

Country Report on the implementation of the
International Treaty on Plant Genetic
Resources for Food and Agriculture
(ITPGRFA)

MALTA

21/09/2018

First Report on Compliance of ITPGRFA

Online Reporting System on Compliance of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Pursuant to Article 21 of the Treaty, the Governing Body approved, at its Fourth Session, the Compliance Procedures that include, among others, provisions on monitoring and reporting: Resolution 2/2011.

According to the Compliance Procedures, each Contracting Party is to submit to the Compliance Committee, through the Secretary, a report on the measures it has taken to implement its obligations under the Treaty. This Online Reporting Systems facilitates the submission of such information in electronic format.

Should you need any additional information regarding the reporting on compliance or the use of the online system, please visit the Treaty's Website or contact the Secretariat at PGRFA-Treaty@fao.org.

Additional Reporting Information

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Article 4: General Obligations

1. Are there any laws, regulations procedures or policies in place in your country that implement the Treaty?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

1A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of such laws, regulations, procedures or policies:

> As a member state of the European Union, Malta implements the aquis communautaire, specifically Chapter 11 on agriculture and rural development, as well as Chapter 12 on food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy.

The agriculture chapter covers a large number of binding rules, many of which are directly applicable. The proper application of these rules and their effective enforcement and control by an efficient public administration are essential for the functioning of the common agricultural policy (CAP). Running the CAP requires the setting up of management and quality systems such as a paying agency and the integrated administration and control system (IACS), and the capacity to implement rural development measures. Member States must be able to apply the EU legislation on direct farm support schemes and to implement the common market organisations for various agricultural products.

The phytosanitary chapter of the EU rules covers issues such as quality of seed, plant protection material, harmful organisms and animal nutrition. Council Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 of 27 July 1994 on Community plant variety rights and its subsequent amendments address the rights of breeders and farmers over registered new varieties within the EU.

The aquis communautaire is translated into national legislation in Malta.

In relation to Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), Malta implements the standard Material Transfer Agreement as understood in the ITPGRFA when this becomes necessary, in conjunction with the responsibilities vested upon the ABS Competent Authority under the national Subsidiary Legislation 549.111.

2. Are there any other laws, regulations, procedures or policies in place in your country that apply to plant genetic resources?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

2A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of such laws, regulations, procedures or policies:

> Other national laws which govern marketing of plant propagation material and phytosanitary standards, therefore aiming towards sustainable exploitation of resources, include: Subsidiary Legislation 433.25 is of particular importance in assuring that any seeds of agricultural landraces and varieties produced and placed on the market in Malta, meet specified standards of quality. The legal instrument transposes Commission Directive 2008/62/EC and aids landraces and varieties which are naturally adapted to local and regional conditions and threatened by genetic erosion to be grown and marketed even when they do not comply with the general requirements as regards the acceptance of varieties and the marketing of seeds and seed potatoes.

Subsidiary Legislation 433.27 concerns seeds of vegetable landraces and varieties, and transposes Commission Directive 2009/145/EC providing for certain derogations for the acceptance for inclusion of vegetable landraces and varieties in national catalogues of varieties of vegetable species as provided for in the Seeds of Agricultural Plants and Vegetables Regulations, 2010 to ensure the sustainable use of such plant genetic resources through growing.

Similarly, Subsidiary Legislation 433.28 transposes Commission Directive 2010/60/EU providing for certain derogations for the marketing of fodder plant seed mixtures intended for use in the preservation of the natural environment in order to assure that any such fodder plant seed mixtures that are produced and placed on the market in Malta meets specified quality standards.

3. Is there any law, regulation, procedure or policy in place in your country that needs to be adjusted / harmonized to ensure conformity with the obligations as provided in the Treaty?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

3A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of such adjustments and any plans to make those adjustments:

> The scope of Subsidiary Legislation 549.111 which implements Article 15 of the CBD, the Nagoya Protocol and the EU ABS Regulation 511/2014 may benefit from being extended to the access and benefit sharing provisions envisioned in the ITPGRFA, however such change may not be necessary given that the ITPGRFA is still applied as part of the national ABS regime and other national priorities which address its wider sense; these include, the greater promotion of the role of farmers, landraces and ethnobotanical knowledge as part

of various initiatives such as ones undertaken by the National Hub for Ethnobotanical Research, and a plan for the establishment of an ex situ conservation facility to be completed in the coming years.

Article 5: Conservation, Exploration, Collection, Characterisation, Evaluation and Documentation of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

4. Has an integrated approach to the exploration, conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) been promoted in your country?

Please select only one option

Yes

No

5. Have PGRFA been surveyed and inventoried in your country?

Please select only one option

Yes

No

5A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of your findings, specifying species, sub-species and /or varieties, including those that are of potential use.

> A complete inventory is not available at national level, however it has been underway for a number of years and with the assistance of various initiatives.

- In 1998, the Government of Malta embarked on an initiative to establish in situ collections of *Pyrus communis* var. *bambinella* (small Maltese June pear), *Eriobotryia japonica* (loquat) and *Opuntia ficus-indica* (prickly pears). In 2014, this initiative was expanded to include in situ collections of other autochthonous crops. A database of PGR present at the growers is being built. The collections and inventory are updated accordingly, and include a number of living and seed collections of varieties and landraces of: *Allium ampeloprasum*; *Allium cepa*; *Apium graveolens*; *Beta vulgaris*; *Brassica oleracea*; *Carthamus tinctorius*; *Cichorium endivia*; *Citrullus lanatus*; *Coriandrum sativum*; *Cucumis melo*; *Cucurbita pepo*; *Daucus carota*; *Eruca sativa*; *Gossypium arboreum*; *Hordeum vulgare*; *Lagenaria siceraria*; *Pisum sativum*; *Sesamum indicum*; *Solanum lycopersicum*; *Sulla coronaria*; *Vicia faba*; *Vicia sativa*; and *Vitis vinifera*.

