



The International Treaty

ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Report of the Cairo Meeting of the Steering Committee for the Follow-up on the Muscat Ministerial Declaration & the Action Plan for the NENA Region

FAO Regional Office, Cairo, Egypt
13 July 2014

Introduction

The regional Ministerial Meeting on “Water and Drought as Agricultural Challenges in the NENA Region and Beyond: The Contribution of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture,” hosted by the Sultanate of Oman, led by H.E. Dr Fuad bin Jaafar Al-Sajwani, Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries Wealth of Oman, adopted the *Muscat Ministerial Declaration on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* on 21 September 2013. Subsequently, a Steering Committee comprising key representatives and experts from the major agricultural organizations in the NENA region was set up to follow-up on the *Ministerial Declaration and the Framework for an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-Sharing Fund in the Near East & North Africa (NENA) Region 2014-2020* (annexed to the Declaration).

The Steering Committee for the *Treaty NENA Action Plan* has had regular meetings since its formation (Minutes of Meetings annexed.)

These meetings were held via teleconference on the following dates:

1. 10 February 2014
2. 04 March 2014
3. 14 March 2014
4. 15 April 2014
5. 30 April 2014

Discussion of the Steering Committee meetings have focused on the transformation of the *Framework Action Plan* into an action-oriented *Strategic Action Plan*, and included the appointment of a regional expert to take on this work under the guidance of the Steering Committee. The regional expert consultant has subsequently prepared a draft outline for consideration by the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee decided to meet in the NENA Region to discuss the draft outline of the *Treaty NENA Strategic Action Plan*, formulated under their guidance by the regional consultant. This meeting took place on 13 July 2014 at the FAO Regional Office in Cairo,

and was hosted by the FAO Assistant Director-General for the Near East & North Africa Region.

Summary of Discussions:

1. Introduction

- FAO Assistant Director-General (ADG) for the Near East & North Africa, Mr Abdessalam Oud Ahmed welcomed the members of the Steering Committee to the FAO Office in Cairo, and spoke of the importance of initiatives such as the Treaty NENA Action Plan in the context of addressing agricultural challenges in the Region. He mentioned that several countries had contacted the FAO Regional Office, expressing an interest in taking the Treaty NENA Action Plan forward.
- International Treaty Secretary, Dr Shakeel Bhatti thanked ADG Mr Ould Ahmed and his staff for hosting the meeting, and thanked the Steering Committee members for gathering in Cairo in the midst of the month of Ramadaan. He went on to highlight the important role of plant genetic resources in working towards food security, and particularly highlighted the important contributions of the FAO Regional Water Scarcity Initiative, the joint Diversity Seek program and the Treaty's Benefit-Sharing Fund as exemplary initiatives with particular relevance for the NENA region. The Treaty NENA Action Plan is expected to form part of the 4th Cycle of Benefit-Sharing Fund projects.
- FAO Deputy Regional Representative for the Near East Region, Dr Pasquale Steduto, gave a presentation on the FAO Water Scarcity Initiative in the Region, also linking it to the Treaty NENA Action Plan as part of the efforts to address pressing issues in the NENA Region. He spoke particularly of improving water management, managing water supply, climate change adaptation, resilience and drought management and building sustainability.
- The Heads of ICARDA, ICBA, AOAD and AARINENA made statements of support for the Treaty NENA Action Plan and expressed their commitment to working in partnership.

2. Treaty NENA Strategic Action Plan (Treaty NENA-SAP)

- NENA Action Plan Expert Consultant, Dr Nadiya Al-Saadi, presented the main elements of the draft Outline of the Strategic Action Plan through a Powerpoint presentation, highlighting the need to identify key areas and activities, leadership roles in the implementation of the Treaty NENA Action Plan, and to secure funds to implement it.
- The discussion covered various aspects, including leadership roles, priorities, key crops, the role of institutions, the link between water security & food security, the need for coordinated action, the need for a monitoring and evaluation mechanism, the need to raise awareness & gain support among policy-makers, & the need to attract potential donors, possibility of expanding Steering Committee membership; gathering information about national priorities, possibly through a simple

questionnaire to be circulated by Steering Committee members; possibility of discussing next draft Treaty NENA Strategic Action Plan on occasion of AARINENA General Conference in Izmir, Turkey, in September 2014; possibility of having a Side Event about the Treaty NENA SAP at AARINENA General Conference in September 2014.

Action Points:

- Steering Committee members agreed to provide feedback to Dr Al-Saadi within two weeks, by 24 July 2014.
- Dr Nadiya to prepare a revised draft, based on discussion and additional feedback from Steering Committee members.
- Treaty Secretariat to prepare and circulate to Steering Committee members a draft on-line Questionnaire on NENA SAP+BSF. Once finalized, AARINENA will circulate the Questionnaire to wider membership. (The Draft Questionnaire is attached herewith.)
- Final Treaty NENA Strategic Action Plan to be endorsed at/by 6th Governing Body of the International Treaty (GB6).

3. Donor Conference

- Treaty officers, Ms Shafi and Dr Marino, provided an overview of the objectives, necessary preparations, approach and expectations for the NENA Donor Conference, tentatively scheduled to take place at the end of 2014.
- Dr Bhatti informed Steering Committee members of Kuwait's offer to host the Donor Conference and of an upcoming exploratory meeting with Qatar Foundation.
- Discussion included: potential donors, leading institutions and others to be invited; need to increase awareness about Contracting Parties; need to clearly define benefits for donors; need to establish regional partnerships; need to approach Ministries of Finance, Development, Foreign Affairs, in addition to Ministries of Agriculture; need to focus on capacity development, national priorities, training, research, science & biotechnology, technology transfer in approaching donors; possibility to refer to November event as 'Donor Forum' rather than Donor Conference.

