



The International Treaty

ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



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FIFTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

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REPORT ON THE EXECUTION OF THE PROJECT CYCLE OF THE BENEFIT-SHARING FUND SINCE THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. By its Third Session, the Governing Body had already adopted the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty and its four accompanying annexes, including those policies and procedures relevant to the execution of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund. At its Fourth Session, the Governing Body adopted procedures for disbursement and for reporting, monitoring and evaluation to be applied in the implementation of the second round of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund.¹
2. This document first introduces the constant improvements to the execution of the project cycle that the Governing Body has undertaken since the adoption of the Funding Strategy. It also refers to other documentation that provides complementary information to this document. It then provides an update on progress made in the execution of the first, second and third rounds of the project cycle since the Fourth Session of the Governing Body.
3. The Governing Body may wish to consider draft elements of a Resolution related to the execution of the project cycle since the last Session of the Governing Body, in the *Appendix* to this document. Such elements are expected to be finally integrated in the Resolution related to the Funding Strategy, a draft of which is provided in the document *Report on the implementation of the Funding Strategy*.²

¹ Resolution 3/2011, Annex 1 and Annex 2.

² IT/GB-5/13/7.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since the adoption of the Funding Strategy, the Governing Body has been constantly improving the execution of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund. At its Second Session, the Governing Body adopted the steps for the execution of the project cycle through Annex 3 of the Funding Strategy (the Operational Procedures). At the Third Session, reporting requirements to the Governing Body on the execution of the project cycle were adopted through Annex 4 of the Funding Strategy. Procedures for disbursement and for reporting, monitoring and evaluation were adopted at the Fourth Session of the Governing Body. At the present Session, the Governing Body will already review the Operational Procedures and consider a policy of conflict of interest in support of the execution of the project cycle.
2. The document *Report on the Implementation of the Funding Strategy*³ deals with general policy related to the Benefit-sharing Fund that is not exclusive to the execution of a particular round of the project cycle. This document reports on matters relevant to the Governing Body on the execution of the rounds of the project cycle since its last Session (March 2011). It therefore covers the last months of the biennium 2010-2011 as well as most of the present biennium 2012-2013. During this time, the first round of the project cycle was finalized and the focus has been the execution of the second round of the project cycle and the planning of the third round.
3. At its Fourth Session, the Governing Body decided to delegate authority for execution of the project cycle during the next biennium to the Bureau of the Fifth Session of the Governing Body (Bureau). The Governing Body also decided to reconvene the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy (the Committee) to, *inter alia*, advise on the design and structure of the next call for proposals and review the implementation of the project portfolio funded by the first and second rounds of the project cycle. The Bureau and the Committee have been regularly updated with regard to the execution of the project cycle.
4. The elements of a draft Resolution on the Funding Strategy related to the execution of the rounds of the project cycle are provided in the *Appendix to this document*.

II. EXECUTION OF THE ROUNDS OF THE PROJECT CYCLE

Execution of the first round of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund

5. At its Fourth Session, the Governing Body welcomed progress made in the implementation of the first round of the project cycle and requested the Secretary to prepare and make available a summary report on the implementation and impact of this first project portfolio.
6. The Bureau, at its first meeting, took note of the overview of project cycle activities for 2012 and requested the Secretary to keep it informed on the execution of the first and second rounds of the project cycles at its next meeting. The Committee received a background document on the execution of the first and second rounds of the project cycle. The Committee stressed the importance of preparing and publishing a terminal report providing a synthetic account of the main results and success stories of the first project portfolio, as well as information on inclusion of materials and project management. The report should be brief and target donors, policy-makers and Treaty stakeholders.

³ IT/GB-5/13/7.

7. Following the advice received by the Committee, the Secretariat prepared the *Report on the First Round of the Project Cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund*.⁴ The Bureau, at its second meeting, welcomed the publication of the *Report* and requested the Secretary to disseminate it widely to Contracting Parties, partners and donors.
8. The *Report* provides an overview of the activities and results of the first project portfolio. Its format and contents are in line with the information and reporting requirements stipulated in the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty.⁵
9. The *Report* documents how, through the execution of the first project portfolio, the Benefit-sharing Fund contributed towards strengthening the capacities or raising the awareness on crop diversity of more than 6000 farmers. The Benefit-sharing Fund further supported the collection of over 360 accessions of traditional varieties and crop wild relatives, the documentation of traditional knowledge related to more than 1500 accessions, and the characterization for useful traits of more than 2200 accessions of varieties held on-farm and in gene banks. Overall, it contributed to ongoing activities for the identification and/or breeding of more than 270 accessions – which either exhibit high yields, resistances to climate stresses, tolerances to crop diseases, or a combination thereof – and the distribution of locally adapted planting material to more than 1800 farmers.
10. The Governing Body, at its Fourth Session, emphasized that plant genetic resources for food and agriculture listed in Annex I of the International Treaty resulting from the projects funded under the first round of the project cycle shall be made available according to the terms and conditions of the Multilateral System, and that information generated by these projects shall be made publicly available within 1 year of the completion of the project, and requested the Secretariat to develop practical and simple measures and systems that will facilitate that the entities implementing such projects meet such requirements.
11. Executing entities were requested to submit a plan of inclusion of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture listed in Annex I of the International Treaty resulting from the project, as part of the Technical and Financial Final Report to be provided before the closure of the project agreement. The letters of notification of inclusion of material in the Multilateral System from the pilot projects are published in the Treaty website.
12. The *Report* explains that over 1700 accessions of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture listed in Annex I addressed by the first project portfolio will be made available under the terms and conditions of the Multilateral System, which is expected to multiply the Benefit-sharing Fund's impact globally. It also provides a list of internet links and other sources compiling the information generated by the projects funded.

