



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 Switzerland on 31 July 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 :

Rolling the National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (NAP-PGRFA) together with Farmers' Organizations.

- Date of submission

31.07.2019

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

Switzerland

- Responsible institution/organization (name, address, website (if applicable), e-mail address, telephone number(s) and contact person)

Federal Office for Agriculture FOAG

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- Type of institution/organization (categories)

Government

- Collaborating/supporting institutions/organizations/actors, if applicable (name, address, website (if applicable), e-mail address, telephone number(s))

Conservation of plant genetic resources: Swiss national database. Participating organizations contact information can be found on the website.

<https://www.bdn.ch/organisations/>

Description of the examples

Mandatory information:¹

- Short summary to be put in the inventory (max. 200 words) including:
 - Implementing entity and partners
 - Start year
 - Objective(s)
 - Summary of core components

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



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- Key outcomes
- Lessons learned (if applicable)

The implementation of the Swiss National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (NPA-PGRFA) started in 1999. The Ordinance on Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA referring to the NPA-PGRFA entered into force in 2015. It provides a stronger legal framework for the measures for conservation of PGRFA and regulates the management of the national gene bank of PGRFA in Switzerland.

NPA-PGRFA strategies and guidelines are defined and implemented based on a multi-stakeholder approach, together with a wide range of private and public institutions. Farmers and farmers' organizations can participate and profit in many ways from the NPA-PGRFA through promoted activities such as the maintenance and marketing of landraces/farmers' varieties; participatory plant breeding/participatory varietal selection; seed-exchange networks; facilitated access to information on plant genetic diversity so as capacity building. 300 projects have been completed so far, with 100 on-going projects in collaboration with regional and national organizations. These projects are listed in the national genebank. Key measures for the sustainable use of PGRFA are the characterization and evaluation of plant genetic resources as well as ensuring high phytosanitary standards for propagation material and promoting PGRFA for niche production.

- **Brief history (including starting year), as appropriate**

The implementation of the Swiss National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (NPA-PGRFA) started in 1999. Vast amounts of knowledge, expertise and plant genetic resources had already been amassed prior to the implementation of the plan by NGO's active in Switzerland. Accordingly, in a first step these resources were gathered and inventoried. This inventory was mainly established by the NGO's, coordinated in big parts by the NGO's but paid by federal grants. The participation of NGO's has greatly sped up the implementation of the plan and provided an opportunity to acknowledge the immense and underfunded efforts of the NGO's. After most of the framework was established, the federal government took over some control to coordinate directly with projects, ensure the same standards were applied to projects involved in the plan and shore up gaps.

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

NPA-PGRFA strategies and guidelines are defined and implemented based on a multi-stakeholder approach, together with a wide range of private (including farmer's organizations, breeders and NGOs) and public institutions. Key measures for the sustainable use of PGRFA are the characterization and evaluation of plant genetic resources as well as ensuring high phytosanitary standards for propagation material and promoting PGRFA for niche production. To support and increase opportunities for the sustainable use of PGRFA, projects aimed at sensitizing the public for the importance of PGRFA and biodiversity in general are also supported.

Furthermore, farmers and farmers' organizations can participate and profit in many ways from the NPA-PGRFA through promoted activities such as the maintenance and marketing of



landraces/farmers' varieties; participatory plant breeding/participatory varietal selection; seed-exchange networks; facilitated access to information on plant genetic diversity so as capacity building.

- Description of the context and the history of the measure/practice is taking place (political, legal and economic framework conditions for the measure/practice) (max 200 words)

The Ordinance on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture referring to the NPA-PGRFA entered into force in 2015. It provides a stronger legal framework for the measures for conservation of PGRFA and regulates the management of the national gene bank of PGRFA in Switzerland. It states that access to PGRFA in the Swiss national gene bank can be obtained under the conditions of the Standard Material Transfer Agreement under the Treaty. Furthermore, this ordinance promotes the sustainable use of PGRFA and frames the funding of such projects.

- 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

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 ²	Also relevant ³
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	x	

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

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



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 ⁴ , 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		x
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.		x
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)

The objective is the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. The sustainable use within the National Plan of Action aims at promoting a broad genetic diversity of PGRFA with positive effects on a diverse, innovative or sustainable niche production - based on locally adapted varieties

- Target group(s) and numbers of involved and affected farmers⁵

The NPA-PGRFA is a Public-Privat-Partnership and more than 50 organizations participate in the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA in Switzerland in a very decentralized manner. The National Gene bank for PGRFA actually consists of 56 collections managed by different organizations in different parts of Switzerland. Agroscope, the Swiss Centre of excellence for agricultural research, is affiliated to the Federal Office for Agriculture. It is ensuring the conservation of seed-saved species and represents the biggest collection existing within the National Gene bank in Switzerland.

- Location(s) and geographical outreach

⁴ Including seed houses.

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



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Switzerland

- Resources used for implementation of the measure/practice
- 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)

Conservation of about 5'300 accessions. About 1000 accessions made available to farmers.
300 projects have been completed so far, with 100 on-going projects

- Other national level instruments that are linked to the measure/practice
Payment of Feedproject, Sensitizing the public of the importance of biodiversity

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

Yes, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity.

- Other issues you wish to address, that have not yet been covered, to describe the measure/practice

Lessons learned

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

Tapping into vast reserves of energy, knowledge and material from NGO's and farmer's organisations can immensely speed up the process of building up a national programme for conservation of PGRFA and their sustainable use

- What challenges encountered along the way (if applicable) (max 200 words)

Coordination of many stakeholders with many different objectives and know-how requires a dedicated team.

- 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)

A lot of freedom could be given to our stakeholders since in most cases their objectives were already aligned with those of the NPA.

Including different stakeholders becomes really important for PR and sustainable use projects and programs

Further information

- Link(s) to further information about the measure/practice
Submitted by Switzerland

<https://www.admin.ch/opc/fr/classified-compilation/20151992/index.html>

<https://www.bdn.ch/pan/>



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Ordonnance sur la conservation et l'utilisation durable de ressources phytogénétiques pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture <https://www.admin.ch/opc/fr/classified-compilation/20151992/index.html>

Examples of Projects on the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA that are also including farmer's organization and farmers can be found here: <https://www.bdn.ch/pan/>