/Senior Staff - national focal point institutions for GIAHS and government resource officers or academicians and, in the process, initiate, implement and manage a GIAHS programme in their respective countries.

The proposed High Level training will build upon a decade of successful piloting of GIAHS dynamic conservation, scientific underpinning of agricultural heritage and worldwide experience in selected countries in Latin America, North Africa and Asia, particularly in China. The course will be divided into different modules:

- The GIAHS Conceptual Framework, background, criteria and processes
- The GIAHS Implementation and Operational Framework; resource mobilization and funding opportunities
- Agricultural Heritage and the Pillars of Sustainable Development
- GIAHS and the Rio+20 Visions and international development objectives
- GIAHS impacts and issues
- Lessons learned and experiences exchange through South-South Cooperation
- The Way Forward

3. Expected outcome and outputs

The outcomes of the project will be:

- Based on lessons learned during the implementation of GIAHS existing interventions in China, ideas will be stimulated on the use of the GIAHS concept to leverage support and synergies with existing relevant programmes and plans in developing countries.
- Up-scaling and expanding of the Chinese experiences and GIAHS best practices of dynamic conservation.
- Enhanced institutional capacity in establishing GIAHS and managing and implementing GIAHS interventions.
- Strengthening of cooperation on GIAHS among member countries.

It is foreseen that approximately 30 participants from government and academia will be trained in the fundamental values of agricultural heritage. Trainees will be introduced to the important aspects and indicators required to manage and develop dynamic conservation of GIAHS.

Specifically, the project will produce the following outputs, such as but not limited to:

- Development of GIAHS training modules: (i) GIAHS conceptual and implementation framework; (ii) Lessons learned and experiences: China's implementation; and (iii) GIAHS learning practices for capacity development.
- Capacity development of prospective GIAHS national institutions/focal points to initiate, design, implement and monitor a GIAHS plan.
- Enhanced capacity of GIAHS national focal points and local trainers.
- Developed/enhanced GIAHS knowledge platform in Asia and the Pacific.

The final report on the training course will be prepared and distributed to the relevant units concerned.

4. Main course modules and pilot sites to visit (Tentative agenda annexed to this document)

The course contents will be divided into five modules³:

³ Descriptions and handouts for each module will be provided at the start of the training.

- 1) **GIAHS Conceptual Framework** – Includes the scientific background of agricultural heritage, features and criteria, from concept to implementation, the evolution of agricultural heritage. Relevant examples to be provided during lectures.
- 2) **GIAHS Implementation/Operational Framework** – The training will include discussion of the institutional aspects of GIAHS, the GIAHS Partnership Framework and the operational guidelines used to assess, manage and monitor GIAHS. During the module there will be discussions on the step-by-step procedures for submission, nomination and designation of GIAHS. Discussions will also cover emerging opportunities and leveraging resources for developing GIAHS conservation through available funding opportunities such as the Global Environmental Facility – focal areas/programmes, ITPGRFA Access and Benefit Sharing Fund mechanisms, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), South-South Cooperation Programmes, and other international donors including in-country funding prospects.
- 3) **GIAHS within Contemporary Development Issues** – This module will cover discussions on GIAHS and the pillars of sustainable development, existing multi-lateral instruments, relevance and opportunities for support. The module will also feature GIAHS in relevant development sectors and sustainable development, such as marketing, heritage conservation and tourism management, culture and cultural diversity, payments for environmental services and others.
- 4) **GIAHS lessons learned and best practices** – One of the main features of the training shall be the lessons learned and best experiences from the current GIAHS interventions. Chinese farmers, representatives from local and national governments, academicians and other stakeholders will give inspirational talks. Also planned are lectures, presentations and documentary videos on GIAHS sites. The module will include field visits to China's selected GIAHS sites to allow participant trainees direct interaction with local communities.
- 5) **GIAHS way forward** – This is the final module. Based on the knowledge gained, the participants will be requested to deliver and present their own GIAHS plan for their respective country. The individual plans will be discussed in the open forum together with the organizers, and eventually a GIAHS 'road map' will be prepared for the Way Forward.

5. Participants and Qualifications

About 30 participants are expected from the following countries:

- Bangladesh
- Bhutan
- Cambodia
- Fiji (or any of the pacific islands)
- India
- IndonesiaThe Lao People's Democratic Republic
- Maldives

- Mongolia
- Myanmar
- Nepal
- The Philippines
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand
- Viet Nam

China will cover the costs for participants from the above-mentioned countries, under the SSC programme.

Participants from other countries (or additional participants within the abovementioned) may attend the training at their own expense.

Participants must meet the following criteria:

Participants must be:

- Staff from the representative/s of national governments, national institutions, academic, research institutions and/or civil society organizations.
- Under 55 years of age with an education background (diploma, BSc or higher) in agriculture, environment, rural development or biological science with a minimum of four years of on-the- job or practical experience.
- Before the training course, the participants are requested to engage in a review or study of his/her working experience or knowledge about his/her country agricultural and environmental development; relevant policies, laws and regulations affecting agricultural production and farmers; profile data on assessing traditional, agro-ecological farming systems; status and trend of agricultural biodiversity, crops and livestock including undervalued crops; status and trend of indigenous knowledge systems and practices; the UNESCO World Heritage list of cultural landscapes; Man and Biosphere programme; indigenous peoples; protected areas; national parks; and any other relevant information pertaining to people and nature. This material will be required during the training course on the development of the GIAHS proposal.
- All participants must be nominated and endorsed by the national government, and will be subject to approval by the organizers and the availability of an opening.
- The selection of participants will be conducted jointly by FAO in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture in Beijing. The Ministry of Agriculture, China will confirm the successful applicants.

6. Other

- **Language**

It is essential that participants are fluent in English, as training will be in English. Simultaneous translation will be given in English and Chinese during the lectures, practical activities, field visits and interventions.

- **Cost**

All travel; accommodation and related expenses for two⁴ officially nominated participants and facilitator/specialists from FAO and the above-mentioned countries (15) will be covered by the FAO-China SSC Trust Fund.

- **Training duration and venue**

The training course will be held in Beijing for three weeks from the 14 to the 28 of September 2014, with arrival on 14 September and departure on the 28 September 2014. Field visits will be organized to selected GIAHS sites in China.

- **Visa Requirement**

Attention is drawn to the strict provisions in force regarding entry into China, including the refusal of those without the required visas. Participants requiring entry visas must obtain these from the Chinese Consulate or Diplomatic Mission in their country before leaving for China. It should be noted that the issuance of an entry visa may require up to two weeks.

Those participants travelling from a country where there is no Chinese Consulate or Diplomatic Mission may obtain a visa on arrival in China provided that they provide FAO their full name, date and place of birth, nationality, passport number, flight number, date of arrival and their travel itinerary. This information must reach FAO Headquarters at least one month before the arrival of participants to permit the course organizers to arrange with the Chinese hosts for the necessary invitation letter and request the issue of an entry visa at the point of entry into China.

- **Information on the training course can be obtained from the following Focal Points:**

FAO

Technical Cooperation Department, Rome

Mr Liu Zhongwei, Programme Officer, South-South Cooperation Team (TCSS), Rome, Italy

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Ms Mary Jane Ramos dela Cruz, Land and Water Division (NRL), Rome, Italy

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China

CICOS, MOA

⁴The government may nominate more than two participants, provided that the nominating government will cover the cost of the additional participants, and subject to acceptance by the organizers.

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