

Sustainable Crop Production Intensification (SCPI) / Save and Grow - Regional Consultation in the Caribbean

FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean (SLC), UN House, Barbados. 4-5 October 2012

A Regional Consultation on Sustainable Crop Production Intensification, including Save and Grow, was organized by FAO's Sub-Regional Office of the Caribbean from 4-5 October 2012, at the UN House Conference Room, Christchurch, Barbados.

http://www.fao.org/agriculture/crops/news-events-bulletins/detail/en/item/161353/icode/?no_cache=1

Background and Objectives

In 2011, under a Letter of Agreement with the FAO, the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) carried out a study on sustainable production practices in Barbados and six countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) – Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts/Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The objective of the study was to gather baseline information on existing sustainable agricultural practices and make these available to the wider agricultural community. The findings were compiled into a Baseline Survey Report, which formed the backdrop of a Regional Consultation held in Barbados on 4-5 October 2012 (Agenda at Annex 1). A total of 23 participants attended the Consultation, including representatives from 12 FAO Member States, two regional civil society bodies (Caribbean Farmers' Network (CaFAN) and the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD)) and five regional organizations (Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), The University of the West Indies (UWI), Institut National de Recherche Agronomique (INRA), the Caribbean Network for Agroecology and Innovation (CAWAI) and the Latinamerican Scientific Society for Agroecology (SOCLA)). The full list of participants is at Annex 2.

The Baseline Survey findings were presented in four technical sessions:

- Crops and Varieties,
- Farming Systems,
- Land and Water Management, and
- Crop and Pest Management.

Related components from other activities were included to make the sessions more comprehensive.

Main findings and conclusions

The following main findings and conclusions from the two days of deliberations are summarized:

- The demands of an increasing population call for increased crop intensification but because of limited land availability and natural resources, it is essential that wastage is reduced and that sustainable production methods are practised to conserve the environment and use inputs efficiently.
- Participants endorsed the key recommendation of the Baseline Survey: *One of the most important uses of this study could be the reintroduction of Good Agricultural Practices with a focus on Climate-Smart Agriculture that could, in one fell swoop, ensure the viability of the sector in a comprehensive way.*
- A wealth of existing information on SCPI techniques is not reaching the farmers. Some farmers currently practising sustainable techniques are not aware that they are doing so. A comprehensive diagnosis of the value chain - from land preparation to harvest and post-harvest - is needed to assess the areas where sustainable techniques are not being practised and to recommend simple adjustments to bring about those changes.
- Proposed techniques should be assessed for cost and for the likelihood of sustainability and adoption by farmers. Development of sustainability indicators should be considered.
- Simple training manuals/materials for farmers are needed to teach them the techniques.
- There is an urgent need for capacity building in areas such as plant breeding, soil science and conservation agriculture within the Ministries of Agriculture of the region. Where capacity exists, South-South Cooperation should be promoted to share expertise.
- Networking among farmers' groups, civil society organizations and technicians should be promoted and linkages among CaFAN, CNIRD and CAWAI fostered (innovation, training).
- Education and awareness programmes are needed to sensitize farmers on the adoption and adaptation of sustainable production methods to urge them to change current practices. CaFAN and CAWAI should join forces to develop collaborative research in pilot demos.
- Research and Development (R&D) are major gaps that can be filled by CAWAI's work on agro-ecology and innovation. Stronger links with Latin American institutions (EMBRAPA, CIAT, CATIE) can assist with capitalizing on the opportunities for information sharing, joint research programmes and capacity building. Greater Private sector sponsorship of R&D, including paying farmers for research, should be promoted.
- The role of farmer organizations needs to be strengthened so that they can play a greater part in influencing farmers to adopt sustainable crop intensification practices.
- The Caribbean is not taking full advantage of existing and potential opportunities. National and regional programmes are needed to sensitize stakeholders of these opportunities. FAO, IICA and CARDI have a significant role to play in this area.
- Decision-makers also need to be sensitized, especially in areas such as the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and FONTAGRO, so that they better understand their rights and benefits and take advantage of existing opportunities.

