GIAHS Information Sheet

The purpose of this paper is to provide overall information on GIAHS Programme which incorporated all the core information uploaded in the website and described in the previously released documents.

I. Origin of GIAHS

Over centuries, generations of farmers, fisher folks and herders have developed complex, diverse and locally adapted agricultural [1] systems with time-tested technologies. The background of creation and maintenance of these systems are farmers' efforts in many places of the world to overcome disadvantageous geographic and harsh climate conditions and to increase and stabilize crop yields in a sustainable manner. These systems have not only provided multiple goods and services for rural communities, but also created, maintained and inherited remarkable knowledge, outstanding rural landscapes, globally significant agricultural biodiversity and unique cultures.

Building on generations of accumulated knowledge and experience by smallholders, family farming and indigenous communities, these systems have been adapted to ever changing environment and climate conditions which finally have acquired resilience and robustness so as to ensure food and livelihood security in the local communities and reduce risks.

II. Definition

As defined by FAO in 2002, GIAHS are "remarkable land use systems and landscapes which are rich in globally significant biological diversity evolving from the co-adaptation of a community with its environment and its needs and aspirations for sustainable development".

III. GIAHS Criteria[2] (short version)

GIAHS sites are expected to fulfil the following criteria which well demonstrate the characteristics of GIAHS which focus agricultural production as a basis and has both tangible and intangible effects.

1. Food and livelihood security;
2. Biodiversity and ecosystem function;
3. Knowledge systems and adapted technologies;
4. Cultures, value systems and social organisations (Agri-Culture);
5. Remarkable landscapes, land and water resources management features

IV. Characteristics of GIAHS

The concept of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) is distinct from, and more complex than, a conventional heritage site or protected area/landscape. GIAHS is a living, evolving system of human communities in an intricate relationship with their territory, cultural or agricultural landscape or biophysical and wider social environment. The humans

[1] "Agriculture" in the context of GIAHS incorporates forestry and fisheries following the FAO definition.
[2] For longer version, please see Section XIII

and their livelihood activities have continually adapted to the potentials and constraints of the environment and also shaped the landscape and the biological environment to different degrees. The resilience of many GIAHS sites has been developed and adapted to cope with climatic variability and change, natural hazards, new technologies and changing social and political situations, so as to ensure food and livelihood security and alleviate risk.

V. Goal and Objectives

Goal: The overall goal of the global initiative is to identify and safeguard Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems and their associated landscapes, agricultural biodiversity and knowledge systems through catalyzing and establishing a long-term programme to support such systems and enhance global, national and local benefits derived through their dynamic conservation[3], sustainable management and enhanced viability.

Objectives: To achieve this goal, the main objectives are:

1) To leverage global and national recognition of the importance of agricultural heritage systems and institutional support for their safeguard;
    a. global recognition is obtained through the creation of the Agricultural Heritage Systems categories supported by governments, FAO governing bodies, UNESCO, World Heritage Centre and other partners:
    b. national recognition and awareness is raised by improving understanding of the threats that such agricultural systems face, of their global importance and of the benefits that they provide at all levels.
2) Capacity building of local farming communities and local and national institutions to conserve and manage GIAHS, generate income and add economic value to goods and services of such systems in a sustainable fashion;
    a. identify ways to mitigate risks of erosion of biodiversity and traditional knowledge, land degradation and threats posed by globalization processes, and skewed policies and incentives;
    b. strengthen conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources, reducing vulnerability to climate change, enhancing sustainable agriculture and rural development and as a result contributing to food security and poverty alleviation;
    c. enhancing the benefits derived by local populations from conservation and sustainable use of their resources and their ingenious systems and rewarding them through the payment for Environmental Services, Eco-labeling, Eco-tourism and other incentive mechanisms and market opportunities.
3) To promote enabling regulatory policies and incentive environments to support the conservation, evolutionary adaptation and viability of GIAHS;
    a. assessment of existing policies and incentive mechanisms, and identification of modalities to provide support for sustainable agricultural practices;
    b. promotion of national and international processes leading to improved policies and incentive mechanisms.

[3] See Section VI

VI. Dynamic Conservation

Dynamic conservation aims at achieving conservation as well as agricultural, social/economic development of the GIAHS site, maintaining a balance between conservation and development through various available measures implemented by major stakeholders as have been formulated in Action Plans[4]. The measures that should be carried out for dynamic conservation include a wide range of means such as technical support to local farmers in yield improvement, quality improvement and soil improvement, niche market development, branding of local crops, promotion of agro-tourism, diversification of income course, involvement of female farmers and local famers in decision making process.

Dynamic conservation strategies and processes allow maintaining biodiversity and essential ecosystem services thanks to continuous innovation, transfer between generations and exchange with other communities and ecosystems. The wealth and breadth of accumulated knowledge and experience in the management and use of resources is a globally significant treasure that needs to be promoted and conserved and, at the same time, allowed to evolve.

