



## Progress report on the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources* - 2007 to 2011

### Animal Genetic Resources Network - Southwest Pacific

#### Strategic Priority Area 1: Characterization, Inventory and Monitoring of Trends and Associated Risks

Most relevant strategic priorities and actions:

Strategic Priority 1, Action 6: *"Strengthen global and regional information systems ..."*

Strategic Priority 1, Action 7: *"Establish or strengthen existing breed endangerment early-warning and response systems, through the further development of national, regional and global risk monitoring mechanisms..."*

#### Action 6:

Regional Information Systems - the Southwest Pacific region utilizes the regional AnGR mailing list "swpangr: Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Mailing List" as part of strengthening regional information exchange. The mailing list was developed and is being hosted on the server of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and is active and serves as the platform for sharing information and discussions. The South West Pacific Animal Genetic Resources list (Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Mailing List: swpangr@lyris.spc.int) was launched in 2007. Members include AnGR National Coordinators, Directors of Livestock Departments and several private individuals and organizations. At the end of November 2011, there were a total of 84 members subscribed to the list; there have been many postings to the list, and these have covered a range of topics related to AnGR: livestock censuses; AnGR national coordinators' nominations and roles; climate change impacts on livestock breeds and effects on agriculture in the region; animal patenting; swine flu and its effects; varroa mites on bees; breed identities; pigs, goats, cattle, sheep, horses, rabbits, etc.; heat stress in chickens; contributions to and from the DAD-Net list; and so forth. We have exchanged and shared information about AnGR and livestock in general, and have included breed characterization, inventory and risks especially now because of the impacts of climate change and other disasters that affect the region.

This web-based mailing list has become an important source of information sharing, communication and discussion, and a learning site for many members throughout the region. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community as the host of the web site, is encouraging the countries of the regions to use the web site as an essential tool for sharing, monitoring and distributing data and information, and also for highlighting threats and regional needs. The web site has been very useful in communicating information on diseases outbreaks and natural disasters in the region.

As for global scene, the DAD-Net has also become an important source of information for many of our members who are also members of DAD-Net.

#### Action 7:

The Southwest Pacific region just completed a pilot characterization and inventory survey project on indigenous pigs and chickens for Fiji, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. The project involved collection of blood samples from indigenous pigs and chickens on FTA cards and sending them to ILRI laboratories in Beijing, China for DNA analysis. The analysis results have been received and the region is excited about the indication that specific chickens breeds in the countries

surveyed are unique and, so far, pure and have not been tampered with commercial or other breeds, and therefore are a global "hotspot" for pure indigenous breeds. Pig breeds in these countries have also shown some diversity and uniqueness. It has also been noted that inbreeding is quite significant, confirming that there has been no tampering from other breeds. This characterization and inventory project was the first ever done in the region and therefore it needs to be extended to all the regional countries. Knowing what we have in the region is our foremost aim so that we can develop and conserve the specific breeds that we have and also establish early warning and response systems.

In as far as breed early warning systems and responses mechanisms are concerned, the Southwest Pacific region does not have these mechanisms in place. These have not been able to be established in the region due to the lack of resources such as finance. Most countries have been relying on support of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community to establishment these mechanisms and it has been difficult for the Secretariat of the Pacific Community to do this due to lack of funding, although we have capacity. The region needs to mechanisms mentioned in Action 7 and would request assistance from developed countries and donors to help put these mechanisms in place in order to help us to monitor, conserve and respond to risks. The countries of the region also need to update their data on breeds and other data; the current data the countries have are outdated, for these were submitted during the preparation of The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

## Strategic Priority Area 2: Sustainable Use and Development

The regional aim, and message to our member countries, is to develop and use animal genetic resources in a sustainable way. The priority need for the region is food security. These aims and priorities are usually contained and stated in individual country's livestock policies to various degrees of commitment. Although the region sees development and use of genetic resources as very important for food security and for addressing the climate change impacts facing the region, this is not being taken up seriously in many of the countries' priority listings. The countries have competing priorities, and due to limited financial resources some priorities such as AnGR are often left at the lower end of the listings.

The region at the present time does not have specifically built facilities for development and conservation of breeds; rather, the message from the livestock authorities is to encourage local livestock keepers and rural farmers to raise and maintain their livestock in their traditional production systems, which they have used for generations. In this way, the rural livestock keepers who would have difficulties in providing extra inputs, especially feed, would be able to maintain their adapted livestock breeds. This is particularly applicable to remote rural communities where transport, marketing infrastructures and other services are limited. The productivity in these types of system is not expected to be high, but the preservation of these livestock breeds is assured. The most common animal genetic resources in the region raised in the traditional production systems are indigenous pigs and chickens and to lesser degree, cattle, goats and sheep and horses.

One of the major issues that is common in the Southwest Pacific Region is the lack of adequate policies, legislative frameworks, strategies and programmes, and the low priority given to implementing sustainable animal genetic resources management. Some countries may have these, but they have been ineffective and therefore need to be reviewed.

