



Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Follow-up to the 17th Regular Session

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has the honour to refer to the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission) established in accordance with Article VI.1 of the Constitution of the Organization. The Commission is an intergovernmental forum for discussion and negotiation by governments on matters related to biodiversity for food and agriculture.

The Commission, at its 17th Regular Session, held from 18 to 22 February 2019, invited Members and observers to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture in a variety of ways, including by providing specific contributions and inputs to the implementation of various major outputs and milestones of the Commission's Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW). This letter provides an overview of the cross-sectoral and sectoral outputs and milestones that Members and observers have been invited to comment upon or provide other inputs to, specifies the types of contribution invited and sets out the deadlines by which the contributions should be made available to the Secretariat. The information provided is summarized in a table annexed to this letter.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to its Members and their accredited Permanent Representations and Embassies the assurance of its highest consideration.

This communication is sent to addressees of FAO Members, as prescribed in the official channels of communication of FAO, as follows:

For ACTION/INFORMATION, as appropriate:

- Main Addressees (Ministers for Foreign Affairs or Agriculture or other addressees selected by the Government);
- Permanent Representatives to FAO/Embassies.

This communication is also being sent to observers.

1. VALIDATION OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS/COORDINATORS

Commission Members address various issues relevant to the work of the Commission through their National Focal Points (NFPs)/National Coordinators. At present, there are NFPs/National Coordinators for the Commission, for biodiversity for food and agriculture (BFA), animal genetic resources (AnGR), aquatic genetic resources (AqGR), forest genetic resources (FGR) and plant genetic resources (PGR). Current NFPs/National Coordinators are listed on the Commission's website at:

<http://www.fao.org/cgrfa/overview/nfp/en/>

Members are invited to review the lists of NFPs/National Coordinators, as displayed on the Commission's website, for correctness and completeness and to update them, as appropriate.

Action: Validation of the lists of NFPs/National Coordinators for correctness and completeness:

1. NFP for the Commission (contact: CGRFA@fao.org);
2. National Coordinator for AnGR (contact: DAD-IS@fao.org);
3. NFP for AqGR (contact: ITWG-AqGR@fao.org);
4. NFP for BFA (contact: SOW-BFA@fao.org);
5. NFP for FGR (contact: FO-ITWG-FGR@fao.org); and
6. NFP for PGR (contact: WIEWS@fao.org)

Deadline: 31 August 2019 and subsequently, as necessary

Send to: E-mail addresses given above

CROSS-SECTORAL MATTERS

2. THE ROLE OF GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

At its 17th Regular Session, the Commission took note of Background Study Paper No. 69, *Biodiversity for food and agriculture and food security - An exploration of interrelationships*, and requested the Secretariat, upon further review by countries and based on additional information, to prepare a brochure, in the official UN languages, on the contribution of genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA) to food security and to the achievement of relevant Sustainable Development Goals.¹

Action: Submission of inputs for the brochure on the contribution of GRFA to food security

Deadline: 31 August 2019

Send to: CGRFA@fao.org

3. ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING FOR GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Commission welcomed the explanatory notes to the *Elements to facilitate domestic implementation of access and benefit-sharing for different subsectors of genetic resources for food and agriculture* ([ABS Elements](#)) and encouraged Members to consider the ABS Elements, including the explanatory notes, and, as appropriate make use of them.

The Commission requested its Secretary to invite Members and observers to provide inputs to the following deliverables it requested the Secretary to prepare:

- i) a review of the Commission's past work on access and benefit-sharing (ABS) for GRFA;
- ii) an up-to-date survey of existing legislative, administrative and policy approaches, including best practices, for ABS for the different subsectors of GRFA and traditional knowledge associated with GRFA held by indigenous peoples and local communities, with the aim of identifying typical approaches and lessons learned from their implementation, as well as challenges and possible solutions;
- iii) an overview of developments under other international agreements and instruments relevant to ABS for GRFA; and
- iv) a proposal for options for future work of the Commission on ABS for the different subsectors of GRFA.²

¹ [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), paragraph 10.

² [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), paragraphs 19–20.

