



The International Treaty

ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



The Funding Strategy of the International Treaty





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This is the third educational module in a series of training materials
for the implementation of the International Treaty on Plant
Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

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Foreword

The impacts of climate change are increasingly being felt around the globe, with extreme weather events that affect agricultural production being only an indication of what may still lie ahead. While all farming systems are affected, rural populations and farming communities living off marginal lands are disproportionately at risk in terms of their ability to generate decent incomes and satisfy their basic dietary needs. Global food security is at stake, and a concerted global effort to strengthen farmers' capacities to adapt their crop production and diversity to climate change is needed.

With the goal of promoting global food security and sustainable agriculture by pursuing the objectives of conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) and sharing the benefits arising from the use of these resources in a fair and equitable way, the International Treaty is a central element of this global effort. Substantial financial resources are needed, however, to achieve impact on a significant scale.

A lot has been achieved over the last decade with regard to PGRFA conservation, in particular thanks to the work of the research centres of the CGIAR Consortium and the Global Crop Diversity Trust - which is an essential element of the International Treaty's Funding Strategy. However, there is still an enormous need for action regarding the conservation and management of crop varieties on farms and in the surroundings where they have developed their distinctive traits. Overall, humankind has become dangerously reliant on a very limited number of major food crops and varieties. This reliance on a narrow genetic base increases the risk of production losses associated with climate change and disease and pest outbreaks. This is why the Benefit-sharing Fund of the International Treaty's Funding Strategy prioritizes on-farm management and conservation of PGRFA.

In light of the above, the publication of this educational module on the International Treaty's Funding Strategy is very timely. In particular through its Benefit-sharing Fund, the International Treaty helps vulnerable farmers in developing countries adapt their crop production to climate change and implement profitable on-farm activities, and promotes the conservation, reintroduction, development and dissemination of traditional and locally adapted crop varieties and related knowledge. The publication of this module also coincides with the third call for proposals of the Benefit-sharing Fund marking the start of a new project cycle, which has a special focus on promoting the co-development and transfer of technologies for the on-farm management, conservation and sustainable use of crop diversity.

I am confident that this module will make an important contribution to the global effort of strengthening farmers' capacities to adapt their crop production and diversity to climate change, by raising policy makers' and donors' awareness on the Funding Strategy, and by helping eligible organizations prepare high quality project proposals in response to calls for proposals of the Benefit-sharing Fund.



Shakeel Bhatti

Secretary

International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

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This module is the third in a series of training materials on the International Treaty. We owe a lot to the experts in the area of capacity development that have shared their experiences with us during the conceptualization phase of the series, as well as the technical support group that has been involved in the elaboration of the curriculum outline for the modules. In this regard, we would like to thank in particular Elizabeth Goldberg (Bioversity International), Gerald Moore (previously Bioversity International), Kakoli Ghosh (FAO Plant Production and Protection Division), Mauricio Rosales (FAO Right to Food Unit), Regine Andersen (Fridtjof Nansen Institute), Kirsty McLean (United Nations University), Wilhelmina Pelegrina (Greenpeace International, at the time working with Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment), and Clair Hershey (Cornell University, at the time working with FAO).

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Patrick Mink from the Secretariat was the author and editor of the module.

Shakeel Bhatti, Secretary of the International Treaty, had the overall responsibility for this publication.

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Introduction

Capacity development is crucial for the effective promotion of the objectives of the International Treaty. This educational module is a tool that helps strengthening the development of both technical and functional capacities necessary for the implementation of the International Treaty among its key stakeholders, in particular with regard to the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty and its Benefit-sharing Fund.

FAO's Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development defines 'capacity development' as the process of unleashing, strengthening and maintaining the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully. The FAO capacity development framework is based on the enhancement of technical and functional capacities across the three dimensions of individuals, organizations and the enabling environment.

Functional capacities refer to policy and normative capacities, knowledge management, partnering and programme implementation capacities. In the context of the International Treaty, this type of capacities is required to enable Contracting Parties, civil society organizations and other relevant institutions and key actors, to engage in policy dialogues and establish programmes and projects for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. The various stakeholders that work in crop conservation and use in their daily activities, such as agricultural researchers, gene bank personnel, breeders and farmers, require technical capacities to carry out their respective roles in the conservation and the sustainable use of PGRFA.

National civil servants involved in the establishment of programmes to implement the international instruments that their governments have ratified often need to become fully acquainted with the technical details of these instruments. Technical stakeholders, in turn, often are not familiar with all legal aspects of the international policy framework within which they operate, and require further training. This educational module therefore aims at strengthening both technical and functional capacities, by presenting a broad overview of the main elements of the Funding Strategy to a policy oriented audience, and explaining the process and requirements for accessing financial resources under the Benefit-sharing Fund to PGRFA practitioners.

The module is designed to strengthen stakeholders' capacities for the operation of the International Treaty and to enhance information and raise awareness among other interested parties, including academia and the media. The material can be used for self-learning purposes, as a reference work on the International Treaty, and as an information resource for the development of awareness-raising material. Thus, it addresses the three capacity development dimensions of individuals, organizations and the enabling environment.

Development Process of this Module

The main features of the development process for this educational module were the following:

- The main target learner groups and their learning needs were identified.
- A draft curriculum outline with learning objectives and lesson outlines responding to these needs was designed by the Secretariat of the International Treaty.
- A support group of experts representing different stakeholders and target learner groups was established.
- Through an electronic consultation the support group provided guidance in shaping the outlines of the lessons and suggested possible peer reviewers.
- The Secretariat prepared initial drafts of the lessons.
- Knowledgeable experts in the relevant technical areas were invited to act as peer reviewers of the lessons.
- A peer review process was set up in order to ensure correctness, coherence and balance of the lessons.
- The Secretariat coordinated the inputs of the peer reviewers into the draft lessons and ensured the editing and publication of the module.

The main target learner groups correspond broadly to the stakeholders of the International Treaty. Their needs were initially identified by means of a survey on capacity development needs carried out by the Secretariat, taking into account existing tools and materials, as well as the needs and gaps expressed in different resolutions of the Governing Body of the International Treaty, the Reports on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

The support group of experts was established following the criteria of technical expertise in capacity development methodologies and the subject matters of conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. In addition, the group responded to the criteria of regional balance.

The first module of this series (“Introduction to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture”) was presented to Contracting Party delegates and other stakeholders in a launching event on the occasion of the Fourth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty in March 2011. The Governing Body welcomed the educational modules and encouraged the Secretariat to continue its work on training materials, including through collaborations with Bioversity International and other relevant institutions.

Target Learner Groups

As a capacity development tool for the effective implementation of the International Treaty, this module is targeted mainly at the International Treaty's stakeholder groups. In addition, the module also represents a valuable resource for prospective donors interested in familiarizing with the Funding Strategy and the Benefit-sharing Fund, as well as the media and academia, which play a particular role in raising awareness on the importance of the International Treaty for food security and climate change adaptation by popularizing it among the general public.

The main learner groups thus include:

- Policy makers and their staff;
- Civil servants;
- Gene bank staff;
- Plant breeders;
- Farmers' organizations;
- other Civil Society Organizations;
- Prospective donors;
- Media; and
- Academia.

The specific target learner groups are indicated at the outset of each lesson.

How to Use this Module

The range of stakeholders involved in the implementation of the International Treaty is very broad, with different stakeholders having varied backgrounds and roles and thus different learning needs.

Whereas Module I of this series of educational modules was designed for newcomers to the International Treaty and the crop diversity policy area from all learner groups, each lesson of this module is targeted at a more specific set of target learner groups.

Lessons 1 and 2, for example, which explain the main elements of the Funding Strategy, provide a historical perspective on the Funding Strategy and the Benefit-sharing Fund, and highlight some projects that were funded by the Benefit-sharing Fund in its first two project cycles, will be particularly relevant to policy makers, civil servants and prospective donors. Lesson 3, in turn, presents the grant-making process of the Benefit-sharing Fund in detail, including its eligibility and selection criteria, which will be of particular use to PGRFA practitioners seeking to apply for funds in reply to call for proposals of the Benefit-sharing Fund.

This module builds on Educational Module I, in particular on sub-section 4.2.4. of its lesson 4 (Main Components and Governance of the International Treaty). However, learners that already have some basic knowledge of the International Treaty will be able to begin directly with the lessons of Module III. Each lesson contains cross-references to relevant other lessons.

The lessons are composed as follows:

- **Learning objectives** presenting the knowledge that learners will acquire in the course of their reading are indicated at the outset of each lesson.
- **Target learner groups** have been defined for each lesson. They are indicated on the same page as the learning objectives. Although the lessons have been designed for specific target learner groups, each of them may contain relevant information for learners of other groups, too. The lessons are cross-referenced accordingly.
- **Overview of the lesson.** Each lesson provides an overview of about one page, introducing the topics that are dealt with on the subsequent pages.
- **Key points to remember** are brought together after the main sections of the lessons in order to help learners remember the main contents and messages.
- **Cross-references** to related content of the other lessons and relevant Internet resources are also indicated for each main section of the lessons.
- **Conclusive summary.** Each lesson ends with a conclusive summary of about one page, summarizing the key points of the lesson.
- **Bibliographic references** on which the lessons are based and that are useful for further reading on the topic can be found at the end of each lesson. Where available, Internet links are provided for ease of reference.

Overview

LESSON 1

The Funding Strategy for the Implementation of the International Treaty

Page 1

This lesson highlights the importance of the Funding Strategy for the implementation of the objectives of the International Treaty. It familiarizes learners with the development process and content of the Funding Strategy and provides an overview of its different funding sources. The lesson further explains how the activities of other entities that promote the conservation and sustainable use of crop diversity, but over which the Governing Body of the International Treaty has no direct control, relate to the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty.

LESSON 2

The Benefit-sharing Fund of the Funding Strategy

Page 31

Lesson 2 demonstrates the contribution of the Benefit-sharing Fund in coping with the challenges of crop diversity conservation and food security in the context of climate change. It further presents the key features of the Benefit-sharing Fund and discusses the fundraising plan for the implementation of the Benefit-sharing Fund. Finally, the lesson showcases the development and growth of the Benefit-sharing Fund, including with the help of a few selected projects funded under the first and second rounds of the project cycle.

LESSON 3

How to Access Resources under the Benefit-sharing Fund

Page 63

This lesson focuses on the Benefit-sharing Fund from an entirely practical perspective. It explains to potential applicants all they need to know about the grant-making process: who is eligible to apply for funds; what kind of activities may receive financial support; what are the criteria according to which the project proposals are appraised; and what are the steps and processes that have to be followed when applying for funds and when implementing a project?

The Funding Strategy for the Implementation of the International Treaty



LESSON 1



Learning objectives

At the end of this lesson, the learner will:

- know what the Funding Strategy is and be aware of its importance for the effective implementation of the objectives of the International Treaty and for coping with the global challenge of adapting agriculture to climate change;
- be familiar with the financial provisions of the International Treaty that provide for the Funding Strategy, its development and content;
- have an overview of the different funding sources of the Funding Strategy;
- have a first introduction to the Benefit-sharing Fund of the Funding Strategy; and
- understand how the activities of other entities that promote the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA relate to the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty.



Target learner groups

Policy makers and their staff, civil servants, prospective donors, as well as other interested parties and institutions.

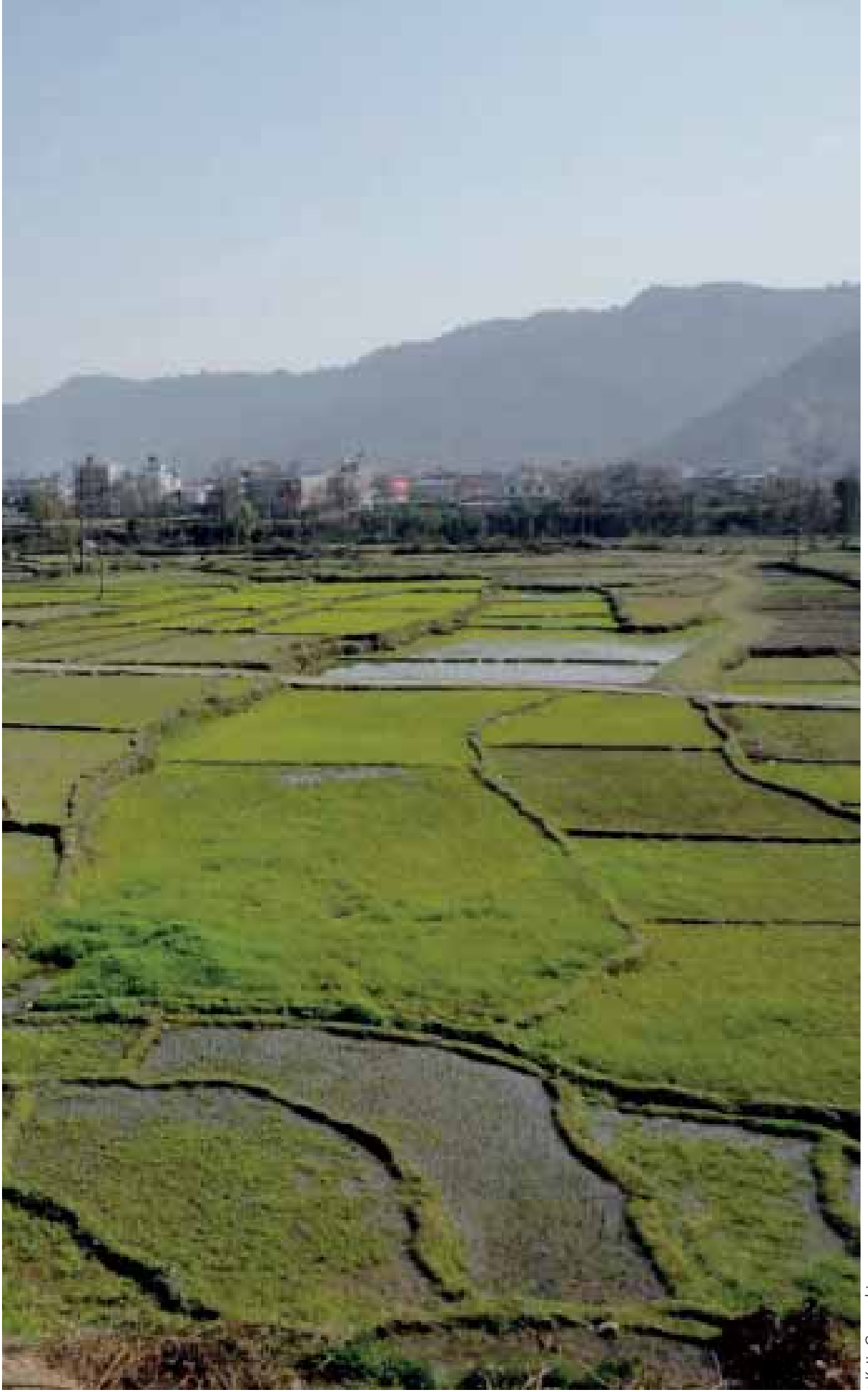


Avena Sativa, oat, by Elizabeth Blackwell (1739)

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1.1. Overview of the Lesson

The objectives of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (hereafter ‘International Treaty’) are the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their use, for sustainable agriculture and food security.¹ In order to fully attain these objectives, a concerted global effort is required to ensure that sufficient funds are made available and used in a complementary and efficient manner at the international, national and local level.

With the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty (hereafter ‘Funding Strategy’), the Governing Body of the International Treaty (hereafter ‘Governing Body’) has established an essential mechanism to strengthen global efforts for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. The Funding Strategy offers governments, international and other organizations and bodies a framework that can help them prioritize their activities in this area, and that may strengthen complementary action by compiling and making available information on such activities. In addition, the Funding Strategy – through its Benefit-sharing Fund – aims at directly mobilizing financial resources from all possible sources to support projects for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA in developing countries. These resources are deployed according to internationally agreed priorities, criteria and operational procedures that help ensure the effectiveness, efficiency

and transparency of the use of funds and of the execution of projects.

The aim of this lesson is to familiarize policy makers, civil servants, other interested parties and institutions, as well as prospective donors, with the prime importance of the Funding Strategy and its Benefit-sharing Fund for the achievement of the objectives of the International Treaty, and for coping with the global challenges of safeguarding biodiversity, strengthening food security and adapting agriculture to climate change.

The first part of the lesson explains the rationale of the Funding Strategy, showing why it is central to the achievement of the objectives of the International Treaty, illustrating the main steps for its development and presenting its aims. Part two of the lesson outlines the different sources of the Funding Strategy and introduces the Benefit-sharing Fund.

After this lesson, readers will be aware of the pivotal role of the Funding Strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of crop diversity, food security and climate change adaptation, both as a direct funding mechanism and as a framework providing guidance to governments and other funds and bodies. They will be familiar with the objectives and priorities of the overall Funding Strategy and understand the conceptual difference between the Benefit-sharing Fund and other resources that are part of the Funding Strategy.

Cross-references:

- For the **text of the International Treaty** see: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/011/i0510e/i0510e.pdf>
- For working **definitions of terms and concepts** such as PGRFA, crop diversity, food security, etc, refer to section 2.3. of lesson 2 of Module I (Objectives and Basic Concepts).

¹ International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2001), Article 1.





1.2. Rationale of the Funding Strategy

1.2.1. The Importance of the Funding Strategy

Plant products account for the vast proportion of the world's food supply. Globally, it is estimated that more than 80 percent of the human nutrition comes from plants, and in many developing countries the share is even higher.² Smallholder farmers, in particular, are highly reliant on locally adapted crops. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), smallholder farming communities surviving off marginal lands account for about half of the 870 million individuals worldwide suffering from hunger and malnutrition due to factors such as low productivity, limited market access, genetic erosion and the

unavailability or high prices of agricultural inputs including locally adapted varieties.³ Also industrialized farming depends on the availability of a wide genetic base for the continued development of well performing varieties, in order to cope with a growing and increasingly urbanized world population, climate change induced stresses and changing consumer preferences. Thus all agricultural production systems depend heavily on crop diversity.

Whereas continued dependence on PGRFA is a given, the fact remains that crop diversity is being lost at an alarming rate. FAO estimates that 75 percent of the diversity within and between crop species has disappeared irrevocably over the 20th century.⁴ Although



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² FAO (2001), pp. 5-6.

³ World Food Programme (2013).

⁴ FAO (2004).



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substantial progress has been achieved over the last decade with regard to the conservation of samples of crop varieties in gene banks, the state of crop diversity in farmers' fields and in natural surroundings remains a cause for concern in most countries, in particular with regard to crop wild relatives, local varieties, landraces and neglected and underutilized species. Many of these PGRFA are increasingly threatened and even likely to disappear over the next decades due to climate change.⁵

Climate change is predicted to lead to more crop failures over the coming decades, as abiotic stresses like extreme heat, cold, drought or flooding, and in particular irregularities in weather patterns, and biotic stresses like new forms of plant pests and diseases, will increase. At the same time, factors including population growth, changing dietary habits and increasing energy needs require agricultural production to achieve ever higher yields with more limited natural resources.⁶

Crop genetic resources contain the building blocks for our food security. Through selection, traditional varieties that are well adapted to local conditions can be identified and disseminated among farmers. Their resistance traits can be bred into new varieties that exhibit high yields in given local conditions, to allow them to better withstand climate change induced stresses. This is why the conservation and sustainable use of crop diversity is critical to strengthen global food security in the face of the increasing impacts of climate change.

The International Treaty is an internationally agreed instrument that addresses these massive challenges. Its objectives are the conservation and sustainable use of crop diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of PGRFA, for global food security and sustainable agriculture.⁷ The International Treaty provides policy guidance and specific measures to be adopted by Contracting Parties in order to achieve these objectives.⁸

⁵ FAO (2010), pp. 3-22.

⁶ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2011), pp. 7-11.

⁷ International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2001), Article 1.

⁸ *Idem*, Articles 5, 6 and 13.





