



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

COMMISSION ON  
GENETIC RESOURCES  
FOR FOOD AND  
AGRICULTURE

# STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (2019–2027)









## Contents

Vision	1
Mission	1
Goals	1
Operative principles	1
I. Rationale for the strategic plan (2019–2027)	3
II. Implementing, monitoring and reviewing	3
III. Partnerships	4
Annex 1: Multi-Year Programme of Work: major outputs and milestones (2019–2027)	5
Annex 2: Session Planning for CGRFA-18 and CGRFA-19	6







## Vision

Valuing and conserving biodiversity for food and agriculture and promoting its use in support of global food security and sustainable development, for present and future generations.

## Mission

Cognizant that genetic resources for food and agriculture are a common concern of all countries, in that all countries depend on genetic resources for food and agriculture that originated elsewhere, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission) strives to halt the loss of genetic resources for food and agriculture, and to ensure world food security and sustainable development by promoting their conservation and sustainable use, including exchange, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use.

## Goals

In line with its mission, the Commission's Goals are cross-sectoral and in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The cross-sector goals build on the global assessments prepared under its guidance, the strategic priority areas, long-term goals and targets of the Commission's global action plans on plant, animal and forest genetic resources for food and agriculture and other Commission activities taken in response to the global assessments.

**Goal 1: Sustainable use:** Promote the sustainable use and development of genetic resources for food and agriculture and, more generally, all biodiversity relevant to food and agriculture, to increase production for world food security and sustainable development.<sup>1</sup>

**Goal 2: Conservation:** Maintain the diversity of genetic resources for food and agriculture.<sup>2</sup>

**Goal 3: Access and benefit-sharing:** Promote appropriate access to genetic resources for food and agriculture and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization.<sup>3</sup>

**Goal 4: Participation:** Facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders in decision-making.<sup>4</sup>

## Operative principles

**Principle 1: The Commission has a coordinating role and deals with policy, sectoral and cross-sectoral matters related to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources of relevance to food and agriculture.**

- The Commission guides and monitors FAO's policies, programmes and activities related to genetic resources for food and agriculture within the framework of FAO's strategic objectives.
- The Commission keeps under continuous review relevant matters in other forums, including policy developments, relating to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture, access to these resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use.

<sup>1</sup> Goal 1 supports SDG 2.4: By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality; SDG Target 14.4: By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics; and SDG Target 15.2: By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.

<sup>2</sup> Goal 2 supports SDG 2.5: By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.

<sup>3</sup> Goal 3 supports SDG 2.5 and SDG 15.6: Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed.

<sup>4</sup> Goal 4 supports SDG 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

**Principle 2: The Commission monitors the state of the world's biodiversity, including genetic resources, for food and agriculture.**

- The Commission oversees the periodic preparation of global assessments on genetic resources and biodiversity for food and agriculture, and, as appropriate, the development of a comprehensive global information system or systems for relevant genetic resources in support of this role.

**Principle 3: The Commission strives to reach international consensus on policies and action programmes to ensure the conservation and sustainable utilization of biodiversity, including genetic resources, for food and agriculture, as well as the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use.**

- The Commission provides an intergovernmental forum for negotiation of international policies on genetic resources for food and agriculture.
- The Commission oversees the implementation of, and updates, global action plans and other instruments addressing the conservation and sustainable utilization of biodiversity, including genetic resources, for food and agriculture, as well as access to these resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use.
- The Commission responds to developments in other forums, where appropriate.

**Principle 4: The Commission contributes to the strengthening of national and regional policies on biodiversity for food and agriculture and promotes cooperation in capacity-building.**

- The Commission supports the development or strengthening of national and regional policies and programmes on genetic resources and biodiversity for food and agriculture, in particular by facilitating the implementation of Global Plans of Actions for genetic resources, and establishes coordination mechanisms to promote national and regional cooperation across relevant sectors and among actors.
- The Commission identifies and facilitates the availability of financial, human, scientific, technical and technological resources to enable Commission Members to contribute actively to the achievement of the outputs and milestones of the Commission's Strategic Plan and to implement policies and recommendations developed by the Commission.
- The Commission supports its Members in the development and implementation of strategies and activities that raise public awareness and facilitate education that creates a better understanding of the relevance of biodiversity for food and agriculture and thereby promotes broader participation of stakeholders in the conservation and use of genetic resources for food and agriculture.

