



PROJECT DURAS

*Promotion du Développement Durable dans les systèmes de Recherche Agricole du Sud
Promoting Sustainable Development in Agricultural Research Systems*

DURAS Project Leaders' Workshop

*11-14 October 2005
Agropolis International
Montpellier, France*

WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

I. Background

A. DURAS Project

The Project DURAS (Promotion du Développement Durable dans les systèmes de Recherche Agricole du Sud) is a three-year project funded by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It aims to contribute to strengthening the involvement and enhancing the scientific potential of southern stakeholders in agricultural research for sustainable development (ARSD), particularly in Africa, Near East and some parts of Asia¹.

It is among the Type 2 Initiatives under the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD). These initiatives also referred to as Partnerships for Sustainable Development, are voluntary multi-stakeholder partnerships which contribute to the implementation of inter-governmental commitments in Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. As such, the project will take part in enabling all stakeholders in agricultural research to make a concrete contribution to the outcomes of the WSSD and other international agreements in furthering sustainable development (SD).

The project has three components, namely: (1) Support to the facilitation role of the Secretariat of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR); (2) Development of a functional information communication management (ICM) system through an improvement of the Electronic Global Forum on Agricultural Research (EGFAR) and the development of Regional Agricultural Information Systems (RAIS); and (3) Competitive grants systems that will fund proposals in key priority areas consistent with the GFAR Business Plan.

The first two components of the project are being handled by the Secretariat of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) in Rome, Italy while the third component is being managed by Agropolis in Montpellier, France where the DURAS Project Office is based.

B. The DURAS Competitive Grants

The DURAS CGS was established to encourage (scaling up of) innovation as well as to contribute to enhancing the scientific potential of ARD stakeholders in the South.

Two Calls for Proposal were made under the DURAS Project. The first Call was launched in July 2004 while the second call was made in February 2005. A total of 129 pre-proposals were submitted for the 1st Call while 173 were submitted for the 2nd Call. These pre-proposals were reviewed by the DURAS Selection and Scientific Partnership Committee (CSPS) in December 2004 and March 2005, respectively, where 12 pre-proposals from each Call advanced to Full Proposal Development stage. Proponents of the pre-selected pre-proposals received Euro

¹ Countries belonging to the France's Priority Solidarity Zone, or ZSP (Zone de Solidarité Prioritaire).

5,000 support for the development of a full project proposal which then served as basis for the final selection of projects for funding. From the 24 full proposals, 12 were chosen by the DURAS CSPS and the Steering Committee in June 2005.

The projects were selected on the basis of the following criteria: (1) over-all project design and feasibility; (2) appropriateness and innovativeness; (3) socio-economic consideration; (4) environmental and sustainability considerations; and (5) partnership quality.