Action Points:

- Steering Committee members agreed to make high-level introductions to potential donors for Treaty Secretary within two weeks, by 24 July 2014.
- Steering Committee members agreed to provide list of invitees (Foundations, Organizations, etc) for Donor Conference.
- Treaty Secretariat to circulate to Steering Committee members the draft Concept Note for Donor Conference/Forum and previously circulated informational documents about the Treaty NENA Action Plan for donors. Steering Committee members to provide suggestions on these documents.

4. Possible Partnership with Qatar National Research Fund (Qatar Foundation)
 - Treaty officers spoke of upcoming meeting with the Qatar Foundation and the possibility of holding a Joint Workshop with the Qatar National Research Fund in collaboration with key regional agricultural institutions.
 - Steering Committee members expressed interest in participating in the possible Workshop with the Qatar Foundation's Qatar National Research Fund.

5. Conclusion
 - The meeting was closed by Mr Ould Ahmed & Dr Bhatti, highlighting the following conclusions:
 1. Revised draft Treaty NENA-SAP to have: clear link to the BSF; key priorities to be translated into national and local activities through BSF projects by countries, based on their needs (i.e. bottoms-up approach); assignment of roles and responsibilities among regional organizations for implementation of the Treaty NENA-SAP; priorities of improving traditional breeding, increasing capacity (including on biosafety regulations), transfer of technology and an agro-ecosystem approach.
 2. Next draft could be presented at AARINENA's General Conference in September 2014 by regional expert consultant Dr Al-Saadi.
 3. The Treaty's Governing Body (GB) to be informed of the progress made on the Treaty NENA SAP, and the final Treaty NENA-SAP should be endorsed at the 6th GB;
 4. Need to create and maintain interest in Treaty NENA-SAP at the Ministerial level.

LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1: List of Participants

Annex 2: Meeting Agenda

Annex 3: Powerpoint presentation of Draft Treaty NENA Strategic Action Plan

Annex 4: Minutes of the previous Meetings of the Steering Committee



Annex 1

List of Participants

1. Dr Shakeel Bhatti, Secretary, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food & Agriculture (ITPGRFA);
2. Mr Abdessalam Ould Ahmed, FAO Assistant Director-General & Regional Representative for the Near East & North Africa Region;
3. Dr Pasquale Steduto, FAO Deputy Regional Representative for the Near East & North Africa Region, and FAO Representative in Egypt;
4. Dr Geoffrey Hawtin, Senior Technical Advisor/Consultant – via Skype;
5. Dr Nadiya Al-Saadi, Expert Consultant, Treaty NENA Action Plan – via Skype;
6. Dr Mahmoud Solh, Director-General, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA);
7. Dr Tariq Al-Zadjali, Director-General, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD);
8. Dr Ismahane Elouafi, Director-General, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) – via Skype;
9. Dr Mohammad Ajlouni, Executive Secretary, Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East & North Africa (AARINENA);
10. ITPGRFADr Abdullah Dakheel, Senior Scientist/Ecologist, ICBA;
11. Dr Ahmed Amri, Head of Genetic Resources Unit, ICARDA;
12. Dr Khalil Abu Afifa, Head of Natural Resources & Environment Department, AOAD;
13. Dr Rida Rizk, Plant Genetic Consultant, AOAD;
14. Mr Mohammad Dost, 'Regional Plant Production Officer, FAO-Egypt;
15. Mr Shoki Al-Dobai, Crop Protection Officer, FAO-Egypt;
16. Mr Fawzi Karajeh, Senior Water Resources & Irrigation Officer, FAO-Egypt;
17. Mr Mario Marino, ITPGRFA Officer;
18. Ms Afshaan Shafi, ITPGRFA Officer.

Annex 2

Meeting Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Draft Outline of Treaty NENA Strategic Action Plan
3. Donor Conference
4. Possible Partnership with Qatar National Research Fund (Qatar Foundation)
5. Conclusion



Annex 3

The International Treaty

ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Powerpoint Presentation: Treaty NENA-SAP Draft Outline



STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ITPGRFA BENEFIT-SHARING FUND IN THE NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA AND BEYOND: 2014 – 2020 (SAP-NENA)

JULY 2014

GENERAL STATEMENTS

CONTEXT OF SAP-NENA FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BSF

- BENEFITS TO THE NENA REGION/IMPACTING FARMERS
- TO ATTRACT FUNDS TO THE BSF FOR PRIORTIY ACTIVITIES

CONTEXT OF THE 1ST DRAFT OF THE SAP-NENA

- INPUTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS
- SUGGESTIONS
- RECOMMENDATIONS

WHAT IS NEEDED

INPUTS FROM STEERING COMMITTEE/MEMBER STATES IN
NENA

DECISION ON:

- ACTIVITIES OF IMPORTANCE IN THE 3 PRIORITY AREAS
- IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAP (Leadership role)
- RESOURCES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION (suggestions)

CONTENT

ACRONYMS
TERMS USED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD & AGRICULTURE
(ITPGRFA) & ITS BENEFIT SHARING FUND (BSF)
INTRODUCTION
PRESENT STATUS
FORMULATION OF THE STRATEGY ACTION PLAN
VISION, MISSION AND GOAL OF THE SAP-NENA
COMPONENTS OF STRATEGICACTION PLAN
EXPLORING RESOURCES TO RAISE BSF BUDGET
EXECUTION OF BENEFIT-SHARING FUND (BSF) PROJECTS INCLUDING MONITORING AND
EVALUATION
REGIONAL NETWORK FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES IN THE NEAR EAST AND NORTH
AFRICA REGION (NENA-PGRN)
REFERENCES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The NENA region is an important region with regards to world food crop diversity
- Its facing challenges that are predicted to get worse
- These challenges need to be addressed
- The SAP aims to provide a 6 year road plan (2014-2020)
- SAP comprises of 3 components and their sub-components
 - Development of regional strategic plans
 - Impacting farmers
 - Co-development, transfer of technology and building capacity
- Formulated based on the SAP-NENA of the NENAPGRN of AARINENA