- In 2015, the Government of Malta completed a project titled 'Study And Sustainable Conservation Of Varieties Of Local Plants'; this project aimed towards the sustainable conservation of plant genetic resources in agricultural and natural ecosystems, and the reversal in the trend of their genetic erosion. The project focused in identifying and studying a number of local landraces and varieties of cultivated plants and indigenous wild species under a high threat and at risk of disappearance. Furthermore, such plants, being of traditional, agricultural and cultural importance, needed to be conserved because they form a part of Malta's national identity. The outcomes of the project, among others, were: the collection of sample specimen of local landraces of agricultural crops and their wild relatives found in nature by the establishment of a seed collection for storage and through regeneration by cultivation in a botanical garden; the establishment of a knowledge base on national crop biodiversity; and, the characterization and propagation of a number of locally important citrus plants. Information was gathered about crop wild relatives occurring nationally, including or relating to: *Solanum lycopersicum*; *Solanum nigrum*; *Solanum villosum*; *Cucurbita* spp.; *Cucumis* spp.; *Citrullus* spp.; *Brassica oleracea*; *Brassica rapa*; *Brassica napus*; *Ecballium elaterium*; *Allium cepa*; *Allium commutatum*; *Allium melitense*; *Vicia faba*; *Cicer arietinum*; *Astragalus boeoticus*; *Hedysarum coronarium*; *Vicia ervilia*; *Lathyrus sativus*; *Scorpiurus muricatus*; *Triticum* sp.; *Hedysarum spinosissimum*; *Lathyrus clymenum*; *Coronilla scorpioides*; *Hordeum leporinum*; *Aegilops geniculata*; *Carthamus tinctorius*; *Carthamus lanatus*; *Gossypium* spp.; *Cuminum cyminum*; *Pimpinella anisum*; *Lavatera arborea*; *Daucus carota*.

- In March 2017, the National Hub for Ethnobotanical Research launched a participatory action research project titled 'Sharing Seeds, Sharing Life' aiming to safeguard local heirloom and landrace seeds. The research study attempts to establish a way forward to tangible solutions from farmer and stakeholder roundtable discussions held in 2014 and 2015 by The National Hub for Ethnobotanical Research. Aside other initiatives, the Hub will make use of a mapping tool created to tag and provide information on locations of ethnobotanical interest. The map is intended to be openly accessible to everyone to be used to both share and buildup on the knowledge base that has been collected throughout this research. This project is ongoing and a complete inventory is not available.

5B. If your answer is 'no', please indicate:

Any difficulties encountered in surveying or inventorying PGRFA;

Any action plans to survey and inventory PGRFA;

The most important PGRFA that should be surveyed and inventoried

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6. Has any threat to PGRFA in your country been identified?

Please select only one option

- yes
 No

6A. If your answer is 'yes', please indicate:

The species, subspecies and/or varieties subject to such threats;

The sources (causes) of these threats;

Any steps taken to minimise or eliminate these threats;

Any difficulties encountered in implementing such steps;

> A number of plant pests and diseases have been identified; over the past 10 years these have negatively impacted plant genetic resources in the Maltese production systems. Amongst the most important, Citrus tristeza virus has threatened local citrus varieties that were originally grafted on sour orange making them more susceptible to the disease. Incidence of the wood borer *Phrynetta leprosa* has also been recorded, damaging mulberry trees and wiping out approximately 90% of the local trees, most of which were quite old. Other pathogens of importance to food crop production systems include: the tomato leaf miner moth, *Tuta absoluta*, which has drastically affected local tomato production; and, *Hypocryphalus scabricollis*, which has decimated indigenous varieties of *Ficus carica* trees.

Other pathogens include: *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus* affecting date palms; *Verticillium* and *Pseudomonas* affecting olive trees; and, various rodents attacking carob trees.

7. Has the collection of PGRFA and relevant associated information on those plant genetic resources that are under threat or are of potential use been promoted in your country?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

7A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of the measures taken:

> The Plant Protection Directorate and the Diversification and Competitiveness Directorate within the Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change frequently provide information to the public in the form of leaflets, notices, adverts and similar dissemination material on the threats present in Malta for PGRFA, as well as the importance of such PGRFA. The extension services of the Diversification and Competitiveness Directorate also assist in educating growers of plant genetic resources. Additionally, the Government of Malta regularly makes available information to the public by means of its magazine titled 'Nisget Artna' to promote its work and raise awareness over a number of issues, among which conservation approaches, threats and importance of PGRFA.

A smartphone application promoted by the Government of Malta and named "Malta Flora and Fauna" has been produced with the intention to assist in the mapping and identification of plant and animal genetic resources across the Maltese islands, as well as obtain information about their threats.

