



Our Ref.: C/X/OCB-12

Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Follow-up to the 19th Regular Session

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has the honour to refer to the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission) established in accordance with Article VI.1 of the Constitution of the Organization. The Commission is an intergovernmental forum for discussion and negotiation by governments on matters related to biodiversity for food and agriculture.

The Commission, at its 19th Regular Session, held from 17 to 21 July 2023, adopted recommendations and invited Members and observers to contribute to the work of the Commission, including by providing specific contributions and inputs to the implementation of the major outputs and milestones of the Commission's Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW). The FAO Council, at its 174th Session, endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Report of the Commission's 19th Regular Session.¹

This letter provides an overview of the cross-sectoral and sectoral outputs and milestones that Members and observers have been invited to comment upon or provide other inputs to, specifies the types of contribution invited and sets out the deadlines by which the contributions should be made available to the Secretariat.

¹ [CL 174/REP](#), paragraph 33.

1. VALIDATION OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS/COORDINATORS

Commission Members address various issues relevant to the work of the Commission through their National Focal Points (NFPs)/National Coordinators. At present, there are NFPs/National Coordinators for the Commission, biodiversity for food and agriculture (BFA), animal genetic resources (AnGR), aquatic genetic resources (AqGR), forest genetic resources (FGR) and plant genetic resources (PGR). Current NFPs/National Coordinators are listed on the Commission's website at:

<https://www.fao.org/cgrfa/overview/national-focal-point/en>

Members are invited to review the NFPs/National Coordinators, as displayed on the Commission's website, for correctness and completeness and to update them, as appropriate.

Action: Validation of the lists of NFPs/National Coordinators for correctness and completeness:

1. NFP for the Commission (contact: CGRFA@fao.org);
2. National Coordinator for AnGR (contact: DAD-IS@fao.org);
3. NFP for AqGR (contact: ITWG-AqGR@fao.org);
4. NFP for BFA (contact: CGRFA@fao.org);
5. NFP for FGR (contact: FO-ITWG-FGR@fao.org); and
6. NFP for PGR (contact: WIEWS@fao.org).

Deadline: 30 April 2024 and subsequently, as necessary

Send to: E-mail addresses given above

2. NOMINATION OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR MICROORGANISM AND INVERTEBRATE GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Commission, at its last session, established the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Microorganism and Invertebrate Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Commission Members are therefore invited to nominate NFPs for microorganism and invertebrate genetic resources for food and agriculture (MIGR).

Action: Nomination of NFP for MIGR

Deadline: 30 April 2024

Send to: CGRFA@fao.org

3. GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Commission, at its last Session, reviewed and simplified a voluntary questionnaire on genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA) and climate change for circulation to the NFPs for the Commission. The questionnaire will shortly be circulated to the NFPs for the Commission who are encouraged to consult with sectoral NFPs/National Coordinators when completing the questionnaire. The Secretariat intends to prepare a summary of all responses received to the questionnaire for consideration by the Intergovernmental Technical Working Groups and the Commission at their next sessions.

Action: NFPs for the Commission to complete questionnaire on GRFA and climate change, when available

Deadline: 31 May 2024

4. ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING

The Commission, at its last Session, took note of a draft questionnaire on the implications of access and benefit-sharing (ABS) measures for the use and exchange of GRFA and benefit-sharing and requested the Secretariat to further simplify and finalize it and to prepare, based on the responses received and other available sources of information, a report for review by the Team of Technical and Legal Experts on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS Expert Team). The survey will be made available on the Commission's website (www.fao.org/cgrfa).

Action: NFPs (and relevant stakeholders) to complete questionnaire on the implications of ABS measures for the use and exchange of GRFA and benefit-sharing, when available

Deadline: 31 May 2024

5. DIGITAL SEQUENCE INFORMATION

The Commission, at its last Session, considered the role of digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources for the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA. It requested the Secretariat to invite Members to submit information on domestic ABS measures applying to DSI and their actual or potential implications for the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA, including their exchange, access to them and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use.

