

**A Stakeholder Analysis to Assess Preferences and Willingness-to-Pay for Management of Rice Wild Relatives in Sri Lanka**

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**Abstract**

Proper management of rice wild relative populations scattered in Sri Lanka in small quantities are highly warranted as they constitute an increasingly important genetic resource that can be used with further research to increase yield of existing hybrid rice varieties. In light of this, this paper presents the outcome of a multi-phased research study carried out to assess the preferences of key stakeholders for conservation and utilisation of those populations. The information contained in databases from a series of empirical analyses carried out with key stakeholders, including the: (a) Breeders (n=30); (b) Environment managers (n=65); (c) Government officials (n=40); (d) Rural communities (n=50), and (e) Urban communities (n=300) were used to select the most relevant attributes pertaining to management of rice wild relatives, including: (1) responsibility for conservation; (2) utilisation of WRR sites; (3) the best conservation method, and (4) Marginal Willingness-to-Pay (MWTP). The outcome of analysis, which employed both Choice Experiment and Contingent Ranking methods highlights that the willingness-to-pay of rural adjacent community was significantly higher (Rs. 82.73) than that of urban households (Rs. 1.34), breeders (Rs. 10.00), policy planners (Rs. 20.46) and environmental managers (Rs. 7.34). The overall MWTP for all stakeholders was estimated to be Rs. 4.83. It also shows that the majority of stakeholders prefer government takes the sole responsibility of conservation of WRR and the adjacent communities should be allowed to utilise WRR sites under the supervision of government. All the stakeholders preferred in-situ conservation. The results draw attention on progressive policy measures which encompass participation of all groups of stakeholders at equal levels; mainstreaming of conservation activities into livelihood development strategies to address the local needs, and setting up of alternative institutional arrangements towards proper execution of policies and research programs aiming conservation of rice wild relatives for the future.

**Keywords:** Conservation, Stakeholder preferences, Wild rice relatives, Willingness-to-Pay