INTRODUCTION

- ITPGRFA_BSF
- Introduction on the NENA Region
 - NENA region -17 countries of the NE and 10 of NA
 - Climatic zones-challenges
 - Facts about NENA region *

PRESENT STATUS *

- PGR activities in the region
- Agro-biodiversity
- In-situ conservation and management
- Ex-situ conservation
 - Box-collections
 - Box-collections by crops in the region
- Sustainable use
 - Box- % use of landraces
- National programs, training & legislation
- Regional and international collaboration

Formulation of the SAP

As per the frame work of the SAP-NENA of the Muscat declaration
In line with SAP-NENA

VISION, MISSION & GOAL

VISION:

The NENA region will have its population, in general and farmers in particular, live with improved standard of living having access to higher yielding varieties of the major food crops developed through conservation and use of PGRFA, that are more resilient and better able to withstand drought, salinity, high temperatures and other threats due to climate change and biotic stresses.



MISSION:

Conserve and safeguard plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in particular to enhance their contribution to national, regional and international agricultural development, food security and well-being of the farmers of the Near East and North Africa.



GOAL:

Organizations and Institutions in NENA will have greater capacity to serve farmers' needs via farmers' organizations through an improved ability to conduct research and development activities that contribute better to the achievement of the objectives of the International Treaty towards the building of strong Global System for conservation and sustainable use of agro-biodiversity.

COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BSF



DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLANS COMPONENT:

GOAL:

Addresses measures related to the development of regional strategic plans with respect to conservation and management of agro-biodiversity, use of diversity and capacity building, in general and plant genetic resources in particular and strengthening regional cooperation in all associated crop diversity and plant genetic resources activities.

COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BSF



DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLANS COMPONENT:

ACTIVITIES: Sub-components

AGRO-BIODIVERSITY

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT SUB-COMPONENT:

THE SUSTAINABLE USE SUB-COMPONENT

POLICY AND LEGISLATION

CAPACITY BUILDING

SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL PROGRAMS

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BSF



IMPACTING FARMERS COMPONENT:

GOAL:

The strategy responds to activities/ measures involving plant genetic resources that offers direct impact to the farmers, farmers' associations and civic societies, which in turn improve the livelihoods of resource poor farmers in short period of time.

ACTIVITIES:

COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BSF



CO-DEVELOPMENT, TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY COMPONENT:

GOAL:

The strategy responds to measures in co-development to mutually develop in promoting plant genetic activities and exchange of technologies related to PGR activities compatible to each other.

ACTIVITIES:

EXPLORING RESOURCES TO BSF

- Arabian Gulf and NENA OPEC countries organizations / ministries can contribute to BSF once the ITPGRFA prepares an outline to improve human capacity of these countries.
- Others

EXECUTION OF BENEFIT-SHARING FUND (BSF) PROJECTS INCLUDING MONITORING AND EVALUATION



**REGIONAL NETWORK FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES IN THE
NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION (NENA-PGRN)**



The International Treaty

ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Annex 4

Minutes of Previous Meetings of the Steering Committee



The International Treaty

ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

MINUTES OF TELECONFERENCE RE: FOLLOW-UP ON MUSCAT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION & FRAMEWORK ACTION PLAN (10 February 2014)

The first Teleconference to discuss the follow-up for the "Framework for an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-Sharing Fund in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) Region: 2014-2020," adopted as part of the Muscat Ministerial Declaration on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in September 2013, was held on 10 February 2014 from 11.30 – 13.00 Rome time.

Participants:

- Dr Ahmed Al-Bakry, Vice Minister, Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries Wealth, Sultanate of Oman;
- Dr Mahmoud Solh, Director-General, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA);
- Dr Ismahane Elouafi, Director-General, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA);
- Dr Tariz Al-Zadjali, Director-General, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD);
- Dr Mohammad Ajlouni, Executive Secretary, Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East & North Africa (AARINENA);
- Dr Ahmed Amri, Head of ICARDA's Plant Genetic Resources Unit;
- Ms Fiona Chandler, ICBA's Director of International Cooperation & Partnerships;
- Dr Shakeel Bhatti, Secretary, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food & Agriculture (ITPGRFA);
- Mr Mario Marino, ITPGRFA Officer;
- Mr Álvaro Toledo, ITPGRFA Officer;
- Ms Afshaan Shafi, ITPGRFA Officer.

(Dr Geoffrey Hawtin, Senior Technical Advisor, ITPGRFA, was unable to participate, but sent his input via Ms Shafi.)

Agenda:

1. Further development of the Framework Action Plan
2. Preparations for the Technical Conference & for the Donor Summit
3. Possible involvement of the Arab League
4. Any other business.

Summary of Discussion:

The participants discussed the process to be followed in the further development and implementation of the Action Plan adopted in Muscat. They agreed on the following steps:

1. Development of the Framework Action Plan

- Participants agreed on the need for a **Steering Committee** to spearhead the process of converting the Framework Action plan into a Strategic Action Plan to be implemented in the NENA Region.
- The composition of this **Steering Committee** will be:
 1. Dr Ahmed Al-Bakry, Vice Minister, Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries Wealth, Sultanate of Oman;
 2. Dr Ismahane Elouafi, Director-General, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA);
 3. Dr Mahmoud Solh, Director-General, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA);
 4. Dr Mohammad Ajlouni, Executive Secretary, Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East & North Africa (AARINENA);
 5. Dr Tariz Al-Zadjali, Director-General, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD);
 6. Dr Geoffrey Hawtin, Senior Technical Advisor (ITPGRFA); and
 7. Dr Shakeel Bhatti, Secretary, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food & Agriculture (ITPGRFA).

