



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



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

Item 18 of the Provisional Agenda

TENTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Rome, Italy, 20–24 November 2023

Draft Work Programme and Budget for the 2024–2025 Biennium – Donor-supported activities under the Special Fund for Agreed Purposes

Executive Summary

This document is presented to the Governing Body as an addendum to the draft Work Programme and Budget for the 2024–2025 biennium. It provides a summary of possible supporting projects to be carried out during the next biennium, with additional financial contributions outside the Core Administrative Budget.

Guidance Sought

The Governing Body is invited to recommend the proposed activities and, should it so wish, suggest priority areas for the consideration of donors who intend to provide funds during the 2024–2025 biennium to support the attainment of expected outcomes.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This document is presented to the Governing Body as an addendum to the draft Work Programme and Budget for the 2024–2025 Biennium (IT/GB-10/23/18). It provides a summary of possible supporting projects to be carried out in the next biennium, with additional financial contributions outside the Core Administrative Budget.
2. Additional voluntary contributions will be received by the Special Fund for Agreed Purposes and managed based on the individual agreements made between respective donors and the Secretary, including for the development and implementation of specific projects.
3. As in the past biennia, the Special Fund for Agreed Purposes plays a critical role in the realization of decisions made by the Governing Body and the effective execution of the Work Programme, supporting the continued successful implementation and advancement of the International Treaty.
4. In addition to the draft Work Programme and Budget for the 2024–2025 Biennium, this document may also be read in conjunction with the document, IT/GB-10/23/18.1, *Implementation Report of the Work Programme for the 2022–2023 Biennium* – which provides a report on the outcomes of supporting projects that have been implemented during the current biennium – as well as with the document, IT/GB-10/23/18.2, *Financial Report on Progress of the Work Programme for the 2022–2023 biennium*.
5. The Governing Body is invited to recommend the proposed activities, as set out below, and should it so wish, suggest priority areas for the consideration of donors who intend to provide funds during the 2024–2025 biennium to support the attainment of expected outcomes. Relevant elements for a possible decision are included in the draft Resolution contained in Annex XX of document IT/GB-10/23/18 for the consideration of the Governing Body.

II. SUPPORTING PROJECTS

Conservation, Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and Farmers' Rights under Articles 5, 6 and 9 of the International Treaty

6. Supporting Contracting Parties in their efforts to promote conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), as well as in the realization of Farmers' Rights, as provided for in the International Treaty, requires the development and dissemination of a broad spectrum of policy, administrative, legal and technical measures. It also depends on the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, including farmers and farmers' organizations, civil society, and both public and private institutions.
7. Following the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA (ACSU), possible activities to enhance implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty would focus on:
 - a. Strengthening and capitalizing on ongoing initiatives to increase effectiveness, impact, and visibility, including through the following:
 - i. the Toolbox for Sustainable Use of PGRFA, as a valuable source of information supporting Contracting Parties and stakeholders in implementing Articles 5 and 6;
 - ii. the Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Use of PGRFA;
 - iii. country/region-specific studies to address bottlenecks in the implementation of Articles 5 and 6;
 - iv. development of a series of training materials on conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, including on cryopreservation;
 - v. policies and regulatory frameworks supporting conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, including Crop Wild Relatives, and recognition schemes for local and indigenous communities and farmers;
 - vi. awareness-raising of the value of crop genetic diversity;

