Crops for the Future

Paths out of poverty

Strategic Plan
2009-2013

Crops for the Future

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Cover photo: Women washing *Houttuynia cordata* in Vietnam. The farmers can realise up to USD0.20 per bundle. H. Jaenicke/ICUC.

Summary

Changing lifestyles and the increasing globalization of trade have tended to favour only a few major crops and these have come to dominate agricultural production, processing and commerce, nationally and internationally. The demands for research – and hence funding – have inevitably concentrated on these same commodities. As a result, not only have a number of food species fallen into disuse, to be replaced by the major crops and the products derived from them, but also many other species are similarly affected such as those that can contribute fibre, medicine, fodder, or construction material. However, these neglected and underused plant species are part of a rich economic, social and cultural diversity. Many have the potential to play a much more important role than they do today in sustaining livelihoods and human wellbeing and in enhancing ecosystem health and stability. In addition, agrobiodiversity helps to keep options open for adaptation to, and mitigation of, climate changes.

Crops for the Future is an organisation dedicated to the promotion of neglected and underutilised plant species as a contribution to humanity. It evolved from the International Centre for Underutilised Crops and the Global Facilitation Unit for Underutilized Species. This Strategic Plan outlines a framework of the focus and activities of this new entity which will complement and strengthen the efforts of other players within the CGIAR and various national governmental and non-governmental agencies. The major areas of differentiation are:

- *Crops for the Future* covers the whole range of underutilised species, food and non-food crops;
- *Crops for the Future* catalyses the development of processing and marketing facilities for underutilised crops and will concentrate on developing options for income generation;
- *Crops for the Future* has a global mandate and will thus strengthen national and regional efforts in policy advocacy; coalitions, consortia and alliances with relevant and engaged partners from the public and private sectors will form the base for its operation;
- *Crops for the Future* will follow the innovation systems concept, thus being an initiator and facilitator, not implementer of research and development activities. Although it will commission and coordinate supporting studies, for example on market opportunities and policy options, unlike the CGIAR Centres it is not a research agency.

Crops for the Future activities are arranged in three major strategic objectives formulated to increase the impact of past and ongoing research and development: (1) increasing the knowledge base for underutilised crops, especially regarding sustained market access, nutritional security, health and climate change, (2) identifying and advocating necessary policy change to promote the use of underutilised crops, and (3) fostering capacity building about underutilised crops.

Crops for the Future is envisaged for the long-term, its life-span determined by regular and rigorous internal and external reviews. In a novel approach, it will be hosted by Bioversity International in a joint venture with the University of Nottingham's Malaysia Campus and located in Serdang, Malaysia. It will have an initial staff complement of 5 experts in the areas of market development, nutrition, policy change, capacity building and information management. The budget estimate for the period 2009-2013 is USD3.7 million.

This plan is necessarily still a draft which will mature and develop in close collaboration with the Management and Programme Advisory Board, staff and stakeholders.

1. What is “Crops for the Future”?

“*Crops for the Future*” is an organisation evolved from the International Centre for Underutilised Crops (ICUC) and the Global Facilitation Unit for Underutilized Species (GFU). It recognises the need for stronger collaboration amongst the stakeholders of neglected and underutilised plant genetic resources to enhance research and development efforts for the benefit of the poor and the environment. Its focus is the collection, synthesis and provision of information and knowledge about neglected and underutilised plant species (NUS) and their current and potential roles in people’s livelihoods and the environment. *Crops for the Future* will be the hub of a consortium of complementary public and private sector partners at all levels.

Its **vision** is: Significant contributions to improved food and nutrition security, health and incomes of the poor, and to the sustainable management of fragile eco-systems will have been made by an increased awareness of the value of neglected and underutilised species. This will have been achieved through collective efforts of research and development organisations, together with the implementation of favourable policies.

Its **mission** is to: support, collect, synthesize and promote knowledge on neglected and underutilised species for the benefit of the poor and the environment.

Box 1: Definition of ‘neglected and underutilised’ plant species

Terms such as ‘underutilised’, ‘neglected’, ‘orphan’, ‘minor’, ‘promising’, ‘niche’ and ‘traditional’ are often used interchangeably to describe useful agricultural plants which are not widespread mainstream crops but which have at least significant local importance.

We define as ‘neglected and underutilised’ plant species with under-exploited potential for, inter alia, food security, health (nutritional/medicinal), energy and construction, fodder, income generation and environmental services.

