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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON ANIMAL
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**DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL
FOCAL POINTS**

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DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS

I BACKGROUND

1. The Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources (Global Strategy) has provided a strategic framework to advance work on animal genetic resources for food and agriculture for over 10 years. A key component of the Global Strategy is the Country-based Planning and Implementation Infrastructure Component, which includes National Focal Points, Regional Focal Points and the Global Focal Point.
2. Establishment of National Focal Points has proven essential to lead, facilitate and coordinate country activities in animal genetic resources and to interface with regional and global efforts. The Global Focal Point was established within FAO to facilitate global initiatives, to develop and maintain a communications capacity and to develop guidelines and other tools to support the sustainable use, development and conservation of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture at the national and regional levels.
3. Regional Focal Points for animal genetic resources have been established in a number of regions to facilitate regional cooperation, to provide technical assistance and leadership, to coordinate training, research and project development aimed at enhancing the use, development and conservation of animal genetic resources, and to improve communication among National Focal Points for Animal Genetic Resources.
4. **The Asian Regional Focal Point** was the first regional focal point that was established and operated between 1993 and 1999, involving 12 countries. It was established on a project basis with financial resources being provided by the Government of Japan. Since conclusion of the project funding, efforts have been undertaken by the Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific (APHCA) and the FAO Regional Office to maintain the regional network that was developed through this project.
5. **The European Regional Focal Point for animal genetic resources** was initiated in 1997 and formally established in 2001, and continues to be fully operational. The Secretariat for the European Regional Focal Point is elected from among the National Focal Points to serve for a limited period. Up to September 2006, the secretariat has been provided by the Government of France, with additional financial contributions from 10 countries from within the region. Since then, Greece hosts the secretariat. This support enables undertaking of concerted action and provides support to countries within the region that require it, to participate in regional meetings. The Regional Focal Point assists with coordinating activities and maintains communication among the National Focal Points of the 39 countries in the regions.
6. **The Regional Focal Point for Southern Africa** involving the 14 Southern African Development Community Countries began as a UNDP-funded Project (RAF/97/032), hosted within the Ministry of Agriculture of South Africa. A Chief Technical Advisor was in place from 1999 to 2002, and a Regional Steering Committee was formed.
7. Based on the positive experience to date, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission) and its Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources (Working Group) have recommended further development of Regional Focal Points, where appropriate. Some of the expected benefits that are likely to result from the establishment of Regional Focal Points include: enhanced ability to share experiences in the implementation of national action plans for the management of animal genetic resources (best practices, policy development, etc.); efficient capacity building through regional training; collaborative animal genetic resources characterization; coordinated *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, potentially significantly reducing

conservation costs; enhanced donor support for animal genetic resources projects through improved project development and promotion; and the potential to establish regional policies that enhance national and regional efforts to better use, develop and conserve animal genetic resources.

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

8. The *Appendix* to the current document contains guidelines to assist in the establishment of Regional Focal Points. The guidelines describe a step-by-step process to assist regional interests to examine their potential for establishing and sustaining a Regional Focal Point.

9. The experience gained from the current and past operation of Regional Focal Points, especially the European Regional Focal Point, has been beneficial for the preparation of the guidelines. A report on the operation of the European Regional Focal Point was previously reviewed by the Working Group.¹

¹ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-3/04/Inf. 1

Appendix

GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES

Step 1: Establish an Interim Regional Steering Committee

The first key step is to establish an interim Regional Steering Committee that can oversee the process for establishing the Regional Focal Point. Core membership in the interim Steering Committee will ideally consist of nominated National Coordinators from within the region. Representation from non-government organizations, business interests, and international organizations that have interests in animal genetic resources may be appropriate, and thus, additional members should be considered to ensure stakeholder representation and to build broad-based support for the establishment of the Regional Focal Point. The main activities for the interim Steering Committee are described below.

If the benefits and objectives of a **Regional Focal Point** have not already been determined in the region, then a key first step will be a needs assessment. This could be undertaken by the interim Steering Committee using a questionnaire. The key target audience for the needs assessment will be National Coordinators for Animal Genetic Resources. Non-government organizations, business interests and relevant international organizations could also be considered for participating in the needs assessment.

Perhaps most importantly, the interim Steering Committee should prepare a business case or plan for the Regional Focal Point that provides a **draft concept for the Regional Focal Point**. The interim **Steering Committee should also agree on a set of selection requirements**, which can be considered at a regional workshop involving National Coordinators for animal genetic resources, policy makers and key stakeholders.

Step 2: Undertake Awareness Building of the Benefits of a Regional Focal Point

A communication strategy may be necessary to build support for the Regional Focal Point. The interim Steering Committee may need to undertake significant awareness building initiatives of the potential benefits of a Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources. This could involve presentations at regional meetings and conferences and interaction with high-level policy-makers. Engagement of government departments, non-governmental stakeholders and relevant business interests is highly desirable to build support for a Regional Focal Point. A business plan will provide an important communication tool, and thus, it is suggested that early effort be devoted to preparing the business plan for the Regional Focal Point.

