



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 ICRISAT on 18 June 2021.

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



Template for submission of

Measures, Best Practices and Lessons Learned from the Realization of Farmers' Rights as set out in Article 9 of the International Treaty

Basic information

- **Title of measure/practice:** Community Seed Bank model as a platform for seed multiplication and distribution including adapted farmer varieties
- Date of submission
17th May 2021
- Name(s) of country/countries in which the measure/practice is taking place
Malawi and Zambia
- Responsible institution/organization (name, address, website (if applicable), e-mail address, telephone number(s) and contact person)
Responsible institution/organization: International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), P.O. Box 1096, Lilongwe-Malawi. Website: www.icrisat.org (name, address, website (if applicable),
e-mail address: J.Mwololo@giar.org telephone number: +26599387213/+2547205763353 and contact person: Dr. James Mwololo
- Type of institution/organization (categories)
An international non-profit organization that undertakes scientific research for development and a member of the CGIAR consortium
- Collaborating/supporting institutions/organizations/actors, if applicable (name, address, website (if applicable), e-mail address, telephone number(s))
Department of Agricultural Services (DARS Malawi) o Zambia Agricultural Research Institution (ZARI), Msekera Research Station, Chipata o Out-grower farmers' foundation-Chipata, Zambia o National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM)-Lilongwe, Malawi

Description of the examples

Mandatory information:¹

- Short summary to be put in the inventory (max. 200 words) including:
 - **Implementing entity and partners:** Lead Institution: International Crops Research Institute for The Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT). Partners: Department of Agricultural Research Services (DARS)-Malawi; Department of Agricultural and Extension Services (DAES)-Malawi Zambia Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI)—Zambia; Farmer Out Growers' Foundation-Zambia; Mthilakubili Cooperative Center-Zambia
 - Start year 18 June 2019
 - Objective(s):
 1. To support farmers to sustainably use and conserve PGRFA for food and nutrition security

¹ This mandatory information is required in order for the measure/practice to be included in the Inventory.



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2. Build capacity of smallholder farmers to use improved varieties for food and nutrition security to enhance resilience in production in the face of climate variability, while realizing sustained incomes among women and youth.
 - Summary of core components: Key components include; Farmer organization into seed clubs; trainings on seed production and agribusiness; establishment of demonstrations for seed production and dissemination campaigns
 - Key outcomes: There are three key outcomes all premised under the goal “Improve productivity, nutrition and on-farm incomes of farmers in Malawi and Zambia through use and conservation of adapted dry land legumes and cereals germplasm”
 1. Farmers supported to maintain and conserve agrobiodiversity in areas vulnerable to climate change and food insecurity
 2. Enhanced availability of quality seed of improved and/or farmer varieties
 3. Enhanced equity and inclusion in the implementation of the programme
 - Lessons learned (if applicable):

Amongst lessons learnt include; 1) Linking of farmers to cooperatives and provision of appropriate training is important (see description in subsequent section)
- Brief history (including starting year), as appropriate

Agriculture is the mainstay of Zambia and Malawi contributing 22% and 28% to the GDP of the two countries respectively. Food crop production is mainly in the hands of small-scale farmers who constitute more than 60% of the farming community. As such, crop productivity is still low, and both countries are food insufficiency and nutrition insecure owing to a number of challenges such as lack of access to inputs, output markets, technical knowledge and climate variability. Grain legumes and dryland cereal crops share multiple values in agri-food systems as resilient crops that provide nutritious food, income and or feed for livestock. The project was conceptualized to address the latter by harnessing dryland legume and cereals genetic resource for food and nutrition security and resilient farming systems in the two countries. The project which started in 2019, is being implemented in five districts i.e. Mchinji and Salima in Malawi; Chipata, Lundazi and Mambwe in Zambia, selected based on the role played by these crops as food and in income generation. The project is working in these districts towards underpinning agricultural growth and livelihoods through: i) intensification of cropping systems and ii) technology development/innovations using dryland legumes and cereals to address food and nutrition insecurity and grow incomes of smallholder farmers. Four entry points identified as key towards achieving the project goal included: (i) Conservation and exploitation of existing genetic resources (ii) high yielding resilient varieties that are nutrient dense (iii) Partnerships, capacity building, innovations and strengthening and/or working with community based structures (iv) Community dialogue/farmer research network including gender mainstreaming. The areas of operation in the two countries have similar weather patterns with effective rains commencing in the month of November/December of each calendar year. **To achieve these objectives, various platforms have been developed and these include 1) Community Seed Banks for building capacity of farmers in seed and seed production, 2) Learning centers in which trials and demonstrations are being conducted, 3) training programs for various activities or project messages, 4) project planning and implementation meetings**
- Core components of the measure/practice (max 200 words)

Target PGRFA: The project targets groundnut, pigeonpea, millets and sorghum.