Action: Submission of inputs to the above deliverables
Deadline: 31 August 2019
Send to: CGRFA@fao.org

4. NUTRITION AND GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Commission noted the importance of traditional knowledge and native and forgotten foods, including relevant initiatives, and the importance of including indigenous peoples and local communities in the formulation of policies, programmes and action plans on nutrition.

The Commission invited countries and observers to share experiences in the development and implementation of policies related to biodiversity and nutrition, including multi-diversified public procurement, school feeding programmes and other approaches. It invited countries and observers to share their best practices and lessons learned in mainstreaming biodiversity into nutrition policies and programmes, and their traditional food knowledge and requested FAO to compile these, for consideration by the Commission at its next session.¹

Action: **Submissions on:**
(i) experiences in the development and implementation of policies related to biodiversity and nutrition; and
(ii) best practices and lessons learned in mainstreaming biodiversity into nutrition policies and programmes, and traditional food knowledge
Deadline: 31 July 2020
Send to: CGRFA@fao.org

BIODIVERSITY FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Biodiversity

5. NEEDS AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO *THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S BIODIVERSITY FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE*

The Commission agreed that the report on *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*, along with developments in other fora that also point to declines in biodiversity of relevance to food and agriculture, calls for a timely and clear cross-sectoral follow-up. It requested the Secretary to invite written concrete text proposals and comments from Commission Members and observers on the document entitled *Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture – Revised draft needs and possible actions*, as presented in *Appendix C*² to the meeting report.³

Action: Submission of concrete text proposals and comments on the revised *draft needs and actions for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture*
Deadline: 1 October 2019
Send to: SOW-BFA@fao.org

Plant genetic resources

6. PREPARATION OF *THE THIRD REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE*

The Commission endorsed the approach proposed for the preparation of *The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. It requested NFPs for PGR to report through the World Information System and Early Warning System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (WIEWS) between January and December 2020 on the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Second GPA) for the period of July 2014 to December 2019. In addition, it invited the Focal Points to provide a summative narrative of the progress made (between January 2012 and December 2019) and the remaining gaps and constraints. In the summative narratives, NFPs should provide a short description of the national genebank(s) and report on efforts to achieve complementarity between the on-farm management and *in situ* conservation of PGR on the one side and the *ex situ* conservation on the other.⁴

¹ [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), paragraph 36.

² [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), *Appendix C*.

³ [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), paragraph 47.

⁴ [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), paragraph 69.

Action: NFPs for PGR to provide through WIEWS:
(i) information on implementation of Second GPA for the period of July 2014 to December 2019; and
(ii) summative narrative on progress made on each priority activity between January 2012 and December 2019

Reporting period: January–December 2020

Forest genetic resources

7. PREPARATION OF THE SECOND REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S FOREST GENETIC RESOURCE

The Commission adopted the outline¹ and timeline² for the preparation of *The Second Report on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*, as well as the guidelines³ for preparing the country reports. It encouraged countries to initiate the collection of information and data for the preparation of their country reports and called upon them to submit their country reports for the preparation of the Second Report by 30 June 2020.⁴ Data and information provided will also be used for the preparation of the second report on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources.

Action: (i) NFPs for FGR to submit country reports for *The Second Report on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*
(ii) Relevant regional networks and international organizations to submit reports on their contributions to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources

Deadline: 30 June 2020
Contact: FO-ITWG-FGR@fao.org

Animal genetic resources

8. COUNTRY PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES

The Commission endorsed the proposed procedure of following the reporting format that was used for the preparation of the previous synthesis reports when undertaking the next review of progress in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources. It invited countries to complete the reporting process in a timely manner and submit country progress reports by 31 July 2019.⁵ It further stressed the need for countries to regularly update their national data in DAD-IS and other relevant databases, in order to ensure that decisions on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action are informed by the most up-to-date data and information available.⁶

Action: National Coordinators for AnGR to submit country progress reports on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources, following procedure outlined in [Circular State Letter C/AGA-5](#) of 4 March 2019

Deadlines: 31 July 2019
Send to: DAD-IS@fao.org

¹ [CGRFA-17/19/10.3](#), Appendix I.

² [CGRFA-17/19/10.3](#), Appendix II.

