



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:

Establishing and linking Community Seed Banks with the national genebank for conservation and policy support.

Date of submission:

23 July 2019

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

Uganda

Responsible organizations

National Agricultural Research Organization- Plant Genetic Resources Center (NARO-PGRC)

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Type of institution/organization (categories)

NARO: Public research organization

MAAIF: Government Ministry

Bioversity International: International Research Centre within CGIAR

Collaborating/supporting institutions/organizations/actors, if applicable

Swiss Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Netherlands government provided financial support.

Description of the examples

Mandatory information:

Short summary to be put in the inventory

Since 2007, Bioversity International, as partner of various projects supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), has been working with the National Genebank and Plant Genetic Resources Center of Uganda (NARO-PGRC) to link ex situ conservation of PGRFA with in situ conservation through community seed banks. The objective was to enhance farmers' access to diverse, high-quality seed from farmers' seed systems, and to strengthen policy support for pluralistic approaches to seed system development. Core activities included capacity development for farmers on seed production and marketing, participatory variety selection as

well as policy review and development. Five community seed banks have been established so far, serving around 3000 farmers. Recent policies, including Uganda's draft PGRFA Policy of 2016 and the National Seed Policy of 2019 recognize the importance of a pluralistic seed system and the need to integrate formal and informal seed systems, also emphasizing the importance of community seed banks.

Brief history (including starting year), as appropriate

Since 2007 Bioversity International through various projects supported by SDC and IFAD has been working with the national gene bank and Plant Genetic Resources Center of Uganda (NARO-PGRC) to link *ex situ* conservation of PGRFA with *in situ* conservation through community seed banks (CSBs). So far, five community seedbanks have been established in different geographic areas of Uganda to support farmers' rights in the following six ways:

- Conservation of indigenous varieties of beans, finger millet, sorghum, vegetables and other legumes and linking these with *ex-situ* conservation by keeping farmers' duplicate collections in the national seed banks
- Improving access to good quality and diverse seed by farmers through their community driven seed banks which support farmers to freely save and exchange seeds of desired characteristics
- Increasing farmers' capacity to produce quality seed, conserve and use local varieties and indigenous knowledge
- Recognition of community seed banks in the draft national PGRFA Policy as an important aspect of *in situ* conservation including the establishment of a community gene fund to support future and present community seed banking initiatives.
- Establishing of a network/platform on community seedbanks which has brought together many farmers and partners such as NGOs, research and policy makers countrywide to share information and resources regarding genetic diversity and availability of diverse seed.
- Holding seed fair events to promote sharing and exchange of seeds and related indigenous knowledge.

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

Core components of the measure include:

Capacity enhancement:

- Construction of 5 community seed banks that preserve genetic diversity of food security crops including beans, finger millet, sorghum, traditional leafy vegetables, cow peas and pigeon peas.
- Training of over 3000 farmers on community seed banking and conservation of local indigenous varieties; quality seed production including seed selection and preservation.
- Developing seed businesses with community seedbanks to improve access of diverse seeds to local communities and training seed bank members on business management.
- Training and inspection by seed certification services of ministry of agriculture and providing alternative quality assurance mechanisms such as Quality Declared Seed (QDS) for community seed banks to enable them package, market and sell their seed.

- Capacity enhancement for *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of PGRFA by linking the community seedbanks with national seed banks to enable the seedbanks to store their duplicates in the gene bank and make voluntary contributions.

Research for climate change adaptation:

Various community seedbanks and their members have been involved in participatory varietal selection of materials grown out from beans, finger millet and sorghum accessions from the national gene banks of Kenya Uganda and Tanzania. These materials are currently being evaluated for resistance to pests and diseases associated with climate change. These trials give farmers an opportunity to participate in decision-making processes with respect to varieties that are suitable for their use. Joint generation and exchange of information between farmers' communities and the national genebanks on climate change issues have also taken place.

