

April 2019



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



The International Treaty
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

**INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

**FIRST ELECTRONIC CONSULTATION OF THE *AD HOC* TECHNICAL
COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

8 – 26 April 2019

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK ON SUSTAINABLE
USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
AND SUPPORTING INITIATIVES 2016 – 2019**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. By Resolution 6/2017,¹ the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (International Treaty) reconvened the *Ad Hoc* Technical Committee on Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ACSU).
2. In accordance with its Terms of Reference, the ACSU will provide advice to the Secretary on:
 - i) implementation of the Programme of Work on Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and Supporting Initiatives;
 - ii) cooperation with other international processes and institutions in the field of sustainable use of PGRFA;
 - iii) identification of additional activities and synergies within the Programme of Work and between the Programme of Work and other areas of work of the International Treaty.
3. The Governing Body also decided that the Committee will work electronically and, if needed, may hold one meeting in the biennium 2018-2019, subject to the availability of financial resources.
4. It will be recalled that, following an online call for nominations and election, the Committee unanimously decided to reconfirm Mr. Riccardo Bocci (Italy) and Mr. William Wigmore (Cook Islands) as Co-Chairpersons of the Committee.

II. MEETING AND ELECTRONIC CONSULTATION OF THE COMMITTEE

5. In accordance with its Terms of Reference, the Committee will prepare reports at the end of its meetings, which will be made available as soon as possible for written comments by Contracting Parties and relevant stakeholders. The comments are to be submitted to the Secretary, who will compile them as information for the Eighth Session of the Governing Body.

¹ Resolution 6/2017 <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mv086e.pdf>

6. Pursuant to Resolution 6/2017 of the Governing Body, an electronic consultation among members and experts is being organized from Monday 8 to Friday 26 April 2019. The electronic consultation is considered valuable and effective in terms of time, costs, participation and engagement of the members and experts.
7. The consultation will afford the Secretariat an opportunity to provide information on the work done so far, and enable further discussions among members and experts, on a range of issues regarding the Programme of Work on Sustainable Use of PGRFA, the outcomes of the Seventh Session of the Governing and future work of the Committee.
8. In order to facilitate the consultation, an *online platform* has been established where, within the given timeframe, members and experts could share or post views, documents, and/or response to questions.²
9. Members and experts will be invited to consider and advise on:
 - The work done in implementing the Programme of Work on Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and Supporting Initiatives 2016 – 2019;
 - A draft Proposal for a new Programme of Work on **Conservation and Sustainable Use** of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and Supporting Initiatives 2020 – 2023;
 - A draft survey on Technology Transfer.
10. For each of the above issues, the Secretariat will prepare a short document, which will be available in the library of the online platform. The participants will be invited to provide response to specific questions and they will be collected and summarized by the Secretariat.
11. At the end of the Consultation, the Co-Chairs will provide a summary or wrap-up, which may include some conclusions and suggestions on possible next steps to prepare for the consideration of the relevant issues by the Governing Body at its next Session. In accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Committee, the Secretary will report to the Governing Body at its Eight Session on the results of the Committee's work.

III. THE PROGRAMME OF WORK ON SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE AND SUPPORTING INITIATIVES 2016 – 2019

12. *Annex 1*, Table 1 to Resolution 4/2015,³ contains the sets of activities to be carried out by different stakeholders under the Programme of Work on Sustainable Use of PGRFA, divided into programmes agreed by the Governing Body (Part A), and supporting initiatives to be undertaken by Contracting Parties and other stakeholders voluntarily (Part B). The present document describes the steps taken by the Secretariat to implement the guidance of the Governing Body with regard to Part A of the Programme of Work, and summarizes information received in regard to Part B.

² Available at: <https://dgroups.org/fao/itpgrfa/acsu>

³ Resolution 4/2015, available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bl143e.pdf>

Part A: Activities agreed to by the Governing Body

A1. Report on activities, projects, and programmes on sustainable use of PGRFA

13. Through a notification issued on 24 October 2018, the Secretary invited submissions from Contracting Parties, other governments, relevant institutions, organizations and stakeholders on the promotion and further improvement of measures for the sustainable use of PGRFA while reducing the reporting duplication for Contracting Parties, which already report on the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

14. Several Contracting Parties provided information on activities and programmes on the implementation of Article 6 of the International Treaty. In the submissions, issues such as the role of local and organic plant breeding; public-private partnerships for pre-breeding; the release of farmers' varieties and local seed production; the value of the community seed banks and the efforts made so far to reduce the gap between the *ex-situ* and on-farm conservation; and the need to count on a facilitated access to PGRFA were highlighted. The submissions are available in the Treaty webpage⁴ and they will form part of an information document that will be provided to the Governing Body at its Eighth Session.

