PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING, AWARENESS, AND RECOGNITION OF AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE

The world’s population is growing rapidly and food demand is expected to rise significantly in the coming years. In order to ensure stable future food supplies, integrated approaches that support family farming communities, sustainable agriculture and the conservation of agroecosystem goods and services at the local level are needed. This project aimed to support and safeguard Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) and enhance the recognition of GIAHS in sustaining local food security, conserving biodiversity and promoting rural development. Through the identification and selection of new agricultural heritage systems, as well as the documentation and sharing of key evidence-based lessons, the project improved the value and awareness of the GIAHS. In doing so, the project promoted sustainable agriculture, natural resource management and empowered communities to transform ecosystem goods and services into marketable products and incomes.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?
The development of the GIAHS was enhanced through workshops, trainings and technical meetings supported by the project. The project identified and designated 12 new agricultural heritage systems in seven countries, and the selection procedures for GIAHS were updated and improved. The capacities of government agencies, ministries, as well as staff from local and national institutions, were strengthened and understanding and knowledge of GIAHS were also improved. The project contributed to the formation of a new regional network, which facilitates meetings, cooperation and learning among member countries. Furthermore, opportunities were provided for countries to enhance cooperation and learning exchanges, especially with countries that have little GIAHS experience. Enhanced GIAHS branding and cooperation within and between regions will continue to support tourism and economic development in GIAHS sites in the future.

IMPACT
With the additional GIAHS identified, the project successfully raised awareness of GIAHS and helped spread the concept of GIAHS around the world. Especially in Europe, where there were no GIAHS identified as of March 2017, the Government of Italy and FAO signed a Memorandum of Understanding in October 2016 to promote GIAHS in Italy and other European countries. At the same time, in some areas that were designated as GIAHS during the project period, GIAHS contributed to food security and rural development. For example, local people made the most of GIAHS designation by introducing residents to learn and experience the characteristics of farming practices at GIAHS sites. The formation of partnerships with local companies to attract more people to the area and promote the branding of agricultural products enhanced the economic benefits derived by local populations. Thus, the project contributed to the recognition of the importance and value of agricultural heritage systems and helped sustain local livelihoods, promote biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources.

KEY FACTS
Contribution USD 511,890
Duration September 2013 – March 2017
Resource Partners Government of Japan
Beneficiaries National government agencies, ministries as well as staff from local and national institutions; Ultimate target beneficiaries are poor farmers, smallholders, family farmers, indigenous people and local communities
ACTIVITIES

- New agricultural heritage systems were identified and assessed.
- Strengthened knowledge management and upscaling best practices were developed.
- Understanding of GIAHS and capacity of local and national partners were enhanced and improved.
- Knowledge management and implementation of GIAHS activities were strengthened.

Project Code
FAO:GCP/INT/154/JPN
ID Resource Partner: A-14/2013-RO/Ip

Project Title
Support to the implementation of the GIAHS Initiative

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