

February 2022



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



**The International Treaty**  
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES  
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

**INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES  
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

**FIFTH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE  
FUNDING STRATEGY AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION**

**15 – 17 February 2022**

**THE FIFTH CYCLE OF THE BENEFIT-SHARING FUND:  
BUILDING BLOCKS**

*Note by the Secretary*

*This document will be used for communications to applicants, National Focal Points and relevant regional and international bodies in launching the fifth funding cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund. Based on the decisions made by the Funding Committee at its fifth meeting regarding budget, funding allocation and funding ceilings, the Secretariat will finalize this document with the guidance of the Funding Committee.*

*The current version of the document consists of 'building blocks', that indicate the proposed outline of the document under preparation. The building blocks contain text that was already agreed by the Governing Body in adopting the new Funding Strategy and by the Funding Committee when it finalized the MEL Framework. It also contains practical information for applicants from previous Calls for Proposals that would need to be updated.*

## I. BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTORY ELEMENTS

*[Res3/2019 paragraph 2, Annex 1: the Funding Strategy, available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/nb780en/nb780en.pdf>]*

Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture make an essential contribution to increasing and safeguarding food security and nutrition, improving rural livelihoods and economies, supporting the maintenance of biodiversity and to meeting the challenges of adapting to climate change.

*[Funding Strategy, paragraph 3]*

The objectives of the International Treaty are the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of their use, in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity, for sustainable agriculture and food security.

*[Funding Strategy, paragraph 7]*

The implementation of the International Treaty is achieved through a wide range of financial resources provided via a range of channels that connect enabling partners of the Treaty. The Results Framework of the Funding Strategy set out in Section III further details this operating framework. Whilst the Governing Body has established key instruments that hold financial resources under its guidance and control (e.g., the Benefit-sharing Fund and the Special Fund for Agreed Purposes) that it uses to play a catalytic role to fill gaps and enhance synergies, the majority of the financial resources contributing to the implementation of the Treaty are not under its direct control. For this reason, the Funding Strategy strives to ensure that sufficient resources are mobilized through all channels mentioned in Section III for the implementation of the Treaty.

*[Res3/2019 paragraph 2, Annex 2: Operations Manual: Benefit-sharing Fund available at <http://www.fao.org/3/nb780en/nb780en.pdf>]*

Established by the Governing Body and operational since 2009, the Benefit-sharing Fund has undertaken four project cycles with 80 projects funded around the world. Based on experiences gained from each preceding cycle, the Governing Body has continually updated and improved the operational procedures of the Fund, its selection process and priority areas of intervention. The Benefit-sharing Fund is an evolving mechanism, and the development of the programmatic approach for the Fund is another step in its development.

## II. RATIONALE AND PROGRAMME OUTCOME

*[BSF Manual, paragraph 12]*

In the last century, parts of the world's food crop diversity disappeared forever reducing coping strategies and resources needed to grow crops that are more resilient, more productive and nutritious.

*[BSF Manual, paragraph 13]*

Small-scale farmers, especially those most vulnerable to climate change and food insecurity, greatly depend on PGRFA to ensure their livelihoods. The Benefit-sharing Fund gives farmers access to a wide range of seeds that are adapted to their needs. This enables farmers to grow different types of crops so that they are not dependent on only one or two, to grow crops with higher yields or varieties that are more resilient to pests, diseases and adverse climate conditions, and crops that taste better and that are more nutritious. The Benefit-sharing Fund enables small-scale farmers, scientists and breeders to tap into the Treaty's global gene pool of millions of different genetic material to undertake research and develop new crop varieties.

*[BSF Manual, paragraph 14]*

Through helping farmers at local level to find solutions to climate change and other challenges, the Treaty system for agricultural diversity is strengthened. The Benefit-sharing Fund transcends the divide that is often seen between in-situ/on-farm and ex-situ conservation, and shows how different initiatives from farming communities through national and international genebanks are linked together through the International Treaty. Knowledge, information and germplasm

generated through the Benefit-sharing Fund feeds back into the Treaty enabling mechanisms, expanding the resources available all over the world to improve food security and sustainable agriculture.

*[IT/GB-9/SFC-4/21/Proceedings, paragraph 6, appendix 3: MEL framework, available at: <https://www.fao.org/3/cb7281en/cb7281en.pdf>]*

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

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

*[MEL framework, paragraph 7]*

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.

*[Include a reference to further details in the section on ‘Overview of the programme’, later in this document]*

### **III. FUNDS AVAILABLE, FUND ALLOCATION OPTIONS AND TYPE OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED**

*[This section will be added after relevant decision by the Committee, see sections III and IV of the document, IT/GB-9/SFC-5/22/, The Fifth Cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund]*

### **IV. TIMELINE AND SELECTION PROCESS**

#### **Overview of process**

*[This section will be added after relevant decision by the Committee, see section V, Overview of process of the document, IT/GB-9/SFC-5/22/, The Fifth Cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund]*

#### **Overview of key dates**

*[This section will be added after relevant decision by the Committee, see section V, Overview of key dates of the document]*

#### **Applicants**

*[Text is taken from the fourth call for proposals.]*

Pre-proposals may be submitted by governmental or non-governmental organizations in Contracting Parties eligible to apply for support, as listed in Appendix 2.

Any governmental or non-governmental organization, including farmers and farmers’ organizations, genebanks and research institutions, as well as regional and international organizations, based in countries that are Contracting Parties to the International Treaty, may apply for grants under the Benefit-sharing Fund. Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria established by the Governing Body and found in Appendix 1 of this Call for Proposals.

