The International Treaty
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
FIRST MEETING OF THE EXPERT CONSULTATION ON THE GLOBAL INFORMATION SYSTEM ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
San Diego, USA, 7-8 January 2015
Annotated Provisional Agenda and Timetable

1. Introduction

1.   The Secretariat has prepared this Annotated Agenda to propose a structure for the discussions and deliberations of the expert consultation. The consultation is a one-time meeting for this biennium and it is suggested that the focus be on the outputs that will be presented to the Governing Body.

2.   Resolution 10/2013 of the Governing Body defines the scope and objectives of the consultation. The Consultation advises the Secretary in the development of proposals for the effective establishment of the Global Information System. In particular, it is expected to:

(i) Facilitate the assessment of needs and advise the Secretary on the identification of activities and priorities for information exchange;

(ii) Conduct a review of major ongoing initiatives, projects and programmes at national, regional and international levels of relevance for the development of Article 17 of the International Treaty;

(iii) Identify information gaps on scientific, technical and environmental matters on PGRFA;

(iv) Identify best practices and appropriate methodologies for the strengthening of an effective global information system;

(v) Conduct and publish the necessary background study papers, in cooperation with Contracting Parties and relevant stakeholders and subject to availability of resources, an online survey on the major components of the Global Information System;

(vi) Advise the Secretariat in the drafting of the vision paper on the Global Information System as a conceptual basis for a programme of work to be presented to the Governing Body at its next session for its consideration.

3.   The consultation benefits from a range of background study papers and information documents that the Secretariat has made available on selected topics, in collaboration with individual experts and institutions active on information systems for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA).

4.   It is not suggested that the meeting review in detail any specific paper or document. Rather, it is recommended that, taking into account the relevant information and considerations contained in the documentation, the expert consultation advise on:

    (i)   The Vision;

    (ii) The elements of the Programme of Work;

    (iii) Any other work that, in the views of the expert consultation, needs to be carried out in preparation for the next session of the Governing Body.

5.   The annotated agenda that follows has been prepared based on these considerations. The present document annotates the provisional agenda and provides a proposed time-table, for the consideration of the expert consultation. The list of documents (i.e. working documents, background study paper, information documents and others inputs) is contained in document IT/COGIS-1/15/Inf.5[1].

2. Opening of the meeting, adoption of the agenda and timetable, election of the Co-Chairpersons

6.   After the formal opening of the meeting, the Secretariat will propose how to organize the meeting, as well as the expected outputs by the end of the meeting. The expert consultation will be invited to consider the provisional agenda and the indicative timetable suggested in this document, in order to adopt its Agenda and organize its work.

7.   The expert consultation will be invited to elect two Co-Chairpersons from among the experts appointed by the Bureau of the Sixth Session of the Governing Body. The practice is to elect the Co-Chairpersons with a regional balance, i.e. one from G-77 countries and one from OECD countries.

3. Core PGRFA data domains and information systems

8.   Article 17 foresees the development and strengthening by Contracting Parties of a Global Information System based on existing information systems. Therefore, it is important for the consultation, as the terms of reference indicate, to review the systems that are in place and identify possible information gaps. At the same time, and in line with the additional terms of reference, the consultation is tasked with facilitating the assessment of information-related needs and the establishment of priorities for information exchange.

9.   Based on those tasks, this agenda item is to review the results of two *ad hoc* surveys that the Secretariat has conducted, one at the landscape level and another with a specific focus on genomics, an area in rapid expansion and with the potential to be connected to several Treaty concepts, such as sustainable use, capacity building and technology transfer, and operational mechanisms, such as the Multilateral System and the Benefit-sharing Fund.

10.   There will also be an opportunity for experts of relevant institutions to present their activities and views on PGRFA information systems. Considering that cooperation with the Clearing House Mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is prescribed by Article 17, a representative of the CBD Secretariat wil be invited to illustrate the scope and objectives of the mechanism, its current status and future expansion.

