



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



International Treaty
on Plant Genetic Resources
for Food and Agriculture

Panel of Experts of the Benefit-sharing Fund Terms of Reference

1. OVERVIEW

The Bureau of the Ninth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture will designate two experts from each FAO Region to join the Panel of Experts for the Fifth Project Cycle of the Treaty's Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF).

According to the Operations Manual of the Benefit-Sharing Fund:

“The independent Panel of Experts will conduct the screening of pre-proposals and final review of project proposals. The Panel of Experts will be designated, from a Roster, by the Bureau in consultation with their Regions. It will consist of two experts from each FAO Region. The independent Panel of Experts will work without remuneration with resources provided under the core administrative budget for any necessary meetings. Terms of Reference of the Panel to be made public”.¹

Expertise is required in plant genetic resources management as well in international, regional and national policies and programmes related to the implementation of the International Treaty. A list of criteria to be used to identify experts is provided in *Section: 3 Key functions* in these ToRs.

The *Policy on Conflicts of Interest and Related Standards of Conduct for the Benefit-sharing Fund* adopted by the Governing Body applies to the independent experts involved in the Panel of Experts.² It is the responsibility of each individual Panel Member to observe its terms.

2. BACKGROUND AND MANDATE

The Benefit sharing Fund aims to improve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers in developing countries, and to promote food security and sustainable agriculture through the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic diversity. It funds on-farm management of plant genetic diversity adapted to farmers' needs and engages farmers in the genetic improvement of such diversity. Through the BSF, enhanced local value chains improve the production and consumption of adapted plant genetic diversity. The Fund also strengthens mechanisms to enhance the sharing of PGRFA, as well as data and knowledge on innovations for PGRFA management. The Benefit-sharing Fund is an essential element of the Funding Strategy and of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing.

The Fifth Project Cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF-5) will be launched in 2022. At least USD 9 million will be invested globally. This is the first project cycle implemented following the adoption of the new Operations Manual: Benefit-sharing Fund and its Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework. BSF-5 implementation will need to take into account this new policy and operational environment.

The grant-making process of the BSF is defined by the project cycle steps contained in the procedures of the Operations Manual of the Fund. Errore. Il segnalibro non è definito. The Panel of Experts is involved in two steps of the project cycle: the screening of pre-proposals (step c) and the final review of full project proposals (step f).

¹ Resolution 3/2019, Annex 2, para. 32: <https://www.fao.org/3/nb780en/nb780en.pdf>

² Resolution 2/2013, Annex 2, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-be595e.pdf>

The Standing Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization (the Funding Committee), which has been delegated the authority for the operations of the BSF during the biennium, will approve the final list of projects to be funded in the BSF-5 based on the work done by the Panel. The Secretariat will provide support throughout the process. The various steps, responsibilities and overall methodology in undertaking the screening and appraisal processes will be further detailed in the *Methodology for the screening and appraisal of project proposals* that will be prepared by the Secretariat.

3. KEY FUNCTIONS

- Undertake the screening of pre-proposals against a set of established criteria and in accordance with the methodology developed by the Secretariat.
- Participate in the meeting of the Panel of Experts for the purpose of (1) developing a common understanding of the priorities and themes of the BSF-5 and being updated on other relevant Treaty developments; (2) finalizing the individual screening of pre-proposals; (3) approving by consensus and in coordination with other members of the panel the shortlists of pre-proposals to be recommended for approval to the Funding Committee;
- Provide advice on how to strengthen specific aspects of shortlisted individual pre-proposals for their further development to a full project proposal;
- Undertake a final review of full project proposals and provide any final recommendations for their further development.

4. PANEL MEMBER NOMINATION: CRITERIA TO BE USED

- Expertise in conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, in particular in relation to climate change, food security and poverty alleviation;
- Extensive knowledge of international policy and programmes relevant to the International Treaty;
- Extensive experience in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of projects and programmes in climate change and food security;
- Extensive knowledge of national and regional plans/programmes and priorities related to the Treaty implementation;
- Proven ability to work effectively in multidisciplinary teams;
- Languages: English (all regions), French (Near East and North Africa Regions), Spanish (GRULAC).