



COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES

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NATIONAL FOCAL POINT SURVEY ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT- SHARING FOR FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES

Note by the Secretariat

At its Sixteenth Regular Session, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission) agreed to prepare non-prescriptive explanatory notes to complement the *Elements to Facilitate Domestic Implementation of Access and Benefit-Sharing for Different Subsectors of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (ABS Elements).

As input for developing the explanatory notes, the Commission requested the Secretariat to collect survey-based information on:

1. use and exchange practices, relevant voluntary codes of conduct, guidelines and best practices, and/or standards and community protocols as well as model contractual clauses on ABS specifically addressing genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA);
2. how prior informed consent (PIC) or approval and involvement of indigenous and local communities is obtained under their jurisdictions and on experiences with the implementation of any relevant ABS measures in the case of GRFA;
3. experiences and views of relevant indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders regarding how countries can consider approaching PIC or approval and involvement of indigenous and local communities in the case of GRFA and associated traditional knowledge;
4. experiences with the use of the ABS Elements; and
5. existing practices in the different subsectors with regard to different uses of GRFA to which ABS measures apply.

A first survey was conducted between 2 and 28 December 2018. It was sent electronically to all National Focal Points/Coordinators (NFPs/NCs) of the Commission for the different subsectors to collect information related to numbers 1, 2 and 4. A second survey to collect information from stakeholders and indigenous people and local communities is underway. It is collecting information on use and exchange of GRFA for research and development related to numbers 3 and 5. That survey was sent electronically to a sample of 586 individuals on April 3, 2018 and will be closed on April 24.

This document reports on the preliminary results for Forest Genetic Resources (FGR) of the first NFP survey. The sample frame for this survey consisted of all known NFPs for plant, forest and aquatic genetic resources, the NCs for animal genetic resources, and the NFPs for biodiversity for food and agriculture and the Commission. Contact information for all NFPs/NCs was obtained from the Commission and was updated by official enquiry by the Commission to the member countries. The final list of NFPs/NCs consisted of 624 individuals from 189 countries. (Note: not all countries have designated individuals for all NFP/NC positions and some individuals serve in multiple capacities.)

The survey was developed over the course of several months with input from multiple experts. It was carried out by Mr Sélim Louafi, Centre International de recherche agronomique pour le développement (Cirad), France and Mr Eric Welch, Center for Science, Technology & Environmental Policy Studies, Arizona State University, USA. Survey administration included an advance email notification, an official invitation and three reminder notices. As part of the administration, the survey team responded to enquiries from invited participants and assisted with troubleshooting of any problems. No significant problems were reported during administration.

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS FROM FGR SECTOR

In total, 280 individuals from 136 countries responded to the survey, resulting in an individual response rate of approximately 45 percent. Of these 280 individuals, only 40 individuals from the FGR sector (34 current NFPs and 6 past NFPs) responded to the survey. However, not all FGR NFPs indicated the forest sector as being the one they were most knowledgeable about (as compared to other subsectors). Indeed, 4 current and past FGR NFPs respondents indicated that they are most knowledgeable in other area than FGR, as for some countries the same person could serve as NFP for multiple sectors. In total, 44 individuals indicated being ‘most knowledgeable’ about FGR. Of the 44, 32 respondents are current NFPs for the FGR to the Commission, 4 are former NFPs for FGR, 2 are current Commission’s NFPs, 4 are NFP for PGRFA and 2 are current Biodiversity for food and agriculture NFP.