In 2015 by the Plant Protection Directorate embarked on a project under the auspices of the Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development, and Climate Change, with the collaboration of Nature Trust Malta between January 2013 and September 2015, and which was co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) under Measure 214, Sub-Measure 10 (Support for the Conservation of Genetic Resources in Agriculture.) This project resulted, among others, in the production of a small botanic garden hosting landraces and crop wild relatives amongst other plants which are of national importance and at risk of being lost. The garden and the information compiled is regularly used to organise informative school activities to foster appreciation for Malta's plant genetic resources including the ones used for food and agriculture, their conservation and their threats.

8. Have farmers and local communities' efforts to manage and conserve PGRFA on-farm been promoted or supported in your country?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

8A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of the measures taken:

> The Diversification & Competitiveness Directorate assists farmers to respond to consumer demands and adapt to changing markets. This is achieved by:

- Assisting producer groups, producer organizations, farmers and growers in finding new market niches in the agro-food industry, and in European markets;
- Conserving and commercializing of local fruit trees, plant/crop varieties and animal breeds;
- Promoting alternative competitive value chains of high value products achieved with the diversification of traditional crops;
- Investing in research and trials so that farmers/growers can shift from traditional crops and try alternative products that are more competitive and give a higher return in today's markets;
- Coordinating agriculture extension service to give technical advice on how to improve in productivity and

competitiveness, and address the challenges of a changing climate.

In association with the President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, a project titled 'Sharing Seeds, Sharing Life' aiming to safeguard local heirloom and landrace seeds, as well as raising awareness about traditional farming practices and cultures was launched in 2017; this project aimed to provide information on locations of ethnobotanical interest.

9. Has in situ conservation of wild crop relatives and wild plants for food production been promoted in your country?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

9A. If your answer is 'yes', please indicate whether any measures have been taken to:

- Promote in situ conservation in protected areas
 Support the efforts of indigenous and local communities

9B. If such measures have been taken, please provide details of the measures taken:

> Since 2014 the Diversification & Competitiveness Directorate, which is situated at the government owned Ghammieri Agricultural National Centre and is responsible for the diversification of the agricultural sector, has embarked on a national programme to collect agricultural genetic material from growers. In situ populations have thereafter been established for various crops.

The plan encompasses various fields involving genetic resources and its main objective is to ensure that biodiversity is integrated in the relevant policies that directly or indirectly affect biodiversity. The Environment and Resources Authority is responsible for overseeing the in situ conservation of a number of habitats and species of importance. A few wild crop relatives and wild plants for food production occur in such sites (e.g. Beta sp., Brassica spp., Diplotaxis spp., etc.) and their taking in the wild and exploitation may be subject to management measures under Subsidiary Legislation 549.44.

10. Are there any ex situ collections of PGRFA in your country?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

10 A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide information on the holder and content of such collections:

> In 2011, the Presidential 'kitchen gardens' managed in cooperation with the Diversification & Competitiveness Directorate were involved in a project to establish a botanic garden hosting local plant varieties and crops, which is accessible to the public and intended to raise public awareness about Malta's genetic heritage.

The Government of Malta manages living plant and seed collections of varieties and landraces of: *Allium ampeloprasum*; *Allium cepa*; *Apium graveolens*; *Beta vulgaris*; *Brassica oleracea*; *Carthamus tinctorius*; *Cichorium endivia*; *Citrullus lanatus*; *Coriandrum sativum*; *Cucumis melo*; *Cucurbita pepo*; *Daucus carota*; *Eruca sativa*; *Gossypium arboreum*; *Hordeum vulgare*; *Lagenaria siceraria*; *Pisum sativum*; *Sesamum indicum*; *Solanum lycopersicum*; *Sulla coronaria*; *Vicia faba*; *Vicia sativa*; and *Vitis vinifera*.

In 2015, Malta completed a project titled 'Study And Sustainable Conservation Of Varieties Of Local Plants'; this project aimed towards the sustainable conservation of plant genetic resources in agricultural and natural ecosystems, and the reversal in the trend of their genetic erosion. The project specifically focused on a number of local landraces and varieties of cultivated plants and indigenous wild species under a high threat and at risk of disappearance. Furthermore, such plants, being of traditional, agricultural and cultural importance, needed to be conserved because they form a part of Malta's national identity. Some of the outcomes of the project was the ex situ conservation of local landraces of agricultural crops and their wild relatives found in nature by the establishment of a seed collection for storage and through regeneration by cultivation in a botanical garden. and, the characterization and propagation of a number of locally important citrus plants. Included in such project are:

Punica granatum L. ; *Ficus carica* L. ; *Ceratonia siliqua* L. ; *Prunus dulcis* Mill. D.A.Webb ; *Olea europaea* L. ; *Pyrus communis* L. ; *Morus nigra* L. ; *Morus alba* L. ; *Malus sylvestris* L. Mill. ; *Cydonia oblonga* Mill. ; *Eriobotrya japonica* Thunb. Lindl. ; *Prunus domestica* L. ; *Prunus persica* L. Batsch. ; *Juglans regia* L. ; ; *Pinus halepensis* Mill. ; *Quercus ilex* L. ; ; *Tetraclinis articulata* Vahl Mast. ; *Myrtus communis* L. ; *Laurus nobilis* L. ; *Chamaerops humilis* L. ; *Pistacia lentiscus* L. ; *Rhamnus alaternus* L. ; *Cercis siliquastrum* L. ; *Crataegus monogyna* Jacq. ; *Anagyris foetida* L. ; *Spartium junceum* L. ; *Phillyrea latifolia* L. ; *Juniperus phoenicea* L. ; ; *Populus alba* L. ; *Fraxinus angustifolia* Vahl ; *Vitex agnus-castus* L. ; *Ulmus canescens* Melville ; *Salix alba* L. ; *Salix pedicellata* Desfontaines ; *Sambucus nigra* L. ; *Celtis australis* L. ; ; *Euphorbia dendroides* L. ; ; *Phlomis fruticosa* L. ; *Erica multiflora* L. ; *Sarcopoterium spinosum* L. Spach ; *Rosmarinus officinalis* L. ; *Jacobaea maritima* L. Pelsner & Meijden ; *Teucrium fruticans* L. ; *Coronilla valentina* L. ; *Cistus creticus* L. ; *Cistus monspeliensis* L. ; *Teucrium flavum* L. ; *Hypericum aegypticum* L. ; *Ruta chalepensis* L. ; *Convolvulus oleifolius* Desr. ; *Thymbra capitata* L. Cav. ; *Periploca angustifolia* Labill. ; *Prasium majus* L. ; ; *Helichrysum melitense* Pignatti Brullo, Lanfranco, Pavone & Ronsisvalle ; *Palaeocyanus crassifolius* Bertol. Susanna ; *Cremnophyton lanfrancoi* ; *Matthiola incana*

