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The International Treaty ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
FOURTH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FUNDING STRATEGY AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION
20-22 September 2021
THIRD DRAFT OF THE MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL) FRAMEWORK OF THE BSF

NOTE BY THE SECRETARY

The second draft MEL Framework of the BSF was made available to the members of the Funding Committee via a virtual checkpoint for the Committee's consideration and comments over a seven week period between 22 July 2021 and 7 September 2021. The comments received from the members of the Funding Committee have been compiled and made available through the document IT/GB-9/SFC-4/21/Inf.4.

This document contains the Third Draft of the MEL framework of the BSF which incorporates the inputs provided by the Funding Committee through the electronic checkpoint. All changes made since the second draft of the MEL framework of the BSF are shown in revision mode in this document to enable more focused consideration by the members of the Funding Committee at their fourth meeting.

I.   INTRODUCTION

1.   This document contains the ~~second~~ third Draft Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (MEL framework) for the Benefit-Sharing Fund, for the consideration by the Standing Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization (the Funding Committee).

2.   Section IV of the BSF Operations Manual, adopted through Resolution 3/2019 of the Governing Body, provides that the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework for the Benefit-Sharing Fund is an integral part of the monitoring of the overall Funding Strategy. Section IV (paras. 37-41) sets out the objectives, basic principles, steps and responsibilities under the MEL framework as follows:

   a. The objectives of the MEL framework are to:

   - promote accountability for the achievement of the priorities, storyline, Theory of Change and Results Framework of the Benefit-sharing Fund as established by the Governing Body through the assessment of results, effectiveness, processes, and performance;
   - promote learning, feedback, and knowledge-sharing on results and lessons learned, as a basis for decision-making on policies, strategies, programmes, and project management;

   b. The Governing Body will regularly receive a Report on the Benefit-sharing Fund with the information arising from the MEL framework. The contribution of the Benefit-sharing Fund to the programmatic approach of the Funding Strategy should be subject to review and continuous improvement.

   c. The MEL framework will be further developed under the guidance of the Funding Committee and will link outcomes and outputs within the storyline and Theory of Change of the Benefit-sharing Fund with clear targets and indicators established to enable the monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes.

3.   At its second meeting, the Funding Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework for the BSF and circulate it to the members of the Funding Committee for comments. At its third meeting, the Funding Committee thanked the Secretariat for preparing the first draft MEL framework, noting that it was a good basis for continuing to develop it further and requested the Secretariat to provide a further developed framework to the Funding Committee at its fourth meeting. It requested that, in doing so, the Secretariat considers the recommendations emerging from the independent evaluation of the Third Cycle of the Benefit- sharing Fund.

4.   The ~~second~~ third Draft Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework for the Benefit-Sharing Fund, is contained in the *Appendix* to this document.

II.   MEL FRAMEWORK: NOTES ON PREPARATIONS OF THE SECOND AND THIRD DRAFTS

5.   The first Draft of the MEL framework was made available to the Funding Committee at its third meeting.[1]

6.   One of the elements missing from the first Draft MEL framework was the Results Framework, which is provided in this second version. The following notes have been elaborated to clarify how the Results Framework has been developed:

- The top level of the Results Framework replicates the top level of the Results Framework of the overall Funding Strategy, as the Benefit-sharing Fund is an integral part of it.[2] The text for the impact of the BSF Results Framework is based on the language adopted by the Governing Body for the top level of the Results Framework of the overall Funding Strategy.

- The Results Framework also takes into account the guidance that FAO provides on developing programme/project frameworks for partnerships with donors, which would generally include one impact and one outcome, plus three major output areas. This will enable the Secretariat to use the Results Framework in agreements with donors that make voluntary contributions to the Benefit-sharing Fund.

- The first two outputs consider that the programmatic approach of the BSF focuses on priority area 2 (PA2) and priority area 11 (PA11) of *the Second Global Plan of Action of PGRFA*. Nevertheless, the programmatic approach, including this Results Framework, puts in place supportive practices and enabling initiatives for the implementation of other priorities of the Second Global Plan of Action.

- The third output reflects the increased emphasis that the updated BSF Manual places on learning from the local to the global levels and on knowledge sharing. It also reflects the requirement for PGRFA materials and data arising from the projects to be made publicly available.

7.   The Results Framework was developed taking into account lessons learned from previous BSF cycles and capitalizing on the Results Framework of the BSF-4, which was the first funding cycle for which a programmatic approach was developed. As requested by the Funding Committee, the recommendations emerging from the independent evaluation of the Third Cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund were also taken into consideration.

8.   The following paragraphs summarise how the recommendations from the independent evaluation were considered in developing the MEL Framework.

9.   At the third meeting of the Funding Committee, the Secretariat made a presentation on how different recommendations of the Independent Evaluation of Third Cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund were incorporated in the development of the various sections of the first draft MEL framework[3].

10.   The second draft MEL framework further addresseds recommendations 7: *Knowledge Management and Communications* by including specific output in the *Results Framework* that

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[1] http://www.fao.org/3/cb3336en/cb3336en.pdf
[2] See Resolution 3/2019, Annex 1, paragraph 18 and Figure 1, *Results Framework of the Funding Strategy* in page 7.
[3] Mel framework and BSF-3 evaluation recommendations available at:
http://www.fao.org/3/CB5642EN/CB5642EN.pdf

relates to the mechanisms to enhance the sharing of PGRFA materials, data and knowledge. This output is in line with the provisions of the Benefit-sharing Fund: Operations Manual to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge-sharing on results and lessons learned at project and programme levels.[4]

11.   The third All changes made to the first Draft of the MEL framework for the BSF incorporates the guidance received from the are in revision mode to enable more focused consideration by the members of the Funding Committee through the electronic checkpoint. The Secretariat has addressed the comments received to the second draft in track change mode in this document.

II. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

12.   The Committee is invited to consider the second third Draft Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework provided in this document and provide comments or guidance for its finalisation for further transmission to the Ninth Session of the Governing Body.

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[4] Annex 2: Benefit-sharing Fund: Operations Manual, Section IV, paragraph 39 (b) available at http://www.fao.org/3/nb780en/nb780en.pdf

APPENDIX

THIRD ~~SECOND~~ DRAFT MEL FRAMEWORK: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK FOR THE BENEFIT-SHARING FUND

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[5] Annex 2 will be provided in the final version of the MEL framework.

The MEL framework for the Benefit-sharing Fund has been developed based on the requirements set out in the BSF Operations Manual[6] and following common elements of MEL frameworks used within the UN development agencies.

This MEL Framework is structured as follows:

- **Overview of the MEL framework** presents the rationale/context of the MEL framework for BSF, its main purpose, target audience and key principles.

- **Results Framework** describes the high-level programmatic approach of the BSF, including the programme's broader outcome area and main outputs.

- **MEL Framework for BSF** contains the main components for the MEL Framework. It describes the approaches to monitoring, evaluation and learning, including the tools available within the MEL system to gather and analyse quantitative and qualitative information related to BSF projects. The section elaborates upon the learning objectives of the MEL framework and presents action points for ensuring that monitoring and evaluation processes within the MEL system are useful and used for learning, communication and influencing at different levels.

- **Reporting** provides the overall timeline of MEL framework implementation and describes the type of reports to be prepared using the MEL framework, roles and responsibilities of various parties involved within the BSF reporting cycles.

- **Annexes** provide additional tools and resources on MEL framework.

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[6] Annex 2 of the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture 2020-2025 available at http://www.fao.org/3/nb780en/nb780en.pdf

I. OVERVIEW OF THE MEL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Rationale

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework for the Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF) is an integral part of the monitoring of the overall *Funding Strategy of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture 2020-2025*[7] (the Funding Strategy). It provides a common framework in conducting Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for the Benefit-sharing Fund at programme and project levels.

The MEL framework:

- is a living document and is complementary to the requirements set out in the newly approved Benefit-sharing Fund: Operations Manual (Annex 2 of the Funding Strategy). The MEL framework will be used throughout the BSF programme and project cycles and will be reviewed and updated regularly, as specified in the Treaty's Funding Strategy;

- addresses the monitoring, evaluation and reporting in an integrated manner, including by further strengthening the learning and knowledge management of the BSF;

- responds to the continuous evolution of the BSF and has been developed taking into account the exiting reporting, monitoring and evaluation system for BSF. While each BSF project has its own reporting, monitoring and data collection methods, this MEL combines a set of interconnected tools and indicators to support the collection, compilation and management of the information arising from the implementation of BSF projects. It provides a common basis for reporting at projects and programme levels;

- promotes accountability and enables learning and knowledge sharing in the implementation of BSF projects and programmes. It has been designed to measure progress, assess risks, improve performance and enable adaptive management in BSF implementation as well as to facilitate and systematize monitoring processes and support compliance with reporting requirements. It is a practical tool that provides immediate operational and strategic management support for the BSF project cycles;

- is results oriented, flexible, dynamic and inclusive of all BSF stakeholders. It forms the basis for assessing impact and ensure effectiveness and efficiency in delivery of the BSF projects and programme to support critical analysis and learning, inform decision-making and strategic programming.

1.2 Results framework

The BSF Results Framework provides the conceptual foundation upon which the MEL framework is organized.

The Results Framework presented in Figure 1 is a visual summary of the BSF programme for the period 2020-2025. It links the achievement of outputs with the programme level outcome and is fully aligned with the Theory of Change and other elements of the BSF Operations Manual.

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[7] Resolution 3/2019 available at http://www.fao.org/3/nb780en/nb780en.pdf

Climate change adaptation

Biodiversity conservation

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

FOOD SECURITY

Improved livelihoods

Economic development

IMPACT

Farmers around the world use, conserve and share Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) leading to increased productivity and on-farm incomes, increased availability of diverse nutrient-rich food, reduced adverse impacts to the environment and enhanced resilience to production shocks.
Biodiversity for food security is safeguarded for the future.

OUTCOME

Livelihoods improved for small-scale farmers in developing countries, and food security and sustainable agriculture promoted, through the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA

OUTPUTS

Adapted PGRFA managed or improved with farmers' participation

Enhanced local value chains improve production and consumption of adapted PGRFA

Mechanisms strengthened to enhance the sharing of PGRFA materials, data and knowledge

1.1 Use and conservation of farmers' varieties enhanced

1.2 New adapted varieties developed through participatory plant breeding

1.3 Dynamic linkages strengthened between on-farm programmes and genebanks and others in the agricultural research systems

2.1 Local seed value chains improved for dissemination of adapted varieties

2.2 Use of adapted PGRFA and their products enhanced in the local food value chain

3.1 Linkages strengthened to ensure the dynamic flow of PGRFA materials and data from local to global through MLS and GLIS

3.2 Capacities of BSF partners enhanced to document&disseminate knowledge on innovations for PGRFA management

3.3 Knowledge-gained and lessons learned accessed and used by all regions through the community of practice

3.4 Visibility on innovations for PGRFA management increased for evidence-based policy and planning

The impact level for the BSF Results Framework uses the wording adopted by the Governing Body for the Results Framework of the overall Funding Strategy:

> "Farmers around the world use and conserve adapted varieties leading to increased productivity and on-farm incomes, increased availability of diverse nutrient-rich food, reduced adverse impacts to the environment & enhanced resilience to production shocks".