Execution of the second round of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund

13. At its Fourth Session, the Governing Body adopted the interim procedures for reporting, monitoring and evaluation and interim procedures for fund disbursement, to be applied in the implementation of the second round of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund.⁶
14. The Governing Body also reviewed the progress made in the execution of the second round of the project cycle. The Governing Body welcomed the progress made so far by the Panel of Experts on the appraisal of project proposals and emphasized the importance of finalizing it

⁴ IT/GB-5/13/Inf.11.

⁵ See Annex 4 of the Funding Strategy available on

ftp://ftp.fao.org/ag/agp/planttreaty/publi/funding_strategy_compilation_en.pdf

⁶ Resolution 3/2011, Annex 1 and Annex 2.

with the highest quality standards to ensure that quality and technical merit determine the appraisal and approval.

15. The Panel of Experts finalized the appraisal of project proposals in July 2011, when the Report of the Co-chairs of the Panel was submitted to the Bureau. The Report contained the ranking by the Panel for project proposals in both Windows of the Call for Proposals as well a detailed explanation and lessons learned of the rigorous and transparent appraisal protocol followed, including managing possible conflict of interests.⁷

16. In August 2011, the Bureau held a teleconference for the approval of projects under the second round of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund. The Bureau expressed its appreciation for the excellent technical work and scientific review done by the Panel, in order to ensure that quality and technical merit determine the appraisal and approval of project proposals. The Bureau endorsed the full Report of the Co-chairs of the Panel of Experts, and did not perform any further appraisal of individual projects.

17. In undertaking the approval of project proposals, the Bureau identified the following: (1) project proposals for immediate funding by the Benefit-sharing Fund; (2) project proposals nested in UNDP programmes that were referred to joint resource mobilization with UNDP; (3) project proposals to be funded if additional funding became available in the Benefit-sharing Fund before the end of the biennium (December 2011); (4) Project proposals to be submitted to other donors for funding.

18. A total of 19 projects were approved for funding by the Benefit-sharing Fund (5, 7 million USD). Projects funded are reaching communities facing food insecurity because of the impact of climate change on the use and conservation of their plant genetic diversity. The funds disbursed in the second round of the project cycle multiplied by ten those disbursed in the first round of the project cycle. There are more than 100 organizations involved in the execution of the second round of the project cycle in more than 31 countries. As a result of joint resource mobilization efforts with UNDP, three additional nested projects are being supported.

19. The information document *Progress Report on the execution of the second round of the project cycle*⁸ provides further background on progress made in the project portfolio. Its format and contents are in line with the information and reporting requirements stipulated in the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty.

20. The Secretariat has regularly updated the Bureau with regard to the status and next steps in the execution of the second project cycle. The Committee also received background information on the execution of the second project portfolio. The Committee thanked the Secretariat for the comprehensive information provided and welcomed the progress made in the execution of the project portfolio.

21. The regional representatives in the Bureau and the Committee have been regularly exploring options with regard to the 8 project proposals that were to be funded if additional funding became available in the Benefit-sharing Fund before the end of the biennium (December 2011). The Bureau, at its second meeting, requested the Committee to address this matter. At the time of finalization of this document, the Committee had not reached consensus on this matter but had decided to continue the discussion at its next resumed meeting, to be held in July 2013.

22. The finalization of the execution of the second round of the project cycle will occur during the next inter-sessional period. In line with those procedures, the Secretary will prepare a *Report on the Second Round of the Project Cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund* and, for the first time, an independent evaluation of the project portfolio will be conducted at the end of the project cycle, following section 3 of the interim procedures.

⁷ Additional information on the Panel of Experts can be found at:

<http://www.planttreaty.org/content/panel-experts-call-proposals-2010-benefit-sharing-fund>

⁸ IT/GB-5/13/Inf.12.