Policy review and development:

The draft Uganda PGRFA Policy of 2016 still awaits tabling through cabinet and parliament approval. This draft policy recognizes farmer' rights to good quality diverse seeds for food security and livelihood improvement. Provisions in the draft acknowledge community seed banking as an effective measure to recognize and implement farmers' rights. Strategy 3.6.1, 3.6.4 and 3.6.5 of this policy provide for the establishment of CSBs, support for community management of PGRFA and farmers' rights respectively. The draft national PGRFA Policy specifically proposes that a fund be set up to support *in situ* conservation activities. NARO-PGRC and other partners are using this instrument to ensure National support for CBS is institutionalized and funded.

The recently approved National Seed Policy 2019 recognizes the importance of a pluralistic seed system and the need to integrate formal and informal seed systems. It also emphasizes the role of CSBs in providing access to quality seed in the informal sector and provides alternative quality assurance mechanisms such as QDS certification for seed banks engaged in seed businesses.

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

Described in previous sections.

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

Art. 9.1

Art. 9.2a

Art. 9.2c

Art. 9.3

Other information, if applicable (optional):

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		
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		
5	In-situ/on-farm conservation and management of PGRFA, such as social and cultural measures, community biodiversity management and conservation sites		
6	Facilitation of farmers' access to a diversity of PGRFA through community seed bank ¹ , seed networks and other measures improving farmers' choices of a wider diversity of PGRFA.	X	
7	Participatory approaches to research on PGRFA, including characterization and evaluation, participatory plant breeding and variety selection		X
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		X
10	Legal measures for the implementation of Farmers' Rights, such as legislative measures related to PGRFA.		X
11	Other measures / practices		

Objective: To improve access to quality and diverse seed in farmers' seed system and policy support for pluralistic seed systems

Target group(s) and numbers of involved and affected farmer

¹ Including seed houses.

Smallholder farmers, local seed businesses, community seed banks, policy makers

Location(s) and geographical outreach

Western, Central and Eastern Uganda

Resources used for implementation of the measure/practice

Various international donors such as SDC, IFAD, GEF UNEP, the government of Netherlands and the Benefit Sharing Fund of the ITPGRFA have contributed funds to the work described in this note, totaling for around one million USD in more than 10 years.

How has the measure/practice affected the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture? Please describe the achievements of the measure/ practice so far (including quantification) (max 200 words)

The measure has improved access to quality and diverse seed by over 3000 farmers directly and others indirectly.

Other national level instruments that are linked to the measure/practice

Described above.

Are you aware of any other international agreements or programs that are relevant for this measure/practice?

Nagoya Protocol. Regional and international agreements on variety registration and seed quality certification.

Lessons learned

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

National gene banks and national agencies in charge of ex situ and in situ conservation, such as the Ministry of Environment must be engaged in efforts to conserve PGRFA. Engaging the national gene bank also provides a back-up for CSBs' collections thereby enhancing the complementarities between *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation.

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

Farmers' knowledge of local varieties, and their capacity to describe and prioritize their own varieties.

Continued technical and financial support from international research and development organizations over the years

Good partnerships with the national gene bank and the focal point of the ITPGRFA

Having a close relationship with the Ministry of agriculture's seed certification and inspection services is advantageous to farmers in capacity development for QDS production contributing to farmers' enhanced access to quality seed of a diversity of varieties.

Further information

<http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/sar/article/view/64785/36008>

<https://www.bioversityinternational.org/e-library/publications/detail/community-seedbanking-to-improve-the-resilience-of-farmers-the-case-of-kiziba-seedbank-in-uganda/>

<https://www.bioversityinternational.org/news/detail/women-of-the-kizibi-community-seedbank/>

<https://www.bioversityinternational.org/e-library/publications/detail/community-seed-banks-sharing-experiences-from-north-and-south/>

https://ccafs.cgiar.org/hoima-community-seed-bank-launch#.XFgYq_ZFzIU