



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 Norway on 21 June 2019.*

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



## Template for submission of

### Measures, Best Practices and Lessons Learned from the Realization of Farmers' Rights as set out in Article 9 of the International Treaty

#### Basic information

- *Title of measure/practice:* **Annual support to the Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF)**
- *Date of submission:* 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019
- *Name(s) of country/countries in which the measure/practice is taking place:* Norway
- *Responsible institution/organization*

Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture of Food

#### Contact details:

The national focal point to the International Treaty:  
Svanhild-Isabelle BATTA TORHEIM  
Senior Advisor, Ministry of Agriculture and Food  
Post-box 8007 Dep 0030 Oslo, Norway  
Email: [Svanhild-Isabelle-Batta.Torheim@lmd.dep.no](mailto:Svanhild-Isabelle-Batta.Torheim@lmd.dep.no)

- *Type of institution/organization (categories)* Government

#### Description of the examples

##### Mandatory information:<sup>1</sup>

- *Short summary to be put in the inventory:*

Norway launched its annual contribution to the Benefit-Sharing Fund (BSF) during the official opening ceremony of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in 2008 to stress the importance of on-farm conservation, complementing to ex situ conservation efforts. At the same time, this annual contribution is done in recognition of the benefit of Norwegian agriculture of plant genetic resources that originate from other areas of the globe. To illustrate this argument, this voluntary contribution is related to the seed trade and equals 0,1% of annual seed sales in Norway. It is referred to in the State Budget, endorsed by the parliament. Norway considers it to be a use-based, voluntary monetary benefit sharing. In addition, the annual contributions give an opportunity to bring the issue regularly to the attention of the political leadership of the ministry.

- *Brief history; Core components and description of the context and the history of the measure/practice is taking place*

Norway launched its annual contribution to the Benefit-sharing Fund during the official opening of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in 2008. The venue and timing of the launch was deliberate chosen. At the occasion of opening the global back-up facility for the world's gene banks, Norway wanted to stress the importance of on farm conservation in addition to ex situ. At the same time, Norway underlined that its annual contribution is done in recognition of the benefit of Norwegian agriculture of plant genetic resources that originate other areas of the globe. To illustrate this argument, the Norwegian contribution is related to the seed trade. The annual contribution equals 0,1% of annual seed sales in Norway.

---

<sup>1</sup> This mandatory information is required in order for the measure/practice to be included in the Inventory.



The first annual contribution to the BSF was sent in 2009, calculated from the seed sales of 2008. Every single year since, a similar annual contribution has been paid. The payment is based on a political decision to balance the management of Svalbard Global Seed Vault with giving attention and support also to on farm management of PGRFA. The annual contribution is referred to in the State Budget, which is endorsed by the Parliament.

The annual contribution is voluntary monetary benefit sharing. In Norway's view, this contribution is not intended to replace the SMTA of the Treaty, or reducing any obligations of mandatory or voluntary contributions of users of material from the MLS.

In addition to the annual contribution, which is covered by the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Norway has also supported the BSF with major grants (40 Mill NOK in 2013 and 3 Mill NOK in 2017) from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- *To which provision(s) of Article 9 of the International Treaty does this measure relate*
  - Art. 9.1    x
  - Art. 9.2a
  - Art. 9.2b    x
  - Art. 9.2c
  - Art. 9.3

**Other information, if applicable**

- *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 <sup>2</sup>	Also relevant <sup>3</sup>
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		
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		
5	In-situ/on-farm conservation and management of PGRFA, such as social and cultural measures, community biodiversity management and conservation sites		

<sup>2</sup> Please select only one category that is most relevant, under which the measure will be listed.

<sup>3</sup> Please select one or several categories that may also be relevant (if applicable).



6	Facilitation of farmers' access to a diversity of PGRFA through community seed banks <sup>4</sup> , 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		
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		

• *In case you selected 'other measures', would you like to suggest a description of this measure, e.g. as a possible new category?* \_\_\_\_\_

• *Objective(s)*

Predictable contribution to the BSF from a user country ensuring financial support to on farm conservation of PGRFA.

• *Target group(s) and numbers of involved and affected farmers<sup>5</sup>*

The Benefit-sharing Fund invests directly in high impact projects supporting farmers in developing countries conserve crop diversity in their fields and assisting farmers and breeders globally adapt crops to our changing needs and demands.

The BSF seeks to accelerate the conservation and use of plant genetic resources on a global scale through technology transfer, capacity building, high-impact projects and innovative partnerships involving farmers, plant breeders, civil society and other stakeholders. The Benefit-sharing Fund prioritizes on-farm management and conservation, it increases food security and facilitates innovative partnerships.

• *Location(s) and geographical outreach:* Global

• *Resources used for implementation of the measure/practice*

The annual contribution in 2018 was NOK 858 046 (equals USD 110.430).

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

Other example of annual contribution to the Benefit-sharing Fund: During the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Body in 2017, French GNIS announced that it will give an annual contribution to the BSF equals 175.000 Euros.

<sup>4</sup> Including seed houses.

<sup>5</sup> Any classification, e.g. of the types of farmer addressed, may be country-specific.



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



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

• *Other issues you wish to address, that have not yet been covered, to describe the measure/practice*  
In March 2018, the state secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Ms. Hanne Maren Blåfjelldal, went on a field trip to Malawi to visit projects that have got support from the Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF). This trip highlighted in several ways how the BSF supports the realization of Farmers' Rights. Among the key issues discussed at the field trip:

- The importance of seed policy and legislation in order to give legal space for the improvement of local seed systems, e.g. the possibility for farming communities to sell seeds from community seed banks.
- The challenge of the formal seed system to meet the demand for certified seeds both in terms of quantity and quality.
- The possible synergies between BSF-supported projects (relatively small amount of funding) and other agricultural development programmers.

### **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 annual contributions give an opportunity to bring the issue regularly to the attention of the political leadership of the ministry.

- *What challenges encountered along the way (if applicable) (max 200 words)*
- *What would you consider conditions for success, if others should seek to carry out such a measure or organize such an activity? (max 100 words)*

Norway has chosen to link the national contribution to the annual seed sales. The information of seed sales is easily available to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. In 2008, Norway also considered option to make farmers, farmers' organizations or seed traders to pay to the BSF. Given the specific structure of Norwegian agriculture and the tight financial links between the authorities and the farmers' organizations, it was considered to be a much simpler approach that the Ministry pays the annual contribution. What could be the possible most efficient or practical approach in other countries should be considered based on the national circumstances and agricultural sector in that country.

Contribution to Sustainable Development Goal 2.5

### **Further information**

- *Link(s) to further information about the measure/practice*

State budget, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (in Norwegian):

[https://www.statsbudsjettet.no/Upload/Statsbudsjett\\_2018/dokumenter/pdf/lmd.pdf](https://www.statsbudsjettet.no/Upload/Statsbudsjett_2018/dokumenter/pdf/lmd.pdf)

Official website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, announcement of 2018 contribution (In Norwegian): <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/blafjelldal-reiser-til-malawi/id2592576/>

Official website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, announcement of 2017 contribution (In Norwegian): <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/norge-stotter-bonders-aktive-bruk-av-savaremanifold/id2540728/>

Announcement of 2017 contribution:



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



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

<http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/news/news-detail/en/c/522317/>

<http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/news/news-detail/en/c/1154602/>

<http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/benefit-sharing-fund/overview/en/>

<http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/news/news-detail/en/c/1107421/>