To contribute to the overall goal, the Results Framework sets one main outcome:

"Livelihoods improved for sSmall-scale farmers in developing countries, and improve food security and sustainable agriculture promoted through the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA)".

The three main outputs of the Results Framework are:

> Output 1 Adapted PGRFA managed or improved with farmers' participation;

> Output 2: Enhanced local value chains improve the production and consumption of adapted PGRFA;

> Output 3 Mechanisms strengthened to enhance the sharing of PGRFA, data and knowledge on innovations for PGRFA management;

The three main outputs have contributory outputs. The main and contributory outputs are based on the BSF Operations Manual.

The third output focuses on strengthening the learning and knowledge-sharing of the BSF to capitalize on the strong emphasis that the new BSF Manual places on learning and knowledge management. The BSF-3 independent evaluation also confirmed that the BSF generated rich and tangible data and knowledge on PGRFA management for food security in the context of climate change and recommended that the BSF should further capitalize on building and sharing knowledge within and across projects, as well as with Treaty stakeholders and National Focal Points at large.

The MEL framework for the BSF will serve as a practical tool to monitor and evaluate the achievements in the main outcome areas and outputs of the Results Framework and enable knowledge management and learning. The approaches to monitoring the achievement of outputs and contributions to the outcome are further described in sections 2.3 and 2.4.

The set of monitoring indicators available to monitor at outcome and output levels are provided in Annex 1 of the MEL framework. Gender differentiated indicators are included to enable a gender differentiated monitoring of the output levels.

The BSF executing partners will use the BSF Results Framework and the list of indicators to develop each individual Logical framework at project level, which will be context specific and prepared in a country-driven manner. In developing the Logical framework at project level, partners will have to bear in mind the approaches set for establishing the baseline (section 2.1) and for risk management (section 2.2).

All BSF projects will contribute to the realization of output 3 on knowledge-sharing and learning but may decide to focus on a limited number of contributory outputs for outputs 1 & 2. Each BSF executing partner will identify a discrete number of monitoring indicators at outcome and outputs levels that they would use throughout the project life.

For each BSF cycle, the Secretariat will aggregate indicators from each project to map the collective contribution of individual projects to the achievement of the BSF Results Framework and assess the progress in contributing to the overall programme.

II. KEY APPROACHES TO MONITORING

The Monitoring for BSF is done on a continuous basis to systematically collect and analyse qualitative and quantitative data and information arising from portfolio implementation. The purpose of the monitoring for BSF is to assess projects' performance and effectiveness in achieving planned outputs and outcome and identify any risks and corrective measures for improvement and adjustment of BSF interventions. The lessons from monitoring are discussed periodically and used to inform actions and decisions.

The monitoring of the BSF projects is carried out in accordance with FAO standards and forms an integral part of the project agreements signed with each BSF executing institution. Each BSF executing institution is responsible for monitoring its contribution towards the achievement of project outputs and outcome. The responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the BSF programme outcome lies with the Secretariat.

2.1 Establishing baseline

The collection of primary and secondary information prior to project intervention, through a baseline survey, is crucial for an evidence based, results-oriented and effective MEL system. The collected quantitative and qualitative information enables joint analysis and decision making amongst stakeholders for the projects' planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning. Many project partners of the BSF have in the past conducted baselines surveys. This MEL framework brings together the experience gained to have the preparation of a baseline establishment standardized throughout the projects and programmes of the BSF. The baseline survey should be combined with endline surveys.[8]

At the inception phase of each project, a needs and vulnerability assessment will be conducted. This will be conducted in conjunction with a PGRFA survey to determine with farmers what the locally available PGRFA are, the PGRFA gaps and new material needed. ~~BSF executing partners will use the list of indicators in producing their baseline.~~

Baseline surveys could integrate the use of questionnaires with other Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools. These could be used in combination with climate vulnerability assessments or tools, such as the diversity wheel, to define plant breeding or conservation objectives or gender differentiated trait preferences. These tools could be used to enhance local knowledge to co-define farmers' perception of climate change and use of PGRFA for disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation. Used in a participatory manner, the surveys can be empowering and create joint ownership among the stakeholders involved.

The surveys have cost, time and skills implications, so a minimum to optimum data sets need to be defined by the BSF executing partners. The data sets need to match the monitoring of outputs, outcomes and risk management.

2.2. Risk management

Risk management involves the process of identifying, monitoring, preventing or mitigating risks that could potentially affect project delivery and outcomes. Risk management presents an opportunity for building resilience and manage inter-related systemic risks:

1. risk related to project context (e.g., market fluctuations, conflicts);

2. project implementation risk (e.g., delays in procurement, staff hiring),

3. risk inherent in agriculture production (e.g., crop failure) and PGRFA management (e.g., biotic and abiotic stresses);

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[8] An end line survey is the collection of information as inputs to evaluate project results by comparing information from the baseline and end line surveys.

   4. risk compounded by climate hazards of both extreme (e.g., typhoon) and slow on-set
      events (e.g., drought).

The objectives of the BSF risk management are two folds. Firstly, to enhance climate resilience at community level through the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. Secondly, risk and adaptive management throughout the project cycle.

