This has made remarkable contribution to biodiversity (largest number of hybrids on-farm in pearl millet as compared to any coarse grain cereal), enhanced Downy Mildew resistance (no related epidemics in the last 30 years) and increased productivity (grain yield increased from about 539 kg/ha during 1986-90 to 1350 kg/ha during 2010-15 registering 73% improvement (almost 3% productivity increase per annum in last three decades in India), which is highest among all food crops) for this hardy crop cultivated largely under most marginal environments with negligible external inputs in India.

Being a public-sector institution, ICRISAT develops improved varieties and hybrid parents of its mandate crops. ICRISAT recognized Private Sector (PS) seed companies as a valuable research partner for research on hybrid cultivar development and seed production. The interaction with the private seed sector was informal and passive in 1990s, although it continued to derive immense economic benefits from ICRISAT’s research products. The idea of a consortia to primarily to engage the private sector in more active partnership to hasten the pace and scale of impact, and to generate research funds to provide partial support to pearl millet improvement research at ICRISAT was born.

This led to the conceptualization and formation of Pearl Millet Hybrid Parents Research Consortium (PMHPRC) in 2000-2001 at ICRISAT. Under which, companies pay fees for access to parent materials to develop better hybrids. The impact of HPRC on the development of hybrids through extensive use of parental lines by the members was studied in the HPRC-I study.

At present, 26 seed companies are members of PMHPRC. This approach harnesses complementary expertise and resources, and generates synergies between international agricultural research centers (IARCs) and the PS in the development and marketing of seed of improved cultivars, without compromising the global research agenda in delivering international public goods (IPGs).

Since the launch of this partnership, the scope for overall benefits at country level in India could surpass US$ 150 M per year from contributions of Hybrid Parents Research Consortium.