

**Subject:** Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research - 3rd Newsletter

**From:** agrobiodiversityplatform@shares-knowledge.de

**Date:** Thu, 14 May 2009 23:44:01 +0200

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No 3, May 2009

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Dear colleagues,

the Platform websites are back online!

Together with this good news we send you our latest newsletter. Even if some time has passed since our last issue we hope you will enjoy reading our information and you will visit our websites at

[www.agrobiodiversityplatform.org](http://www.agrobiodiversityplatform.org) and [climate.agrobiodiversityplatform.org](http://climate.agrobiodiversityplatform.org)

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## From the Platform

The past year has seen important developments for the Platform as well as some exciting achievements. In this Newsletter we highlight a number of these and outline some of the future activities that we think may be of interest to Platform members and supporters. As always, we welcome your comments, suggestions and advice on items in this newsletter and on other key agrobiodiversity issues.

A major activity has been concerned with the use of agrobiodiversity by indigenous peoples and rural communities to cope with climate change. This work, supported by the Christensen Fund has produced a [rich set of documentation](#) which we are currently analysing and synthesizing. We hope to make a summary document available in the next 3-4 months.

The Platform has been active in a number of international arenas. With FAO and Bioersity International, we co-organized a consultation on "Climate Change and Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture". The [results of this consultation](#) were part of the background material for the high Level Meeting \*\*\*\*\*. We also co-organized and participated in side events on the climate change and agrobiodiversity at the 9th Conference of the Parties (COP9) of the Convention of Biological Diversity and at the 13th meeting of its Subsidiary Body on Science, Technology and Technical

Advice. Reports of these events can be found at [IISD Reporting Services](#).

It is important that the Platform adequately reflects the interests and concerns of its members and supporters and we took advantage of COP9 to organize an informal stakeholder consultation. During the year you will also have noticed that we have changed the website and tried to make it more dynamic and responsive. We see the website as continually evolving and you will see further changes over the next months. Again, your own suggestions and ideas are most welcome.

Over the coming year we hope to develop a strong and effective communication strategy, participate in a number of key meetings and try and find ways in which we can be more useful to young professionals involved in agrobiodiversity research, particularly postgraduate students. We will also continue to work on the use of agrobiodiversity to help cope with climate change. Together with a number of other organizations, we would like to ensure that the importance of agrobiodiversity for adaptation and mitigation of climate change is raised at the next Conference of the Parties of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP15 UNFCCC).

One of the Platform's aims to provide a forum for discussion and to strengthen links between different areas of work relevant to agrobiodiversity. You will find a short discussion paper on this at [grou.ps/par\\_cc](http://grou.ps/par_cc) highlighting some key issues which come out of the experiences of researchers working on conservation agriculture and agrobiodiversity.

Best regards

The Platform Team

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**Guestarticle:** Amir Kassam and Toby Hodgkin did a bit of

### **"Rethinking Agriculture: Agrobiodiversity for Sustainable Production Intensification"**

There is now growing interest and movement in broadening the so called "modern agriculture" paradigm to include practices that are biologically-driven and environmentally friendly. In fact, the industrial paradigm that has been promoted during much of the 20th century is running out of steam because the assumptions and practices upon which it is based no longer meet the overall needs of the society. To understand where we are in terms of agriculture development, where we have come from and where we need to go, some fundamental questions must be posed, namely: What is modern agriculture? What are some of its major consequences, and the underlying reasons for them? How well suited is modern agriculture for the future? Do we need to rethink some of our "modern" attitudes and approaches to agriculture and to agrobiodiversity?"

Read the [full article online](#) or [download pdf](#) (90 kb)

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### **Conservation Agriculture-CoP and Framework of Action**

The Framework summarises the actions proposed by delegates at a Technical Workshop, held at FAO's offices in Rome in July 2008, with technical support from the Tropical Agricultural Association (TAA-UK). It is intended principally for the use of persons who attended the workshop, so that it can serve as a common point of reference as they engage themselves in follow-up activities. It is also intended to serve as a source of information on Conservation Agriculture (CA) methods and the prospects for expanding their application for those interested in the subject. Comments on this the Framework are most welcome, as are expressions of interest in participating in the cluster of Communities of Practice (CoP) that are expected to emerge in the coming months.