Building on the BSF's Risk Assessment Matrix,[9] the risk management will be improved and implemented. Risk screening and management will be part of the selection process, project inception and implementation. Whilst the context of risk management is complex, the tools and indicators for the BSF will be practical and easy to implement.

2.3. Technical monitoring: a focus on the output level

The technical monitoring of the BSF is carried out during the lifespan of the projects and provides real-time information on project implementation and performance. Each BSF project is required to monitor and report periodically on the status of project implementation, in accordance with the monitoring mechanisms and reporting requirements set out in project contracts and following FAO standards.

The purpose of the technical monitoring is to:
- assess the status of project implementation compared with the original workplan and budget;
- assess the achievement of the pre-identified targets and related indicators in terms of quality and timeliness;
- assess the changes to the key assumptions and risks that affect attainment of project targets and individuate any remedial measures;
- assess if the accomplished targets continue to be relevant for the achievement of the project outcome and overall goal; and,
- summarize the major problems and issues affecting or likely to affect implementation progress, compliance with reporting and monitoring, recommend actions to overcome these problems and issues.

All BSF projects will develop individual Logical frameworks that will be aligned to the Results Framework of the Benefit-sharing Fund. Targets at outcome and output levels should be established in relation to baseline data and thus set the prospects for performance over the project duration.

The list of indicators at output level are provided in Annex 1 of the MEL framework and are the benchmark for the technical monitoring. Gender differentiated indicators have been included to enable a gender differentiated monitoring at output level.

The targets and indicators will be subject to technical monitoring to assess if the cumulative reported indicators are adequate to reach the envisaged targets and ensure that they lead to the delivery of planned outcomes in the agreed period. This process will be repeated at each reporting interval to continuously validate that delivery of targets is on schedule and remains relevant.

2.4.   Monitoring at the outcome level: assessing the benefits for farmers

The monitoring of BSF previous cycles was strong on achievement of technical outputs at each cycle. The monitoring at programme outcome level (i.e., food and nutrition security, disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change, resilient livelihoods, policy changes and co-generation of technologies etc.,) needs a more systemic approach within the period of implementation of the Funding Strategy 2020-2025. in the next years, including moving beyond a concrete funding cycle.

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[9] Please refer to section 2.6. *Monitoring tools.*

Whilst the BSF has developed and used strong technical monitoring at output levels, the MEL framework will now correlate outputs to enable monitoring at outcome level. Outcome level monitoring aims to manage projects to achieve and demonstrate the benefits that PGRFA brings to small-scale farmers in developing countries.

The outcome level monitoring will test project level assumptions to the BSF's Theory of Change and will track impact pathways towards macro level outcomes. The positive changes are the PGRFA benefits related to food and nutrition security, resilient livelihoods, income generation disaster risk management and climate adaptation. This will also include policy changes and institutional transformation toward the co-generation of technologies to harness plant genetic resources for a climate resilient food and agriculture systems.

Integrated with knowledge management, MEL at outcome level will may also track key medium-term achievements of the projects and how these contribute to long term goals of PGRFA management in the context of the Treaty implementation.

Indicators at outcome level will be strengthened and included in Annex 1 of the MEL Framework. Although hard quantitative data in some areas will be difficult to track and measure (e.g., farmers' improved income), the outcome indicators are intended to be mutually reinforcing. Their triangulation can produce robust data and establish causal links to outputs and outcomes.

2.5. Financial monitoring

Based on Article 19.3 (h) of the Treaty, the Governing Body has established a Trust Account to receive financial contributions to the Benefit-sharing Fund. In accordance with the Financial Rules of the Governing Body, the Trust Account of the Benefit-sharing Fund is administered by FAO and its accounts and financial management are subject to the policies and procedures of FAO.

The implementation of the interim disbursement procedures[10] are in line with the Financial Rules of the Governing Body and consistent with existing FAO financial rules and procedures, as well as other applicable FAO rules and procedures.

The terms and conditions of disbursement are set forth in the project agreements. The project agreements include, *inter alia:*

- a schedule for the disbursement of funds in tranches based on time specific milestones;

- a requirement for an *Implementation Report* from the implementing entity prior to each tranche disbursement.

- a provision authorizing non-payment if project delivery fails.

Responsibility: the Secretary of the Governing Body will develop the project agreements following the FAO template for Letters of Agreement.

Payments are made in the following phases:

1. An initial payment to follow signature of the project agreement.

   Responsibility: the Secretary of the Governing Body will authorize the initial payment.

2. Interim payments, dependent upon receipt and acceptance of *Implementation Reports,* which includes a financial statement of expenditures signed and certified by a duly designated representative of the executing entity and relevant supporting documentation.

   Responsibility: the executing entities will submit *Implementation Reports* to be accepted by the Secretary before authorizing any new payment.

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[10] Res 3/2011: Annex 2: Draft Interim Disbursement Procedures available at http://www.fao.org/3/a-be453e.pdf

3. A final payment, dependent upon receipt and acceptance of a *Terminal Report*, which includes a final financial statement of expenditures signed and certified by a duly designated representative of the executing entity and relevant supporting documentation. Responsibility: the executing entities will submit a *Terminal Report* to be accepted by the Secretary before authorizing the final payment.

2.6. Monitoring tools

The MEL framework builds on existing reporting and monitoring system within the BSF. The monitoring for BSF is carried out at two levels: project level and programme level.

At programme level, the BSF Reports to the Funding Committee will be the main tool used by the Secretariat to aggregate data and evidence on results produced by BSF projects.

