

## **Regional workshops on Animal Genetic Resources in Sub-Saharan Africa November 2013**

### **Background**

One of the ways forward subsequent to capacity building for sustainable use of animal genetic resources (AnGR), is the importance of empowering the “champions” of past training courses to be at the forefront in the implementation of AnGR improvement programs, and to take on the role of training trainers at their national and regional levels. Such “champions” are those that have shown professional leadership in their home areas and that are judged to have particular capacity to contribute to further development of AnGR issues in both higher education and research. Through empowering “champions” in AnGR, the team will enable the equipping of a critical number of people who would then go on to steer research and promote higher education to enable capacity for sustainable development and use of AnGR in the region. This is a necessary development as the number of PhD holders in Animal Breeding are very few in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), and thus, effective dissemination of appropriate knowledge and skills to colleagues and students is needed.

In November 2011 the ILRI-SLU team conducted a workshop in Addis Ababa for a selected number of “champions” from SSA. FAO was co-organizer of the workshop and used the opportunity to empower their national coordinators for realization of the Global Plan of Action (GPA) on AnGR, as several of the champions are also national coordinators. During the workshop the participants presented plans for regional collaboration on higher education as well as action research on AnGR aiming at implementation of genetic improvement programs for valuable indigenous breeds. Plans were presented by two groups from Eastern Africa and from one group each of Southern and Western Africa. It was envisaged that the proposed plans should be further elaborated during 2012 through the regional networks established at the workshop, and with the ILRI-SLU team members as facilitators. In 2013 it was planned that the champions should meet with the facilitators at regional workshops for reporting about progress made and be further empowered to develop concepts for increased regional collaboration on higher education and research in AnGR.

In December 2012 the ILRI-SLU team had the opportunity to meet and share the concept of “empowering champions” with representatives of RUFORUM and the 2012 launched TEAM Africa (Tertiary Education for Agriculture Mechanism). Both organizations supported the concept of regional workshops. Furthermore, ECOWAS, SADC, CORAF and ASARECA, in addition to other stakeholders in AnGR have been contacted for both financial and in kind support of the concept, in order to strengthen the initiatives within relevant African regional and national institutions.

Three regional workshops aimed to catalyze changes in the strategies and practices in the utilization of AnGR within Sub-Saharan Africa have been planned by the ILRI-SLU project team working with regional collaborators in the month of November 2013 as follows:

- West-Africa region: *Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso: 5-7 Nov*
- East-Africa region: *Kigali, Rwanda: 19-21 Nov*
- Southern Africa region: *Gaborone, Botswana: 26-28 Nov*

## Objectives

The main objectives of the workshops are expressed as catalyzing and enhancing regional collaboration in order to:

1. Improve university teaching including MSc and PhD training in animal breeding and genetics for sustainable use of AnGR.
2. Plan and undertake research for development in prioritized areas of AnGR.
3. Implement improved conservation and breeding programs for sustainable use of identified AnGR.
4. Improve capacity development including outreach activities in relevant areas.

Outputs from the workshops will be in line with the critical success factors defined in the ILRI strategy: to influence decision makers, grow capacity and secure sustainable and appropriate funding.

## Program

Each workshop will include the following activities:

1. Presentation of national and regional activities supporting the four objectives and concept notes developed by "Champions" following the workshop held in Addis Ababa in 2011:
  - Activities of champions within the regions on AnGR
  - On-going regional collaboration between relevant institutions and among "champions"
2. Presentations of regional priorities, challenges and opportunities in AnGR by various institutions:
  - ILRI Regional representatives
  - Regional organizations with focus on AnGR development and utilization: SADC, ECOWAS, ASARECA, CORAF, CIRDES
  - Regional organizations with focus on higher education: RUFORUM, TEAM Africa
  - International collaborators with focus on AnGR: FAO, SLU, WALIC/ITC
3. Group work aimed to:
  - Identify common areas and synergies from information shared
  - Determine specific joint activities with indicative time-lines to be championed within countries—and regions for acceptance by policy makers/relevant institutions
  - Identify both potential and pipeline resources available to support AnGR activities
  - Ways forward to secure development