VII. Chronology of GIAHS Development

Starting of GIAHS

In response to the global trends that undermine family agriculture and traditional agricultural systems, in 2002, during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, Johannesburg, South Africa), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations launched a Global Partnership Initiative on conservation and adaptive management of "Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems".

Expansion of GIAHS activity

Since then, using various extra budgetary financial resources[5], many global or country projects have been implemented to assist member countries in identifying and conserving the GIAHS sites and making GIAHS propose documents through communication with local communities and involvement of relevant stakeholders. For example, GEF projects which had been carried out 2008-14 resulted in the designation of the first series of 8 GIAHS sites in six countries selected as pilot countries, namely, Algeria, Chile, China, Peru, Philippines and Tunisia as a result of its six years of implementation. There had been several country projects which also had supported making of GIAHS proposals and subsequent designation of the sites.

Moreover, international, regional and national conferences, seminars, training courses to enhance the capacity of ember countries and to disseminate the concept of GIAHS have been carried out. This included a large scale of international GIAHS Forum which had been held four times in Rome (2006), Buenos Ares (2009), Beijing (2011) and Noto in Japan (2013) where many stakeholders were invited and shared their experiences on implementation of

[4] "Action Plan" is one important part of a proposal document which illustrates effective measures to be implemented by national, local government, public institutions, private sectors, local communities, farmers' organizations and civil societies to promote dynamic conservation of the site.

[5] The donor countries and international organizations which provided financial resources to GIAHS activity were; Germany, Global Environmental Facility (GEF), IFAD. The present donor countries which support GIAHS Programme with voluntary contribution are China and Japan.

measures relevant to GIIAHS. In particular, Noto Forum adopted "Not Communique" which recommends:

i. GIAHS designated sites should be periodically monitored and their viability maintained;
ii. The progressive designation of further GIAHS sites to promote the conservation of agricultural heritage;
iii. The promotion of on the ground projects and activities, particularly in developing countries;
iv. Existing GIAHS support the recognition of candidatures of GIAHS areas in less developed countries; and
v. The promotion of twinning of GIAHS sites between developed and developing countries.

As a result of these activities, the designated GISAHS sites have increased as you can see in the table of Section XI. Designated Sites and the GIAHS programme has gained considerable recognition both at the international and national levels.

At the global level, GIAHS has been very much appreciated at various intergovernmental fora. At the national level, GIAHS has contributed to the adoption of policies that integrate agricultural heritage into agricultural development programmes. It has also been influential in promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity and genetic resources for food and agriculture, the protection of traditional knowledge systems, culture and, more importantly, creating a bridge to a sustainable future.

New GIAHS Features after FAO Conference in 2015

With increased recognition and visibility of GIAHS in manty countries and international fora, the 148th session of the FAO Council agreed that the GIAHS should be vested with formal status within the FAO framework and endorsed the initiation of a process for the development of a draft Conference Resolution for anchoring GIAHS within the Organization. This initiative was discussed in several governing bodies including the 24th session of the COAG in 2014 and finally has led to the decision by the 39th FAO Conference in 2015 that vested the GIAHS programme into FAO by making regular budget available to support core operations of the GIAHS programme (P-5 officer and general service staff costs) during 2016-17 with the understanding that the work on GIAHS will primarily rely on extra budgetary funding.

Furthermore, the governance and working arrangements of the GIAHS programme have been streamlined to facilitate light and smooth operations through the establishment of a new Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) which initiated its activities since 2016 for a two-year period. The Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) convened its inaugural meeting from 22 to 23 February. The SAG provides scientific advice on the GIAHS programme and conduct designation of GIAHS sites.

VIII. Relevance with other international activities and international acknowledgment

In the international arena, appreciation for GIAHS was expressed in various intergovernmental fora, such as the Conferences of the Parties of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 2008[6],

[6] Resolution X.31 invited Parties to consider recognition or protection of rice paddies "through mechanisms such as the FAO Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems Programme".

and of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2010[7]. GIAHS also has been acknowledged in the international communique and declaration.

The declaration announced by the Third APEC Ministerial Meeting on Food Security in September 2014 supported FAO's work on GIAHS and mentioned GIAHS in its relevance to rural development. G-20 Agriculture Minister Meeting in June 2016 also welcomed GIAHS in the context of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in food and agriculture.

IX. The Promotion of Collaboration with UNESCO

The GIAHS Secretariat is now communicating with the UNESCO to seek collaboration between GIAHS and World Heritage activity in such a way to hold an annual information exchange meeting and invitation of officers to the relevant meeting on both sides. GIAHS is different from UNESCO World Heritage in that GIAHS focuses on agricultural system and how agriculture has been developed and adapted from the perspectives of both tangible and intangible features as is well reflected in the GIAHS five criteria, while UNESCO World Heritage seems to have more focus on landscape and tangible aspects. Nonetheless, it is quite useful to establish communication with UNESCO to exchange information and learn each other.