³ [CGRFA-17/19/10.3/Inf.1](#).

⁴ [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), paragraph 78.

⁵ [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), paragraph 85.

⁶ [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), paragraph 89.

IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

9. NEED FOR EXTRA-BUDGETARY RESOURCES

The Commission thanked the donors who had provided support to the MYPOW multi-donor trust fund and through bilateral funds, and encouraged other donors to follow their example.¹

More specifically, the Commission stated the need for the availability of extra-budgetary funds:

- (i) to support Members in implementing actions for follow-up to the report on *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*, including for data collection initiatives and capacity development at national level;²
- (ii) for convening an open-ended meeting of the Group of National Focal Points for Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture with a view to reviewing and revising, as appropriate, the document, *Biodiversity for food and agriculture – needs and possible actions*, for consideration by the Commission at its Eighteenth Session, to support the participation of developing countries and to provide interpretation, as appropriate;³
- (iii) to support countries in the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;⁴
- (iv) to hold two international symposia on: (i) *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives and wild food plants; and (ii) on-farm management and development of farmers' varieties/landraces.
- (v) to support the preparation of *The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, including the preparation of thematic background studies and country reports by developing and least-developed countries;⁵
- (vi) to support the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources, in particular in developing countries, and the Funding Strategy for the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources;⁶
- (vii) to support the preparation of *The Second Report on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*, including the development of a new global information system on forest genetic resources.⁷

¹ [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), paragraph 98.

² [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), paragraph 42.

³ [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), paragraph 48.

⁴ [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), paragraph 61.

⁵ [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), paragraph 71.

⁶ [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), paragraph 76.

⁷ [CGRFA-17/19/Report](#), paragraphs 79 and 80.

Annex
SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS AND INPUTS

National Focal Points	1. Validation of National Focal Points/Coordinators • Validate lists of NFPs/Coordinators for correctness and completeness	Submission by: 31 August 2019
Food security	2. The role of genetic resources for food and agriculture for food security • Submissions of inputs for the brochure based on Background Study Paper No. 69.	31 August 2019
Access and benefit-sharing (ABS)	3. Access and benefit-sharing for genetic resources for food and agriculture • Submission of inputs to the following deliverables the Commission requested its Secretary to prepare: (i) a review of the Commission's past work on ABS for GRFA; (ii) an up-to-date survey of existing legislative, administrative and policy approaches, including best practices, for ABS for the different subsectors of GRFA and traditional knowledge associated with GRFA held by indigenous peoples and local communities, with the aim of identifying typical approaches and lessons learned from their implementation, as well as challenges and possible solutions; (iii) an overview of developments under other international agreements and instruments relevant to ABS for GRFA; and (iv) a proposal for options for future work of the Commission on ABS for the different subsectors of GRFA	31 August 2019
Nutrition	4. Nutrition and genetic resources for food and agriculture • Submissions on (i) experiences in the development and implementation of policies related to biodiversity and nutrition; and (ii) best practices and lessons learned in mainstreaming biodiversity into nutrition policies and programmes, and traditional food knowledge	31 July 2020
Biodiversity (BFA)	5. Needs and possible actions in response to <i>The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture</i> • Submission of concrete text proposals and comments on the revised <i>draft needs and actions for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture</i> (contained in CGRFA-17/19/Report, Appendix C)	1 October 2019
Plant genetic resources (PGR)	6. Preparation of <i>The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i> • NFPs for PGR to: (i) report through WIEWS on implementation of Second GPA for the period of July 2014 to December 2019; and (ii) provide summative narratives of the progress made between January 2012 and December 2019.	January- December 2020
Forest genetic resources (FGR)	7. Preparation of <i>The Second Report on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources</i> • NFPs for FGR to submit country reports for <i>The Second Report on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources</i> • Relevant regional networks and international organizations to submit reports on their contributions to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources	30 June 2020
Animal genetic Resources (AnGR)	8. Country progress report on implementation of Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources • National Coordinators for AnGR to submit country progress reports on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources, see Circular State Letter C/AGA-5 of 4 March 2019	31 July 2019
Extra-budgetary resources	9. Need for extra-budgetary resources for Commission activities	