



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
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**The International Treaty**  
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES  
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

**Views, Experiences and Best Practices as an example of possible options for  
the national implementation of Article 9 of the International Treaty**

*Note by the Secretary*

*At its [second meeting](#) of the Ad hoc Technical Expert Group on Farmers' Rights (AHTEG), the Expert Group agreed on a revised version of the [template](#) for collecting information on examples of national measures, best practices and lessons learned from the realization of Farmers' Rights*

*This document presents the updated information on best practices and measures of implementing Article 9 of the International Treaty submitted by ICRISAT on 18 June 2021.*

*The submission is presented in the form and language in which it was received.*



## **Template for submission of**

### **Measures, Best Practices and Lessons Learned from the Realization of Farmers' Rights as set out in Article 9 of the International Treaty**

#### **Basic information**

- Title of measure/practice

Farmer Field Schools, as an extension approach to transfer technology transfer with the help of farmer to farmer trainers using demonstration centers as learning points

- Date of submission

17th May 2021

- Name(s) of country/countries in which the measure/practice is taking place

Malawi and Zambia

- Responsible institution/organization (name, address, website (if applicable), e-mail address, telephone number(s) and contact person)

Responsible institution/organization: International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), P.O. Box 1096, Lilongwe-Malawi. Website: [www.icrisat.org](http://www.icrisat.org) (name, address, website (if applicable),

e-mail address: [J.Mwololo@giar.org](mailto:J.Mwololo@giar.org) telephone number: +26599387213/+2547205763353 and contact person: Dr. James Mwololo

- Type of institution/organization (categories)

An international non-profit organization that undertakes scientific research for development and a member of the CGIAR consortium

- Collaborating/supporting institutions/organizations/actors, if applicable (name, address, website (if applicable), e-mail address, telephone number(s))

Department of Agricultural Services (DARS Malawi) o Zambia Agricultural Research Institution (ZARI), Msekera Research Station, Chipata o Out-grower farmers' foundation-Chipata, Zambia o National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM)-Lilongwe, Malawi

#### **Description of the examples**

##### **Mandatory information:<sup>1</sup>**

- Short summary to be put in the inventory (max. 200 words) including:

- **Implementing entity and partners:** Lead Institution: International Crops Research Institute for The Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT). Partners: Department of Agricultural Research Services (DARS)-Malawi; Department of Agricultural and Extension Services (DAES)-Malawi Zambia Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI)—Zambia; Farmer Out Growers' Foundation-Zambia; Mthilakubili Cooperative Center-Zambia

- Start year 18 June 2019

- Objective(s):

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<sup>1</sup> This mandatory information is required in order for the measure/practice to be included in the Inventory.



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1. Build capacity of smallholder farmers to use improved varieties for food and nutrition security to enhance resilience in production in the face of climate variability, while realizing sustained incomes among women and youth.
  2. Improve Community dialogue/farmer research network including gender mainstreaming.
    - Summary of core components: Key components include; 1) Practical evaluation of best technologies through demonstrations; 2) beneficiaries, the target farmers or community groups; 3) Technology and knowledge dissemination including business planning and gender trainings
    - Key outcomes: There are 3 key outcomes all premised under the goal “Improve productivity, nutrition and on-farm incomes of farmers in Malawi and Zambia through use and conservation of adapted dry land legumes and cereals germplasm”
      1. Farmers capacity of farmers to innovate and use of plant genetic resources for food and nutrition security enhanced
      2. The ownership of technologies and adoption enhanced
      3. Enhanced equity and inclusion in the implementation of the programme
    - Lessons learned (if applicable):

Amongst lessons learnt include; 1) The farmer field school approach is exemplary in the delivery of best bet technologies whereby knowledge and skills are passed to farmers through practical based approach
- Brief history (including starting year), as appropriate

Agriculture is the mainstay of Zambia and Malawi contributing 22% and 28% to the GDP of the two countries respectively. Food crop production is mainly in the hands of small-scale farmers who constitute more than 60% of the farming community. As such, crop productivity is still low, and both countries are food insufficiency and nutrition insecure owing to a number of challenges such as lack of access to inputs, output markets, technical knowledge and climate variability. Grain legumes and dryland cereal crops share multiple values in agri-food systems as resilient crops that provide nutritious food, income and or feed for livestock. The project was conceptualized to address the latter by harnessing dryland legume and cereals genetic resource for food and nutrition security and resilient farming systems in the two countries. The project which started in 2019, is being implemented in five districts i.e. Mchinji and Salima in Malawi; Chipata, Lundazi and Mambwe in Zambia, selected based on the role played by these crops as food and in income generation. The project is working in these districts towards underpinning agricultural growth and livelihoods through: i) intensification of cropping systems and ii) technology development/innovations using dryland legumes and cereals to address food and nutrition insecurity and grow incomes of smallholder farmers. Four entry points identified as key towards achieving the project goal included: (i) Conservation and exploitation of existing genetic resources (ii) high yielding resilient varieties that are nutrient dense (iii) Partnerships, capacity building, innovations and strengthening and/or working with community based structures (iv) Community dialogue/farmer research network including gender mainstreaming. The areas of operation in the two countries have similar weather patterns with effective rains commencing in the month of November/December of each calendar year. **To achieve these objectives, various platforms have been developed and these include farmer field schools as Learning centers in which demonstrations were established and field days conducted, 2) targeted trainings to farmers on various technological applications**
  - Core components of the measure/practice (max 200 words)



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**Target PGRFA:** The project targets groundnut, pigeonpea, millets and sorghum.