These species are generally:

- strongly linked to the cultural heritage of their places of origin;
- local and traditional crops (with their ecotypes and landraces) or wild species whose distribution, biology, cultivation and uses are poorly documented but which have been maintained / conserved over many generations of farmers because of the special crop values;
- adapted to specific agro-ecological niches and marginal land;
- with a weak or no formal seed supply systems;
- collected from the wild or produced in traditional production systems with little or no external inputs such as agrochemicals;
- neglected from research, extension services, producers, policy and decision makers, donors, technology providers and consumers;
- highly nutritious and/or have medicinal properties or other multiple uses.

2. Why a "new" entity?

Two small international institutions, the International Centre for Underutilised Crops (ICUC) and the Global Facilitation Unit for Underutilized Species (GFU), have both been active internationally in promoting and backstopping efforts aimed at realizing the potential of NUS to help alleviate poverty and protect the environment (see Annex 1 for the parent entities' track record).

While both organisations have made valuable contributions acting individually, events such as the current food and energy crises demonstrate that more concerted efforts are needed to make a difference. Stakeholder consultations between 2006 and 2008 pointed to the following issues that need increased attention:

- Sketchy information and knowledge base about NUS and insufficient communication between actors limits their use and efficient collaboration.
- Generally unfavourable policy environments hamper the wider use of NUS.
- Limited awareness about the potential and contributions of NUS for livelihoods and well-being, and weak capacity in many sectors and at different levels of society, limit uptake of information.

The way forward to address these issues is by building on ICUC's and GFU's many complementarities in a synergistic way by forming *Crops for the Future*. In an innovative structure, this entity will form a nucleus for larger coalitions and consortia to address specific NUS-related issues and demands.

Box 2: What is different about "Crops for the Future"?

"*Crops for the Future*" results from a coalition of two organisations, keeping elements of both that have proven useful to stakeholders in the past and strengthening areas that need improvement. Its activities will be firmly based on an innovation systems concept (a useful overview is provided in World Bank, 2006), providing the framework for the interaction of research and development stakeholders. Coalitions, consortia and alliances with relevant and engaged partners from the public and private sectors will form the base for the operation of *Crops for the Future*.

At present, no other international organisation exists that concentrates solely on collecting, synthesising and promoting knowledge about underutilised food and – importantly – non-food crops, their current and potential role in peoples' livelihoods and the environment. There is no comparable international organisation dedicated to catalyzing the development of processing and marketing facilities for niche crops and concentrating on developing options for income generation and diversification. No other global organisation in this sector truly embraces the innovation systems framework, by forming coalitions, consortia and alliances with public and private sector partners to reduce poverty.

Thus, no other organisation will be able to champion underutilised crops to the public and to policy makers from such a firm base of credibility.

The time is favourable for this move:

- The Millennium Development Goals, due to be reached by 2015, aim towards goals that can be achieved by making better use of existing agricultural biodiversity, for example: eradication of extreme hunger and poverty, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, promoting gender equality and empowering women, ensuring environmental sustainability.
- The international agricultural research community, exemplified by the CGIAR, has prioritised amongst its System Priorities underutilised plant genetic resources; developing markets and increasing income from fruits; vegetables and forest environments; and increasing poor peoples' resilience to change.
- Increasing numbers of key bilateral and individual donors are interested in fostering the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and developing alternative income opportunities for sustainable poverty reduction.
- Others focus their support on strengthening communities' self-help ability through an increased self-esteem, achieved by revisiting traditions and culturally relevant habits, including the use of traditional foods and other products.

3. Strategic Objectives

Crops for the Future will focus on three major strategic objectives based on extensive stakeholder consultations (Jaenicke and Höschle-Zeledon, 2006; Hawtin, 2007; Jaenicke et al., in press; *www.dgroups.org/groups/cta/Underutilisedplants2008/index.cfm*) and formulated to increase the impact of past and ongoing research and development activities.

1. Increase the knowledge base for NUS, especially in the areas of sustained market access, nutritional security and health and climate change.
2. Advocate a favorable policy environment to promote the use of NUS.
3. Increase awareness on the potential and contributions of NUS for livelihoods and well-being, and strengthen capacity in relevant sectors at different levels.

The outcomes in the medium- and long term will mainly be behavioural changes of *Crops for the Future* boundary partners through increased knowledge and awareness of the benefits of NUS. This will further lead to:

- Enhanced production and consumption of neglected and underutilised species.
- Increased income for producers through better marketing and post-harvest treatments, including processing, storage, labelling and promotion.
- Improved nutritional status of the society through higher consumption of NUS and/or more diverse diets.
- Increased resilience to change and shocks (climatic/environmental/social/political) through diversified production and improved production systems.