Monitoring at project level relies on collection of evidence sourced from the management teams involved in the execution of BSF projects at country level/s. The Secretariat has developed and used throughout the BSF project cycles a set of monitoring tools[11] to capture information, quantitative and qualitative data, assess performance and risk in project implementation:

1. **Reporting and monitoring schedule** is used by the Secretariat to keep track of the due dates for reporting for each project, including the status of approval of the reporting documents and disbursement.
2. **Results report**[12] (**EN, SP, FR**) provide information in areas of effectiveness, efficiency, potential impact, best practices and lessons learnt. The results report has been designed to track the status of inputs/outputs, assumptions/risks, and the likelihood of the achievement of programme outcomes and overall goal.
3. **Periodic financial reports** (**EN, SP, FR**) include a financial statement of incurred expenditures within the corresponding reporting period;
4. **Monitoring questionnaire**[13] (**EN, SP, FR**) provides quantitative and qualitative data in the fields of partnerships, beneficiaries, targeted PGRFA, field activities, conservation practices, PGRFA information and technologies, training and capacity building, project management.
5. **Risk assessment matrix** (**EN, SP, FR**) captures and analyses the level of risks (high, medium, low) in relation to a set of factors: environmental, social, cultural and economic conditions, management capacity and skills, project management, governance, budget and workflow. For each factor of risk, project partners are required to elaborate upon the coping strategy/ies to manage the identified risks.
6. **Field visits**: the Secretariat periodically organizes field visits to selected BSF projects to directly assess progress in project implementation, meet project beneficiaries and partners, collect first-hand information on changes in the livelihoods of target communities, engage in mutistakeholder dialogues, exchange information, good practices and collect lessons learnt. Field visits are meant to validate the results reported by the projects.

The quantitative and qualitative data and information gathered through the monitoring tools is analysed, triangulated, systematized and aggregated by the Secretariat to enable reporting at the BSF programme level.

III. KEY APPROACHES TO EVALUATION

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[11] The reporting and monitoring tools are an integral part of the monitoring and reporting requirements set out in the contracts signed with the BSF implementing partners (FAO Letters of Agreement).
[12] Please note that due to COVID-19 emergency the results report template has been updated to include an assessment of the impact of the pandemic on the implementation of project activities.
[13] Please note that due to COVID-19 emergency the monitoring questionnaire has been updated to include an assessment of the impact of the pandemic on the implementation of project activities.

According to the *Interim Procedures for Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation* adopted by the Governing Body of the Treaty[14], a terminal independent evaluation of the project portfolio is conducted at the end of the project cycle.

The minimum requirements for such evaluation are:

- compliance with norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group.
- assessing at a minimum:
  1. the achievement of outputs and outcomes, and provide ratings for targeted objectives and outcomes;
  2. the sustainability of outcomes after project completion, with a scale of rating;

The minimum contents of the terminal evaluation report are:

- basic data on the evaluation:
  - when the evaluation took place,
  - who was involved;
  - the key questions, and
  - the methodology;

- basic data on the project, including expenditures from the Benefit-sharing Fund and other sources;

- lessons for broader applicability; and,

- the terms of reference of the evaluation (in an annex).

The independent evaluation shall be based on visits to the locations of a sample of projects and other mechanisms, such as interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions.

The evaluation report shall be submitted to the Secretary within a reasonable time after termination of the projects.

The evaluation report shall contain findings and recommendations and will be made public through the website.

The evaluation team is led by independent experts not involved with the projects and the Benefit-sharing Fund. An approach paper and Terms of Reference for evaluation are prepared by the Secretary and the FAO Evaluation Office. The evaluation report is reviewed, if needed, by the evaluation office of the implementing entity. The evaluation team is solely responsible for the independent evaluation report.

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[14] Res. 3/2011 Annex 1: *Interim Procedures for Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation*
http://www.fao.org/3/a-be453e.pdf

IV. KEY APPROACHES TO KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION

4.1. Knowledge and learning within the BSF programme

Building from the knowledge and lessons generated from the first four cycles of the BSF, this MEL framework includes a strong focus on knowledge management and communication.

Learning takes place at individual and organizational levels. Knowledge management entails the process of generating, sharing, validating and applying knowledge towards problem solving and enacting change. Since knowledge relates to experience and behaviour, knowledge management is context specific. It revolves around people and their interactions; with each other and their environments.

The purpose of BSF knowledge management is to contribute to supporting the implementation of the Treaty. This involves contribution to the enhancement of the cyclical and mutually enhancing relations between the MLS and the BSF; whereby PGRFA materials and knowledge are accessed and adapted contributing to the generation of more PGRFA and knowledge into the multilateral system of access and benefit sharing.

The knowledge and evidence from local, national, regional and global levels will be translated into a compelling and tailor-made narratives to increase the visibility and influence of the Treaty - towards supporting the Contracting Parties and stakeholders of the Treaty to access and generate PGRFA for food and nutrition security and climate resilience.

4.2. Knowledge management and learning phased approach

The BSF will take a phased approach in its knowledge management, starting from its core constituents right through the PGRFA community at large, considering:

- o the need for continuous learning and the further development of the BSF's knowledge management;

- o the vast potential of PGRFA management in contributing to food and nutrition security in the context of climate resilience; and,

- o the scale of ambition of the BSF's knowledge management needs to be matched with human and financial resources.

Such phased approach is enshrined in the operational plan for knowledge management, learning and communication, contained in *Annex 2*.

Project level

The basic and primary focus of the BSF knowledge management is at project level where multiple stakeholders collaborate, often pooling resources and each other's expertise to jointly implement a BSF project. Often working with small-scale farmers in developing countries, knowledge processes take place basically in problem analysis, identification of possible solutions, experimentation and adaptation.