X. Future GIAHS Development

Due to increased global interest on GIHAS from various international fora and member countries, GIAHS programme is expected to make further progress and development in the following manner.

1. More global expansion of the designated GIAHS sites.

Currently the most GIAHS sites are observed in Asian region. But this does not mean that other countries in different regions do not have potential GIAHS sites. Insufficient information and of awareness of GIAHS concept and their impacts, lack of capacity to identify potential GIAHS sites and make appropriate proposals and difficulty to involve local communities are major obstacles for GIAHS dissemination. FAO should work more closely with these countries which have potential GIAHS sites through its country or regional offices to achieve this objective.

2. Pursuant to more effective measures for dynamic conservation

The ultimate goal of GIAHS is to conserve the GIAHS sites while pursuing necessary adaptation to the surrounding environment. This means that the GIAHS site is expected to make agricultural as well as social and economic development necessary to make it possible to overcome the threats and challenges it has faced, while retaining the core element and unique features of the site.

In order to accomplish this, various effective measures should be implemented with involvement of the local communities by local communities, farmer's organizations and local and national government in a collaborative and mutually supportive way under the action plan for dynamic conservation. Normally the action plan for dynamic conservation is made in

[7] Convention on Biological Diversity, Articles 10c and 8j and Decision X/34 called for strengthening approaches which promote the sustainability of agricultural systems and landscapes such as "the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations".

GIAHS proposal documents. But this action plan should be preferably evaluated periodically in terms of its effectiveness and appropriate corrected actions as a result of such evaluation.

Monitoring the current state of the GIAHS designated sites should be conducted to grasp the effectiveness of the implemented measures and evaluation of measures and their outcomes also needs to be done to see whether the current measures for dynamic conservation is appropriate and to seek any room for improvement. Appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation methodology should be also established in the future.

XI. Designated Sites

Designated GIAHS sites		
Countries	**Name of sites/systems**	**Designation Year**
Algeria	1. Ghout System (Oases of the Maghreb)	2011
Bangladesh	2. Floating Garden Agricultural Practices	2015
Chile	3. Chiloé Agriculture	2011
China	4. Rice Fish Culture	2005
	5. Wannian Traditional Rice Culture	2010
	6. Hani Rice Terraces	2010
	7. Dong's Rice Fish Duck System	2011
	8. Pu'er Traditional Tea Agrosystem	2012
	9. Aohan Dryland Farming System	2012
	10. Kuajishan Ancient Chinese Torreya	2013
	11. Urban Agricultural Heritage – Xuanhua Grape Garden	2013
	12. Jiaxian Traditional Chinese Date Gardens	2014
	13. Xinghua Duotian Agrosystem	2014
	14. Fuzhou Jasmine and Tea Culture System	2014
India	15. Saffron Heritage of Kashmir	2011
	16. Koraput Traditional Agriculture	2012
	17. Kuttanad Below Sea Level Farming System	2013
Islamic Republic of Iran	18. Qanat Irrigated Agricultural Heritage Systems, Kashan	2014
Japan	19. Noto's Satoyama and Satoumi	2011
	20. Sado's Satoyama in Harmony with Japanese Crested Ibis	2011
	21. Managing Aso Grasslands for Sustainable Agriculture	2013
	22. Traditional Tea-grass Integrated System in Shizuoka	2013
	23. Kunisaki Peninsula Usa Integrated Forestry, Agriculture and Fisheries System	2013
	24. **Ayu of the Nagara River System**	2015
	25. **Minabe-Tanabe Ume System**	2015
	26. **Takachihogo-Shiibayama Mountainous Agriculture and Forestry System**	2015
Kenya	27. Oldonyonokie/Olkeri Maasai Pastoralist Heritage	2011
Morocco	28. Oases System in Atlas Mountains (Oases of the Maghreb)	2011
Peru	29. Andean Agriculture	2011
Philippines	30. Ifugao Rice Terraces	2011
Republic of Korea	31. Traditional Gudeuljang Irrigated Rice Terraces in Cheongsando	2014
	32. Jeju Batdam Agricultural System	2014
Tanzania	33. Engaresero Maasai Pastoralist Heritage Area	2011
	34. Shimbue Juu Kihamba Agroforestry Heritage Site	2011
Tunisia	35. Gafsa Oases (Oases of the Maghreb)	2011
United Arab Emirates	36. Al Ain and Liwa Historical Date Palm Oases	2015

The current designated GIAHS sites reflect wide variety of agricultural types in different parts of the world and reveal human wisdoms to overcome difficulties. Most of the GIAHS sites in North African region is Oasis agriculture where local farmers have established and maintained for a long time excellent and sustainable water management practices, crop growing technologies to combat water scarcity condition.