Box 3 presents the Strategic Objectives in detail; Table 1 gives details on the operations plan and an illustration of the objective tree is provided in Annex 2.

Box 3: Crops for the Future's Strategic Objectives

Strategic objective 1: Increase the information and knowledge base on NUS, especially in the areas of sustained market access, nutritional security and health and climate change

Strategy: Reliable information is needed about all aspects of NUS including their market potential, by the different stakeholders along the value chain. *Crops for the Future* will play a catalytic role in generating and synthesizing information, providing cross-cutting analysis, drawing out lessons and stimulating information exchange and communication between actors.

Outputs: Reliable and useful information about general and specific issues related to NUS production and consumption is available and communicated to a broad range of stakeholders through *Crops for the Future*'s information portal.

Track record: Both GFU and ICUC have been working in the area of information and knowledge brokering. GFU offers an online experts database and maintains a web portal that provides links to relevant information. ICUC's series of monographs and practical manuals has been well received. Both organisations have news services and have convened several stakeholder fora at international level in the past.

Strategic objective 2: Advocate a favorable policy environment to promote the use of NUS

Strategy: In many cases, a better deployment of NUS requires a change in currently prevailing policies in different sectors to facilitate entry and retention of small entrepreneurs in the NUS markets, including both input (e.g. seeds) and output (e.g. produce). *Crops for the Future* will work on the policy interface and conduct analyses, participate in dialogues and advocate for change at regional and international levels to facilitate the creation of conducive policy environments. Case studies will provide a broader evidence base on the benefits of NUS to support advocacy.

Outputs: Policy dialogue at international, regional and national (local) levels to remove barriers and create enabling environment for the enhanced use of NUS – without jeopardizing poor people's access to them.

Track record: Advocacy through the provision of information and by engaging in dialogue with decision makers has been one of the key areas of GFU's mandate. Its key success is the current amendment of the EU Novel Food Regulation that improves access of underutilised species products to the EU market.

Strategic objective 3: Increase awareness on the potential and contributions of NUS for livelihoods and well-being, and strengthen capacity in relevant sectors at different levels

Strategy: Greater awareness and increased capacity in different sectors and levels of society of the role of NUS in support of livelihoods of current and future generations contribute to their higher appreciation, reverse their image of being old-fashioned or poor peoples' crops, and generate financial and policy support. *Crops for the Future* will use an integrated communications strategy to maintain dialogue with donors, policy makers and other change agents. It will develop training materials on areas such as sustainable and safe production, processing, marketing, entrepreneurship, quality standards, etc. to be used by targetted training and education providers.

Outputs: Increased awareness of the importance of NUS for livelihoods and well being, and enhanced capacity to produce and consume NUS sustainably and safely.

Track record: Greater general awareness of the utility of NUS and the inclusion of underutilised plant genetic resources in the priorities of the CGIAR System and several donor agencies can certainly be attributed to GFU's and ICUC's activities over the past decade. ICUC has organised hands-on training courses on food processing and germplasm evaluation and handling, as well as developed posters and training manuals; GFU has been involved in the development of a training course and associated training materials on marketing of agrobiodiversity and genetic resources with Wageningen International. This course has been an integral part of Wageningen's training for the past three years.

Table 1: Operations plan: what will be done, how, when and by whom

Why	What	How	When	By whom
Sketchy information and knowledge base about NUS and insufficient communication between actors limits their use and efficient collaboration.	Reliable and useful information about general and specific issues related to developed and NUS (markets, nutrition, climate change) available to a broad range of stakeholders in a "one-stop shop".	Databases, on-line info portal, newsletters etc. maintained ▪ Strategies for improved germplasm access, including benefit sharing, developed. ▪ Strategies for sustainable promotion of NUS developed. ▪ Models for different climate scenarios analysed.	Ongoing, using existing infrastructure, and partnerships, upgrading and updating as necessary to address the needs of a variety of stakeholders.	*Crops for the Future* with partners including GlobalHort, CTA, FAO, ISHS, WHO, Bioversity International, ICRAF, ASB, national private and public sector partners and NGOs.
Generally unfavorable policy environments hamper the use of underutilised plants.	Policy dialogue at international, regional and national (local) levels to remove barriers and create enabling environment for enhanced use of NUS.	▪ Policy analysis at regional and international level carried out. ▪ Policy briefs and other advocacy events organized; policy recommenda-tions and implementation strategies developed.	Some activities are ongoing and will be expanded; policy change at international and regional level can be influenced by *Crops for the Future*. For local level change local partners will be able to draw upon information and support. Policy change is a long-term effort which needs close and long-term relationships with decision makers.	*Crops for the Future* with international, regional and national partners, e.g. Bioversity International; GFAR and regional fora; relevant bodies within the EU, WTO, USDA etc.
Limited awareness about the potential and contributions of NUS for livelihoods and well-being and weak capacity in many sectors and at different levels of society limits uptake of information.	Reliable and useful information about all aspects of NUS available and provided through training, databases and other appropriate means to members of the society.	▪ Training materials developed and courses contributed to. ▪ Communication strategy developed and PR events and activities organised.	▪ Ongoing, using existing infrastructure and partnerships.	*Crops for the Future* with partners such as GlobalHort, CTA, FAO, ISHS, IFS, Commonwealth of Learning, CTA and national partners.