List of 12 projects supported under the DURAS Competitive Grants Scheme

1. Caractérisation morphologique, zootechnique et génétique des populations locales de volailles de genre *Gallus gallus* dans les pays côtiers de l'Afrique occidentale (*Université d'Abomey-Calavi – Bénin; Pays concernés: Bénin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana*)
2. Un réseau régional de plateformes d'échanges pour améliorer l'identification des besoins des agriculteurs et la diffusion de nouvelles variétés de bananier plantain (*CARBAP-Cameroun; Pays concernés: Cameroun, Bénin, Gabon, Guinée*)
3. Farmer Access to Innovation Resources. Action Research on Innovation Support Fund (*Farmer Support Group-South Africa; Countries involved: S. Africa, Uganda, Cambodia, Sudan*)
4. Innovations et savoirs paysans dans les pratiques de gestion des écosystèmes forestiers humides d'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre : diversification des systèmes d'exploitation associant cultures pérennes et vivrières (*IRAD-Cameroun; Pays concernés: Cameroun, Ghana, Guinée*)
5. The implication of the local knowledge in the increasing integration of animal husbandry in the farming systems of disadvantaged communities (*National Institute of Soil and Fertilizer- Vietnam; Countries involved: Vietnam, Laos*)
6. Valoriser les savoirs paysans sur l'intégration agriculture élevage pour une gestion durable des écosystèmes des savanes subhumides de l'Afrique (*CIRDES-Burkina Faso; Pays concernés: Burkina Faso, Mali, Tchad, Cameroun*)
7. Approche intégrative de la gestion des nématodes phytoparasites en systèmes maraîchers méditerranéens et sahéliens (*Société MARISSA Groupe AZURA – Maroc; Pays concernés: Maroc, Algérie, Tunisie, Sénégal*)
8. Appropriation par les Organisations de Producteurs d'Afrique de l'Ouest de la technologie d'inoculation avec des microorganismes améliorant la production végétale (*CLCOP de Keur Momar Sarr- Sénégal; Pays concernés: Sénégal, Burkina Faso*)
9. Linking farmers to markets through valorization of local resources: the case for intellectual property rights of indigenous resources (*University of Pretoria – South Africa; Countries involved: South Africa, Namibia*)
10. Improving the pig and pig meat marketing chain to enable small producers to serve consumer needs in Vietnam and Cambodia (*Vietnam Agricultural Science Institute; Countries involved: Vietnam, Cambodia*)
11. Poverty and Pace Setters (POPS). From sector support for farm products marketing to targeting entrepreneurs by building networks among poverty struck (*Centre for Rural Economic Development Research-Vietnam; Countries involved: Vietnam, Kenya*)
12. Production de malts de sorgho ou de mil de qualité pour la production alimentaire artisanale ou semi industrielle en Afrique de l'Ouest (*CERNA-Burkina Faso; Pays concernés: Burkina Faso; Bénin*)

All projects involve a minimum of two countries from the South and at least three types of stakeholder groups, one of which is an NGO, farmers organizations, or small-medium enterprise. Each project also involves a French or European collaborating organization.

The award size varies from Euro 90,000 to Euro 150,000 over a period of two-years. Project implementation started after the October 2005 workshop.

II. Workshop Objectives

The workshop aimed to bring together coordinators of DURAS-supported projects and share information with each other on their respective project. It was also designed to discuss and agree on the following: (1) minimum set of indicators which each project can use to estimate contribution to sustainable development (SD); (2) common project monitoring and reporting system; and (3) information and communication tools which can be used to facilitate interaction among Project Coordinators as well as in the reporting and dissemination of project results.

III. Workshop Design

The workshop was divided into seven sessions: Opening; Presentation of 12 Projects; Project Contribution on Sustainable Development (SD); Progress Reporting; Financial Reporting; Information and Communication; and Workshop Evaluation & Closing. (*Annex 1: Workshop Programme*).

Each session involved presentations followed by open discussions and, in the case of the session on contribution to SD, a Working Group Discussion. Guided visit to the Languedoc-Rousillon Remote Sensing Center, the Institute for Rural Development (IRD) Greenhouse and Agropolis Museum was also organized.

Oliver Oliveros and Anne-Lucie Wack of the DURAS Project Office co-facilitated the workshop. Mireille Montes de Oca provided secretariat support. Simultaneous interpretation (English-French-English) was likewise provided.

IV. Workshop Results and Conclusions

A. Opening Session

Michel Salas, Agropolis Secretary General, welcomed the participants and wished them a fruitful and productive workshop. In his message, Dr. Jean-François Giovannetti (Ministry of Foreign Affairs-France) provided a brief historical background of sustainable development and the "birth" of the DURAS Project. For his part, GFAR Executive Secretary Ola Smith highlighted the importance of partnership and the need to involve other non-traditional players in ARD in the research for development process. Self-introduction of workshop participants followed.