**Principle 5: The Commission continues and strengthens cooperation and partnerships on biodiversity for food and agriculture.**

- The Commission facilitates and oversees cooperation between FAO and other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies.
- In addition to its activities on plant, animal, forest, aquatic genetic resources, microorganisms and invertebrates, the Commission brings together international partners addressing biodiversity for food and agriculture, to facilitate exchange of experiences and to create new partnerships.
- The Commission's cooperation with other relevant international bodies strives to ensure that negotiations in other forums take into account the special needs of the agricultural sector with regard to all components of biological diversity relevant for food and agriculture.
- The Commission will strengthen the involvement of all stakeholders, such as civil society and producer organizations, including organizations representing women and small-scale producers, breeding institutions and industries, and public- and private-sector organizations involved with genetic resources for food and agriculture.

## **I. Rationale for the strategic plan (2019–2027)**

1. Biodiversity for food and agriculture is among the Earth's most important resources. Crops, livestock, aquatic organisms, forest trees, micro-organisms and invertebrates – thousands of species and their genetic variability – make up the web of biodiversity upon which the world's food production depends. Biodiversity for food and agriculture contributes to food security and nutrition and sustainable livelihoods and, through the provision of regulating and supporting ecosystem services, underpins the natural potential for adaptation to ever-changing socio-economic and environmental dynamics, such as population growth, dietary preferences, nutritional needs and climate change.
2. Aware of the importance of each component of biodiversity for food and agriculture to global food security and nutrition, the Commission aims to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture, access to these resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use, for present and future generations.
3. Since 2007, the Commission has been operating under a Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW).<sup>5</sup> The Strategic Plan for the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture 2014–2023 embraces the MYPOW and contains the Commission's vision, mission and goals. The Commission's goals of the Strategic Plan for the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture 2019–2027 build on the "State of the World" global assessment reports, and the strategic priority areas, long-term goals and targets of the global action plans and other policy responses to these assessments, as well as the established indicators and monitoring procedures for assessing the global action plans and the implementation of other instruments agreed.
4. This Strategic Plan supersedes and replaces all previous versions of the Multi-Year Programme of Work and of strategic plans. It includes in Annex 1 the MYPOW's major outputs and milestone for the forthcoming five regular sessions of the Commission and in Annex 2 more detailed plans for the next two sessions of the Commission.

## **II. Implementing, monitoring and reviewing**

5. The Strategic Plan guides the Commission in the implementation of its mandate. The Strategic Plan is a rolling, and therefore flexible, set of outputs and milestones, which the Commission keeps under review. Reviewing this Strategic Plan at each second Session will enable the Commission to assess the progress of its work towards its goals, to address and include new and emerging issues in the field of biodiversity, including genetic resources, for food and agriculture, and to take into account new developments and processes in other relevant forums. The MYPOW with major outputs and milestones and the Session Planning are reviewed at each Session.
6. For the implementation of this Strategic Plan, the Commission continues to rely on technical support from its subsidiary bodies, including the intergovernmental technical working groups that advise the Commission on issues in the areas under their respective competences. They provide advice and make recommendations to the Commission on these matters and consider the progress made in implementing this Strategic Plan.
7. Through this Strategic Plan, the Commission foresees the continued preparation and presentation of its global assessments of the state of the world's biodiversity for food and agriculture, including animal, plant, aquatic and forest genetic resources.
8. The success of the implementation of this Strategic Plan and its MYPOW will depend on the support provided through FAO's Programme of Work and Budget, and on the mobilization of extra-budgetary resources, as well as on partnerships with, and the contributions of, other international organizations.

---

<sup>5</sup> CGRFA-11/07/Report, Appendix E.

### III. Partnerships

9. To achieve its goals and targets and support the implementation of this Strategic Plan, the Commission will continue to seek synergies and strengthen partnerships with the relevant specialized agencies and conventions of the United Nations as well as other intergovernmental organizations, including the Convention of Biological Diversity and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, with a view to achieve synergies and avoid duplication of work. Cooperation will also be enhanced with international agricultural research centres, national and regional scientific organizations, international and regional non-governmental organizations, civil society, producer organizations, relevant funding agencies and the private sector. Information exchange and capacity development will be facilitated through regional networks and South–South and triangular cooperation.
10. To facilitate the implementation of this Strategic Plan and strengthen cooperation in the field of biodiversity for food and agriculture, the Commission has established a consultation process by which international organizations are invited to provide information on their policies, programmes and activities relevant to the prioritized themes of each of the Commission's regular sessions.