Execution of the third round of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund

23. At its Fourth Session, the Governing Body delegated the authority for the execution of the project cycle during the biennium to the Bureau and requested the Committee to advise the Governing Body on the design and structure of the next call for proposals.⁹

24. The Governing Body also requested the Secretary to prepare, for the Bureau, a *Report on lessons learned during the execution of the first and second rounds of the project cycle* to support the design and execution of the project cycle and its future rounds, including the next call for proposals.¹⁰ The Committee reviewed the *Report on lessons learned* and used it to provide its advice in the design and structure of the third Call for Proposals.¹¹ Further information on the *Report on lessons learned* is found in the *Report on the implementation of the Funding Strategy*.¹²

25. The Committee emphasized the importance of opening a third Call for Proposals as soon as possible. It reiterated the importance of maintaining the thematic focus for the third Call for Proposals as it constitutes a precise, consistent and concrete implementation of the priorities agreed by the Governing Body. It further advised that:

- the third round of the project cycle will continue featuring a Window on Immediate Action Projects and will not feature a Window on Strategic Action Plans;
- a Window of the third Call for Proposals be dedicated to the co-development and transfer of technologies related to the Treaty coupled with capacity building in support of the thematic focus and in full alignment with the three priorities adopted by the Governing Body. Given the need for further guidance from the Governing Body on technology transfer, the Committee recommended that the funding available assigned to this Window be low for the time being;
- the Secretariat prepared a draft Call for Proposals based on the Annotated Outline of the Third Call for Proposals,¹³ and taking into account the *Report on lessons learned*. It also advised on the steps to finalize the design of the third Call for Proposals.

26. At the time of publication of this document, the final steps to finalize the design of the third Call for Proposals were being undertaken. As reported to the Bureau, one target would be to launch the third Call for Proposals at the time of Fifth Session of the Governing Body but this is dependent upon mobilizing sufficient funding to launch the Call.

⁹ Resolution 3/2011, paras. 23 and 36 (ii).

¹⁰ Resolution 3/2011, paras. 23.

¹¹ IT/GB-5/13/Inf.4. *Report of the Seventh Meeting of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy*. Paras. 26-30. <http://www.planttreaty.org/sites/default/files/acfs7re.pdf>

¹² IT/GB-5/13/7.

¹³ IT/ACFS-7/12/8, Annex 1. <http://www.planttreaty.org/sites/default/files/ACFS7w08e.pdf>

APPENDIX

**DRAFT ELEMENTS OF A RESOLUTION:
EXECUTION OF THE PROJECT CYCLE OF THE BENEFIT-SHARING FUND SINCE
THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

THE GOVERNING BODY,

- (i) **Recalling** that the Governing Body, at its Fourth Session, delegated authority for the execution of the project cycle during the next biennium 2012/13 to the Bureau of the Fifth Session of the Governing Body;
- (ii) **Recalling** the decision of the Governing Body, at its Fourth Session, to reconvene the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy to, *inter alia*, advise the Governing Body on the design and structure of the next call for proposals and on the review of implementation of project portfolio funded by the first and second rounds of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund;
- (iii) **Recalling** that the Governing Body, at its Fourth Session, requested the Secretary to prepare and make available a summary report on the implementation and impact of this first project portfolio;
- (iv) **Recalling** that the Governing Body, at its Fourth Session, adopted *interim* procedures for reporting, monitoring and evaluation and *interim* procedures for fund disbursement, to be applied in the implementation of the second round of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund;

Hereby,

1. **Thanks** the Bureau and the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy for the intergovernmental work carried out to support the execution of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund since the Fourth Session of the Governing Body;
2. **Welcomes** the publication of the *Report on the First Round of the Project Cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund* and requests the Secretary to disseminate it widely to Contracting Parties, partners and donors;
3. **Thanks** all the institutions that were involved in the implementation of projects of the first round of the project cycle for their support in multiplying the impact of the Benefit-sharing Fund through activities at local level, such as the strengthening of capacities of farmers, and, at global level, through the inclusion of materials in the Multilateral System and through making information generated by these projects publicly available;
4. **Welcomes** progress made in the execution of the second round of the project cycle;
5. **Requests** the Secretary to initiate the planning of the independent evaluation to be conducted at the end of the project cycle, following the procedures adopted at its Fourth Session, and to prepare and make available a summary report on the implementation of the second project portfolio;
6. **Requests** the Secretariat to continue providing assistance to facilitate that plant genetic resources for food and agriculture listed in Annex I of the International Treaty resulting from the projects funded under the second round of the project cycle are made available according to the terms and conditions of the Multilateral System, and that information generated by these projects is made publicly available within 1 year of the completion of the project;
7. **Decides** to launch the third Call for Proposals of the Benefit-sharing Fund at the closing of the Fifth Session of the Governing Body.