11.   Under this agenda item, a background study on genomics, which highlights relevant technological developments that impact on the conservation and utilization of germplasm, will also be presented as the basis for the advice of the experts on the linking up of the Global Information System with the genomic information domain, and the underlying research and user communities. The document also highlights the potential contribution of the genomics towards the improvement of the information associated with the PGRFA material in the MLS and presents

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[1] http://www.planttreaty.org/sites/default/files/cogis1Inf5.pdf

some gaps and possible activities in relation to plant breeding, pre-breeding, and the role of genebanks for their consideration in the context of the development of the Programme of Work on the Global Information System.

4. The draft Vision Paper and the elements of the Vision

12.   As suggested above, the advice of the experts will result in a Vision Paper which, as the Secretariat proposes, may include the statement of the Vision. It is in the Vision Paper that the different recommendations of the expert consultation, following the terms of reference of Resolution 10/2013, will be consolidated. This agenda item will be devoted to discussing and producing these deliverables, based on the supporting documentation for the meeting, in particular the draft Vision Paper and the draft Vision therewith attached.

13.   The background studies for the consultation highlight a set of key concept and areas of work for the devising and deployment of the Global Information System, namely: interoperability, partnerships and standards. Multiple background documents refer to the rationales and functions of those concepts, and their possible placement within the Vision and related implementing activities. The expert consultation will be invited to appraise and integrate those concepts and areas of work as it may be necessary, and advise accordingly. Particular attention will be called on the relevant policy and institutional settings within which the Global Information System is likely to operate.

5. The Unique Permanent Identifier for PGRFA

14.   Some of the immediate benefits that the development of the Global Information System can bring to Treaty stakeholders is to connect data sets maintained by a wide variety of organizations. Some of the technical options most frequently adopted to facilitate the establishment of data linkages involves permanent unique identifiers. A background document before the expert consultation presents some of the technical options that could be considered in setting up a global common method to apply permanent unique identifiers to PGRFA, particularly those available in the Multilateral System.

15.   Under this agenda item, the expert consultation will be invited to consider a series of technical measures and recommendations to improve data interoperability for the benefit of plant breeders and data curators, which could become standards and common good practices if consensus is reached in the short and medium term in the context of the Global Information System.

6. Advice on the development of the Programme of Work

16.   As the terms of reference prescribe, the Vision of the Global Information System is the conceptual basis for the Programme of Work that the Secretary is to present to the next session of the Governing Body.

17.   In the documentation prepared there are possible elements of such Programme of Work which have emerged from the different technical analyses, related to both process (e.g. engagement of stakeholders) and substance (e.g. permanent unique identifiers, standards, PGRFA information platform/network). A synthesis of these elements is made as part of the Vision Paper and, on that basis, the expert consultation will be invited to recommend the main components and activities of the Programme of Work for the Global Information System.

18.   Should the experts determine that their recommendations call for other work in preparation for the next session of the Governing Body, they may include such an advice under the agenda item.

7. Other business

19.   Under this agenda item, the expert consultation may address any other business as it may be requested in the meeting.

8. Adoption of the Report

20.   This agenda is for the approval of the Report of the meeting. If constraints make it difficult to discuss and approve a comprehensive report of the expert consultation, the consultation may delegate a restricted group to finalize of the report with the assistance of the Secretariat, including possible annexes thereto.

9. Proposed indicative timetable

Time	Agenda Item	Title
Wednesday, 7 January, morning		
9:00-13:00	1	Opening of the Session
	2	Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable
	3	Election of the Co-Chairpersons
	4	Core PGRFA data domains and information systems 4.1 Presentation of the landscape and genomics surveys
Wednesday, 7 January, afternoon		
14:00 – 18:00	4	4.2 Relevant developments
	5	The draft Vision Paper and the elements of the Vision 5.1 Interoperability, partnerships and standards 5.2 Periodic assessment of stakeholders' information needs 5.3 Policy and institutional settings
Thursday, 8 January, morning		
9:00 – 13:00	6	The Unique Permanent Identifier for PGRFA
	7	Advice on the development of the Programme of Work
	8	Other business
Thursday, 8 January, afternoon		
16:00 – 18:00	9	Adoption of the Report