

KGF-ICIMOD Consultation Workshop on Hill Agriculture in Chattogram Hill Tracts

An International Consultative Workshop on Hill Agriculture Development, organized jointly by Krishi Gobeshona Foundation (KGF), Dhaka, Bangladesh and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Kathmandu, Nepal, was held on 22-23 October, 2019 at the Conference Room of the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Dhaka. Dr. Wais Kabir, Executive Director, KGF welcomed the guests for their participation in the consultation workshop and inaugurated the workshop in the morning of October 22, 2019. Dr. Golam Rasul, Chief Economist of ICIMOD represented his organization at the opening session of the workshop. Scientists from relevant research institutions, universities, KGF experts, ICIMOD experts, experts from private sectors participated in the consultation workshop to identify the gaps, success, challenges etc. for designing of the next phase of the KGF project “CRP-1: Harnessing the Potentials of Hill Agriculture: Enhance Crop Production through Sustainable Management of Natural Resources.



Inauguration of the consultative workshop on hill agriculture

The workshop was organized as a sequel to the recent signing of a Letter of Intent (LoI) by KGF and ICIMOD during August 2019 in Nepal seeking to establish long-term collaboration and partnership, based on the principles of synergy, between the two organizations in areas of mutual interest, particularly concerning resilience building among inhabitants of the mountains and hills, especially the Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT).

The objective of the consultation workshop was to share knowledge and experiences on the problems and prospects of agricultural production systems and discuss future action plans for the development of sustainable production systems for the hilly regions of Bangladesh.

Component Leaders (CL) presented the key achievements, knowledge gaps and challenges and lessons learnt from the first phase of the on-going project “Enhance Crop Production through Sustainable Management of Natural Resources” under the KGF Commissioned Research Program (CRP)-1: Harnessing the Potentials of Hill Agriculture, for the Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) region of Bangladesh. The workshop participants deliberated on the major R&D issues, priorities, new ideas, action plans and opportunities of collaboration with ICIMOD for the next phase of the project.

Besides, the Project Manager of the on-going project under KGF CRP-3: Strengthening Sugarcane Research and Development in the Chattogram Hill Tracts presented the key achievements, knowledge gaps and challenges and lessons learnt so far. Scientists from the Soil Resources Development Institute (SRDI), Bandarban also presented key findings of SRDI research programs on soil conservation and watershed management in the CHT region.

ICIMOD experts presented papers on different aspects of hill agriculture and livelihood as follows:

1. Dr. Golam Rasul, Chief Economist: Hill Agriculture Development in CHT: Challenges and opportunities
2. Dr. Surendra Raj Joshi, Senior Resilient Livelihoods Specialist: Climate resilient value chain development for improved livelihoods
3. Dr. Suman Bisht, Senior Gender Specialist, Livelihoods: Gender Gap Analysis (Gender Gap in the Hindu Kush Himalayan Countries)
4. Dr. Sanjeev Bhuchar, Theme Leader Water & Air: Springshed management for water security
5. Dr. Farid Ahmad, Head Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit: Objective Based Planning

The discussion and planning sessions were facilitated by ICIMOD under the leadership of Dr. Farid Ahmad, Head Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of ICIMOD where Pratigya Silwal, Programme Officer, Adaptation and Resilience Building, ICIMOD facilitated the group work. The participants were divided into five groups for brainstorming sessions to develop future strategies and action plans for five proposed components of the hill agriculture project as follows:

1. Springshed/Watershed Management
2. Sustainable Land Management
3. Crop Intensification
4. Value Chain and Entrepreneurship Development
5. Plant Protection



Participants of the workshop

A technical session of the workshop
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The brainstorming of the five groups for bringing in ideas to formulate the next phase action plans for the hill agriculture project involved identification of major R&D issues for the future, prioritization and setting of goals and objectives with verifiable indicators, expected outputs and impacts, etc. for an integrated hill agriculture research, technology development and dissemination project.

At the end of the two-day consultation workshop, the roles and responsibilities as mutually proposed by KGF and ICIMOD were as follows:

- ✓ Identify the gaps, areas of collaboration and implementation on Hill agriculture development
- ✓ Manage human resource for the implementation of the project
- ✓ Support in joint research and knowledge management
- ✓ Provide information inputs for proposal development
- ✓ Develop effective Monitoring mechanism for the program implementation
- ✓ Provide technical support and strengthen expertise
- ✓ Support in knowledge management and publish research outputs for specific target groups.
- ✓ Impact Assessment of project support
- ✓ Organizing trainings, workshops and relevant events for wider awareness building.



Plenary session of the workshop

In the closing session, Dr. Farid Ahmad of ICIMOD synthesized the outputs and outcomes of the consultation in brief that would be of great help in developing a coordinated and integrated action plan for the second phase of the KGF project, “CRP-1: Harnessing the Potential of Hill Agriculture: Enhance Crop Production through Sustainable Management of Natural Resources” for CHT.

Dr. Wais Kabir, Executive Director, KGF and Dr. Golam Rasul, Chief Economist and Dr. Nand Kishor Agarwal, Programme Coordinator, Resilient Mountain Solutions Initiative, ICIMOD in their closing remarks expressed firm hope for strong interactions and collaboration between ICIMOD and KGF in developing and disseminating agricultural production technologies to increase productivity, generate incomes and improve the lives and livelihoods of the largely impoverished hill people of CHT of the HKH region.

The workshop ended with a reception given by KGF in the evening of October 23, 2019 where Dr. Eklabya Sharma, Deputy Director General, ICIMOD met the participants over dinner along with Dr. Wais Kabir, Executive Director, KGF. Both of them expressed their eagerness for strengthening partnership and collaboration between KGF and ICIMOD for the development of agriculture and improvement of the hill farmers’ lives and livelihoods in the Chattogram Hill Tracts.