



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



**The International Treaty**

ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES  
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Country Report on the implementation  
of the International Treaty on Plant  
Genetic Resources for Food and  
Agriculture  
(ITPGRFA)

# SERBIA

06/07/2021

**STANDARD REPORTING FORMAT**  
**COUNTRY REPORT ON COMPLIANCE – ITPGRFA**

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SERBIA

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#### **Article 4: General Obligations**

1. Are there any laws, regulations procedures or policies in place in your country that implement the Treaty?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of such laws, regulations, procedures or policies:

The Law on Ratification of the International Treaty On Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Official Gazette of Serbia, International Agreements, No. 01/2013

2. Are there any other laws, regulations, procedures or policies in place in your country that apply to plant genetic resources?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of such laws, regulations, procedures or policies:

Law on Ministries  
Food Safety Law  
Law on Agriculture and Rural Development  
Law on Subsidies in Agriculture and Rural Development  
National Programme of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Seed Law  
Law on Registration of Plant varieties  
Law on Breeder's Rights  
Law on Nature Protection  
Strategy for Biodiversity Conservation  
Rulebook on Subsidies in PGRFA conservation

3. Is there any law, regulation, procedure or policy in place in your country that needs to be adjusted / harmonized<sup>1</sup> to ensure conformity with the obligations as provided in the Treaty?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of such adjustments and any plans to make those adjustments:

After the harmonization with the Treaty, final draft Law on PGRFA Management will be adopted by the Parliament.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this report, a Contracting Party may choose whichever term (adjusted or harmonized) is appropriate in relation to their legal systems

**Article 5: Conservation, Exploration, Collection, Characterization, Evaluation and Documentation of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture**

4. Has an integrated approach to the exploration, conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) been promoted in your country?

Yes

5. Have PGRFA been surveyed and inventoried in your country?

Yes, partially

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of your findings, specifying species, sub-species and/or varieties, including those that are of potential use:

Inventorying and monitoring of PGRFA in Serbia started in early 50's and 60's of the past century, mostly for the breeding purpose. Since 90's, PGRFA are collected, stored and maintained within the National Collection. Basic characterization and evaluation has been made only for one little part of the National Collection.

Since National Plant Gene Bank of Serbia (NPGBS) facilities were not completed and put into operation for many years, in the period 2000-2015 the Serbian Government entrusted the Maize Institute "Zemun Polje" to keep the National Collection on contractual basis. On 1 April 2015, when all the technical conditions were ready, seed samples of National Collection were transferred and stored in the cold chambers of the NPGBS in Belgrade-Zemun, under the Directorate for National Reference Laboratories, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management. After this transfer, the work of NPGBS was activated officially, after 25 years as the complex was built for the purpose of establishing the Plant Gene Bank of Yugoslavia.

In total, 4238 samples are kept in the National Collection of the National Plant Gene Bank:

- Cereals and Maize 2985 samples
- Medicinal and Aromatic Plants 387
- Industrial Crops 367
- Fodder Crops 284
- Vegetables 215

Fruits and Vitis collections with 3500 accessions are kept as field collections of Faculties of Agriculture in Belgrade and Novi Sad as well in the Institute for Vine and Viticulture in Niš.

If your answer is 'no', please indicate:

Any difficulties encountered in surveying or inventorying PGRFA;

For many years, NPGBS had an obvious lack of professional research staff, since it works under the auspices of state administration, which is not common in other countries in the region and Europe. There are currently two jurisdictions in the NPGBS:

- 1) PGRFA management and conservation, under the Law on Ministries and
  - 2) Plant Gene Bank activities (ex situ conservation) is under the Law on Food Safety.
- Only three persons are employed in the NPGBS for both jurisdictions.

Any action plans to survey and inventory PGRFA;

Within the Action plan of the Final Draft National Programme, it is planned to complete the Inventory in the next 5 years.

The most important PGRFA that should be surveyed and inventoried:

The most important PGRFA that should be surveyed and inventoried are: Cereals, Vegetables, Fruits and Vitis.

