



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* **Linking on farm management and ex situ conservation at Svalbard Global Seed Vault**
- *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*  
**Ministry of Agriculture and Food**  
Svanhild-Isabelle BATA TORHEIM  
Senior Advisor,  
The national focal point to the International Treaty  
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
- *Collaborating/supporting institutions/organizations/actors*
  - ✓ Nordic Genetic Resources Centre (NordGen)
  - ✓ Global Crop Diversity Trust

#### Description of the examples

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

- *Short summary to be put in the inventory*

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway offers storage facilities for duplicates of seed accessions conserved by national, regional and international genebanks, research institutes and NGOs. It thus serves as a 'backup' of the ex situ collections of the world. However, it is a major objective of the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food and its partners, the Global Crop Diversity Trust and the Nordic Genetic Resources Centre (NordGen), to strengthen the links between various conservation strategies, including in situ and on-farm conservation, and to highlight the complementarities of the various strategies. This has been done, for example, by inviting individual farmers and their organizations to present their work in official ceremonies, like for example the opening ceremony in 2008 and the 10th anniversary of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in 2018. In addition, storage is also offered for duplicates of unique seed accessions conserved by farming communities. Norway's annual contribution to the Benefit-Sharing Fund (BSF), announced at the official opening, is also meant to highlight the importance and complementary contributions of various conservation strategies.

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

---

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



The idea of having a global security storage facility in Svalbard, to house duplicates of seed conserved in gene banks all over the world began being discussed in the 1980s. After the entry into force of the International Treaty, the idea was realised. In 2008, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault was officially opened. The Seed Vault provides facilities for the safe deposit of seeds samples that have distinct genetic resources of importance to food security and sustainable agriculture. After ten years of operation, more than one million accessions have been stored at Svalbard.

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault is the backup of the ex situ collections of the world. However, to Norwegian authorities it has been a major objective to stress the need also for in situ and on farm conservation, as well as to strengthen the links between different conservation strategies. These are examples of this:

- (1) the involvement of farmers and their organizations have been important as well as highlighting the complementarities to on farm. Among the speakers at the official opening in 2008, was also late Tay Gipo, a Philippe farmer. In the audience were about 200 scientists, diplomats and world leaders including 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Awardee Wangari Mathai of Kenya and UN Food and Agriculture Organization Secretary General Jacques Diouf. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Norway invited Tay Gipo for his work on seed conservation, rice breeding and maintenance of biodiversity in his farm.<sup>2</sup>
- (2) Annual contribution to the BSF announced at the official opening (see example 2 from Norway)
- (3) The Seed Vault offers storage for duplicates of all unique seed accessions conserved also by farming communities. For example, in 2015, potato farmers from Peru deposited seeds in the Vault.
- (4) During the 10 year anniversary of the Seed Vault in February 2018, also representatives of organisations working closely with farming communities, were invited to make presentations at the Svalbard Seed Summit. One of the key messages from this summit was that governments should *facilitate improvement of community seed banks and the multiplication of the seeds they contain. This will conserve crop diversity that has been saved by the farming community. It will give local farmers easy and timely access to diverse and*

- *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
- Art. 9.2c    x
- 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>3</sup>	Also relevant <sup>4</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		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 banks <sup>5</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	x	
10	Legal measures for the implementation of Farmers' Rights, such as legislative measures related to PGRFA.		
11	Other measures / practices		x

- In case you selected 'other measures', would you like to suggest a description of this measure, e.g. as a possible new category? Linking ex situ, in situ and on farm conservation
- Objective(s) The Svalbard Global Seed Vault provides facilities for the safe deposit of seeds samples that have distinct genetic resources of importance to food security and sustainable agriculture. The Seed Vault offers storage for duplicates of all unique seed accessions conserved by national, regional and international gene banks, research institutes and NGOs.
- Target group(s) and numbers of involved and affected farmers<sup>6</sup> National, Regional and International gene banks, research institutes and NGOs.

<sup>3</sup> Please select only one category that is most relevant, under which the measure will be listed.

<sup>4</sup> Please select one or several categories that may also be relevant (if applicable).

<sup>5</sup> Including seed houses.

<sup>6</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**

- *Location(s) and geographical outreach* Norway, International level

#### **Lessons learned**

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

Work closely with civil society organizations to link up with farmers and institutions working with farmers that are involved with on farm management.

#### **Further information**

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

Submitted by Norway

- ✓ General information about the Svalbard Global Seed Vault: <https://www.seedvault.no/>
- ✓ Summary of "Svalbard Seed Summit" in 2018: <https://www.seedvault.no/news/the-seed-vault-summit-calls-for-action-to-save-crop-diversity/>
- ✓ News article about Tay Gipo: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/lifestyle/content/84132/pinoy-farmer-honored-in-noah-s-ark-opening/story/> ; <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/content/150667/pinoy-honored-in-global-seed-vault-anniversary-celebration/story/>
- ✓ Representatives of indigenous Andean communities deposit the potato seeds in the Svalbard vault: <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/326369/icode/>