## Strategic Priority Area 3: Conservation

Most relevant strategic priorities and actions:

Strategic Priority 8, Action 2: *"Encourage the development and implementation of national and **regional in situ conservation programmes** for breeds and populations that are at risk ..."*

Strategic Priority 10: *"Develop and implement **regional and global long-term conservation strategies**"*

Strategic Priority 9, Action 2: *"Establish or strengthen national and **regional facilities for ex situ conservation, in particular cryogenic storage. Support the efforts of countries within a region that have opted to establish a regional facility.**"*

SP 8, Action 2: Most countries of the region do not have specific facilities built for the purpose of conserving breeds. Some of the reasons for the lack of these developments are: national authorities have competing priorities, and AnGR development and conservation comes low in the priority listing; because of low priority listing, national authorities do not allocate budgets for these facilities to be established; and, to date, there have not been many breeders, NGOs, community-based organizations, etc

that have been engaged pro-actively in any conservation of AnGR, and therefore there is a need for greater awareness-raising activities in the countries.

The most common conservation programme that has been encouraged in the countries is in situ conservation, whereby breeds are raised and kept by rural livestock keepers or owners, and mostly these are smallholders using their local/traditional production systems. This is the common measure that is most applicable in the region, especially in the remote areas where the presence of rare or specific breeds is most likely. The region does not fully know which breeds are at risk due to the countries' limited knowledge/information on the various potential breeds available. The risks of these unknown breeds being lost is highest in areas where threats such as climate change impacts and natural disasters and food security breaches are most serious.

SP 10: Nothing to report.

SP 9, Action 2: Most countries of the region do not have ex situ conservation facilities, especially cryogenic storage facilities, except for Australia and New Zealand who have them. Small countries with economies of scale cannot afford to have access to such facilities although it is an urgent need to have the breeds conserved.

The need for regional ex situ conservation facilities to be established is urgent, as the threats are continuous.

## Strategic Priority Area 4: Policies, Institutions and Capacity-building

Most relevant strategic priorities and actions:

Strategic Priority 13 Action 3: *“Establish or strengthen, in partnership with other countries, as appropriate, relevant research, training and extension institutions, including national and **regional agricultural research systems**, to support efforts to characterize, inventory and monitor trends and associated risks, sustainably use and develop, and conserve animal genetic resources.”*

Strategic Priority 17: ***“Establish Regional Focal Points and strengthen international networks”***

Strategic Priority 19 Action 1: ***“Support regional and international campaigns to raise awareness of the status of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture, and seek to develop wide support at the government and institutional levels, as well as among the general public.”***

Strategic Priority 23, Action 1: ***“Assist all stakeholders to strengthen capacity-building, including by exchange of experience, by enhancing research and educational activities, and by providing **training opportunities, technology transfer and financial resources**, at national, regional and international levels ... ”***

Implementation and financing (paragraph 57): ***“The international networks for animal genetic resources should be encouraged and strengthened through implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources, noting the **important role of Regional Focal Points and regional networking to build collaborative partnerships, to coordinate regional management efforts in animal genetic resources, to further develop information sharing, and for technical cooperation, training and research.**”***

SP13 Action 3: The region has not established any such appropriate or relevant training institutions or extension institutions that are particularly committed to activities related to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. We are hoping that each country will include AnGR relevant activities in their list of priorities. As mentioned above, the major conservation activity is carried out by rural farmers in their own environments using the appropriate production system to conserve animal genetic resources.

SP 17: The regional AnGR activities are being coordinated through the Animal Production Officer, Land Resources Division, Secretariat of the Pacific Community who acts as the AnGR Regional Coordinator. The position holder facilitates the activities and strengthens international networks as well as regional activities.

SP 19 Action 1: The region, through the AnGR Regional Coordinator, conducted various awareness campaigns bringing awareness and promotion of the importance of AnGR to various countries through talks, interviews, power point presentations

and distribution of FAO Promoting Diversity T-shirts. The awareness campaigns have been limited to some countries - including Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu - due to the inadequate financial resources and funding that we have in the region. We could have done these activities in all the countries if we had financial assistance.

SP 23 Action 1: At the AnGR regional meetings held in 2006 and 2007, participants identified priorities mentioned in SP 23 to be conducted in the countries. Although very important to the region, due to limited financial resources, we have been restricted to strengthening these in all the areas mentioned. However, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and other countries have tried wherever opportunities arise to promote these.

The region has a platform - the mailing list that we have in the region for information sharing, discussions and other collaborations.

## Implementation and financing of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources

Most relevant paragraph:

Implementation and financing (paragraph 50): *“... implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources will require substantial and additional financial resources and long-term support for national, regional and international animal genetic resources programmes and priority activities, provided such incentives are consistent with relevant international agreements. The process should encourage and support the participation of governments and all relevant stakeholders. **Regional and international collaboration will be crucial.**”*

All the countries of the region have pledged to support the Global Plan of Action's activities and implementation, but to do this they need finance. Urgent financial assistance is needed from the international communities to support implementing activities. AnGR activities rank low in the national priorities among all the competing priorities that the governments have. Therefore, it is often difficult for the AnGR National Coordinators to attract funding from national governments.

The region's suggestion to help countries seek financial resources is to request FAO to provide a list of potential funding sources whereby each country could submit their proposals to the funding sources. The region fully supports regional and international collaboration.