- vii. regional briefings among Contracting Parties and interested stakeholders on the implementation of Articles 5 and 6; and
 - viii. enhanced coordination and partnerships among public institutions, researchers, private entities, and other stakeholders.
- b. Possible future strategies to address bottlenecks to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty, through the following:
- i. development by the ACSU of voluntary guidelines on the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty;
 - ii. elaboration of an inclusive process to develop voluntary guidelines, such as a global symposium, with expert inputs to address different types of bottlenecks; and
 - iii. development of a mechanism to identify levels and forms of implementation of Articles 5 and 6, and support for countries in need, according to specific contexts and local conditions.
8. To sustain the progress made in the implementation of Article 9, the Secretariat will continue to update, promote and disseminate: the Inventory of national measures, best practices and lessons learned on the implementation of Farmers' Rights, as set out in Article 9 of the International Treaty; the Options for encouraging, guiding and promoting the realization of Farmers' Rights, as set out in Article 9 of the International Treaty; and the Educational Module and other available information resources on Farmers' Rights.
9. The Secretariat will also continue to support and facilitate initiatives of Contracting Parties and relevant organizations to promote and realize Farmers' Rights, such as training, workshops, consultations, and other capacity-building activities.
10. Document IT/GB-10/23/13, *Report on the implementation of Farmers' Rights*, provides an overview of the priority activities and proposals for future work on Farmers' Rights.

Estimated cost: USD 450 000

Multilateral System Support and Extension Programme: expanding operations and safeguarding germplasm collections

11. The International Treaty community benefits from a rational and science-based system of *ex situ* conservation of germplasm collections, in order to make them available for research, breeding and training on a global scale. A global network of national and international collections is essential for the future of global food security and sustainable agriculture. It therefore remains critical to strengthen the operations of those collections operating within the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing (Multilateral System), and to safeguard collections and conserve unique and globally valuable genetic diversity.
12. The operations of the Multilateral System will benefit from enhanced knowledge and sharing of experiences between users and providers. Active participation of all actors in workshops and in mechanisms to exchange experiences will contribute to increased availability and accessibility of material, including samples recently included in the Multilateral System.
13. Germplasm collections of important food crops around the world continue suffering significant damage, or under imminent threat of damage due to a range of emergencies or rapidly changing circumstances. These include pandemics, natural disasters, pest and pathogen outbreaks, institutional changes, land use and ownership issues, and conflict. Damage to unique germplasm collections not only represents a loss for the holding institution concerned, but also for global agricultural research and breeding communities, as well as for farmers and the society at large. The International Treaty will continue cooperating with partners, such as the Global Crop Diversity Trust (Crop Trust) and the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, in order to safeguard and rehabilitate plant germplasm collections and assist farmers in rehabilitating affected crop systems based on locally adapted germplasm.
14. The network of Article 15 collections can be expanded through new agreements with interested international institutions and host governments. The Governing Body has regularly mandated the Secretary to explore prospects for new agreements. In cases where new agreements are in place, the Secretary, in close collaboration with technical partners, should also provide initial support to facilitate the availability of

germplasm and related data in the Multilateral System, e.g. through Easy-SMTA, Digital Object Identifiers, and Genesys. The allocation of financial resources for expansion of the network of Article 15 agreements would enable these activities to be upgraded into a coherent programme, jointly designed, and implemented together with CGIAR Centers and the Crop Trust, and coordinated with an updated, rational system of international germplasm conservation and availability.

15. Field collections play an essential role, both in terms of conservation of unique material and as a complement to *in situ* conservation in the context of local agricultural systems. *In situ* and field collections are particularly vulnerable, as they are exposed to environmental and development threats. Therefore, there continues an urgent need to secure resources that can be mobilized rapidly to respond to immediate threats to unique, international germplasm field collections that fall under the framework of the International Treaty, with a status that is in all respects equivalent to the *ex situ* collections under the management of CGIAR Centers.

16. Proposed activities will include:

- organizing regional implementation workshops to support Contracting Parties and other users of the Multilateral System, including for the identification and notification of material available in the Multilateral System and use of the Standard Material Transfer Agreement;
- supporting Contracting Parties in the documentation and exchange of national experiences on implementation of the Multilateral System, and publishing them on the website of the International Treaty;
- undertaking further research on possible measures to encourage natural and legal persons to include material in the Multilateral System, including the convening of a small focus groups;
- translating the Educational Module on the Multilateral System into Arabic, French and Spanish;
- facilitating the rapid mobilization and deployment of technical and financial assistance in emergency situations for Article 15 collections, alongside existing mechanisms, (e.g., the Benefit-sharing Fund), and mandates, (e.g., the Crop Trust and the CGIAR);
- devising and implementing short-term measures to safeguard and ensure continuous availability of threatened unique germplasm;
- planning and implementing a programme of expansion of Article 15 collections; and
- for new signatory institutions, delivering backstop support on the operation of the Multilateral System.