6. Has any threat to PGRFA in your country been identified?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please indicate:

The species, subspecies and/or varieties subject to such threats;

Cereals, Vegetables, Fruits and Vitis.

The sources (causes) of these threats;

Intensive agriculture, increased use of pesticides, pests, climate changes, floods, droughts and lack of financial support for conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA on national level, lack of farmer's interest for growing old varieties because of little income and unregulated market for PGRFA and their related products.

Any steps taken to minimize or eliminate these threats;

Any difficulties encountered in implementing such steps:

In the Final Draft Law on PGRFA Management, the article 20 is speaking about Special program in the case of disasters, comprising climatic changes, bearing in mind the special role of PGRFA in coping with climatic changes. It is also planned to prepare safety base collection to keep in one of the neighboring countries in the region. The samples of Cereals from the GRAINEFIT project, financed by FAO BSF, will be safely duplicated, packed and sent to Svalbard.

7. Has the collection of PGRFA and relevant associated information on those plant genetic resources that are under threat or are of potential use been promoted in your country?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of the measures taken:

National Programme for Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA in Serbia is in the phase of final draft and prepared for the adoption in the Government. In this Programme, there are presented measures and actions on the short, mid and longtime level.

8. Have farmers and local communities' efforts to manage and conserve PGRFA on-farm been promoted or supported in your country?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of the measures taken:

The samples of vegetables from the NPGBS were given to farmers for the purpose of regeneration and multiplication and also promotion of old varieties through farmers.

The example of good practice: Non-governmental organization "Frame of Life" from Valjevo is gathering farmers willing to grow old varieties of fruit, vegetables and cereals, to make inventory and conserve them for future generations.

9. Has in situ conservation of wild crop relatives and wild plants for food production been promoted in your country?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please indicate whether any measures have been taken to:

X Promote in situ conservation in protected areas;

Support the efforts of indigenous and local communities.

If such measures have been taken, please provide details of the measures taken:

10. Are there any ex situ collections of PGRFA in your country?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please provide information on the holder and content of such collections:

NPBGS – National Collection

Institute for Maize, Belgrade – Maize, Cereals, Soybean

Institute for Field and Vegetable Crops, Novo Sad – Cereals, Maize, Vegetables, Wild Sunflower, Soybean,

Industrial Crops, Fodder Crops, Medicinal Plants

Institute for Vegetables, Smederevska Palanka – Vegetables

Institute for Fodder Crops, Kruševac – Fodder Crops

Institute for Medicinal Plants, Belgrade – Medicinal Plants

Faculty of Agriculture, Belgrade – Cereals, Fruit, Vitis

Faculty of Agriculture, Novi Sad – Cereals, Fruit, Vitis

11. Has the development of an efficient and sustainable system of ex situ conservation of PGRFA been promoted in your country?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please indicate the measures taken to promote ex situ conservation, in particular

any measures to promote the development and transfer of technologies for this purpose:

NPGBS is planned to link institutes, faculties, farmers, seed companies, NGOs and industry. Various open days of biodiversity and local fairs are organized every year, NPGBS staff participate in TV shows on Agriculture, national seminars, regional and FAO projects.

12. Has the maintenance of the viability, degree of variation, and the genetic integrity of ex situ collections of PGRFA been monitored in your country?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of the main conclusions of these monitoring activities:

Viability is more than 85% in checked accessions of Maize, Wheat, Cucurbits, Millet, Flax, Tobacco), and the monitoring activities are planned to be performed on annually basis.

13. Has your country cooperated with other Contracting Parties, through bilateral or regional channels, in the conservation, exploration, collection, characterization, evaluation or documentation of PGRFA?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please indicate the other Contracting Parties with whom the cooperation was undertaken (where additional to cooperation through the Governing Body or other Treaty mechanisms) and, where possible, details of any relevant projects:

GRAINEFIT project of the Institute for Field and Vegetable Crops in Novi Sad, Serbia, is carried out in cooperation with the Institute of Food Technology from Novi Sad, Serbia, and two Bulgarian institutes, the Agro-Bio Institute from Sofia and the Institute of Plant Genetic Resources from Sadovo. The project aims to make better use of the neglected genetic resources of small grains in the light of climate change, with an emphasis on supporting small farms in achieving stable yields, safe and good quality cereal products.