4. Mechanisms for Partnerships

Crops for the Future's novel approach of being co-hosted by two organisations – a CGIAR Centre and a university – will help internalise partnerships at different levels. The initial consortium of three will be the nucleus for a larger cluster of complementary partners in the future.

Since both 'parent' institutions, GFU and ICUC, have a good track record in working in partnership with individual international and national development agencies, agricultural research and extension organisations and NGOs these partnerships will continue in *Crops for the Future*.

Box 4: An example of partnership success

ICUC and GFU have recently worked hand in hand to organise an international symposium on underutilised plants in Arusha, Tanzania, which was attended by over 200 participants from 55 countries. Following this symposium, an electronic conference took place, hosted by CTA, which provided further room for discussion and a way of assimilating scattered experiences. It provided good experience of the need to allow people to work collectively but at their own speeds. These activities have yielded a statement of intent for collaborative R&D activities issued jointly by the e-conference participants and a new platform on underutilised plants under the auspices of the International Society for Horticultural Sciences, co-chaired by ICUC and GFU, with new partnership opportunities.

Key partners for *Crops for the Future* will include experts from universities, national research systems, NGOs and the private sector, relevant CGIAR Centers and global networks such as GlobalHort and the NTFP Global Partnerships Programme. Areas where stronger partnerships need to be built – although several individual contacts exist – are with the sectors of education, nutrition, climate change, sustainable environment. Partnerships with the food industry need to be established, especially with respect to marketing of new products.

We welcome new initiatives on NUS research and development as this indicates increased interest in NUS and provides new opportunities for partnerships. Given the limited funding which has been available in the past, we are aware that novel, more efficient ways of collaboration are needed. Our strategy will be to continue to work with partners in a transparent and fair manner in order to add value to the activities of all collaborators and to share a common vision.

5. Governance, management and staffing

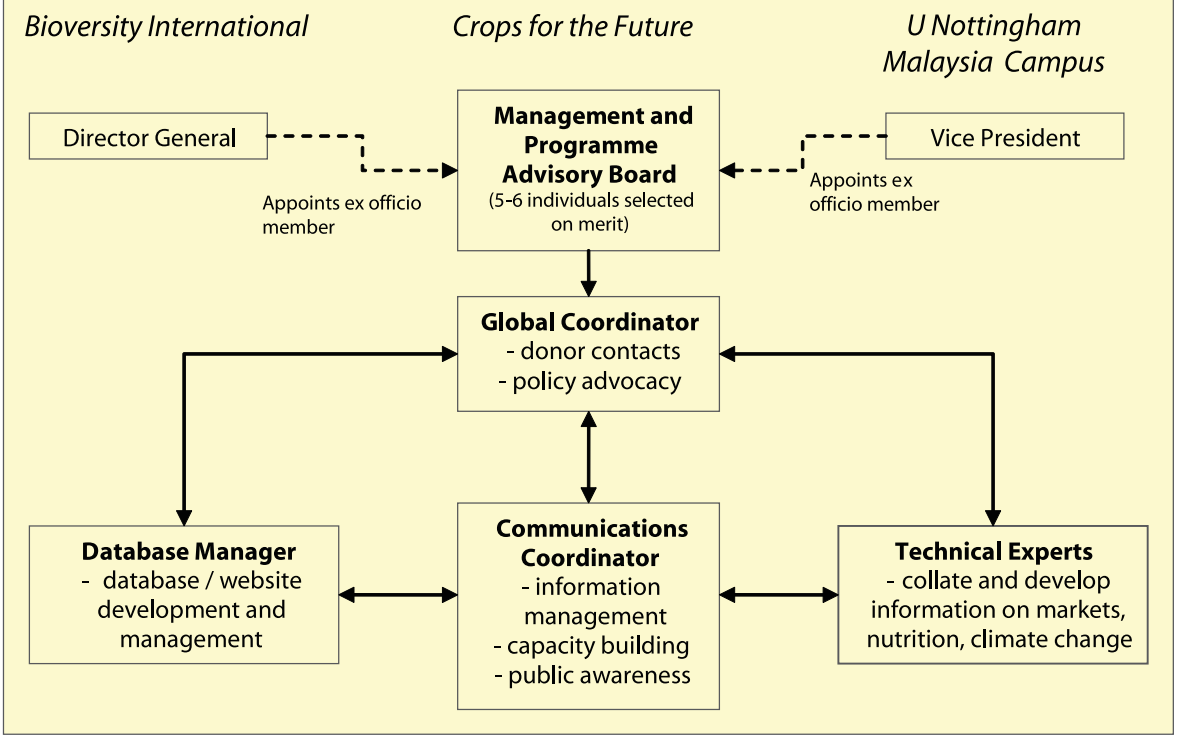
Crops for the Future is envisaged for the long-term, its life-span determined by regular and rigorous internal and external reviews. It will be hosted by Bioversity International at its Asia, Pacific and Oceania (APO) office in Serdang, Malaysia in a joint venture with the University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus (UNMC).