Action: Submission of information on (1) domestic ABS measures applying to DSI and (2) their actual or potential implications for the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA, including their exchange, access to them and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use

Deadline: 30 June 2024

Send to: CGRFA@fao.org

6. PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

(a) Comments on the revised draft Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

The Commission, at its last Session, noted that the revised draft *Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (revised draft Third Report) would be made available to Members during the first half of 2024 for further comments, which should be submitted within 30 days of the date of its publication. The revised draft Third Report will be made available on the WIEWS's website (www.fao.org/wiews) and NFPs for PGR will be notified in due time.

Action: Submission of comments on the revised draft Third Report

Deadline: within 30 days of date of publication

Send to: ITWG-PGRFA@fao.org

(b) Experiences with the use of Voluntary Guidelines

In response to the Commission's recommendation, FAO intends to compile experiences with the use of the *Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Crop Wild Relatives and Wild Food Plants*² and *Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Farmers' Varieties/Landraces*,³ with the aim of improving them and increasing their relevance, as appropriate.

It further recommended that the FAO Council request FAO to address activities related to *in situ* conservation of wild PGRFA and those related to on-farm management of landraces and farmers' varieties in separate sections in future reports to the Commission.

Action: Submission of experiences with the use of the *Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Crop Wild Relatives and Wild Food Plants* and the *Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Farmers' Varieties/Landraces*

Deadline: 31 August 2024

Send to: ITWG-PGRFA@fao.org

7. FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES

The Commission recommended that FAO prepare a revised draft *Second Report on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* (revised draft Second Report) by 1 October 2023, for comments by Members and observers by 30 November 2024. The preparation of the revised draft Second Report has been delayed for technical reasons. The revised draft Second Report is now expected to be made available by 31 March 2024. Comments may be submitted within 60 days of the date of its publication. The revised draft Second Report will be made available on the Commission's website (www.fao.org/cgrfa).

² FAO. 2017. *Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Crop Wild Relatives and Wild Food Plants*. Rome. <https://www.fao.org/3/I7788EN/i7788en.pdf>

³ FAO. 2019. *Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Farmers' Varieties/Landraces*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/CA5601EN>

Action: Submission of comments on the revised draft Second Report
Deadline: within 60 days of date of publication
Contact: FO-ITWG-FGR@fao.org

8. ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES

The Commission, at its last Session, invited countries to initiate the collection of information and data for the completion of their country report questionnaires, which will inform *The Third Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. In the meantime, the questionnaire has been circulated to the National Coordinators for AnGR who have been invited to complete the questionnaires by 30 June 2024.

Action: Completion of online questionnaire
Deadline: 30 June 2024
Contact: SOW-AnGR@fao.org

9. AQUATIC GENETIC RESOURCES

The Commission, at its last Session recommended that FAO hold further consultations on the draft indicators and timeline proposed for monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. An updated proposal on indicators and timelines will be circulated to NFPs for AqGR for feedback well in advance of the next session of the Working Group on AqGR.

Action: NFPs for AqGR to submit comments on draft indicators and timeline for monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Aquatic Genetic Resources
Deadline: 30 June 2024
Contact: ITWG-AqGR@fao.org

10. EXTRA-BUDGETARY RESOURCES

Commission Members thanked donors who had provided support to the implementation of the Commission's MYPOW and to the implementation of the Commission's instruments by countries.⁴

The Commission also stressed the need for support, including extra-budgetary funds, to facilitate:

- (i) the implementation of the Framework for Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture, the Global Plans of Action, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and related Funding Strategies; and
- (ii) the development, revision and implementation of national seed policies and legislation, considering the Commission's *Voluntary Guide for National Seed Policy Formulation*.⁵

In addition, Members and relevant international mechanisms, funds and bodies are invited to give immediate and due priority and attention to the effective allocation of predictable and agreed resources for the preparation of *The Third Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

⁴ CGRFA-17/19/Report, paragraph 100.

⁵ FAO. 2015. *Voluntary Guide for National Seed Policy Formulation*. Rome.
<https://www.fao.org/3/i4916e/i4916e.pdf>