

May 2017



**Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations**



**The International Treaty**  
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES  
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

**Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda**

**INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES  
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

**SECOND MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE  
GLOBAL INFORMATION SYSTEM OF ARTICLE 17 OF THE TREATY**

**Rome, Italy, 13 – 14 June 2017**

**Partnerships, Collaboration and Capacity Development**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Following the recommendations provided by the Scientific Advisory Committee at the first meeting, and in line with the Programme of Work of GLIS (PoW), this document provides an update on activities for the strengthening and development of partnerships for the GLIS Portal and joint opportunities for capacity development activities with a focus on developing countries.
2. Since the first meeting of the Committee, major efforts have been made to prioritize and strengthen partnerships for the development of the GLIS Portal and the implementation of the PoW, based on the advice provided by the Committee regarding the prioritization of partnership with a strategic approach.
3. To facilitate direct interactions and an open dialogue between the members of the Committee and the stakeholders, the Secretariat has invited a few selected organizations to deliver presentations on their ongoing programmes of work in relation to GLIS. This document provides only a succinct reference to some of the ongoing collaborations.

**II. PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATIONS**

4. Following the advice of the first meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee, the Secretariat has explored synergies with the CGIAR's Excellence for Breeding Platform and Genebank Platform, the Plant Production and Protection Division of FAO, the Global Crop Diversity Trust in relation to Genesys, DataCite, the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR), the CBD Secretariat, the Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA) and ICARDA, among others.
5. Through the CGIAR's Genebank Platform, Genesys, GRIN-global and other genebank management systems in the CGIAR will be upgraded to accommodate DOIs. The Platform has set a target for all genebanks of the CGIAR expect to assign DOIs to all their available accessions within the next biennium.
6. The CGIAR's Excellence in Breeding Platform has indicated an intention to adopt the "B4R" (Breeding for Rice) software developed at IRRI as the preferred breeding management software across the CGIAR for all crops. Work is already in progress to incorporate DOIs into B4R as part of the workflow for transferring material to or from a breeding programme. The

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decision of EiB will add significant additional value to this work, enabling GLIS to reach many more breeders.

7. The Secretariat has continued collaborating with the Global Crop Diversity Trust on Genesys, through participation in the Genesys Advisory Committee as well as specific meetings and one visit to the Crop Trust to plan for further joint collaboration. The Secretariat of the International Treaty travelled to Bonn in February 2017 to meet with the Trust to exchange information and plan some joint activities. The Secretariat provided to the Trust documentation on the technical options to facilitate the connection of Genesys database to the Global Information System.

8. With regard to capacity development, the Crop Trust was invited by the Secretariat to deliver a presentation on Genesys at the NENA Workshop ‘Strengthening National Capacities on Plant Genetic Resources in the context of the Global Information System of the International Treaty’ held at Giza, Egypt from 9 to 11 May 2017<sup>1</sup>. The Secretariat of the International Treaty has also information and presentations on the Standard Material Transfer Agreement and on the Global Information System to facilitate the conduction of a training workshop with in Kuala Lumpur at the end of July.

9. The Secretariat and the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) have scaled-up partnership with the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding in December 2016. The partnership foresees a range of activities related to the documentation and information of crop germplasm.

10. The collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has been strengthened by devising an on-line data exchange protocol, linked to the ABS-Clearing House Mechanism. The Secretariats of the CBD and the International Treaty have planned for a planning session in the second half of June. Document IT/GB7/SAC-2/17/5, *Access and use of PGRFA Information through the Global Information System*, informs the Committee of policy and legal developments occurring in the CBD and the Nagoya Protocol in relation to sequence data and synthetic biology.

11. The Secretariat has identified synergies with the Plant Production and Protection Division of FAO in relation to World Information and Early Warning System (WIEWS) and the monitoring of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Second GPA).

12. With the support of FAO’s Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development Division (OPC), a collaboration with the Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) initiative has been established to promote the adoption of DOIs among their stakeholders and networks. The collaboration will increase the visibility of DOIs and GLIS in the large GODAN community and will allow the Secretariat to join forces in their advocacy initiatives.

### **Promotion of tools**

13. The Secretariat of the International Treaty paid a visit to the project manager and coordinator of GRIN-Global at the Agricultural Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in May and explored several ways in which GRIN-Global could interact with the Global Information System and with Easy-SMTA.

14. Additionally and in the context of GLIS, the use of GRIN-Global as a genebank management system was promoted. The Secretariat invited the Genebank Manager of the National Genebank of Tunisia to deliver a presentation on the use of the System, at the aforementioned NENA Workshop in Egypt. The National Genebank of Tunisia, under the Ministry of Environment, has been one of the first countries to adopt GRIN-Global in the region. Nevertheless, that instance of the implementation still lacks some important functions and the

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/meetings/meetings-detail/en/c/853576/>

Secretariat of the International Treaty has planned for a joint working and training session with the staff of the genebank in June.

### **Advocacy**

15. The Secretariat has also liaised with the Research Data Alliance (RDA) through FAO-OPC on data sharing and information exchange standards. Areas for possible collaboration include:

- i) Delivery of a webinar to the RDA/IGAD, AIMS.FAO.ORG and GODAN communities on the Guidelines for the optimal use of Digital Object Identifiers for germplasm samples;
- ii) Delivery of a webinar on the role of DOIs to support the agricultural sciences research community to locate, identify, and cite research data;
- iii) Publication of blog posts (no longer than 500 words) on data harmonization in GLIS. (see <http://aims.fao.org/activity/blog/guidelines-optimal-use-digital-object-identifiers-germplasm-samples-0>, which was created for the AIMS.FAO.ORG community and disseminated through RDA/IGAD);
- iv) Participation in the IGAD/RDA meeting in Montreal, during the RDA Plenary Meeting, to present GLIS progress with the harmonization of IDs for research data;
- v) Joint contributions to GODAN work on the ownership of open data and the related governance options.<sup>2</sup>

16. The Secretariat has collaborated with the DataCite Metadata Working Group on descriptors mapping and participated in the DataCite Board. This partnership is expected to benefit the GLIS portal during the registration of material through a compatible metadata structure.

17. The Secretariat has defined possible lines of collaboration with the Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA) and ICARDA related to improve coordination and capacity development in the NENA region through the strengthening of existing networks and projects. This focuses on building capacity to develop national inventories and contribute data to Genesys.

18. Closer collaboration with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) is being established in relation to standards and relevant descriptors mapping. A proposal will be made to GBIF to harmonize missing descriptors in their metadata structure to comply with the GLIS descriptors required to assign a DOI.

19. Following the advice provided by the Scientific Advisory Committee at the first meeting, the Secretariat is establishing the framework for further collaboration with Divseek, particularly in the definition and scope of a *Memorandum of Understanding*, and has circulated the report on implications of the work of DivSeek for the objectives of the International Treaty to all Contracting Parties as prepared by this initiative.

### **III. ADVICE SOUGHT**

20. The Committee is invited to advise on the strategic orientation of partnerships and collaboration and the further development thereof, including on capacity development for developing country Contracting Parties.

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.godan.info/documents/ownership-open-data-governance-options-agriculture-and-nutrition-0>