Crops for the Future is registered as a company limited by guarantee, in order to facilitate its operations internationally and to reduce the host's fiduciary liability towards it.

It will be managed by a Global Coordinator who will be responsible to a Management and Programme Advisory Board (MPAB) comprised of 5-6 individuals selected on merit. The key international/regional staff of *Crops for the Future* will comprise:

- a global coordinator, responsible for donor contacts, fundraising and, depending on his/her expertise, one of the technical areas of priority (markets, policy, nutrition)
- a communications coordinator, responsible for information management, capacity building and public awareness
- a database manager/webmaster, responsible for technical aspects and day-to-day management of website and databases
- specialists in policy advocacy, nutrition and climate change

Figure 1: Suggested governance structure



Crops for the Future will create the conducive and dynamic environment to attract and retain highly qualified and motivated individuals to build up a critical mass of in-house expertise.

Wherever feasible and possible, seconded staff, visiting fellows and short-term interns will also be encouraged to join the team to fill critical gaps or strengthen certain work areas in collaboration with strategic partner organisations.

The Global Coordinator will be hired internationally by the Management and Programme Advisory Board. His/her term will be for a period of 5 years, funding permitting, with a renewal of one term possible after careful evaluation by the MPAB.

Management and Programme Advisory Board: *Crops for the Future* will receive strategic direction from its stakeholder community through constant dialogue and periodic large meetings (similar to the process of strategy development during 2006-8). The Management and Programme Advisory Board will be a small group of experts drawn from the stakeholder community–based on individual merit, not institutional representation–and thus reflecting the diversity on the ground. Whilst merit should be the paramount selection criterion, diversity and balance in gender and culture should be sought. The term of office for MPAB members should be for 3 years with a renewal of one term possible. The Board's function will be to:

- recruit the Global Coordinator;
- provide guidance, focus and direction to achieve *Crops for the Future*'s long term goals;
- approve policies, and the financial, programme and work plans;
- monitor and evaluate progress and impact;
- provide advocacy for the successful implementation and sustainability of *Crops for the Future*'s outputs;
- support resource mobilization strategies.

A separate paper details how the Management and Programme Advisory Board will operate in relation to fiduciary and similar strategic responsibilities, having regard to host institution/country agreements.

Details of hiring and staff policy will be governed by Bioversity International's policies and are spelled out in an agreement between *Crops for the Future* and Bioversity International, including adequate interim arrangements for the transition period.

6. Finances

The tables below provide indicative figures for the budget sought to allow *Crops for the Future* to execute the activities outlined above. Funds are available until December 2008 to set up the entity at its new location and limited restricted funding is available for some operations to July 2011. However, a solid core budget to support at least a minimum of 3 key personnel (global coordinator, communications coordinator and website/database manager) is now needed to ensure operations can start without delay.

	in USD*					
item	**2008-09****	**2009-10**	**2010-11**	**2011-12**	**2012-13**	**TOTAL**
Staff (1, #)	118,661	389,980	399,730	409,723	419,966	1,738,059
Operations (2)	46,000	289,000	244,000	264,000	364,000	1,207,000
Contingency (3)	*8,233*	*33,949*	*32,186*	*33,686*	*39,198*	*147,253*
O/H (20%)	*34,579*	*142,586*	*135,183*	*141,482*	*164,633*	*618,462*
Total	**207,473**	**855,515**	**811,099**	**848,891**	**987,797**	**3,710,774**

* estimates only
** 4 months (Dec 08-Mar 09)
# annual inflation increase of 2.5% calculated for staff costs after 2009-10

(1) 4 internationally/regionally recruited (1 CEO at USD170,000 (of which base salary is ca USD100,000), 1 senior at 100,000 (54,000), 2 at 40,000 (25,000)); 2 regional/national support at 20,000 (15,000). The budgeted staff costs are based on Best and Lopes (2008).

(2) international/national travel; database maintenance; data analysis, publications, consultants, basic research etc.

(3) 5% on staff plus operations

Broken down per Strategic Objective:

	in USD					
item	**2008-09**	**2009-10**	**2010-11**	**2011-12**	**2012-13**	**TOTAL**
1 Increased Knowledge Base	**78,997**	**326,656**	**329,047**	**334,574**	**340,238**	**1,409,512**
1.1 Markets	*43,499*	*151,162*	*156,216*	*159,346*	*162,555*	*672,778*
1.2 Nutrition	*22,082*	*98,162*	*94,691*	*96,258*	*97,865*	*409,058*
1.3 Climate change	*13,416*	*77,332*	*78,140*	*78,969*	*79,818*	*327,675*
2 Policy change	**36,332**	**177,996**	**130,196**	**132,451**	**234,762**	**711,737**
3 Capacity building	**49,332**	**174,328**	**184,486**	**206,698**	**208,966**	**823,810**
Contingency	**8,233**	**33,949**	**32,186**	**33,686**	**39,198**	**147,253**
OH (20%)	**34,579**	**142,586**	**135,183**	**141,482**	**164,633**	**618,462**
TOTAL	**207,473**	**855,515**	**811,099**	**848,891**	**987,797**	**3,710,774**

Our strategy is to interact with key donors and partners to identify areas of mutual interest where *Crops for the Future* can provide important contributions based on this Strategic Plan. Key donors have been contacted in 2007 and follow-up continues. Income and in-kind contributions will be sought from the following key donors, amongst others:

Donor	Special interest in *Crops for the Future*
ACIAR	Through Crawford Fund, can support the development of a Master Class on underutilised plants
BMZ/GTZ-BEAF	BMZ/GTZ-BEAF strategic priorities are set with reference to CGIAR System Priorities: • "Promoting conservation and characterization of underutilised plant genetic resources to increase the income of the poor" with reference to CGIAR System Priority 1b; • "Increasing income from fruits and vegetables" with reference to CGIAR System Priority 3a; • "Integrated land, water and forest management at landscape level" with reference to CGIAR System Priority 4a Can provide support for specific research within these 3 Priorities, provided *Crops for the Future* would submit the application through a CGIAR Centre
CIM	Staff secondments any area
CIRAD/France	Key complementary strategic priorities are: • Ecological intensification • Bioenergies • Food safety and accessibility • Policies to facilitate access to markets at local level • Nature/society/ecosystems/livelihoods CIRAD can provide staff secondments in the above areas
CTA	CTA is not a traditional 'donor' but will be a valuable key partner through whom some *Crops for the Future* activities can be carried out. CTA's complementary key areas of strength are: • Skills development in ICT and knowledge management, expanding outreach and providing information on the following areas: • diversification and biodiversity, value adding and differentiation strategies (e.g. as alternatives to sugar production, employment creation particularly involving rural youth in the agricultural sector) • bioenergy/biofuels • innovation systems and policy advocacy
DFID	Policies, upscaling
Ireland	Utilization of genetic resources for poor farmers
Italy	Biodiversity
Syngenta Foundation	IPR, modeling of NUS and climate change in semi-arid areas; connecting farmers to markets
SDC	Biodiversity, nutrition
USAID	Interest expressed, especially through their current focus on agrobiodiversity.

7. Assumptions and Risk Identification & Management

This section provides an overview of some critical assumptions and risks, and describes how *Crops for the Future* will manage these.