Estimated cost: USD 600 000

Global Information System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

17. The Ninth Session of the Governing Body adopted a revised Programme of Work on the Global Information System (PoW-GLIS) for 2023–2028, with five objectives: i) the GLIS Portal; ii) interoperability; iii) access and use of information; iv) information and knowledge sharing; and v) capacity development and technology transfer.¹

18. Document IT/GB-10/23/11, *Report on the Implementation of the Global Information System*, provides information on the priorities identified by the Fifth meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee on the GLIS, including further improvement of the GLIS Portal, and support to developing countries on capacity building related to documentation, catalogues, inventories, and information exchange.²

19. Possible activities to be supported would include:

- at least one meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee;

¹ www.fao.org/3/nk240en/nk240en.pdf

² www.fao.org/3/nn142en/nn142en.pdf

- further development of the GLIS Portal through a graphic relationship browser to enable breeders and farmers to find germplasm through national and international inventories and specialized data repositories;
- provision of direct technical assistance for publishing and sharing information about national collections available in the Multilateral System, particularly for developing countries;
- provision of training and capacity-building workshops for the development of national inventories of Crop Wild Relatives in selected developing countries, by linking *ex situ* and *in situ* information; and
- development and publication of crop descriptor lists, in partnership with relevant organizations.

Estimated cost: USD 450 000

Implementation of the Funding Strategy

20. At its Eighth Session, the Governing Body adopted a new Funding Strategy of the International Treaty for the period 2020 to 2025.

21. Since the adoption of the new Funding Strategy, the Standing Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization (the Funding Committee) developed a 5-year Operational Plan for its implementation, which encompasses the requests made by the Governing Body through Resolution 3/2019. The Funding Strategy and Operational Plan set a heavy agenda for the Funding Committee to take forward, and as such, it is imperative that progress is made in the next biennium.

22. The proposed activities to be supported, derived from the Funding Strategy and its Operational Plan, are as follows:

- implementation of the approved Food Processing Industry Engagement Strategy;
- analysis of opportunities and potential synergies arising from the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), for integrating PGRFA into national priorities;
- compilation of tools and best practices for better integration of PGRFA into national development plans;
- development of communication tools, products, and platforms to help resource mobilization efforts and to increase outreach with users of the Multilateral System and with new donors and stakeholders, and enhance the visibility and recognition of donors;
- development and streamlining of monitoring and review processes and tools for the Funding Strategy, including those related to the GBF monitoring framework;
- development of draft and policy criteria for specific assistance under the Funding Strategy, as called for in Art.13.4 of the International Treaty; and
- rollout of a methodology for measuring non-monetary benefit-sharing.

Estimated cost: USD 350 000

Benefit-sharing Support Programme

23. The Funding Strategy of the International Treaty includes, in its Annex 2, the *Benefit-sharing Fund: Operations Manual* (BSF Manual), which further defines the programmatic approach of the BSF, with targeted priorities, an improved monitoring, evaluation and learning framework, and a stronger focus on knowledge management, communication and visibility.

24. In 2023, the Funding Committee approved a portfolio of 28 projects for funding, as part of the Fifth Call for Proposals of the Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF-5). The BSF-5 will contribute to the realization of both strategic and operational aspects of the new programmatic approach. The programmatic approach focuses on the long-term and strategic arrangement of individual, yet interlinked, projects that aim to achieve large-scale impacts on the global conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. Thus, selected partners will work together

on developing the BSF-5 programme, by creating synergies and complementarities, and by connecting with relevant PGRFA stakeholders.