## Annex 1: Multi-Year Programme of Work: major outputs and milestones (2019–2027)

	17th Session 2019	18th Session 2021	19th Session 2023	20th Session 2025	21st Session 2027
<b>Sectoral matters</b>					
<b>Animal genetic resources (AnGR)</b>		Review of implementation of the Global Plan of Action for AnGR		Presentation of <i>The Third Report on the State of the World's AnGR</i>	Review of the Global Plan of Action for AnGR
<b>Aquatic genetic resources (AqGR)</b>	Presentation of the finalized <i>State of the World's AqGR</i>	Consideration of the draft Global Plan of Action for AqGR			Review of implementation of the Global Plan of Action for AqGR
<b>Forest genetic resources (FGR)</b>	Review of implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of FGR		Presentation of <i>The Second Report on the State of the World's FGR</i>	Review of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of FGR	
<b>Micro-organism and invertebrate genetic resources (MIGR)</b>		Review of work on MIGR		Review of work on MIGR	
<b>Plant genetic resources (PGR)</b>	Review of status and trends of seed policies		Presentation of <i>The Third Report on the State of the World's PGR</i>		Review of implementation of the (Second) Global Plan of Action for PGR
<b>Cross-sectoral matters</b>					
<b>The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture (SoW-BFA)</b>	Follow-up to SoW BFA	Follow-up to SoW BFA	Follow-up to SoW BFA		Follow-up to SoW BFA and presentation of <i>The Second Report on the State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture</i>
<b>Access and benefit-sharing (ABS)</b>	Develop explanatory notes for subsectors of GRFA to complement the ABS Elements	Review of work on ABS		Review of work on ABS	
<b>Biotechnologies</b>		Review of the work on biotechnologies for the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA		Review of the work on biotechnologies for the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA	
<b>"Digital sequence information" ("DSI")* on genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA)</b>	Consider the use of "DSI" on GRFA and the potential implications for conservation, sustainable use and ABS of GRFA		Consider the use of "DSI" on GRFA and the potential implications for conservation, sustainable use and ABS of GRFA		Review the work on "DSI" on GRFA and the potential implications for conservation, sustainable use and ABS of GRFA
<b>Climate change**</b>		Review of work on climate change and GRFA	Review of draft questions on climate change and GRFA Review of revised Voluntary Guidelines		Review of work on climate change and GRFA
<b>Nutrition and health</b>	Review of work on GRFA and nutrition	Concept note on biodiversity for food and agriculture and human health	Review of work on GRFA and nutrition and health		Review of work on GRFA and nutrition and health
<b>Management</b>	Progress report/ review of the Strategic Plan Reporting on SDGs	Options paper for future organization of work	Progress report/ review of the Strategic Plan Reporting on SDGs		Progress report/ review of the Strategic Plan Reporting on SDGs

Note: As reviewed by the Commission at its Seventeenth Session in the light of comments received from its intergovernmental technical working groups.

\*The term is taken from decision CBD COP XIII/16 and is subject to further discussion. There is a recognition that there are a multiplicity of terms that have been used in this area (including, inter alia, "genetic sequence data", "genetic sequence information", "genetic information", "dematerialized genetic resources", "in silico utilization", etc.) and that further consideration is needed regarding the appropriate term or terms to be used.

\*\*As updated by the Commission at its Eighteenth Regular Session (CGRFA-18/21/Report, Appendix B).

