



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



The International Treaty
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

**Views, Experiences and Best Practices as an example of possible options for
the national implementation of Article 9 of the International Treaty**

Note by the Secretary

At its [second meeting](#) of the Ad hoc Technical Expert Group on Farmers' Rights (AHTEG), the Expert Group agreed on a revised version of the [template](#) for collecting information on examples of national measures, best practices and lessons learned from the realization of Farmers' Rights

This document presents the updated information on best practices and measures of implementing Article 9 of the International Treaty submitted by Bioversity International on 23 July 2019.

The submission is presented in the form and language in which it was received.

Basic information:

Title of measure/practice:

Community biodiversity registries and biocultural community protocols: strengthening communities' capacity to manage crop genetic diversity in Benin.

Date of submission:

23 July 2019

Name(s) of country/countries in which the measure/practice is taking place

Benin

Responsible organizations

Bioversity International

Type of institution/organization (categories)

International Research Centre within CGIAR

Collaborating/supporting institutions/organizations/actors, if applicable

Project partner institutions:

- ABS Capacity Development Initiative;
- ONG Cercle de Sauvegarde des Ressources Naturelles (CeSaReN) (Benin);
- Institut National des Recherches Agricoles du Benin (INRAB);
- Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)
- Natural Justice
- Comité de gestion des forêts sacrées de Bonou, Bonou (Benin).
- Jeunesse Sans Frontière, Tori Bossito (Benin).

Description of the examples:

Mandatory information:

Brief summary for the inventory

From 2015 to 2018, Community Biodiversity registers and Biocultural Community Protocols were developed in Benin. The national agricultural research organization *Institut National des Recherches Agricoles du Benin* (INRAB) as well as several NGOs were involved (see submissions for detailed lists of project partners). In a first step, community biodiversity registries were established in the participating communities to identify crop, forage and agroforestry diversity in their agricultural systems. These registers can be used, for example, for the documentation of traditional knowledge associated with PGRFA, for monitoring purposes or to identify potentially interesting materials for exchange with outsiders. Biocultural Community Protocols were then developed with the objective of helping local communities to take advantage of their countries' commitments under both the ITPGRFA and the Nagoya Protocol by establishing mechanisms to regulate access to genetic resources in their territories. These protocols can set out rights and responsibilities under customary, state and international law as the basis for engaging with external actors, such as governments, companies, academics and NGOs, and to establish the terms and conditions for access to and use of their traditional knowledge and resources.

(184)

Brief history (including starting year), as appropriate

The project 'Mutually supportive implementation of ITPGRFA and the Nagoya Protocol in Benin and Madagascar' was implemented with the support of the Darwin Initiative, a UK Government Fund, from April 2015 to April 2018. The project's primary objectives were to develop mechanisms to implement the ITPGRFA and the Nagoya Protocol in mutually supportive manners from community to national levels. The project was successful in supporting partners to developing national level laws that were approved by national cabinets; it also supported communities to develop mechanisms to promote their interests as managers of biological diversity in their agricultural systems. This note will focus on two of those mechanisms: community biodiversity registries and biocultural community protocols. The latter were developed with the objective of helping the communities take advantage of their countries' commitments under both the ITPGRFA and the Nagoya Protocol. Bioversity International was the lead executing agency for the grant. Project partners are listed above.

Core components of the measure/practice (max 200 words)

Two groups of communities in Benin (Tori Bossito, Bonou) created community biodiversity registries to identify crop, forage and agroforestry diversity in their agricultural systems. They use those registries to monitor trends in the use of diversity across the community, to identify potentially interesting materials to exchange with users outside the community, and to identify gaps that they could potentially fill by acquiring crop diversity from elsewhere. The communities also developed biocultural community protocols to set out processes and procedures, building on community level institutions and practices, and linking up with local, national organizations where necessary, for a) considering requests for genetic resources managed within the communities and b) to access desirable plant genetic resources from elsewhere. Awareness raising and capacity strengthening workshops were organized at the community level to introduce the ITPGRFA and the Nagoya Protocol, and their potential significance to the communities concerned.

The communities exchanged crop genetic resources between themselves (within and between the two countries) and accessed crop genetic resources from CGIAR Centres which they entered into collectively managed evaluation trials.

Short description of the context and the history of the measure/practice is taking place

The Nagoya Protocol and the ITPGRFA create access and benefit sharing norms, and promote recognition of indigenous peoples, local communities and farmers as biodiversity stewards. Before the project started, Benin had ratified the ITPGRFA and the Nagoya Protocol. However, it didn't have mechanisms to implement either agreement.

To which provision(s) of Article 9 of the International Treaty does this measure relate

Art. 9.1

Art. 9.2a

Art. 9.2b

Art. 9.2c

Please indicate which category of the Inventory is most relevant for the proposed measure, and which other categories are also relevant (if any):

No.	Category	Most relevant	Also relevant
1	Recognition of local and indigenous communities', farmers' contributions to conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, such as awards and recognition of custodian/guardian farmers		X
2	Financial contributions to support farmers conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA such as contributions to benefit-sharing funds	X	
3	Approaches to encourage income-generating activities to support farmers' conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA		
4	Catalogues, registries and other forms of documentation of PGRFA and protection of traditional knowledge		X
5	In-situ/on-farm conservation and management of PGRFA, such as social and cultural measures, community biodiversity management and conservation sites		X
6	Facilitation of farmers' access to a diversity of PGRFA through community seed banks, seed networks and other measures improving farmers' choices of a wider diversity of PGRFA.		
7	Participatory approaches to research on PGRFA, including characterization and evaluation, participatory plant breeding and variety selection		
8	Farmers' participation in decision-making at local, national and sub-regional, regional and international levels		X
9	Training, capacity development and public awareness creation		
10	Legal measures for the implementation of Farmers' Rights, such as legislative measures related to PGRFA.		
11	Other measures / practices		

Lessons learned

Describe lessons learned which may be relevant for others who wish to do the same or similar measures/practices (max 250 words).

The activities conducted at the community level required considerably more resources (both time and financial) than was initially planned for in the project proposal. Meaningful community level engagement takes considerable time and support. The project was very lucky to have the ABS Capacity Development Initiative and Natural Justice already involved working with some of the communities. Their participation/contributions underscore the importance of maintaining close, ongoing interaction/dialogue with community members and representatives.

What would you consider conditions for success, if others should seek to carry out such a (max 100 words)

Participatory, inclusive approaches to community engagement. Women and men from the four case study communities actively participated, from the very beginning, in the development of the biocultural community protocols, community biodiversity registries and the community investment plans.

Multistakeholder governance of project activities within both countries. National Project Implementation Committees were formed in both countries. These included representatives of all relevant stakeholder groups in the country, including local farmers and farmer organizations. These Committees met regularly to guide the implementation of the project. These Committees were co-chaired by the national ITPGRFA and Nagoya Protocol focal points in both countries.

Further information

Bioversity International maintains a webpage dedicated to the project where more information is available: <https://www.bioversityinternational.org/darwin-benin-madagascar/>

The biocultural community protocols developed by the four communities are available at:

- BCP Tori Bossito, Benin:
https://www.bioversityinternational.org/fileadmin/user_upload/research/research_portfolio/policies_for_crop/BCP_ToriBossito_Benin_2018.pdf
- BCP Bonou, Benin
https://www.bioversityinternational.org/fileadmin/user_upload/research/research_portfolio/policies_for_crop/BCP_Bonou_Benin_2018.pdf