

Workshop: The role of partner communities with GCP – Private sector

Q1) How can the (Private Sector) best help support the work of the GCP?

Q2) What can the GCP do to take maximum advantage of the expertise and perspectives of the (Private Sector)?

Participants:

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Henson-Apollonio Vistoria- CGIAR
Kolesnikova-Allen Maria - IITA
Lessard Philippe - Biogemma
Mahalakshmi Viswanathan – SGRP/Biodiversity
Powell Wayne - NIAB
Ragot Michel – Syngenta Seeds
Ribaut Jean-Marcel - GCP
Samidu Frank – Seed Tech
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As discussion progressed:

1. We merged the questions
2. We followed more in a bi-directional / collaborative discussion mindset

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General comments for potential collaborations . . .

- Requests for collaborations are easier to respond to if they are **specific** rather than very general.
 - **Iterative approach** can be helpful
 1. Start with some focused **measurable/tangible aspects**
 2. Leverage what is learned into further discussions
 3. Next round of measurable/tangible approaches
 - Sometimes an **umbrella agreement with smaller chapters/sub chapters** is more useful. As collaborations develop new options emerge, previously not envisioned or so uncertain so as to not warrant an agreement initially.
- Agreements should aim, **beyond protecting the rights of the parties involved**, at supporting what collaborating researchers want to accomplish.
- Where exchanges can be considered as **collaborations this may foster matching funds approaches with other donors (example USAID GDA program specifically established to provide matching funds to further support Private/Public sector collaborations)**.
- **Blanket (umbrella) confidentiality agreements** are sometimes necessary and beneficial since they may allow to freely engage in discussions which allow to define collaboration specifics.
- **Flexibility is important when setting up partnerships.**
 - Look for and be prepared to discuss alternative ways that can still **meet your final objective – but may employ a different route** then initially chosen (example map/vs..... postdoc).
 - Maintain the balance keeping “out the box thinking” but coming down to measurable/tangible objectives.

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Areas of potential collaboration between private sector and GCP

Transfer of germplasm *(reflects particular interests of the group)*

- Example was given of Pioneer-CIMMYT tropical-temperate germplasm enrichment program that will benefit resource poor farmers ultimately. Tropical germplasm in backcrossing program with private sector elite temperate germplasm, BC2's going to public sector. Specific objectives were established.
- How do SMEs from developing countries access public germplasm? They currently need to know about all CG centers. Should the GCP play a role in being a “central repository” of information about available germplasm – product inventory being developed will help?

Transfer of information

- Legal framework for “humanitarian benefit” option available if non consortium members can show benefits for resource poor farmers.
 - How do SMEs from developing countries access relevant information from the GCP? Is the information understandable given different interests ? Questions re IT access and need to keep information easily presentable, and accessible (including non web based CD's/DVD's etc).
 - Requests from GCP on Private sector, framework for example requests on how commercial companies structure their breeding programs – is being discussed, specific focus/objectives.

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Areas of potential collaboration between private sector and GCP

Transfer of know-how

- How can GCP scientists access private sector facilities or capabilities? **Hosting of external scientists might not always be possible** due to the fact that, by being hosted within a private company, a scientist will often be communicated (or have access to) information beyond the scope of the specific collaboration.
- **Access to private sector for third-party service.** May not be possible if service appears to disadvantage a service provider, however may be possible if part of a collaborative approach (genotyping example).
- **Sharing of legal expertise** – there is relatively little experience to date still with private/public sector partnerships.
- **Process know-how for “translational” activities.** Can GCP learn from the private sector on how to integrate and transfer genetic information into varieties, in particular when dealing with new technologies? Look into questions the private sector has had to ask it, how it has addressed them, and how it has come to answers.
- **GCP and IP help desk is willing to help “broker” these discussions,** if GCP consortium members present specific requests (technology example). Can be used as a framework by the GCP for proprietary private sector tools or methods, i.e. for keeping confidentiality on these tools or methods while ensuring that the resulting products or information are public goods.

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Areas of potential collaboration between private sector and GCP

Transfer of material

- Transgenics: regulatory hurdle. Introgression of events in germplasm is outside of the scope of the GCP.
- Non-public goods becoming public goods: germplasm or technologies becoming off-patent. Should GCP build a database of patents expired or about to expire? Is there a risk linked to patents on improvements of subject-matter of expired patents? Thought was to stay away from the expired /off patent inventory as they may be updated/replaced or contingent to newer patents.

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Summary for potential collaboration between private sector and GCP

Requests -- **specific** rather than very general.

Iterative approach can be helpful, start with focused **measurable/tangible aspects**.

Umbrella agreement with smaller chapters/sub chapters may be more useful.

Aim **beyond protecting the rights of the parties** . . . supporting what researchers want to accomplish.

Collaborations may foster matching funds approaches with other donors (example USAID GDA program)

Confidentiality agreements are sometimes necessary and beneficial since they may allow to freely engage in discussions which allow to define collaboration specifics.

Flexibility is important when setting up partnerships.

Look for and be prepared to discuss alternative ways that can still **meet your final objective**

Persist . The hardest part sometimes is the first few steps !