Step 3: Prepare a Business Case or Business Plan for a Regional Focal Point

It is recommended that the interim Steering Committee prepare a detailed business plan for the Regional Focal Point. This would include a clear statement of purpose; the main activities of the proposed Regional Focal Point; and an indicative budget with staffing requirement. Suggestions on the key elements of the business plan are provided below to assist the interim Steering Committee.

Vision Statement or Statement of Purpose

The interim Steering Committee may wish to prepare a draft vision or statement of purpose for the Regional Focal Point. The statement of purpose could also be described as terms of reference for the Regional Focal Point. As an example, the terms of reference for the European Regional Focal Point are provided below to assist the interim Steering Committee draft a statement of purpose or terms of reference for its Regional Focal Point:

- *To assist and enhance the animal genetic resources activities of National Focal Points at the European level.*

- *To develop and maintain regular contact and exchange of relevant information on animal genetic resources horizontally between European National Focal Points and vertically with the Global Focal Point in Rome within FAO's agreed global structure.*
- *To stimulate the funding and organisation of regional projects, workshops and national programmes on animal genetic resources within the European Region.*
- *To stimulate and co-ordinate the maintenance and further development of national and regional animal genetic resources databases and encourage European information networking on animal genetic resources.*

Main Activities of the Regional Focal Point

The Steering committee should consider the potential main activities for the Regional Focal Point, and include these in the business plan. A **list of potential activities** for a Regional Focal Point is provided below to assist the interim Steering Committee. They are listed under three main categories: Technical Cooperation Activities; Mobilization of Financial Resources Activities; and Communication and Networking Activities.

Potential Technical Cooperation Activities:

- Determine regional capacity building needs and establish a coordinated agenda for addressing priority needs to better use, develop and conserve animal genetic resources.
- Coordinate documentation of breeds at risk and prepare coordinated conservation plans as appropriate. The plans will be based on existing bibliography and country reports and will give emphasis to both technical and socio-economic aspects, to local breeds of the region and to the strategic advantages of coordinated regional actions.
- Coordinate the exchange of information within the region on animal genetic resources management activities, including further development of data and information systems.
- Coordinate inventory and characterization of transboundary regional breeds to improve cost effectiveness and investigate opportunities for cooperation in breed improvement programmes.
- Foster strong working relationships among countries within the region and between the various stakeholders, and build consensus on regional issues and policies.
- Develop a schedule for execution of work plans with the participation of more than one country in the region is suggested.

Mobilization of Financial Resources:

- Prepare a portfolio of projects to be presented to possible donors. These projects will be based on agreed regional priorities for action, and Country Reports and National Action Plans prepared within the region will be extremely valuable in assisting the identification of the priority needs.
- Facilitate and coordinate implementation of regional projects and facilitate access by countries to external technical and financial resources.

Potential Communication and Networking Activities:

- Establish and maintain communication mechanisms among National Focal Points within the region.
- Establish and maintain communication with the Global Focal Point, and other Regional Focal Points as appropriate.
- Establish and maintain communication with stakeholders within the region.

- Set up and coordinate the functioning of a Regional Network through a website to register and update the activities in the region.
- Establish a virtual library to assist capacity building in the region. Important documents such as Country Reports from the region could be stored and available in the library, as well as the reports of regional meetings and various documentations provided by member countries. Also, regional research and other projects should be documented and held in the regional virtual library.
- Promote and coordinate the preparation and release of communication material for raising awareness at regional and national levels, on the social, economic, food security, cultural, and other aspects of management of animal genetic resources and specifically local resources.

Draft Budget and Funding Options

The interim Steering Committee may wish to prepare a draft budget for the operation of the Regional Focal Point and include the budget in the business plan. A substantial yearly budget is needed to enable operation of the Regional Focal Point, and the interim Steering Committee will need to develop and propose a realistic budget to participating countries and possible donors.

The interim Steering Committee will also need to consider and propose a sustainable funding mechanism for the operation of the Regional Focal Point. Experience has shown that mobilization of financial resources from donors for the establishment and maintenance of Regional Focal Points has proved to be extremely difficult, but not impossible. However, the most sustainable approach to financing Regional Focal Points is likely to be a combination of in kind and other support from a host country or host organization from within the region, and a cost sharing arrangement of member countries from within the region. The interim Steering Committee may wish to propose a formula for contributions from countries within the region in order to ensure sustainable functionality of the Regional Focal Point. The interim Steering Committee may also wish to approach potential donors to provide start-up funding for the Regional Focal Point.