**Beneficiaries:** To date **over 2800 farmers have been reached in total particularly those accessing seed through community seed banks, field days and access to various trainings including on crop production, agri-business, seed production)**

**Gender:** To mainstream gender in project activities, **a training on gender was done in both countries and over 300 farmers benefited. An innovation platform targeting the front line staff from different stakeholders will be established** to strengthen platform dialogues and gender equity.

**Impacts:** The efforts are geared towards contribution to food, nutrition and income security; adaptation to climate change and to science and innovation. In terms of cropping systems, two systems each with two planting patterns that include legume double up (groundnut + pigeon pea) and spatial arrangement (maize + pigeon pea) have been evaluated via the farmer field schools with farmers for them to select most suited systems for their respective localities/

Description of the context and the history of the measure/practice is taking place (political, legal and economic framework conditions for the measure/practice) (max 200 words)

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**Farmer Field Schools:** Technology dissemination is often constrained by effectiveness and efficiency in reaching farmers. The gap between the ratio of Extension staff to farmers is huge, and the use of lead farmers as pathways for getting technologies or knowledge to fellow farmers has proved to be useful. Most NGOs have adopted this approach whereby the lead farmers are designated with various names, i.e. promoters, farmer to farmer trainers etc. These lead farmers transfer information through learning centers that are called Farmer Field Schools. Crop varieties for promotion or experimentation are planted by farmers (learning by doing) in these centers.

**To which provision(s) of Article 9 of the International Treaty does this measure relate**

- Art. 9.1
- Art. 9.2a
- Art. 9.2b
- Art. 9.2c
- Art. 9.3

**Other information, if applicable**

- Please indicate which category of the Inventory is most relevant for the proposed measure, and which other categories are also relevant (if any):

No.	Category	Most relevant <sup>2</sup>	Also relevant <sup>3</sup>
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<sup>2</sup> Please select only one category that is most relevant, under which the measure will be listed.

<sup>3</sup> Please select one or several categories that may also be relevant (if applicable).



1	Recognition of local and indigenous communities', farmers' contributions to conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, such as awards and recognition of custodian/guardian farmers	√	
2	Financial contributions to support farmers conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA such as contributions to benefit-sharing funds		
3	Approaches to encourage income-generating activities to support farmers' conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA		√
4	Catalogues, registries and other forms of documentation of PGRFA and protection of traditional knowledge		
5	In-situ/on-farm conservation and management of PGRFA, such as social and cultural measures, community biodiversity management and conservation sites		
6	Facilitation of farmers' access to a diversity of PGRFA through community seed banks <sup>4</sup> , seed networks and other measures improving farmers' choices of a wider diversity of PGRFA.	√	
7	Participatory approaches to research on PGRFA, including characterization and evaluation, participatory plant breeding and variety selection	√	
8	Farmers' participation in decision-making at local, national and sub-regional, regional and international levels		√
9	Training, capacity development and public awareness creation	√	
10	Legal measures for the implementation of Farmers' Rights, such as legislative measures related to PGRFA.		√
11	Other measures / practices		

- In case you selected 'other measures', would you like to suggest a description of this measure, e.g. as a possible new category? \_\_\_\_\_
- Objective(s)
- Target group(s) and numbers of involved and affected farmers<sup>5</sup>
- Location(s) and geographical outreach
  
- Resources used for implementation of the measure/practice
- How has the measure/practice affected the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture?
- Please describe the achievements of the measure/ practice so far (including quantification) (max 200 words)

<sup>4</sup> Including seed houses.

<sup>5</sup> Any classification, e.g. of the types of farmer addressed, may be country-specific.



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- Other national level instruments that are linked to the measure/practice
- Are you aware of any other international agreements or programs that are relevant for this measure/practice?
- Other issues you wish to address, that have not yet been covered, to describe the measure/practice

### **Lessons learned**

- Describe lessons learned which may be relevant for others who wish to do the same or similar measures/practices (max 250 words).  
**Cohesion:** The adoption of best bet technologies will depend on the cohesiveness of members in a farmer group and/or community. As such, the farmer field school approach was observed to instill cohesiveness thereby enhancing quicker diffusion of technologies and adoption.
- What challenges encountered along the way (if applicable) (max 200 words)  
**Covid-19:** The covid pandemic was the major challenge experienced during the 2019/20 and 2020/21 growing seasons. Restrictions on numbers per gathering impaired maximal operationalization of the farmer field schools.
- What would you consider conditions for success, if others should seek to carry out such a measure or organize such an activity? (max 100 words)  
**Collaboration:** The collaboration we have with DARS, ZARI, farmer foundations and DAES has been key especially in project implementation including the trainings via the farmer field schools.  
**Farmer participation:** Farmers in the project have owned project activities particularly by enhancing cohesiveness via the farmer field schools.  
**Technical expertise:** Technical expertise from ICRISAT, DARS, ZARI and DAES has been pivotal in the design and implementation of various activities in the project

### **Further information**

- Link(s) to further information about the measure/practice