At project level, a diversity of PGRFA materials is accessed, characterized, tested, developed and adapted on multiple locations within diverse agro-ecologies and cropping systems. Often linking farmers' and scientific knowledge, strategies employing PGRFA for sustainable agriculture and climate change adaptation are developed and tested. Some of the most successful results within the BSF are those where small-scale farmers in developing countries jointly analyse and work together with the support of plant breeders, extension agents, etc. Another crucial learning processes is the gender differentiated identification of farmers' trait preferences and plant breeding objectives.

Further outreach and communication take place when farmers' knowledge and PGRFA materials are shared in e.g., community seed fairs and policy dialogue. The documentation of knowledge products and processes, lessons learned, and best practices are the core activities at project levels.

Programme level

Amongst projects, at programme level, the collection and sharing of the documentation of knowledge products and processes, lessons learned and best practices are shared amongst the past and present BSF partners and shared more widely to the Contracting Parties of the Treaty. The Treaty Secretariat can collate and annotate knowledge products; and encourage the sharing and use of these materials.

The Secretariat should also organize webinars, conferences, side events, as part of knowledge sharing and communications. In addition, the Secretariat should also make public the information on the PGRFA materials and basic characterization that were accessed, tested, developed and deposited to the MLS linking these with narratives on outcomes.

The BSF Secretariat should also collate the knowledge products and achievements of the BSF and track these towards the long terms goals of the Treaty to ensure further use and development of relevant BSF materials. This should serve as possible inputs to the future design of the BSF call for proposals, further programme development and fund raising and collaboration with other programmes and institutions.

Further added value to the BSF knowledge products can be archived though linking within FAO, highlighting the significance of the BSF and the Treaty to FAO's strategic programming. In addition, the Secretariat can also provide links to FAO knowledge products such as guidelines and tools, which may be of interest to the BSF project holders. For example, links to FAO's work on Farmers' Field Schools, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, value chain development and the Committee on Food Security.

In consultation with the BSF project holders and contracting parties on, for instance, key bottlenecks and priorities, the BSF can further add value to the knowledge products of the BSF by using these as evidence to support e.g., case studies, policy briefs, manuals, development of tools and further training. This way the knowledge products of the BSF can be used to further generate knowledge products for wider dissemination.

Appealing to a wider community, the BSF can reach out to other programmes, institutions, networks and knowledge platforms for mutual sharing of information and potentials for further collaboration.

4.3. Outreach and communication

The outreach and communication activities will translate knowledge and evidence from local, national, regional and global levels into compelling narratives to increase the visibility of the International Treaty.

More specifically, the communication and outreach aim at:

a. Communicate and give visibility to results, impact and positive changes in the livelihoods of the targeted communities and describe to the general public the value of the implementation of the International Treaty.

b. Develop accessible and attractive communication materials that relate the significance of PGRFA, the BSF and the ITPGRFA to the SDGs, local and global resilient food systems and sustainable livelihoods.

c. Reach out to a wider set of institutions and ensure that the benefits of the BSF, in terms of knowledge, information and problem-solving, are not limited to funded projects but applicable to the International Treaty community at large.

d. Share knowledge, and lessons learnt and promote PGRFA best-practices and innovations for broader uptake.

Communication products can should be tailored to, as appropriate:

- All Contracting Parties;

- The stakeholders of the International Treaty, including PGRFA practitioners, seed sector, development sector;

- Messaging must relate to the wider food systems: consumers, food and retail industries, financial and banking sector.

- Corresponding targeted policy messaging to the respective governments; and relevant international agreements, bodies and processes such as the SDGs, UNFCCC, CBD, GPA, OECD.

Communication will be closely linked to dissemination of knowledge gained and lessons learned. At local to regional levels the emphasis would be placed on communication between stakeholders (including farmers, breeders, researchers and PGRFA conservationists) of BSF projects and other practitioners. At regional to international levels, the emphasis would be on replication and uptake by other stakeholders, at operational and policy levels, within and beyond the BSF programme. At global level, outreach on knowledge gained will target the Governing Body and the Treaty community at large, FAO as well as other international organizations and processes.

BSF communication activities take place at project and programme levels. An important guiding principle of the knowledge management and communication plan will be capacity development in communication skills and awareness raising for BSF executing partners. The intended result of such capacity building will be to increase the capacities of BSF executing partners to communicate Treaty implementation at local and national levels and to enable them to participate and co-generate communication products targeting regional and global levels.

Each project will develop a communication and visibility plan and allocate a minimum percentage of the project's budget for this purpose. The Secretariat develops and disseminates communication toolkits for the use by BSF executing partners, and identifies opportunities for joint communication and learning amongst partners.

The Secretariat manages communication at the programme level to ensure that results, best practices, knowledge and visibility of funded actions are properly communicated and disseminated at different levels. The Treaty Secretariat is responsible for the overall coordination and reporting on the implementation of the communication activities to all Treaty constituencies, including donors.

V. REPORTING

One of the main purposes of the MEL framework is to facilitate the monitoring processes and support compliance with reporting requirements. The information arising from the MEL framework will be systematized, analysed and compiled to report at project/s and programme levels to support critical analysis and learning, inform decision-making and strategic programming.

The table below summarizes the main type of reports that will be prepared using the MEL framework, the timeline, roles and responsibilities.

