



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



The International Treaty
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

**Views, Experiences and Best Practices as an example of possible options for
the national implementation of Article 9 of the International Treaty**

Note by the Secretary

At its [second meeting](#) of the Ad hoc Technical Expert Group on Farmers' Rights (AHTEG), the Expert Group agreed on a revised version of the [template](#) for collecting information on examples of national measures, best practices and lessons learned from the realization of Farmers' Rights

This document presents the updated information on best practices and measures of implementing Article 9 of the International Treaty submitted by Bioversity International on 23 July 2019.

The submission is presented in the form and language in which it was received.

Basic information:

Title of measure/practice: Helping farmers access PGRFA from the multilateral system for climate-change adaptation

Date of submission:

23 July 2019

Name(s) of country/countries in which the measure/practice took place:

Costa Rica, Guatemala, Burkina Faso, Bhutan, Cote D'Ivoire, Benin, Kenya, Nepal, Madagascar, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe,

Responsible organizations

National research teams comprised of national agricultural research organizations, farmer and community organizations, universities, national ITPGRFA focal points in the countries listed above with support from Bioversity International.

Description of the examples

Mandatory information:

Brief summary for the inventory

Under the Joint Capacity Building Program for Developing Countries on Implementation of the International Treaty and its Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing, Bioversity International with partners implemented several projects: 'Genetic Resources Policy Initiative,' 'Mutually supportive implementation of the Plant Treaty and Nagoya Protocol in Benin and Madagascar' and 'Open source seeds systems for climate change adaptation'. Core components included participatory workshops with farmers to identify climate-change impacts and desirable crop traits, followed by selecting local varieties and adapted materials for crop enhancement programs suited to local conditions. Other components included technical training to identify suitable PGRFA from abroad, which were then accessed through the multilateral system. The objectives were (1) to help farmers access diverse crop germplasm whose performance they can evaluate in their own local settings; and (2) to demonstrate to national policy makers why implementing and taking advantage of the ITPGRFA's multilateral system of access and benefit-sharing is useful. Key lessons learned include that most farmers are unaware of the ITPGRFA, but once they understand the opportunities, they become highly interested in accessing and testing PGRFA; however, connecting farmers to the multilateral system requires support from the national research system.

Brief history (including starting year), as appropriate

Under the framework of the Joint Capacity Building Programme for Developing Countries on Implementation of the ITPGRFA and its Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing (Joint Programme), Bioversity International has managed a number of projects working with teams of national partners in Latin America, Africa and Asia. The largest such project was the 'Genetic Resources Policy Initiative', supported by the government of the Netherlands. A second, smaller project funded by the Darwin Initiative was entitled, 'Mutually supportive implementation of the

Plant Treaty and Nagoya Protocol in Benin and Madagascar'. As part of those projects, Bioversity and partners have developed an activity/method for working with farmers at community level to obtain potentially useful germplasm for adapting to the impacts of climatic changes on their agricultural production systems. These exercises are described in the following section. These exercises have served two functions: first, to help farmers get access to a diversity of crop germplasm whose performance they can evaluate in their own local settings, and second, to demonstrate to national policy makers in the same countries why it is useful to implement and take advantage of the ITPGRFA's multilateral system of access and benefit-sharing. This note focusses on the first aspect, that is, helping farmers to get PGRFA through the multilateral system.

Bioversity is involved in a third project, supported by the ITPGRFA Benefit Sharing Fund, called "Open source seeds systems for climate change adaptation" which uses a similar approach for helping farmers access materials from the multilateral system.

Core components of the measure/practice (max 200 words)

Multi-stakeholder project teams travel to participating communities for participatory workshop with community members with the objectives of ascertaining farmers' perspectives on the impact of climate changes on food security crops, the farmers' coping strategies, and to identify desirable traits in varieties of those same crops or replacement crops. Then the teams consider potential sources of PGRFA with the desired traits. First, the teams consider local varieties that farmers may identify that are performing acceptably and consider options for increasing the availability of seed/reproductive materials for those crops for other farmers in the area. Second, the teams, which include the national genebank manager and plant breeders, consider potentially adapted materials from national public collections and crop enhancement programs that may do well in local conditions. Third, the teams are taught how to use a combination of publicly available climate data, GIS data, and genebank accession passport information, to identify materials in other countries' national and in international genebanks that may be potentially useful. For this latter exercise, the research teams search through accession level information on Genesys to identify materials. Thereafter, the national teams consider the results of their searches and identify what they consider to be 'best bets'. They request the materials from the organizations conserving them, sign SMTAs and eventually receive materials through the multilateral system. Thereafter, national and international experts work with the farmers to design evaluation trials using participatory tools and methods.

This is a generic description of the exercise that the project teams have gradually developed over time. It has not been possible to replicate all steps in all of the countries listed above.

Description of the context and history

See previous and following sections.

To which provision(s) of Article 9 of the International Treaty does this measure relate

Art. 9.1

Art. 9.2b

Art. 9.2c

Art. 9.3

Please indicate which category of the Inventory is most relevant for the proposed measure, and which other categories are also relevant (if any):

No.	Category	Most relevant	Also relevant
1	Recognition of local and indigenous communities', farmers' contributions to conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, such as awards and recognition of custodian/guardian farmers		
2	Financial contributions to support farmers conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA such as contributions to benefit-sharing funds		
3	Approaches to encourage income-generating activities to support farmers' conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA		
4	Catalogues, registries and other forms of documentation of PGRFA and protection of traditional knowledge		
5	In-situ/on-farm conservation and management of PGRFA, such as social and cultural measures, community biodiversity management and conservation sites		
6	Facilitation of farmers' access to a diversity of PGRFA through community seed banks, seed networks and other measures improving farmers' choices of a wider diversity of PGRFA.	X	
7	Participatory approaches to research on PGRFA, including characterization and evaluation, participatory plant breeding and variety selection		X
8	Farmers' participation in decision-making at local, national and sub-regional, regional and international levels		
9	Training, capacity development and public awareness creation		
10	Legal measures for the implementation of Farmers' Rights, such as legislative measures related to PGRFA.		
11	Other measures / practices		

Lessons learned

Describe lessons learned which may be relevant for others who wish to do the same or similar measures/practices (max 250 words).

Most of the farmers in the world do not know anything about the ITPGRFA or the multilateral system of access and benefit sharing. However, once informed about the possibility of free (or almost free) access to such an immense diversity of reproductive materials, many farmers are naturally very interested in knowing if there are materials that they could use. Farmers clearly need a lot of support to learn about the multilateral system, to figure out how to search through it and find potentially useful materials, ask for it, and to finally receive it after it has gone through necessary phytosanitary testing. National agriculture research organizations, national genebanks, national agricultural extension agencies can play key roles in connecting farmers to the multilateral system.

What would you consider conditions for success, if others should seek to carry out such a (max 100 words)

Commitment from national agricultural research organizations to engage with farming communities. Financial support for both the farmers and the national agricultural research organizations to dedicate requisite time and effort to work together to identify farmers needs, search through information on materials in the multilateral system, go through process of requesting the materials, signing the standard material transfer agreements, getting materials through national phytosanitary processes and finally, setting up evaluation trials.