

November 2004



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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Tenth Session

Rome, 8 – 12 November 2004

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL STRUCTURES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF FARM ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES – RESULTS OF A QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

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STRENGTHENING NATIONAL STRUCTURES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF FARM ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES – RESULTS OF A QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

I. Background

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) initiated the development of the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources (Global Strategy) in 1993. FAO committed the Animal Production and Health Division as the Global Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources, to coordinate further development of the Global Strategy.
2. The goal of the Global Strategy is to overcome the erosion of animal genetic resources and to ensure sustainable development and use of these resources. The Global Strategy provides a framework to assist countries, regions and other stakeholders plan, implement and maintain management programmes for sustainable use and development of animal genetic resources. The Global Strategy involves four fundamental components:
 - an intergovernmental support mechanism for enabling direct government involvement and ensuring continuity of policy advice;
 - a technical programme of interdependent activities to characterize, use, develop and conserve those irreplaceable resources;
 - a geographically distributed and country-based structure, supported by regional and global focal points, to assist national actions; and
 - a reporting component to aid action planning and to monitor and evaluate progress.
3. As part of the Country-based Planning and Implementation Infrastructure, the establishment and operation of National Focal Points for animal genetic resources has continued as one of the most important and basic elements of the Global Strategy, and significant progress has been made to establish them as part of a global animal genetic resources network. As of 30 September 2004, 130 countries have nominated National Coordinators for animal genetic resources, responsible for serving as contact persons to the Global Focal Point. Names and addresses are available in DAD-IS (www.fao.org/dad-is).
4. The support in institutional development is one of the priority areas highlighted by countries in their reports. This priority issue was also expressed during regional follow-up workshops for the preparation of the Country Reports. The National Coordinators (NCs), at their meeting in March 2004 in Rome, requested FAO to assist in the strengthening of national focal points (NFPs) for the management of animal genetic resources.
5. The Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources (The Working Group), in its Third Session, recommended that FAO emphasize to countries the need to establish and strengthen their national focal points for animal genetic resources. This would enhance participation in the further development of the Global Strategy, including implementation of strategic priorities identified in the Country Reports. Furthermore, the Working Group recommended that countries consider maintaining their national consultative committees or other committees as appropriate to ensure stakeholder support and participation in the Global Strategy at national level.
6. The Secretariat has therefore undertaken a global questionnaire survey of National Focal Points for Animal Genetic Resources (NFP), to inform the Commission on the progress in the

implementation of NFPs. A total of 90 completed questionnaires were received by 27 October 2004. The majority of the responding countries (91%) had finalised their Country Report and submitted it to FAO. Regional representation was as follows: Africa (30), Asia and The Pacific (10), Europe (28), Latin America and The Caribbean (16), Near East (5) and North America (1). The results of the survey are presented in this paper. Questions 1 – 6, 10 – 11, 13-14 and 15 – 17 are presented as percentage of countries in each category. Questions 7 – 9, 12 and 18 are presented as percentage of all responses for each category. Some interpretation of the results is provided. The paper follows up on the information document on national networks presented to the Working Group in its Second Session¹.

7. While the questionnaire results are useful in providing an overview of structures, trends and activities that are being implemented at the country level to enhance conservation and sustainable use of animal genetic resources, caution is needed when interpreting the level of progress that has been made. The good understanding of the state of capacity to manage animal genetic resources and differences among and within regions requires a much more comprehensive assessment. Inventories of activities and resources, and a detailed policy and programme analysis will be undertaken in the preparation of the Report of the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources, providing a clear understanding of the state of animal genetic resources and capacity to manage them at the country, regional and global levels.

II. Results of the questionnaires

8. The following paragraphs provide an overview of the results of the questionnaires indicating progress made in the establishment of national networks, and the implementation of the strategic priorities for action identified in the Country Reports, as well as prospects for regional networking and the establishment of Regional Focal Points.

Status of implementation of National Focal Points for the management of animal genetic resources

9. Results of the questionnaire indicate that there has been significant progress in the establishment of national networks for animal genetic resources. The consultative process and the networks of stakeholders established during the preparation of the Country reports are valuable to maintain and build on, in order to ensure that the goals of the Global Strategy are met. It is important to consolidate these committees within countries through national structures coordinated through a national focal point (NFP). The National Consultative Committee which was important for Country Report preparation is still active in 65% of the countries, but were dissolved in 35% of the countries after the Report's finalisation. However, in 88% of the countries an organisation continues to host the National Coordinator (NC), who in 87% will continue his/her activities in official capacity. Only in 2% of the countries, the activities of the NC were discontinued. These results indicate that countries are moving towards coordinated and institutionalized management of animal genetic resources.

10. The questionnaire, however, did not provide information whether the NC is a fulltime professional, or whether financial resources are being provided for activities of the NFP. Functional and effective NFPs should play a leading role to ensure that the momentum and interest generated during the preparation of the Country Reports process is maintained, and that the implementation of some of the priority actions identified are getting started. Strong NFPs alone will not result in the successful implementation of the national plans. They need to be supported by well organised national structures with clearly defined functions and roles.

Process of Country Report preparation

¹ Overview of Country Activities Associated with the Development and Implementation of the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources (CGRFA/WG-AnGR-2/00/ INF/2)E

11. Questionnaires asked about the recognition the Country Report has received at national level. In the majority (81%) of countries, the Country Report had received medium or high recognition.