With supportive participation of:

8. Dr Ahmed Amri, Head of ICARDA's Plant Genetic Resources Unit;
 9. Ms Fiona Chandler, ICBA's Director of International Cooperation & Partnerships;
 10. Mr Mario Marino, ITPGRFA Officer;
 11. Mr Álvaro Toledo, ITPGRFA Officer; and
 12. Ms Afshaan Shafi, ITPGRFA Officer.
- The Steering Committee agreed to **identify a young and upcoming Expert from the NENA Region** to assist in the development, writing and fine-tuning of the Framework Action Plan.
 - This Expert will be assisted by a **Technical Committee of PGRFA experts**.
 - The main task of this Expert/Consultant will be to **convert the Framework Action Plan into an action-oriented Strategic Action Plan**. In this regard, the participants decided the following steps:
 1. The ITPGRFA Secretariat will draw up **Terms of Reference** and E-mail these to the Steering Committee.
 2. The Steering Committee members will **propose names** for consideration.
 3. The Steering Committee will then **select an Expert** from the proposed list of names.
 - The Steering Committee and other invitees will have a **1 or 2-day Preparatory Meeting** in the Region to discuss and finalize the draft Action Plan formulated by the Expert/Consultant.
 1. Timing: **April 2014 / early-May 2014**
 2. Venue: **Near East Region** (maybe in Jordan or in Dubai)
 3. Objectives:
 - Discuss & finalize draft Action Plan
 - Meet with potential donors

- Identify experts & other invitees for Technical & Donor Conference in November
- Participants agreed make good use of the Plant Genetic Resources Network that already exists in NENA region, which is coordinated by ARINENA and facilitated by ICARDA.

2. Preparations for the Technical Meeting & Donor Summit

- Participants agreed to hold a Technical & Donor Conference in the Region in **November 2014**.
- The objective of this Conference/Summit will be to **present Strategic Action Plan for implementation, including the identification of donors**.
- Invitees have yet to be decided, but are expected to include Ministries, National Focal Points, Experts, Potential donors, etc.
- The Conference/Summit might be timed to coincide with (an) other major event(s) in the Region.
- Participants agreed that the Conference/Summit should be held in the Near East Region, somewhere with a concentration of potential donors. The exact venue and other details will be discussed in the coming weeks and months.

<u>Follow-up Actions:</u>	<u>Responsible Parties:</u>	<u>Proposed Deadline</u>
1. Terms of Reference for Expert/Consultant:	Treaty Secretariat	18 February 2014
2. Circulation of List of Suggested Names:	Steering Committee	21 February 2014
3. 2 nd Teleconference:	All	24 February 2014
4. Selection of Expert/Consultant:	Steering Committee	28 February 2014
5. Identify Potential Funding:	Steering Committee	28 February 2014
6. Engage Expert/Consultant:	TBD	28 February 2014
7. Decide venue for Steering Committee Meeting:	All	28 February 2014
8. 3 rd Teleconference:	All	14 March 2014
9. Present draft Strategic Action Plan:	Expert/Consultant	28 March 2014
10. 4 th Teleconference:	All	10 April 2014
11. Steering Committee Meeting:	Steering Committee + Expert/Consultant	April /early-May 2014 (TBC)
12. Decide venue for Technical Meeting & Donor Summit	Steering Committee	TBD





The International Treaty

ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

MINUTES OF TELECONFERENCE-2 RE: FOLLOW-UP ON MUSCAT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION & FRAMEWORK ACTION PLAN (04 March 2014)

The second Teleconference to discuss the follow-up for the "*Framework for an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-Sharing Fund in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) Region: 2014-2020*," adopted as part of the Muscat Ministerial Declaration on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in September 2013, was held on 04 March 2014 from 11.30 – 12.20 Rome time.

Participants:

- Dr Ismahane Elouafi, Director-General, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA);
- Dr Mohammad Ajlouni, Executive Secretary, Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East & North Africa (AARINENA);
- Dr Ahmed Amri, Head of ICARDA's Plant Genetic Resources Unit;
- Ms Fiona Chandler, ICBA's Director of International Cooperation & Partnerships;
- Dr Shakeel Bhatti, Secretary, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food & Agriculture (ITPGRFA);
- Mr Mario Marino, ITPGRFA Officer;
- Mr Álvaro Toledo, ITPGRFA Officer;
- Ms Afshaan Shafi, ITPGRFA Officer.

Regrets for being unable to participate:

- Dr Ahmed Al-Bakry, Vice Minister, Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries Wealth, Sultanate of Oman;
- Dr Mahmoud Solh, Director-General, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA);
- Dr Tariz Al-Zadjali, Director-General, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD);
- Dr Geoffrey Hawtin, Senior Technical Advisor, ITPGRFA

Agenda:

1. Selection of Expert/Consultant to work on fine-tuning the Framework Action Plan into a Strategic Action Plan.
2. Identifying potential funding sources for the Benefit-Sharing Fund.
3. Selection of Venue for Steering Committee Meeting in late-April/May 2014.
4. Reserving timeslots for next two Steering Committee Teleconferences:

- 3rd Teleconference of the Steering Committee – proposed date & time: 14 March 2014 at 11.30 hours Rome time.
 - 4th Teleconference of the Steering Committee – proposed date & time: 10 April 2014 at 11.30 hours Rome time.
5. Any other business.