Resource Mobilization and Assistance Requested

In terms of Resource Mobilization, several ongoing or recently-approved projects and potential sources were identified that can support many of the areas of need, including:

- Advancing Participatory Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Belize and the St Vincent and the Grenadines Agri-practitioners project (funded by the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management).
- The Promotion of Regional Opportunities for Produce through Enterprises and Linkages (PROPEL) project, supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), through which the Canadian Hunger Foundation (CHF)
- Banana Accompanying Measures (BAM), with € 35 million available for three countries
- 10th EDF programmes – SPS / ACP projects (€ 20 million)
- The Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in the Caribbean SIDS (USD 20 million)
- The German-funded Land and Coastal Resources Management Programme (€ 11 million)
- Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)'s support to regional projects that address technology transfer and capacity building

The countries requested assistance in the following areas of Land and Water Management: capacity building and development of training materials in Rainwater harvesting technologies, Water use efficiency, Integrated plant nutrition management and Composting. Also proposed was the establishment of in-country activities, ranging from the promotion of backyard gardens and seed banks (ITPGRFA) to pilot demonstrations related to Climate Smart Agriculture.

Next Steps

The next steps identified for follow-up by FAO included:

- Work with IICA and CARDI to develop training materials/programmes in areas identified
- Seek opportunities under the Country Programming and the Regional Frameworks to mobilize resources to implement some of the national and regional projects identified
- Work with the countries to sensitize the relevant Ministries of the opportunities which exist for resource mobilization.
- Promote inter-sectoral linkages, information sharing and joint programming among the Ministries as well as the agencies.
- Work closely with the ITPGRFA to develop a regional programme to sensitize countries of the benefits so they can take advantage of the opportunities which exist to assist countries.

The Full Report of the Consultation is available from Vyjayanthi Lopez (Vyjayanthi.lopez@fao.org).

Annex 1. Agenda for the Regional SCPI Consultation

UN House Conference Room, Hastings, Barbados, 4-5 October, 2012

DAY 1		
8:00 – 8:30	Registration	
8:30 – 9:00	Opening Session <i>Welcome Address</i> – Mrs. Florita Kentish, FAO-SLC <i>Feature Address</i> – Mr. Lennox Chandler, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management, Barbados	FAO
9:00 – 10:30	Session 1 - Contextual Framework	Chairperson: Humberto Gomez, IICA
	Icebreaker and Introductions	Lystra Fletcher-Paul (LFP), FAO
	Background, Contextual Framework, Objectives and Expected Outcomes	Vyju Lopez (VL), FAO
	Save and Grow	FAO - VL
10:30 – 11:00	B R E A K	
11:00 – 12:30	Session 2 – Sustainable Farmer Practices – Crops and Varieties	Chairperson: Humberto Gomez, IICA
	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources – Seed Management	Juanita Chaves, FAO
	Presentation from Guyana on NSIM and PGRA report	David Frederick
	Baseline survey	FAO - VL
	Discussion and Group work – Gaps, Possible Solutions, Resources Required and how	
12:30 – 1:30	L U N C H	
1:30 – 3:30	Session 3 – Sustainable Farmer Practices - Farming Systems	Chairperson: Francis Lopez, UWI / CAWAI
	Baseline Survey	FAO – VL
	Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture – Cuba Experience	Owolabi Elabanjo (Antigua and Barbuda)
	Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture	Jethro Greene, CaFAN
	Agro-ecological innovations	CAWAI – Jean-Louis Diman (INRA), Georges Felix (PR/Haiti)
	Discussion and Group work – Gaps, Possible solutions, Resources required and how	
	B R E A K	
3:30 – 5:00	Presentation of Group Findings	
	Crops and Varieties	
	Farming Systems	
DAY 2		
8:00 – 10:00	Session 4 – Sustainable Farmer Practices - Land and Water Management	Chairperson - Jean-Louis Diman (INRA)

	Climate Smart Agriculture	FAO - LFP
	Baseline Survey and Examples from FAO's work	FAO - LFP
	Discussion and Group work – Gaps, Possible solutions, Resources Required and how	
10:00 – 10:30	B R E A K	
10:30 – 12:30	Session 5 – Sustainable Farmer Practices – Crop and Pest management	Chairman - Jean-Louis Diman (INRA)
	Baseline survey	FAO - VL
	IICA's Work	Humberto Gomez, IICA
	Discussion and Group work – Gaps, possible solutions, resources required and how	
12:30 – 1:30	L U N C H	
1:30 – 2:30	Presentation of Group Findings and discussion Land and water Crop and Pest management	
2:30 – 3.30	Session 6 – Resource Mobilization (Panel Discussion)	Chairperson: Mrs. Florita Kentish (FAO)
	Possible funding sources – HFLACI, TCPs, GEF-IWCLAM, 5Cs, etc	IICA, CARDI, FAO, CDB, CEHI, etc
3.30 – 5:00	Session 5 - The Way Forward and Wrap up	FAO

Annex 2. List of Participants at the Regional SCPI Consultation in the Caribbean, 4-5 October 2012, UN House, Barbados

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