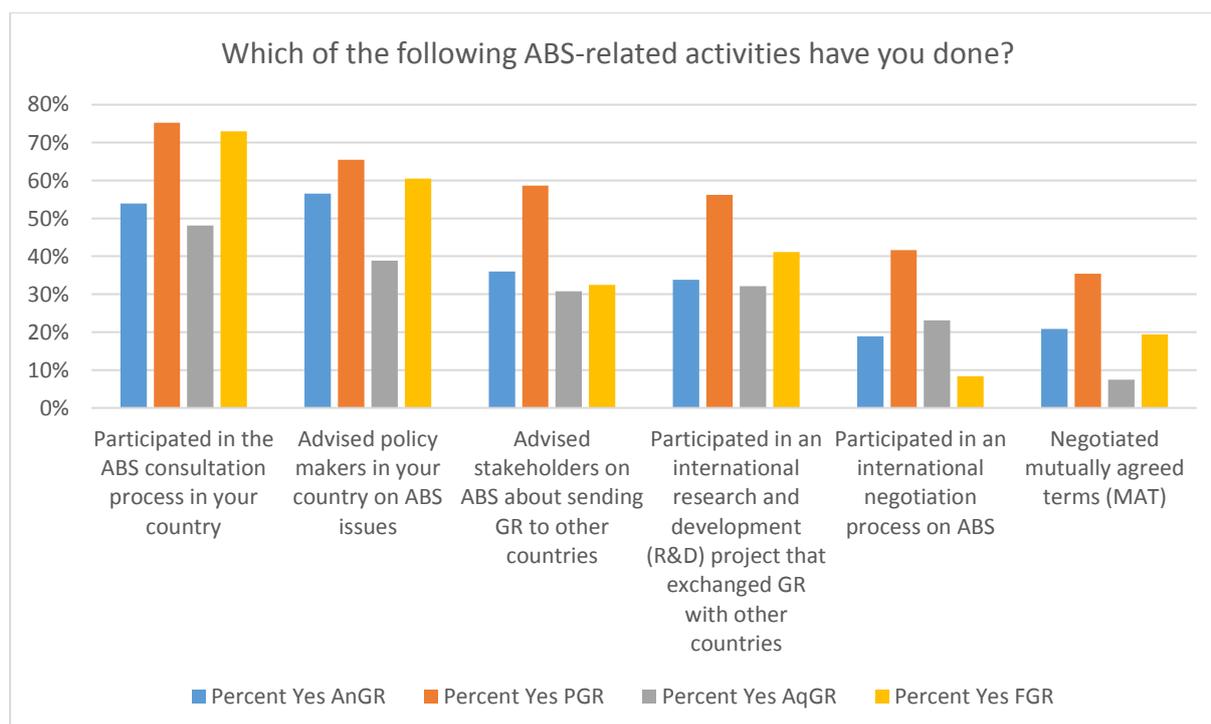
It should be noted that the FGR sector has the second lowest response rate of all GRFA sectors (12% compared to almost 30% in Plant or Animal). This may be explained by the fact that ABS issues are quite new in this sector and still not fully felt by NFPs.

II. INFORMATION, AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT OF NFPs ON ABS

To understand the involvement of NFPs/NCs in ABS issues in their countries, the survey asked respondents to indicate if they were had undertaken a range of different types of associated activities.

There are substantial differences among sectors with regard to their level of involvement in ABS-related activities (Figure 2). More than 70 percent (past and current) FGR sector NFPs respondents have been involved in policy-related activities at national level and 65% have advised policy makers on ASB issues in their countries. This figure however, drops heavily (less than 10%) with regard to involvement in international negotiation process at the international level. Only 20 percent of respondents have direct experience with ABS (i.e. negotiation of MAT) but more than 40 percent have practical experience in exchanging GRFA in the context of R&D projects and 30 percent have advised stakeholders willing to exchange FGR on ABS requirements. Overall, except for international negotiation activities, FGR NFPs are quite involved on both policy activities and practical experiences on ABS (mainly through participation in R&D project).

Figure 1. Involvement in ABS-related activities (by sectors)