subsp. melitensis Brullo, Lanfranco, Pavone & Ronsisvalle ; Darniella melitensis Botschantzev Brullo ; Hyoseris frutescens Brullo and Pavone ; Suaeda vera Forssk. ex J.F.Gmel. ; Silene fruticosa L. ; ; Urginea pancration Steinheil Philippe ; Iris pseudopumila Tineo ; Iris sicula Todaro ; Narcissus tazetta L. ; Asphodelus aestivus Brot. ; Ferula communis L. ; Papaver rhoeas L. ; Glaucium flavum Crantz ; Daucus gingidum ; Cynara cardunculus L. ; Asparagus aphyllus L. ; Calendula suffruticosa Vahl ; Borago officinalis L. ; Lactuca serriola L. ; Antihirrinum sp. ; Dactylis hispanica ; Dittrichia viscosa L. Greuter ; Acanthus mollis L. ; Carex extensa ; Hyparrhenia hirta L. Stapf ; Lygeum spartum Loefl. ex L. ; Piptatherum miliaceum L. Coss. ; Capparis spinosa L. ; Anthyllis hermanniae subsp. melitensis Brullo & Giusso ; Halimione portulacoides L. Aellen ; Limbarda crithmoides L. Dumort ; Antirrhinum tortuosum Bosc ; Antirrhinum siculum Miller ; Crithmum maritimum L. ; Atriplex halimus L. ; ; Vitis Vinifera L. ; ; Cynara scolymus Linn ; Spinacia oleracea L. ; Petroselinum crispum Mill. Nym. ; Allium sativum L. ; Allium ampeloprasum var. porrum L. ; Daucus carota subsp. sativus ; Vicia faba L. ; Beta vulgaris subsp. vulgaris.

In March 2017, the National Hub for Ethnobotanical Research launched a participatory action research project titled 'Sharing Seeds, Sharing Life' aiming to safeguard local heirloom and landrace seeds. The research study attempts to establish a way forward to tangible solutions from farmer and stakeholder roundtable discussions held in 2014 and 2015 by The National Hub for Ethnobotanical Research. Aside from producing a number of recommendations for stakeholders and policy makers, and establishing a space to facilitate networking across different culture groups, the Hub will make use of a mapping tool created to tag and provide information on locations of ethnobotanical interest. The map is intended to be openly accessible to everyone to be used to both share and buildup on the knowledge base that has been collected throughout this research.

Specimens of local plants are conserved at the Argotti Botanic gardens, for taxonomic classification and education purposes. The garden includes collections of indigenous and Mediterranean flora, cacti and succulents, as well as specimen of wild plants of national importance.

11. Has the development of an efficient and sustainable system of ex situ conservation of PGRFA been promoted in your country?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

11A. If your answer is 'yes', please indicate the measures taken to promote ex situ conservation, in particular any measures to promote the development and transfer of technologies for this purpose:

> No specific promotional campaigns have been carried out to promote ex situ conservation. Ex situ conservation is mainly run by Academic facilities or Government bodies rather than private entities, therefore no promotional efforts were considered necessary. The Government of Malta is working to establish a national gene bank which will address lacunae in the conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

12. Has the maintenance of the viability, degree of variation, and the genetic integrity of ex situ collections of PGRFA been monitoring in your country?

Please select only one option

- yes
 No

12A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of the main conclusions of these monitoring activities

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13. Has your country cooperated with other Contracting Parties, through bilateral or regional channels, in the conservation, exploration, collection, characterization, evaluation or documentation of PGRFA?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

13A. If your answer is 'yes', please indicate the other Contracting Parties with whom the cooperation was undertaken (where additional to cooperation through the Governing Body or Treaty mechanisms) and, where possible, details of any relevant projects:

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Article 6: Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

14. Are there any policy and legal measures in place in your country that promote the sustainable use of PGRFA

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

14A. If your answer is 'yes', please indicate whether such policy and legal measures include:

- Pursuing fair agricultural policies that promote the development and maintenance of diverse farming systems that enhance the sustainable use of agricultural biological diversity and other natural resources;
 Strengthening research that enhances and conserves biological diversity by maximizing intra- and inter-specific variation for the benefit of farmers;
 Promoting plant breeding efforts, with the participation of farmers, that strengthen the capacity to develop varieties particularly adapted to social, economic and ecological conditions, including in marginal areas;
 Broadening the genetic base of crops and increasing the range of genetic diversity available to farmers
 Promoting the expanded use of local and locally adapted crops, varieties and underutilised species
 Supporting the wider use of diversity of varieties and species in on-farm management, conservation and sustainable use of crops and creating strong links to plant breeding and agricultural development
 Reviewing and adjusting breeding strategies and regulations concerning variety release and seed distribution

14B. If such policy and legal measures are in place, please provide details of the measures taken and any difficulties encountered in implementing them:

> Agriculture in Malta follows the laws and priorities which are mutually agreed among Member States and which emanate from the European Union. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is a support instrument for farmers to promote sustainable agriculture, and in Malta it is managed by the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA) via Subsidiary Legislation 146.03 "Paying Agency Regulations"

A number of Common Agricultural Policy instruments benefiting biodiversity are included in the EU Biodiversity Action Plan for Agriculture adopted in 2001. They include measures that encompass environmental requirements integrated into market policy and targeted environmental measures that form part of the Rural Development Programmes. The core priorities of the Action Plan are:

- the promotion and support of environmentally-friendly farming practices and systems that benefit biodiversity directly or indirectly;
- the support of sustainable farming activities in biodiversity-rich areas;
- the maintenance and enhancement of good ecological infrastructures, and the promotion of actions to conserve local or threatened livestock breeds or plant varieties.

Additionally, in 2011, the EU adopted an ambitious strategy setting out 6 targets and 20 actions to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020. In relation to agriculture, three stand out and are namely:

- Action 8: Enhance CAP direct payments to reward environmental public goods such as crop rotation and permanent pastures; improve cross-compliance standards for GAEC (Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions) and consider including the Water Framework in these standards
- Action 9: Better target Rural Development to biodiversity needs and develop tools to help farmers and foresters work together towards biodiversity conservation
- Action 10: Conserve and support genetic diversity in Europe's agriculture

At national level, among others, Malta implements laws on organic farming via Subsidiary Legislation 427.54. These have the objectives to:

- Provide for an Organic farming Control system as provided for in European Union law
- Provide for a legislative framework which supports the Organic Farming sector in Malta
- Safeguard consumer interest and thus the sustainable development of the sector

Activities pertinent to plant breeding are generally minimal and virtually non-existent since no official large scale breeding programs are carried out, and diversity for large scale commercial production is generally imported rather than developed. However priorities are established by the Diversification and Competitiveness Directorate to enable farmers to:

- Diversify traditional crops by promoting alternative competitive value chains of high value products;
- Invest in research and trials so that farmers/growers can shift from traditional crops and try alternative products that are more competitive and give a higher return in today's market.

Article 7: National Commitments and international Cooperation

15. Has the conservation, exploration, collection, characterization, evaluation, documentation and sustainable use of PGRFA been integrated into your country's agriculture and rural development programmes and policies?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

15A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of the integration of such activities into the agriculture and rural development programmes and policies:

> The Government of Malta acting through the Plant Protection Directorate integrates within its mandate actions which concern the conservation, exploration, collection, characterization, evaluation, and documentation of PGRFA. In its recent activities, the Directorate operated to fulfill the following objectives:

- Collection and compilation of indigenous knowledge provided by the persons involved in the cultivation of specific local crop varieties (origin, properties, advantages of use, market situation);
- Sampling and collection of seeds for quality testing (germination and purity);
- Preliminary morphological characterisation of the varieties and establishment of preliminary variety descriptions;
- Sustainable use of the varieties and their products (awareness, promotion and dissemination of information at local level);
- Promotion and support of the efforts of farmers and local communities oriented towards organising and conserving such genetic resources on their farms/land;
- Ex situ long term conservation of plant material - study on the identification of the most feasible method;
- Regeneration of conserved germplasm;
- Literature review for available information;
- Exploration of the local territory for localisation and identification of plants;
- Surveying and inventorying plants;
- Sampling and collection of seeds for ex situ conservation and cultivation.

The Diversification and Competitiveness Directorate operates to ensure the sustainable use of PGRFA and provides assistance to farmers through various activities and services to achieve this goal.

16. Has your country cooperated with other Contracting Parties, through bilateral or regional channels, in the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA?

Please select only one option

- yes
 No

16A. If your answer is 'yes', please indicate whether the aim of such cooperation is to:

- Strengthen the capability of developing countries and countries with economies in transition with respect to conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA
- Enhance international activities to promote conservation, evaluation, documentation, genetic enhancement, plant breeding, seed multiplication, and sharing, providing access to and exchanging PGRFA and appropriate information and technology, in conformity with the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-Sharing under the Treaty

16B. If, in addition to cooperation through the Governing Body or other Treaty mechanisms, your country has cooperated with other Contracting Parties directly or through FAO and other relevant international organizations, please indicate such other Contracting Parties and, where possible, details of any relevant projects:

> The Maltese authorities cooperated with Swedish authorities in the sharing of knowledge about conservation practices to enhance national expertise in this field, however the use of the SMTA was not applicable in this case since genetic resources were not being shared.

Article 8: Technical Assistance

17. Has your country promoted the provision of technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, with the objective of facilitating the implementation of the Treaty?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

17A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of the measures taken

> Assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition is generally provided via the European Union and common objectives. However such contributions are not specifically intended for the implementation of the Treaty although overlap between scopes exists. For this scope, the EU participates actively in international fora and is engaged in a EU-Africa Strategic Partnership with the key objective to stimulate trade and growth, as well as contribute to food security, in developing countries. Since 2008, the EU has been working to conclude Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries.

Through the EPA, among others, the EU cooperates with the African Union on organic farming, sanitary and phytosanitary issues, processing and standards.

Along similar lines, the instruments of the EU Common Agricultural Policy, while aimed at developing the EU farm sector, are also designed to minimise the impact on markets and producers in non-EU countries.

The EU employs various funds to assist developing countries to enable them to become stronger competitors.

Assistance systems like the Aid for Trade (AFT) support partner countries' efforts to develop and expand their trade as leverage for growth and poverty reduction. The aid, provides assistance in:

- trade policy and regulation
- trade development
- trade-related infrastructure
- building productive capacity
- trade-related adjustment, and
- other trade-related needs.

18. Has your country received technical assistance with the objective of facilitating the implementation of the Treaty?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

18 A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of such technical assistance:

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Article 9: Farmers' Rights

19. Subject to national law, as appropriate, have any measures been taken to protect and promote farmers' rights in your country?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

19 A. If your answer is 'yes', please indicate whether such measures were related to:

- Recognition of the enormous contribution that local and indigenous communities and farmers of all regions of the world have made and will continue to make for the conservation and development of plant genetic resources;
- The protection of traditional knowledge relevant to PGRFA
- The right to equitably participate in sharing benefit arising from the utilisation of PGRFA
- The right to participate in making decisions, at the national level, on matters related to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA
- Any rights that farmers have to save, use, exchange, and sell farm-saved seed/propagating material

19B. If such measures were taken, please provide details of the measures taken and any difficulties encountered in implementing them:

> Malta implements the Nagoya Protocol through the Regulation (EU) 511/2014 which is transposed into Subsidiary Legislation 549.111; the law encompasses and regulated the access and utilization of all natural genetic resources, as well as any plant genetic resources of historical/cultural importance such as heirlooms and landraces, as well as any traditional knowledge associated with them. Users of these genetic resources may be required by law to request prior informed consent and negotiate the benefits arising from such utilization with the provider country for the scope of contributing to conservation and sustainable development.

The Plant Protection Directorate is also the Maltese representative in the Administrative Council of the Community Plant Variety Office and in the committee of technical liaison officers of the same Office. It contributes by reviewing and providing comments of various draft administrative and technical documents of the Community Plant Variety Office in Europe and also participates in decision making.

Additionally, the Agriculture Directorate consults and is regularly approached by individuals, organizations, entities, co-operatives, associations, non-government organisations (NGOs) or other groups lobbying farmers' collective interests or purporting to represent individual farmers in matters concerning their rights and obligations. These groups are monitored to ensure that they are constituted and operate according to law and upon principles of good governance.

Organizations may be registered under various laws with different regulators depending on the aims and nature pursued by the entity or group and the decisions taken by the members. The following bodies manage different organizations among others:

- The Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations registers any voluntary organisations in accordance to Ch. 492 of the laws of Malta, Voluntary Organisations Act;
- The Cooperatives' Board registers Cooperatives in accordance to Ch. 442 of the laws of Malta, Cooperative Society Act;
- The Registrar of Trade Unions registers associations in accordance to Ch.452 of the laws of Malta, Employment and Industrial Relations Act;
- The Registrar of Companies oversees companies and other forms of commercial partnerships in accordance with Ch. 386 of the laws of Malta;

Among other instruments, the offer of advisory services to farmers is regulated by the mechanisms established under Legal Notice 113 of 2010, while fertilizer plans may be drawn up by suitably qualified persons recognized by the Agriculture Directorate under Legal Notice 321 of 2011 and its amendments.

Article 11: Coverage of the Multilateral System

20. Has your country included in the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-Sharing (MLS) all PGRFA listed in Annex 1 to the Treaty that are under the management and control of your Government and in the public domain?

Please select only one option

- All
 Partially
 None

20A. If your answer is 'all', please provide details of any difficulties encountered in including Annex 1 PGRFA in the MLS:

> The ITPGRFA entered into force for Malta on 20 February, 2017, therefore its implementation is still in its initial stages in Malta, however the country aims to fully implement the International Treaty. Some difficulties are met with identifying to what extent the ITPGRFA applies to the scenario in Malta; this will involve establishing which Annex I species and varieties occur in Malta and to what effect they are used. Methods to ensure the implementation of the MLS will also need to be identified, including mechanisms of self-reporting by users of genetic resources.

The occurrence of plant breeding and ex situ conservation via gene bank facilities of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is limited in Malta, therefore the impact of the application of the MLS is not expected to be significant.

20B. If your answer is 'partially', please provide details of:

The extent to which Annex 1 PGRFA have been included in the MLS

The crops that have been included in the MLS; and

The difficulties encountered in including Annex 1 PGRFA in the MLS:

>

20C. If your answer is 'none', please provide details of the difficulties encountered in including Annex 1 PGRFA in the MLS:

>

21. Has your country taken measures to encourage natural and legal persons within your jurisdiction who hold Annex 1 PGRFA to include those resources in the MLS?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

21A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of:

The natural or legal persons within your jurisdiction that included Annex 1 PGRFA in the MLS;

The crops that have been included in the MLS by these persons; and

Any difficulties these persons encountered in including Annex 1 PGRFA in the MLS:

> The ITPGRFA entered into force for Malta on 20 February, 2017, therefore its implementation is still in its initial stages in Malta. Nevertheless, Malta does not have collection holders of Annex I plant genetic resources that are in the public domain, therefore the multilateral system of facilitated access is not applicable. For other Annex I plant genetic resources that are in the public domain, the sMTA may be applied through the intervention of the national ABS Competent Authority, where applicable.

The Government of Malta through the Diversification and Competitiveness Directorate manages catalogues of holders of local crop varieties cultivated in Malta. A database of PGR present at the growers is being built by the Diversification and Competitiveness Directorate. The latter entity has from time to time contributed to the sharing of genetic resources held within its living collections with local farmers, and comprised samples of Brassica, Daucus and Vicia seeds.

21B. If your answer is 'no', please provide details, in particular details of any difficulties encountered in encouraging these persons to include Annex 1 PGRFA in the MLS:

>

Article 12: Facilitated access to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture within the Multilateral System

22. Has your country taken measures to provide facilitated access to Annex 1 PGRFA, in accordance with the conditions set out in Article 12.4 of the Treaty?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

22A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of such measures:

> In relation to access and benefit sharing of Annex I PGRFA which are in the public domain, Malta implements the standard Material Transfer Agreement as understood in the ITPGRFA when this becomes necessary, in conjunction with the responsibilities vested upon the Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Competent Authority under the national Subsidiary Legislation 549.111.

It is uncertain whether conditions such as the provision of descriptive information can be met because no formal ex situ gene bank facilities exist which manage such resources, therefore the PGRFA may need to be considered on individual basis.

22B. If your answer is 'no', please provide details of any difficulties encountered in providing facilitated access to Annex 1 PGRFA:

>

23. Has facilitated access been provided in your country to Annex 1 PGRFA pursuant to the standard material transfer agreement (SMTA)?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

23A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide the number of SMTAs entered into:

> In relation to access and benefit sharing of Annex I PGRFA which are in the public domain, Malta implements the standard Material Transfer Agreement as understood in the ITPGRFA when this becomes necessary, in conjunction with the responsibilities vested upon the Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Competent Authority under the national Subsidiary Legislation 549.111. Specific laws which directly transpose the ITPGRFA into national law have not been produced, however the provisions pertinent to the MLS of the ITPGRFA may be directly applied through the same authority. No access requests have been recorded since the entry into force of the ITPGRFA for Malta.

23B. If your answer is 'no', please provide details of any difficulties encountered in providing facilitated access to Annex 1 PGRFA pursuant to the SMTA:

>

24. Has the SMTA been used voluntarily in your country to provide access to non-Annex 1 PGRFA?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

24A. If your answer is 'yes', please indicate the number of such SMTAs entered into:

>

25. Does the legal system of your country provide an opportunity for parties to material transfer agreements (MTAs) to seek recourse in case of contractual disputes arising under such agreements?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

25A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of the relevant laws, regulations or procedures:

> Disputes arising from any eventual application of the SMTA, if not amicably resolved by negotiation between the parties, may be settled through the national judicial system established under the Arbitration Act, Chapter 387 of the Laws of Malta.

26. Does the legal system of your country provide for the enforcement of arbitral decisions related to disputes arising under the SMTA?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

26A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of the relevant laws, regulations or procedures:
> Arbitral decisions are enforceable through the Arbitration Act, Chapter 387 of the Laws of Malta which makes reference to the Code of Organization and Civil Procedure, Chapter 12 of the Laws of Malta

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

[Code of Organization and Civil Procedure, Chapter 12 of the Laws of Malta](#)
[Arbitration Act, Chapter 387 of the Laws of Malta](#)

27. Have there been any emergency disaster situations in respect of which your country has provided facilitated access to Annex 1 PGRFA for the purpose of contributing to the re-establishment of agricultural systems?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

27A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of such emergency disaster situations and the Annex 1 PGRFA to which access was provided:

>

Article 13: Benefit-sharing in the Multilateral System

28. Has your country made any information available regarding Annex I PGRFA?

- Yes
 No

28A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of any information made available regarding Annex 1 PGRFA (e.g. catalogues and inventories, information on technologies, results of scientific and socio-economic research, including characterisation, evaluation and utilisation):

> Information is made available by various government bodies in the form of webpages, magazines, leaflets or other similar material about traditional practices, varieties, innovations or initiatives.

29. Has your country provided or facilitated access to technologies for the conservation, characterisation, evaluation and use of Annex I PGRFA?

If access to technologies was provided, please provide details of the access provided.

Please select only one option

Yes

>

No

29A. If your answer is 'yes', please indicate whether your country:

Has established or participated in crop-based thematic groups on utilisation of PGRFA

Is aware of any partnerships in your country in research and development and in commercial joint ventures relating to the material received through the MLS, human resource development and effective access to research facilities.

29B. If access to technologies was provided, please provide details of the access provided:

>

30. Has your country provided for and/or benefitted from capacity building measures in respect of Annex 1 PGRFA?

Please select only one option

Yes

No

30A. If your answer is 'yes', please indicate whether such measures were related to:

Establishing and/or strengthening programmes for scientific and technical education and training in conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA;

Developing and strengthening facilities for conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA;

Carrying out scientific research and developing capacity for such research.

30B. If your country provided for and/or benefitted from such measures, please provide details:

>

Article 14: Global Plan of Action

31. Has your country promoted the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture?

Please note that this question differs from question 15 as it only concerns Annex I PGRFA and is more specific.