Serbia is the member of ECPGR from 1980 and actively participate in the projects and meetings together with other member countries. We are participating in ECPGR Grant Scheme and other activities related to PGRFA conservation and sustainable use in Europe.

#### **Article 6: Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture**

14. Are there any policy and legal measures<sup>2</sup> in place in your country that promote the sustainable use of PGRFA?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please indicate whether such policy and legal measures include:

X Pursuing fair agricultural policies that promote the development and maintenance of diverse farming systems that enhance the sustainable use of agricultural biological diversity and other natural resources;

X Strengthening research that enhances and conserves biological diversity by maximizing intra- and inter-specific variation for the benefit of farmers;

X Promoting plant breeding efforts, with the participation of farmers, that strengthen the capacity to develop varieties particularly adapted to social, economic and ecological conditions, including in marginal areas;

X Broadening the genetic base of crops and increasing the range of genetic diversity available to farmers;

X Promoting the expanded use of local and locally adapted crops, varieties and underutilized

species;

X Supporting the wider use of diversity of varieties and species in on-farm management, conservation and sustainable use of crops and creating strong links to plant breeding and agricultural development;

X Reviewing and adjusting breeding strategies and regulations concerning variety release and seed distribution.

If such policy and legal measures are in place, please provide details of the measures taken and any difficulties encountered in implementing them:

The importance and transparency of the management and use of PGRFA in Serbia strongly depend on the new legislation. Research institutes, faculties, private sector, other organizations and stakeholders, as well as farmers, are all expected to take part in responsibility for the implementation of the Law on PGRFA Management, after its adoption. The number of strategic documents on agriculture and rural development, nature management, biodiversity and environment protection, all related to PGRFA, are already adopted and implemented. The Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy show that a large number of Biodiversity Policy commitments will be implemented, concentrating on relevant national and international aspects. Serbia participates in all relevant international instruments for the PGRFA conservation, and believes that international obligations in terms of agriculture and biodiversity are mutually supportive.

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<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this report, legal measures may include regulations.



**Article 7: National Commitments and International Cooperation**

15. Has the conservation, exploration, collection, characterization, evaluation, documentation and sustainable use of PGRFA been integrated into your country's programmes and policies?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of the integration of such activities:

X Conservation

X Exploration

X Collection

X Characterization

X Evaluation

X Documentation

X Sustainable use

Please indicate into which type of programmes and policies:

X Agriculture and rural development

X Food security

X Biodiversity conservation

Climate change

Other

Additional details:

16. Has your country cooperated with other Contracting Parties, through bilateral or regional channels, in the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please indicate whether the aim of such cooperation is to:

Strengthen the capability of developing countries and countries with economies in transition with respect to conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA;

Enhance international activities to promote conservation, evaluation, documentation, genetic enhancement, plant breeding, seed multiplication, and sharing, providing access to and exchanging PGRFA and appropriate information and technology, in conformity with the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-Sharing under the Treaty.

If, in addition to cooperation through the Governing Body or other Treaty mechanisms, your country has cooperated with other Contracting Parties directly or through FAO and other relevant international organizations, please indicate such other Contracting Parties and, where possible, details of any relevant projects:

GRAINEFIT project with Bulgaria, financed from FAO BSF IV

#### **Article 8: Technical Assistance**

17. Has your country promoted the provision of technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, with the objective of facilitating the implementation of the Treaty?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of the measures taken:

Exchange of information

Access to and transfer of technology

Capacity building

Please explain:

We offered to the region our Gene Bank facilities for the safety base collection.

18. Has your country received technical assistance with the objective of facilitating the implementation of the Treaty?

No

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of such technical assistance:

Exchange of information

Access to and transfer of technology

Capacity building

Please explain:

With the objective of facilitating the implementation of the Treaty in our country, we strongly need: technical assistance, exchange of information, access to and transfer of technology and capacity building.