## Submissions

*[Text is taken from the fourth call for proposals.]*

All applications must be submitted through the recognized authorities of an eligible Contracting Party of the Treaty, i.e. through the National Focal Points or the Permanent Representatives to FAO. A list of National Focal Points and Permanent Representatives to FAO of eligible Contracting Parties is included in Appendix 3.

All applications must be made using the Submission Form for pre-proposals in Appendix 4. Pre-proposals may be submitted in any of the Treaty languages, plus, where necessary, a translation to a working language (English, French, Spanish), as stipulated by the Operational Procedures adopted by the Governing Body.

Applications must be sent by the national authorities of eligible Contracting Parties to the Secretariat of the Treaty at [Treaty-Fund@fao.org](mailto:Treaty-Fund@fao.org).

## Helpdesk

*[Text is taken from the fourth call for proposals.]*

In order to facilitate the process of preparing pre-proposals and full proposals for funding from the Benefit-sharing Fund, the Secretariat of the Treaty has established a Helpdesk. Applicants are invited to contact the Helpdesk at [Treaty-Fund@fao.org](mailto:Treaty-Fund@fao.org) for further elaboration and explanation of the information contained in this document, or to seek answers to any other questions that they may have regarding the submission of pre-proposals or proposals. The Helpdesk will operate in English, French, Spanish and Arabic and may conduct workshops for partners invited to participate in the programme and submit full proposals.

## V. OVERVIEW OF THE BSF PROGRAMME

*[IT/GB-9/SFC-4/21/Proceedings, paragraph 4, appendix 3: MEL framework, available at: <https://www.fao.org/3/cb7281en/cb7281en.pdf>]*

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.

*[MEL framework, paragraph 5]*

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”.

*[MEL framework, paragraph 6]*

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

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

*[MEL framework, paragraph 7]*

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.

*[MEL framework, paragraph 8]*

The three main 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.

*[MEL framework, paragraph 9]*

The MEL framework for the BSF will serve as a practical tool to monitor and evaluate the achievements in the main outcome area 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 II C and II D.

*[MEL framework, paragraph 10]*

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.

*[MEL framework, paragraph 11]*

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 II A) and for risk management (section II B).

*[MEL framework, paragraph 12]*

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.

### **Primary beneficiaries and partnership approach**

*[Res3/2019 paragraph 4, Annex 2: Operations Manual: Benefit-sharing Fund available at <http://www.fao.org/3/nb780en/nb780en.pdf>]*

The primary beneficiaries of the Benefit-sharing Fund are farmers, especially in developing countries, and countries with economies in transition, who conserve and sustainably utilize plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, as stated in Art. 13.3 of the International Treaty.

*[BSF Manual, paragraph 5]*

All projects funded will demonstrate the benefits that PGRFA brings to farmers, with a special emphasis on support to on-farm/in situ management, farmer-to-farmer exchanges, local seed value chains, and a better flow of PGRFA from ex-situ collections to farmers and back.

*[BSF Manual, paragraph 17]*

The Benefit-sharing Fund is demand driven and responsive to the different needs and interests of farmers and other PGRFA providers and users. Funded projects result in strong consortia of Treaty enabling partners collaborating to enhance the implementation and visibility of the Treaty. The partnerships established are inclusive, dynamic and multiple level between a wide range of

PGRFA institutions and stakeholders so as to create a sense of ownership of results and promote social inclusiveness.

### **Knowledge management, learning and communication**

*[IT/GB-9/SFC-4/21/Proceedings, paragraph 49, appendix 3: MEL framework, available at: <https://www.fao.org/3/cb7281en/cb7281en.pdf>]*

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.

*[MEL framework, paragraph 51]*

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.

*[Res3/2019 paragraph 42.j., Annex 2: Operations Manual: Benefit-sharing Fund available at <http://www.fao.org/3/nb780en/nb780en.pdf>]*

Learning:

- enabled within and between projects and programmes and the external environment;
- lessons learned and continuous learning are regularly provided to all Regions so to increase commitment to the Fund;
- should occur on a continuous basis so that knowledge and lessons can be applied and facilitated through a community of practice of enabling partners.
- responsibility: the executing entities and the Secretariat, and the wider dissemination of synthesis of lessons learned by National Focal Points, donors, the Funding Committee and others enabling partners;
- should inform the regular review of the Funding Strategy. (Operational Manual, para 42.j)

*[IT/GB-9/SFC-4/21/Proceedings, paragraph 52, appendix 3: MEL framework, available at: <https://www.fao.org/3/cb7281en/cb7281en.pdf>]*

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.

*[MEL framework, paragraph 64]*

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.

*[MEL framework, paragraph 65]*

More specifically, the communication and outreach aim at:

- a. Communicating and giving visibility to results, impact and positive changes in the livelihoods of the targeted communities and describing to the general public the value of the implementation of the International Treaty;
- b. Developing 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. Reaching 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. Sharing knowledge, and lessons learnt and promote PGRFA best-practices and innovations for broader uptake.

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1: ELIGIBILITY AND SCREENING CRITERIA FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS**

**APPENDIX 2: LIST OF COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR SUPPORT UNDER THE BENEFIT-SHARING FUND**

**APPENDIX 3: LIST OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES TO FAO OF ELIGIBLE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

**APPENDIX 4: SUBMISSION FORM FOR PRE-PROPOSALS**