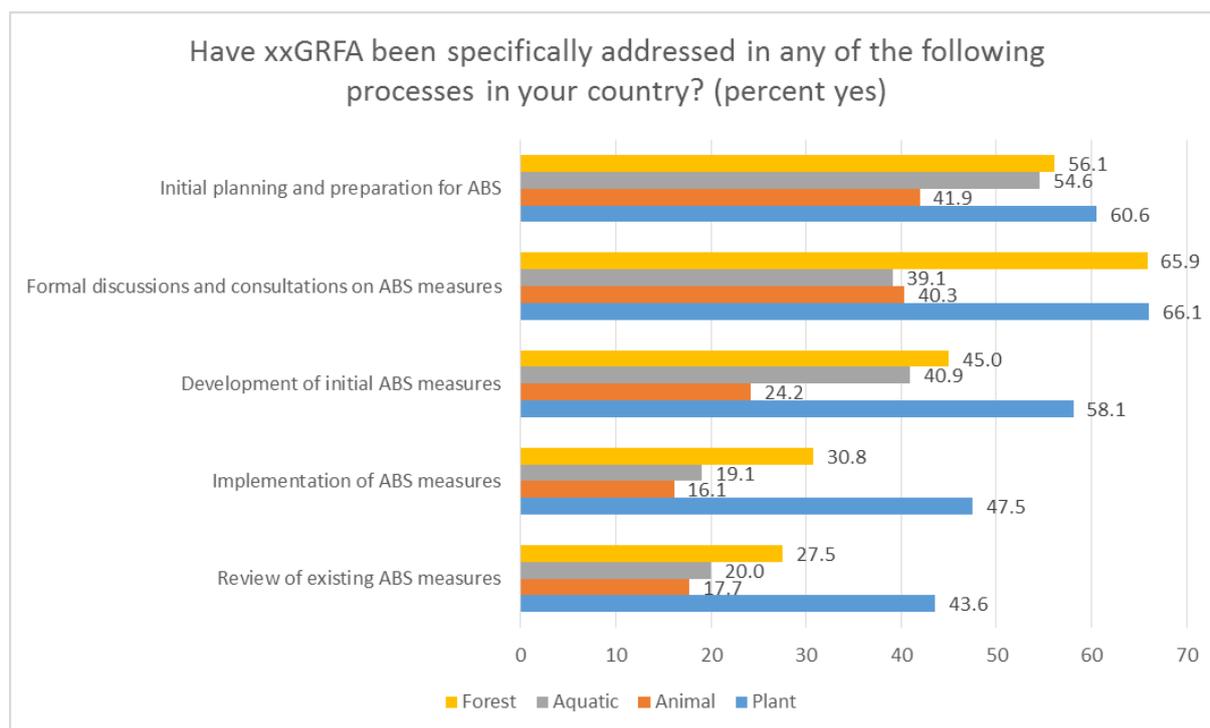
Only 15% of FGR sector NFP respondents indicated that their country had not begun ABS policy-related activities and almost 60 percent indicated that ABS measures had been adopted, implemented or reviewed in their country. Of this percentage, a bit less than half (10) reported being involved or very involved in ABS development, revision or implementation in their country.

The survey sought to understand whether NFP/NCs recalled receiving information about ABS and what the source of the information was. Further, given the objectives of FAO's ABS Elements to facilitate the development of ABS measures, NFPs/NCs were asked whether they were familiar with the Elements. Overall, the main source of information for current FGR sector NFP respondents is their own government (70%) and FAO (45%) (Note: respondents were able to check multiple categories.) However, less than one third of the respondents (11) were aware of the existence of the ABS Elements.

III. SUBSECTORS CONSIDERATIONS IN ABS POLICY PROCESS

Almost one third of FGR NFP respondents indicated that there are specific ABS measures for FGR in their country. As shown in Figure 2, the forest sector respondents, together with the plant sector, report the highest subsector consideration at the initial phase of the ABS policy process (planning and discussion). The difference with the plant sector becomes more important at the development, implementation or review of ABS measures but remain overall quite high compared to the other sectors.

Figure 2. GRFA considerations in ABS policy process (by subsectors)



IV. SUBSECTOR SPECIFICITIES

The survey collected subsector-level responses to several agree/disagree questions about the characteristics of GRFA. Respondents were first asked to identify the subsector with which they were most familiar. All respondents were then asked three sets of agree/disagree questions with the specific subsector embedded within the question text (here noted as xxGR). Findings are presented in Figures 3, 4 and 5. The scale for all three sets of questions is: strongly disagree = 1; disagree = 2; neither agree nor disagree; agree = 4; strongly agree = 5.

The first set of general questions (Figure 3) shows relatively consistent question-level responses across subsectors. However, the FGR sector is has, comparatively to the other sectors, the lowest level of agreement regarding the fact that GR are of exotic origin, have been shaped over generations and are essential for achieving food security. This last point could be explained by the fact that FGR could contribute directly to food availability but also embrace other primary forestry products that contribute only indirectly to food security.

