

PLEC NEWS AND VIEWS

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Recent PLEC News

Liang Luohui and Miguel Pinedo-Vasquez

The successful completion of the GEF-funded PLEC Project is well recognized in the final evaluation reported in this issue. The evaluation concludes that 'PLEC as a whole has successfully achieved all four original project objectives and it has created and demonstrated a way to reform agricultural research in order to reverse global trends toward monoculture, land degradation, and biodiversity loss'. Over the years of collaboration, hundreds of project participants, including scientists, technicians, local officials, students, and farmers have come to embrace agrodiversity for sustainable rural development. After completion of the GEF-funded phase, many participants have continued to promote successful agrodiversity principles and approaches through development of follow-up projects and partnerships, and dissemination of project outputs.

Progress

Progress in developing PLEC follow-up projects varies. The Scientific Coordinator (Miguel Pinedo-Vasquez) has been particularly active, developing a medium-scale global GEF project for submission through UNDP, seeking more specific funds for his colleagues in Latin America, and networking with other bodies, in particular CIFOR and IPGRI.

In a major step forward for PLEC, the Earth Institute of Columbia University has provided a substantial grant to support Miguel's salary, and that of his research assistant, Andres Gomez, as well as funding in support of project travel.

Some groups have obtained funds:

- Thailand has a large grant from the McKnight Foundation for 'Agrodiversity for *in situ* Conservation and Management of Thailand's Native Rice Germplasm'. Ongoing work is also supported by the Thailand Research Fund.
- Brazil has a one-year grant from Overbook Foundation to support work in the Amapá sites, and travel in connection with further fund-

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