12. High and medium support for the preparation of the Country Report came mainly from the technical level (52 and 35%). The ranking on political support was inverse: it was considered medium by 54% and high by 35% of countries. Support from communities during the Country Report preparation was judged low to medium in the majority of countries (73%). This may indicate that ownership of the process was highest in technical staff, who were the target group of FAO training and technical meetings, and who were also the respondents of the questionnaire, but did not yet fully reach the community-based stakeholders. Political support was essential to maintain momentum during the process.

National follow-up actions after Country Report finalization

13. Country Reports had a strong impact in so far as 81% of countries stated to have started implementing priorities identified in the Country Report. This indicates that the preparation of Country Reports has led to increased awareness of the role which animal genetic resources play for food security and rural development.

14. The questionnaire, however, did not ask whether programmes on the management of animal genetic resources were emphasized by placing them on the political agendas, or whether national management plans for animal genetic resources have become part of the government's priority action plans for poverty alleviation and food security.

15. Activities undertaken subsequent to the finalization of the Country Report were mainly project preparation (62%) for submission to national and international donors or to FAO for technical support. Second ranked the holding of workshops/meetings (54%) or courses (13%), which together (77%) stress the high emphasis countries put on capacity building and the need to continuously develop the necessary human resources to support the programme.

16. Asked to identify three activities considered important for follow-up of the priorities outlined in the Country Report, the following answers were received (more than one response possible)

Capacity building	53 %
Conservation	36 %
Policy and legal framework	26 %
Improved breeding strategies	25 %
Identification and characterization	19 %

17. With regard to the priorities mentioned in the Country Report, the countries answered that immediate attention is needed in the fields of species or breeds (67%), followed by development of technical capacity, facilities, and institutions, with similar ranking of these three fields (51-59%). The importance given to training courses was ranked similar (22-31%) in the four categories from low to very high. Technical expertise to support the programme is a critical element needed to successfully implement the national animal genetic resources management plans.

18. The priorities relating to species and breeds are (more than one response possible)

Conservation	72 %
Characterization	64 %

Breeding programmes	64 %
Genetic evaluation	45 %
Surveys	41 %
Other	14 %

19. When asked about the immediate action required to implement priorities linked to breeds and species, financial support ranked highest (90%). However, combining the answers received for technical assistance (60%) and human resources development (36%) as an indicator for need of capacity building (96) shows the equal importance attached to capacity building. Political support (31%) was considered less important for the direct action to better conserve or manage specific species or breeds.

Regional and international cooperation

20. The majority of countries (90%) stated that regional meetings, with international participation and coordination, are relevant to the next phases of the process of finalization of the first Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources and the further development of the Global Strategy. There is also widespread agreement that policy involvement in the process has to be strengthened, as 84% of countries stated that these meetings should be attended by both technical staff and political decision makers.

21. As regional networking and cooperation has increased during the process of the preparation of the first Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources, 77% of the countries consider the importance of regional coordination, for example through the establishment of a Regional Focal Point, as important/very important. They also consider that due to limited capacity, the countries are not able to continue this process without external support (72%). Only 28% of countries stated that they would be able to continue the process independently. This cooperation should include both external technical and financial support (71%), with 21% and 8% of countries asking for technical and financial assistance only. Technical expertise could be sourced from the stakeholders that form the national network or from the regional and the global focal points.

ANNEX 1**GLOBAL SURVEY OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES****QUESTIONNAIRE**

Country:

National Coordinator:

Country Report status: () in preparation () draft () final

- 1) If still in preparation or draft stage, expected completion date is
 - () August 2004
 - () September 2004
 - () October 2004
 - () November 2004
 - () December 2004
- 2) The National Coordinator (NC) will
 - () continue activity in an official capacity
 - () continue activity in an unofficial capacity
 - () discontinue activity
- 3) The National Consultative Committee (NCC)
 - () is still active
 - () has concluded its activities
- 4) Is there an official organization that will host the activities of the NC and NCC?
 - () yes
 - () no
- 5) How do you evaluate the recognition of the country report at national level?
 - () none
 - () low
 - () medium
 - () high

-
- 6) How do you evaluate the support received for country report preparation at these levels?
- A) Political
- none
 - low
 - medium
 - high
- B) Technical
- none
 - low
 - medium
 - high
- C) Community
- none
 - low
 - medium
 - high
- 7) Considering the priorities mentioned in the country report, those requiring immediate attention relate to
- species/breeds
 - institutional organization
 - technical capacity
 - facilities
- 8) Relative to the priorities linked to breeds and species, immediate action is required in
- financial support
 - technical assistance
 - political support
 - human resources

-
- 9) The priorities relating to species and breeds are
- characterization
 - surveys
 - conservation
 - breeding programmes
 - genetic evaluation
 - other
- 10) The importance given to training courses on conservation and management of AnGR is
- low
 - medium
 - high
 - very high
- 11) Have any activities been undertaken in your country relating to the national priorities identified in the national report?
- yes
 - no
- 12) If so, please indicate the activities undertaken
- meetings/workshops
 - project preparation/presentation
 - courses
- 13) Are regional meetings, with international participation and coordination relevant to the next phases of the process?
- yes
 - no
- 14) If so, these meetings should involve
- only technical staff
 - only political staff
 - both technical and political staff

- 15) How would you evaluate the importance of regional coordination (Regional Focal Point) for future AnGR activities in your country?
- not necessary
 - necessary
 - important
 - very important
- 16) Is your country capable of continuing this process independently?
- yes
 - no
- 17) If not, cooperation should include
- technical assistance
 - financial support
 - both
- 18) Please outline three activities you consider important for follow-up of the priorities outlined in the country report.