## Annex 2: Session Planning for CGRFA-18 and CGRFA-19

### Activities in preparation of CGRFA-18 (2020/2021)

Sectoral matters	
<b>Animal genetic resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare draft outline, timeline and budget and develop process for collecting national data to support the preparation of <i>The Third Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i></li> <li>• Prepare synthesis progress report to provide a global overview of progress made to implement the Global Plan of Action</li> <li>• Prepare FAO progress report on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action and the Funding Strategy</li> <li>• Prepare international organizations progress report</li> <li>• Prepare brief report on the status and trends of animal genetic resources</li> </ul>
<b>Aquatic genetic resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider draft Global Plan of Action for Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</li> </ul>
<b>Forest genetic resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare FAO progress report on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Forest Genetic Resources</li> <li>• Prepare an update on the preparation of Second Implementation Report and <i>The Second Report on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources</i> (including collection of national data)</li> </ul>
<b>Micro-organisms and invertebrates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of work on micro-organisms and invertebrates</li> <li>• Follow-up on previous recommendations by the Commission on this matter</li> </ul>
<b>Plant genetic resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare FAO progress report on the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</li> <li>• Follow up on previous recommendations by the Commission on this matter</li> <li>• Prepare update on the preparation of <i>The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i></li> </ul>
Cross-sectoral matters	
<b><i>The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow-up to <i>The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture</i></li> </ul>
<b>Access and benefit-sharing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey on domestic legislative, administrative and policy measures of existing access and benefit-sharing instruments and their impact on genetic resources for food and agriculture and define future work</li> <li>• Follow-up on previous recommendations by the Commission on this matter</li> </ul>
<b>Biotechnologies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the development of biotechnologies and their potential impact or implications on the conservation and sustainable utilization of genetic resources for food and agriculture</li> </ul>
<b>"Digital sequence information" on GRFA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow-up on previous recommendations by the Commission on this matter</li> </ul>
<b>Climate change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status of preparation of the global assessment of the role of genetic resources for food and agriculture for climate change adaptation and mitigation</li> <li>• Follow-up on previous recommendations by the Commission on this matter</li> </ul>
<b>Nutrition and health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow-up on previous recommendations by the Commission on this matter</li> <li>• Concept note on biodiversity for food and agriculture and human health</li> </ul>
<b>Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare progress report / review of the Strategic Plan, MYPOW</li> <li>• Options paper on future organization of work</li> <li>• SDG reporting</li> </ul>
<b>Other matters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite international instruments and organizations to report on their work in supporting the activities of the Commission and collate their inputs</li> </ul>



## Activities in preparation of CGRFA-19 (2022/2023)

Sectoral matters	
<b>Animal genetic resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance preparation of <i>The Third Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i> and report on progress made</li> <li>• Prepare document on the implementation and possible updating of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources</li> <li>• Prepare FAO progress report on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources</li> <li>• Prepare brief report on the status and trends of animal genetic resources</li> </ul>
<b>Aquatic genetic resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop follow-up to the Global Plan of Action for Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</li> </ul>
<b>Forest genetic resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare FAO progress report on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Forest Genetic Resources</li> <li>• Present the Second Implementation Report and <i>The Second Report on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources</i></li> </ul>
<b>Micro-organisms and invertebrates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of work on micro-organisms and invertebrates</li> <li>• Follow-up on previous recommendations by the Commission on this matter</li> </ul>
<b>Plant genetic resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of <i>The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i></li> <li>• Progress report on the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources</li> <li>• Prepare draft Third Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources, if relevant</li> </ul>
Cross-sectoral matters	
<b><i>The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare progress report on the implementation of the follow-up to <i>The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture</i></li> </ul>
<b>Access and benefit-sharing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow-up on previous recommendations by the Commission on this matter</li> </ul>
<b>Biotechnologies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow-up on previous recommendations by the Commission on this matter</li> </ul>
<b>"Digital sequence information" on GRFA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the use of "digital sequence information on GRFA" and the potential implications for conservation, sustainable use and ABS of GRFA</li> </ul>
<b>Climate change**</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of a country-driven global assessment of climate change effects and genetic resource adaptation and mitigation measures</li> <li>• Prepare follow-up to the assessment</li> </ul>
<b>Nutrition and health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of work on GRFA and nutrition and health</li> </ul>
<b>Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare progress report / review of the Strategic Plan, MYPOW</li> <li>• Follow-up on previous recommendations by the Commission on targets and indicators, SDG reporting</li> </ul>
<b>Other matters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite international instruments and organizations to report on their work in supporting the activities of the Commission and collate their inputs</li> </ul>

\*\* The Commission, at its Eighteenth Regular Session, updated the work stream on climate change, see above Annex 1. The activities listed here for the work stream were neither reviewed, nor updated on that occasion.

