

April 2023



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**



**International Treaty
on Plant Genetic Resources
for Food and Agriculture**

Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda
INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
FIFTH MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE GLOBAL INFORMATION SYSTEM
Rome, Italy, 8 – 9 May 2023
REPORT ON PARTNERSHIPS, COLLABORATION AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Resolution 5/2022, by which the Governing Body adopted the Programme of work on the Global Information System 2023-2028 (GLIS PoW), emphasized the importance of partnerships and collaboration for its effective implementation.¹
2. One of the objectives of the GLIS PoW is to create and enhance opportunities to increase knowledge about PGRFA and to add value to it. In particular, objective 4.a refer to the need to “identify and create opportunities for information exchange among partners and users of the GLIS Portal (research, academia, genebanks, farmers, breeders, private sector, scientific journals, etc.)”.
3. This document provides an overview of the major initiatives and activities regarding partnerships and collaborations that the Secretariat engaged in for the implementation of the Programme of Work of the Global Information System (GLIS).
4. Most of the documents prepared for this meeting contain references to ongoing partnerships and collaboration with a wide range of organisations, initiatives and entities. This document summarises and cross-references those activities, provides information on partnerships not explicitly addressed in other documents and information on other ongoing or potential activities with relevant organisations and entities.
5. Following the advice of the Committee at previous meetings, the Secretariat has invited partner organisations and observers to deliver short presentations under this item. Other brief presentations from invited experts and observers will be accommodated under the relevant agenda items to stimulate the discussion by the Committee.
6. Finally, the document provides indicative elements for which the advice of the Committee is being sought by the Secretary.

¹Resolution 5/2022 www.fao.org/3/nk240en/nk240en.pdf

II. REPORT ON LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

7. The Secretariat has continued its collaboration with key partners for the linkages between the Portal of the Global Information System and the FAO's Early Warning System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (WIEWS), Genesys, Eurisco, the CGIAR Genebank Platform, and SADC Network, as relevant sources of PGRFA information on *ex situ* material. The type of collaboration and system interactions with these systems were reported to the Committee at its fourth meeting and to the Governing Body in 2022.
8. During the last year, the Secretariat continued to collaborate with FAO to promote reporting under the Second GPA and WIEWS, and has collaborated with the Plant Production and Protection Division on the analysis of data for various background studies and reports that will be published in the course of 2023.
9. In addition to the collaboration on WIEWS, the International Treaty and the CGRFA Secretariats collaborate in the following GLIS-related areas:
- (a) the preparation of the Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Third Report) and the consideration of the Third Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;²
 - (b) the monitoring and implementation of *the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (Second GPA), including the dissemination of the *Draft Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Farmers' Varieties and Landraces* and global networking on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA;³
10. The Secretariat has also participated in the Steering Committee of Genesys and exchanged information and views for the development of a strategic approach to better serve selected genebanks and provide new services based the infrastructure created by the DOIs. The project Biodiversity for Opportunities, Livelihoods and Development (BOLD), where the secretariats of the Treaty and the Crop Trust are collaborating in assisting genebanks, will offer new opportunities for collaboration in the upcoming months. Along the same lines, the new projects to be funded under the fifth cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund of the International Treaty will offer opportunities to extend the collaboration in the area of PGRFA documentation and information exchange.
11. The Secretariat has continued collaborating with the European Search Catalogue for Plant Genetic Resources (EURISCO) in supporting Contracting Parties of this Region to exchange PGRFA information. In the first quarter of 2023, several Contracting Parties from this region have indicated their intention to assign DOIs and update their reports.
12. In the last year, it is also relevant to note the collaboration developed with the INCREASE project and its Web-based Portal, being developed by IPK in Germany, to provide access to all information associated with the PGRFA studied and developed during the project, such as DNA sequences and test results.
13. The collaboration with the South African Development Community (SADC) has also continued in relation to Web-SDIS, a genebank documentation system adopted by many countries in the region. The recent collaboration for the assignation of DOIs is described in document IT/GB-10/SAC-GLIS-3/18/4, as well as the participation in a regional workshop organized in Zimbabwe in February 2023.
14. The application of Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) through GLIS has continued to provide opportunities to improve efficiencies in linking germplasm across databases and information systems and through research publications and other datasets.

² See the notification "NCP GB9-06- CSL- Third Report SoW PGRFA" www.fao.org/plant-treaty/notifications/detail-events/en/c/1278126/

³ Available at www.fao.org/3/ca5601en/ca5601en.pdf

15. The partnerships for the development of crop descriptors lists have continued during the last year, in particular with the World Agroforestry (ICRAF) and with the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR), and the Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK). The collaboration in the coming months in this area also includes the *Avena* Working Group of ECPGR, ICRISAT and other international institutions and thematic networks as described in document IT/GB-10/SAC-GLIS-3/18/3.2.

16. Particular attention is given to the ongoing formalization of the collaboration with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) in the area of crop ontologies and also to promote the update and replacement of outdated and static versions of PGRFA datasets and to establish dynamic data flows to keep such datasets as complete and updated as possible in the future.

17. The Secretariat also participated as an observer in the Annual General Meeting for 2023 of the DivSeek International Network held in San Diego, USA, in January 2023. The Secretariat presented the latest developments and updates from the Ninth Session of the Governing Body and conveyed the invitation to report to the Tenth Session on the collaboration.

18. As noted by the Bureau of the Governing Body, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) brings new opportunities for collaboration in various areas of work. The Secretariat is discussing with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity how to strengthen the collaboration and make information available through the Access and Benefit-Sharing Clearing-House. In particular, the sharing of information could help to facilitate the update of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), e.g., information about the membership, the contact details of the national focal points, on PGRFA available *ex situ* in a particular country, and a link to national reports on the implementation of the International Treaty, as the first set of data. Both Secretariats have initiated the discussion to renew their Memorandum of Cooperation.

19. The future collaboration with the CBD would include the analysis of existing information resources and datasets provided by Governments to suggest indicators to monitor progress on the implementation of the GBF. Additional collaboration could be developed around the documentation of CWR conserved *in situ*, particularly for material that is actively managed and conserved.

III. ADVICE SOUGHT

20. The Committee is invited to:
- a. **Take note** of the information provided in this document and;
 - b. **Provide advice** on developing and further strengthening partnerships and collaboration, including on improving support to GLIS users, planning and organizing training and capacity development activities.