25. This component will include activities to support the enhancement of the programmatic approach of the BSF in the context of the implementation of the Funding Strategy, as follows:

- establishment of the BSF community of practice for communication and knowledge sharing, to enable partners to build linkages between different funding sources and explore collaborative planning and co-spending opportunities;
- analysis of appropriate channels and activities for mobilizing co-funding resources and pursuing co-spending opportunities, to strengthen linkages between different funding sources and partners;
- implementation of a programme-wide inception phase for BSF-5 projects, for grounding an evidence-based planning and monitoring, evaluation, and learning;
- demonstration of functional, scalable, and sustainable models of access and benefit-sharing of PGRFA management, from local, national to global levels, through piloting of Phase 2 projects;
- deployment of a communication toolkit to support BSF partners in effectively communicating the results and achievements arising from BSF projects, within the framework of the broader communication strategy of the International Treaty; and
- further promotion of non-monetary benefit-sharing under the International Treaty (exchange of information; access to and transfer of technology; capacity building) and dissemination of the information and data arising from such schemes.

Estimated cost: USD 500 000

Capacity Development Programme for Mutual Supportiveness between the International Treaty and the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol, in the context of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

26. The objectives of the International Treaty are attained through close linkages with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Governing Body has repeatedly stressed the need to enhance such connections. The CBD's Conference of the Parties, in adopting the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (Nagoya Protocol), formally recognized the International Treaty as one of the complementary instruments that constitute the International Regime of Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS). Since the entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol, the Secretariat and the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT have been implementing capacity-building activities for mutual supportiveness with the International Treaty, in the context of the ongoing Joint Capacity Building Programme. Such activities have contributed to maintaining the relevance of the International Treaty in the context of wider ABS initiatives, and to promoting implementation of the Multilateral System within, or in parallel with, new or revised ABS frameworks.

27. Continuing and enhancing such activities will be critical in light of the new, overarching GBF. The GBF sets specific targets for monetary and non-monetary benefits linked to access to genetic resources (Goal C, Target 13). The GBF promotes coherence, complementarity and cooperation between the CBD and other biodiversity-related conventions and relevant multilateral agreements and international institutions, respecting their mandates, and creates opportunities for cooperation and partnerships among diverse actors to enhance implementation of the Framework (paragraph 6). While several processes under the Nagoya Protocol – for example on digital sequence information, on its Article 10 regarding global benefit-sharing mechanisms, and on Article 4 regarding the relationship with other international instruments – continue to have implications for the implementation of the International Treaty in terms of global ABS policy, the GBF offers the opportunity to generate new impetus for mutually supportive implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and the International Treaty. The GBF highlights the need to strengthen, on a wider scale, policy dialogue and operational coordination between national authorities responsible for the International Treaty and environmental authorities in charge of implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, at international, regional and national levels. This coordination would contribute to the whole-of-government approach that is at the heart of GBF implementation (paragraph 7 (c)).

28. Under the proposed Capacity Building Programme for Mutual Supportiveness, dialogue and coordination will be promoted through:

- preparation of joint decision-support tools for relevant ministries engaged in implementing the Nagoya Protocol and the Multilateral System and in meeting the relevant GBF goals and targets, and the development of specialized awareness-raising and outreach material on both the International Treaty and the Nagoya Protocol;
- joint capacity-building workshops for the national focal points and competent authorities of both agreements, on selected themes of reciprocal, immediate relevance that are linked to the relevant GBF goals and targets; and
- technical and expert advice to governments, on request, for the harmonious and mutually supportive implementation of the access and benefit-sharing provisions of the Multilateral System and the Nagoya Protocol.

29. Through these activities, it will also be possible to connect International Treaty stakeholders to the frameworks and initiatives for capacity building under the CBD, through coordination with the various implementing entities. A coherent and coordinated approach to capacity development will be pursued in order to integrate the programme into wider ABS experience sharing and lesson learning, for the efficient utilization of available resources and expertise.

Estimated cost: USD 800 000