



Sub-regional office for Central Asia (FAOSEC)

TRAVEL REPORT

Place visited: Baku, Azerbaijan

Purpose of visit: To participate in the final workshop of the project TCP/AZE/3202: "Strengthening utilization of plant genetic resources in Azerbaijan through enhancing conventional plant breeding and associated biotechnology capacity" and hold discussions with CIMMYT and national counterparts for building upon the project outputs.

Reporting Officers: Chikelu Mba, Agricultural Officer, AGP;
Hafiz Muminjanov, Plant Protection and Production Officer,
SEC

The attached report is approved for circulation as indicated below:

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**Back-to-office report
to Baku, Azerbaijan
by
Hafiz Muminjanov, Plant Production and Protection Officer, FAO-SEC
Chikelu Mba, Agricultural Officer (Plant Genetic Resources Use), AGPMG**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Reporting Officers (ROs) travelled to Baku, Azerbaijan to participate in the final workshop of the project TCP/AZE/3202: “Strengthening utilization of plant genetic resources in Azerbaijan through enhancing conventional plant breeding and associated biotechnology capacity” and hold discussions with colleague and project consultant from the International Wheat and Maize Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and national counterparts for building upon the project outputs. The travel itinerary is presented in Annex 1.

Dr Alexey Morgounov, Head, International Winter Wheat Improvement Program (IWWIP), CIMMYT and Dr. David Bedoshvili, FAO International Consultant also travelled to Baku to participate in the workshop.

The final workshop took place in the Republic Lux hotel, Baku on 20 and 21 December 2011. The agenda of the workshop is presented in Annex 2. Senior staff members from the Azeri Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, the State Soil and Mapmaking Committee, researchers from the National Academy of Sciences, Agrarian Science Center, Azerbaijan Genetic Resource Institute (AGRI) and Research Institute of Crop Husbandry (RICH) attended the workshop. The list of workshop participants is presented in Annex 3.

The workshop was opened by Deputy Minister of Agriculture Prof. Bahram Aliyev. During the opening ceremony and introduction of the workshop, Academician Arif Hashimov, First Vice-President of the National Academy of Sciences, Academician Garib Mammadov, Head, the State Soil and Mapmaking Committee, Mr. Novruz Guliyev, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and Professor Asad Musayev, Head, Agrarian Science Center, Project National Coordinator presented keynote addresses to the workshop. All speakers welcomed the workshop participants, indicated the important achievements made by the project and thanked FAO and CIMMYT for kind support and cooperation. On behalf of CIMMYT Dr. A.Morgounov and on behalf of the FAO the ROs and Ms. Tarana Bashirova AFAOR, Azerbaijan welcomed the workshop participants as well. The high caliber of workshop participants from the relevant Azeri ministries and agencies underscored the great importance the government placed on this and other collaborative endeavors with FAO.

Dr. Chikelu Mba presented a brief overview of the project, its objectives, implemented activities and their outputs and proffered suggestions on how the outputs could be built upon with the aim of ensuring that plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) are harnessed optimally in Azerbaijan with the ultimate aim of delivering high quality seeds and planting materials of the most suitable crop varieties to the growers.

Dr. Zeynal Akparov presented a detailed report on the project outcomes on training and technology transfer and Dr. Mohtasim Ahmadov reported on pre-breeding and breeding activities. Subsequently, the national counterparts reported on work done by specific crops, thus: Dr. Sevinj Mammadova and Dr. Mehraj Abbasov on activities carried out on wheat; Dr.

Litfer Amirov – legumes, especially on chickpeas; Dr. Nargiz Garaybeyova on barley; and Dr. Ruhangiz Mammadova on cotton, These presentations were well received and elicited considerable discussions. The discussions were mostly aimed at situating the project outputs in the context of the future activities related to the proposed regional network (Central Asia and the Caucasus countries – CAC) for the sustainable use of PGRFA identified during the October 2011 Regional Workshop on PGRFA held in Baku, Azerbaijan. The BTOR and related documentation for this workshop are on file.

Dr. A. Morgounov gave a presentation on the role of CIMMYT in the implementation of the project aims within the framework of the centre's overall mandates in the region. Moreover he reported on recent activities carried out by CIMMYT in the region, achievements and vision for future support and cooperation with the National Agricultural Research System.

Dr. A. Mammadov of the Azeri Genetic Resources Institute (GRI) reported on the project outcomes on the development of PGR Network and presented the PGRFA Information Management System, the updated NISM database and activities on GRIN-Global Data Base.

Ms. T. Bashirova reported on project administration and coordination and partnership.

The first day of the workshop was completed by discussion of the project outcomes on PGRFA Network and Information Management System.

On the second day of the workshop, the researchers of the GRI, Eldar Mustafayev, Dr Mehraj Abbasov, Dr. Litfer Amirov and Sevinj Mammadova, who attended the international trainings courses, reported on their impressions knowledge and experience gained and how they are applying the newly acquired skills in their work.

Dr. David Bedoshvili, FAO International Consultant, who will be assisting the national partners to finalize a National strategy on PGRFA presented to the workshop participants an overview of the draft strategy. He indicated that the main concept of the national strategy will be harmonized and coordinated functioning of PGRFA conservation, use in plant breeding and the delivery of seeds and planting materials through the seed sector. The strategy, as explained, would therefore consider the available resources and technical capacity in the country and develop strong linkages between PGR conservation, utilization and dissemination. Wheat, barley, chickpea and cotton were proposed as the priority crops. The strategy should be based on the national regulation on PGRFA, membership of Azerbaijan to international conventions and treaties, define interested partners and priority crops as well as needs and modalities for addressing them within a timeframe. It was stressed that capacity development should be one of the core activities considered by the national strategy. The envisaged national strategy will therefore outline the action plan to cover the range of activities spanning an efficient conservation of PGRFA, establishment of strong linkages between PGR collections and users, efficient utilization of PGRFA, linkages between plant breeding and seed sector, governance, awareness raising and the establishment of the national commission on PGRFA.

During a discussion Dr. A. Morgounov noted that the outline of the National Strategy on PGRFA covers a large spectrum of issues including plant breeding and the seed industry. In reality, implementation of such strategy would be difficult, he admonished. Thus, the strategy should be divided into certain steps, including identifying activities year by year. He stressed the strength of Azerbaijan at the regional level which achieved good results including in the

drafting the Regional PGRFA strategy and in implementing germplasm collections activities. Dr. H. Muminjanov, referring to a recent Regional Workshop on Seed Policy held in Istanbul, informed that FAO has committed to provide technical support to member countries in the formulation and implementation of the national seed policies and that this should also be considered while developing the national strategy on PGRFA. Afterwards, Dr. Z. Akparov and Dr. Sevinj Mammadova provided more information on the necessity of having the national PGRFA strategy with a wide focus on conservation and utilization of PGR, plant breeding and seed sector that should unite different players in PGRFA in the country in cohesive activities.

Dr. C. Mba suggested that the national strategy should be completed and readied for presentation as one concrete achievement of FAO and the government of Azerbaijan to be presented during the FAO Regional Conference in 2012.

The workshop participants were interested to learn how to achieve a sustainability of the project outcomes and future prospects of getting support from FAO, CIMMYT and other development partners. In this regard, Dr. A. Morgounov expressed CIMMYT's interest in cooperation with Azeri colleagues in implementation of the national strategy on PGR. He mentioned about planned cooperation of FAO and CIMMYT in conducting an inventory of wheat landraces and training of young wheat breeders in CIMMYT that also will cover Azerbaijan.

Dr. H. Muminjanov presented the FAO activities on plant production and protection in SEC region and informed about operational and pipeline projects, including the ones for Azerbaijan. He also explained the FAO mandate and role, decentralization policy, activities on result based management and country programming framework, types of projects, etc.

Other activities

H. Muminjanov met with the National Manager of the GCP/RER/030/TUR Dr. A. Musaev, National Consultant Dr. S.Safarli and the researcher of the Crop Husbandry Institute who reported on project progresses. No-till drill procured from Brazil was finally delivered to the project site in Ter-ter region of Azerbaijan. Using the no-till drill, wheat was planted on 10 ha after harvesting maize. The national project team is planning to use a drill for planting winter wheat in farmers' fields of 50 ha.

It was agreed with the national partners to arrange the next backstopping mission in June 2012 for planting the second crop after harvesting wheat.

RO, C. Mba, along with Mr. D. Bedoshvili met with relevant national counterparts, Ms. S. Mammadova and Messrs Z. Akparov and A. Akparov of the GRI, Baku and agreed on modalities, including timeframes, for the revision of the draft National PGRFA Strategy. The meeting availed these partners the opportunity to clarify issues, agree on expectations and identify documentations and other partners worth consulting in order to facilitate the consultant's work.

Acknowledgement

The ROs express sincere appreciation to the national partners for their commendable levels of dedication in the implementation of the project activities which enabled the achievement of foreseen outputs. The ROs are also particularly grateful to CIMMYT in general and

particularly to Dr. A. Morgounov for close cooperation in the implementation of the project. Special thanks also go to Ms. T. Bashirova, AFAOR in Azerbaijan and colleagues in operation and administrative units of SEC for continued support and assistance.

Recommendations / Actions to be taken

- The National Strategy on PGRFA to be finalized and presented at the FAO Regional Conference in 2012 as an achievement of close cooperation with the Government of Azerbaijan
- National counterparts to identify a potential candidate to be supported for participation in CIMMYT wheat improvement program in 2012.
- To consider conducting an inventory of wheat landraces in cooperation with CIMMYT and the national partners.
- To plan a backstopping mission for GCP/RER/030/TUR by H. Muminjanov and T. Friedrich in June 2012.

Annex 1. Travel itinerary

- Chikelu Mba

December 19: Rome – Istanbul – Baku
December 22: Baku – Istanbul - Rome

- Hafiz Muminjanov

December 19: Ankara (12:00) – Baku (16:00)
December 22: Baku (10:00) – Ankara (10:00)

Annex 2. Agenda of the final workshop of the project TCP/AZE/3202: “Strengthening utilization of plant genetic resources in Azerbaijan through enhancing conventional plant breeding and associated biotechnology capacity”

aku, Hotel Republic Lux, December 20-21, 2011

20 December 2011, Tuesday

Chair: Prof. Bahram Aliyev, Deputy Minister of Agriculture

- 10:00 Opening addresses and introduction
- Prof. Bahram Aliyev, Acad. Arif Hashimov, Acad. Mahmud Abdullayev, Dr. Asad Musayev (project coordinator, Azerbaijan), Ms. Tarana Bashirova (FAO, Azerbaijan), Dr. Chikelu Mba (FAO, Italy), Dr. Alexey Morgounov (CIMMYT, Turkey), Dr. Zeynal Akparov (Genetic, Resources Institute, Azerbaijan)*
- 10:15 An brief overview of the project aims and implemented activities
- Dr. Chikelu Mba, Dr. Alexey Morgounov, Dr. Zeynal Akparov, Ms. Tarana Bashirova etc.*
- Reports and evaluation of the project outcomes and results:**
- 10:40 Presentation-reporting of the project outcomes on training and technology transfer - *Dr. Zeynal Akparov*
- 11:05 Brief reports by trainees (to be identified) and discussion of the project outcomes
- 11:35 Break**
- 11:50 Presentation-reporting of the project outcomes on pre-breeding and breeding activities – *Dr. Mohtasim Ahmadov (RI of CH, Azerbaijan)*
- 12:15 Brief reports by crop specific national leads (*Dr. Sevinj Mammadova, Dr. Mehraj Abbasov – wheat, Dr. Litfer Amirov – legumes, Dr. Nargiz Geraybeyova – barley, Dr. Ruhangiz Mammadova – cotton*) and discussion of the project outcomes
- 13:00 Lunch**
- Co-Chairs:** *Dr. Asad Musayev and Dr. Hafiz Muminjanov*
- 14:00 Role of CIMMYT in implementation of the project aims - *Dr. Alexey Morgounov*
- 14:20 Project administration and coordination, project partnership - *Dr. Chikelu Mba, Dr. Hafiz Muminjanov (FAO-SEC, Turkey), Ms. Tarana Bashirova*
- 14:40 Presentation-reporting of the trainees (Eldar Mustafayev, Dr Mehraj Abbasov, Dr. Litfer Amirov, Sevinj Mammadova)

- 15:00 Presentation-reporting of the project outcomes on development of PGR Network – *Mr. Afig Mammadov (Genetic Resources Institute, Azerbaijan)*
- PGRFA Information Management System
 - presentation of the updated NISM database
 - GRIN-Global DB activities
- 15:30 Discussion of the project outcomes on PGR Network and PGRFA Information Management System
- 15:50 Break**
- Co-Chairs:** *Dr. Zeynal Akparov and Dr. Alexey Morgounov*
- 16:10 National PGR Strategy: Main points – *Dr. David Bedoshvili (International Consultant on Strategy), Dr Chikely Mba*
- 16:30 Presentation-reporting of the project outcomes on development of the National Strategy of PGR activities - *Dr. Sevinj Mammadova (Genetic Resources Institute, Azerbaijan)*
- 16:50 Discussion of the National Strategy and working plan
- 17:10 1st day conclusions and schedule of 2nd day

21 December 2011, Wednesday

Co-Chairs: *Dr. Javanshir Talai and Dr. Chikelu Mba*

- 10:00 Upgrade of lab and field infrastructure – *Dr. Zeynal Akparov and Dr. Javanshir Talai (RI of CH, Azerbaijan)*
- Molecular Biology Lab of GRI
 - Farming Institute
- 10:40 Sustainability of the project outcomes and future prospects – *Dr. Asad Musayev, Dr. Zeynal Akparov, Dr. Chikelu Mba, Dr. Alexey Morgounov*
- 11:10 Perspectives of the collaborations between FAO and Azerbaijan – *Dr. Chikelu Mba, Dr. Hafiz Muminjanov, Ms. Tarana Bashirova*
- 11:30 Break**
- 12:00 Final remarks and wrap up
- 12:30 Lunch**
- 14:00 Visit of Biotechnology Lab. And other laboratories of the GRI
- Visit of Research Institute of Crop Husbandry

Annex 2. List of participants

№	Name	Country	Organization
1.	Alexey Morgounov	Turkey	CIMMYT, Ankara
2.	Chikelu Mba	Italy	FAO, Rome
3.	Hafiz Muminjanov	Turkey	FAOSEC, Ankara
4.	David Bedoshvili	Georgia	International Consultant
5.	Tarana Bashirova	Azerbaijan	FAO-AZE, Baku
6.	Acad. Arif Hashimov	Azerbaijan	First Vice-President of the National Academy of Sciences
7.	Acad. Mahmud Abdullayev	Azerbaijan	State Committee on Soil and Mapmaking, National Academy of Sciences
8.	Bahram Aliyev	Azerbaijan	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture
9.	Sabir Valiyev	Azerbaijan	Ministry of Agriculture
10.	Rovshan Aliyev	Azerbaijan	Ministry of Agriculture
11.	Fazil Pashayev	Azerbaijan	State Commission on Test and Protection of Breeding Achievements
12.	Ogtay Huseynov	Azerbaijan	Ministry of Agriculture
13.	Gadir Hasanov	Azerbaijan	Ministry of Agriculture
14.	Ogtay Babayev	Azerbaijan	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources
15.	Elgun Ahmedov	Azerbaijan	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources
16.	Anar Mammadov	Azerbaijan	Ministry of Economic Development
17.	Elchin Ahmedov	Azerbaijan	Ministry of Economic Development
18.	Asad Musayev	Azerbaijan	Agrarian Science Center
19.	Zeynal Akparov	Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan Genetic Resource Institute (AGRI)
20.	Shemseddin Asadov	Azerbaijan	AGRI
21.	Mehraj Abbasov	Azerbaijan	AGRI
22.	Sevinj Mammadova	Azerbaijan	AGRI, RICH
23.	Sevinj Mammadova	Azerbaijan	AGRI
24.	Afig Mammadov	Azerbaijan	AGRI

25.	Ruhangiz Mammadova	Azerbaijan	AGRI
26.	Nargiz Garaybeyova	Azerbaijan	AGRI
27.	Sevda Babayeva	Azerbaijan	AGRI
28.	Eldar Mustafayev	Azerbaijan	AGRI
29.	Javanshir Talai	Azerbaijan	RICH
30.	Mohtasim Ahmadov	Azerbaijan	RICH
31.	Qatiba Hasanova	Azerbaijan	RICH
32.	Sevda Hajiyeva	Azerbaijan	RICH
33.	Faiq Khudayev	Azerbaijan	RICH
34.	Litfer Amirov	Azerbaijan	RICH, AGRI
35.	Elchin Hajiyev	Azerbaijan	AGRI
36.	Jamala Mursalova	Azerbaijan	AGRI
37.	Sevinj Nuriyeva	Azerbaijan	AGRI
38.	Vusala Izzatullayeva	Azerbaijan	AGRI
39.	İlhama Mirzaliyeva	Azerbaijan	AGRI
40.	Haji Shikhlinski	Azerbaijan	AGRI
41.	Hamlet Sadiqov	Azerbaijan	AGRI
42.	Khanbala Rustamov	Azerbaijan	AGRI
43.	Muhammad Eldarov	Azerbaijan	AGRI
44.	Vahid Farzaliyev	Azerbaijan	Central Botanical Garden
45.	Rasib Zeynalov	Azerbaijan	RIPM
46.	Hafiz Mammadov	Azerbaijan	RICH