Such measures may include the establishment and maintenance of germplasm storage facilities, characterization of crop varieties for traits such as yield and resistances to stresses, and participatory programmes for on-farm management of locally adapted crops, among many others, as reflected in Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty. The implementation of such measures, however, requires considerable financial resources to achieve a meaningful impact on a global scale. Especially for developing countries – where a large part of the remaining *in situ* crop diversity is concentrated – it is difficult to channel substantial levels of funding into effective

measures for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.⁹

The Contracting Parties of the International Treaty acknowledge that in particular developing countries need financial support in order to effectively implement their commitments under the International Treaty. This is why it was decided to establish a funding strategy to make available sufficient financial resources for the achievement of the objectives of the International Treaty, and it was agreed that developed countries, in particular, should allocate such support through the Funding Strategy.¹⁰

Key points to remember:

- Humankind is highly dependent on PGRFA to satisfy its dietary needs.
- A major share of crop diversity has already been lost, and factors such as population growth, changing consumer preferences and climate change put further pressure on the remaining crop diversity and on food security.
- PGRFA are a fundamental part of the solution for adapting agriculture to climate change, through the dissemination of locally adapted traditional varieties and the selection of resistance traits for breeding into new “climate-ready” varieties.
- The Funding Strategy was established as a mechanism to ensure that sufficient funds are made available for the global effort of conserving PGRFA and using them sustainably to strengthen global food security while coping with the impacts of climate change.

Cross-references:

- For more detailed background information on the **global challenges of crop diversity, food security and climate change**, and the ways the International Treaty addresses these challenges, refer to section 1.2. of lesson 1 of Module I (A Global Treaty for Food Security in an Era of Climate Change).
- To learn more about the **objectives of the International Treaty** refer to sub-section 2.2.1. of lesson 2 of Module I (Objectives, Scope and Basic Concepts).
- For a detailed account of **measures for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA**, including technical background information, the respective provisions of the International Treaty, as well as options and examples for their implementation, refer to the lessons of Module II (Conservation and Sustainable Use under the International Treaty).

⁹ FAO (2010), p. 125.

¹⁰ International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2001), Articles 18.1, 18.2 and 18.4 b).

1.2.2. The Elaboration of the Funding Strategy

As with most components of the International Treaty, the Funding Strategy is not a static mechanism. On the contrary, it is dynamic in the sense that it remains under the regular scrutiny of the Governing Body and may be developed further and adapted to changing circumstances, if and when required.

The development of the Funding Strategy is therefore a gradual and ongoing process. Its skeleton, including the decision for its establishment, a general objective, a list of possible funding sources and some basic priorities, has been provided for in Article 18 of the International Treaty (“Financial Resources”).¹¹

The details of this skeleton were elaborated through a negotiation process under the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for

Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) acting as the *Interim* Committee for the International Treaty.¹² The process started shortly after the International Treaty entered into force, and the Funding Strategy was adopted at the First Session of the Governing Body in 2006 through Resolution 1/2006.¹³ In the same resolution, the Governing Body recognized the Global Crop Diversity Trust (hereafter ‘Crop Trust’) as an essential element of the Funding Strategy in relation to the *ex situ* conservation and availability of PGRFA.

However, the Funding Strategy consisted mainly of provisions on its aims and possible funding sources, and several of the components necessary for its proper functioning still needed to be developed. Consequently, the Governing Body established the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy, which subsequently prepared the priorities, eligibility criteria and operational procedures related to the use of the resources under the direct control



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¹¹ International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2001), Articles 18.1, 18.4 c-f) and 18.5.

¹² An *Open-ended Working Group on the Rules of Procedure and Financial Rules of the Governing Body, Compliance, and the Funding Strategy* met in Rome in December 2005 to prepare the draft Funding Strategy.

¹³ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2012a), p. 2.





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of the Governing Body, and the information and reporting requirements under the Funding Strategy. These four annexes became integral components of the Funding Strategy.¹⁴

This enabled the Secretariat of the International Treaty (hereafter ‘Secretariat’) to set up a trust account for the receipt and disbursement of financial resources – the resources of the so-called Benefit-sharing Fund – and to launch the first call for project proposals in December 2008. Thanks to the generous investments that had been received in the meantime from different Contracting Parties to that end, the Bureau of the Governing Body (hereafter ‘Bureau’) was able to approve the first portfolio of 11 small-grant pilot projects – and thereby officially launch the Benefit-sharing Fund – in May 2009.¹⁵

At its Third Session in June 2009, the Governing Body endorsed the Strategic Plan

for the Implementation of the Benefit-sharing Fund of the Funding Strategy, which was also prepared by the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy. The Strategic Plan sets a funding target of US\$ 116 million until the end of 2014 for the Benefit-sharing Fund. The Governing Body agreed that this plan constitutes a basis for the resource mobilization efforts of the Secretariat and Contracting Parties.

In 2010, the Bureau authorized the opening of the second call for proposals.

In the meantime, the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy prepared the *Interim* Procedures for Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation and the Draft *Interim* Disbursement Procedures, which were adopted by the Governing Body at its Fourth Session in 2011.¹⁶ Later in 2011, the Bureau approved 19 projects for funding

¹⁴ The first three – priorities, eligibility criteria and operational procedures – were finalized and adopted as annexes 1-3 to the Funding Strategy by the Governing Body at its Second Session in 2007. The information and reporting requirements were adopted as annex 4 to the Funding Strategy, at the Third Session of the Governing Body, in 2009.

¹⁵ Norway, Switzerland, Spain and Italy together donated US\$ 581 088. Each of the 11 projects received a grant of up to US\$ 50 000 over a period of two years.

¹⁶ The *interim* procedures for reporting, monitoring and evaluation are in line with and build upon the more general information and reporting requirements of the Funding Strategy.



under the second round of the project cycle, with a funding level that totalled nearly US\$ 5.5 million.

At its Fifth Session in 2013, the Governing Body adopted a policy on conflicts of interest for the experts appraising projects, and decided to launch the third call for project proposals, with a total budget of more than US\$ 10 million for the third round of the project cycle. This equalled almost a twentyfold increase compared to the first round of the project cycle, and nearly a doubling of the budget compared to the second round.¹⁷ At the same time, however,

a wide gap still remained with regard to the target of US\$ 116 million.

Also in 2013, the Governing Body decided to establish the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing (hereafter '*Ad Hoc* Working Group'). Building on the work so far carried out by the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy, the *Ad Hoc* Working Group aims to increase user-based payments and contributions to the Benefit-sharing Fund in a sustainable and predictable long-term manner, and to enhance the functioning of the Multilateral System.¹⁸

Key points to remember:

- The skeleton of the Funding Strategy was provided for in Article 18 of the International Treaty.
- The Funding Strategy was adopted at the First Session of the Governing Body in 2006.
- The Crop Trust is an essential element of the Funding Strategy in relation to the *ex situ* conservation and availability of PGRFA.
- The priorities, eligibility criteria and operational procedures related to the use of the resources under the direct control of the Governing Body, the information and reporting requirements under the Funding Strategy, and the policy on conflicts of interest, were developed subsequently and became integral parts of the Funding Strategy.
- The Benefit-sharing Fund collects and makes available those resources of the Funding Strategy that are under the direct control of the Governing Body.
- The first call for proposals under the Benefit-sharing Fund was opened in 2008 the second one in 2010, and the third one in 2013. With more than US\$ 10 million, the total funding level of the third project portfolio is almost twenty times higher than the first and nearly twice the size of the second one. However, a wide gap still remains with regard to the target of US\$ 116 million.

Cross-references:

- To learn more about the **history of the International Treaty**, refer to lesson 3 of Module I (History of the International Treaty).
- For a **short overview of the Funding Strategy**, refer to sub-section 4.2.4. of lesson 4 of Module I (The Main Components of the International Treaty).
- For a more **detailed account of the annexes of the Funding Strategy**, refer to lesson 3 of this Module (How to Access Resources under the Benefit-sharing Fund).
- Refer to section 1.5. of lesson 2 of this Module (The Benefit-sharing Fund of the Funding Strategy) to find some **examples of projects funded under the first and second rounds of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund**.
- For more information on the **Crop Trust** refer to Box 1.1 below.

¹⁷ The main donors of this round of the project cycle are the European Commission and Norway.

¹⁸ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2013).



1.2.3. Aims of the Funding Strategy

The aims of the Funding Strategy are:

- the development of ways and means by which adequate resources are available for the implementation of the International Treaty; and
- the transparent, efficient and effective utilization of all resources made available under the Funding Strategy.¹⁹

To better understand the meaning of these aims, it is helpful to take a quick preview at the possible sources of the Funding Strategy. On the one hand, they comprise the resources that are made available directly under the

International Treaty and are therefore under the control of the Governing Body, which are the resources of the Benefit-sharing Fund. On the other hand, the Funding Strategy also comprises the resources that are invested through other channels in activities that support the implementation of the International Treaty. These may include resources allocated by governments for their own domestic activities, or resources they make available for bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation (other than the Benefit-sharing Fund), as well as resources that are deployed by international mechanisms, funds and bodies, such as the Crop Trust. The Governing Body does not have any direct control over this second category of financial resources of the Funding Strategy.²⁰

Box 1.1: The Global Crop Diversity Trust and the International Treaty

The International Treaty was adopted by the FAO Conference at its Thirty-first session in November 2001, and it entered into force in June 2004. As one of its main components, the International Treaty provided for a Funding Strategy to support the activities and measures that are necessary for the achievement of its objectives (which are the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, and the sharing of benefits arising from their use).

Meanwhile, FAO and the CGIAR Consortium promoted the establishment of the Crop Trust as an endowment that would provide a permanent source of funds for the long-term conservation of the world's *ex situ* germplasm. The agreement for the establishment of the Crop Trust was opened for signature in 2004, and it came into force only a few months after the International Treaty.²¹

To formalize their relationship, the Governing Body of the International Treaty and the Crop Trust signed a relationship agreement at the Second Session of the Governing Body that recognized the Crop Trust as an essential element of the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty in relation to the *ex situ* conservation and availability of PGRFA, operating within the framework of the International Treaty and under the overall policy guidance of the Governing Body.²²

The Crop Trust focuses on the following activities: safeguarding PGRFA collections *ex situ*; promoting an efficient global system of *ex situ* conservation; promoting the regeneration, characterization, documentation and evaluation of PGRFA; promoting the availability of PGRFA; and capacity development related to these activities. It thereby makes an important contribution towards the implementation of the International Treaty, in particular its articles 5.1 a), b), e) and f); 7.2 a); and 13.2 a), b) and c).²³

¹⁹ *Interim* Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2006a), paras. 1, 2.1 and 2.2.

²⁰ *Idem*, para. 2.1 a)-f).

²¹ Global Crop Diversity Trust. 2004a.

²² Global Crop Diversity Trust. 2006.

²³ Global Crop Diversity Trust. 2004b.



The Funding Strategy aims at enhancing the *availability* of financial resources directly through the Secretariat's resource mobilization efforts under the Benefit-sharing Fund, through which the Governing Body makes financial resources available for projects that benefit farmers in developing countries. At the same time, the Funding Strategy aims at contributing towards enhancing the availability of financial resources *indirectly* through its Contracting Parties and their advocacy work in other international mechanisms, funds and bodies to promote the objectives of the International Treaty.

In the context of the Benefit-sharing Fund, *transparency, efficiency and effectiveness* of the use of financial resources are ensured through the agreed-upon priorities, eligibility criteria, and operational procedures that

regulate the selection and execution of funded projects. Executing entities of such projects report regularly on their progress, results and use of resources, in accordance with the information and reporting requirements of the Funding Strategy.

The Funding Strategy also aims at enhancing *transparency, efficiency and effectiveness* with regard to activities carried out by other entities that contribute towards the implementation of the International Treaty, over which the Governing Body has no or only limited control. To that end, the Secretariat has started collecting information on the mandates, policies, eligibility criteria and procedures of such international mechanisms, funds and bodies, which it makes available through the website of the International Treaty.²⁴

Key points to remember:

- The aims of the Funding Strategy are the development of ways and means by which adequate resources are available for the implementation of the International Treaty, and the transparent, efficient and effective utilization of all resources made available under the Funding Strategy;
- The Funding Strategy pursues its aims directly through the Benefit-sharing Fund, and indirectly through the Contracting Parties of the International Treaty and by collecting and making available information on the mandates, policies and procedures of other mechanisms, funds and bodies that contribute to the Funding Strategy but are not under the direct control of the Governing Body.

Cross-references:

- For explanations of the **provisions of the International Treaty dealing with *in situ* and on-farm conservation**, refer to sub-section 2.2.1 of lesson 2 of Module II (The Provisions of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty).
- To learn about **options for on-farm management and conservation**, refer to sub-section 4.2.3. of lesson 4 of this module (Implementation of Articles 5 and 6 from a Users' Perspective) and to Box 4.1 of lesson 4 of Module I (Main Components and Governance of the International Treaty).
- For more information on the **measures to support the sustainable use of PGRFA under Article 6 of the International Treaty**, refer to sub-section 2.2.2. of lesson 2 of Module II (The Provisions of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty).
- For **practical illustrations of options to promote sustainable use of PGRFA**, refer to section 4.2. of lesson 4 of Module II (Implementation of Articles 5 and 6 from a Users' Perspective).
- For more **information on potential partners of the Benefit-sharing Fund** see: <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/potential-partners-benefit-sharing-fund>

²⁴ *Interim* Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2006a), para. 13; see, for example, the reports of the Global Crop Diversity Trust contained in the different Governing Body reports.



1.3. Sources of the Funding Strategy

As mentioned above, the overall Funding Strategy is an agreed strategy both for enhancing the availability of funds for PGRFA conservation and use activities through existing channels, as well as for mobilizing financial resources directly under the International Treaty. It comprises the resources of the Benefit-sharing Fund, as well as funds deployed through other channels that are not under the direct control of the Governing Body. In order to demonstrate the full scope of the Funding Strategy, this section takes a closer look at these two categories of funding sources.

1.3.1. Resources under the Direct Control of the Governing Body - the Benefit-sharing Fund

The Benefit-sharing Fund comprises those resources that are under the direct control of the Governing Body, i.e. over which the Governing Body has the power to decide what they should be used for. Through the reviewed operational procedures for the use of the resources under the direct control of the Governing Body, the Governing Body has assigned the task of approving projects to be supported through the Benefit-sharing Fund to its Bureau²⁵, which is composed of



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²⁵ The Governing Body reviewed the operational procedures at its fifth session in 2013. Step 6 of the Reviewed Operational Procedures for the Use of Resources under the Direct Control of the Governing Body assigns the responsibility for approving projects for funding within the project cycle to the Bureau.

one delegate per FAO region (the Chair and Co-Chairs of the Governing Body).²⁶ The Governing Body nevertheless maintains the overall control over the use of these resources.

Sources of the Benefit-sharing Fund

The funding sources of the Benefit-sharing Fund may comprise voluntary contributions from any entity such as Contracting Parties, the private sector, including the food processing industry, and non-governmental organizations.²⁷ Further, the financial resources that result from the sharing of monetary benefits arising from the commercialization of PGRFA under the Multilateral System of the International Treaty will also flow into the Benefit-sharing Fund.²⁸ In addition, the Funding Strategy foresees that financial resources may be channelled from the FAO Regular Programme to the Benefit-sharing Fund.²⁹

Benefits arising from the commercialization of PGRFA

The name of the Benefit-sharing Fund is derived from the provision on monetary benefit-sharing contained in Article 13.2 d) ii) of the International Treaty, which reads as follows: “The Contracting Parties agree that [...] **a recipient who commercializes a product that is a plant genetic resource for food and agriculture and that incorporates material accessed from the Multilateral System, shall pay to the mechanism referred to in Article 19.3 f), an equitable share of the benefits arising from the commercialization of that product**, except whenever such a product is available without restriction to others for further research and breeding, in which case the recipient who commercializes shall be encouraged to make such payment.”

Box 1.2: Other financial resources of the Governing Body

In addition to the financial resources that fall under the Funding Strategy, the Governing Body of the International Treaty disposes of further financial resources, such as the Core Administrative Budget and the Special Fund for Agreed Purposes. These resources are vital to the implementation of the International Treaty as they allow the Secretariat to carry out its duties, including the organization of international meetings. However, they cannot be used to support the achievement of the objectives of the International Treaty in Contracting Parties, and thus are not considered part of the Funding Strategy.

The Core Administrative Budget contains those resources which Contracting Parties contribute, on a voluntary basis and often according to an indicative scale of contributions³⁰ that is based on the United Nations scale of Assessments, for the maintenance and daily operations of the Secretariat and the organization of the Governing Body sessions, as well as other agreed activities by the Governing Body, such as certain intersessional meetings.

The Special Fund for Agreed Purposes includes those resources that donors earmark for specific activities that are not covered by the Work Programme and Budget of the Governing Body. Such activities may include expert meetings, workshops, and other activities proposed by the Secretariat, that are approved by the Governing Body but that are subject to the availability of necessary funds.

²⁶ The seven FAO regions are: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East, North America and Southwest Pacific.

²⁷ International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2001), Articles 18.4 f) and 13.6, and *Interim Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (2006), para. 2.1 e).

²⁸ *Idem*, Article 13.2 d), and *Interim Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (2006), para. 2.1 d).

²⁹ *Interim Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (2006a), para. 2.1 f).

³⁰ The Administrative and Budget Committee of the United Nations General Assembly decides on the scale of assessments for contributions to its regular budget. The scale of assessments reflects a country's capacity to pay (measured by factors such as a country's national income and size of population).





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The mechanism referred to in Article 19.3 f) of the International Treaty is the Benefit-sharing Fund. Whomever uses crop genetic material that is part of the Multilateral System for the development of planting material which is subsequently commercialized, is encouraged to pay a share of the profits to the Benefit-sharing Fund. In case the company, institution or person who developed the material decides to protect it to prevent other researchers and breeders from accessing it, for example by means of a patent that grants exclusive rights over the material to the patent holder, the payment of a share of the profits to the Benefit-sharing Fund becomes mandatory. This share has been set at 1.1 percent of the sales less 30 percent, which comes down to 0.77 percent of the sales.³¹

A recent study on the potential monetary and non-monetary benefits arising from the International Treaty suggests that annual payments into the Benefit-sharing Fund

arising from commercial benefit-sharing will be large, if all factors are favourable, but only after many years. It thus remains very difficult for the time being to predict future financial flows based on this mandatory benefit-sharing scheme.

Voluntary Contributions

By October 2013, all financial resources received under the Benefit-sharing Fund were voluntary contributions, primarily from Contracting Parties and to a lesser extent from international institutions and the private sector. From the total of confirmed contributions of more than US\$ 23.5 million by October 2013, over 93 percent were contributions from Contracting Parties. The donors were Australia, Canada, the European Commission, Germany, IFAD, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, and Syngenta.³² For an overview of the main donors of the Benefit-sharing Fund, refer to Figure 1.1 below.



³¹ *Interim* Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2006b), para. 1 of *annex 2*; an alternative payment scheme (in *annex 2* of the same document) foresees the option for the company, institution or person to pay 0.5 percent of the sales of any commercialized variety that belongs to the same crop as the material it, he or she decided to restrict access to.

³² By the time of publication of this educational module, the voluntary contributions of the European Commission, Germany and IFAD were confirmed, however they had not yet been fully received.