Mr. Oliveros presented the Workshop Objectives and Expected Outputs as well as an overview of the DURAS Project. Dr. Smith briefed the participants on the role of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR). Ms. Wack, Agropolis *Chargée de Mission* on Sustainable Development (SD), provided an overview of Agropolis as a French platform on agriculture, food and environment. (*Annexes 2, 3 and 4: PowerPoint presentations*)

B. Session 2: Presentation of 12 DURAS-funded projects

The 12 Project Coordinators presented their respective initiative highlighting: (1) project content, including problem statement, objectives, key activities and expected outputs; (2) partnership dimension, i.e., stakeholders involved as well as their roles and responsibilities; (3) project's possible impact, its value added, and potential contribution to sustainable development; and (4)

framework for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) including their proposed impact indicators. (Annex 5: Project Summary Sheets of the 12 projects)

C. Session 2: Project’s contribution to sustainable development

The session on *Project’s contribution to sustainable development* started with presentations from Oliver Oliveros and from Francois Kornmann (Alter Consult). The first presentation focused on the initial work done by the DURAS Project’s Office in terms of developing a framework for estimating the projects’ contribution to SD while the second presentation provided some guidelines in developing SD indicators. The two presentations highlighted the various dimensions of SD, namely: economic, environmental and social as well as the importance of coming up with measurable, realistic and practical indicators that will estimate their project’s contribution to SD. (Annex 6 and 7: PowerPoint presentations)

Following the two introductory presentations, the participants were divided into four groups corresponding to the four thematic focus of the DURAS CGS projects. Each group was requested to (1) revisit their log frame, expected outputs, and the project proposal’s section on “Contribution to SD;” (2) review the initial work done by the DURAS Project Office on SD indicators for the project; and (3) propose indicators which can be used in estimating their project’s contribution to SD. The groups re-convened afterwards for Plenary Session for presentation and discussion of Working Group outputs. (Annex 8 Working Group Outputs)

As participants were not able to conclude on this, they agreed to continue the exercise by revisiting their respective project documents and consulting with their other partners and together define no more than 15 indicators covering the economic, ecological and social dimensions of SD. Project leaders were requested to submit their revised SD indicators by 08 December 2005.

D. Session 3: Progress Reporting

Mr. Oliveros briefly presented the proposed Progress Reporting Framework. It was highlighted that the main objective of the progress reporting is to ensure satisfactory progress of the project and that the reporting system will track, among others, all major project variables– cost, time, scope, and quality of deliverables.

The overall objectives of the process are to (1) track and review actual project accomplishments; (2) reflect, report and share accomplishments thus far; (3) ascertain whether or not project objectives are likely to be met; and (4) identify/propose possible corrective action early when project performance varies significantly from original plans.

Quarterly, Mid-term and Final Progress Reports will be submitted electronically by Project coordinators using the electronic workspace designed for them. Below is a matrix summarizing the elements of Progress Reporting per period. (Annexes 9: Progress Reporting formats)

<i>Elements of DURAS Progress Report</i>	Quarterly Report	Mid-Term Report	Final Report
Over-all project status as per 4 Critical Success Factors (CSF)*	X	X	X
Summary		X	X
Update on project activities	X**	X	X
Emerging contribution on sustainable development (SD)		X	X
Stakeholders involved		X	X
Publications and exchanges (e.g., seminars, conferences, etc)		X	X
Issues and challenges		X	X
Action Requests	X	X	
Project’s regional benefits			X
Future opportunities and challenges			X

* CSFs include (1) Meeting the stated project objectives; (2) timeliness of project implementation; (3) functional involvement of stakeholders; and (4) scientific outputs

** Optional

E. Session 4: Information and Communication

The DURAS website and the DURAS Project Leaders' electronic work station were presented. Following the ensuring discussion, the following suggestions were put forward by the participants:

1. Establish an on-line SD Resources. This will include hyperlinks, downloadable reading materials, etc. on sustainable development and related issues.
2. Within DURAS website, provide a summary/profile of CGS projects and link to its independent website.
3. Support to the development of CGS project website. DURAS Project Office will also explore possibility of using a back office system which will enable project coordinators to manage their website (updating, uploading information) in a decentralized manner.
4. Explore the possibility of providing training on agricultural information system management through the Component 2 of the DURAS Project. Linkage with the SIST Project will also be explored.
5. DURAS Project was requested to provide publication support, e.g. editing and printing, to the 12 CGS projects. Publications to include, among others, a compendium of all the 12 DURAS CGS projects, films and other audio-visual materials.
6. In publishing DURAS CGS projects, it was proposed that this be based on a framework on how the projects address/contribute to SD. For instance, the article/publication should highlight a project's distinct feature and a description of how each project is expected to respond/contribute to SD. The second part may focus on the results achieved, intermediate benefits, and/or the extent by which the project contributed to SD.
7. It was also suggested that project coordinators meet annually to update each other on the progress made, share experiences, lessons learned and emerging results. Prospective dates identified include the following:
 - 9-11 November 2006 (New Delhi) during the GFAR 2006 Conference
 - June/November 2006 (Rome) FAO Council Meeting
 - April 2007 (Rome) FAO Committee on Agriculture
 - October 2006 at CIRDES Headquarters (Burkina Faso)
 - November 2007 (Rome) FAO Conference
 - November/December 2006 Agropolis

F. Session 5: Financial Reporting

The DURAS Financial Reporting format was presented jointly by Oliveros and Jean Artacho, Agropolis Accountant. Below are the main points raised during the discussion:

1. Transfer of funds is governed by a Letter of Agreement between Agropolis (on behalf of the DURAS Project) and the recipient organizations. Project coordinators are mainly responsible for the efficient and effective management and utilization of funds. They will report annually the expenditures using the set of excel tables provided by the DURAS Project Office (*Annex 10*). Project coordinators may also submit their Financial Reports quarterly should they wish to.
2. Project expenditures related to per diem, proof of expenses (e.g. receipts, etc) and foreign exchange rates are subject to the conditions and regulations of the French Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry (MINEFI). Participants were informed that the DURAS Project Office have requested the MAE-France to exempt the projects from

the rules related to the application multiple exchange rates. The Project Office is yet to receive response from the latter. Project Coordinators were advised to refer to the Ministry's website (<http://www.finances.gouv.fr/minEFI/services/index.htm>) where the allowed *per diem* and exchange rates can be accessed.

3. Financial Report should be certified exact by the recipient organization's accounting unit. All original proofs of expense (e.g. boarding passes, train tickets, receipts) should be submitted to the DURAS Project Office.
4. Overhead cost should not exceed 8% of the total project cost.

V. Workshop Evaluation

At the end of the Workshop, participants were requested to fill-up the Workshop Evaluation Form (Annex 11). Most of the participants find the Workshop Sessions very useful. A number of them have singled out the discussions on projects contribution to sustainable and the indicators to estimate potential project impacts to be among the most important aspects of the workshop. They have also appreciated learning more about the other projects as well as the role of GFAR, Agropolis, and MAE-France in the DURAS project.

Participants' learning was facilitated by the presentations and rich discussions that took place. They also found the learning environment to be conducive and time management effective. For some, their learning was hindered by too many presentations over a long period and, for Muslim participants, by fasting since the workshop was held during the Ramadan period.

Participants also found the workshop to be excellent idea as it provided them an opportunity not only to know and understand the objectives and expectations of the DURAS Project office and the donor, but also to know more about the other projects and discuss with them on issues related to project content and implementation.

Among their suggestions include: (1) conduct an annual workshop among project coordinators to share progress made and emerging project outcomes as per the SD indicators they have used; (2) establish a database of SD resources on concepts, tools and research methods on SD; and (3) assign an expert on SD indicator for each for each thematic group (of projects) to help them elaborate on their project's contribution to SD. Other participants commented that a more varied format should have been used throughout the workshop and that there should have been more discussion on (a) project themes with overlapping focus; (b) scientific issues and (c) scientific and development outputs of the projects.

Over-all, the workshop met the expectations of the participants and participants felt generally satisfied.