#### **Article 9: Farmers' Rights**

19. Subject to national law, as appropriate, have any measures been taken to protect and promote farmers' rights in your country?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please indicate whether such measures were related to:

- X Recognition of the enormous contribution that local and indigenous communities and farmers of all regions of the world have made and will continue to make for the conservation and development of plant genetic resources;
- X The protection of traditional knowledge relevant to PGRFA;
- X The right to equitably participate in sharing benefits arising from the utilization of PGRFA;
- X The right to participate in making decisions, at the national level, on matters related to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA;
- X Any rights that farmers have to save, use, exchange, and sell farm-saved seed / propagating material.

If such measures were taken, please provide details of the measures taken and any difficulties encountered in implementing them:

Theoretically, all the measures related to farmers' rights are adopted within the Law on Ratification of the FAO Treaty in 2013, but there is need to harmonize the other national legislation with the mentioned Law.

#### **Article 11: Coverage of the Multilateral System**

20. Has your country notified all PGRFA listed in Annex I to the Treaty that are under the management and control of your Government and in the public domain as included in the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-Sharing (MLS)?

None

If your answer is 'all', please provide details of any difficulties encountered in including Annex I PGRFA in the MLS:

If your answer is 'partially', please provide details of:

- The extent to which Annex I PGRFA have been included in the MLS;
- The crops that have been included in the MLS; and
- The difficulties encountered in including Annex I PGRFA in the MLS:

If your answer is 'none', please indicate the difficulties encountered in including Annex I PGRFA in the MLS:

- X Lack of guidelines for the identification and inclusion of material;
- There is no national gene bank;
- X Lack of catalogue of PGRFA in the country;

X Lack of specialized human resources;

- X Limited economic resources and the need for capacity building;
- Other, please explain

21. Has your country taken measures to encourage natural and legal persons within your jurisdiction who hold Annex I PGRFA to include those resources in the MLS?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of:

- The natural or legal persons within your jurisdiction that included Annex I PGRFA in the MLS
- The crops that have been included in the MLS by these persons;  
and
- Any difficulties these persons encountered in including Annex I PGRFA in the MLS:

If your answer is 'no' please provide details, in particular details of any difficulties encountered in encouraging these persons to include Annex I PGRFA in the MLS:

**Article 12: Facilitated access to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture within the Multilateral System**

22. Has your country taken measures to provide facilitated access to Annex I PGRFA, in accordance with the conditions set out in Article 12.4 of the Treaty?

No

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of such measures:

If your answer is 'no', please provide details of any difficulties encountered in providing facilitated access to Annex I PGRFA:

23. Has facilitated access been provided in your country to Annex I PGRFA using the Standard Material Transfer Agreement (SMTA)?

Yes

If your answer is 'no', please provide details of any difficulties encountered in providing facilitated access to Annex I PGRFA using the SMTA:

24. Has the SMTA been used voluntarily in your country to provide access to non-Annex I PGRFA?

No, but the issue is under consideration

25. Does the legal system of your country provide an opportunity for parties to the material transfer agreements (MTAs) to seek recourse in case of contractual disputes arising under such agreements?

No

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of the relevant laws, regulations or procedures:

26. Does the legal system of your country provide for the enforcement of arbitral decisions related to disputes arising under the SMTA?

No

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of the relevant laws, regulations or procedures:

27. Have there been any emergency disaster situations in respect of which your country has provided facilitated access to Annex I PGRFA for the purpose of contributing to the re-establishment of agricultural systems?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of such emergency disaster situations and the Annex I PGRFA to which access was provided:

In 2014, after severe floods in our country two institutes provided seeds of Maize and Wheat to farmers.

**Article 13: Benefit-sharing in the Multilateral System**

28. Has your country made any information available regarding Annex I PGRFA?

No

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of any information made available regarding Annex I PGRFA:

- Catalogues and inventories
- Information on technologies
- Results of scientific and socio-economic research, including characterization, evaluation and utilization
- Other

29. Has your country provided or facilitated access to technologies for the conservation, characterization, evaluation and use of Annex I PGRFA?

No

If your answer is 'yes', please indicate whether your country:

- Has established or participated in crop-based thematic groups on utilization of PGRFA;
- Is aware of any partnerships in your country in research and development and in commercial joint ventures relating to the material received through the MLS, human resource development and effective access to research facilities.