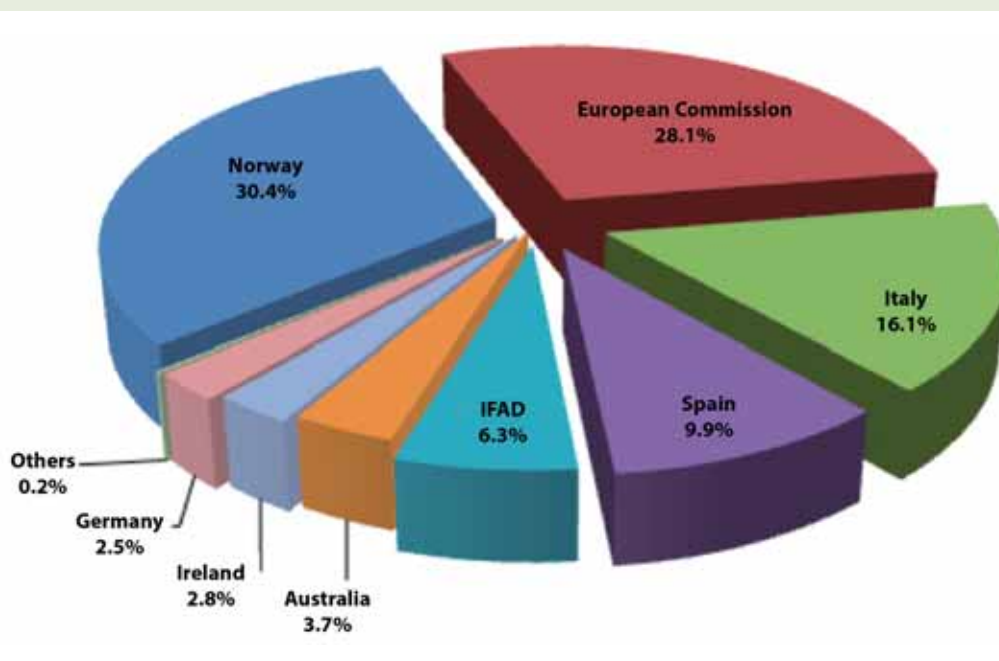
Innovative Approaches

In order for the Benefit-sharing Fund to receive financial resources on a regular and predictable basis, the Governing Body has invited Contracting Parties and other relevant stakeholders to explore the development of innovative approaches to allow for the provision of such resources.³³ Norway, for example, has set up a scheme under which it makes voluntary payments to the Benefit-

sharing Fund on a regular basis, linking its contributions to the volume of its seed market: it contributes 0.1% of the annual value of all seed sold within its territory.

To further promote such innovative approaches, the Governing Body, at its fifth session, decided to establish the *Ad Hoc* Working Group to develop measures to increase sustainable and predictable user-based payments and contributions.

Figure 1.1: Main donors of the Benefit-sharing Fund (by October 2013)



Total confirmed contributions by October 2013: US\$ 23 677 197

³³ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2009), para. 8.





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Priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund

The financial resources under the Benefit-sharing Fund are disbursed according to well defined priorities. *Annex 1* of the Funding Strategy, entitled “Priorities for the Use of Resources under the direct Control of the Governing Body”, stresses the need for the Governing Body to “[f]ocus on critical conservation and sustainable use activities in developing countries”, highlighting that benefits should reach farmers, indigenous and local communities. This can be interpreted as an acknowledgement of the contribution that farmers have made and will continue to make to the conservation and development of PGRFA. Based on the priority activities of the Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture³⁴ (hereafter ‘Global Plan of Action’), the annex identifies the following three key priorities on which the Benefit-sharing Fund is to focus its activities, and delivers some explanations for each of them:³⁵

Information exchange, technology transfer and capacity building

“Building strong national programmes is essential for capacity-building in developing countries and furthering the implementation of the Treaty. It is a prerequisite for sustainability of efforts to strengthen and develop national capacities in the conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

Expanding and improving education and training in developing countries is a *sine qua non*, in order to build capacity. Education and training is a long-lasting investment in the sustainable management of the diversity of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in developing countries.”

On-farm management and conservation of PGRFA

“Supporting on-farm management and conservation of plant genetic resources for



³⁴ The first Global Plan of Action, adopted in 1996, was entitled ‘Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture’. In 2011, the updated Global Plan of Action was adopted, with the title ‘Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture’.

³⁵ Article 18.3 of the International Treaty foresees that the Global Plan of Action shall be taken into account when mobilizing funding for priority activities, plans and programmes.

food and agriculture is the most direct way of reaching farmers, indigenous and local communities in developing countries to whom benefits should flow. It forms a strong contribution to the maintenance of on-farm diversity of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. Only by strengthening these efforts can on-farm management of diversity complement *ex situ* conservation.”

Sustainable use of PGRFA

“Expanding the characterization and evaluation of collections is necessary to promote and facilitate their use. More complete characterization and evaluation will increase the relevance of germplasm held *ex situ* and on farm for breeding.

Diversification of crop production, genetic

enhancement and broadening the genetic base of crops will directly contribute to increasing the sustainability of agricultural production. This will lessen dependence on external inputs, increase productivity and respond to the challenge of climate change.”³⁶

To sum up, the projects that are to be supported by the Benefit-sharing Fund are to focus on critical conservation and sustainable use activities in developing countries that involve and benefit farmers. These may include activities such as capacity development for conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, on-farm management and conservation of PGRFA, as well as characterization and evaluation, diversification of crop production, genetic enhancement and base-broadening of crops for strengthening food security and adapting to climate change.



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³⁶ Interim Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2006a).





Box 1.3: The Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

The first Global Plan of Action was adopted in 1996 as an instrument to identify the technical and financial needs for ensuring the conservation and promoting the sustainable use of PGRFA. In its essence, it recommends a set of programmes and activities to address these needs at the community, national, regional and international level. It is a 'rolling instrument', which means that it is periodically updated according to evolving needs and priorities with regard to crop diversity.³⁷ The Global Plan of Action has formally been included in the framework of the International Treaty with Article 14 requesting Contracting Parties to promote its effective implementation.

The Global Plan of Action is also linked to the Funding Strategy and the Multilateral System of the International Treaty, with Article 13.5 stating that the ability to fully implement the Global Plan of Action depends largely on the benefits that are shared under the Multilateral System and the Funding Strategy. Further, the funding target of the Funding Strategy has been established based on the needs set out in the Global Plan of Action, and the priorities for the disbursement of funds under the Benefit-sharing Fund of the Funding Strategy are derived from the priority activity areas of the Global Plan of Action.

By embracing the Global Plan of Action, the International Treaty retains the necessary flexibility to adapt to evolving gaps and needs related to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. In 2011, the FAO Council approved the updated Second Global Plan of Action. The Second Global Plan of Action takes into account new developments and trends, measures, major scientific and technology advances and policy developments of relevance to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.

The main aim of the Second Global Plan of Action is to strengthen the implementation of the International Treaty. Each provision of the International Treaty dealing with conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA corresponds to one or several of the priority activity areas of the Second Global Plan of Action. For each priority activity area, the Second Global Plan of Action contains sections on the desired objectives, recommendations of national and international policies and strategic approaches to reach these objectives, as well as capacity development, research and technology needs.³⁸

Consequently, the Second Global Plan of Action is a key resource providing guidance to Contracting Parties and other stakeholders for the attainment of their objectives and meeting their commitments related to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.

Based on these priorities and the notion that climate change will increasingly impact on global food production, the current thematic focus of the Benefit-sharing Fund is "helping ensure sustainable food security by assisting farmers to adapt to climate change through a targeted set of high impact activities on the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture".³⁹ It is important to note, however, that this thematic focus does not imply broadening or modifying

the three agreed priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund. Rather, it constitutes a precise, consistent and concrete implementation of the agreed priorities with the aim of increasing the positive impact of the Benefit-sharing Fund.

Operational Procedures

In addition to these priorities, the disbursement of the financial resources under the Benefit-sharing Fund follows clear and agreed

³⁷ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2011), pp. 76, 77, 130.

³⁸ FAO (2011), pp. 9+11.

³⁹ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2012b), para. 9.

operational procedures. According to the reviewed operational procedures, specific calls for proposals are prepared by the Secretariat of the International Treaty, under the guidance of the Bureau, and advertised on the International Treaty's website and through the national focal points and relevant regional bodies. Applicants are invited to submit pre-proposals, which are then screened by an independent panel of experts. Only those pre-proposals that comply with the eligibility criteria and obtain a high provisional score

against the screening criteria are invited to submit full project proposals. The independent panel of experts then appraises the full project proposals, based on their quality and technical merit. According to the recommendations of the independent panel of experts, the Bureau approves the projects that are to receive financial support from the Benefit-sharing Fund. The steps of the project cycle, as well as the eligibility and selection criteria, are explained in more detail in lesson 3 of this Module.

Key points to remember:

- The resources under the direct control of the Governing Body are collected and made available through the Benefit-sharing Fund.
- The sources of the Benefit-sharing Fund comprise voluntary contributions, as well as financial benefits that arise from the commercialization of planting material obtained through use of PGRFA under the Multilateral System (both voluntary and mandatory).
- The Funding Strategy foresees that the resources of the Benefit-sharing Fund shall be used for critical conservation and sustainable use activities in developing countries, in a way that they benefit farmers and indigenous and local communities.
- The priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund are: information exchange, technology transfer and capacity building; on-farm management and conservation of PGRFA; and sustainable use of PGRFA.
- The current thematic focus of the Benefit-sharing Fund is helping ensure sustainable food security by assisting farmers to adapt to climate change through a targeted set of high impact activities on the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.
- The selection criteria for projects to be supported by the Benefit-sharing Fund and the steps of the project cycle are contained in the operational procedures.

Cross-references:

- For background information on the governance of the International Treaty, including the **role and composition of the Governing Body its Bureau**, refer to sub-section 4.3. of lesson 4 of Module I (Main Components and Governance of the International Treaty).
- To learn more about the **relationship between the Global Plan of Action and the International Treaty**, refer to sub-section 3.2.5. of lesson 3 of Module II (Further Components of the International Treaty Supporting Conservation and Sustainable Use).
- To learn more about **the Multilateral System and the Standard Material Transfer Agreement**, please refer to sub-section 4.2.3. of lesson 4 of Module I (Main Components and Governance of the International Treaty), as well as to the lessons of forthcoming Module IV (The Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing).
- For more explanations on **the rationale and milestones in the development of the Benefit-sharing Fund**, refer to lesson 2 of this Module (The Benefit-sharing Fund of the Funding Strategy).
- For **in-depth information related to the grant-making process of the Benefit-sharing Fund**, which includes information on its priorities, eligibility criteria, operational procedures, refer to lesson 3 of this Module (How to Access Resources under the Benefit-sharing Fund).
- For detailed data related to the **Core Administrative Budget and the Special Fund for Agreed Purposes**, including contribution levels of by Contracting Parties, see: <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/status-contributions>
- The **indicative scale of contributions to the International Treaty's Core Administrative Budget** is available here: <http://www.planttreaty.org/sites/default/files/w25a1r1.pdf>



1.3.2. Resources not under the direct control of the Governing Body

The Funding Strategy foresees that financial resources that do not fall under the purview of the Governing Body, but that are invested in activities that contribute to the implementation of the International Treaty, may equally be considered part of the Funding Strategy. Contracting Parties' commitment to implement the Funding Strategy, both collectively and individually, may thus also entail advocating for increased funding for critical PGRFA conservation and sustainable use activities in other relevant forums. It is, however, necessary to differentiate such "resources not under the direct control of the Governing Body" from the resources of

the Benefit-sharing Fund of the International Treaty.

Sources

Such financial resources may be deployed by Contracting Parties and other countries through their own national programmes, or through bilateral, regional and multilateral channels (other than the Benefit-sharing Fund). They may also comprise the resources that are made available by international organizations that have entered into agreements with the Governing Body, and other international funds and bodies.⁴⁰ The Secretariat of the International Treaty has started to compile information and reports on resources not under the direct control of the Governing Body that are being provided to it by such entities.



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⁴⁰ International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2001), Articles 18.4 a), c) and d), and *Interim* Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2006a), paras. 2.1 a)-c).

The Global Crop Diversity Trust

One example of an international body that has entered into an agreement with the Governing Body is the Crop Trust. The Crop Trust is an endowment fund operating under international law that was established in 2004, with the central objective to use the proceeds of its endowment to ensure the conservation of the unique germplasm of the most important crops for global food security in perpetuity in *ex situ* gene banks. By the beginning of 2013, the Crop Trust was endowed with over US\$ 190 million. It currently supports 20 major crop collections held at international gene banks, mostly at the research centres of the CGIAR Consortium.⁴¹

Through the resolution that adopted the Funding Strategy in 2006, The Governing

Body of the International Treaty recognized the Crop Trust as an essential element of the Funding Strategy in relation to the *ex situ* conservation and availability of PGRFA.⁴² The Crop Trust operates within the framework of the International Treaty, receiving overall policy guidance from the Governing Body.⁴³ In accordance with the Information and Reporting Requirements under the Funding Strategy, the Crop Trust regularly reports to the Governing Body on resources provided and activities undertaken in support of the implementation of the International Treaty.

The Crop Trust and the Benefit-sharing Fund of the International Treaty are perfectly complementary, as the Benefit-sharing Fund's main focus is on on-farm conservation, management and sustainable use of PGRFA, while the Crop Trust covers *ex situ* conservation.



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⁴¹ Information available on the website of the Crop Trust: <http://www.croptrust.org/>

⁴² *Interim* Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2006a), preambular para. 9.

⁴³ The Executive Board of the Crop Trust is composed of members nominated by the Bureau of the Governing Body of the International Treaty and the Crop Trust's Donors Council.





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Contracting Parties and other International Mechanisms, Funds and Bodies

Through its Article 7.2, the International Treaty invites all actors involved in international cooperation to implement the Funding Strategy. In addition, the Funding Strategy invites all international mechanisms, funds and bodies that provide resources in support of activities of relevance to the implementation of the International Treaty, to use the priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund within the context of their mandates.⁴⁴ In this sense, the Funding Strategy provides guidance to such funding bodies as to the activities that should be given priority in order to strengthen concerted action.

The Secretariat has started collecting information on the mandates, policies, eligibility criteria and procedures of such funding bodies, and makes them available

through the website of the International Treaty.⁴⁵ In addition, it collects information of Contracting Parties and other countries regarding the measures taken within other international bodies, and actions taken to promote voluntary contributions from sources within their country, for the implementation of the International Treaty, as well as information on bilateral funding and on national activities, plans and programmes relevant to the Funding Strategy.⁴⁶

A number of international organizations relevant to the implementation of the International Treaty have been identified to date.⁴⁷ Several of them have officially expressed their interest in partnering with the International Treaty, including by applying the priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund to the selection of their projects. In this context, a number of projects have been promoted and adopted for funding through its own sources by the United Nations Development



⁴⁴ *Interim* Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2006a), para. 12.

⁴⁵ *Idem*, para. 13.

⁴⁶ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2009), annex 1.

⁴⁷ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2010); notably the CGIAR Consortium, FAO, the GEF, IFAD, UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank and the Global Adaptation Fund.

Programme. Furthermore, the International Fund on Agricultural Development (hereafter IFAD) has collaborated with the International Treaty in the implementation of the second round of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund. The Secretariat of the International Treaty is further exploring the possibility of a long-term partnership with IFAD, which is intended to go beyond the second round of the project cycle, and seeks to further individuate international partners to act as donors to the Benefit-sharing Fund.

This demonstrates that the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty is increasingly being recognized as the framework for concerted action with regard to the conservation and sustainable use of crop diversity at the international level. The Secretary of the International Treaty seeks to strengthen cooperation with the above and other international organizations, with the aim to enhance the volume and recognition of all activities that fall under the overall Funding Strategy of the International Treaty.

Key points to remember:

- The overall Funding Strategy also comprises resources that are not under the Governing Body's control, but that contribute towards the achievement of the objectives of the International Treaty.
- This includes, *inter alia*, resources deployed by national governments, or international organizations that have entered into agreements with the Governing Body.
- The Crop Trust is an example of an international body that has entered into an agreement with the Governing Body. The Governing Body recognized the Crop Trust as an essential element of the Funding Strategy in relation to the *ex situ* conservation and availability of PGRFA. With the Benefit-sharing Fund prioritizing on-farm management and conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, the complementarity between the Crop Trust and the Benefit-sharing Fund is guaranteed.
- The Funding Strategy provides guidance to other funding bodies, inviting them to use the priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund within the context of their mandates.
- The Secretariat collects information on the procedures and activities of national governments and other funding bodies.
- The Funding Strategy is increasingly being recognized as the framework for concerted action with regard to conservation and sustainable use of crop diversity at the international level.

Cross-references:

- For working **definitions of terms and concepts** including 'ex situ' and 'in situ' conservation, refer to section 2.3. of lesson 2 of Module I (Objectives, Scope and Basic Concepts).
- To learn more about the **relationship between the Benefit-sharing Fund and the Crop Trust**, refer to subsection 5.3.2. of lesson 5 of Module I (The Legal Architecture Governing Crop Diversity and Partnerships for Implementation).
- For more information on **international organizations that have expressed their interest in partnering with the Benefit-sharing Fund** see: <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/potential-partners-benefit-sharing-fund>



1.4. Conclusive Summary

Crop diversity is a fundamental part of the solution for adapting agriculture to climate change. In small-scale agriculture this is achieved through the dissemination of locally adapted traditional varieties and the selection of resistance traits for breeding into new “climate-ready” varieties, whereas in industrialized agriculture, mainly the private sector produces new high-yielding and stress resistant varieties. The Funding Strategy was established as the International Treaty’s mechanism to ensure that sufficient funds are made available for the effort of conserving PGRFA and using them sustainably to achieve and maintain global food security.

The Funding Strategy is an essential part of the International Treaty, as its role is to render the achievement of the objectives of the International Treaty possible. It does so on two general levels: by enhancing the availability of funds for the implementation of the International Treaty, and by providing guidance to Contracting Parties, other countries, organizations, institutions and other entities, with regard to activities that contribute to the implementation of the International Treaty.⁴⁸

Possible sources of the Funding Strategy include, on the one hand, voluntary contributions from Contracting Parties, other countries, institutions and the private sector, as well as voluntary and mandatory payments that result from the commercialization of crop genetic material that is part of the Multilateral System. These financial resources are collected and made available through the Benefit-sharing Fund. On the other hand, the Funding Strategy also comprises all those resources that are deployed by countries,

other bodies, funds and institutions directly through their own programmes and projects for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. The difference between these two categories of funding sources is that while the Governing Body has control over how the resources of the Benefit-sharing Fund are allocated, it has no direct control over the financial resources that are invested by national governments or other institutions.

The Funding Strategy, through its Benefit-sharing Fund, mobilizes financial resources and makes them available for critical PGRFA conservation and sustainable use activities in developing countries. Since the Benefit-sharing Fund was launched in 2009, it has supported more than 30 projects in over 30 countries with a total of about US\$ 6 million, and in 2013 a further call for project proposals was opened, with a total budget of more than US\$ 10 million. Lesson 2 of this module provides concrete examples of the significant contribution of the Benefit-sharing Fund towards the improvement of livelihoods of local farming communities.

In accordance with the Funding Strategy, the Secretariat started collecting and making available information on the activities of other funding bodies and national governments, and encourages such other bodies to apply the funding priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund within their mandates. Thereby, the Funding Strategy increases transparency, efficiency and effectiveness, and strengthens complementary action, by providing an internationally recognized framework for concerted action in the policy area of conservation and sustainable use of crop diversity.



⁴⁸ FAO (2006), p. 4.

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The Benefit-sharing Fund of the Funding Strategy



LESSON 2



Learning objectives

At the end of this lesson, the learner will:

- recognize the contribution of the Benefit-sharing Fund of the Funding Strategy (hereafter 'Benefit-sharing Fund') in coping with the challenges of crop diversity conservation and food security in the context of climate change;
- be familiar with the key features of the Benefit-sharing Fund and the milestones in its development;
- be aware of the main elements of the Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-sharing Fund;
- understand the Programmatic Approach of the Benefit-sharing Fund; and
- have an impression of selected projects under the Benefit-sharing Fund that illustrate its development.



Target learner groups

Prospective donors, policy makers, civil servants, civil society organizations, media.



Brassica rapa, turnip, by Elizabeth Blackwell (1739)

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2.1. Overview of the Lesson

The Benefit-sharing Fund of the Funding Strategy (hereafter 'Benefit-sharing Fund') of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (hereafter 'International Treaty') invests directly in high impact projects supporting farmers in developing countries to conserve crop diversity in their fields and assisting farmers and breeders globally in adapting crops to our changing needs and demands. It collects funds from all possible sources including voluntary contributions, as well as the financial resources that result from the sharing of monetary benefits arising from the commercialization of PGRFA under the Multilateral System of the International Treaty. The Benefit-sharing Fund comprises those financial resources of the Funding Strategy that are under the direct control of the Governing Body.

The Benefit-sharing Fund makes a crucial contribution towards the implementation of the objectives of the International Treaty. It tackles global challenges by supporting farmers at the local level, fostering cross-regional alliances and partnerships, and facilitating access at the global level to research results of its projects and crop genetic material they address, including through the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing of the International Treaty (hereafter 'Multilateral System').