A2. Toolbox for Sustainable Use of PGRFA

15. At its Third Meeting, the Committee reaffirmed the necessity of developing the Toolbox as a practical instrument to assist Contracting Parties with the implementation of Article 6 of the Treaty. The Committee acknowledged the progress made in defining the functions and contents of the Toolbox and proposed that it should initially focus on a few priority areas and be developed further over time to address all elements of the PGRFA use system.

16. The Toolbox has two primary components—web pages highlighting and summarizing key areas of relevance in promoting and enhancing the sustainable use of PGRFA, and a database facilitating access to a selection of resources to aid users in the development of sustainable use initiatives.⁵ Resources are classified according to the relevant subject area(s) and specific subject categories as well as by the primary geographic area of relevance, language, publication date, and format. Most resources are open access and freely available for download from the Web.

17. Users can access resources via a search function in each subject area web page (to find resources related to that area) or use the 'Search for resources' page to undertake free-text or structured searches of the entire database. To further aid users in navigating the database, the resources are also classified according to eight types, as shown below. Some resources are of more than one type—for example, publications that include case studies, learning materials that include tools, and case studies that are presented as multimedia. More than 200 entries in English, French, and Spanish are now available in the webpage.

Resource type	Definition
	<p>Article/Presentation</p> <p>Articles published in peer-reviewed journals (open access only), newsletters, popular press or websites, and presentations given at conferences, meetings, and workshops</p>

⁴ Submissions provided by Contracting Parties and interested stakeholders <http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/sustainable-use/information-and-submissions/en/>

⁵ Toolbox for Sustainable Use of PGRFA <http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/tools/toolbox-for-sustainable-use/overview/en/>

Resource type	Definition
	<p>Case study Specific examples of initiatives to show users what can be achieved in practice and the lessons learned</p>
	<p>Database/Platform Repositories and access points for particular types of organized data</p>
	<p>Learning material Information in a structured format designed specifically for the purposes of teaching and Learning</p>
	<p>Method Step by step procedures or guidelines in how to implement specific approaches or initiatives</p>
	<p>Multimedia Videos, slide shows, audio clips, and webinars</p>
	<p>Publication/Report Reports of research studies and meetings, brochures, policy briefs, and other grey literature</p>
	<p>Tool Applications (software and simulation tools) for analyzing data</p>

Part B: Supporting Initiatives undertaken by Contracting Parties and other stakeholders voluntarily

B1. Platform for the Co-Development and Transfer of Technologies in the context of non-monetary benefit-sharing

18. Through Resolution 4/2015, the Governing Body requested Contracting Parties and other stakeholders to continue reporting on implementation of the Programme of Work on Sustainable Use and its Supporting Initiatives. The Platform for the Co-Development and Transfer of Technology (Platform) was initiated by interested institutions in 2011.⁶ In line with the provisions of the International Treaty, technology transfer under this initiative is primarily a form of non-monetary benefit-sharing related to the management and use of PGRFA.

19. In September 2015, the third meeting of the Platform was convened in Rome, Italy, to define the strategic focus of the initiative, given developments in other International Treaty processes. The meeting also set out to expand the network of active institutions and report on

⁶ The Platform contributes to the objectives of the International Treaty by:

- i) Empowering stakeholders to utilize technologies for the conservation, characterization, evaluation and sustainable use of PGRFA; and
- ii) Increasing opportunities for technology transfer, information sharing and capacity development

progress at the Sixth Session of the Governing Body. The Platform decided to continue operating as a functioning network of institutions and agreed on a strategic programme of work as a supporting initiative of the Programme of Work.

20. The fourth meeting of the Platform was held in Vienna, Austria, on 22 October 2016. The meeting was attended by 28 participants representing different partner institutions, who reported on progress in the relevant programmes (e.g. Bean Adapt,⁷ Quinoa Project,⁸ Durum Wheat Project Initiative, the Benefit-sharing Fund project on Transfer of Technologies related to Rice, and other technology packages.

21. A programme of work was prepared in a strategy paper for a programmatic approach of the Platform for the biennium 2018–19,⁹ and was presented at the Seventh Session of the Governing Body of the Treaty.

22. On 20 February 2019, the Indonesian Agency for Agricultural Research and Development (Agency) communicated to the Secretary of the Treaty indicating that Indonesia will no longer be able to continue supporting or presiding over the Platform, and requested the Secretariat “...to take an advanced role” in the managing the Platform.

23. Although the Platform appears temporarily inactive, the Secretariat has finalized a survey for the identification of gaps between technologies available and technologies needed, as contained in the document, ACSU-Electronic Consultation 1/19/Inf.3. The Committee is invited to advise on the opportunity and necessity of re-launching the Platform (see questions in the document ACSU-Electronic Consultation 1/19/3).