Beneficiaries: Over 2500 farmers have been reached in total particularly those accessing seed through community seed banks, and a total of 647 farmers had access to various trainings including on crop production, agri-business, seed production)

Gender: To mainstream gender in project activities, a series of activities are being conducted to provide understanding on approach to gender issues. **A gender study has been conducted in both countries (Malawi and Zambia)** to provide understanding on the roles individuals especially women in agriculture. Following the study, **a training on gender was done for both countries targeting 300 farmers.**

Impacts: The efforts are geared towards contribution to food, nutrition and income security; adaptation to climate change and to science and innovation. Currently 5 varieties have been introduced to the farming communities through the community seed banks.

Description of the context and the history of the measure/practice is taking place (political, legal and economic framework conditions for the measure/practice) (max 200 words)

Two seed systems are recognized in the two countries and include; formal and informal seed systems. The formal seed sectors are run by seed companies and to a greater extent serves farmers in the commercial sub-sector and less of subsistence communities. To increase access of improved seed to the rural masses, an informal seed has widely been used and CSBs are an example of the many platforms under informal seed system. The legal or policy condition is that these farmers under CSBs can only produce Quality Declared Seed (QDS) that should be shared within the communities in the area where the seed is being produced. Generally, quality declared seed has been a strong foundation for grain markets which is key to improving economic status of rural farmers. Since seed multiplication for a wider dissemination is a major challenge, other innovations beyond CSBs have been use and include; **out-grower** methods. Here seed multiplication is contracted to trained farmers with a buy-back clause. This also is a good source of income to farmers.

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

- Art. 9.1
- Art. 9.2a
- Art. 9.2b
- Art. 9.2c
- Art. 9.3

Other information, if applicable

- 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 ²	Also relevant ³
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² Please select only one category that is most relevant, under which the measure will be listed.

³ Please select one or several categories that may also be relevant (if applicable).



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 ⁴ , seed networks and other measures improving farmers' choices of a wider diversity of PGRFA.	√	
7	Participatory approaches to research on PGRFA, including characterization and evaluation, participatory plant breeding and variety selection		
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		

- In case you selected 'other measures', would you like to suggest a description of this measure, e.g. as a possible new category? _____
- Objective(s)
- Target group(s) and numbers of involved and affected farmers⁵
- Location(s) and geographical outreach
- Resources used for implementation of the measure/practice
- How has the measure/practice affected the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture?
- Please describe the achievements of the measure/ practice so far (including quantification) (max 200 words)
- Other national level instruments that are linked to the measure/practice

⁴ Including seed houses.

⁵ Any classification, e.g. of the types of farmer addressed, may be country-specific.



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- Are you aware of any other international agreements or programs that are relevant for this measure/practice?
- Other issues you wish to address, that have not yet been covered, to describe the measure/practice
- Location(s) and geographical outreach
- Resources used for implementation of the measure/practice
- How has the measure/practice affected the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture?
- Please describe the achievements of the measure/ practice so far (including quantification) (max 200 words)
- Other national level instruments that are linked to the measure/practice
- Are you aware of any other international agreements or programs that are relevant for this measure/practice?
- Other issues you wish to address, that have not yet been covered, to describe the measure/practice

Lessons learned

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

Mobility: Implementation of community seed banks, demonstrations and other out-reach activities are done in collaboration with the Department of Agricultural Extension Services (DAES) through AEDOs in various EPAs. The main challenge with system is that AEDOs are highly stretched with many activities they undertake for government and other NGOs in the area in addition to distances they have to travel. Provision of support in terms fuel minimizes their mobility challenges.

Aggregation: Farmers in our community seed banks still sell their produce as individuals and are exposed to the risk of being exploited by middlemen popularly known as vendors. In some places like Chinguluwe in Salima, Government has established cooperatives to ease the problem. What needs to be looked at is how best we can link these farmers to the cooperatives, and improving the functionality of these cooperatives as produce marketing centers. Where we don't have cooperatives like Mchinji, continued training on agri-business is key.

- What challenges encountered along the way (if applicable) (max 200 words)
Covid-19: The covid pandemic was the major challenge experienced during the 2019/20 and 2020/21 growing seasons. Restrictions on travels and numbers per gathering were put in place, thus impairing the execution of a number of activities.
- What would you consider conditions for success, if others should seek to carry out such a measure or organize such an activity? (max 100 words)

Collaboration: The collaboration we have with DARS, ZARI, farmer foundations and DAES has been key especially in implementation of community seed banks, out-grower approaches and establishment of demonstrations.

Farmer participation: Farmers in the project have owned project activities and this has been a revelation for the smooth operations especially on the management of demonstrations and

Technical expertise: Technical expertise from ICRISAT, DARS, ZARI and DAES has been pivotal in the design and implementation of various activities in the project



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Further information

- Link(s) to further information about the measure/practice