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

31A. If your answer is 'yes', please indicate whether the implementation of the plan was promoted through:

- National actions
 International cooperation

31B. If the implementation of the plan was promoted, please provide details:

> In 2015, Malta completed a project titled 'Study And Sustainable Conservation Of Varieties Of Local Plants'; actions pertinent to this project were related to some of the aims of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Conservation of crop local varieties, crop wild relatives and landraces was a priority in this project. The project contributed effectively to enhance communication, education and public awareness on the valuable genetic resources of the Maltese Islands and their sustainable use. The outcomes of the project were: the ex situ conservation of local landraces of agricultural crops and their wild relatives found in nature by the establishment of a seed collection for storage and through regeneration by cultivation in a botanical garden; the establishment of a knowledge base on national crop biodiversity; the creation of educational platforms to inform and engage the general public about national plant biodiversity; and, the characterization and propagation of a number of locally important citrus plants

Article 15: Ex Situ Collections of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture held by the International Agricultural Research Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and other International Institutions

32. Has facilitated access to Annex I PGRFA been provided in your country to the International Agricultural Research Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (IARCs) or other international institutions that have signed agreements with the Governing Body of the Treaty?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

32A. If your answer is 'yes', please indicate:

To which IARCs or other international institutions facilitated access was provided;
The number of SMTAs entered into with each IARC or other international institution:

>

32B. If your answer is 'no', please provide details of any difficulties encountered in providing facilitated access to Annex 1 PGRFA to IARCs and other international institutions that have signed agreements with the Governing Body of the Treaty

> No requests have been received for the facilitated access to Annex I PGRFA by International Agricultural Research Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (IARCs) or other international institutions that have signed agreements with the Governing Body of the Treaty.

33. Has access to non-Annex I PGRFA been provided in your country to IARCs or other international institutions that have signed agreements with the Governing Body of the Treaty?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

33A. If your answer is 'yes', please indicate:

To which IARCs or other international institutions access was provided;
The number of MTAs entered into with each IARC or other international institution:

>

33B. If your answer is 'no', please provide details of any difficulties encountered in providing access to non-Annex 1 PGRFA to IARCs and other international institutions that have signed agreements with the Governing Body of the Treaty:

> No requests have been received for the facilitated access to non-Annex I PGRFA by International Agricultural Research Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (IARCs) or other international institutions that have signed agreements with the Governing Body of the Treaty.

Article 16: International Plant Genetic Resources Networks

34. Has your country undertaken any activities to encourage government, private, non- governmental, research, breeding and other institutions to participate in the international plant genetic resources networks?

Please select only one option

Yes

No

34A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of such activities:

>

Article 18: Financial Resources

35. Has your country provided and/or received financial resources for the implementation of the Treaty through bilateral, regional or multilateral channels?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

35A. If your answer is 'yes', where possible, please provide details of such channels and the amount of the financial resources involved:

>

36. Has your country provided financial resources for national activities for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA?

Please select only one option

- Yes
 No

36A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of such national activities and the amount of the financial resources involved:

> Malta was involved in various projects which aimed towards the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. The most recent and notable projects included:

(1) In 1998, the Government of Malta embarked on an initiative to establish in situ collections of *Pyrus communis* var. *bambinella* (small Maltese June pear), *Eriobotryia japonica* (loquat) and *Opuntia ficus-indica* (prickly pears). In 2014, this initiative was expanded to include in situ collections of other autochthonous crops. In 2017, the first seed donations from Ghammieri took place involving seeds of *Brassica*, *Daucus* and *Vicia* cultivars. A database of PGR present at the growers is being built. The collections and inventory are updated accordingly, and include a number of living and seed collections of various crops.

(2) A project completed in 2015 named 'Study And Sustainable Conservation Of Varieties Of Local Plants' which resulted in: the ex situ conservation of local landraces of agricultural crops and their wild relatives found in nature by the establishment of a seed collection for storage and through regeneration by cultivation in a botanical garden; the establishment of a knowledge base on national crop biodiversity; the creation of educational platforms to inform and engage the general public about national plant biodiversity; and, the characterization and propagation of a number of locally important citrus plants. With a budget of €2.6 million, the project was co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) under Measure 214, Sub-Measure 10 – Support for the Conservation of Genetic Resources in Agriculture.

(3) In March 2017, the National Hub for Ethnobotanical Research launched a participatory action research project titled 'Sharing Seeds, Sharing Life' aiming to safeguard local heirloom and landrace seeds. Aside from producing a number of recommendations for stakeholders and policy makers, and establishing a space to facilitate networking across different culture groups, the Hub will make use of a mapping tool created to tag and provide information on locations of ethnobotanical interest; this tool will be useful in achieving one of the priorities of the Second Global Plan of Action for Food and Agriculture, to survey and inventory plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. This project is ongoing and a complete inventory is not available.

About this reporting format

37. Have you encountered any difficulties in completing this reporting format?

Please select only one option

Yes

>

No

37A. If your answer is 'yes', please provide details on such difficulties:

>

37B. If you have suggestions for improvement of this reporting format, please share them:

>

General remarks on the implementation of the ITPGRFA

38. You may use this box to share any advice you may have arising from your country's experience with implementation of the Treaty:

> No comment

39. You may use this box to share any additional information that may be useful to provide a broader perspective of difficulties in implementation of the Treaty:

> No comment

40. You may use this box to share any additional information that may be useful to provide a broader perspective of measures that could help to promote compliance:

> No comment