Summary of Discussion:

1. Selection of Expert/Consultant

- The participants discussed the candidates under consideration for the position of Expert Consultant to work on fine-tuning and transforming the Framework for an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-Sharing Fund in the NENA Region: 2014-2020 into a Strategic Action Plan.
- Dr Solh, Dr Zadjali & Dr Hawtin had sent in their comments via e-mail to Ms Shafi, who shared these during the teleconference.
- Participants unanimously selected Dr Nadia Al-Saadi to take on this task, and agreed on two other candidates in case Dr Al-Saadi is not available. The other two candidates, in order of preference were:
 - o Dr Rami Khalil
 - o Dr Mohammed Tazi

2. Identifying potential funding sources

- There was some discussion on potential funding partners for the Benefit-Sharing Fund, particularly in relation to the implementation of the Action Plan for the NENA Region.
- Dr Zadjali had sent comments via e-mail and suggested identifying more specifics about funding targets.
- Participants agreed to explore funding possibilities and to report back on this on a regular basis during future teleconferences.
- The Treaty Secretariat agreed to prepare & share with the Steering Committee a brief informational note that could be used when talking to potential donors.

3. Venue for Steering Committee Meeting in late-April/May 2014

- There was discussion on the pros & cons of venues for the Steering Committee Meeting in late April/early May. It was decided that it would be better to try to hold the meeting in a place where we could also easily start reaching out to potential donors/financial partners, so that we could start cultivating potential funding partners and they make take ownership of the Action Plan by hosting the meeting. This would help to crystalize/ finalize funding support by the Technical Meeting & Donor Conference in November 2014.
- Ms Chandler of ICBA offered to contact the Qatar Foundation to enquire about their possible interest in hosting the Steering Committee meeting in late April/early May.
- ICARDA suggested hosting the meeting of the Steering Committee in Amman, Jordan.
- ICBA also offered to host the meeting of the Steering Committee in Dubai, UAE.

4. Next Two Steering Committee Teleconferences

- All participants in the teleconference confirmed their availability for the timeslots suggested for the next two Steering Committee Teleconferences, which will be as follows:
 - Teleconference-3: 14 March 2014 at 11.30 hours Rome time.
 - Teleconference-4: 10 April 2014 at 11.30 hours Rome time.

5. Any other business

- There was no other business.

<u>Follow-up Actions:</u>	<u>Responsible Parties:</u>	<u>Proposed Deadline</u>
1. Contact Selected Expert:	Treaty Secretariat	05 March 2014
2. Develop brief note (for potential donors):	Treaty Secretariat	07 March 2014
3. Contact Qatar Foundation:	Fiona Chandler	05 March 2014
4. Develop more specifics about funding targets:	Treaty Secretariat	10 April 2014
5. Explore potential funding:	Steering Committee	14 March 2014
6. Report on potential funding:	Steering Committee	14 March 2014
7. 3 rd Teleconference:	All	14 March 2014
8. 4 th Teleconference:	All	10 April 2014
9. Steering Committee Meeting:	Steering Committee + Expert/Consultant	April /early-May 2014 (TBC)





MINUTES OF TELECONFERENCE-3 RE: FOLLOW-UP ON MUSCAT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION & FRAMEWORK ACTION PLAN (14 March 2014)

The third Teleconference to discuss the follow-up for the *"Framework for an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-Sharing Fund in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) Region: 2014-2020,"* adopted as part of the Muscat Ministerial Declaration on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in September 2013, was held on 14 March 2014 from 11.00 – 11.40 Rome time.

Participants:

- Dr Mahmoud Solh, Director-General, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA);
- Dr Shakeel Bhatti, Secretary, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food & Agriculture (ITPGRFA);
- Dr Geoffrey Hawtin, Senior Technical Advisor, ITPGRFA
- Mr Mario Marino, ITPGRFA Officer;
- Ms Afshaan Shafi, ITPGRFA Officer.

Those unable to participate:

- Dr Ahmed Al-Bakry, Vice Minister, Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries Wealth, Sultanate of Oman;
- Dr Ismahane Elouafi, Director-General, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA);
- Dr Tariq Al-Zadjali, Director-General, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD);
- Dr Mohammad Ajlouni, Executive Secretary, Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East & North Africa (AARINENA);
- Dr Ahmed Amri, Head of ICARDA's Plant Genetic Resources Unit;
- Ms Fiona Chandler, ICBA's Director of International Cooperation & Partnerships;
- Mr Álvaro Toledo, ITPGRFA Officer.

Agenda:

1. Update on selected Expert/Consultant to work on fine-tuning the Framework Action Plan into a Strategic Action Plan.
2. Update from Steering Committee members on identifying potential funding sources for the Benefit-Sharing Fund.
3. Venue for Steering Committee Meeting in late-April/May 2014.

4. Reserving timeslot for next Steering Committee Teleconference – proposed date & time: 10 April 2014 at 11.30 hours Rome time.
5. Any other business.

Summary of Discussion:

1. Update on selected Expert/Consultant to work on fine-tuning the Framework Action Plan into a Strategic Action Plan

- Dr Bhatti reported that the Treaty Secretariat had been in contact with Dr Nadiya Al-Saadi, to inform her of her selection by the Steering Committee to work as Expert Consultant on fine-tuning and transforming the Framework for an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-Sharing Fund in the NENA Region: 2014-2020 into a Strategic Action Plan.
- The Secretariat had already sent Dr Al-Saadi the Terms of Reference approved by the Steering Committee for the position of Expert Consultant for the NENA Action Plan.
- Dr Al-Saadi's initial response was very positive, and she requested a little time to consider the scope of the work required and to consult with her superiors.
- Dr Al-Saadi's decision is expected in the coming week.
- Participants reiterated the decision that, in case Dr Al-Saadi is unable to accept the position, the next person on the list of 3 candidates should be contacted.