Please provide details:

30. Has your country provided for and/or benefitted from capacity building measures in respect of Annex I PGRFA?<sup>3</sup>

No

If your answer is 'yes', please indicate whether such measures were related to:

- Establishing and/or strengthening programmes for scientific and technical education and training in conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA;
- Developing and strengthening facilities for conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA;

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<sup>3</sup> Please note that this question differs from question 15 as it only concerns Annex I PGRFA and is more specific

Carrying out scientific research and developing capacity for such research.

If your country provided for and/or benefitted from such measures, please provide details:

**Article 14: Global Plan of Action**

31. Has your country promoted the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please indicate whether the implementation of the plan was done through:

X National actions;

X International cooperation;

Other actions

Please provide details:

Our country has promoted the implementation of the Global Plan of Action within the FAO TCP project 2010-2012:” Strengthening National Programme for PGRFA Conservation and Sustainable Use”.

**Article 15: Ex Situ Collections of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture held by the International Agricultural Research Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and other International Institutions**

32. Has facilitated access to Annex I PGRFA been provided in your country to the International Agricultural Research Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (IARCs) or other international institutions that have signed agreements with the Governing Body of the Treaty?

No

If your answer is 'yes', please indicate:

To which IARCs or other international institutions facilitated access was provided;

The number of SMTAs entered into with each IARC or other international institution:

If your answer is 'no', please provide details of any difficulties encountered in providing facilitated access to Annex I PGRFA to IARCs and other international institutions that have signed agreements with the Governing Body of the Treaty:

33. Has access to non-Annex I PGRFA been provided in your country to IARCs or other international institutions that have signed agreements with the Governing Body of the Treaty?

No

If your answer is 'yes', please indicate:

To which IARCs or other international institutions access was provided;

The number of MTAs entered into with each IARC or other international institution:

If your answer is 'no', please provide details of any difficulties encountered in providing access to non-Annex I PGRFA to IARCs and other international institutions that have signed agreements with the Governing Body of the Treaty:



**Article 16: International Plant Genetic Resources Networks**

34. Has your country undertaken any activities to encourage government, private, non-governmental, research, breeding and other institutions to participate in the international plant genetic resources networks?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details of such activities:

Meetings, seminars, collection missions, joint projects.

Programs and projects: SEEDNet, ECPGR, FAO.

**Article 18: Financial Resources**

35. Has your country provided financial resources for national activities for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', please provide the estimated amount of funds provided during the last five years, including government resources:

From 2013, 16600 Eur per year, as subsidies for PGRFA conservation.

Please indicate if your country has developed a strategy or other measures to enhance the availability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the provision of financial resources to implement the International Treaty:

No

36. Has your country provided financial resources for the implementation of the International Treaty?

Yes

If your answer is 'yes', where possible, please provide details of such channels and the amount of the financial resources involved during the last 5 years:

After the ratification of the Treaty, from the year 2013, we are contributing to the Core Administrative Budget of the International Treaty on biannually basis, the amount is 1074,72 USD per annum.

Total amount:

Channel: Bilateral

Please provide details:

37. Has your country received financial resources for the implementation of the International Treaty?

No

If your answer is 'yes', where possible, please provide details of such channels and the amount of the financial resources involved during the last 5 years:

Total amount:

Channel:

- Bilateral
- Regional
- Multilateral

Please provide details:

**General remarks on the implementation of the ITPGRFA**

38. You may use this box to share any advice you may have arising from your country's experience with implementation of the Treaty:

39. You may use this box to share any additional information that may be useful to provide a broader perspective of difficulties in implementation of the Treaty:

40. You may use this box to share any additional information that may be useful to provide a broader perspective of measures that could help to promote compliance:

There is a need to organize National Seminar on the Treaty implementation, with the FAO help.

*[ --- Question to be administered separately --- ]*

***About this reporting***

41. Have you encountered any difficulties in completing this reporting format?

No

If your answer is 'yes', please provide details on such difficulties:

If you have suggestions for improvement of this reporting format, please share them: