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Good Practices of *in situ* Conservation of Tropical Fruit Tree Species Diversity: Linking Conservation and Livelihood

BHUWON STHAPIT¹, PERCY SAJISE², V. RAMANATHA RAO², PAUL QUEK², FELIPE DE CRUZ³,
FROUKJE KRUIJSSEN², MAURICIO BELLON⁴

¹*Bioversity International, Diversity for Livelihoods Programme, Nepal*

²*Bioversity International, Regional Office for Asia, the Pacific and Oceania, Malaysia*

³*University of the Philippines, Los Banos College, Institute of Plant Breeding, Philippines*

⁴*Bioversity International, HQ Maccaresse, Italy*

Abstract

Tropical fruits are not only an integral part of culture in Asia but are also important as source of income and for their food and nutritional values. They contribute towards the well-being of people and enhancement of the environment as part of the agricultural ecosystem and tropical forest. Traditionally these tropical fruits are managed in a variety of production systems such as in natural forests, protected areas, buffer zones, homegardens, semi-commercial and commercial orchards. As a component of the homegarden, tropical fruit species are grown to serve the cultural and economic needs of farming communities. Homegardens are also the repository of the genepool of tropical fruit species taken and cultivated from the forest areas especially for communities occupying fringes of forest ecosystems or protected areas.

Over the years, farmers along with formal research institutions, have developed a range of production and management practices to conserve and sustainably use tropical fruit species diversity in Asia. These good practices can be a process, a method, a technique, an institutional arrangement or any combination of these, which attains the objective of both conservation and sustainable use of these fruit species diversity. In recent years, scaling up of good practices has become a popular strategy for improving research and development options to reduce rural poverty and vulnerability. This paper aims to identify good practices for sustainable management of tropical fruit tree diversity from current practices around the globe. Strengthening capacity of human and social capitals of local communities to document and blend traditional knowledge with scientific knowledge to manage tropical fruit diversity is the fundamental process to translate good practices into reality on the ground. These practices should be practical, cost-efficient, sustainable, and have the potential for scaling up to wider geographical, institutional and socio-cultural contexts. Based upon the above criteria, the paper describes some case studies that illustrate examples of good practices of conservation and sustainable use of cultivated and wild tropical fruit tree species in Asia, which, at the same time, help the farmer benefit from growing tropical fruit species.

Keywords: Asia, good practice, homegardens, *in situ* conservation, livelihoods, sustainable use, tropical fruits species, wild species and their wild relatives

Contact Address: Bhuwon Sthapit, Bioversity International, Diversity for Livelihoods Programme, 3/10 Dharmashila Buddha Marg, Nadipur Patan, Pokhara-3, Nepal, e-mail: b.sthapit@cgiar.org