2. Update from Steering Committee members on identifying potential funding sources for the Benefit-Sharing Fund

- The Treaty Secretariat reported that it had prepared a simple 1-page informational note, as requested by Dr Ismahane in the previous Teleconference. The 1-page informational note contains basic information about the NENA Action Plan & the Benefit-Sharing Fund and was intended to assist ICBA & other Steering Committee members in approaching potential donors.
- This 1-page informational note had already been sent to ICBA to use in contacting the Qatar Foundation.
- In addition to the simple 1-page informational note, the Treaty Secretariat had also been working on a more detailed document, containing more technical information about the NENA Action Plan and the Benefit-Sharing Fund.
- The 2nd document is being developed to be used by members of the Steering Committee as a follow-up to the 1-page introductory note, to provide more technical details to potential donors.
- Dr Solh said he would provide names and introductions to the following potential donors in the region:
 1. Islamic Development Bank;
 2. Arab Fund.
- Dr Solh also offered to speak with the Kuwait Fund during the upcoming Arab Forum for Environmental Development in May 2014, and said he would subsequently report the results of that discussion to the Steering Committee.

- The Treaty Secretariat agreed to finalize & send to the Steering Committee both the 1-page introductory note and the longer document for them to use in their fund-gathering efforts.

3. Venue for Steering Committee Meeting in late-April/May 2014

- The Treaty Secretariat reported that ICBA/Dr Ismahane & Ms Chandler were in the process of approaching the Qatar Foundation, and were expected to provide an update the next week.
- There was discussion about travel & incidental costs relating to the April/May meeting of the Steering Committee, as well as any future meetings.
- Participants agreed that proposals to the Qatar Foundation and other potential donors should focus on larger resource mobilization efforts for the Benefit-Sharing Fund, and not on funding the meetings of the Steering Committee.
- The Steering Committee meetings would be self-funded, i.e. every participating institution would have to finance their own costs.

4. Next Steering Committee Teleconferences

- The next Steering Committee teleconference will be on **Thursday, 10 April 2014 at 11.30 hours Rome time.**
- All participants were requested to reserve this time in their schedules to avoid scheduling conflicts and to ensure their participation.

5. Any other business

- There was no other business.

<u>Follow-up Actions:</u>	<u>Responsible Parties:</u>	<u>Proposed Deadline</u>
1. Follow-Up with Selected Expert, Dr Al-Saadi:	Treaty Secretariat	21 March 2014
2. Contact Qatar Foundation:	Dr Ismahane	24 March 2014
3. Finalize & send brief note (for potential donors):	Treaty Secretariat	28 March 2014
4. Finalize longer descriptive document (for potential donors)		
	Treaty Secretariat	01 April 2014
5. Introduction & donor contact info:	Dr Mahmoud Solh	01 April 2014
6. Explore potential funding:	Steering Committee	on-going
7. Report on potential funding:	Steering Committee	10 April 2014
8. Develop more specifics about funding targets:	Treaty Secretariat	10 April 2014
9. 4 th Teleconference:	All	10 April 2014
10. Steering Committee Meeting:	Steering Committee + Expert/Consultant	April /early-May 2014 (TBC)





The International Treaty

ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

MINUTES OF TELECONFERENCE-4 RE: FOLLOW-UP ON MUSCAT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION & FRAMEWORK ACTION PLAN (15 April 2014)

The fourth Teleconference to discuss the follow-up for the "Framework for an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-Sharing Fund in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) Region: 2014-2020," adopted as part of the Muscat Ministerial Declaration on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in September 2013, was held on 15 April 2014 from 14.30 – 15.40 hours Rome time.

Participants:

- Dr Shakeel Bhatti, Secretary, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food & Agriculture (ITPGRFA);
- Dr Mahmoud Solh, Director-General, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA);
- Dr Ismahane Elouafi, Director-General, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA);
- Dr Tariq Al-Zadjali, Director-General, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD);
- Dr Mohammad Ajlouni, Executive Secretary, Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East & North Africa (AARINENA);
- Dr Nadiya Al-Saadi, Expert Consultant, NENA Action Plan;
- Mr Mario Marino, ITPGRFA Officer;
- Ms Afshaan Shafi, ITPGRFA Officer.

Those unable to participate:

- Dr Ahmed Al-Bakry, Vice Minister, Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries Wealth, Sultanate of Oman;
- Dr Ahmed Amri, Head of ICARDA's Plant Genetic Resources Unit;
- Ms Fiona Chandler, ICBA's Director of International Cooperation & Partnerships;
- Dr Geoffrey Hawtin, Senior Technical Advisor, ITPGRFA (provided comments beforehand);
- Mr Álvaro Toledo, ITPGRFA Officer.

Agenda:

1. Welcome to Expert Consultant, Dr Nadiya Al-Saadi, to the Steering Committee.
2. Update from Steering Committee members on identifying potential funding sources for the Benefit-Sharing Fund.
3. Venue for Steering Committee Meeting in early May 2014. Proposed date: Wednesday, 7 May 2014.

4. Reserving timeslot for next Steering Committee Teleconference – proposed date & time: 30 April at 11.30 hours Rome time.
5. Any other business.