What	Reporting Level	Frequency	Content	Responsibility
Progress narrative reports	Project	In accordance with the reporting and monitoring schedule set in the contracts (every 8 months)	• Update on status of implementation of project activities (including any modifications to the original workplans and budgets) • Achievements at output level • Achievements at outcome level • Partnership • Challenges • Gender • Sustainability • Good practices and lessons learned	BSF executing partners Project management team
Periodic financial reports	Project	In accordance with the reporting and monitoring schedule set in the contracts (every 8 months)	• Statement of expenditure for the corresponding reporting period	BSF executing partners Project management team
Report to SFC	Programme	Annual	• Synthesis of quantitative and qualitative information arising from MEL • Update on progress in the implementation of BSF portfolio • Update on the use of financial resources • Learning, communication and outreach • Main challenges encountered and corrective measures adopted • Success stories and lessons learnt	Secretariat

Report to donors, NFPs, BSF partners *(upon request)*	Programme	Annual	• Be based on the annual reports to the SFC, as much as possible • Synthesis of quantitative and qualitative information arising from MEL • In accordance with the reporting requirements set in donor agreements	Secretariat
Report to GB	Programme	Biennial	• Be based on the annual reports to the SFC • Synthesis of quantitative and qualitative information arising from MEL • In accordance with the Procedures for Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation • In accordance with BSF Operations Manual	SFC/Secretariat
Final Report of BSF	Programme	At the conclusion of project cycle		Secretariat
Evaluation report	Programme	At the conclusion of project cycle	• UN Evaluation group standards	FAO Office of Independent Evaluation Secretariat / SFC

ANNEX 1: MEL FRAMEWORK

LIST OF INDICATORS FOR MONITORING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE BSF RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The table below provides an indicative list of indicators for each target of the Results Framework provided above, which are measurable and for which information can be collected and processed throughout the project implementation period.

Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement
Impact Farmers around the world use and conserve adapted varieties leading to increased productivity and on-farm incomes, increased availability of diverse nutrient-rich food, reduced adverse impacts to the environment & enhanced resilience to production shocks	Achievement status of each Sustainable Development Goals at national levels
Overall outcome: Livelihoods improved for sSmall-scale farmers in developing countries, and improve food security and sustainable agriculture promoted, through the conservation and sustainable use of- plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA)	# farmers reporting increase in the type of crops and adapted varieties they consume # farmers reporting increased knowledge and capacities for food storage, processing and cooking # of farmers using PGRFA management strategies to increase resilience # community-level disaster risk management measures implemented % increase in volume of seeds/products integrated in the local value chain # of farmers reporting increase access to seeds of adapted varieties(quality, quantity, proximity, affordability and seed reserves) # of farmers reporting improved income Increased engagement multi-actor awareness of the contribution of PGRFA actors in support to SDGs achievement Increased multi-actor engagement on PGRFA policy and planning # of national/regional policy and planning related to food and nutrition security and climate change adaptation integrating PGRFA # of communication/evidence-based case studies showcasing inter-linkages between the different Treaty mechanisms (MLS, GLIS, Funding Strategy, BSF)

	# of institutions that adopt policies and practices to generate adapted PGRFA for small-scale farmers
OUTPUT 1*:* ADAPTED PGRFA MANAGED OR IMPROVED WITH FARMERS' PARTICIPATION	
Output 1.1 Use and conservation of farmers' varieties[15] enhanced	**PGRFA indicators** # of farmers' varieties and locally available PGRFA, including crop wild relatives and underutilized crops, collected and conserved # of farmers' varieties and locally available PGRFA with improved management strategies # of PGRFA re-introduced from genebanks or from other local communities into cultivation # of locally-available PGRFA disseminated to other farmers **Data/knowledge indicators** # of data on PGRFA made publicly available # of analysis & research published [16] **Capacity building, institutions and infrastructure indicators** # of farmers trained on-farm PGRFA management # of scientists, technical support staff and extension agents trained on on-farm management # of events (seed and food fairs, field days, demonstration plots, experimental trials, etc.) carried out to promote locally available PGRFA # of community seed banks (CSBs) established/strengthened # of local varieties conserved in CSBs % of women in leadership participating in CSB management
Output 1.2 New adapted varieties developed through participatory research	**PGRFA indicators** # of PGRFA accessed made available to farmers through participatory research

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[15] The second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (GPA-PGRFA) uses the term farmers' varieties/landraces.

[16] Including ethnobotanical and socio-economic/sociocultural research; population and conservation biology; research and extension studies for underutilized crops; extent and nature of possible threats to existing diversity on farm and in situ; studies to quantify genetic erosion. See GPA-PGRFA, para.52.

	# of PGRFA characterized and/or evaluated to address needs identified with small scale farmers # of new adapted varieties resulting from participatory variety selection (PVS) # of new adapted varieties resulting from participatory plant breeding (PPB) # of new adapted varieties cultivated by farmers % change in productivity of the targeted crops # of farmers reporting ~~increase~~ improved ~~in~~ yields/~~income~~productivity **Data/knowledge indicators** # of data on PGRFA made publicly available # of analysis and research papers published[17] # of protocols on characterization/evaluation developed and shared # of thesis, both MSc and PhD ~~published~~ completed # of institutions actively cooperating on capacity building and knowledge sharing **Capacity building, institutions and infrastructure indicators** # of farmers actively involved in on-farm PGRFA research # of farmers and/or extension agents trained on PGRFA participatory research # of farmers and/or extension agents trained as trainers on PGRFA participatory research # ~~young~~ of scientists, including young researchers, trained on PGRFA management to address the needs of small-scale farmers # of local participatory research teams established and/or strengthened (e.g., FFS, learning groups, local communities of practice, etc.) # of field days and innovation fora organized
Output 1.3. Dynamic linkages strengthened between on-farm programmes and genebanks and others in the agricultural research	***PGRFA indicators*** # of PGRFA (accessions, breeding lines, new varieties) managed or improved with farmers participation