**Contact:** Theodor Friedrich ([theodor.friedrich@fao.org](mailto:theodor.friedrich@fao.org)) and Amir Kassam ([kassamamir@aol.com](mailto:kassamamir@aol.com))

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### **Building capacity for teaching and learning agrobiodiversity**



A workshop aimed at strengthening agricultural biodiversity education in African universities has resulted in a collaborative "action plan" for empowering agriculture graduates with appropriate skills and tools for dealing with Africa's increasingly complex agricultural and environmental challenges.

Held in Nairobi, Kenya on January 21-23, the "Learning Agrobiodiversity" workshop was jointly organised by [Bioversity International](#), the agricultural university networks [ANAFE](#) and [RUFORUM](#), and [CTA](#). It brought together topic experts and university stakeholders from across sub-Saharan Africa, who collaboratively discussed their knowledge and experiences in the science, policy and practice of agrobiodiversity and developed ideas on how it could be better mainstreamed into university education.

A key output is a draft curriculum framework consisting of 10 learning "clusters". For each cluster the rationale, key learning points and suggested course content was identified. These will be further developed with participants using collaborative online tools, including Google Docs and discussion fora. When further refined, the curriculum framework will be posted to PAR for broader stakeholder consultation.

The workshop report will be available on the PAR website in late May 2009.

#### Further reading

[CTA Policy Brief : Harnessing biodiversity for sustainable development Strengthening Agricultural Education and Training in Sub-Saharan Africa Reshaping ACP Tertiary Education in Agriculture](#)

**Contact:** Boudy von Schagen (b.vanschagen@cgiar.org)

### Discussing Agrobiodiversity and Climate Change

You might recall a two weeks web-discussion we hosted between Monday 17 November and Friday 5 December 08 with the objective to identify gaps and needs in agrobiodiversity and climate change research. We reckon it is worthwhile to dig it out and share it with you across the network. Hope you will enjoy it and we look forward in your comments and suggestions you might have ♦ and for sure you do.

[Read more](#) or [download wrap-up-pdf](#) (30 kb)

### Events

- [15th Annual International Sustainable Development Research Conference](#) "Taking up the Global Challenge: Analysing the implementation of innovations and governance for Sustainable Development" - Utrecht, The Netherlands, 5 - 8 July 2009
- [1st All Africa Horticulture Congress "Grown under the sun"](#), Nairobi, Kenya, 31 August - 3 September 2009
- DIVERSITAS: [Second Open Science Conference: Biodiversity and society: understanding connections, adapting to change](#) - Cape Town, South Africa, 13 - 16 October 2009

- [Tropical roots and tubers in a changing climate: A convenient opportunity for the world](#) - Lima, Peru, 2 - 6 November 2009
- FARA-led Conference on [Agricultural Biodiversity in Africa](#), 2010

More events and events archive related to [Agrobiodiversity Research](#) and to [Agrobiodiversity Research & Climate Change](#)

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## Finding your way around the platform and its projects

### How to ...

- **... retrieve previous posts?**

The easiest way for you to find past bits information is to select a month in the drop down in the left column and view the archived posts in the respective month. If you have no idea in which month the searched information might have been published you can scroll down the homepage and on the bottom you find a link "Older Entries". Another option is to navigate by tags or categories (see below).

- **... use "tags"?**

You find our tag cloud below the events list in the right column. The Climate Change Project assigns tags topic wise. Just click the topic tags you want to find post about and you will retrieve all respective posts.

- **... understand "categories"?**

With categories the posts are sorted by their nature. E.g. you want to find all posts on funding simply select "Funding" from the categories drop-down in the left column and all funding posts are visible to you!

- **... simply search for some bit of content?**

Enter your search term in the searchfield in the left column, press return or click the enlargement glass and wait for your result!

- **... contact the team?**

This is an easy one: Just visit our contact page - under "Services" on the climate change website, choose the person you wish to connect to and send an email.

- **... get added value from del.icio.us on the climate change website?**

Del.icio.us is a social bookmarking portal the we use to collect and store interesting links in the field of agrobiodiversity and climate change. If you create a del.icio.us account yourself you easily can view our bookmarks in your account by just adding us to your del.icio.us network. And, even better, you can share your links with us by just tagging them with PAR\_CC. In the very near future we will provide more information on this.

- **... to contribute to the platform?**

- First and easiest: Register on our website and add comments to our post!
- Send us an email with suggestions for a post, link, funding source, training opportunity or job offer.
- If you want to do more than this, maybe be a regular contributor to our site, contact us and we will provide you access to our input area.

Please feel free to suggest more "how to ..." topics!!

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