The Benefit-sharing Fund is closely related to the Multilateral System – the first operational international access and benefit-sharing mechanism. It was launched with the first call for proposals in December 2008, and the first

portfolio of 11 small-scale projects was funded over the 2009-2011 biennium. Over its early years of existence, the Benefit-sharing Fund has witnessed considerable growth, which was accompanied by significant developments related to its management and structure. The challenge is now to maintain the momentum by exploring innovative approaches for the continued functioning and further growth of the Benefit-sharing Fund.

The aim of this lesson is to demonstrate the exemplary contribution of the Benefit-sharing Fund to coping with the challenges of crop diversity conservation and food security. The lesson does so by familiarizing readers with the Benefit-sharing Fund's key features and illustrating its impact in the field with the help of three projects that were funded under the first and second rounds of its project cycle.

The lesson starts by presenting the basics of the Benefit-sharing Fund, including its aims, main components and the milestones in its establishment. Then, the Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-sharing Fund and the Programmatic Approach are described to demonstrate its growth and further development, which is illustrated by selected benefit-sharing projects.

At the end of this lesson, readers will be fully aware of the Benefit-sharing Fund's contribution towards addressing global challenges, and be able to showcase the development of the Benefit-sharing Fund with some concrete examples. The readers will also understand which future challenges still lay ahead.

Cross-references:

- For the **text of the International Treaty** see: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/O11/i0510e/i0510e.pdf>
- For working **definitions of terms and concepts** such as crop diversity, food security, etc, refer to section 2.3. of lesson 2 of Module I (Objectives and Basic Concepts).



2.2. The Basics of the Benefit-sharing Fund

2.2.1. Aims of the Benefit-sharing Fund

The Benefit-sharing Fund is a main component of the overall Funding Strategy of the International Treaty. As such, it shares the aims of the Funding Strategy, which are the development of ways and means by which adequate resources are available for the implementation of the International Treaty, and the transparent, efficient and effective utilization of all resources made available.¹ The objectives of the International Treaty are the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their use, for global food security and sustainable agriculture.²

Within the overall Funding Strategy, the Benefit-sharing Fund can be imagined as

the International Treaty's arm at the field level aiming at responding to the most pressing needs related to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the International Treaty and its Funding Strategy, the financial resources of the Benefit-sharing Fund are used primarily for activities that benefit farmers, especially in developing countries, who conserve and sustainably use crop diversity.³ The current thematic focus of the Benefit-sharing Fund is "helping ensure sustainable food security by assisting farmers to adapt to climate change through a targeted set of high impact activities on the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture". The Benefit-sharing Fund thus makes a critical contribution to the implementation of all objectives of the International Treaty.

Key points to remember:

- The aim of the Benefit-sharing Fund is to make financial resources available for the achievement of the objectives of the International Treaty.
- The financial resources of the Benefit-sharing Fund are used primarily for activities that benefit farmers, especially in developing countries, who conserve and sustainably use crop diversity.



¹ *Interim Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (2006), paras 1, 2.1 and 2.2.

² *International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (2001), Article 1.

³ *Idem*, Articles 13.3, 13.4 and 18.5, and *Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (2007), *appendix D.1* and *appendix D.2*.

Cross-references:

- For a detailed account on **the aims of the overall Funding Strategy and its different sources**, refer to lesson 1 of this Module (The Funding Strategy for the Implementation of the International Treaty).
- For more information about the **objectives of the International Treaty**, refer to sub-section 2.2.1. of lesson 2 of Module I (Objectives, Scope and Basic Concepts).
- For more detailed background information on the **global challenges of crop diversity, food security and climate change**, and the ways the International Treaty addresses these challenges, refer to section 1.2. of lesson 1 of Module I (A Global Treaty for Food Security in an Era of Climate Change).
- For a detailed account of **measures for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA**, including technical background information, the respective provisions of the International Treaty, as well as options and examples for their implementation, refer to the lessons of Module II (Conservation and Sustainable Use under the International Treaty).

2.2.2. Key Features of the Benefit-sharing Fund

The Benefit-sharing Fund makes a major contribution toward ongoing efforts in the area of conservation and utilization of crop diversity, complementing the work of other institutions and bodies and enabling stakeholders to address global challenges at the local level. A distinguishing factor is its close collaboration with all major stakeholders at the national level in reaching its global targets. What follows is a summary of the Benefit-sharing Fund's key features that distinguish it from other initiatives in the crop diversity area.

The first fully operational ABS Mechanism

The Benefit-sharing Fund is directly related to the Multilateral System on Access and Benefit-sharing (hereafter 'Multilateral System') of the International

Treaty, as it will collect and make available the financial resources that result from the sharing of monetary benefits arising from the commercialization of PGRFA.⁴ Whomever commercializes PGRFA (e.g. planting material) originating or including material from the Multilateral System is encouraged to make voluntary payments to the Benefit-sharing Fund. Payments become mandatory in cases where the access to PGRFA originating from the Multilateral System is restricted, for example if the entity commercializing the material takes out a patent that prevents others from using it for further research and breeding. The Benefit-sharing Fund is thus closely linked to the Multilateral System – the first fully operational mechanism at the international level that regulates the access to genetic resources and the sharing of benefits arising from their use (hereafter 'ABS') in line with the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol on ABS.

⁴ International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2001), Articles 13.2 d) ii) and 19.3 f), and *Interim* Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2006), para. 2.1 d) and footnote 7 of *annex 4*.



However, commercial benefit-sharing may only bring modest financial income to the Benefit-sharing Fund in the short and medium term. Further possible funding sources of the Benefit-sharing Fund comprise voluntary contributions that are not linked to the commercialization of PGRFA, from any entity such as Contracting Parties, international organizations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.⁵ In addition, innovative approaches and mechanisms to bring more financial resources to the Benefit-sharing Fund will have to be explored.

Multilateralism

The Benefit-sharing Fund was set up by the Contracting Parties of the International Treaty in the spirit of multilateralism, and is administered and steered by the international community. To maximize the impact of the Benefit-sharing Fund, the Contracting Parties have developed internationally agreed

priorities, criteria and procedures according to which the resources are invested.

The priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund are drawn from the Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture - a supporting component of the International Treaty that identifies gaps and provides policy guidance for coordinated international action in the crop diversity area.⁶ The Contracting Parties decided that the Benefit-sharing Fund should focus on the most pressing among these gaps that are not sufficiently funded elsewhere, to avoid duplications and enhance complementarity with other funding mechanisms. This ensures that scarce financial resources are used where they are most needed.

Any governmental or non-governmental organization, including gene banks and research institutions, farmers and farmers' organizations, and regional and international



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⁵ International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2001), Articles 18.4 f) and 13.6, and *Interim Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (2006), para 2.1 e).
⁶ The first Global Plan of Action was entitled 'Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture'. In 2011, the updated Global Plan of Action was adopted, with the title 'Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture'.



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organizations, based in countries that are Contracting Parties, can apply for funding in response to specific calls for proposals.⁷ Projects must benefit Contracting Parties that are developing countries. An independent panel of experts screens and appraises the received proposals based on their quality and technical merit, and the Bureau of the Governing Body subsequently approves them according to the recommendations of the panel of experts.

Global Challenges

The targeted priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund are designed in a way that the Benefit-sharing Fund addresses the global challenges of safeguarding crop diversity, strengthening food security and adapting to climate change. Activities that may fall under the priorities include, *inter alia*, characterizing traditional and wild crop genetic material for their stress resistance levels; selecting and breeding high performing varieties that are adapted to particular local conditions; making such planting material widely

available to farmers; and training farmers and other stakeholders in these and other areas that are related to conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.

Thereby, the Benefit-sharing Fund helps local farming communities cope with global challenges. It supports activities that ensure that local crop varieties of importance to our food security are preserved, reintroduced, developed and maintained in farmers' fields, so that they remain available to farming communities. It also makes available funding for scientific efforts to identify specific traits and breeding new varieties, which tolerate climate change induced stresses and resist increasingly occurring pests and diseases while keeping yield and nutrition levels up.

Due to its importance for climate change adaptation in agriculture, the Benefit-sharing Fund has been officially recognized by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as an option for adaptation funding.⁸

⁷ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2009a), para. 9.

⁸ UNFCCC (2013).



Dynamism

One subsidiary body that was created by the Governing Body of the International Treaty has contributed substantially to the dynamic nature of the Benefit-sharing Fund: the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy (hereafter '*Ad hoc* Advisory Committee'). The *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee has undertaken the preparatory work for the elaboration of the priorities, eligibility criteria and operational procedures of the Benefit-sharing Fund, and among other tasks it advised the Bureau on the design and structure of calls for proposals. In reviewing the implementation of the project cycle, the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee identified lessons learned and formulated recommendations for the further development and future implementation of the Benefit-sharing Fund. It thereby strongly supported the Benefit-sharing Fund's

capacity to adapt to changing needs and upcoming challenges. Already between the first and the second round of its project cycle, the implementation of the Benefit-sharing Fund has witnessed major developments in terms of scale, scope and structure, which was to an important extent the fruit of the work of the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee.

In 2013, the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing was established (hereafter '*Ad Hoc* Working Group'). Building on the work so far carried out by the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy, the *Ad Hoc* Working Group aims to increase user-based payments and contributions to the Benefit-sharing Fund in a sustainable and predictable long-term manner, and to enhance the functioning of the Multilateral System.



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Key points to remember:

- The Benefit-sharing Fund is directly related to the Multilateral System - the first fully operational international ABS mechanism. It is fully in line with the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol.
- The Benefit-sharing Fund was created in the spirit of multilateralism, and is steered and administered by the Governing Body of the International Treaty according to internationally agreed priorities, criteria and procedures.
- The targeted priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund are designed in a way that the Benefit-sharing Fund addresses the global challenges of safeguarding crop diversity, strengthening food security and adapting to climate change.
- The Benefit-sharing Fund is a recognized option for adaptation funding under the UNFCCC.
- The work of the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy supported the Benefit-sharing Fund's capacity to adapt to changing needs and upcoming challenges.
- Building on the work so far carried out by the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee, the *Ad Hoc* Working Group will develop measures to increase sustainable and predictable user-based payments to the Benefit-sharing Fund.

Cross-references:

- For background information on the governance of the International Treaty, including the **role and composition of the Governing Body and its Bureau**, refer to sub-section 4.3. of lesson 4 of Module I (Main Components and Governance of the International Treaty).
- For an in-depth account on the **priorities, eligibility criteria and operational procedures of the Benefit-sharing Fund** refer to lesson 3 of this Module (How to Access Resources under the Benefit-sharing Fund).
- To learn more about the **relationship between the Global Plan of Action and the International Treaty**, refer to sub-section 3.2.5. of lesson 3 of Module II (Further Components of the International Treaty Supporting Conservation and Sustainable Use).
- The **UNFCCC Adaptation Funding Interface** is accessible here:
http://unfccc.int/adaptation/implementing_adaptation/adaptation_funding_interface/items/4638.php
- More information on the **Ad hoc Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy** can be found here:
<http://www.planttreaty.org/content/history-ad-hoc-advisory-committee-funding-strategy>
- For more information about the **linkages between the International Treaty and the Convention on Biological Diversity**, refer to lesson 5 of Module I (The Legal Architecture Governing Crop Diversity and Partnerships for Implementation).
- For more detailed information on the different **sources of the Benefit-sharing Fund**, refer to lesson 1 of this Module (The Funding Strategy for the Implementation of the International Treaty).



2.2.3. Milestones in the Development of the Benefit-sharing Fund

1996 - Adoption of the Global Plan of Action

In response to the unacceptable levels of loss of agricultural biodiversity in farmers' fields witnessed over the past century and assessed for the first time on a global scale in the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture⁹, 150 countries adopted the first Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (hereafter 'Global Plan of Action').¹⁰ The Global Plan of Action was established as a framework, guide and catalyst for action to create an efficient system for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. It identified

twenty priority activity areas, and its main aims were to:

- ensure the conservation of PGRFA as the basis of food security;
- promote sustainable use of PGRFA to foster development and reduce hunger and poverty;
- promote the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of PGRFA;
- assist countries and institutions to identify priorities for action; and
- strengthen existing programmes and enhance institutional capacity.

To achieve these aims, the Global Plan of Action provided clear policy guidance for countries to translate global objectives regarding the conservation and use of PGRFA into their national programmes.



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⁹ The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture found that 75 percent of PGRFA had been lost irrevocably over the 20th century.

¹⁰ The first Global Plan of Action was entitled 'Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture'. In 2011, the updated Global Plan of Action was adopted, with the title 'Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture'.



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2001 - Adoption of the International Treaty

The International Treaty was adopted by the Thirty-first Session of the FAO Conference, upon approval by a two-thirds majority of the FAO member countries. The International Treaty is the first legally binding international agreement for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. It establishes the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing, which regulates access to PGRFA for research and breeding, as well as the terms according to which the benefits arising from the use of PGRFA are to be shared. These terms foresee that benefits arising from the commercialization of PGRFA that originate from the Multilateral System be shared through a multilateral fund. The International Treaty – in its articles 5 and 6 – further proposes a list of measures to strengthen the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, which is largely drawn from the priority activity areas of the Global Plan of Action. Through its Article 14, the International Treaty recognizes the Global Plan of Action as one of its supporting components.

The International Treaty provides for the establishment of a funding strategy for the mobilization of the financial resources needed for the achievement of its objectives. Further, it foresees that the Governing Body may establish a trust account for receiving and utilizing financial resources that are part of this funding strategy, including the benefits arising from the commercialization of PGRFA mentioned above.¹¹

2004 - Entry into force of the International Treaty

The International Treaty entered into force in June 2004, 90 days after the deposit of the fortieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

2006 - Adoption of the Funding Strategy and establishment of the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy

The Contracting Parties of the International Treaty adopted the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty at the First Session of

¹¹ International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2001), Articles 18, 19.3 f) and 13.2 d) ii).



the Governing Body, through Resolution 1/2006. The Funding Strategy seeks to attract financial resources from all possible sources, in order to support activities that implement the objectives of the International Treaty. It comprises resources deployed for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA that are under the direct control of the Governing Body, as well as other national, bilateral and multilateral funding sources that implement the objectives of the International Treaty. The Benefit-sharing Fund constitutes that part of the resources under the Funding Strategy over which the Governing Body has direct control. Through operative paragraph 14 of Resolution 1/2006, the Governing Body decided to establish the trust account through which the Benefit-sharing Fund is administered.

Equally through Resolution 1/2006, the Governing Body established the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee. It was originally composed of seven Contracting Party representatives – one for each FAO region – and in 2009 it was enlarged to two representatives per FAO region, through a decision of the Governing Body.

2008/2009 - Opening of the first call for proposals and launch of the first project portfolio of the Benefit-sharing Fund

The adoption by the Governing Body of the priorities, eligibility criteria and operational procedures of the Benefit-sharing Fund at its Second Session in 2007, and the first generous contributions by Contracting Parties to the Benefit-sharing Fund, allowed the Secretariat to open the first call for project proposals in December 2008 for a total budget of just over half a million US dollars. Consequently, the first 11 small-grant projects

were approved for funding by the Bureau of the Governing Body in May 2009, and the Benefit-sharing Fund became operational with its first disbursements in December 2009. The projects of the first portfolio were implemented over the subsequent biennium.¹²

2009 - Endorsement of the Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-sharing Fund

Also in 2009, at the Third Session of the Governing Body, the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee presented the Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-sharing Fund (hereafter ‘Strategic Plan’). Based on the priority activity areas and the policy recommendations of the Global Plan of Action, the Strategic Plan provides for cost estimates for implementing the activities required to meet the objectives of the International Treaty on a global scale, and sets a funding target of US\$ 116 million to be reached by December 2014.

2010/2011 - Opening of the second call for proposals and launch of the second project portfolio of the Benefit-sharing Fund

Thanks to further generous contributions by Australia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Spain and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Benefit-sharing Fund’s second call for proposals was opened in July 2010.¹³ The Bureau of the Governing Body approved the second project portfolio of the Benefit-sharing Fund, with a total of nearly US\$ 5.5 million invested in 19 projects for the conservation and sustainable use of crop diversity in developing countries.



¹² Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2013).

¹³ In addition to these contributions, a Canadian research programme has made the first-ever voluntary contribution arising from a product resulting from the use of PGRFA, for a total value of US\$ 1190.

2013 - Establishment of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing; and opening of the third call for proposals

At its fifth session in 2013, the Governing Body decided to establish the *Ad Hoc* Working Group, with the task to develop measures to increase user-based payments to the Benefit-sharing Fund in a sustainable and predictable long-term manner, and to enhance the functioning of the Multilateral System. The *Ad Hoc* Working Group is composed of up to 27 representatives from Contracting Parties

from all seven FAO regions. Additional Contracting Parties and representatives from civil society organizations, the seed industry, farmers' organizations and the CGIAR centres may be invited to participate as observers.

Also in 2013, following further generous contributions by the European Commission and Norway, the Governing Body decided to launch the third call for proposals as soon as possible after the closure of its fifth session. The total budget of the project portfolio under the third round of the project cycle is expected to amount to more than US\$ 10 million.

Key points to remember:

- The Global Plan of Action was adopted in 1996 as a framework, guide and catalyst for action to create an efficient system for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, identifying gaps and providing clear policy guidance to national governments.
- The International Treaty was adopted in 2001 and entered into force in 2004 as the first legally binding international agreement for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. It recognizes the Global Plan of Action as a supporting component, and provides for the establishment of a funding strategy.
- In 2006, the Governing Body adopted the Funding Strategy. The Benefit-sharing Fund collects and makes available those financial resources under the Funding Strategy that are under the direct control of the Governing Body.
- The first call for proposals under the Benefit-sharing Fund was opened in 2008, and the Benefit-sharing Fund became fully operational with its first disbursements in 2009.

Cross-references:

- For more information on the **role of the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Global Plan of Action** in the development of the International Treaty, refer to Box 3.3 in lesson 3 of Module I (History of the International Treaty).
- For more background information about the **history of the International Treaty**, refer to lesson 3 of Module I (History of the International Treaty).
- To learn more about **the Multilateral System**, refer to sub-section 4.2.3. of lesson 4 of Module I (Main Components and Governance of the International Treaty), as well as to the lessons of forthcoming Module IV (The Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing).



2.3. The Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-sharing Fund of the Funding Strategy

At its second session in 2007, the Governing Body entrusted the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee with the development of a strategic plan for the implementation of the Benefit-sharing Fund. This strategic plan would include, in particular, appropriate mechanisms for the operationalization of the Benefit-sharing Fund and a fund-raising strategy.¹⁴

Accordingly, the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee prepared such a plan, which was endorsed by the Governing Body at its third session in 2009.¹⁵ The Strategic Plan notably sets a funding target of US\$ 116 million for the Benefit-sharing Fund over a period of five and a half years from July 2009 to December 2014, and provides detailed guidance on how this target could be achieved.

The target was set based on an assessment of resource mobilization efforts of other multilateral organizations, including the Global Crop Diversity Trust (hereafter ‘Crop Trust’), and an analysis of the needs expressed

in the project proposals received for the first call for proposals of the Benefit-sharing Fund. In particular, the needs that fall within the priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund were taken into account. They are: information exchange, technology transfer and capacity building; managing and conserving plant genetic resources on farm; and sustainable use of plant genetic resources.¹⁶

Cost calculations with regard to the three priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund were based on the estimates that were prepared for the implementation of the first Global Plan of Action. The US\$ 116 million would thereby represent a moderate approach based on intermediate assumptions regarding needs.¹⁷

Taking into account that the Benefit-sharing Fund is in a “start-up” phase, the Strategic Plan recognizes the need to begin with a lower target in the first year, and progressively raise more funds in subsequent years, with the highest levels being committed in the fifth year.

Figure 2.1: Plan to secure the US\$ 116 million objective over a five-year period

| | Year 1 (18 months) | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Cumulative target (US\$ million) | 10 | 27 | 50 | 80 | 116 |
| Annual target (US\$ million) | 10 | 17 | 23 | 30 | 36 |

¹⁴ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2007), operative para. 2 of appendix D.4.

¹⁵ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2009a).

¹⁶ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2009b), pp. 12 and 13.

¹⁷ *Idem*, pp. 13 and 14.



The Strategic Plan foresees that Contracting Parties will remain the main contributors to the Benefit-sharing Fund, while other potential donors may include non-Contracting Parties, international foundations, the private sector and certain individuals. The broad support from Contracting Parties should help facilitate and accelerate contributions from other donors.¹⁸ The *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee has supported the implementation of the Strategic Plan, notably by advising the Bureau and the Secretary on resource mobilization.¹⁹ Given the global economic crisis, the major challenge for the *Ad Hoc* Working Group and other stakeholders will now be to identify and develop innovative approaches for resource mobilization in order to bridge the accumulated funding gap.

the resource mobilization efforts through the establishment of a Special Task Force of goodwill ambassadors. Such goodwill ambassadors help identifying prospects, by establishing contacts within their sphere of influence on behalf of the Benefit-sharing Fund, and energetically assist in helping secure contributions. Other important elements for successful resource mobilization efforts as contained in the Strategic Plan include, *inter alia*, the development of fund raising tools such as a case statement about the unique features of the Benefit-sharing Fund and a project management system to track activities with potential donors; donor relation activities including high-level cultivation events; and increased communication and awareness raising activities.

In addition to the funding target, the Strategic Plan foresees a number of activities and operational requirements needed for its implementation. These comprise, for example, the involvement of leaders in

The Strategic Plan provides the framework for the fundraising efforts of the Secretariat, and is therefore a very important instrument for sustaining and increasing the replenishment of the Benefit-sharing Fund.

Key points to remember:

- The Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-sharing Fund was adopted by the Governing Body in 2009.
- The Strategic Plan provides the framework for the fundraising efforts of the Secretariat.
- Based on the cost estimates prepared for the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, the Strategic Plan sets a funding target of US\$ 116 million for the Benefit-sharing Fund, representing a moderate approach based on intermediate assumptions regarding needs.

Cross-references:

- To learn more about the **relationship between the Benefit-sharing Fund and the Crop Trust**, refer to sub-section 5.3.2. of lesson 5 of Module I (The Legal Architecture Governing Crop Diversity and Partnerships for Implementation).
- For an in-depth account on the **priorities, eligibility criteria and operational procedures of the Benefit-sharing Fund** refer to lesson 3 of this Module (How to Access Resources under the Benefit-sharing Fund).
- To learn more about the **relationship between the Global Plan of Action and the International Treaty**, refer to sub-section 3.2.5. of lesson 3 of Module II (Further Components of the International Treaty Supporting Conservation and Sustainable Use).

¹⁸ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2009b), p. 17.

¹⁹ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2009a).



2.4. The Programmatic Approach of the Benefit-sharing Fund

In the relatively short period of time since its first project portfolio was launched in 2009, there have been considerable developments with regard to the structure and scale of the Benefit-sharing Fund. Most notably, starting with the second call for proposals a programmatic approach was introduced with the aim to ensure that activities under the Benefit-sharing Fund are implemented under the framework of overarching strategies, to enhance their long-term impact.

The first project portfolio can be considered the pilot round of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund. The 11 projects were relatively small in scale, with a funding level of just up to US\$ 50 000 each, over a two-year period. Resources were tied to concrete activities designed to achieve significant results responding to the priorities of the

Benefit-sharing Fund in a relatively short timeframe.

The Secretariat was able to mobilize a substantially larger amount of financial resources for the second round of the project cycle, which needed to be reflected in the second call for proposals. This up-scaling raised new questions with regard to project implementation that needed to be addressed. Thus, for the development of the second call for proposals the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee consulted external experts on programme management in the field of crop diversity conservation and use, food security and climate change adaptation. Finally, it was decided to shape the call in a way that would strengthen the overall policy coherence of the activities under the Benefit-sharing Fund and favour the development of longer-term strategies.



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This focus responds to the widespread agreement that one of the areas of greatest concern currently confronting agriculture is how to ensure sustainable food security in the face of climate change. The Declaration of the 2009 *World Summit on Food Security* states:

“Climate change poses additional severe risks to food security and the agriculture sector. Its expected impact is particularly fraught with danger for smallholder farmers in developing countries, notably the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and for already vulnerable populations. Any recipe for confronting the challenges of climate change must allow for mitigation options and a firm commitment to the adaptation of agriculture, including through **conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture.**”²⁰

2.4.1. Different Funding Windows

In order to combine the achievement of tangible results in the short term with activities leading to broader impacts that may only manifest themselves in the longer term, a structure with two funding windows was established for the second call for proposals. Window 1 comprised Strategic Action Plans, i.e. projects addressing entire agro-ecological zones or crops at the global level, analyzing opportunities for meeting the challenges posed by climate change and developing spatially appropriate priorities, strategies and action plans.²¹ Window 2, in turn, was aimed at projects with a more punctual scope, aiming at delivering immediate results. With the third call for proposals, a new funding window was introduced, to support projects that promote the co-development and transfer of technologies.

²⁰ FAO (2009).

²¹ Hawtin, Acosta Moreno, Swaminathan, Bala Ravi and Hegwood (2010), p. 15.



Strategic Action Plans

By supporting the development of Strategic Action Plans, the Benefit-sharing Fund aimed at increasing the understanding of how developing country farmers can adapt to climate change through the conservation and use of PGRFA.²² For example, Strategic Action Plans could focus on agro-ecological zones where major disruptions are predicted to occur due to climate change, or be formulated on the basis of specific crops. They included information exchange, technology transfer and capacity building activities covering all areas relating to the conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in the face of climate change. The second call for proposals stated that such areas may include, *inter alia*: on-farm conservation and management; participatory plant breeding and the dissemination of seed and other planting material, as well as plant breeding (including base broadening, pre-breeding, the introgression of genes from wild species etc);

collecting and conserving PGRFA *ex situ*; and conserving of wild relatives *in situ*. Typically, Strategic Action Plans were implemented through existing institutions as part of a broader policy framework.²³ The Strategic Action Plans of the second project cycle ran for a maximum of one year, and their individual funding levels did not exceed US\$ 400 000.

Immediate Action Projects

Complementary to the Strategic Action Plans, the Benefit-sharing Fund supported Immediate Action Projects under the second round if its project cycle, to generate high impact in the short term.²⁴ These projects were similar in nature to the ones of the first round of the project cycle, however more targeted and larger in scale. Within the priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund, it was decided that Immediate Action Projects should concentrate primarily on one or more of the following topics, i.e. information exchange, technology transfer



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²² Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2010), para. 50.

²³ *Idem*, section 3.1.

²⁴ *Idem*, para. 56.

and capacity building; on-farm conservation and management of PGRFA; and participatory plant breeding and the distribution of appropriate seed and planting materials. The size of individual Immediate Action Projects did not exceed US\$ 300 000 and these projects ran for a maximum of two years. The third call for proposals maintained a funding window for Immediate Action Projects.

Support to the Co-development and Transfer of Technologies

In order to enhance the substantive and coherent focus on technology transfer demanded by the Contracting Parties, it was decided to open a new funding window under the third call for proposals, specifically to support the co-development and transfer of technologies. There is a multitude of possible areas that would benefit from the co-development and transfer of technology, from biotechnologies to seed production systems. A ‘typical’ project might involve, for example, a national research institution in a developing country – the lead institution - working in partnership with a research institute elsewhere, to develop a particular item of technology (e.g. drought or heat resistance in a locally important smallholder crop) and transferring it to the lead institution for further adaptation, testing and dissemination.

2.4.2. Selection Criteria, Screening Criteria and Appraisal Criteria

The operational procedures of the Benefit-sharing Fund contain a general framework of selection criteria being used in the appraisal

of project proposals. Since the second call for proposals, more specific criteria derived from this general framework of selection criteria have been used for the screening of pre-proposals and the appraisal of full proposals. The precise screening and appraisal criteria may thus vary in each round of the project cycle, and are therefore published in each call for proposals. Pre-proposals have to address the screening criteria, and full project proposals must address the appraisal criteria. Under the second call for proposals, the main additional screening criteria for Immediate Action Projects were that the projects had to have the potential for a significant short-term impact, be country-driven and identify complementary funding sources.

2.4.3. The Third Call for Proposals

The third call for project proposals maintained the thematic focus of the second call, and equally provided funds for two different types of projects in two funding windows. As in the second call, there was a funding window for Immediate Action Projects, given the high demand for this type of projects. However, since Contracting Parties felt that technology transfer had not received sufficient focus during the first two rounds of the project cycle, a new funding window was opened up for the third call for proposals specifically to support the co-development and transfer of technology. As a consequence of opening this new window, and as a result of the need to learn lessons from the implementation of current projects, the window for Strategic Action Plans will not be operative during the third call for proposals.²⁵

²⁵ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2012b), p. 10, and Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2012a), p. 9.



Key points to remember:

- The Programmatic Approach of the Benefit-sharing Fund aims to ensure that projects are implemented under the framework of overarching strategies, to enhance their long-term impact.
- To strengthen this Programmatic Approach, a thematic focus was adopted for the second call for proposals and maintained since: to help ensure sustainable food security by assisting farmers to adapt to climate change through a targeted set of high impact activities on the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.
- In order to combine the achievement of tangible results in the short term with activities leading to broader impacts that may manifest themselves in the longer term, the Benefit-sharing Fund has adopted a structure with different funding windows.
- In addition to the Immediate Action Projects that were already promoted under the second call for proposals, the third call for proposals focuses in particular on the co-development and transfer of technologies.

Cross-references:

- For **up-to-date information on the Benefit-sharing Fund** and its calls for proposals consult regularly the following web page: <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/benefit-sharing-fund>
- The **expert advice paper** for the development of the second call for proposals is available here: ftp://ftp.fao.org/ag/agp/planttreaty/funding/experts/bsf_exp_p01_en.pdf



2.5. Selected Projects of the first two Rounds of the Project Cycle

This section aims at illustrating the building up of the Programmatic Approach explained under 1.4 above with short presentations of selected projects of the first and second portfolios of the Benefit-sharing Fund.

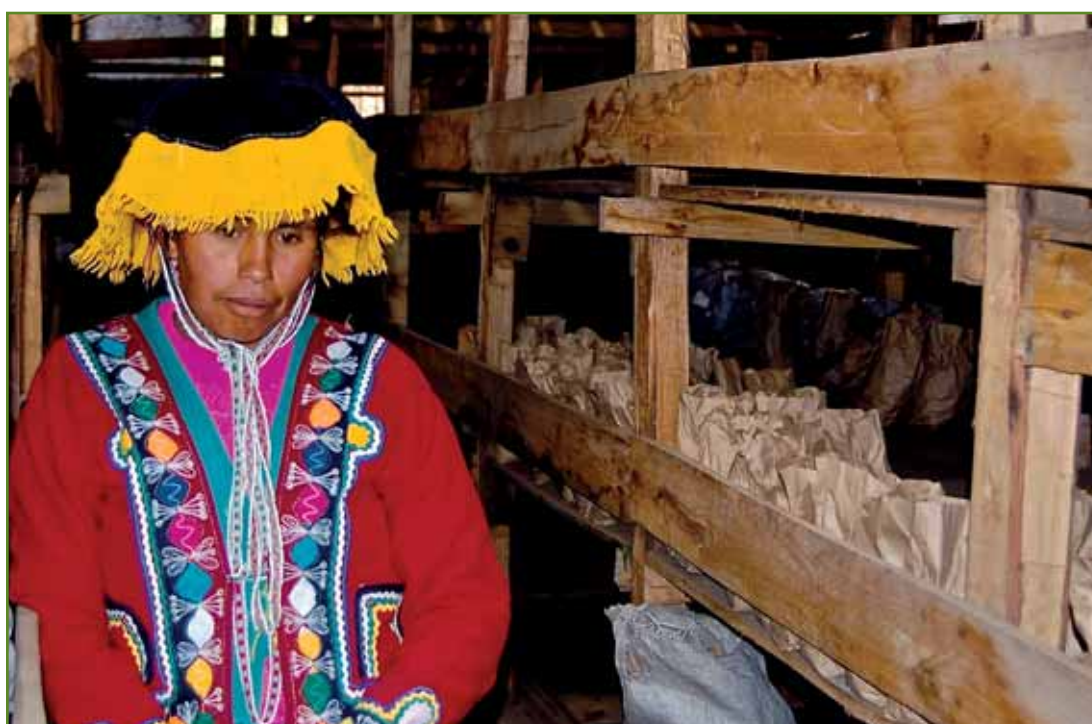
2.5.1. An Example from the First Round of the Project Cycle

Conservation and Sustainable Use of Native Potato Varieties in the Potato Park, Cusco, Peru²⁶

This project was executed by the ANDES Association (Asociación para la Naturaleza y el Desarrollo Sostenible), a Peruvian non-governmental organization, with the direct involvement of six indigenous communities of the Cusco area that populate and administer the Potato Park. The Potato Park is the largest

in situ reserve of potato genetic material in the world and one of the few examples of such a reserve in which inhabitants play a major role in the maintenance of PGRFA.

Within the framework of this project, 410 accessions of traditional and locally adapted potato varieties, conserved *ex situ* by the International Potato Centre (CIP), were reintroduced into the fields of the indigenous communities, where they had previously been lost due to genetic erosion. In addition, the Papa Arariwas – twelve community-appointed Potato Guardians – developed 80 new potato varieties during the project period, which led to a substantial increase in on-farm diversity in the Potato Park. The Papa Arariwas are overseeing the conservation and management of this diversity, ensuring that the planting material is available to the six communities.



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²⁶ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2013).





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In a joint effort with CIP, the Potato Park also created an online Local Biocultural Register, where both traditional knowledge and scientific characterization data related to over 1100 native potato varieties are jointly accessible.²⁷ The register helps local farmers identify specific varieties and traditional practices. This allows them to adapt to changing climate patterns, and at the same time serves as a defensive protection mechanism against misappropriation by third parties, since publication prevents others from claiming novelty.

Over 1500 members of the indigenous communities of the Potato Park were trained in various areas, including the production of value added products. Five new “biocultural” products based on local potato varieties were developed that are now commercialized on local markets, under the trademark of the Potato Park. The products include potato starch, potato sweets (“manjar”), potato liquor, potato soap and the “chocopapa” – a

treat made of chocolate and potato. Thanks to a local benefit-sharing agreement signed among the six indigenous communities, a share of the sales of any of the products that carry the Potato Park trademark label goes into a communal fund for Potato Park activities.

2.5.2. Examples from the Second Round of the Project Cycle

Community based Biodiversity Management for Climate Change Resilience (Strategic Action Plan)²⁸

This project was coordinated by the Nepali non-governmental organization LI-BIRD (Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development), in collaboration with partner organizations in twelve countries across Africa, Latin America and South Asia.²⁹ It aimed at developing a series of strategic action plans to integrate community based biodiversity management (CBM) as a



²⁷ Take a look at the Local Biocultural Register at: www.andesproyectos.org/khipu

²⁸ LI-BIRD (2012).

²⁹ Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Malawi, Nepal, Nicaragua, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

strategy for on-farm management of PGRFA for sustainable food security and enhancing climate change resilience of farming communities.

CBM is a methodology to promote sustainable livelihoods through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity at the local level, by increasing the decision-making power of communities with regard to access and control over their genetic resources. CBM integrates local knowledge and practices and is driven by local social systems, rules and institutions. It includes a variety of practices such as seed fairs; community biodiversity registers; participatory variety selection and participatory plant breeding; community seed banks; local seed business development; value addition; and value chain development. The project aimed at developing strategic action plans for implementation at a total of 28 sites in twelve different countries. In all participating countries, a common methodology was used to distinguish the challenges faced with regards to enhancing resilience, enhancing CBM practices to address such challenges, and conduct research to examine the strength of those practices. To guarantee evidence-based

outputs, with the potential to make an impact on a national and global scale, farmers and development organizations with a proven record in CBM had been identified to join the project. These organizations were associated with universities to ensure scientifically sound inputs during the strategic planning exercise. The planning process incorporated several capacity development activities, organized by leading global institutions including Bioversity International and Wageningen University.

Representatives from all partner countries had been brought together in the course of an inception workshop, where they discussed and agreed on global modalities and processes for implementing the project. In each of the 28 CBM sites that had been identified, a governmental or non-governmental development organization and a university worked jointly with a community-based organization. Regional workshops were organized to develop a work plan for implementation of a participatory learning and action research process in each CBM site. This process included diagnosis and identification of CBM practices for strengthening community resilience, from



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which lessons learned were drawn as inputs for strategic action plans.

Through this process, the project aimed at facilitating interpretation, discussion and incorporation of on-farm experiences of non-governmental and grassroots organizations, supported by research and educational institutions, to develop evidence-based strategic action plans. A major particularity of this project was the involvement of a wide range of partners from countries in different continents with activities being carried out in 28 sites spread across twelve countries.

Seeds for Life - Action with Farmers in Uttar Pradesh - Indian Ganges Plain region - to enhance Food Security in the Context of Climate Change (Immediate Action Projects).³⁰

This project was executed by the non-governmental organization Humana People to People India, in collaboration with Bioversity International. It aimed at contributing to the development of sustainable food security

for 50 villages located in a rice and wheat producing area that is predicted to be seriously affected by climate change. The project did so by strengthening farmers' capacities in seed conservation, rice cultivation intensification and improved wheat cultivation, and by diversifying the farming systems through the promotion of further rice and wheat varieties, as well as other crops.

The 50 villages that benefited from the project covered 650 families (or about 4000 people). Of these, about 450 women farmers had organized themselves into self-help groups, and about 150-200 farmers were organized in farmers' clubs. Most project activities were implemented through the involvement of the members of the farmers' clubs and the women self-help groups that had been established to that end. The project's main activities were:

Establishment of local gene banks

Local-level gene banks with cool and dry chambers were established, where a part



³⁰ Humana People to People India (2012).



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of the collected seeds could be stored, in order to be shared with a national gene bank and to be distributed to farmers in following growing seasons. The members of the farmers' clubs and the women self-help groups were trained on how to operate and maintain the gene bank facilities, so that they would be able to run them themselves after the completion of the implementation period of the project. This ensured the farmers' access to locally adapted planting material in the long run, and conferred them control over their own planting material.

Farmer training

The project also promoted further training activities, including seed selection and on-farm conservation techniques. An important element of the project was farmer training on sustainable agricultural practices that increase agricultural yield, in particular with rice and wheat. Selected model farmers were involved in preparing demonstration plots, where sustainable rice cultivation intensification and improved wheat cultivation techniques are demonstrated. The project further entailed farmer training

for the registration of local seed varieties and conservation techniques with the national Plant Varieties Authority of India, with the aim of enabling farmers to reap benefits from their indigenous crop varieties.

Introduction of new crops and income generation

In order to reduce farmers' vulnerability to climate change by lessening their dependence on wheat and rice, and to enhance their food security and generate additional income, three new crops were introduced to the participating villages under the project, namely Amaranth, Moringa and Quinoa. All three crops are high in protein content, relatively drought tolerant, and valuable as additional food to the traditional diet. Most importantly, these crops can be cultivated both alongside the staple crops as well as during the fallow season. Simultaneously, the project was training the women self-help groups and farmers' clubs in the preparation of the newly introduced crops for cooking and packaging for household level consumption, contract supply or direct sale in the market, and aimed at establishing market linkages.



Key points to remember:

- One of the projects of the first portfolio of the Benefit-sharing Fund was the Potato Park in Peru, where over 400 native potato accessions were reintroduced, an online register with characterization data and traditional knowledge on over 1100 potato varieties was created, and new “biocultural” products were developed for local commercialization.
- The Nepalese NGO LI-BIRD implemented a project under the Strategic Action Plans window of the second round of the project cycle. The project aimed at developing a series of strategic action plans to integrate Community based Biodiversity Management as a strategy for on-farm management and enhancing climate change resilience of farming communities, for 28 sites in twelve countries across three continents.
- An Immediate Action Project was implemented in India under the second round of the project cycle. This project aimed at enhancing the food security of 4000 villagers living in an area that is predicted to be seriously affected by climate change, through a combination of training activities, crop diversification linked to new income generating activities, and the establishment of local gene banks.

Cross-references:

- To learn more about the **projects that received funding under first round of the project cycle** of the Benefit-sharing Fund, including an interactive map and fact sheets for each project, see: <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/projects-2009-2011>
- The main **results of the projects of the first round of the project cycle** of the Benefit-sharing Fund are presented in the following report: <http://www.planttreaty.org/node/4355>
- More information on the **projects that received support under the two funding windows of the second round of the project cycle** of the Benefit-sharing Fund, including maps and short descriptions, can be retrieved here: <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/call-proposals-2010-approved-projects-under-window-1-and-2>



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2.6. Conclusive Summary

In just a few years since its operationalization, the Benefit-sharing Fund has emerged as a leading multilateral funding mechanism for climate change adaptation and the enhancement of food security through sustainable use and on-farm management and conservation of crop diversity.

This success of the Benefit-sharing Fund is to a large part attributable to the fact that it disburses its funds according to specific and internationally agreed priorities, eligibility criteria and operational procedures. With its Strategic Plan the Benefit-sharing Fund has a clear fundraising target, although challenges remain to reach this target.

The adoption of the first Global Plan of Action, which provided policy guidance for coordinated international action in the crop diversity area and from which the priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund were later derived, was one of the early milestones towards the establishment of the Benefit-sharing Fund. The other main milestone, of course, was the adoption of the International Treaty, which recognized the Global Plan of Action as a supporting element, and provided for the Funding Strategy and the Multilateral System for Access and Benefit-sharing. The Benefit-sharing Fund became operational with the opening of the first call for proposals in December 2008 and the first disbursements to executing entities by the end of 2009.

From the first round of its project cycle to the second one, the total funding level of the Benefit-sharing Fund increased substantially, from 11 projects receiving up to US\$ 50 000 each to 19 projects receiving up to US\$ 400 000 each. The total budget for the project

portfolio of the third call for proposals is expected to exceed US\$ 10 million. This increase in scale was accompanied by major developments in the design and structure of the call for proposals, as the Benefit-sharing Fund adopted its Programmatic Approach.

Under the Programmatic Approach, the thematic focus “to help ensure sustainable food security by assisting farmers to adapt to climate change through a targeted set of high impact activities on the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture” was introduced. The Programmatic Approach also introduced a new structure of the call for proposals that is based on funding windows, which allows the Benefit-sharing Fund to support projects with immediate results alongside projects that focus on a wider horizon and may only show sustainable impact in the longer term.

Under the second call, one window was open to projects for the elaboration of strategic action plans, whereas the second window was reserved for immediate action projects. The Governing Body decided to maintain the thematic focus that was introduced under the second round of the project cycle. The structure based on funding windows was also maintained for the third call for proposals, with one window for immediate action projects and a second one for projects that focus on co-development and transfer of technologies. This is expected to give further impetus to the technology transfer element of funding priority 1 of the Benefit-sharing Fund, and provide for sufficient time to properly evaluate the impacts of the strategic action plan projects of the second round of the project cycle.



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How to Access Resources under the Benefit- sharing Fund



LESSON 3



Learning objectives

At the end of this lesson, the reader will:

- be familiar with a range of possible project activities that match the funding priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund;
- know the eligibility criteria and selection criteria for project proposals;
- understand the main steps required to file a project proposal; and
- have an overview of the procedural steps after the approval of a project proposal.



Target learner groups

Governmental and non-governmental organizations, including gene banks and research institutions, farmers and farmers' organizations, and regional and international organizations.



Cicer arietinum, chickpea, by Elizabeth Blackwell (1739)

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3.1. Overview of the Lesson

Evidence from the first two rounds of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund shows that the demand for financial resources for conservation and sustainable use of crop diversity exceeds the Benefit-sharing Fund's current funding capacity.

In response to the second call for proposals, for example, more than 400 pre-proposals were submitted to the Secretariat of the International Treaty. After a thorough screening and selection process, ensuring the quality and technical merit of project proposals, 19 projects were approved for funding in line with the level of available funds. The number of project proposals approved for funding can vary in each round of the project cycle, depending on the funds available.

Due to this relative scarcity of resources, the grant-making process of the Benefit-sharing Fund is highly competitive. This lesson therefore aims at supporting potential applicants in enhancing the quality of their pre-proposals and project proposals, by explaining the eligibility criteria, priorities and selection criteria of the Benefit-sharing Fund in-depth. The lesson also provides useful background information on the steps and processes of the project cycle.

When preparing and filing their pre-proposals and project proposals, applicants

are encouraged to take into account the following suggestions:

- Verify whether you are eligible to receive financial support of the Benefit-sharing Fund;
- make sure your proposed project activities fall within the priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund;
- make sure your proposed project addresses the screening and appraisal criteria of the call for proposals; and
- strictly follow the procedures outlined in the call for proposals and defined by the steps of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund.

After completion of this lesson, readers will be fully acquainted with the grant-making process of the Benefit-sharing Fund and have a clear idea as to which aspects they should pay special attention to in order to comply with the screening and appraisal criteria.

Applicants are therefore advised to regularly monitor the website of the International Treaty for up-to-date information related to the Benefit-sharing Fund and its calls for proposals: <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/benefit-sharing-fund>

Cross-references:

- For **up-to-date information on the Benefit-sharing Fund** and its calls for proposals regularly monitor the following web page: <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/benefit-sharing-fund>



Box 3.1: Frequently Asked Questions on the Benefit-sharing Fund

• What type of projects does the Benefit-sharing Fund invest in?

The Benefit-sharing Fund provides financial support to projects that address the following priorities: on-farm management and conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA); sustainable use of PGRFA; and information exchange, technology transfer and capacity building related to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.

• Who is eligible for funding under the Benefit-sharing Fund?

Any governmental or non-governmental organization, including gene banks and research institutions, farmers and farmers' organizations, and regional and international organizations, based in countries that are Contracting Parties to the International Treaty, may apply for grants under the Benefit-sharing Fund, for projects that benefit Contracting Parties that are developing countries.

A list of Contracting Parties eligible to receive support under the Benefit-sharing Fund, derived from the World Bank's most recent classification of economies, is prepared for each round of the project cycle. In addition, for project proposals to be eligible for funding they must meet the objectives of the International Treaty, fall within the priorities mentioned in the answer to the previous question, and be presented through the concerned Contracting Party.

• Can funding be requested on an ongoing basis?

No. Eligible entities may only apply for funding in response to specific calls for proposals, which mark the beginning of a new project cycle. The announcement of each call is posted on the website of the International Treaty (www.planttreaty.org) and a formal notification is disseminated through its national focal points and other well established communication channels. Users can also register online to be informed about the announcement of a new call and other news about the International Treaty: <http://www.planttreaty.org/user/register>

• Are there any additional requirements projects must comply with?

In addition to the general eligibility criteria referred to in the answer to the second question above, each call for proposals contains a set of screening and appraisal criteria that are specific to that round of the project cycle. This is due to the fact that a given call for proposals may have a special focus on a particular set of activities or crops, for example. As the screening and appraisal criteria may change from one call to another, it is important to read the information contained in the call for proposals and its annexes very carefully.

Once funded by the Benefit-sharing Fund, executing entities are required to include the PGRFA involved in their projects that fall under *Annex 1* of the International Treaty into the Treaty's Multilateral System. In addition, they shall make available the information generated through the funded activities within one year after the implementation period.

• How large are the project grants disbursed by the Benefit-sharing Fund?

The size of the project grants may vary from one call for proposals to another. Under the second round of the project cycle, for example, there were two funding windows for two different types of projects. Window 1 supported projects that elaborated Strategic Action Plans, with individual funding levels of up to US\$ 400 000 over an implementation period of one year. It was aimed at projects analyzing opportunities for meeting the challenges posed by climate change and developing spatially appropriate priorities, strategies and action plans. Window 2 supported Immediate Action Projects, with individual funding levels of up to US\$ 300 000 over an implementation period of two years. These projects aimed at generating immediate benefits for smallholder farming communities.

A Frequently Asked Questions section on the Benefit-sharing Fund is also available online: <http://www.planttreaty.org/faq?tid=105>.



3.2. Who is Eligible to Receive Financial Support under the Benefit-sharing Fund?

First of all, potential applicants may only apply for funding in response to specific calls for proposals. Such calls for proposals are published by the Secretariat on the website of the International Treaty.

In principle, any governmental or non-governmental organization, including gene banks and research institutions, farmers and farmers' organizations, and regional and international organizations, based in countries that are Contracting Parties to the International Treaty, may apply for grants under the Benefit-sharing Fund.¹

In addition, proposed projects must comply with a set of short and straightforward eligibility criteria. Concretely, they must:

- *Meet the objectives of the International Treaty*

The objectives of the International Treaty are the conservation and the sustainable use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA), and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits that arise from their use, for global food security and sustainable agriculture.²



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¹ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2009), para. 9.

² International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2001), Article 1.



- *Fall within the priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund*

The priorities are sustainable use and on-farm management and conservation of PGRFA, as well as information exchange, technology transfer and capacity building related to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. Section 3.3. provides more detail about possible activities that may fall under these priorities.

- *Benefit Contracting Parties that are developing countries*

A list of Contracting Parties eligible to receive support under the Benefit-sharing Fund, derived from the World Bank's most recent classification of economies, is prepared for each round of the project cycle. The list

is posted on the website of the International Treaty, together with the call for proposals.

- *Be presented through the Contracting Party or Parties concerned*

Applicants must submit their proposals through the national focal point of the International Treaty, the Permanent Representative to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), or other official channels of their respective countries. This is to ensure that projects will receive the required recognition and institutional support of the countries in which these are implemented.

Proposals that do not fulfil all of these eligibility criteria are automatically excluded from the selection process.

Key points to remember:

- Potential applicants may only apply for funding in response to specific calls for proposals that are published by the Secretariat on the website of the International Treaty.
- Any governmental or non-governmental organization, including gene banks and research institutions, farmers and farmers' organizations, and regional and international organizations, based in countries that are Contracting Parties to the International Treaty, may apply for grants under the Benefit-sharing Fund.
- In order to be eligible to receive financial support from the Benefit-sharing Fund, projects must: meet the objectives of the International Treaty; fall within the priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund; benefit Contracting Parties that are developing countries; and be presented through the Contracting Parties or Parties concerned.
- Proposals that do not fulfil all of these eligibility criteria are automatically excluded from the selection process.

Cross-references:

- The **calls for proposals of the Benefit-sharing Fund** are published on the following web page: <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/benefit-sharing-fund>
- For more information about the **objectives of the International Treaty**, refer to sub-section 2.2.1. of lesson 2 of Module I (Objectives, Scope and Basic Concepts).
- The contacts of the **national focal points** of the International Treaty can be found here: <http://www.planttreaty.org/nfp>
- The contacts of the **Permanent Representatives to FAO** can be retrieved here: <http://admintersys.fao.org/Bluebook/jsp/blank.jsp#>



3.3. What Activities fall within the Priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund?³

The Benefit-sharing Fund disburses its financial resources according to internationally agreed priorities, to ensure its focus on critical conservation and sustainable use activities in developing countries that do not receive adequate funding from other sources, and to avoid duplications and enhance synergies with other funding mechanisms. In order to be eligible for support from the Benefit-sharing Fund, proposed project activities must fall within the following priorities:

- On-farm management and conservation of PGRFA;
- sustainable use of PGRFA; and
- information exchange, technology

transfer and capacity building related to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.⁴

The second call for proposals introduced the thematic focus to help ensure sustainable food security by assisting farmers to adapt to climate change. The Governing Body welcomed this thematic focus and decided to maintain it.⁵ It is important to note, however, that this thematic focus does not imply broadening or modifying the three agreed priorities. Rather, it constitutes a precise, consistent and concrete implementation of the agreed priorities with the aim of increasing the positive impact of the Benefit-sharing Fund.



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³ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2007), annex 1.

⁴ These three – equally important and complementary – priorities are drawn from the Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (hereafter ‘Global Plan of Action’) – a supporting component of the International Treaty that identifies gaps and provides policy guidance for coordinated international action in the area of crop diversity. The first Global Plan of Action was entitled ‘Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture’. In 2011, the updated Global Plan of Action was adopted, with the title ‘Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture’.

⁵ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2011), paras. 13 and 22.





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The following three sub-sections discuss the priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund in more detail, presenting examples of possible activities for each of them. It will become clear that the priorities are highly interrelated; for example, participatory plant breeding efforts may qualify as both on-farm and sustainable use activities, while at the same time contributing towards strengthening the capacities of farmers and professional breeders involved.

Proposals that do not promote activities that fall within the priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund are automatically excluded from the selection process.

3.3.1. On-farm Management and Conservation of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

There are three main reasons why the Benefit-sharing Fund prioritizes on-farm management and conservation of crop diversity: first, because it is the most direct way to ensure that benefits reach farmers

and indigenous and local communities in developing countries; second, it strongly contributes to the maintenance of on-farm diversity of PGRFA; and third, to ensure the complementarity of the Benefit-sharing Fund with funding bodies that focus on *ex situ* conservation, in particular the Global Crop Diversity Trust (hereafter ‘Crop Trust’).

On-farm management and conservation comprises the maintenance, recovery, further development and cultivation of viable populations of species of domesticated or cultivated plant species in the surroundings where they have developed their distinctive traits.⁶ Strengthening systems for on-farm management and conservation of genetic diversity contributes towards reducing farmers’ vulnerability to climate change. In this respect, farmers, as managers of genetic diversity, have much to offer both to their own communities and to the world more generally through their efforts to conserve crop diversity, improve it through breeding and selection and by making it available for use to others.⁷



⁶ International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2001), Article 2.

⁷ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2010), p. 19.

On-farm activities that are being supported by the Benefit-sharing Fund may include, *inter alia*: on-farm evaluation, selection, conservation and use of local and introduced genetic diversity (including crop wild relatives, landraces and traditional varieties developed by farmers as well as new, improved varieties bred by professional plant breeders, and hybrids between local and introduced germplasm); farmer breeding and selection activities; ensuring the conservation of any genetic diversity that might otherwise be lost as a result of introduction and breeding efforts (e.g. through conservation in national or international gene banks or the development

of local and community gene banks); preserving and making available local and indigenous knowledge; developing outlets for local crops and varieties; adding value to local crops and varieties; and linking farmers with communities elsewhere nationally, regionally and internationally to promote the sharing of material and information relating to climate change.⁸

A major condition for successful on-farm management projects is that they result in improved livelihoods of the communities involved, allowing beneficiaries to meet their own subsistence needs and/or to generate additional market income.

Box 3.2: The Benefit-sharing Fund and On-farm Management and Conservation⁹

On-farm and *in situ* management and conservation of crop diversity is addressed in Articles 5.1 c), 5.1 d) and 6.2 f) of the International Treaty. These provisions provide a basis for the promotion and support of the efforts of farmers, indigenous and local communities to manage and conserve their PGRFA on-farm, and in the case of crop wild relatives *in situ*, including in protected areas, and for promoting the wider use of crop diversity on-farm. Many among the projects of the first round of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund focussed on on-farm management and conservation of PGRFA.

In one of the projects, in India, for example, the Benefit-sharing Fund supported the project team in identifying isolated farmers that still cultivated a highly nutritive and locally adapted farmer developed cassava variety, in order to multiply the variety and disseminate it more broadly. Now, more than 300 women farmers are again actively involved in the cultivation of this variety, through which they have managed to triple their incomes compared to their previous earning levels.

In Peru, the Papa Arariwas - community-appointed Potato Guardians - developed 80 new potato accessions during the project period, leading to a substantial increase in on-farm diversity in the Cusco Potato Park. The Papa Arariwas oversee the conservation and management of this diversity, ensuring that the planting material is available to all six indigenous communities of the park. These communities have also developed new products based on their potato varieties, which they sell on local markets to earn additional income.

A particular approach to safeguard crop wild relatives *in situ* was adopted in a project supported by the Benefit-sharing Fund in Nicaragua. Two farmers owning land that falls within a protected area entered into contractual agreements whereby they committed themselves to conserve naturally growing populations of the wild maize relative teocintle on their land, in exchange for targeted training activities and basic agricultural tools.

⁸ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2010), p. 19. This is not an exhaustive list of activities; it is only provided for illustration purposes.

⁹ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2013).





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Key points to remember:

- Prioritizing on-farm activities is the most direct way to ensure that benefits reach farmers and indigenous and local communities in developing countries; makes a strong contribution to the on-farm maintenance of PGRFA; and ensures the complementarity between the Benefit-sharing Fund and other funding mechanisms that focus on *ex situ* conservation, in particular the Crop Trust.
- Strengthening systems for on-farm management and conservation of PGRFA contributes towards reducing farmers' vulnerability to climate change.

Cross-references:

- For technical information related to **on-farm management and conservation of PGRFA**, and for practical options to implement measures to promote on-farm management and conservation, refer to sub-section 1.2.2. of lesson 1 of Module II (What is Conservation and Sustainable Use?) and sub-sections 4.2.1., 4.2.2. and 4.2.3. of lesson 4 of that same Module (Implementation of Articles 5 and 6 from a Users' Perspective).
- For more detailed background information on the interrelatedness of the **global challenges of crop diversity, food security and climate change**, and the ways the International Treaty addresses these challenges, refer to section 1.2. of lesson 1 of Module I (A Global Treaty for Food Security in an Era of Climate Change).



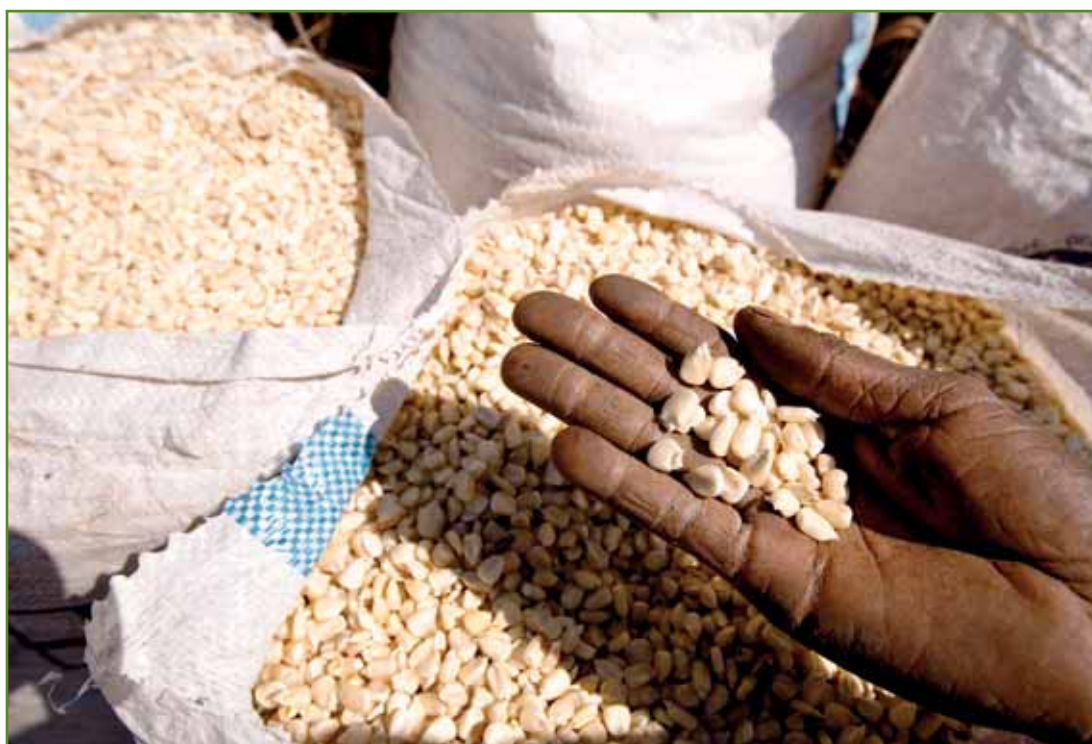
3.3.2. Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

This priority covers all activities that are linked to the sustainable use of crop diversity. It stresses in particular the need for increased characterization and evaluation of PGRFA to facilitate their use for breeding purposes, and the diversification of crop production, genetic enhancement and broadening the genetic base of crops as means to increase the sustainability of agricultural production and to respond to the challenge of climate change.

The joint efforts of professional breeders and farmers in improving crops that are important to resource-poor farmers, or that have the potential to become important under future climate scenarios, is an activity that falls under all three priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund. There is a need for such participatory plant breeding efforts that focus on the breeding and selection of varieties with traits that are particularly important for helping farmers adapt to the negative impact of climate change, e.g. tolerance to heat, drought, water-

logging, salinity, or resistances to predicted new pests and diseases.¹⁰

Improved varieties, however bred, are of no value unless they can be widely disseminated and are actually adopted by farmers. Such dissemination may occur through formal and informal channels, and both will be important over time as the effects of climate change cause the geographical location of ecosystems to shift. Varieties that are adapted to one location are likely to find themselves adapted to quite another geographic area one or more decades hence. Strengthening the production and delivery systems for seed and other planting material will be required by farmers in order to adapt their farming systems to climate change. This might be achieved through, *inter alia*, supporting the efforts of public or private seed producers, as well as other, often less formal, arrangements for disseminating varieties directly among farmers themselves (through so-called “informal seed systems”). In supporting both formal and informal seed systems, it will be important to ensure that appropriate measures are in place for conserving any materials that might be replaced by the new varieties.¹¹



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¹⁰ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2010), p. 19.

¹¹ *Idem.*, p. 19-20.



Box 3.3: The Benefit-sharing Fund and Sustainable Use

Many of the activities implemented under the projects of the first portfolio of the Benefit-sharing Fund contributed towards the implementation of the provisions on sustainable use of PGRFA contained in Article 6 of the International Treaty, such as promoting the expanded use of local and locally adapted crops, broadening the genetic base of crops and strengthening research to enhance intra- and inter-specific variation.

Over 360 traditional and locally adapted accessions of eleven different crops threatened by genetic erosion, including crop wild relatives, were collected under the overall portfolio, and the best performing in terms of climate adaptation, pest resilience and yields were actively disseminated and promoted among farmers. More than 1800 farmers gained access to locally adapted planting material through the activities supported by the portfolio.

The Benefit-sharing Fund, in the first round of its project cycle, also contributed to ongoing activities under which more than 2200 accessions of eight different crops were evaluated and characterized. In particular, resistance traits and accessions with high resistance levels to six major crop diseases were studied, in addition to accessions with high tolerance levels to heat, drought and cold.

By supporting ongoing research and development programmes, the first portfolio of the Benefit-sharing Fund also contributed to the selection and breeding of over 270 accessions of five major food crops (potato, wheat, maize, finger millet and sorghum) that exhibit high potential for resistance levels to different biotic and abiotic stresses, and to training farmers in plant selection techniques and adaptation strategies.

Furthermore, over 1700 accessions of 13 different crops addressed by the portfolio will be made available to the international scientific community for further research and breeding through the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing of the International Treaty. Access to this genetic material and the research results and characterization data will boost the further use of these accessions worldwide.

Key points to remember:

- There is a particular need for better characterization of PGRFA to enhance their use for breeding purposes and to develop varieties that are adapted to new climate change induced stresses.
- The Benefit-sharing Fund focuses in particular on breeding efforts that are carried out in collaboration with farmers.
- Strengthening efficient seed distribution systems is key in enabling farmers to adapt to climate change.

Cross-references:

- For a detailed account of **measures for the sustainable use of PGRFA**, including technical background information, the respective provisions of the International Treaty, as well as options and examples for their implementation, refer to the lessons of Module II (Conservation and Sustainable Use under the International Treaty).
- To learn more about **the International Treaty's provisions dealing with participatory plant breeding**, refer to sub-section 2.2.2. of lesson 2 of Module II (The Provisions of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty).
- For more information on **different methodologies and objectives for participatory plant breeding**, refer to sub-section 4.2.2. of lesson 4 of Module II (Implementation of Articles 5 and 6 from a Users' Perspective).



3.3.3. Information Exchange, Technology Transfer and Capacity Building

It is important to note that in the context of the Benefit-sharing Fund, this priority refers to information exchange, technology transfer and capacity building *related to the management, conservation and sustainable use of crop diversity*.

Strengthening the institutional environment for crop diversity management, conservation and sustainable use at the local, national and regional level is a critical area for support. Strong national programmes are needed to contribute fully to, and take full advantage of, international cooperation in the area of crop diversity. Effective national programmes provide the policies, strategies and action plans that are necessary for setting well-defined goals, allocating resources, distributing responsibilities and strengthening linkages between all relevant

stakeholders.¹² It is essential that national programmes have the capacity to assess their future germplasm needs with respect to food security and climate change, and that they are able to access, develop, maintain and distribute the required plant genetic materials.¹³

Practitioners of crop conservation and use, such as agricultural researchers, gene bank personnel, breeders and farmers, require adequate technical capacities to carry out their respective roles. To this end, the Benefit-sharing Fund focuses in particular on building capacities with respect to on-farm management, development and conservation of traditional and locally adapted crop varieties and the *in situ* maintenance and use of crop wild relatives, in all breeding sectors.

Transfer of technology does not generally take place in isolation but in the context of a ‘package’ of activities, which, in addition to the technology itself, also includes



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¹² FAO (2011), p. 67. Relevant stakeholders may include local and national government institutions, the private sector, civil society organizations, breeders’ and farmers’ organizations, and research and educational bodies.

¹³ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2010), p. 18.



information exchange and capacity building. It also often requires policy and infrastructural support. Technology needs to be understood in a very wide sense and its transfer should aim to solve important problems, with special attention being paid to technologies that could enhance the ability of farmers to adapt to climate change. A ‘typical’ project might involve, for example, a national research institution in a developing country – the lead institution – working in partnership with a research institute elsewhere, to develop a particular item of technology (e.g. drought

or heat resistance in a locally important smallholder crop) and transferring it to the lead institution for further adaptation, testing and dissemination.

Neither technology transfer nor capacity building are feasible without information exchange. Information exchange can take place at different levels and use different channels. Among many ways, information can be exchanged through collaboration between scientists and farmers, and sharing best practices and research results with

Box 3.4: The Benefit-sharing Fund and Technology Transfer¹⁴

Technology transfer is a key element of the Benefit-sharing Fund’s priorities, and it is considered a primary form of non-monetary benefit-sharing under the International Treaty. Several of the projects of the Benefit-sharing Fund’s first portfolio had a pronounced technology transfer component.

Part of the ongoing activities of the executing entity of a project in Peru towards which the Benefit-sharing Fund contributed, for example, comprised the transfer of *in vitro* germplasm management techniques from the International Potato Centre (CIP) to the local “potato guardians” (Papa Arariwas) of the Potato Park. This transfer of technology significantly strengthened the Papa Arariwas’ capacities to produce high quality and virus-free planting material for the six indigenous communities of the park.

The Benefit-sharing Fund further contributed to ongoing research activities of the executing entities in Costa Rica and Uruguay that aimed at breeding new potato varieties for local farmers. The Costa Rica project, for example, reported to have developed various breeding lines with high resistance potential to potato blight that are extremely suited for processing, and thus of high value to the potato industry. Similarly, the Uruguay project detected a resistance gene to bacterial wilt in a wild potato relative with high potential to be bred into commercial potato varieties for the use of farmers in the near future.

In Kenya, two improved finger millet varieties with particularly high yields under local conditions and resistances to blast disease were multiplied and distributed to over 1000 smallholder farmers.

The transfer of technologies is extremely important as it bears a high multiplier potential for lasting impact in addressing the global challenges of safeguarding biodiversity, strengthening food security and adapting to climate change. In order to further enhance the generation and dissemination of new and sustainable technologies, one of the two funding windows of the third call for proposals focuses on ‘co-development and transfer of technologies’.



¹⁴ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2013).

stakeholders at the local, national and international level. Possible channels include, but are not limited to, awareness raising events, discussion forums, farmer field schools, websites and publications. In particular, there is a need for improved information systems

to ensure that timely and accurate information - including local and indigenous knowledge - on the genetic resources themselves, the traits they possess and on how to access and use them, is readily available, e.g. in the form of online catalogues and data bases.¹⁵

Key points to remember:

- Capacity development implies the enhancement of technical and functional capacities across the three dimensions of individuals, organizations and the enabling environment, which includes the establishment of sound policies and programmes.
- Technology transfer comprises the development, improvement and exchange of both 'hard technologies' such as infrastructure, equipment and seeds, and "soft technologies" such as knowledge of methods, techniques and practices.
- There is a particular need for improved information systems, such as online catalogues on PGRFA and related traditional knowledge, to ensure the availability of data related to conserved PGRFA.
- Proposals that do not promote activities that fall within the priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund are automatically excluded from the selection process.

Cross-references:

- To learn more about the **relationship between the Global Plan of Action and the International Treaty**, refer to sub-section 3.2.5. of lesson 3 of Module II (Further Components of the International Treaty Supporting Conservation and Sustainable Use).
- For working **definitions of terms and concepts** such as PGRFA, *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation etc, refer to section 2.3. of lesson 2 of Module I (Objectives and Basic Concepts).
- For more technical background information **on *in vitro* conservation**, refer to sub-section 1.2.2. of lesson 1 of Module II (What is Conservation and Sustainable Use?).
- For an **example of a global information system** on PGRFA, refer to Box 5.3 in lesson 5 of Module I (The Legal Architecture Governing Crop Diversity and Partnerships for Implementation), and see the website of Genesys: <http://www.genesys-pgr.org/>

¹⁵ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2010), p. 18.



3.4. Which are the Criteria for Project Selection?

3.4.1. Screening and Appraisal Criteria

In addition to the eligibility criteria, each call for proposals contains further criteria that are used by an independent panel of expert for the screening of pre-proposals and for the appraisal of full project proposals. These screening and appraisal criteria are derived from the general framework of selection criteria contained in the operational procedures of the Benefit-sharing Fund, however they are specific to each call and may differ depending on the type of project to be funded.

In the case of the second call for proposals, for example, screening criteria for Immediate Action Projects included that they had to have the potential and adequate size for a significant impact in the short term; respond to a clear priority need, preferably as

expressed through already existing strategies or plans; be country driven and demonstrate a clear engagement with, and participation by, relevant stakeholders; and identify actual and potential additional funds from other funding sources that share similar or complementary objectives. In addition, pre-proposals were screened for potential impacts related to food security and climate change in all regions with developing countries that are Contracting Parties of the Treaty.

The appraisal criteria typically are based and further build on the screening criteria for pre-proposals. They are applied at the full project proposal stage.

Provided that the screening and appraisal criteria are likely to differ from one call to another, it is important to read the specific instructions of each call for proposals very carefully.



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3.4.2. Selection Criteria

As mentioned above, the screening and appraisal criteria (specific to each call for proposals) are derived from the general framework of selection criteria contained in the operational procedures of the Benefit-sharing Fund.

The ten general selection criteria are:

1. Project relevance

This criterion assesses the degree to which the project addresses the priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund, whether it makes a contribution to poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability, and whether it is relevant to national, regional and international policies, plans and/or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.

2. Feasibility

The feasibility criterion examines whether the project aims are realistic given the available resources and the time frame, and whether the budget is adequate to fully cover the proposed activities and produce the expected results within the planned implementation period.

3. Effectiveness and efficiency

Criterion number three explores whether the anticipated project costs are warranted against the expected project results and benefits.

4. Benefits and beneficiaries

This criterion takes into account: whether the beneficiaries of the proposed project are in line with (1) the provisions of the International Treaty (i.e. primarily farmers, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition), (2) the priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund (i.e. farmers, indigenous and local communities in developing countries) and (3) the specific call for proposals; and whether the expected results are likely to reach the proposed beneficiaries.

5. Team composition and capacity

Criterion number five assesses whether the potential executing entities have sufficient human capacity, including partners with the different disciplines that are required, and whether sufficient use of available local expertise is foreseen for project implementation.



6. Collaboration

The collaboration criterion examines the extent of collaboration foreseen for project implementation, the extent to which such collaboration enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of the project, and whether there is counterpart funding and/or input in kind by the applicant. This could be, for example, collaboration between different types of institutions within a country or region, or technological support from institutions based in other countries or regions.

7. Planning and Monitoring

At the full proposal stage, applicants are required to elaborate and include a concrete monitoring and reporting plan in their project proposals. Such a plan must contain milestones for project implementation, a logical framework with result indicators, baseline information and a description of the problem to be addressed, as well as an organizational set-up and separate budget lines for monitoring and reporting. This criterion thus explores whether the project proposal incorporates proper milestones and indicators, and the extent to which these allow measuring the expected impacts.

8. Sustainability

The sustainability criterion assesses the likelihood that the activities and beneficial changes foreseen under the project will be sustained beyond the implementation period, taking into account whether capacity development components (including, in particular, technology transfer, capacity building and training) are incorporated in the project proposal.

9. Geographic extension

Criterion number nine assesses the extent of the geographic scope and impact of the proposed project, as well as the global and/or regional importance of the project in achieving the objectives of the International Treaty.

10. Crop relevance

This criterion examines the importance of the PGRFA addressed by the proposed project to global and regional food security (including to the quality and diversity of the human diet or animal feed), as well as to conservation and utilization (e.g. whether the material is of particular importance for



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research and breeding). It also looks at the extent to which the crops are threatened at the national, regional or global level. In addition, it explores whether the proposed project addresses conservation and/or utilization of PGRFA in one of their centres of diversity.

The screening and appraisal criteria derived from this general framework of selection criteria are specific to each call for proposals. It is therefore essential to refer to the criteria contained in the current call for proposals when preparing pre-proposals and full project proposals.

Key points to remember:

- Individual calls for proposals typically contain a set of criteria that are used for the screening of pre-proposals, in addition to the eligibility criteria.
- Provided that the screening criteria are likely to differ from one call to another, it is important to read the specific instructions of each call for proposals very carefully.
- In order to be eligible to receive financial support from the Benefit-sharing Fund, projects must: meet the objectives of the International Treaty; fall within the priorities of the Benefit-sharing Fund; benefit Contracting Parties that are developing countries; and be presented through the Contracting Parties or Parties concerned.
- The criteria used for the screening of pre-proposals and the appraisal of full proposals are derived from the general framework of selection criteria as contained in the operational procedures of the Benefit-sharing Fund: project relevance; feasibility; effectiveness and efficiency; benefits and beneficiaries; team composition and capacity; collaboration; planning and monitoring; sustainability; geographic extension; and crop relevance.
- As screening and appraisal criteria are specific to each call, it is essential to refer to the criteria contained in the current call for proposals when preparing pre-proposals and full project proposals.

Cross-references:

- For more information about the **objectives of the International Treaty**, refer to sub-section 2.2.1. of lesson 2 of Module I (Objectives, Scope and Basic Concepts).
- The contacts of the **national focal points** of the International Treaty can be found here: <http://www.planttreaty.org/nfp>
- The contacts of the **Permanent Representatives to FAO** can be retrieved here: <http://admintersys.fao.org/Bluebook/jsp/blank.jsp#>
- For background information on the governance of the International Treaty, including the **role and composition of the Governing Body and its Bureau**, refer to sub-section 4.3. of lesson 4 of Module I (Main Components and Governance of the International Treaty).



3.5. What are the Procedures to be followed according to the Project Cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund?

The grant-making process of the Benefit-sharing Fund is largely defined by the steps of the Benefit-sharing Fund's project cycle; some of these steps take place before any funds are allocated to successful applicants, while others set in once the implementation period of the projects begins.

3.5.1. The Main Steps prior to the Allocation of Funds

Opening a call for proposals

The project cycle begins with a call for proposals issued by the Governing Body, in the official languages of the International

Treaty (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish). The call contains general information such as the aims, priorities, and the eligibility and selection criteria of the Benefit-sharing Fund; as well as information and procedures specific to the call, including: submission forms; screening and appraisal criteria; timing and deadlines; expected funds available; crops addressed; requirements to projects funded; and main legal and financial provisions of the project agreements. A concept note containing all this information is publicized through the website of the International Treaty, and disseminated through the Contracting Parties' national focal points and relevant regional bodies.



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Submission of pre-proposals

Once a call for proposals has been opened, applicants are invited to prepare their project pre-proposals, in accordance with the submission forms that are disseminated together with the call. Pre-proposals need to be submitted to the Secretary of the International Treaty through the national focal point, the Permanent Representative to FAO, or other official channels of the applicant's host country, respectively the country where the project is to be implemented, within the deadline indicated in the call.

Pre-proposals must fulfil the eligibility criteria and address the screening criteria contained in the call for proposals. In order to enhance the chances of success of a pre-proposal, the instructions contained in the call for proposals and the submission form of pre-proposals - and in particular any additional requirements specified therein - should be strictly adhered to. Pre-proposals can be submitted in any official language of the International Treaty, plus a translation into either English, French or Spanish.¹⁶

Screening and response to pre-proposals

Upon receipt of the pre-proposals, these are screened by an independent panel of experts according to the eligibility criteria and the screening criteria established as part of the call for proposals. The panel of experts is composed of at least two experts per region, selected by the Bureau in consultation with the regions, from a roster of experts. The Bureau of the International Treaty will respond to the applicants within the timeframe published in the call for proposals, inviting applicants that fulfil the eligibility criteria and that achieve the

highest provisional ranking according to the screening criteria to submit full project proposals.

Submission of project proposals from approved pre-proposals

Applicants that were invited to prepare full project proposals should use the submission form of full project proposals they will receive from the Secretariat to that end. As with the pre-proposals, full proposals have to be submitted to the Secretary of the International Treaty through the national focal point, the Permanent Representative to FAO or other official channels of the applicant's host country, respectively the country where the project is to be implemented.

Proposals must address the appraisal criteria that are specific to the call for proposals, and the instructions contained in the call for proposals and the submission form of project proposals should be strictly followed. The Secretariat provides for a Helpdesk function that provides technical support to applicants for the preparation of project proposals, focusing in particular on Contracting Parties with special needs.¹⁷ Project proposals must be submitted within the announced deadline, in any of the official languages of the International Treaty, plus a translation into English, French or Spanish.

Appraisal of project proposals

Project proposals are appraised according to the appraisal criteria published in the call for proposals. To that end, the independent panel of experts reviews, scores and ranks the full project proposals based on their quality and technical merit.

¹⁶ English, Spanish and French are the working languages of the International Treaty.

¹⁷ More information of the Helpdesk can be found on the website of the International Treaty, at: <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/benefit-sharing-fund>



Box 3.5: Screening of Pre-proposals and Appraisal of Proposals under the first two Rounds of the Project Cycle

More than 400 pre-proposals were received in response to both the first and the second calls for proposals of the Benefit-sharing Fund.

In the first round of the project cycle, the Bureau of the Governing Body of the International Treaty met twice to screen the pre-proposals received, according to the eligibility criteria and a number of additional criteria that were established to that end. In the second round, the Bureau agreed that the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy would review the preparatory screening by the Secretariat and recommend to the Bureau a portfolio of pre-proposals to be invited to prepare full project proposals.

The panel of experts was then responsible for the appraisal of the full project proposals. In both rounds of the project cycle, the appraisal process started by submitting each project proposal to three experts, one of whom was from the Region of the applicant. The panel of experts worked based on an evaluation and ranking form prepared by the Secretariat of the International Treaty, which contained questions based on the selection criteria of the Benefit-sharing Fund and, in the case of the second round of the project cycle, according to additional criteria established as part of the call for proposals.

For the appraisal process of the second project cycle, the evaluation and ranking form contained 37 questions for Window 1 and 35 questions for Window 2 projects (total 125 proposals). Each expert was requested to appraise a number of projects, giving a score from 0 to 5 for each question. Project proposals that received the highest scores were then short-listed. In a further step, the experts appraised the short-listed proposals in three groups, according to a reduced set of five key evaluation questions based on the selection criteria and the additional criteria established as part of the call for proposals. For each question they were requested to give a score from 0 to 3. They then identified the 33 proposals (15 Window 1 and 18 Window 2) with the highest scores for a final collective appraisal. The final score of each of these proposals was the average of the scores provided by the individual experts. Based on this appraisal of the panel of experts, the Bureau approved the 19 project proposals (7 Window 1 and 12 Window 2) with the largest scores for funding, according to the financial resources available in the Benefit-sharing Fund.

Based on the lessons learned from the execution of the first and the second rounds of the project cycle, the screening of pre-proposals and the appraisal of proposals is now undertaken in an integrated manner, with the independent panel of experts responsible for both activities. This is to ensure that projects are screened and appraised based solely on their quality and technical merit.



Figure 3.1: The Grant-making Process of the Benefit-sharing Fund



Approval of projects for funding within the project cycle

The Bureau approves the projects to be funded, according to the level of funds contained in the Benefit-sharing Fund for that project cycle, the recommendations of the independent panel of experts and additional possible considerations, such as geographical balance. The list of projects approved for funding will be published on the website of the International Treaty.

The final number of projects approved thus depends on the funds available in each round of the project cycle, the size of individual grants foreseen in the call for proposals, and the funds requested by the successfully appraised applicants.

Signature of project agreements

The Secretariat then establishes project agreements with the executing entities of the approved projects. These so-called letters of agreement provide relevant legal and financial provisions and requirements from the Governing Body, including more defined

elements for reporting and monitoring as well as other general conditions.

For example, the project agreements define the amounts of the different instalments of the fund disbursements, and stipulate that the disbursements are conditional on the receipt and approval by the Secretariat of the implementation reports and final technical reports submitted by the executing entities. Another important element of the project agreements is the requirement for executing entities to include the PGRFA involved in their projects that fall under *Annex 1* of the International Treaty into the Multilateral System of the International Treaty. In addition, the project agreements require executing entities to make publicly available information generated through activities funded by the Benefit-sharing Fund within one year after the implementation period.

Once the project agreements and corresponding grant payment schedules are signed by the Secretary of the International Treaty and the senior management of executing entities, the executing entities can start implementing their activities.



Key points to remember:

- The main steps of the grant-making process prior to the allocation of funds are: opening a call for proposals; submission of pre-proposals; screening and response to pre-proposals; submission of project proposals from approved pre-proposals; appraisal of project proposals; approval of projects for funding within the project cycle; and signature of project agreements.

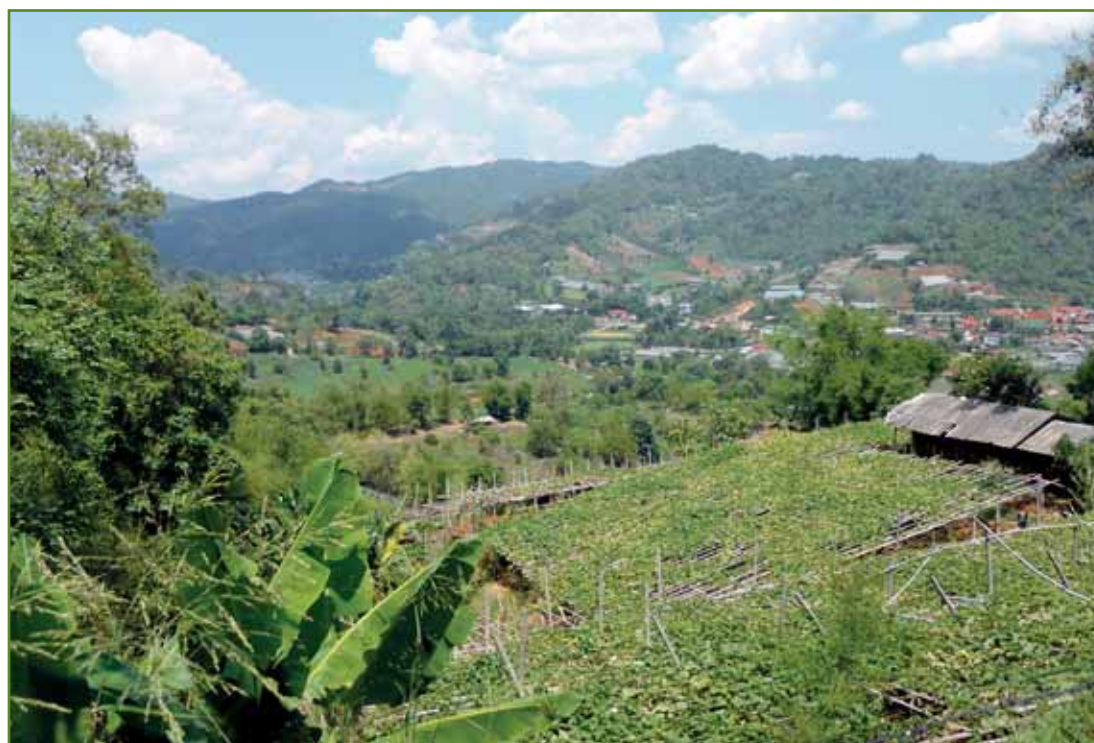
Cross-references:

- For **up-to-date information on the Benefit-sharing Fund** and its calls for proposals consult regularly the following web page: <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/benefit-sharing-fund>
- More information on the **Ad hoc Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy** can be found here: <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/history-ad-hoc-advisory-committee-funding-strategy>
- **Selected projects that received funding** under the first and second rounds of the project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund are presented under section 1.5 of lesson 2 of this Module (The Benefit-sharing Fund of the Funding Strategy).
- The contacts of the **national focal points** of the International Treaty can be found here: <http://www.planttreaty.org/nfp>
- The contacts of the **Permanent Representatives to FAO** can be retrieved here: <http://admintersys.fao.org/Bluebook/jsp/blank.jsp#>
- To learn more about **the Multilateral System**, refer to sub-section 4.2.3. of lesson 4 of Module I (Main Components and Governance of the International Treaty), as well as to the lessons of forthcoming Module IV (The Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing).



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3.5.2. The Main Steps after the Allocation of Funds

Disbursement

The exact terms and conditions of disbursement are set forth in the aforementioned project agreements. The project agreements include, *inter alia*, a schedule for the disbursement of funds in tranches based on time specific milestones, a requirement for an implementation report from the executing entity prior to each tranche disbursement, and a provision authorizing non-payment if project delivery fails.

The Secretariat of the International Treaty is responsible for the disbursement of funds. An initial payment follows the signature of the project agreement. Interim payments are made during the implementation period, dependent upon receipt and approval by the Secretariat of implementation reports, which must include a financial statement of expenditures signed and certified by a duly

designated representative of the executing entity, as well as relevant supporting documentation. A final payment is made at the end of the implementation period upon receipt and approval by the Secretariat of a terminal report, which must equally include a signed and certified financial statement of expenditures and supporting documentation.¹⁸

Reporting and monitoring

A mechanism for reporting and monitoring is provided for through the project proposals. At the moment of submitting their full proposals, applicants are required to elaborate and include a concrete monitoring and reporting plan. Such a plan must contain milestones for project implementation, a logical framework and indicators for results, a baseline for the project and a description of the problem to be addressed, as well as an organizational set-up and budgets for monitoring and reporting.

¹⁸ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2011), annex 2.





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As explained above, the payment schedule contained in the project agreements is linked to the detailed reporting schedule based on implementation reports and terminal reports.

The executing entities make active use of the implementation targets and result indicators contained in their monitoring and reporting plan, and compile data to assess progress, for the elaboration of the project reports. The implementation reports, which are submitted periodically to the Secretary according to the reporting schedule contained in the project agreement, must include a financial reporting component with a periodical audited financial statement, and a result reporting component with a periodical report on progress and results. The terminal report summarizes key successes and challenges for the future, and includes a financial report. The templates for the implementation and terminal reports are prepared by the Secretariat of the International Treaty.

In addition, the Secretary of the Treaty arranges for backstopping missions in

cooperation with multilateral agencies, where necessary, including to capture the views of stakeholders and to identify solutions to obstacles in project implementation.

At any stage of project implementation, the Bureau may consider the suspension or cancellation of a project. Reasons for suspension or cancellation may include financial irregularities, material breach and poor implementation performance leading to a conclusion that the project can no longer meet its objectives. Before the Bureau decides to suspend or cancel a project, the concerned executing entity will be given a fair chance to present its views.¹⁹

Independent evaluation

A terminal independent evaluation of the project portfolio is conducted at the end of the implementation period, with the aim to assess the achievement of outputs and outcomes, and the sustainability of results after project completion.



¹⁹ Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2011), annex 1.

The independent evaluation is based on visits to the locations of a sample of projects, and other mechanisms such as interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions. The evaluation report's components include, *inter alia*, findings, lessons for broader applicability and recommendations. The evaluation team is lead by independent experts

not involved with the projects and the Benefit-sharing Fund, who are solely responsible for the independent evaluation report. The team submits the report to the Secretary of the International Treaty within a reasonable timeframe after termination of the projects, who then makes the report public through the website of the International Treaty.²⁰

Key points to remember:

- The main steps of the grant-making process after the allocation of funds are: disbursement; reporting and monitoring; and independent evaluation.
- Disbursements are made in several tranche payments, and are conditional on the receipt and approval by the Secretariat of the implementation and terminal reports submitted by the executing entities.
- The Bureau can suspend or even cancel projects in case of financial irregularities, material breach and poor implementation performance.



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²⁰ No independent evaluation was carried out for the first round of the project cycle, due to the limited size of projects.

3.6. Conclusive Summary

Organizations based in countries that are Contracting Parties to the International Treaty may apply for grants under the Benefit-sharing Fund in response to specific calls for proposals. Successful proposals must meet the eligibility criteria of the Benefit-sharing Fund and promote activities that fall within its priorities, and address the screening and appraisal criteria specific to the call for proposals.

In order to be eligible for support from the Benefit-sharing Fund, proposed projects must meet the objectives of the International Treaty, benefit Contracting Parties that are developing countries, be presented through the Contracting Party or Parties concerned, and fall within the following priorities:

- On-farm management and conservation of PGRFA
- Sustainable use of PGRFA
- Information exchange, technology transfer and capacity building related to on-farm management, conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA

The screening and appraisal criteria applied by the independent panel of experts are derived from the general framework of the following selection criteria:

- Project relevance
- Team composition and capacity
- Feasibility
- Sustainability
- Effectiveness and efficiency
- Planning and monitoring
- Benefits and beneficiaries
- Geographic extension

- Collaboration
- Crop relevance

The main steps of the grant-making process of the Benefit-sharing Fund prior to the allocation of funds to the executing entities of approved project proposals are:

- Opening a call for proposals
- Submission of pre-proposals
- Screening and response to pre-proposals
- Submission of project proposals from approved pre-proposals
- Appraisal of project proposals
- Approval of projects for funding within the project cycle
- Signature of project agreements

Once the project agreements have been signed, the Secretariat of the International Treaty arranges the first tranche payments so that the executing entities can start implementing their activities. A first instalment is paid upon signature of the project agreement, while intermediate and final disbursements are dependent on the receipt and approval by the Secretariat of the project reports submitted by the executing entities. In addition to a technical report assessing project results against the initial project objectives, and a detailed statement of expenditures, the terminal project report must also contain a plan for inclusion into the Multilateral System of plant genetic material addressed by the projects which falls under *Annex 1* of the International Treaty. An independent evaluation of the entire portfolio of each round of the project cycle is undertaken after its completion.



3.7. Bibliographic References

- FAO. 2011. *Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2624e/i2624e00.pdf> (accessed 8 October 2013).
- International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. 2001. Available at: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/011/i0510e/i0510e.pdf> (accessed 8 October 2013).
- Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. 2013. *Report on the First Round of the Project Cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund*. Available at: http://www.planttreaty.org/sites/default/files/Report_BSF.pdf (accessed 8 October 2013).
- Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. 2012. *Conservation and Sustainable Use under the International Treaty*. Available at: http://www.planttreaty.org/sites/default/files/edm2_full_en.pdf (accessed 8 October 2013).
- Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. 2011. “Resolution 3/2011 ‘Implementation of the Funding Strategy of the Treaty’”, *Report of the Fourth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. Available at: http://www.planttreaty.org/sites/default/files/R3_2011_en.pdf (accessed 8 October 2013).
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- Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. 2009. “Appendix A.3 – Resolution 3/2009 – Implementation of the Funding Strategy of the Treaty”, *Report of the Third Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. Available at: <http://www.planttreaty.org/sites/default/files/gb3repe.pdf> (accessed on 8 October 2013).
- Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. 2007. “Appendix D – Funding Strategy – Annexes 1 to 3”, *Report of the Second Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. Available at: <http://www.planttreaty.org/sites/default/files/gb2repe.pdf> (accessed 8 October 2013).



Selected Online Resources

This section provides a selection of resources related to the International Treaty and its Funding Strategy that are available online.

International Instruments

- International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. 2001. Available at: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/011/i0510e/i0510e.pdf>
- Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. 1996.
Available at: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/015/aj631e.pdf>
- Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. 2011.
Available at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2624e/i2624e00.pdf>
- Convention on Biological Diversity. 1992.
Available at: <http://www.cbd.int/convention/text/>
- Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity. 2010.
Available at: <http://www.cbd.int/abs/doc/protocol/nagoya-protocol-en.pdf>

Websites of International Institutions

- CGIAR Consortium: <http://www.cgiar.org/cgiar-consortium/>
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: http://www.fao.org/index_en.htm
- Global Crop Diversity Trust: <http://www.croptrust.org/>
- International Fund for Agricultural Development: <http://www.ifad.org/>
- United Nations Development Programme:
<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home.html>
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: http://unfccc.int/adaptation/implementing_adaptation/adaptation_funding_interface/items/5736.php

All the above Internet links were accessed on 8 October 2013.

Training Resources

- Educational Modules on the International Treaty
Available at: http://www.planttreaty.org/educational_modules
- Documentation and Information Centre of the International Treaty
Available at: http://www.planttreaty.org/content/vl_panel
- The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: Implementing the Multilateral System – Learning Module
Available at:
http://www.biodiversityinternational.org/training/training_materials/international_treaty.html

Further Reading

For the list of reference materials on which the lessons of this educational module are based, refer to the Bibliographic References sections of each lesson. Below you find a selection of resources for further reading related to the topics dealt with in this module.

Ceccarelli, S., Guimaraes, E. P., and Weltzien, E. 2009. *Plant Breeding and Farmer Participation*.
Available at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i1070e/i1070e00.htm>

FAO. 2011. *Save and Grow*.
See: <http://www.fao.org/ag/save-and-grow/>

FAO. 2010. *The Second Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.
Available at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1500e/i1500e.pdf>

Frison, C., López, F. and Esquinas-Alcázar, J. T. 2011. *Plant Genetic Resources and Food Security*.
Available at: http://www.biodiversityinternational.org/uploads/tx_news/Plant_genetic_resources_and_food_security_1532.pdf

Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. 2013. *Report on the First Round of the Project Cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund*.
Available at: http://www.planttreaty.org/sites/default/files/Report_BSF.pdf

Smale, M. 2006. *Valuing Crop Biodiversity: on-farm Genetic Resources and Economic Change*.
Available at: <http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/pubs/pubs/otherpubs/cropbiodiversitytoc.pdf>

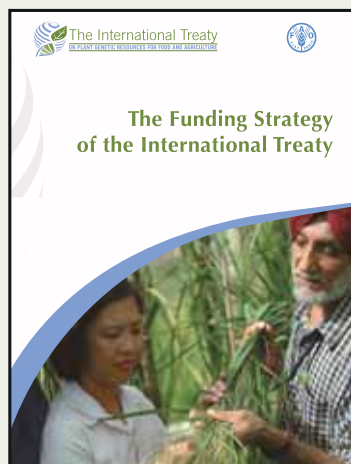
Sthapit, B. R., et al. 2008. *Mobilizing and Empowering Communities in Biodiversity Management*.
Available at: [http://portals.wi.wur.nl/files/docs/Sthapit%20et%20al,%202008a%20-%20Mobilizing%20and%20empowering\(2\).pdf](http://portals.wi.wur.nl/files/docs/Sthapit%20et%20al,%202008a%20-%20Mobilizing%20and%20empowering(2).pdf)

All the above Internet links were accessed on 8 October 2013.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| ABS | Access and benefit-sharing |
| ANDES | Asociación para la Naturaleza y el Desarrollo Sostenible |
| Benefit-sharing Fund | Benefit-sharing Fund of the Funding Strategy (of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture) |
| CBM | Community based biodiversity management |
| CGRFA | Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) |
| CIP | International Potato Center |
| Crop Trust | Global Crop Diversity Trust |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| Funding Strategy | Funding Strategy of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| Global Plan of Action | Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and the Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture |
| Governing Body | Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture |
| IFAD | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| International Treaty | International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture |
| LI-BIRD | Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development |
| Multilateral System | Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing (of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture) |
| PGRFA | Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture |
| Second Global Plan of Action | Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture |

| | |
|---|---|
| Secretariat | Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture |
| Strategic Plan | Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-sharing Fund (of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture) |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| <i>Ad Hoc</i> Advisory Committee | <i>Ad Hoc</i> Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy (of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture) |



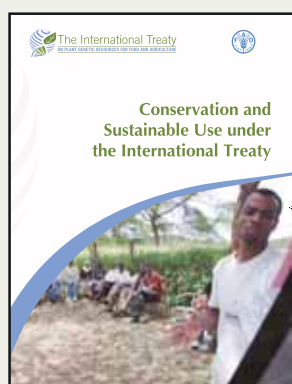
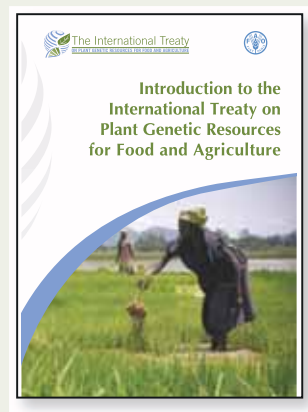
Module III - The Funding Strategy of the International Treaty

Module III presents the main elements of the Funding Strategy for the implementation of the International Treaty, with a focus on the Benefit-sharing Fund. The module illustrates the early implementation phase of the Benefit-sharing Fund with the help of selected projects that received funding under the first two rounds of its project cycle, and explains what kind of project activities may be eligible for funding and how the financial resources of the Benefit-sharing Fund may be accessed.

Already appeared in this series:

Module I - Introduction to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

This module was especially designed for newcomers to the crop diversity policy area. It outlines the main components of the International Treaty in the context of current global challenges and the broader legal framework governing crop diversity.



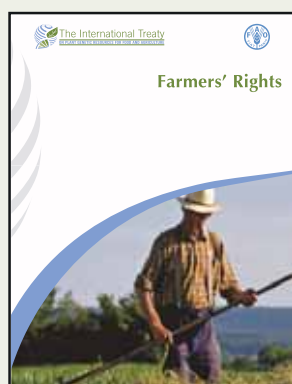
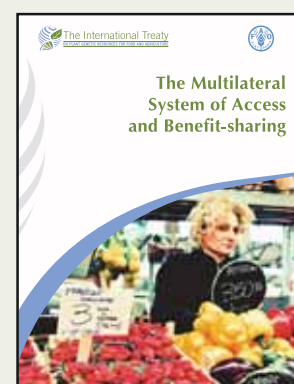
Module II - Conservation and Sustainable Use under the International Treaty

Module II explains the provisions of the International Treaty dealing with conservation and sustainable use of crop diversity and presents examples for their implementation.

The full series will be further composed by:

Module IV - The Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing

This module will explain the operation of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing, with a special focus on the Standard Material Transfer Agreement used in germplasm exchanges.



Module V - Farmers' Rights

Module V will present the provisions of the International Treaty that deal with the rights of farmers with regard to crop diversity, and provide examples of the realization of Farmers' Rights in different national settings.

The development and publication of this educational module was made possible thanks to the Governments of Italy and Spain. For information on opportunities to contribute to the realization of further modules of this series please contact the Secretariat of the International Treaty.

Donor recognition in all produced materials will be guaranteed.

See contact details on the back of this publication.

“The Funding Strategy of the International Treaty” is the third in a series of educational modules being developed under the coordination of the Secretariat of the International Treaty to strengthen capacities for the effective implementation of the International Treaty among its stakeholder groups. The work on these training materials was officially welcomed by the Governing Body of the International Treaty at its fourth session.

The educational modules are aimed at all stakeholder groups of the International Treaty, including policy makers and their staff, civil servants, gene bank staff, plant breeders, farmers’ organizations and other civil society organizations. They are also designed as information and awareness raising materials for the use of media, academia, prospective donors and other interested institutions.

www.planttreaty.org



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