Assumption/Risk	Response
1. Lack of collaboration with complementary partner organisations will inhibit progress.	As a catalyst, *Crops for the Future* will study carefully and integrate with the strategies of the partners, complementing and supporting their NUS activities. The information circulation and liaison roles of *Crops for the Future* should be especially valuable to isolated partners.
2. *Crops for the Future*'s funding base is at the moment dominated by DFID as key donor. Whilst its activities currently fall squarely into the interests of several key bilateral donor agencies, the notion that 'underutilised crops are underutilised for a reason' still prevails amongst the majority of donor agencies.	Through its activities, *Crops for the Future* will demonstrate to donors and other stakeholders the value of NUS in expanding options for rural communities and small enterprises to cope with changing (previously unknown or rare) circumstances. Donors' interest in food security and adaptation to less reliable climates should result in more attention to underutilised species and eventually in the recognition of the continued relevance of *Crops for the Future* leading to stable and diversified funding in the medium term.
3. The time frame for producing convincing results is short, and events such as the current food crisis and climate change may need rapid responses that cannot wait for the evaluation of lengthy research projects. It will be critical for *Crops for the Future* to be able to provide rapidly sufficient scientific evidence of the potential of NUS to contribute to food and nutritional security, income and environmental health in order to gain and maintain donors' and policy makers' interest.Crops for the Future	*Crops for the Future* • will be careful not to over-emphasize benefits of NUS, by providing objective comparisons with mainstream crops and with traditional methods for processing and marketing; • will evaluate and promote (own and partners') interim research results as contributions to policy developments; • will make use of non-conventional methods for communication to stimulate greater political will to take up and apply knowledge about NUS.
4. Political will at national and international levels is paramount to change existing policies that currently inhibit a wider use of underutilised plant species and to implement them effectively.	*Crops for the Future* and strategic partners • will enter into and maintain policy dialogues with key policy makers to present sound scientific evidence of the benefits of underutilised species to development; • will assist policy makers in policy formulation and design of implementing strategies.

8. References

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Annex 1: The parent-entities' track record

The International Centre for Underutilised Crops, ICUC (www.icuc-iwmi.org), was founded in 1992 at the University of Southampton, UK as a research, development and training organisation. Its main achievement over the past 15 years has been to put underutilised crops onto the agenda of national research programmes, especially in South and South-East Asia. Since its inception, ICUC has been instrumental in the organisation of a series of national and regional planning and priority setting workshops, has supported national research institutions with germplasm collections and characterisation of priority crops, and has provided training opportunities in close collaboration with national and regional research and enterprise development organisations in 21 countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

ICUC's flagship project "Fruits for the Future" produced and distributed globally, valuable factsheets, monographs and technical manuals for ten underutilised fruit tree species in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Its regional project on the processing and marketing of underutilised fruits has trained key personnel in five Asian countries, produced a processing manual and related processing posters for eight key species in English and seven local languages. Through training and business development support, targeted local people in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Vietnam have been enabled to double their household incomes from indigenous fruit processing and marketing. A recent project "Coalition to Diversify Income from Underused Crops" now upscales the knowledge further in India and Vietnam.

ICUC has also been instrumental in the founding of several professional networks, in particular UTFANET (Underutilised Tropical Fruits in Asia Network), UTVAPNET (Underutilised Tropical Vegetables for Asia and the Pacific Network), SEANUC (Southern and East Africa Network for Underutilised Crops) and ACUC (Asian Centre for Underutilised Crops).

ICUC moved to Sri Lanka under new leadership in late 2005 and has since developed into a global champion for underutilised crops. It was instrumental in the setting up of a special working group on underutilised species within the International Society for Horticultural Science, is a founding member of the Global Partnership on Non-timber Forest Products and has provided leadership in the development of a new global strategic framework for underutilised plants research and development. Several research reports and position papers on key issues have been published.

The Global Facilitation Unit for Underutilized Species, GFU (www.underutilized-species.org), of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) was established in 2002 and was housed within Bioversity International, Rome, Italy. As a multi-institutional initiative, GFU has promoted the wider use of underutilised plant species through supporting and facilitating the work of other stakeholders, lobbying the inclusion of these species into international and national research and development agendas, and better donor support, thus creating an enabling environment for stakeholders who are engaged in developing NUS.