Maasai Pastoral System both in Kenya and Tanzania is an example of sustainable nomadic system which has lasted for a long time in harmony with the surrounding nature. Rice terraces in China and the Philippines not only show magnificent landscapes but also have ingenious water management systems and seed management practices.

Chiloe Agriculture in Chile and Andean Agriculture in Peru are the showcases of endemic species of crops important for human consumption. Bangladesh Floating Garden demonstrates how famers who had suffered from flooding can be innovative to counter such a harsh environment.

XII. GIAHS Designations Process

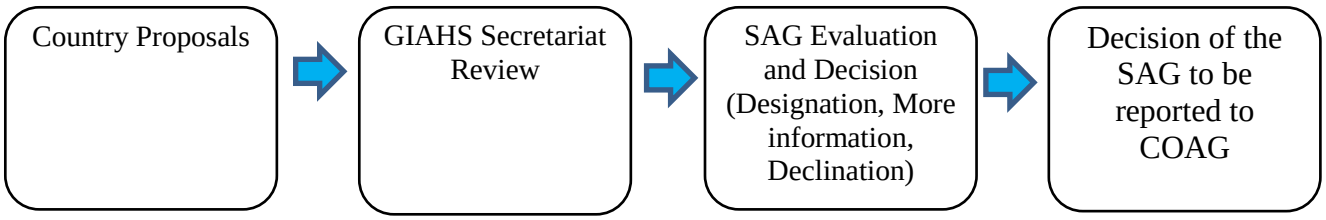
1. The process for designation of GIAHS sites starts from a proposal from a member country which nominates its potential GIAHS site. A proposal document is expected to be submitted from an appropriate national government ministry or institute or a national GIAHS Committee.

2. The **GIAHS Secretariat** reviews the proposal document to check whether the document is compliant with the proposal template and sufficient information is provided in line with the GIAHS selection criteria.

3. Once the proposal document satisfies these conditions, it is sent to the **Scientific Advisory Group (SAG)** for its scientific evaluation. The SAG makes its comprehensive evaluation including the outcome of field survey of the proposed site.

4. When the SAG conclude that the proposal fulfils the GIAHS selection criteria as a result of its evaluation, the SAG designates it as GIAHS site. When the SAG concludes that more information should be provided in the proposal document, the SAG sent it back to the proposing country through Secretariat for revision and resubmission. The SAG also can make a decision that the proposed site does not meet the criteria.

5. The outcome of the decision on the designation will be reported to the regular session of the COAG.



XIII. GIAHS Selection Criteria

1. Food and livelihood security

The proposed agriculture system should contribute to food and livelihood security of local communities (often indigenous), representing the majority of their livelihood provisions. This includes provisioning and exchange among local communities to create a relatively stable and resilient food and livelihood system.

2. Biodiversity and ecosystem function

Agricultural biodiversity and genetic resources (species, varieties & breeds), as well as other biodiversity such as wild relatives, pollinators and wildlife associated with the agricultural system and landscape. The system/ site should be endowed with globally (or nationally) significant biodiversity and genetic resources for food and agriculture (e.g. endemic, rare, endangered species of crops and animals).

3. Knowledge systems and adapted technologies

Maintain invaluable knowledge, ingenious technology and management systems of natural resources, including biota, land, water; and social organisations and institutions, including customary institutions for agro-ecological management, normative arrangements for resource access and benefit sharing, etc.

4. Cultures, value systems and social organisations (Agri-Culture)

Cosmo-vision, value systems and agri-cultural practices associated with environment and agricultural calendar; festivities and rituals as knowledge transfer. Local institutions play a critical role in balancing environmental and socio-economic objectives, in creating resilience and in the reproduction of all elements and processes critical to the functioning of the agricultural system. Some may ensure conservation of and promote equity in the use and access to natural resources; some transmit traditional knowledge systems and critical values that promote custodianship of biodiversity, land and water; some facilitate planning, cooperation and innovation/adaptation. Such institutions may take the form of ceremonial and religious beliefs and practices, including taboos, ceremonies and festivities; of customary law and conflict resolution, including on resource tenure; of kinship, marriage and inheritance systems; of forms of leadership, decision-making and cooperation; of oral and written traditions; of games and other forms of education and instruction; of division of roles and distribution of labour, including gender roles and specialized functions; etc (intangibles).

5. Remarkable landscapes, land and water resources management features

Landscape features resulting from human management, that provide particularly ingenious or practical solutions to environmental or social constraints, such as land use mosaics, irrigation/water management systems, terraces, particular ecosystem adaptive architecture, which might provide for resource conservation/efficiency or provide habitats for valued biodiversity, recreational values collective or non-commercial valuable uses (aesthetic, artistic, educational, spiritual, and/or scientific values of ecosystems).