Figure 3. General agree/disagree statements about GRFA by subsector

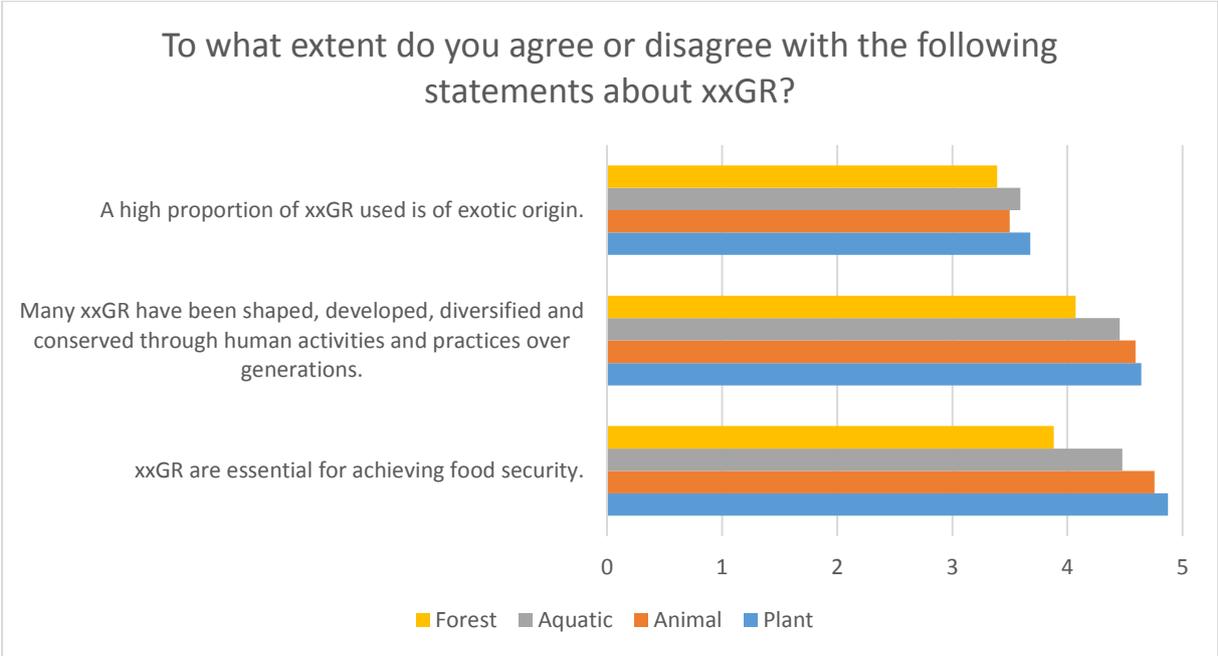


Figure 4. General agree/disagree statements about GRFA by subsector

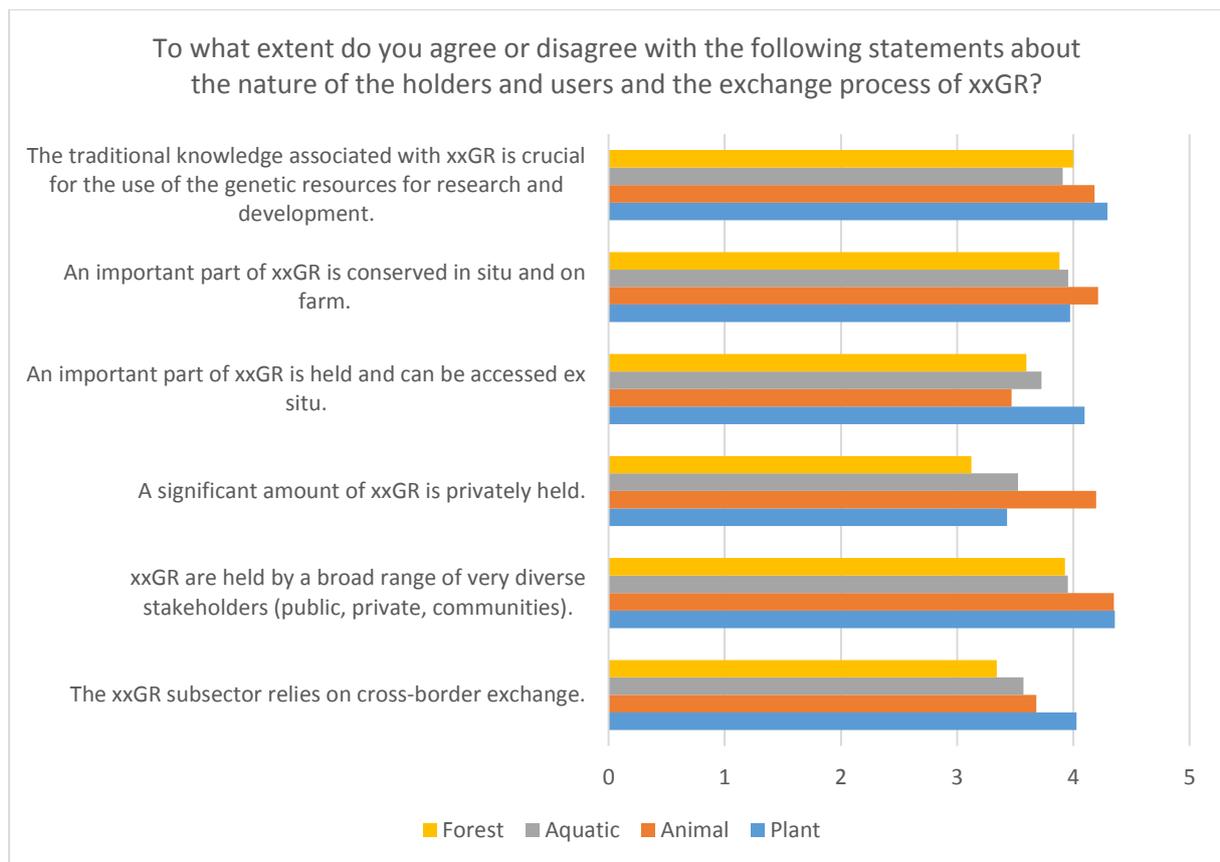
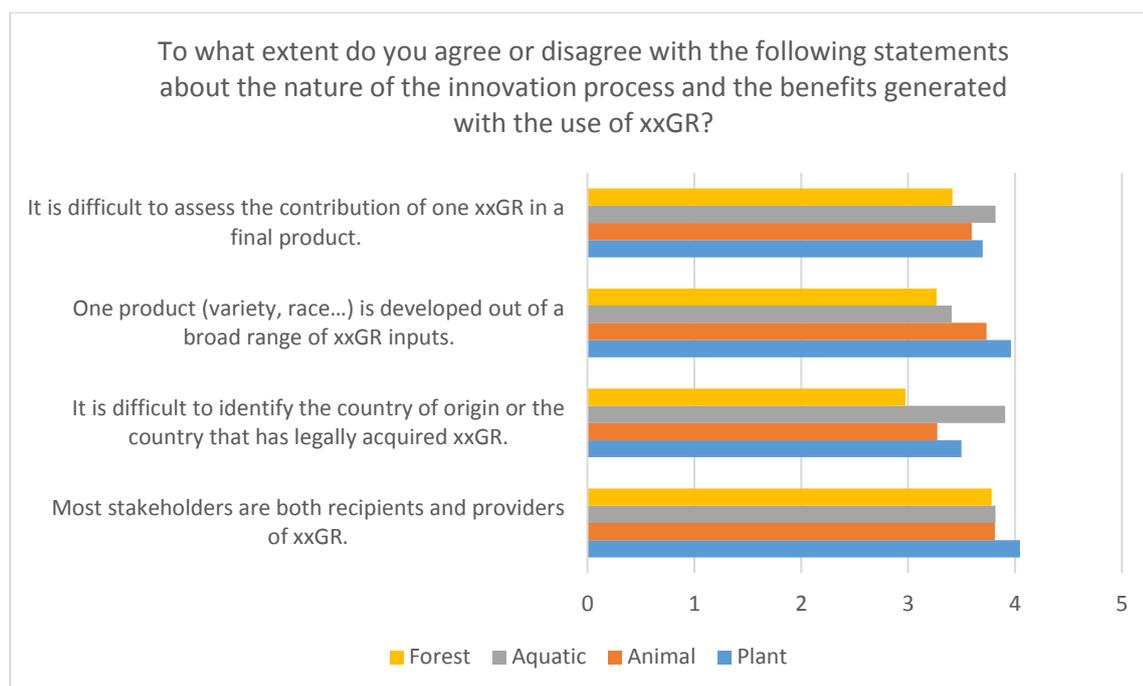


Figure 4 shows responses to a set of questions concerning the holders, users and exchange process of the particular subsector. Overall, there are no marked differences regarding the importance of *in-situ* and on-farm conservation, of *ex-situ* conservation and access. FGRs are less likely to be held by private entities the FGR respondents are less likely to agree that the subsector relies on cross-border exchange than any other sector.

Respondents were also asked about the innovation process and benefit-sharing at the subsector level. Findings, presented in Figure 5, show that FGR experts are less likely to find it difficult to assess the contribution of one FGR in a final product, to identify the country of origin and to agree that one tree variety is developed out of a broad range of FGR inputs.

Figure 5. Agree/disagree statements about use and exchange of GRFA by subsector



V. CONCLUSION

Overall, the results tend to show a relatively reasonable level of awareness and involvement of the FGR NFPs respondents in ABS policy-related activities. Respondents also reported a fair level of consideration for the specificities of FGR in ABS policy processes, especially at the earliest phase. However, it is difficult to draw any definitive conclusion for the whole sector considering the low response rate in this sector and the fact that respondents are likely to be among the most sensitized on ABS issues within the whole FGR NFPs sample frame. Compared to other sectors, the FGR sector displays important specificities (link with food security, long generational intervals, importance of publicly owned/managed forests...) that justify the need for developing careful explanatory notes to complement the ABS elements in order to support efficient implementation of ABS in this sector.