B.2 Training Workshops on Sustainable use of PGRFA and Farmers’ Rights

24. The need for capacity-building was highlighted in several Resolutions as a key activity to carry out in order to provide effective support to enable Contracting Parties implement the main provisions of the International Treaty.¹⁰ Relevant areas include building synergies across different sectors and other multilateral instruments, such as the Convention of Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and how to align or to develop an effective capacity development and policy response to the global challenges of crop diversity loss, sustainable food production and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Accordingly, the Secretariat is organizing a series of regional training workshops in the relevant areas. The overall goal of the training workshops is to enhance the implementation of the International Treaty through greater understanding of the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and Farmers’ Rights and to contribute to achievement of Zero hunger and the 2030 SDGs. More specifically, they aim:

- To provide an overview of the global challenges of crop diversity loss, food security and climate change and to understand how these challenges are interlinked;
- To update participants on the recent developments in international policy and governance, technological advances, and information on dynamic conservation of agricultural biodiversity and plant genetic resources for food and agriculture;
- To stimulate ideas and be able to identify areas and opportunities to mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and Farmers’ Rights in the context of national plans and programmes on food security and sustainable agriculture and other relevant sectoral programmes;
- To provide a platform for the sharing of experiences and lessons learned on the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and implementation of Farmers’ Rights; and

⁷ Bean Adapt: <http://www.beanadapt.org/site/>

⁸ Quinoa Project: <http://www.cirad.fr/en>

⁹ Document IT/GB-7/17/Inf.16 - Strategy paper on the programmatic approach of the Platform for the Co-development and Transfer of Technologies, for the biennium 2018/2019

¹⁰Resolution 4/2017. Operations of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing

Resolution 5/2017. Implementation of the Global Information System

Resolution 6/2017. Implementation of Article 6, Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Resolution 7/2017. Implementation of Article 9, Farmers’ Rights (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-mv102e.pdf>)

Resolution 9/2017. Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-mv088e.pdf>)

- To serve as a venue for networking between and among participants for developing future collaboration on conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.

25. A first Regional Training Workshop on Conservation and Sustainable use of PGRFA and Farmers' Rights was held from 5 to 8 March 2019, Manila, Philippines with 55 participants from 12 Contracting Parties of the Treaty. The Secretariat is actively working to raise funds to organize two additional Regional workshops, one in Africa (Senegal) and one in Latin America (Uruguay) on the same subject.

B.3 Raising awareness of the actual and potential value of crop wild relatives, landraces and underutilized species of local and regional importance for food security and sustainable development

26. The Secretariat is collaborating with different departments and units in FAO for the implementation of activities in support to the Programme of Work on Sustainable Use, in particular on the implementation of the *Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, and the preparation of the *Third State of the World of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

27. Relevant information and requests are also included in the Report of the Ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Italy,¹¹ and in the documents discussed during the Seventeenth Regular Session of the the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.¹² They recognized the importance of on-farm management of farmers' varieties/landraces and *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives and wild food plants.

28. Two International Symposia will be organized in cooperation with the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture aiming to share experiences and best practices and to discuss possible future activities, including the creation of possible information exchange and networking mechanisms. Key outcomes of the proposed symposia would include setting priorities for future work, and preparation of a summary statement on the importance of on-farm management of farmers' varieties/landraces and *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives and wild food plants for current and future food security.

IV. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER RELEVANT ENTITIES, INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS

29. The Secretariat of the Treaty continues to collaborate with broad range of partners, institutions and initiatives in the implementation of the Programme of Work and related activities. These include the Secretariat of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Global Crop Diversity Trust, the CGIAR Centres, the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR), etc.

30. The Secretariat is also cooperating with a number of other existing initiatives/projects.¹³

¹¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/MX725en/mx725en.pdf>

¹² <http://www.fao.org/cgrfa/meetings/detail/en/c/1153541>

¹³ These include:

- Diversifood: <http://www.diversifood.eu/>
- Dynaversity: <http://dynaversity.eu/project/>
- Farmers Pride: www.farmerspride.eu
- G2P-Sol – Tomato, potato, eggplant, and pepper: <https://sostenibilita.enea.it/projects/g2p-sol>
- Linkages: <http://www.diversifood.eu/?s=Linkages>
- European Evaluation Network (EVA) on wheat/barley: <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/resources/european-evaluation-network/eva-workshop-on-wheatbarley/>
- Bresov (Brassica and Phaseolus): <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/bresov>
- FAO South-South Cooperation- Regional consultations on Farmers' Rights: <http://www.fao.org/south-south-gateway/en/>
- GenRes Bridge "Joining forces for genetic resources and biodiversity management": <http://www.euforgen.org/about-us/events/event/genres-bridge-project-kickoff-meeting/>