Step 4: Establish a draft set of Selection Criteria, Host Agreement and Conduct Elections

The interim Steering Committee may wish to prepare a draft set of selection procedures to assist countries understand the minimum requirements for hosting a Regional Focal Point. Some selection requirements are provided below to assist the interim Steering Committee to consider the key elements for selecting a host site.

Selection Criteria

The interim Steering Committee may wish to suggest that the host institution already be engaged in activities concerning the management of animal genetic resources within the country or the region.

The interim Steering Committee may wish to establish the minimum basic staff and infrastructure that is required to host the Regional Focal Point and financial commitment from the host organization.

The interim Steering Committee may wish to suggest the type of organization that could serve as a host: a Ministry of a host country, a national institution, or regional international or intergovernmental organization. The interim Steering Committee may wish to suggest that the host can be selected from any of these options, provided all countries involved agree to the arrangement.

The interim Steering Committee may wish to establish the length of term for hosting the Regional Focal Point. This could be a fixed term, if rotation within the region is desirable. Alternatively, the Regional Focal Point could be permanently established but subject to periodic reviews.

Host Agreement

The interim Steering Committee may wish to prepare a host agreement that the host institutions would be required to officially agree to in order to host the Regional Focal Point. The host agreement should

specify the agreed expectations of the Regional Focal Point; cost-sharing arrangements and indicate the governance arrangements. The Host Agreement could be between the host institution and the Steering Committee of the Regional Focal Point.

Elections

The interim Steering Committee may wish to establish election procedures for the establishment of the Regional Focal Point. This will be particularly important if more than one potential host organization expresses its willingness to host the Regional Focal Point. A key element is to determine who is eligible to cast a vote, and the level of consensus that is required for establishment of the Regional Focal Point (e.g. majority, a percentage of countries in the region, etc.). The Global Focal Point could be requested to assist in the election process if deemed appropriate.

Step 5: Convene a Regional Workshop

The interim Steering Committee should organize a regional workshop to enable all countries within the region to consider the establishment of the Regional Focal Point. This will enable country representatives, and in particular National Coordinators for Animal Genetic Resources, to review the business plan prepared by the interim Steering Committee as well as the draft selection criteria and draft host agreement.

If feasible, the host organization for the Regional Focal Point could be agreed upon during the first regional workshop. This would require consultations prior to the workshop.

Step 6: Establish a permanent Steering Committee for the Regional Focal Point

The regional workshop should also agree on the establishment of a permanent Steering Committee for the Regional Focal Point, as well as decide on its membership and the process for its renewal.

By the closure of the workshop, the permanent Steering Committee should receive a mandate to proceed to identify a potential host organization using agreed selection criteria, and have regional agreement on the selection process.

Step 7: Agree on roles and functions of the permanent Steering Committee

Permanent Steering Committee

The regional workshop should also establish terms of reference for the Permanent Steering Committee to oversee operation of the Regional Focal Point. Factors to consider include:

- Length of membership.
- Election of a Chair of the Steering Committee.
- Meeting frequency and modes of communication.

Undertake official nomination of the new members of the Steering Committee.

Functions of the permanent Steering Committee

On an ongoing basis, the Steering Committee should undertake a number of planning and supervising functions. A list of potential activities is provided below to assist the Steering Committee.

- Organize regular regional meetings. Convening of an annual meeting is most desirable and the Steering Committee would play a key role in developing the agenda for these meetings.
- Decide on various matters related to the operation of the Regional Focal Point in between regular regional workshops.
- Develop a consultation procedure with participating countries, where appropriate.

- Organize training workshops and special sessions devoted to development of project proposals, supported by the Secretariat.
- Plan, execute or supervise implementation of regional projects.
- In collaboration with the Secretariat, establish a budget for the Regional Focal Point.
- Elect and oversee operation of the Secretariat of the Regional Focal Point.
- Oversee the election of the Steering Committee members.
- Represent the region, as appropriate, at international events and meetings.

Step 8: Establish the Host Site and Secretariat for the Regional Focal Point

Host Site

The permanent Steering Committee should initiate a process to identify the candidate(s) host sites and implement the selection process (e.g. launch a call for proposals to host the Regional Focal Point).

- Undertake election or other selection procedures agreed upon at the regional workshop.
- Conclude selection of a host site and inform member countries on the results.
- Establish a host agreement and business plan for operation of the Regional Focal Point
- Establish the Secretariat for the Regional Focal Point and prepare clear terms of reference for its operation.

The Secretariat

The permanent Steering Committee should agree on the main roles and functions for the Secretariat. This may include:

- Providing support to the Steering Committee.
- Organizing regional meetings and conferences.
- Distributing information among National Focal Points.
- Providing an interface with the Global Focal Point.

Step 9: Routinely Review Operation of the Regional Focal Point

- The Steering Committee should routinely undertake a review of operation of the Regional Focal Point.