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[17] Including crop improvement research, including participatory breeding; spatial analysis to identify varieties likely to have climate-adapted traits; phenotyping techniques used to improve on-farm management and improvement. See GPA-PGRFA, para.52-53.

systems	# of new accessions of PGRFA (farmers' varieties, crop wild relatives, underutilized crops) securely conserved in genebanks # of farmers' varieties re-introduced/delivered from genebanks to farmers # of crop wild relatives species conserved in situ by targeted communities # of genebanks actively participating in the project # of PGRFA material deposited in national/international genebanks # of PGRFA material deposited in Svalbard **Data/knowledge indicators** # of data on PGRFA made publicly available # of analysis and research papers published[18] # of catalogues on PGRFA developed **Capacity building, institutions and infrastructure indicators** # of genebank and breeding researchers actively involved in on-farm PGRFA research # of genebank and breeding researchers, farmers trained on PGRFA participatory research # young scientists trained on PGRFA management to address the needs of small-scale farmers

OUTPUT 2: ENHANCED LOCAL VALUE CHAINS IMPROVE THE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF ADAPTED PGRFA

Output 2.1 Local seed value chains improved for dissemination of adapted varieties	***PGRFA indicators*** kg of seeds of adapted varieties meeting quality standards produced # of varieties with improved quality seed production # of new farmer groups or other local actors involved in seed quality production, multiplication and/or distribution # of farmers using quality seeds # of companies commercializing seeds of adapted PGRFA % of ~~satisfied~~ farmers reporting increased quality of seeds sold in the market

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[18] Including on effective ways to integrate on-farm and ex situ conservation. See GPA-PGRFA, para.52-53.

	Data/knowledge indicators #seeds production manuals/publications developed # of new varieties registered in national catalogues of commercial varieties # of new business models for seed production, multiplication and/or distribution developed/strengthened # of trainings modules on seed commercialization developed **Capacity building, institutions and infrastructure indicators** # of farmers trained in seed production, multiplication and/or distribution # people trained in the development and implementation of business models # of seed inspectors, dealers, extension and local agents trained in quality seed production, multiplication and/or distribution # of women in leadership position in the seed production # of public-private partnerships formed
Output 2.2. Use of adapted PGRFA and their products enhanced in the local food vale chain	# of new farmer groups or other local actors use adapted PGRFA and their products ~~involved in promotion of adapted PGRFA and their products~~ # of farmers reporting increased dietary diversity # of food products developed with new varieties # of food fairs organized # of food processing enterprises engaged in the projects # of knowledge products shared on food storage, processing and cooking of nutritious foods

OUTPUT 3: MECHANISMS STRENGTHENED TO ENHANCE THE SHARING OF PGRFA MATERIALS, DATA AND KNOWLEDGE

3.1. Linkages strengthened to ensure the dynamic flow of PGRFA materials and data from local to global through the MLS and GLIS	***PGRFA indicators*** # of PGRFA accessed from the MLS # of SMTAs signed # of DOIs assigned to PGRFA material on a voluntary basis # of PGRFA material included in MLS

	# of PGRFA materials safely duplicated in Svalbard **Data/knowledge indicators** # diagnostic exercises undertaken with farmers to identify new PGRFA material needed from the MLS # MLS accessed materials analysed and shortlisted at research stations for further participatory research # of data for new PGRFA accessions made publicly available through GLIS # of PGRFA information tools developed / disseminated through GLIS # of partners using new PGRFA information tools available in GLIS **Capacity building, institutions and infrastructure indicators** # webinars and/or capacity building workshops organized on the practical functioning of GLIS and MLS for PGRFA management # of BSF partners supported to use MLS/GLIS through the MLS Helpdesk # of people using training materials on the use of MLS/GLIS for the practical use at national level
3.2. Capacities of BSF partners enhanced to document and disseminate knowledge on innovations for PGRFA management	**Data/knowledge indicators** # of partners that strengthened their mechanisms to document and disseminate knowledge and lessons learnt # of tools (germplasm, information, know-how and technologies) developed, documented and disseminated # of manuals, policy briefs, guides on PGRFA innovations produced and disseminated **Capacity building, institutions and infrastructure indicators** # of local networks on PGRFA actively exchanging knowledge and information # of knowledge sharing platforms used (e.g., websites, blogs, digital groups etc.) # of researchers, extension agents, national focal points, government workers and technicians trained on PGRFA innovations # young scientists, particularly women, supported through knowledge-sharing and targeted capacity building on PGRFA innovations # of field days, fairs and innovation fora organized to disseminate knowledge

3.3. Knowledge-gained and lessons learned accessed and used by all regions through the community of practice	# of partners actively involved in community of practice # of topics discussed within community of practice # of case studies presented in community of practice # of regional consultations between practitioners and policy makers organized % of practitioners satisfied with utility of knowledge presented in the community of practice % of increase in accessing and downloading information made available through community of practice # of webinars, workshops organized for knowledge sharing # of knowledge tools reviewed and improved by the community of practice
3.4. Visibility on innovations for PGRFA management increased for evidence-based policy and planning	# of partners trained on (co-)development of visibility products showcasing innovations # of visibility products published at local, regional or global level # of people reached by BSF visibility products # of policy briefs published # of policy dialogues promoted # of partners participating in relevant policy and planning processes at national level # of plans and policies strengthened or developed that integrate innovations in PGRFA management