



Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Follow-up to the 16th Regular Session

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has the honour to refer to the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission) established in accordance with Article VI.1 of the Constitution of the Organization. The Commission is an intergovernmental forum for discussion and negotiation by governments on matters related to biodiversity for food and agriculture.

The Commission, at its 16th Regular Session, held from 30 January to 3 February 2017, invited Members and observers to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture in many different ways. Furthermore, it invited specific contributions and inputs from Members and observers to the implementation of various major outputs and milestones of the Commission's Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW). This letter provides an overview of cross-sectoral and sectoral outputs and milestones which Members and observers have been invited to comment on or provide other inputs to, identifies the types of contribution and provides the deadlines by which comments and inputs should be made available to the Secretariat. The information provided is summarized in a table annexed to this letter.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to its Members and their accredited Permanent Representations and Embassies the assurance of its highest consideration.

This communication is sent to addressees of FAO Members, as prescribed in the official channels of communication of FAO, as follows:

For ACTION/INFORMATION, as appropriate:

- Main Addressees (Ministers for Foreign Affairs or Agriculture or other addressees selected by the Government);
- Permanent Representatives to FAO/Embassies.

This communication is also being sent to observers.

1. VALIDATION OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS/COORDINATORS

Commission Members address various issues relevant to the work of the Commission through their National Focal Points (NFPs)/National Coordinators. At present, there are NFPs/Coordinators for the Commission, for biodiversity for food and agriculture, for animal genetic resources, for aquatic genetic resources, for forest genetic resources and for plant genetic resources. Current NFPs/National Coordinators are listed on the Commission's website at:

<http://www.fao.org/nr/cgrfa/cgrfa-about/national-contact/en/>

Members are invited to check the lists of NFPs/National Coordinators, as displayed on the Commission's website, for correctness and completeness and to nominate/update NFPs/National Coordinators, as appropriate.

Action: Validate the lists of National Focal Points/National Coordinators for correctness and completeness:

1. the Commission (contact: CGRFA@fao.org);
2. animal genetic resources (contact: DAD-IS@fao.org);
3. aquatic genetic resources (contact: CGRFA-AqGR@fao.org);
4. biodiversity for food and agriculture (contact: SOW-BFA@fao.org);
5. forest genetic resources (contact: FO-ITWG-FGR@fao.org); and
6. plant genetic resources (contact: WIEWS@fao.org).

Deadline: 31 July 2017

Send to: E-mail addresses, as given above

Cross-sectoral matters

2. THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S BIODIVERSITY FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Commission, at its last session, welcomed the draft report on *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*. It stressed the importance of ensuring that as many country reports as possible are submitted. It invited countries that have not yet done so to submit their reports by the agreed date of 30 June 2017.¹ While recognizing that countries have the option of reporting using the simplified guidelines prepared by the Secretariat, the Commission noted that the use of the full guidelines is the preferred option.² It agreed that countries that have already submitted a country report can submit a revised version by 30 June 2017, and requested countries choosing to do so to clearly communicate to the Secretariat any amendments made.³

Action: Submission of country reports and, as appropriate, revised country reports

Deadline: 30 June 2017

Send to: SOW-BFA@fao.org

3. NEEDS AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIODIVERSITY FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Commission considered needs and possible actions for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture, as identified during informal regional consultations and consolidated by the Secretariat.⁴ It requested the Secretary to invite Members and observers to submit comments on the needs and possible actions and proposals for additional needs or possible actions for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture, taking into account the findings of the revised draft report on *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*.⁵ Once the revised draft report has been published, which will be during the second half of 2018, the Secretariat will remind countries of the opportunity to comment on the needs and possible actions.

Action: Submission of comments/inputs on needs and actions for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture

Deadline: 15 April 2018

Send to: SOW-BFA@fao.org

¹ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 12.

² The guidelines are available on the Commission's website, at: <http://www.fao.org/nr/cgrfa/biodiversity/guidelines/en/>

³ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 11.

⁴ CGRFA-16/17/4 Appendix I.

⁵ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 16.

4. THE ROLE OF GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE FOR FOOD SECURITY

The Commission considered options for raising awareness of the role genetic resources for food security and nutrition. In this context, it requested FAO to prepare a study addressing the contribution of genetic resources for food and agriculture to the four pillars of food security and to the achievement of relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to reflect the outcomes of the study in *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*. The Commission requested FAO to invite Members and observers to provide inputs to the Secretariat.¹

Action: Submission of inputs for the study on the role of genetic resources for food and agriculture for food security
Deadline: 31 July 2017
Send to: CGRFA@fao.org

5. ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING FOR GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Commission considered access and benefit-sharing (ABS) for genetic resources for food and agriculture and, *inter alia*, agreed to produce non-prescriptive explanatory notes describing, within the context of the *Elements to facilitate domestic implementation of access and benefit-sharing for different subsectors of genetic resources for food and agriculture* (ABS Elements), the distinctive features and specific practices of different subsectors of genetic resources for food and agriculture, to complement the ABS Elements. It invited Members, observers and other stakeholders to provide relevant inputs for such explanatory notes by electronic means, including on: (i) their practical experiences in implementing national ABS measures related to genetic resources for food and agriculture; and (ii) the distinctive features and the specific practices of different subsectors of genetic resources for food and agriculture.²

Action: Submission of inputs to the non-prescriptive explanatory notes describing, within the context of the ABS Elements, the distinctive features and specific practices of different subsectors of genetic resources for food and agriculture
Deadline: 31 July 2017
Send to: CGRFA@fao.org

6. DIGITAL SEQUENCE INFORMATION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Commission established a new work stream on “digital sequence information on genetic resources for food and agriculture.”³ It requested the Secretary to invite Members to submit information on the use of “digital sequence information on genetic resources for food and agriculture” and potential implications for the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture, including exchange, access and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use, and to compile and submit this information to the Executive Secretary of the CBD, as a timely contribution to the process set by decision CBD COP XIII/16.⁴ The Commission also invited countries to consider genetic resources for food and agriculture in their national submissions to the CBD under the process set by decision CBD COP XIII/16.⁵

Action: Submission of information on the use of “digital sequence information on genetic resources for food and agriculture” and potential implications for the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture, including exchange, access and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use
Deadline: 1 September 2017
Send to: CGRFA@fao.org

¹ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 21.

² CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 25(iv).

³ The term is taken from decision CBD COP XIII/16 and is subject to further discussion. There is a recognition that there are a multiplicity of terms that have been used in this area (including, *inter alia*, “genetic sequence data”, “genetic sequence information”, “genetic information”, “dematerialized genetic resources”, “*in silico* utilization”, etc.) and that further consideration is needed regarding the appropriate term or terms to be used.

⁴ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 88. For further information on the CBD process, see Notification [SCBD/SPS/DC/VN/KG/jh/86500](https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/2016/13/13-16-05-en.pdf).

⁵ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 89.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Commission reviewed its Programme of Work on Climate Change and Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and reiterated its invitation to countries to implement the *Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Integration of Genetic Diversity into National Climate Change Adaptation Planning*¹ and to provide feedback in this regard to the Secretary.²

Action: Feedback with regard to the implementation of the *Voluntary Guidelines*
Deadline: 1 June 2018
Send to: CGRFA@fao.org

Sectoral matters

Animal genetic resources

8. ANNUAL REPORTING ON ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL TARGET 2.5

The Commission reviewed progress in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources. It stressed the need for countries to regularly update their national data in DAD-IS or EFABIS, including information on animal genetic resources for food and agriculture both *in situ* and *ex situ* – as required for reporting on SDG indicator 2.5.2 – and to provide information on breed classifications.³ Countries should report annually, through DAD-IS, on indicators relevant to SDG Target 2.5.

Action: Submission of breed population data
Deadlines: 15 December 2017/15 December 2018
Submit at: <http://dad.fao.org/>

Aquatic genetic resources

9. THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S AQUATIC GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Commission welcomed the draft report on *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. It invited countries that have not yet done so to nominate National Focal Points and to submit country reports on aquatic genetic resources by 30 June 2017, and encouraged countries that have already submitted a country report to submit a revised version, as appropriate, by the same deadline.⁴

Action: Submission of country reports or, as appropriate, revised country reports
Deadline: 30 June 2017
Send to: CGRFA-AqGR@fao.org

¹ <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/290cd085-98f3-43df-99a9-250cec270867/>

² CGRFA-16/17paragraph 29.

³ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 46.

⁴ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 39.

Forest genetic resources

10. COUNTRY PROGRESS REPORTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABLE USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES

The Commission adopted the proposed targets, indicators and verifiers for forest genetic resources to be used as assessment tools to monitor the implementation of the Global Plan of Action.¹ It also adopted the proposed schedule for monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. Furthermore, the Commission encouraged countries to prepare themselves for the collection of information and data, as appropriate, to facilitate timely submission of the first Country Progress Reports.²

Action: Submission of Country Progress Report on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources
Deadline: 31 December 2017 (Contact for further information: FO-ITWG-FGR@fao.org)
Visit: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/fgr/93085/en/>
Contact: FO-ITWG-FGR@fao.org

Plant genetic resources

11. SIMPLIFICATION OF THE REPORTING FORMAT FOR MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECOND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Commission requested FAO to consult Commission Members and observers on options for further simplifying the *Reporting Format for Monitoring the Implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.³ Comments on the Reporting Format and proposals for its simplification should be submitted as soon as possible, and no later than 31 July 2017.

Action: Submission of comments on and proposals for simplification of the *Reporting Format for Monitoring the Implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*
Deadline: 31 July 2017
Send to: WIEWS@fao.org

12. DRAFT VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON NATIONAL LEVEL CONSERVATION AND USE OF FARMERS' VARIETIES/LANDRACES

The Commission considered draft *Voluntary guidelines on national level conservation and use of farmers' varieties/landraces*⁴ and referred them to its Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture for further review. It invited Members, observers and National Focal Points to provide comments on this document.⁵

Action: Submission of comments on the draft *Voluntary guidelines on national level conservation and use of farmers' varieties/landraces*
Deadline: 31 July 2017
Send to: ITWG-PGRFA@fao.org

¹ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 74.

² CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 75.

³ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 56.

⁴ CGRFA-16/17/Inf.18.

⁵ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 63.

13. ANNUAL REPORTING ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL TARGET 2.5

The Commission recommended that FAO invite countries to report annually on SDG indicator 2.5.1, starting in February 2017. Countries should report through the World Information and Early Warning System (WIEWS) Reporting System, in which indicators relevant to SDG Target 2.5 are clearly indicated.¹

Action: Submission of data on implementation of SDG Target 2.5
Deadline: 15 December 2017/15 December 2018
Send to: WIEWS@fao.org

14. COUNTRY REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECOND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Commission welcomed the *Assessment of the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture 2012-2014*² and stressed the need for a greater number of country reports. It invited all countries that have not yet done so to provide information on their implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action between January 2012 and June 2014 as soon as possible, and in no case later than 31 December 2017, through the WIEWS Reporting System.³

Action: Submission of data on the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture between January 2012 and June 2014
Deadline: 31 December 2017
Submit at: www.fao.org/pgrfa
Contact: WIEWS@fao.org

Micro-organisms and invertebrates

15. DRAFT WORK PLAN FOR FUTURE WORK ON THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF MICRO-ORGANISMS AND INVERTEBRATES

The Commission considered the status of its work on the conservation and sustainable use of micro-organisms and invertebrates and requested FAO to prepare a draft work plan for future work on the conservation and sustainable use of micro-organisms and invertebrates, taking into account countries' views, the findings of *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture* and any other relevant information, for review by the Commission's Intergovernmental Technical Working Groups and the Commission at their next sessions. It requested the Secretary to invite countries to provide their views on the development of the draft work plan.⁴

Action: Submission of views on the development of a draft work plan for future work on the conservation and sustainable use of micro-organisms and invertebrates
Deadline: 30 September 2017
Send to: CGRFA@fao.org

¹ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 69.

² CGRFA-16/17/Inf.17.1; CGRFA-16/17/Inf.17.2.

³ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 55.

⁴ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 78.

Implementation of the Multi-Year Programme of Work

16. DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Commission reviewed the implementation of its Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) and considered a draft Strategic Plan for the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2018–2027). It agreed that the Strategic Plan for the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture adopted at the Commission's Fourteenth Regular Session remains valid and updated major outputs and milestones (2018–2027) of the MYPOW.¹ The Commission requested the Secretary to invite Members and observers to comment, during the intersessional period, on the draft Strategic Plan.²

Action: **Submission of comments on the draft Strategic Plan for the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture**
Deadline: **1 September 2017**
Send to: **CGRFA@fao.org**

17. NEED FOR EXTRA-BUDGETARY RESOURCES FOR COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

The Commission invited donors to provide extra-budgetary funds for a range of ongoing Commission activities, including:

- (i) the finalization, translation and publication of the report on *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*;³
- (ii) the finalization of the report on *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*;⁴
- (iii) the replenishment of the FAO Trust Account for the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources;⁵
- (iv) the preparation of *The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*;⁶ and
- (v) the implementation of the Commission's Multi-Year Programme of Work.⁷

In addition, the Commission invited donors to provide funding for relevant country activities, including the implementation of the Commission's action plans⁸ and the preparation of country reports for *The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.⁹

¹ CGRA-16/17/Report, *Appendix C*.

² CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 82.

³ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 14.

⁴ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 42.

⁵ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 49.

⁶ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 68.

⁷ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 85.

⁸ CGRFA-16-17/Report, paragraphs 58, 73; *Appendices B and C*.

⁹ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 68.

Annex

SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS AND INPUTS

		Submission by:
National Focal Points	1. Validation of National Focal Points/Coordinators • Validate National Focal Points/Coordinators for correctness and completeness	31 July 2017
Biodiversity	2. <i>The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture</i> • Submission of country reports and, as appropriate, revised country reports	30 June 2017
	3. Needs and possible actions for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture • Submission of comments/inputs on needs/actions regarding biodiversity for food and agriculture	15 April 2018
Food security	4. The role of genetic resources for food and agriculture for food security • Submission of inputs for the study on the role of genetic resources for food and agriculture for food security	31 July 2017
Access and benefit-sharing	5. Access and benefit-sharing for genetic resources for food and agriculture • Submission of inputs to the non-prescriptive explanatory notes describing, within the context of the ABS Elements, the distinctive features and specific practices of different subsectors of genetic resources for food and agriculture	31 July 2017
Digital sequence information	6. Digital sequence information on genetic resources for food and agriculture • Submission of information on the use of "digital sequence information on genetic resources for food and agriculture" and potential implications for the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture, including exchange, access and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use	1 September 2017
Climate change	7. Climate change and genetic resources for food and agriculture • Feedback with regard to the implementation of the <i>Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Integration of Genetic Diversity into National Climate Change Adaptation Planning</i>	1 June 2018
Animal genetic resources	8. Annual reporting on animal genetic resources for SDG Target 2.5 • Submission of data on the implementation of SDG Target 2.5	15 December 2017 15 December 2018
Aquatic genetic resources	9. <i>The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i> • Submission of country reports or, as appropriate, revised country reports	30 June 2017
Forest genetic resources	10. Country Progress Reports on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources • Submission of Country Progress Report on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources	31 December 2017
Plant genetic resources	11. Simplification of the reporting format for monitoring the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture • Submission of comments and proposals for simplification of the Reporting Format	31 July 2017
	12. Draft voluntary guidelines on national level conservation and use of farmers' varieties/landraces • Submission of comments on the draft voluntary guidelines	31 July 2017
	13. Annual reporting on plant genetic resources for SDG Target 2.5 • Submission of data on the implementation of SDG Target 2.5	15 December 2017 15 December 2018
	14. Country Report on the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture • Submission of country data on the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (01/2012–06/2014)	31 December 2017
Micro-organisms and invertebrates	15. Draft work plan for future work on the conservation and sustainable use of micro-organisms and invertebrates • Submission of views on the development of a draft work plan for future work on the conservation and sustainable use of micro-organisms and invertebrates	30 September 2017
MYPOW	16. Draft Strategic Plan for the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture • Submission of comments on the draft Strategic Plan for the Commission	1 September 2017
Extra-budgetary resources	17. Need for extra-budgetary resources for Commission activities	