Summary of Discussions:

1. Welcome to Expert Consultant, Dr Nadiya Al-Saadi, to the Steering Committee

- **Dr Nadiya Al-Saadi** was formally **introduced and welcomed** to the **Steering Committee** as Expert Consultant on fine-tuning and transforming the Framework for an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-Sharing Fund in the NENA Region: 2014-2020 into a Strategic Action Plan.
- Dr Al-Saadi thanked the Steering Committee for selecting her to take on this important task & requested guidance & assistance from all.
- Steering Committee members welcomed Dr Al-Saadi & offered their willing assistance to her with the task on hand.
- In keeping with suggestions received from Dr Hawtin, participants agreed that Dr Al-Saadi will circulate a **draft annotated outline of the proposed strategy document**. This draft outline will include major sections indicating the issues to be covered, and including priorities, objectives, goals, expected outcomes and impact, key activities, time-scale, milestones, major institutions and partners, organizational structures and processes, monitoring and evaluation systems, human and financial resource requirements, etc.
- **Dr Saadi** will circulate a **draft outline** by to the Steering Committee by **22 April 2014**.
- Steering Committee members, notably **ICARDA, AARINENA, AOAD and ICBA** offered to convene a **small regional Workshop** with experts in the region to discuss & provide substantive input to **Dr Al-Saadi**, based on the draft outline.

2. Update from Steering Committee members on identifying potential funding sources for the Benefit-Sharing Fund

- The Treaty Secretariat reported that Dr Bhatti had contacted the **Qatar Foundation**, based on an introduction by Dr Ismahane, and a response was awaited. **Dr Ismahane** said she would try to **follow-up** on this & would also provide the Secretariat with a contact telephone number at the Qatar Foundation.
- The Treaty Secretariat has also prepared and circulated to the Steering Committee a **longer informational document to use in approaching potential donors**, as requested. This longer document contains more technical information about the NENA Action Plan and the Benefit-Sharing Fund, presented in a simple way.
- Dr Solh requested that the concept note contain a specific request/proposal.
- Dr Ismahane suggested that the note include BSF success stories.
- The **Treaty Secretariat** agreed to further develop the **detailed "Concept Note" for donors** & to circulate a revised version to the Steering Committee within one week, by **22 April 2014**.
- Participants were requested to review the note & provide any further **specific comments**.
- **Dr Solh** agreed to provide **names and introductions to the some potential donors** in the region, particularly:
 1. **Islamic Development Bank,**
 2. **Arab Fund.**
 3. **Kuwait Fund.**

- **Dr Solh** was also reminded to approach the **Kuwait Fund** himself during the upcoming **Arab Forum for Environmental Development** in May 2014. He said he would talk with them and subsequently report the outcome of the discussion to the Steering Committee.

3. Venue for Steering Committee Meeting in early May 2014. Proposed date: Wednesday, 7 May 2014.

- Since the **Treaty Secretariat** is waiting to hear from the **Qatar Foundation**, it was agreed to postpone the decision of a venue for the Steering Committee meeting in the Region.
- The timing for the Steering Committee meeting to be held in the Region was postponed from early May 2014 to June or July 2014.
- The Secretariat agreed to **circulate possible dates for the Steering Committee meeting**, so that each member could indicate the dates that would be most suitable, given everyone's busy schedules.
- Participants agreed that attendance at **Steering Committee meetings will be self-funded**, i.e. every participating institution will finance their own costs.
- Participants also agreed that proposals to the Qatar Foundation and other potential donors should focus **on larger resource mobilization efforts for the Benefit-Sharing Fund**.

4. Next Steering Committee Teleconferences

- The next Steering Committee teleconference will be on **Wednesday, 30 April 2014 at 11.30 hours Rome time**.
- All participants were requested to **reserve this time in their schedules** to avoid scheduling conflicts and to ensure their participation.

5. Any other business

- There was no other business.

<u>Follow-up Actions:</u>	<u>Responsible Parties:</u>	<u>Proposed Deadline</u>
1. Circulation of draft outline:	Dr Nadiya Al-Saadi	22 April 2014
2. Circulation of revised "concept note" for donors:	Treaty Secretariat	22 April 2014
3. Follow-up with Qatar Foundation:	Dr Ismahane Elouafi	22 April 2014
4. Qatar Foundation contact info:	Dr Ismahane Elouafi	22 April 2014
5. Introduction & donor contact info:	Dr Mahmoud Solh	22 April 2014
6. Regional Workshop of Experts & Dr Al-Saadi:	AARINENA, AOAD, ICARDA, ICBA + Dr Al-Saadi	May 2014 (TBC)
7. Explore potential funding:	Steering Committee	on-going
8. Report on potential funding:	Steering Committee	30 April 2014
9. ^{5th} Teleconference:	All	30 April 2014
10. Steering Committee Meeting:	All	June/July (TBC)





The International Treaty

ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

MINUTES OF TELECONFERENCE-5 RE: FOLLOW-UP ON MUSCAT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION & FRAMEWORK ACTION PLAN (30 April 2014)

The fifth Teleconference to discuss the follow-up for the *"Framework for an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-Sharing Fund in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) Region: 2014-2020,"* adopted as part of the Muscat Ministerial Declaration on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in September 2013, was held on 30 April 2014 from 11.30 – 13.00 hours Rome time.

Participants:

- Dr Shakeel Bhatti, Secretary, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food & Agriculture (ITPGRFA);
- Dr Ismahane Elouafi, Director-General, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA);
- Dr Ahmed Amri, Head of ICARDA's Plant Genetic Resources Unit;
- Dr Nadiya Al-Saadi, Expert Consultant, NENA Action Plan;
- Mr Mario Marino, ITPGRFA Officer;
- Ms Afshaan Shafi, ITPGRFA Officer.