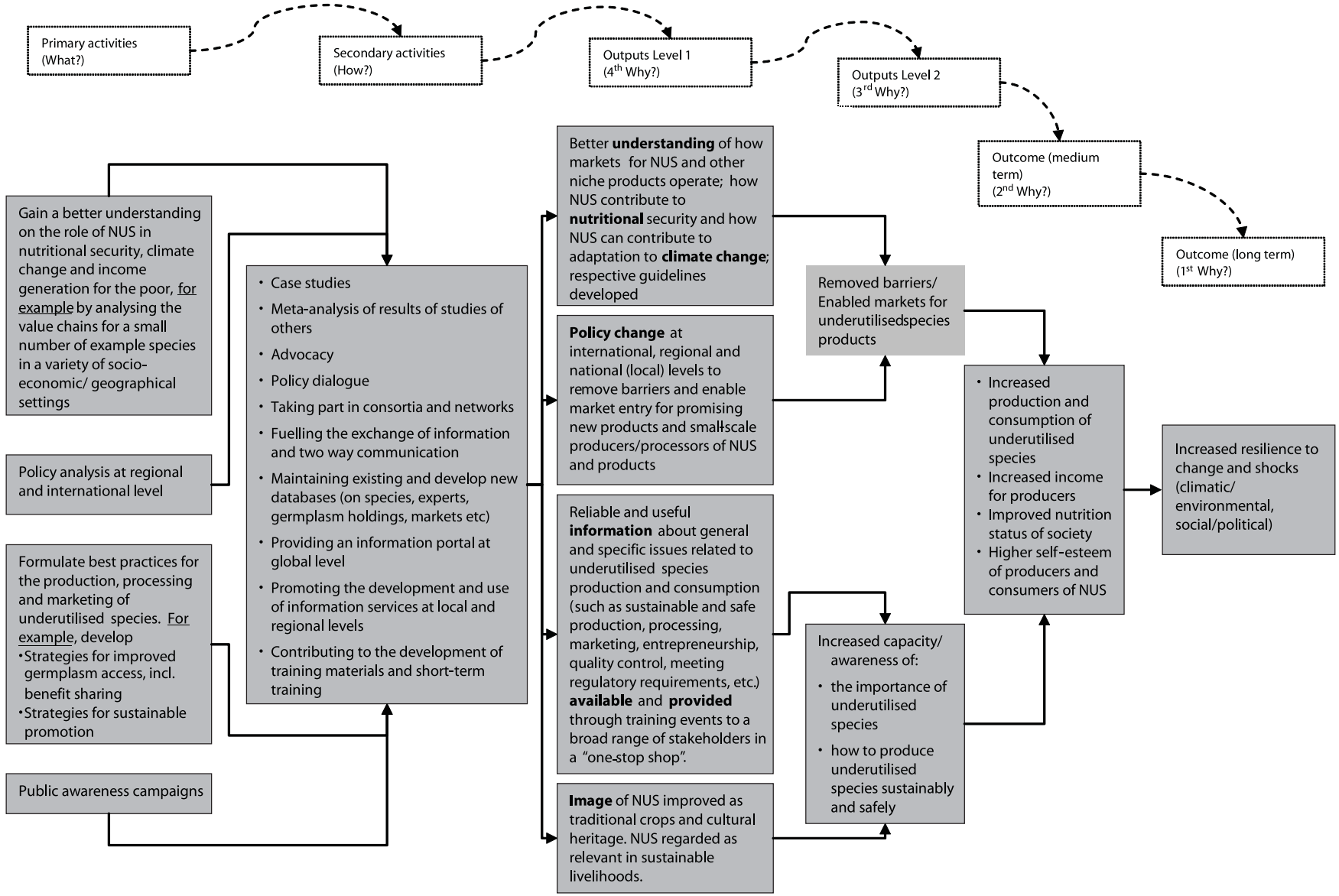
Through its interactive web portal, news updates, accessible databases and awareness building activities, the GFU has built a broad alliance of researchers, policy makers, development specialists, agricultural producers and consumers.

Major achievements have been the identification and development of approaches and decision steps for the promotion of underutilised plant species, the formulation of the Chennai Platform for Action that advocates a greater focus on agricultural diversity and NUS in order to address the MDG on halving hunger and poverty by 2015, the inclusion of NUS in FAO's Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (GRFA) workplan. Together with ICUC, GFU led the development of the new strategic framework for research and development of underutilised plant species.

GFU analyzed national policies and international agreements to identify gaps and produce recommendations for policy amendment to increase use of NUS. A particular important result jointly achieved with partner organisations has been the formulation and submission of recommendations to amend the EU Novel Food Regulation, a non-tariff barrier to trade with NUS based products. A revised version of the Regulation, circulated in early 2008 for further comments and notified to WTO, will provide better access to NUS products from non-EU countries to the EU market. It is expected to enter into force in 2009.

In order to respond to the perceived high potential of NUS for income generation through their commercialisation, the GFU has developed guidelines for NUS value chain development and provided a set of recommendations regarding geographical indications as tools for sustainable use of genetic resources and rural development. GFU has been instrumental in the design and establishment of a regular training course on marketing NUS at Wageningen International. GFU developed and made available a number of public awareness materials, including posters, leaflets and brochures. A travelling exhibition of commercial products made from NUS demonstrates the market potential of these species.

Annex 2: Crops for the Future Objective Tree



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