Those unable to participate:

- Dr Ahmed Al-Bakry, Vice Minister, Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries Wealth, Sultanate of Oman;
- Dr Mahmoud Solh, Director-General, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA);
- Dr Tariq Al-Zadjali, Director-General, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD);
- Dr Mohammad Ajlouni, Executive Secretary, Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East & North Africa (AARINENA);
- Ms Fiona Chandler, ICBA's Director of International Cooperation & Partnerships;
- Dr Geoffrey Hawtin, Senior Technical Advisor, ITPGRFA (provided comments beforehand);
- Mr Álvaro Toledo, ITPGRFA Officer.

Agenda:

1. Discussion of Draft Outline of Strategic Action Plan, including discussion on Needs & Financial Estimates.
2. Update from Steering Committee members on identifying potential funding sources for the Benefit-Sharing Fund.
3. Venue for Steering Committee Meeting in early May 2014. Proposed date: Saturday, 21 June 2014.
4. Any other business.

Summary of Discussions:

1. Discussion of Draft Outline of Strategic Action Plan, including discussion on Needs & Financial Estimates

- **Dr Nadiya Al-Saadi** reported on her earlier discussions with members of the Steering Committee. In particular, she spoke of her detailed discussions with Dr Geoff Hawtin, who suggested that the emphasis of the draft be placed on **Use and Conservation** rather than the other way around, since the impact of the Strategic Action Plan is important, particularly from a donor perspective.
- **Dr Geoff Hawtin** had also suggested considering **sub-regional approaches**. There was some discussion on the definition of the regional & sub-regional groupings. Definitions varied.
- **Dr Ismahane** suggested using a crop-based approach, i.e. using **agro-ecological zones**.
- **Dr Bhatti** felt that an agro-ecological approach, focusing more on priority crops, rather than only the FAO administrative definition of the NENA Region. This would be more inclusive, thus also highlighting **cooperative multilateralism**, in keeping with the spirit of the International Treaty.
- **Dr Nadiya** requested assistance and more information of agro-ecological zones.
- **Dr Ismahane** spoke of the importance of **outcome targets**, particularly vis-à-vis poverty alleviation and food security.
- The **Treaty Secretariat** will provide Dr Nadiya with some **information on agro-ecological zones**.
- **Dr Nadiya** will continue **bilateral discussions** with individual members of the Steering Committee, and follow-up on their offer to coordinate a small **Regional Workshop in May** to further discuss and develop the **draft Strategic Action Plan** with her.

2. Update from Steering Committee members on identifying potential funding sources for the Benefit-Sharing Fund

- Dr Bhatti reported that he had been in touch with the **Qatar Foundation**, and had a teleconference scheduled with **Dr Abdul Sattar Al-Taie of the Qatar Foundation's Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF)** for the coming Sunday (04 May 2014), and would report on the outcome of that call in due course.
- Dr Ismahane shared several relevant insights into the **Qatar Foundation**, particularly about their areas of interest; notably, **opportunities for collaboration on research and innovations, desalination and high-end technologies**; about **funds for hosting conferences and workshops** & offered to send to the Treaty Secretariat a **presentation about the Global Drylands Alliance (GDA)** to serve as background material for Dr Bhatti's call with Dr Sattar Al-Taie.
- **Dr Amri** agreed to follow-up with **Dr Solh** regarding his offer to **approach the Kuwaitis** to explore funding possibilities, as also the **Arab Forum for Environmental Development**, both of whom he is scheduled to meet in May 2014.
- The **Treaty Secretariat** offered to **follow-up with the Kuwaiti representation in Rome** after Dr Solh has made the initial contact.
- The **Treaty Secretariat** spoke of the **revised informational document** recently circulated to the Steering Committee and said it would send a final revised version, in English and in Arabic shortly. This **descriptive document** contains some technical

information about the NENA Action Plan and the Benefit-Sharing Fund with some success stories and projected funding, all presented in an easy-to-understand manner.

3. Venue for Steering Committee Meeting in early May 2014. Proposed date: Saturday, 21 June 2014.

- The new proposed date for the meeting of the Steering Committee is **Saturday, 21 June 2014** in combination with meetings with potential donors on 22 and 23 June 2014.
- It was agreed to try to involve the **Qatar Foundation** as soon as possible, and to pursue the idea of convening the Steering Committee meeting in cooperation with them. This was awaiting Dr Bhatti's discussion with Dr Sattar/Qatar Foundation, scheduled for Sunday, 04 May 2014.
- **Alternative venues** were discussed, including ICARDA's offer to convene the meeting in **Amman**, Jordan, and ICBA's offer to convene it in **Dubai**, UAE. Other suggestions included **Jeddah**, possibly around the 40th Anniversary meeting of the Islamic Development Bank (23 – 26 June 2014).

4. Next Steering Committee Teleconferences

- The next Steering Committee teleconference **will be proposed by Dr Nadiya**.

5. Any other business

- There was no other business.

<u>Follow-up Actions:</u>	<u>Responsible Parties:</u>	<u>Proposed Deadline</u>
1. Background information on GDA & QF:	Dr Ismahane Elouafi	01 May 2014
2. Follow-up with Qatar Foundation:	Dr Bhatti	04 May 2014
3. Follow-up with Dr Solh re: approaching donors:	Dr Amri	06 May 2014
4. Information on agro-ecological zones:	Mario Marino	07 May 2014
5. Final revised descriptive note for donors:	Treaty Secretariat	07 May 2014
6. Regional Workshop of Experts & Dr Al-Saadi:	AARINENA, AOAD, ICARDA, ICBA + Dr Nadiya	May 2014 (TBD)
7. Explore potential funding:	Steering Committee	on-going
8. Report on potential funding:	Steering Committee	next Telecon
9. Sixth Teleconference:	All/Dr Nadiya to decide	TBD
10. Steering Committee Meeting:	All	21 June (TBC)